

About This Book

This Book Contains the Most Widely Used and Respected Career Information of Its Kind Available Anywhere

America's Top 300 Jobs is one of the most important sources of career information available anywhere. Based on the latest information from the U.S. Department of Labor, it contains readable and up-to-date information on hundreds of jobs. Approximately 90 percent of all U.S. workers are employed in one of these jobs.

Every two years the Department of Labor updates the data upon which this book is based. This ensures that information on such things as salaries and projected growth—as well as the job descriptions themselves—remain current and accurate. The labor department publishes this updated information in a book titled the *Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)*. The *OOH* is the most widely used source of career information of all time, and it is available in libraries and employment programs everywhere. *America's Top 300 Jobs* includes all the job descriptions provided in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, as well as additional information to make it easier and more helpful to use.

Four Major Uses of *America's Top 300 Jobs*:

- 1. If You Are Exploring Career Options:** Find out which careers and jobs are most interesting to you and how to prepare for them.
- 2. If You Are Conducting a Job Search:** Identify job targets and prepare for interviews by knowing what skills are required, average pay, and other details about the job.
- 3. If You Are an Employer:** Determine how to write job descriptions, establish salary ranges—and what to look for when interviewing candidates.
- 4. If You Are a Counselor, Instructor, or Other Career Specialist:** Consult this essential reference for all career-related needs.

Introduction

America's Top 300 Jobs describes, in detail, occupations comprising about 86 percent of all jobs in the economy. Occupations that require education or training are given more attention. In addition, summary information on another 79 occupations, accounting for another 5 percent of all jobs, is presented in an appendix. An additional appendix provides information on the 500 largest occupations. The relatively small percentage of jobs that are not covered are mainly categories for which little meaningful information could be developed.

This book is best used as a reference and is not meant to be read from cover to cover. Instead, browse through the Table of Contents beginning on page v, or look in the alphabetical index for occupations that interest you. Don't limit yourself to these, however. Other jobs also might be worth looking into.

For an overview of the broad trends that are likely to shape the economy and affect jobs, read the Important Labor Market Trends Through the Year 2005 section, beginning on page 7.

Choosing an Occupation

For any occupation that sounds interesting to you, use this book to find out what the work involves; what education or training you need; what the advancement possibilities, earnings, and job outlook are, and what related occupations you might consider.

Each job description in this book follows a standard format, making it easier for you to learn more about and compare occupations. The following describes each of the sections comprising each job description and gives some hints on how to interpret the information provided.

Information Included in the Descriptions

This section provides an overview of how the occupational descriptions, or statements, are organized. Each occupational statement follows a standard format, making it easier for you to compare occupations. The following highlights information presented in each section of a statement, and offers hints on how to interpret the information provided.

Job Title and DOT Numbers

Each description is headed by a job title in bold letters. Immediately following this title is a listing of numbers in parenthesis. These cross-reference another major career reference book from the U.S. Department of Labor titled

the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT)*, Fourth Edition. DOT numbers are included because they are cross-referenced to many career information systems.

An appendix at the back of this book cross-references DOT numbers to occupations covered in *America's Top 300 Jobs*.

Nature of the Work

- What workers do on the job, the equipment they use, and how closely they are supervised.
- How workers' duties vary by industry, establishment, and size of firm.
- How responsibilities of entry-level workers differ from those of experienced, supervisory, or self-employed workers.
- How technological innovations are changing what workers do and how they do it.
- Emerging specialties.

Working Conditions

- Hours worked in a typical week.
- The workplace environment.
- Exposure to injury, illness, and job-related stress.
- Necessary protective clothing and safety equipment.
- Physical activities required.
- Extent of travel required.

Employment

- The number of jobs the occupation provides.
- Key industries employing workers in the occupation.
- Geographic distribution of jobs.
- The proportion of part-time (fewer than 35 hours a week) and self-employed workers in the occupation.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

- Significant sources of training; typical length of training; and training preferred by employers.
- Whether workers acquire skills through previous work experience; informal, on-the-job training; formal training (including apprenticeships) offered by employers or unions; the Armed Forces; home study; or hobbies and other activities.

- Formal educational requirements: high school, post-secondary, vocational or technical training, college, or graduate or professional education.
- Desirable skills, aptitudes, and personal characteristics.
- Certification, examination, or licensing required for entry into the field, for advancement, or for independent practice.
- Continuing education or skill improvement requirements.
- Paths of advancement.

Job Outlook

- Forces that will result in growth or decline in the number of jobs.
- Relative number of job openings an occupation provides. Occupations that are large and have high turnover rates generally provide the most job openings, reflecting the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or stop working.
- Level of competition for jobs. Is there a surplus or shortage of job seekers compared to the number of job openings available? Do opportunities vary by industry, by size of firm, or geographic location? Even in over-crowded fields, job openings do exist, and good students or well-qualified individuals should not be deterred from undertaking training or seeking entry.
- Susceptibility to layoffs due to imports, slowdowns in economic activity, technological advancements, or budget cuts.

