

# What stage am I at?

## Introduction to this workbook

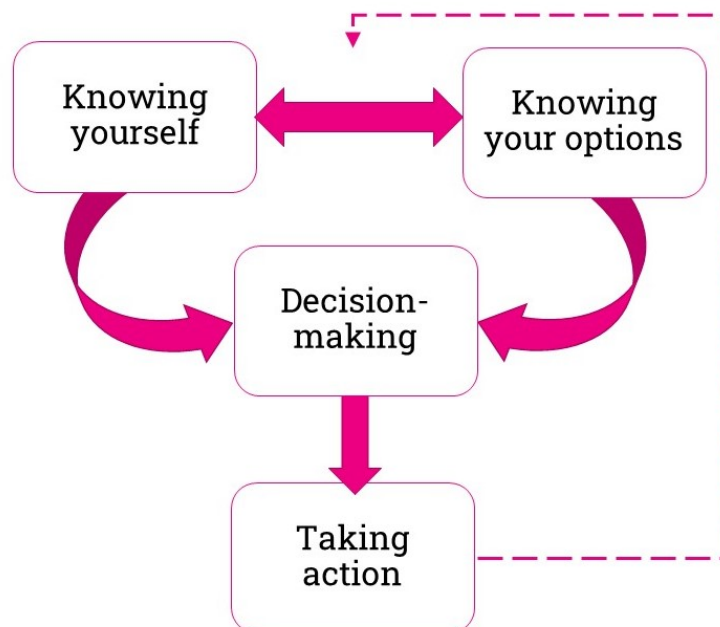
Seeing the career planning process and learning what stage you're at can help you:

- ✓ Feel more confident, knowing what to focus on next
- ✓ Feel more motivated, breaking things up into smaller, more do-able steps
- ✓ Make informed decisions

This workbook helps you pick an exercise from the careers help toolkit that fits the stage you're at now.

## Step 1: Learn about the DOTS model

The DOTS model turns thinking about your next career choice into a nice neat diagram. It can be useful to see it as a flowchart, a 'how to' guide which walks you through how to 'do careers':


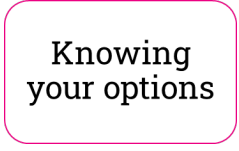
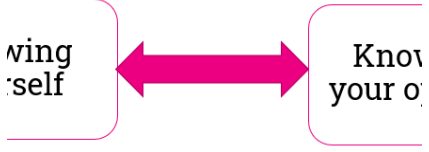
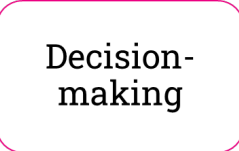




It was first created by Bill Law and A.G. Watts in 1977<sup>i</sup>, although it's been adapted and revised over the years.

We've revised it a bit too to reflect our experience in careers advice. We reworded some of the boxes, and added in the two-way arrow and the dotted arrow.

It's called 'DOTS', even though the letters don't come in that order. In the order of the model it's Self - Options - Decision-making - Taking action. That gives the SODT model, which isn't that catchy (not without an 'i' anyway).

To understand the DOTS model better, let's look at each part in turn

Part	Description
	<p>Knowing what your skills, values and interests are right now.</p> <p>Knowing what's important to you and some of the ideal 'ingredients' for a good option.</p>
	<p>Knowing the main categories of options available to you (e.g. apprenticeships, courses, jobs, self-employment).</p> <p>Researching options that you're interested in, or that fit your skills or values.</p>
	<p>By researching options you can find out more about yourself and vice versa. What ideas are you most and least enthusiastic about? What does this tell you about what the ideal 'ingredients' for a good option are?</p> <p>By learning about yourself you can learn which options to explore in more detail. What's are the most important things for you? Start looking at options related to what you're looking for.</p>
	<p>Narrowing down your options to a manageable shortlist</p> <p>Choosing which option or options to go for.</p> <p>You could then set a goal for what you want to achieve.</p>
	<p>Doing something about it!</p> <p>Making a plan of action that breaks things down into manageable steps.</p>
	<p>Learning from the action you take.</p> <p>Learning more about yourself and your options by reflecting on what you do.</p> <p>Career planning is a process of lifelong learning.</p>

### Why is the DOTS model useful?

Knowing there's a process you can follow can make decision-making feel easier.

