

## Lesson Plan: Exploring Skilled Trades Pathways in Ontario

**Grade Level:** 9–12

**Time Required:** 75 minutes (can be extended to a 2-period lesson)

**Curriculum Connections:**

- **Career Studies (GLC20):** A1.1, A1.2, A2.2, B1.1, B1.2, B2.3
  - **Technological Education (Grades 9–12):** Foundations (A1), Career Opportunities (C1, C2)
  - **Guidance & Career Education:** Pathways planning, transition skills, experiential learning
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### Learning Goals

Students will:

- Understand what skilled trades are and why they are essential.
  - Explore the four skilled trade sectors and real examples.
  - Identify personal strengths and interests related to skilled trades careers.
  - Recognize high-school pathway programs (OYAP, SHSM, Dual Credits, Co-op).
  - Analyze the benefits of skilled trades, including job prospects, salary, and “earn while you learn.”
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### Success Criteria

Students can:

- ✓ Explain the term *skilled trade* and describe the apprenticeship pathway.
  - ✓ Identify at least three trades they had never considered before.
  - ✓ Describe OYAP, SHSM, Dual Credits, and Co-op and how these programs support pathways.
  - ✓ Reflect on whether a skilled trade may be a good fit based on interests, values, and working style.
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### Materials

- The Trades Report—September issue
  - Projector / Smartboard
  - Printed student worksheet (reflection questions & trade exploration chart)
  - PDF excerpts or slides from your uploaded file
  - Chart paper & markers
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## Lesson Sequence

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### 1. Minds-On (10 minutes)

#### Hook: “What Makes the World Work?”

Display images of homes, bridges, cars, food processing plants, salons, HVAC systems.

Ask:

- “Which careers make these things possible?”
- “What do you think skilled trades are?”

Definition:

Skilled trades are **hands-on careers requiring specialized knowledge** that keep our communities running.

Reveal *fast facts* from page 2:

- *1 in 6 job openings in Ontario will be in skilled trades by 2026*
- *At least 1 in 3 trades workers with an apprenticeship credential is nearing retirement*

Have students do a quick pair-share: “Why might this matter for your generation?”

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### 2. Action: Part A — Why Choose the Skilled Trades? (15 minutes)

Introduce the “10 Reasons to Choose a Career in the Skilled Trades” (p. 1–2).  
Highlight key reasons with examples:

- **Job security** (shortages due to retirements)
- **Great pay** (trades often earn above Ontario’s average income)
- **Earn while you learn** (apprenticeships pay while training)
- **Little/no debt** (grants, bonuses, tool funding, interest-free loans)
- **Career advancement** (supervisor, manager, instructor, business owner)
- **Start in high school** through OYAP, co-op, dual credits, SHSM

#### Class activity:

Students choose their **top three reasons** and write:

- Why that reason matters to them
  - How it compares to other pathways (university/college)
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### 3. Action: Part B — What Are the Four Skilled Trade Sectors? (20 minutes)

Show the table from **page 7** (Construction, Industrial, Motive Power, Service). Discuss sample trades, wages, and skills needed.

#### Group Activity: “Sector Stations”

Set up four stations:

- Construction
- Industrial
- Motive Power
- Service

Each station includes:

- What the sector does
- 1–2 sample trades
- Skills required
- Wage ranges (from the chart)

Students rotate every 3–4 minutes, completing a **Trade Exploration Chart**:

- What does this trade do?
  - Where do they work?
  - What skills are needed?
  - Does this trade appeal to me? Why or why not?
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### 4. Action: Part C — Is a Skilled Trade Right for You? (10 minutes)

Use the self-assessment questions from **page 4**:

- Interests
- Work style
- Strengths
- Goals
- Lifestyle fit

Students answer privately on the worksheet.

Optional: play the suggested video “*Consider a Career in the Skilled Trades*” (page 4).

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## Action: Part D — How to Explore Trades in High School (10 minutes)

Teach the four main pathways using page 6 content:

### OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program)

- Start apprenticeship hours in high school
- Work alongside tradespeople
- Must be 15+ with at least 14 credits

### Cooperative Education (Co-op)

- Workplace learning; “test-drive” a trade
- Often counts as OYAP if placed in a skilled trade

### SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major)

- Sector-focused program; earns certifications like First Aid/CPR
- Offers experiential learning

### Dual Credits

- Earn high school + college credits simultaneously
- Great for transition to apprenticeship or college programs

### Activity:

Students create a **pathway plan** for one trade of interest, including:

- Courses to take (e.g., math, tech, English)
- Certifications to obtain (e.g., First Aid, safety training)
- Programs to join (OYAP, Co-op, SHSM, Dual credits)

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## 5. Consolidation (5 minutes)

Exit ticket:

**“One trade I am interested in and one next step I can take in high school to explore it.”**

Students hand in their worksheets for assessment.

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## Assessment

### For Learning:

- Observations during discussions
- Station activity responses

### As Learning:

- Self-assessment: “Is a Skilled Trade Right for You?”

## Of Learning:

- Completed Trade Exploration Chart
  - Pathway planning worksheet
  - Exit ticket
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## Extension Opportunities

- Have students research an in-demand Red Seal trade (p. 4).
- Invite an OYAP recruiter or tradesperson for a classroom talk.
- Assign a culminating task: *Create a one-page career profile of a trade* using labour-market info (page 5–6 resource links).