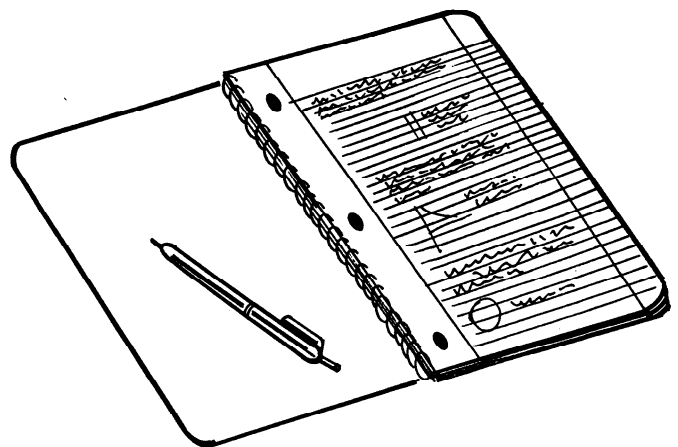




# Job Power **Choose** **Your** **Career**

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J. WESTON  
**WALCH**  
PUBLISHER

Portland, Maine

# Contents

<i>A Job . . . or a Career?</i>	v
<b>Part 1: Getting to Know Yourself</b>	<b>1</b>
Checklist 1: <i>Ideal Lifestyle</i>	3
Checklist 2: <i>Who Am I?</i>	5
Checklist 3: <i>What Are My Skills?</i>	7
Action Sheet 1: <i>My Long-term Plans</i>	11
Action Sheet 2: <i>What Am I Best At?</i>	12
Action Sheet 3: <i>What Are My Weaknesses?</i>	13
Action Sheet 4: <i>I Am . . .</i>	14
<b>Part 2: Your Ideal Job</b>	<b>15</b>
Checklist 4: <i>Location</i>	17
Checklist 5: <i>Kind of Company</i>	18
Checklist 6: <i>Work Environment and Hours</i>	19
Checklist 7: <i>Compensation</i>	20
Checklist 8: <i>Benefits</i>	22
Checklist 9: <i>Job Satisfaction</i>	24
Action Sheet 5: <i>What Do I Like to Do?</i>	26
Action Sheet 6: <i>What Do I Dislike Doing?</i>	27
Action Sheet 7: <i>How Do I Feel About Work?</i>	28
Summary Sheet: <i>My Ideal Job</i>	30
Action Sheet 8: <i>My Ideal Job</i>	32
<b>Part 3: Choosing a Career</b>	<b>33</b>
Action Sheet 9: <i>Possible Occupations</i>	35
Informational Interviews	38
Sample Document 1: <i>List of Contacts</i>	39
Action Sheet 10: <i>List of Contacts</i>	40
Interview Questionnaire 1	42
Interview Questionnaire 2	44
Sample Document 2: <i>Thank-You Letter</i>	46

**iv** *Choose Your Career*

<b>Part 4: Improving the Fit</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Action Sheet 11: <i>Skill-Building Strategies</i></b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Part 5: Know Your Market</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>The World Around You</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Sample Document 3: <i>Target List</i></b>	<b>53</b>
<b>The Systematic Search</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Action Sheet 12: <i>Target List</i></b>	<b>56</b>
<b>The Next Step</b>	<b>57</b>

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## A Job . . . or a Career?

You've decided that you're ready to start working. What is the first thing you should do? A lot of people jump straight into the job search. They look through the Help Wanted ads and start applying for jobs.

That may be a good approach if you're looking for a summer job, or a job to do after school. But are you looking for a job, or a career? There is a difference. The dictionary defines "job" as "a position or employment; a task or chore; a piece of work." The definition of "career" is "a lifework, profession, occupation; one's progress through life." If you're looking for a career, something that will become an important part of your future, you should stop and do some thinking about yourself first. You need to think about yourself and your needs. What is important to you? What interests you? What are you good at? What kind of balance do you want to have between your work and your personal life? What are your objectives, both for the near future and for the long term?

This book will help you organize your thinking. It will help you find out where you really want to go, and the best way to get there. Remember, if you don't know where you want to go, you may end up somewhere else altogether.