Earnings

- Typical earnings of workers in the occupation.
- How earnings vary with experience, location, and tenure.
- Whether workers are compensated through annual salaries, hourly wages, commissions, piece rates, tips, or bonuses.
- Earnings of wage and salary workers compared to self-employed persons, who hold about 8 percent of all jobs.
- Benefits, including health insurance, pensions, paid vacation and sick leave, family leave, child care or elder care, employee assistance programs, summers off, sabbaticals, tuition for dependents, discounted airfare or merchandise, stock options, profit sharing plans, savings plans, or expense accounts.

Key Phrases in the Descriptions

Descriptions of the relationship between the supply of and demand for workers in a particular occupation reflect the knowledge and judgment of economists in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Office of Employment Projections.

Changing employment through the year 2005

If the statement reads:	Employment is projected to:
Grow much faster than average	Increase 36 percent or more
Grow faster than average	Increase 21 to 35 percent
Grow about as fast as average	Increase 10 to 20 percent
Grow more slowly than average, or little or no change	Increase 0 to 9 percent
Decline	Decrease 1 percent or more

Opportunities and competition for jobs

If the statement reads:	Job openings compared to job seekers may be:
Excellent opportunities	Much more numerous
Very good opportunities	More numerous
Good or favorable opportunities	About the same
May face competition	Fewer
May face keen competition	Much fewer

Related Occupations

- Occupations that use similar aptitudes, interests, education, and training.

Sources of Additional Information

- Associations, government agencies, unions, and other organizations providing useful occupational information.
- Free or inexpensive publications offering more information, some of which is available in libraries, school career centers, or guidance offices.

Sources of Career Information

Exploring career alternatives and looking for jobs are difficult tasks. While *America's Top 300 Jobs* is an excellent source of career information, you may need additional facts or resources. This section suggests some of those additional resources. Many of the books mentioned in the first section are available from JIST Works, Inc. See the ordering information in the back of this book.

Four Highly Recommended Occupational Reference Books

While many consider the information provided in *America's Top 300 Jobs* to be the most helpful career information available, one or more of the references listed below may also benefit you. *America's Top 300 Jobs* provides excellent descriptions of the major jobs, but does not cover the more specialized ones. This can be a limitation if you have experience, education, or interest in a specific area and want to know more about the variety of jobs that area offers. In some cases, you may also want to know about the variety of jobs to consider if you are making a career change or searching for a new job. The career or business section of larger libraries will have one or more of the following books, and all are available from JIST Works, Inc.

Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT). This is standard reference book published by the U.S. Department of Labor. It provides brief descriptions for more than 12,500 jobs. Useful for identifying skills used in past jobs, preparing for interviews, and identifying job targets. While it is a bit hard to use—1,400 pages long—there is no other source of information like it.

The Complete Guide for Occupational Exploration (CGOE). A major career reference book that arranges more than 12,000 jobs into 12 major interest areas and increasingly specific clusters of related jobs. Useful for career exploration or identifying job targets. Includes a self-assessment section, a variety of useful cross-references, narrative descriptions for each group of jobs, and other helpful information. While the *CGOE* is almost 1,000 pages long, it is very easy to use and will quickly help you identify the many specialized jobs that are related to the skills, education, and experiences you already have. The variety of cross-referencing systems in the *CGOE* allow you to look up jobs based on education, hobbies and leisure interests, military experience, and many other factors.

***The Enhanced Guide for Occupational Exploration (EGOE)*, 2nd Edition**. Provides descriptions for 2,800 jobs arranged into 12 major interest areas and increasingly spe-

cific work groups. These jobs cover 95 percent of the job market. This book is useful for career exploration, identifying skills used in previous jobs, researching new job targets, and preparing for interviews.

Career Guide to America's Top Industries. Designed to help plan careers, identify alternative job targets, and prepare for interviews. Provides trends and other information on more than 40 major industries and summary data on many others. Excellent for getting information about an industry prior to an interview. Includes details on employment projections, advancement opportunities, major trends, and a complete narrative description of each industry. A reprint of a Department of Labor publication. This book can be useful to help you decide in which industry to work, though it is another one of those things that most job seekers may not think much about.

Computer Access to Thousands of Job Descriptions Is Now Possible

While the books I've just mentioned are very useful, they all have limitations. For example, you may need to refer to two or three big reference books to get all of the available information on a specific job. Another limitation is that some of the more detailed information is provided in coded form that is not easy to understand. Part of the difficulty of using these books is the sheer number of jobs that need to be included. Providing details on all of them requires a massive number of pages. Fortunately, more powerful and less expensive computers with large data storage capabilities now are available to handle this.

A new CD-ROM, titled *America's Top Jobs on CD-ROM*, allows you to look up the complete text of any job listed in *America's Top 300 Jobs*, plus another 7,700 more specific *DOT* job descriptions that are related to the more general *OOH* jobs. What is particularly important is that the program is very easy to use and very fast. It allows you to look up jobs by interest, occupational grouping, and several other ways.

Other Career Reference Books

Young Person's Occupational Outlook Handbook. Covers all the jobs in the *OOH* but in fewer words and more graphics.

America's Top Jobs Books. The job descriptions are based on those in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and include details on pay, education required, working conditions, and more. Titles in this series include: