

Wired for What?

A parent's guide to helping your student understand their natural abilities before choosing a major, a college, or a career.



Richard Harris

preparedstudents.com

If Your Teen or College Student Is Wrestling With Questions Like...

What should I do with my life?

What should I study?

Which careers would actually fit me?

What if I make the wrong decision?

This guide is for you.

These questions have always been hard. Today they carry even more weight.

College costs keep climbing. AI is reshaping the job market. New careers are appearing while familiar ones are changing shape underneath us.

And yet students are still asked to make expensive, consequential decisions with almost no information about themselves.

Choose a major. Choose a college. Choose a career. Build a plan.

But very few students ever get help understanding the natural abilities they'll bring to those decisions.

That's where the Highlands Ability Battery becomes incredibly valuable. It gives students objective information about how they naturally think, learn, solve problems, process information, and do their best work.

Instead of asking your student to guess what might fit, this guide gives your family something to actually start from.

THE OVERLOOKED QUESTION

Your Student May Know What Interests Them. But Do They Know What They're Naturally Good At?

When students think about possible careers, they usually focus on two questions.

THE WHY

"Why would I want to work in this field?"

THE WHO

"Who would I get to help or work with?"

Both matter. But there's a third question students almost always overlook.

THE QUESTION THAT GETS SKIPPED

"What would I actually be doing every day?"

Every career is made up of tasks. Some require someone to analyze complex information fast. Others reward patience, predictability, and careful attention to detail. Some demand a strong ability to visualize objects in three dimensions. Others lean heavily on words, ideas, relationships, and communication.

A student can love the mission behind a career and still dislike the actual work that comes with it.

Students deserve a chance to think through that difference before they spend years and thousands of dollars pursuing a path.

WHY MANY CAREER TESTS FALL SHORT

Most Career Assessments Ask Students to Describe Themselves

Many career tests ask questions like these.

"Would you enjoy working with numbers?"

"Do you consider yourself creative?"

"Would you prefer a predictable job or a constantly changing one?"

These can be useful. But they all depend on something students usually can't do yet: accurately evaluate themselves.

Most students haven't experienced enough workplaces or responsibilities to know what they'd actually prefer. Some answer based on what they think their parents want to hear. Others answer based on a class they liked last semester, a career they saw online, or what sounds impressive to say out loud.

The Highlands Ability Battery takes a different approach. Instead of relying on what students believe about themselves, it asks them to complete a series of timed work samples.

These play out like brain games. Students solve problems, spot patterns, remember information, and mentally manipulate objects, all designed to measure how they naturally operate.

THE CORE DIFFERENCE

Your student isn't reporting what they think they can do. They're demonstrating how they actually perform.

Nineteen Work Samples. One Remarkably Detailed Picture.

The Highlands Ability Battery uses 19 different work samples to reveal how a person is naturally wired. Here are two real examples, straight from the assessment.



In the Classification sample, your student clicks the three images that go together, as fast as they can. High scorers tend to need fast-paced work with plenty of variety. Lower scorers actually prefer predictability and structure, and thrive on repetition.

In the Spatial Relations sample, your student identifies what a 3-D block looks like when rotated. Engineers, as a group, tend to score high here; psychologists tend to score lower. Neither is "better." Each points toward a very different kind of daily work.

The results can also show:

- How quickly your student processes certain types of information, and whether they need variety or greater predictability
- Whether they're naturally drawn toward tangible objects or abstract ideas
- How they communicate, retain information, and learn best
- The environments where they're most likely to do their best work

Each result is one piece of information. The real value shows up when all nineteen come together, and students finally have language for something they've sensed about themselves for years.

NO GOOD SCORES, NO BAD SCORES

Highlands Isn't a Test Your Student Passes or Fails

Some parents worry an ability assessment will point out weaknesses, or tell their student they're not capable of a certain future. That's not what this does.

There are no good or bad ability profiles.

One student might process information fast and crave constant variety. That student may get restless in repetitive environments. Another student might process more deliberately and prefer structure, stability, and predictability. Neither result is better. They just need different things from their environment to do their best work.

The same holds true across the whole assessment. Some students naturally excel at visualizing and manipulating physical objects in their minds. Others feel most at home working with words, ideas, and relationships. There are real, wonderful opportunities across the entire range of results.