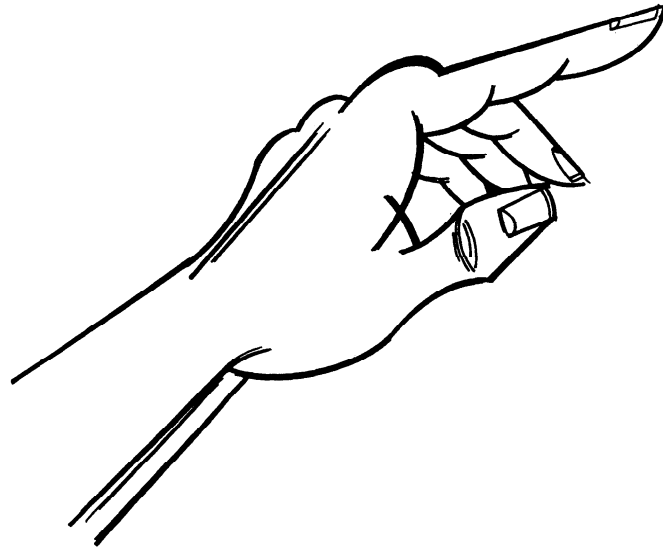
This is not a book to read, this is a **work book**, a how-to kit. It will help you recognize your strengths and weaknesses, and discover what you really like to do.

The action sheets and checklists in this book are for you to write in. You will fill them in with your ideas, conclusions, and drafts. You will find that writing helps you develop clear, well-formulated ideas.

To get started, read quickly through the whole book. This will tell you what to expect. Then go through the book in detail, filling in all the action sheets and checklists.



I was a top manager in two very different industries, and personally hired a lot of men and women. I organized some takeovers and mergers, and had to let a number of employees go. Realizing the problems these people faced, I left my job and started a career transition company. In the last 10 years, I have helped hundreds of men and women decide what kind of job they should be looking for, and have shown them how to find it. This book is the outcome of my experience. It will not try to psychoanalyze you or teach you any fancy theories. It will just teach you how to decide what kind of a job you should be looking for.



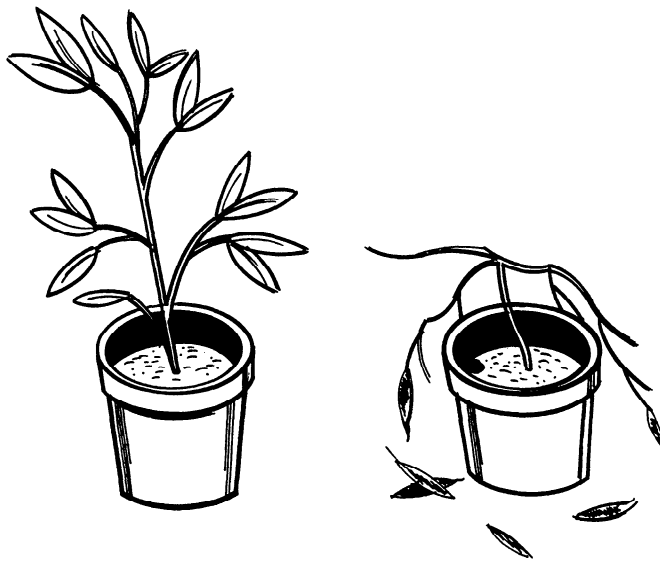
## Your Ideal Job

In the first section, you spent a lot of time finding out about yourself, your interests, aptitudes, and values. In this section, you'll apply the same kind of analysis to the workplace to find the ideal job.

Your first reaction may be, Why bother thinking about the ideal job? I need a job as soon as possible, and I will take whatever I can get!

It's true, you may not find your ideal job right away. You may have to take a job that is different from the ideal job; you may have to make some concessions. As a matter of fact, you will almost certainly have to make some concessions. But what are you making concessions **from**? You need a vision of your ideal job to compare with job possibilities, so that you can tell what concessions you may have to make. You will have to decide if it is better to make concessions now or to wait and keep looking until you are closer to your ideal job. You may also have more than one job offer, and will have to decide which one comes closest to your ideal job.

Just as every person is different, so is every job. In this section we will look at some of the most important variables of a job: location, kind of company, benefits, work hours, work environment, and compensation.



## ✓ Checklist 4: Location

One of the first questions you need to ask when you start looking for work is, Where do I want to live? If you want to live in a rural area, you may need to rule out a number of occupations. Some jobs are plentiful in one part of the country and hard to find in others. Look back at Checklist 1, Ideal Lifestyle. Which important aspects of your ideal lifestyle would be affected by where you live? Would you be willing to relocate for a job, or do you plan to stay in the area where you live now? Think about the pros and cons of both staying put and relocating. Then fill in the location information below.

