

Andrew Hendrie

Mrs. Hoffman

R & W for the College Bound

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### Career Comparison Essay

I have always had an interest in creating things of my own. Whether it be constructing LEGO sets as a child, making music, or drawing, my passion for making things has always been one of my defining characteristics throughout my life. At the same time, I had become very interested in science at school. I loved to learn about how everything around me came to be and theorizing about things I did not understand. I liked all subjects within science, but I was most fond of astronomy above all of the others and had even gotten a telescope when I was 11. As I get older, though, I still remain largely undecided as to which career field I will end up in. However, I have narrowed my decisions down to two options: an architect and an astronomer. In order to come to a conclusion about which career I should pursue, I decided to conduct some research on both of the careers and evaluate which of the two yields the brightest future for me.

Driven by my interest in outer space, I did research on astronomers first. I sought to obtain a basic understanding of what astronomers would tackle on a day-to-day basis, discovering that astronomers often “develop theories or models of physical phenomena” and “collaborate on research activities with scientists or technical specialists”(“Occupation”).

**Although** I had largely expected to have been doing these things, I still believe this information was significant confirmation about what I speculated to be taking place every day even though I

do understand that these are more general and what I do on the job will be a lot more specific than this. Regardless of how interested I may be in becoming an astronomer, depending on how the job looks in the future, I may not have a chance to become one. Thankfully though, according to CareerOneStop, the future for astronomers is bright and is expected to be full of opportunities and grow faster than most jobs with a projected +10% change in job openings by 2026("Occupation"). With the future for astronomers looking great, it became of importance to see how financially well-off this profession would leave me. Even though doing something I'm passionate about and something that will make me happy take precedence over whatever salary my future job entails, I still wanted to know what astronomers make per year. As of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2017 stat, the median pay for astronomers is somewhere around \$117,220 annually("Physicists"), something that certainly makes me more likely to consider being an astronomer along with the passion I have for the subject. Now that I knew what to expect as an astronomer if I were on the job someday, it was time to look into what I needed to do in college in order to get there. Generally, astronomers tend to either have a Doctorate or Master's degree, requiring about 5-8 years to get the certification needed to pursue the career. For a college major, astronomers typically should look towards obtaining either an astrophysics or calculus major. Overall, from the research done into astronomers, I now feel that I could realistically see myself becoming one but understand that there would be a lot of work involved along the way and that it would not be an easy road to get there. However, with the passion I have for astronomy, I believe that I have the motivation necessary to succeed and follow this career path if I so choose.

With my evaluation of my future as an astronomer underway, I now chose to look into what becoming an architect might entail. This career was different because I feel that I am better

informed about what architects do relative to astronomers. At the senior expo earlier this year, one of the people I saw happened to be an architect and so that gave me a lot of insight prior to any of the online research I had done. So, it came as little surprise to me when I discovered that architects dealt mostly with planning and designing houses, factories, and other structures (“Architects”). One advantage that I would have in becoming an architect over an astronomer is my experience with things related to what an architect might do in school. As a junior I had taken technical drawing and I am currently taking the advanced version of the class, which involves using computers to create models of larger objects that would, in the professional world, eventually be built by architects. Although the future for architects may not be as bright when compared to astronomers percentage-wise at a 4%, the actual number of job openings is greater at a projected 5,500 compared to about 200 astronomers (“Architects”), which is probably the more important detail due to how far I would have to travel to work with it most likely being less time with more job openings. As far as salaries go, the median yearly earnings for architects level out at around \$78,740 with a starting pay closer to about \$50,000 (“Occupation”). Additionally, I found that most architects typically have at least a Bachelor’s degree and therefore spend about four years at a university to earn the required certification with architects majoring, unsurprisingly, in architecture. Reflecting on the knowledge gained from my research about architects, I also believe that I would be very happy if I chose to make this my job in the future due to my previous experience in school with related subjects, an advantage I have in this career over the other as our school does not offer any astronomy related course.

After extensively evaluating the both of these careers and their impact on my life in the future, I came to the conclusion that I had a similar passion in both of these fields. However, I was way more familiar with the material regarding architecture as I have had practice with computer aided design through our school whereas most of the astronomy related things I do come more sporadically and are always on my own time. Also, I deemed it more likely for me to find a job closer to home as an architect rather than an astronomer due to the larger number of employed architects versus astronomers which is definitely something I prefer over a job further away. Eventually, I came to the decision that I should probably focus more on becoming an architect over an astronomer based on the information that I know now but I am still absolutely leaving my options open for the future even though the research I had done has certainly helped me narrow my options down and rank the careers I would want to go into as college becomes closer and closer.

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