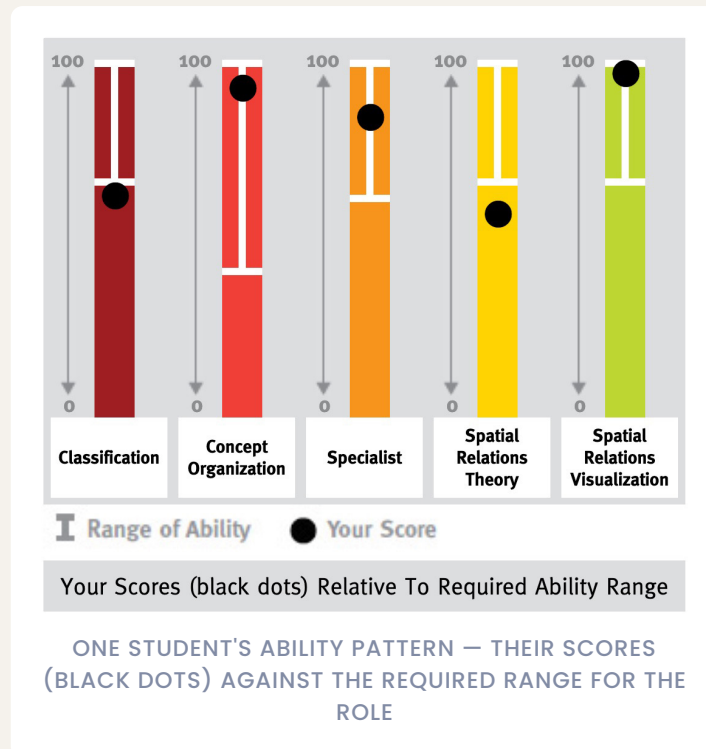
WHAT HIGHLANDS DOES

It doesn't put your student in a box. It shows them what they need to thrive.

FROM SCORES TO A REAL PLAN

The Report Is a Starting Point, Not a Final Verdict

Once your student's results come together into an ability profile, Highlands helps them start exploring career fields, college majors, workplace environments, and skills worth developing, all matched to how they're actually wired.



Patterns like this one open the door to a defined set of Job Families and occupations built for people who think this way, complete with salary ranges and growth outlook.

WHAT THIS ISN'T

"This is what you have to do for the rest of your life." No assessment should make that call for your student.

Every Pattern Connects to Real Careers Worth Exploring

The goal is better information, so your student can explore, compare, and narrow their options with real confidence. Think of the results as a well-lit starting point. Your student still chooses where they go. They're just choosing with a much clearer picture of who they are.

Careers to Explore for Specializing - Structural Consultative Problem Solving

*Organized by the U.S. Dept. of Labor's **Job Families** which are groups of occupations based upon work performed, skills, education, training and credentials.*

Architecture and Engineering

[Aerospace Engineers](#)
[Agricultural Engineer](#)
[Automotive Engineers](#)
[Civil Engineering Technicians](#)
[Computer Hardware Engineer](#)
[Electrical Engineers](#)
[Electromechanical Engineer Tech.](#)
[Electronics Engineering Technicians](#)
[Energy Engineers](#)
[Environmental Engineers](#)
[Fire-Prevention Engineer](#)
[Industrial Engineering Technologists](#)

[Industrial Engineers](#)
[Manufacturing Engineer](#)
[Marine Engineer](#)
[Materials Engineer](#)
[Mechanical Engineering Tech.](#)
[Mechatronics Engineers](#)
[Microsystems Engineers](#)
[Mining & Geological Engineer](#)
[Nanosystems Engineer](#)
[Petroleum Engineers](#)
[Product Safety Engineer](#)

Computer and Mathematical

[Computer Systems Analyst](#)

[Telecommunications Engineer Spec.](#)

Construction and Extraction

[Construction & Building Inspector](#)
[Solar Energy Installation Managers](#)

Installation, Maintenance, and Repair

[Aircraft Mechanic](#)
[Automotive Master Mechanic](#)

Life, Physical, and Social Science

[Chemists](#)
[Environmental Restoration Planner](#)
[Hydrologists](#)

A SAMPLE LIST OF CAREERS MATCHED TO ONE STUDENT'S ABILITY PATTERN

These occupation lists are a starting place for discussion, organized by the U.S. Department of Labor's official Job Families. They're not meant to dictate what your student must do for the rest of their life, and your student doesn't have to pursue any of them if they don't match what they've envisioned for their future.

They're simply real, evidence-based options your student can start researching with confidence, instead of guessing where to even begin.

"This Explains So Much About Me."

My favorite part of walking students through their Highlands results is watching the moment something clicks.

A student sees a pattern in the report and suddenly understands why certain things have always come naturally to them. A parent looks at the results and says, "This is exactly what we've always noticed about them. We just never knew how to put it into words."