Even if you would rather not relocate, try to fill in the names of at least two other acceptable areas. If you're not really familiar enough with other areas, do some research about different places. Travel guides and reference books can tell you a lot about different places, and there are hundreds of Web sites with information about locations around the country.

### Desirable Locations

First priority location: \_\_\_\_\_

Other acceptable locations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Commuting Distance

Even if you don't relocate for work, you may need to commute to your job. How far are you willing to commute one way to work? Place a checkmark by the choice you would be most comfortable with.

\_\_\_\_\_ a few blocks

\_\_\_\_\_ less than 5 miles

\_\_\_\_\_ 5–10 miles

\_\_\_\_\_ 10–45 miles

\_\_\_\_\_ more than 45 miles



## ✓ Checklist 6: Work Environment and Hours

Different types of jobs have different physical environments, and can need employees at different hours. Based on your knowledge of yourself, which of these work settings would suit you best? Check the most appropriate answer in each category.

### Work Environment

<input type="checkbox"/> indoors <input type="checkbox"/> both indoors and outdoors <input type="checkbox"/> outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/> cold <input type="checkbox"/> temperate <input type="checkbox"/> hot
<input type="checkbox"/> constant noise <input type="checkbox"/> comfortable noise level <input type="checkbox"/> complete silence	<input type="checkbox"/> sitting still all day <input type="checkbox"/> some sitting, some moving <input type="checkbox"/> moving around all day

### Work Hours

<input type="checkbox"/> days (8:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M.) <input type="checkbox"/> afternoons/evenings (4:00 P.M.–12 midnight) <input type="checkbox"/> nights (12 midnight–8:00 A.M.) <input type="checkbox"/> swing shift (mix of above shifts)
--

### Workdays

<input type="checkbox"/> Monday–Friday <input type="checkbox"/> work weekends, days off during the week <input type="checkbox"/> work holidays <input type="checkbox"/> seasonal employment
--

## ✓ Checklist 7: Compensation

Imagine that an employer has called to offer you a job. The human resources manager offers you a choice of several benefit/compensation packages:

### **Package #1**

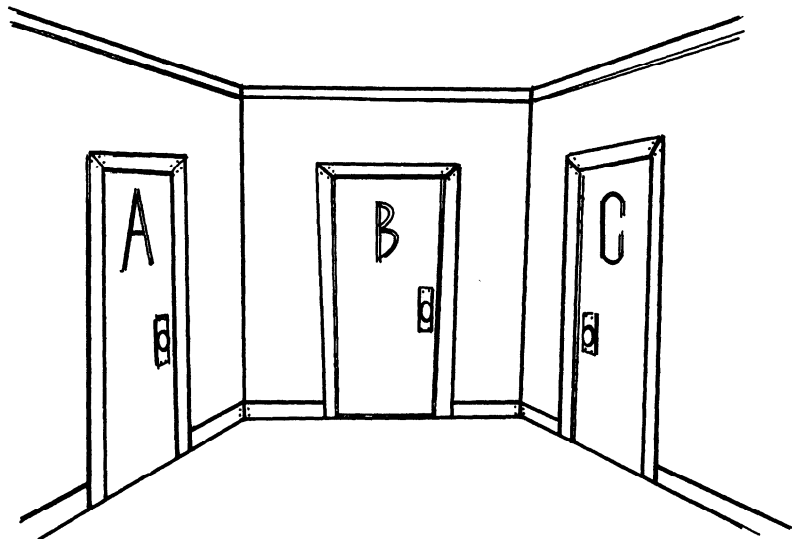
Annual salary of \$21,000 per year; two weeks of paid vacation; five paid sick days; 10 paid holidays; tuition reimbursement; company health and dental insurance plan where employee is responsible for one quarter of the total cost of the plan (currently \$52 per week, employee pays \$13 per week).

### **Package #2**

Hourly wage of \$11 per hour (employees to work 40 hours per week with time-and-a-half paid for hours worked over 40); three weeks of paid vacation; 10 paid holidays; company health insurance plan where employee is responsible for one half of the total cost of the plan (currently \$52 per week, employee pays \$26 per week).

### **Package #3**

Base salary of \$12,000 with 3 percent commission on all sales up to \$10,000 per month, 5 percent commission on sales from \$10,001–\$50,000, 7 percent commission on sales above \$50,001 per month (the average salesperson sells \$25,000 per month); three weeks of paid vacation; 10 paid holidays; company health insurance plan where employee is responsible for one half of the total cost of the plan (currently \$52 per week, employee pays \$26 per week).