It can also help you avoid common issues, like:

- Feeling overwhelmed by having to make a decision. This is sometimes a problem when 'decision making' comes first in the process.
- Applying for things that don't suit your skills, values or interests. This can be a problem when 'taking action' comes first in the process and can waste time and energy.
- Struggling to narrow down your options. This can be an issue if the 'knowing yourself' stage is missing and you have too few criteria to assess your options.
- Taking action but finding the option is nothing like what you thought. This can be a problem if the 'knowing your options' stage is missing and you didn't have enough information.

## Step 2: Take the quiz

You might already be able to spot what stage in the DOTS process you're at, but if not, our quick quiz might help:

### Question 1: How would you summarise your situation?

Pick **one** option that best describes you.

Options	Tick (one row only)	Letter
I know what kind of thing might suit me, but I don't yet know real options like it that are available	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I know about some of the options available to me, but I'm not sure what would suit me best	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
I've found different options look like they might suit me equally well	<input type="checkbox"/>	C
I've made a decision... but I haven't done anything about it yet	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
I don't know where to start	<input type="checkbox"/>	A and B

### Question 2: What do you know so far?

Pick **one** option that best describes you.

Answer options	Tick (one row only)	Letter
I know how to find options and rate how well they suit me to find a good choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
I mainly know about my skills, what I'm interested in and what's important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
I mainly know about options that are open to me at the moment	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I don't really think I know much that would be useful in making choices yet	<input type="checkbox"/>	A and B
I know some options that would suit my skills, interests and what's important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	C

### Question 3: What other statements describe you?

Pick **all** that as apply

Answer options	Tick (all that apply)	Letter
I'm not sure I know what I'm looking for in a good option	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
I've decided what I want, but I'm not sure if what I'm doing towards it is right	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
I don't think I have enough information about my options	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I've made a choice, but don't know what to do now	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
I've made a decision but now I'm procrastinating	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
It's pretty random which options I have information about right now	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I couldn't tell you what I'm really interested in	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
I'm not sure what I'm good at	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
What I know about my options is largely through what I've heard other people saying	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I could decide what to do next easily, if it weren't for some unknown factors	<input type="checkbox"/>	C
I know what I want, but not how to get there	<input type="checkbox"/>	D
I've got a shortlist of options, but it's hard to choose between them	<input type="checkbox"/>	C
I only really know about options where I know someone who's done it	<input type="checkbox"/>	B
I'm not sure what's important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	A
I'm not feeling good about narrowing down my options	<input type="checkbox"/>	C
I'm not sure how to narrow down my options	<input type="checkbox"/>	C

### Results

Count how many ticks you have for each letter. Your **highest scoring** suggests the stage you're likely at in the DOTS process:

Letter	Count ticks for this letter	DOTS category
A		Knowing yourself
B		Knowing your options
C		Decision-making
D		Taking action

## Step 3: Pick an exercise to try

Pick an exercise to try from our [Career help toolkit](#) online for your highest scoring stage. If there's more than one scoring highest, choose the stage that comes first in the DOTS model.

### If you're at the 'knowing yourself' stage

Pick an exercise from the [Career help toolkit](#) sections labelled 'I want to...'

- Understand what my skills are
- Understand what my values are
- Understand what my interests are

### If you're at the 'knowing your options' stage

Pick an exercise from the [Career help toolkit](#) sections labelled 'I want to...'

- Find career ideas using quizzes
- Find career ideas linked to my favourite subject
- Find the facts about my career ideas
- Find out about people's experiences of different careers
- Find more about different courses and qualifications
- Find out more about apprenticeships and school leaver jobs

### If you're at the 'decision-making' stage

Pick an exercise from the [Career help toolkit](#) sections labelled 'I want to...'

- Decide what I'm going to do next

### If you're at the 'taking action' stage

Pick an exercise from the [Career help toolkit](#) sections labelled 'I want to...'

- Take the next step towards my career idea

## Step 4: What did you learn?

Which exercise did you choose to do?

What did you learn from the exercise you tried?

What are you going to do now? All of these are good options:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Do more of the course, but use the <a href="#">Career help toolkit</a> again as I move through the stages
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do another exercise or two for the stage I'm at now, then do more of the course
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read the descriptions of the other course workbooks and prioritise what's most relevant to me right now

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<sup>i</sup> Law, B. & Watts, A. G. (1977). Schools, Careers and Community: A study of some approaches to careers education in schools. London, UK: Church Information Office (pp. 8-10).