That language matters more than you'd think. Once students can articulate their natural abilities, they're better equipped to:

- Explain what they bring to a classroom or workplace
- Decide whether a major or career is worth a closer look
- Ask sharper questions on college visits
- Pursue experiences that test out possible directions
- Talk about their strengths in interviews with real specifics
- Recognize environments that probably won't fit them
- Make decisions with genuine confidence, not just a hopeful guess

The assessment won't answer every question about your student's future in one sitting. But it replaces a lot of uncertainty with real insight, and insight is something they can actually build on.

From Pulled in Every Direction to a Plan She Could Feel Good About

When I began working with Isabel, she was a hardworking high school senior with strong grades. She just had no idea how to turn her success in school into an actual plan for life after graduation.

She loved art. She had no clue what to study, which careers made sense, or which schools would even be a fit. College conversations made her so anxious that she'd started avoiding them altogether.

"I felt pulled in a bunch of different directions and didn't know what to do or what schools would fit for me."

— Isabel, High School Senior

Her Highlands results told a different story. She had an unusually strong eye for visual detail, showing up clearly in her Design Memory and Observation scores, which explained a lot about why certain kinds of creative work had always drawn her in.

From there, we connected what she'd learned about herself to specific fields and college options. The assessment didn't make the decision for her. It gave us what we needed to organize her thinking, narrow her choices, and build a real plan.

"This process was really helpful for discovering the steps I needed to go through to make a decision."

— Isabel, on the process

That's what direction usually looks like. A student doesn't need their whole life figured out. They need enough clarity to spot a promising next step and move toward it with confidence.

MORE THAN A REPORT

A Detailed Report Is Valuable. Knowing How to Use It Is Even More Valuable.

The Highlands report holds a lot of information. Without guidance, a student can flip through it, highlight a few interesting lines, and still have no idea what to do next.

That's why the personal feedback session matters as much as the assessment itself. During that session, I help your student:

- Understand their results in plain English
- Spot the most important patterns in their profile
- Connect those patterns to experiences they've already had
- Identify environments and tasks likely to fit them
- Think through possible majors, careers, and paths
- Ask questions about anything in the results that surprises them
- Figure out which possibilities deserve a closer look

THE REAL GOAL

Your student should walk away understanding themselves better, with a clear idea of what to explore next.

WHO AM I?

Hi, I'm Richard Harris



I began my career as a high school counselor, helping hundreds of students think through their futures and next steps.

I later became a recruiting leader at two different multibillion-dollar companies, where I led teams responsible for hiring college students into internships and their first full-time jobs.

I've seen the school-to-work transition from both sides. I understand the decisions students face, the qualities employers value, and the steps that help young people turn their strengths into meaningful opportunities.

That means your student will receive more than an explanation of their natural abilities. I can help them begin connecting those abilities to promising education and career paths, understand which options deserve a closer look, and move toward a practical plan that sets them up for future success.

I would love the opportunity to help your student gain that same clarity.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

I'm Offering This Experience to a Limited Number of Students at No Cost

I've become convinced of one thing over years on both sides of the school-to-work transition: students are often asked to make huge decisions long before they understand themselves. I want to help change that.

For a limited number of qualified students, I'm offering:

1

The Highlands Ability Battery

The complete online assessment, including all 19 work samples.

2

Their Complete Highlands Report

Your family gets the full report on your student's natural abilities, learning preferences, and ability patterns.

3

A Personal Feedback Session With Me

I'll walk your student through their results myself, answer their questions, and help them start connecting what they've learned to real future directions.

\$450+

NORMAL COST OF THIS EXPERIENCE

\$0

COST FOR SELECTED FAMILIES

No payment required. No obligation to continue working with me afterward. Some families get exactly what they need from the assessment and feedback session alone. Others choose to keep working with me to narrow their student's strongest options and build a real education and career plan. That choice is entirely yours.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

This Opportunity May Be a Good Fit for Your Student If...

- ✓ Your student is roughly junior year of high school through college age
- ✓ Your student genuinely wants more direction for their future
- ✓ They're uncertain about a career, major, education path, or how to narrow several possibilities
- ✓ They have an idea in mind but want better information before committing to it
- ✓ Your student is willing to participate, not just going through the motions because a parent wants them to
- ✓ Your student can complete the assessment promptly if selected

Because I personally cover the cost of every assessment and lead each feedback session myself, I can only offer this to a limited number of students. That's why I ask interested families to complete a short application first.

Help Your Student Make Their Next Decision With Better Information

Your student doesn't need to know exactly what they'll do for the rest of their life. But they deserve the chance to understand how they're naturally wired before making decisions that could shape it.

Start the Highlands Application →

Short application • No payment required • Limited availability