Which package would you choose? In terms of guaranteed dollars in your paycheck, Package #2 would be the best offer. But the rate of pay isn't the only thing that changed from package to package. Package #1 offered two weeks vacation, five paid sick days, tuition reimbursement, and dental coverage. Package #2 offered three weeks vacation, no paid sick days, no tuition reimbursement, and no dental coverage. Package #3 offered the same benefits as Package #2. Tuition reimbursement would mean that the company would pay for you to increase your skills and qualifications—and your future employability. The dental plan would probably pay for the two annual cleanings and checkups recommended for good dental health, and would pay for part of any dental work needed. Would the tuition and dental coverage of Package #1 be worth more than the extra \$1,214 of Package #2?

Also, since Package #2 is based on an hourly wage, with time-and-a-half of \$16.50 for any hours over 40 per week, Package #2 might actually pay considerably more. And while Package #3 might pay even more if sales were good, it might also pay no more than the base salary of \$12,000.

Before agreeing to any compensation package, you should prepare a careful budget. Include all the expenses you are likely to have. Make sure you will have enough to cover emergency situations. Then you will have a sound basis for deciding whether or not to accept a compensation package.

### Salary

I would like to earn \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I need to earn at least \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am/am not willing to have part of my pay based on commission. \_\_\_\_\_

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### ✓ Checklist 8: Benefits

Most full-time employees are entitled to certain benefits. By law, employees must be given leave for jury duty and for certain types of military service. But most other benefits are left up to the employer.

Here are some common types of benefits. Rate each one according to how important it is to you. If you are not sure what one of the benefits offers, do some research to find out.

	absolutely essential	very important	somewhat important	not at all important
child care				
clothes/uniform allowance				
compassionate leave				
dental insurance				
disability insurance				
emergency leave				
funeral pay				
life insurance				
maternal leave				
medical insurance				
military leave				
overtime pay				
paid vacation				
paid holidays				
paternal leave				

	absolutely essential	very important	somewhat important	not at all important
pension plan				
personal days				
premium pay				
profit sharing				
sick leave				
sick pay				
tuition reimbursement				
workers' compensation				

Go back through the list and find any benefits that you rated as absolutely essential. List them here, starting with the most important benefit.

**Essential Benefits**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

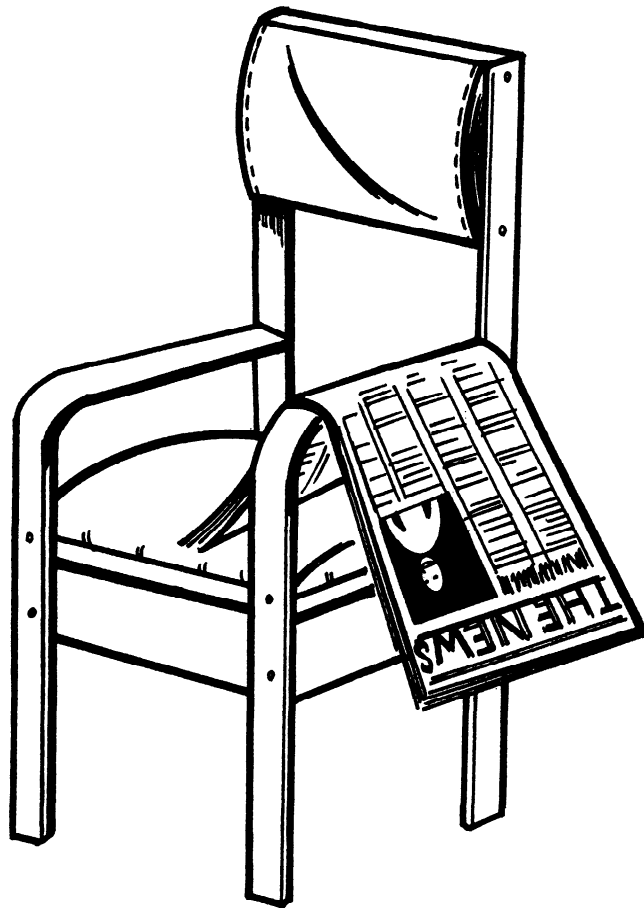
### ✓ Checklist 9: Job Satisfaction

The work we do can satisfy us in different ways. For many people, job satisfaction depends on how well the job matches the individual's personality. Rate each of the following elements of different jobs according to how important it is to you.

