

The Skilled Trades

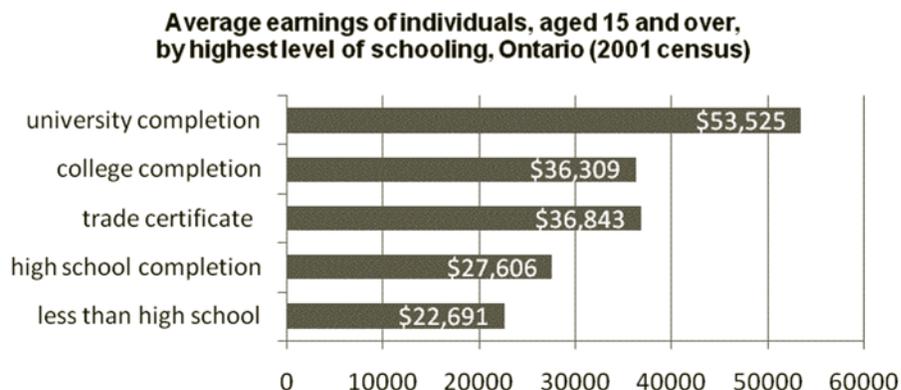
A skilled trade is an occupation that requires skilled labour, such as a carpenter, baker, plumber or electrician. For each skilled trade, there is a process for getting a certificate of qualification.

Pre-Reading

1 Discuss the questions in a small group.

1. Describe your work experience (in Canada and elsewhere). What did you do?
2. Do you consider yourself *skilled* in a particular area of work? What is this area of work?
3. Make a list of as many skilled trades as you can think of.
4. What do you think is important to know about the skilled trades?

2 Look at the bar graph below. Answer the questions.



Data source: Statistics Canada, summary tables.

1. Write three sentences to describe what the bar graph illustrates. You can use words such as *lowest*, *highest*, *more than*, *less than*, *on average*.
2. Did any information in the graph surprise you? Why?

Reading

THE SKILLED TRADES

What is a skilled trade?

A skilled trade is an occupation that requires skilled labour, such as a carpenter, baker, plumber or electrician. For each skilled trade, there is a process for getting a certificate of qualification. There are over 200 skilled trades in Canada, organized into four sectors: construction, manufacturing, transportation and service.

Some of Canada's skilled trades are compulsory trades. This means you must have a Certificate of Qualification to work in that trade. Having the certificate means you have passed a provincial exam that tests your knowledge of the trade. Other trades are voluntary trades. You do not need to have a certificate to work in the voluntary trades, although those who are certified may earn higher wages and have more employment opportunities. A certified tradesperson is called a journeyperson.

How do I become a journeyperson?

To become a journeyperson, you must pass a Certificate of Qualification exam. You can only write this exam if you have enough experience in the trade (in Canada or in another country). You have to prove that you have that experience and skill in the trade to write the exam. If you don't have enough experience, you can get it through an apprenticeship.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is for people who do not have enough experience in a trade and who want to obtain certification in a skilled trade. An apprenticeship involves a combination of learning on the job while getting paid, and attending short in-school sessions. It usually lasts two to five years. When you complete the apprenticeship, you can write the Certificate of Qualification examination. If you pass, you have provincial certification to work in that trade. There are two steps to becoming an apprentice:

1. Find a job in which you work with someone who is already a journeyperson. The journeyperson and the employer must agree to work with you and make other arrangements while you are in school.
2. Register as an apprentice with the Ontario government. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) is the Ontario ministry that registers and certifies apprentices in Ontario. When you register as an apprentice, you are eligible for incentives and in-school training.

What is the job situation like in the skilled trades?

Canada is facing a serious shortage of skilled trades people. Many workers in the skilled trades are getting ready to retire, and fewer youth are entering the skilled trades than in previous generations. As a result of this shortage, the Ontario government is encouraging people to begin apprenticeship programs. It is funding services and programs that help people learn about the trades and the benefits of apprenticeships. These services include employment counsellors, a telephone hotline, and educational programs that prepare you for apprenticeship (or pre-apprenticeship) programs. The government is also promoting apprenticeship by offering incentives. These incentives include loans, tax breaks, money to buy tools, and money offered to an employer to accept you as an apprentice.

Vocabulary Building

3 Below are terms used in the text about the skilled trades. Write the correct letter on each line to match each term to its meaning. Try to do this without looking back at the text.

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|--------------------------|---|
| 1. ____ compulsory trade | a. a trade in which only registered apprentices or certified journeypersons can work |
| 2. ____ voluntary trade | b. a person who is registered in an apprenticeship program |
| 3. ____ apprentice | c. a trade in which people can work even if they are not a registered apprentice or a journeyperson |
| 4. ____ journeyperson | d. a program in which a person learns on the job and goes to in-school sessions |
| 5. ____ skilled trade | e. an occupation that requires skilled labour and has a certification exam |
| 6. ____ apprenticeship | f. a reward that is designed to encourage a certain behaviour or action |
| 7. ____ incentive | g. a person who is skilled in a trade and has passed a Certificate of Qualification exam for that trade |

Comprehension

4 Answer the questions.

1. What is the difference between a skilled tradesperson, an apprentice and a journeyperson?
2. List two reasons why Canada has a shortage of skilled workers in the trades.
3. List some things the Ontario government is doing to encourage people to work in the trades.
4. Do you think the incentives described in the text will encourage people to enter the trades?
5. Can you suggest other incentives that may work better?
6. An apprenticeship is often described as an opportunity to “earn while you learn.” Explain what this phrase means.

5  Search for information about Ontario trades on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities website. Answer the questions.

Search term: *Ministry Training Colleges Universities apprenticeship*

1. How many trades are compulsory in Ontario? Why do you think these trades are compulsory?
2. Find out how you can get help becoming an apprentice. On the menu bar on the homepage, click on **Apprentices**. Then click on **Find an Employer**.
 - a) List three ways you can get help finding an employer who may accept you as an apprentice.
 - b) How can you learn more about how to get help finding an employer?