Unit 1

Is Tech the Right Career?

Learning Objectives

In this unit, you will:

- talk about career choice;
- enhance your understanding of the importance of Information Technology in future career;
- recognize the urgency of cultivating hard skills and soft skills;
- learn how to write an illustration essay;
- learn how to recognize signal words.

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.

—Aristotle

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

—Confucius

Preview

Imagine you are going to hunt for a job in the fiercely competitive IT field, what qualifications do you need to be able to stand out from other candidates and get the job you desire?

When you choose IT, you should bear in mind that it is a fast changing field and you may fall behind because new technical skills spring up overnight. Therefore, following the trends of IT and upgrading yourself are necessary. Besides, it is also very important to develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork and problem solving.

Opportunities and space for self-development are tremendous in the IT field as long as you have clear goals for your career and keep learning. Have you ever thought about your own career path? Do you have what it takes to be a successful IT professional?

Section A

Pre-reading Activities

1. Listen to the talk about how to be successful in a job interview. Fill in the blanks based on what you hear.

1) Some interviewees walk into an employer's office without knowing much about the position they're _____; however, employers tend to ask questions that will ultimately _____ one's skill level and knowledge of their company. Making a good _____ in the interview and providing strong answers will help you stand out in the interviewer's mind, potentially _____ a job offer.

2) What are the five tips for ensuring a successful interview?

   a) _____

   b) _____

   c) _____

   d) _____

   e) _____

2. **Suppose you are in a job interview, and your interviewer asks you the following two questions. How are you going to answer them in order to win in your job interview?**

1) Can you work under pressure?
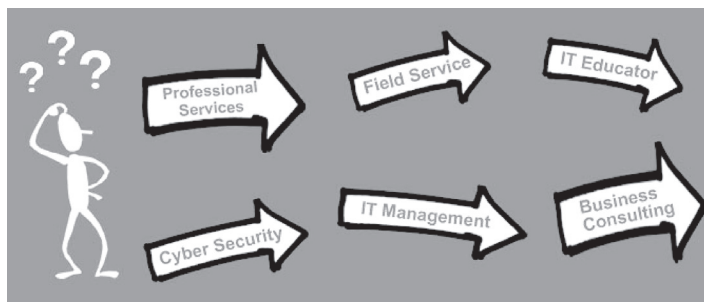
2) Are you a team player?

Text A

IT Career Paths

1. Information Technology (IT) continues to change the way we live, play, and do business, so it should come as no surprise that IT has been the fastest growing career field in recent years, and will continue to be for years to come.

2. The **dominance** of the IT job market is due in part to many **factors**, including **prolific** growth of the Internet and e-commerce, lower **hardware** and **software** prices allowing more businesses to **upgrade** their technology, increased demand for information security experts **spurred** by the rising **frequency** and **complication** of cyber-crimes, and the **advent** of smarter applications enabling companies to analyze data and develop **unprecedented** business intelligence.

3. For established IT professionals or those beginning an IT career path, this continues to be good news. However, **regardless** of the rapid growth and increased opportunity, simply showing up will not **guarantee** success. The technology job market will continue to get more competitive as people go where the money and jobs are. This is why it is important to clearly identify your career goals and develop a learning plan with the necessary skills, computer training and IT **certifications** to build a competitive edge and achieve your goals.

4. IT skills are constantly falling in and out of fashion, but the technical skills that are in greatest demand today are application/web development, **database** management, network **administration**, IT security, help desk/tech support, and **virtualization**. Talk with IT leaders and you'll also hear that cloud computing skills are increasingly in demand.

5. Now, if you are looking to be successful in the IT field, you need to develop other skills besides being technical. You need to focus on developing your soft skills if you want to keep moving forward in your IT career.

6. For instance, IT managers need a mix of soft skills and technical skills to be successful. They need to be able to communicate **effectively**, build relationships with **employees** in other business functions, and lead and manage teams.

7. Consider also the example of Chief Information Officers (CIOs). For CIOs, technical skills now matter less while business savvy and **leadership** skills are requirements. CIOs require a deep understanding of their company's business, how it makes or loses money, its market, competition and customers. They also need to be able to communicate effectively, in business terms, with their **peers** and with board members, and build relationships with them. CIOs identify long-term strategic thinking and planning, collaboration and influence, change leadership, and identifying and seizing on commercial opportunities as among their most critical leadership skills.

8. Generally speaking, you will need the following to be a successful IT professional.

Flexibility and Persistence

9. The IT industry is always developing to adjust to the growing demand for new computers and information networks. While this is good news for the rest of the world, the people who are in the IT field have a tougher time since they always have to be on top of the latest technological trends that appear overnight.

10. Many IT professionals have to **anticipate** situations when something stops working or becomes obsolete. To become a successful IT professional, you will need to have the flexibility and persistence to deal with the many issues that arise with end user **mishaps**, security **vulnerabilities**, and technical failures.

Problem-Solving

11. It is common knowledge that IT software and hardware can be delicate, complicated and a little **unpredictable**. The ability to **predict** and identify changes or problems in a **client**'s or **employer**'s network, hardware or software before it becomes a problem is a skill that an IT professional needs to develop.

12. There are times when systems just fail to work for no apparent reason. In such **scenarios**, the IT professional must be able to work under pressure and immediately come up with a solution without **disrupting** a client's or employer's work environment for too long. Being able to stay calm, to anticipate problems and to come up with **innovative** solutions are important skills for this career.

Knowledge of Hardware and Software

13. IT professionals are responsible for the computers and the hardware and software that keep local-area and wide-area networks running **smoothly**. To succeed in this field, you must be able to work with all of the physical components of a network, be able to prevent network attacks and vulnerabilities as well as computer maintenance and repair.

Passion and Desire to Learn

14. The IT industry is constantly evolving, which means that newer IT practices and solutions are being introduced every day. Therefore, anyone interested in succeeding in the IT field must have a real **passion** for learning new things. Being **passionate** about IT will ensure that you are willing and **committed** enough to take up the challenges that the industry will throw at you on a daily basis. If you don't like the idea of learning, then IT is not the field for you. Without the passion for learning the latest technology, an IT professional will rapidly fall behind in the competition, and the IT field will become **tiresome** and gloomy. On the other hand, if you have the passion, **curiosity** and a desire to learn, you will find the IT industry to be a real **wonderland** with something new to discover or learn every day.

15. There is no doubt that with a large number of candidates eager to get into the IT field, it can be a competitive field to enter if you don't have the proper qualifications and training. However, with the proper training and the right attitude, just about anyone can get their foot in the IT industry.

(918 words)

New Words

dominance	/ˈdɒmɪnəns/	*n.*	the fact of being more powerful, more important, or more noticeable than other people or things 优势；支配；统治
factor	/ˈfæktə/	*n.*	[C] fact, circumstance, etc. that helps to produce a result 因素
prolific	/prəˈlɪfɪk/	*a.*	1. (of plants, animals, etc.) producing much fruit or many flowers or offspring（指动植物等）多产的；多育的 2. (of a writer, an artist, etc.) producing many works（指作家、艺术家等）多创作的 3. existing in large numbers 大量的
hardware	/ˈhɑːdˌwɛə/	*n.*	[U] 1. (computing) the machinery and electronic parts of a computer system 硬件