	absolutely essential	very important	somewhat important	not at all important
making a lot of money				
helping other people				
influencing other people's feelings and attitudes				
working with the public				
being part of a team				
working alone				
having good friends on the job				
being respected by coworkers				
being in charge of other people on the job				
working with clear, firm deadlines				
working at your own pace				
being better at the job than other people				
being seen as an expert at your job				
doing work that stays the same over time				
doing work that changes all the time				
using physical strength and ability				
using creativity				
using artistic ability				
using organizational skills				
having a flexible work schedule				
having the same schedule all the time				
knowing that you can keep your job for a long time				
taking risks				
making decisions for yourself				
having someone to tell you what to do				

Look at the items you rated as absolutely essential. Which one of them is the most important to you? Write it on the line numbered 1 below. Write the second-most important item on line 2. Continue until you have listed the five elements of work that are most important to you. As you start looking at potential jobs and careers, refer back to this list. It's important that you satisfy your employer on the job—but it's also important for the job to satisfy **you**.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



**Action Sheet 5: What Do I Like to Do?**

You probably already have some work experience. What kind of work have you done in the past? Include jobs you did while in school, and volunteer work. What can you learn from those jobs?

What would I like most to do professionally?

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The thing I liked most in my last job was:

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The thing I liked most in the job before the last one was:

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In my next job, I would like to:

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**Action Sheet 6: What Do I Dislike Doing?**

All jobs include some things that we don't like. So long as the good aspects of a job outnumber the bad ones, a job can be a good fit. Still, it makes sense to avoid all the negative aspects you can. Use this checklist to identify aspects of past jobs that you disliked.

The thing I disliked most in my last job was:

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What I disliked most in the job before my last one was:

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I was bothered or frustrated by:

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In my next job, I would rather not do or have to put up with:

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### **Action Sheet 7: How Do I Feel About Work?**

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Most of us spend a lot of time at work. Say you start working at the age of 20, and retire at 65. You work 40 hours a week and get three weeks off every year for vacation and holidays. That's 40 hours a week for 49 weeks a year for 45 years—a total of 88,200 hours! If you're going to spend that much time working, you should do work that satisfies you, and that you enjoy.

What kind of work would that be for you? What kind of work would not satisfy you? For example, someone who is very fond of animals might find working at a veterinary clinic satisfying. The same person would probably be very unhappy working for a firm that does animal testing. Try to answer each of these questions in one sentence. There are no right and wrong answers, only answers that describe the way you feel.

1. How do you define work? What does it mean to you?

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2. What kind of work would make you proud to tell other people about what you do?

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3. What personal or professional goals do you want to achieve through your work?

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4. What kind of people do you look up to and want to be like?

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5. What kind of people do you want *not* to be like?

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6. How do you define success? What does it mean to you?

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7. How do you define security? What does it mean to you?

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8. How do you define job satisfaction? What does it mean to you?

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9. What kinds of things do you really like doing in your leisure time, or as a hobby?

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If you have access to the Internet, you can try out a number of different career interest inventories. These inventories ask you to respond to a number of statements. Your responses are then analyzed to see what kinds of careers would suit you. To find some of these career interest inventories, search on "career search," then "advice."

It would be great if our careers could be like an extension of our hobbies, but that's not always possible. Still, the more you know about your own attitudes toward work, the easier it will be to find a career that suits you.

## Summary Sheet: My Ideal Job

Use the information you put down on the checklists and action sheets in Parts 1 and 2 to fill in this summary sheet.

### The Company

#### **Location**

First priority: \_\_\_\_\_

Other acceptable areas: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptable commuting distance: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Kind of Company**

Big corporation or small company? \_\_\_\_\_

Local, national, multinational? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Type of Industry**

Manufacturing? Trading? Service? Government? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Company Culture**

Management style, structure, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of direct superior: \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of person do I work best with? \_\_\_\_\_

### My Job

#### **My Activity**

Accounting, administration, data processing, manufacturing, selling, other:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **My Level of Responsibility**

Assistant to somebody, clerical job, shop floor worker, supervisor, other:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Working Hours**

Shift worked: \_\_\_\_\_

Days worked: \_\_\_\_\_

**Compensation**

I want to earn \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I need to earn at least \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am/am not willing to have part of my pay as commission or bonus.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Benefits**

Employee benefits that are important for me to have:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_

