

WELCOME TO THE LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY

There's More to Landscaping Than Mowing Grass

CORE IDEA

Landscaping is an industry, not one job.

Some people design, some build, some grow plants, some solve problems, some care for properties, and some lead the whole operation.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Where might someone like me fit?

Students explore the kinds of work, environments, and problems that naturally interest them.



TARGET AGE
10-12

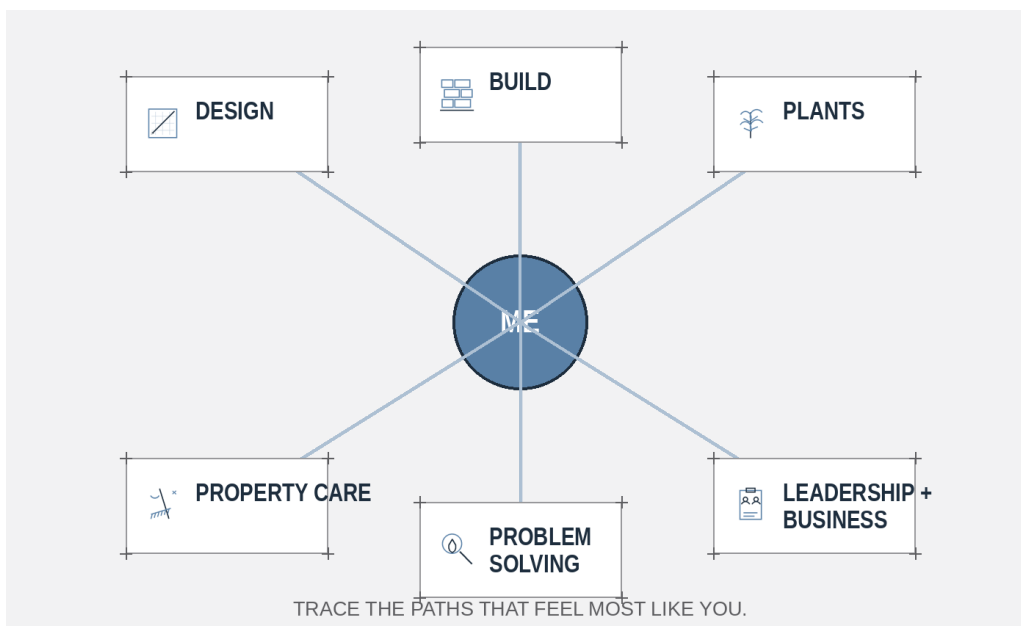


LESSON LENGTH
20-25 MIN



HANDS-ON OUTCOME
CAREER MAP

SEE IT → TRY IT → CONNECT IT → EXPLAIN IT → FIND IT IN THE REAL WORLD



Lesson at a Glance

Discovery first. Career choice later.

TEACHER LENS

For this age group, the lesson is built around discovery rather than career counseling. A 10-year-old should not leave thinking, "I have to choose a career." They should leave thinking, "There are a lot of different ways I could fit into this world."

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end, students can...

- Explain that landscaping includes many different careers.
- Identify at least five major landscape career pathways.
- Connect personal interests or strengths to different kinds of landscape work.
- Select two or three pathways they would like to explore further.
- Explain why those pathways interest them.

MATERIALS

Keep it tactile.

- Career pathway cards or images
- A few physical objects: trowel, tape measure, plant, paver, drawing, irrigation fitting, work glove
- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper
- "Which Landscape Career Fits Me?" worksheet
- Pencils or markers
- Optional photos of real landscape professionals at work

20–25 MINUTE RUN OF SHOW

0–3	3–10	10–15	15–20	20–23	23–25
HOOK	MEET THE TEAMS	CAREER CORNERS	CAREER MAP	TOP THREE	WRAP

+

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Students can connect who they are to how people work.

The goal is not an accurate future occupation. The goal is for students to recognize connections between who they are, what they enjoy doing, and the work people do.

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Hook + Meet the Teams

0:00–10:00 / Activate what students already know, then widen the picture.

0:00–3:00 / HOOK

“Who Works Here?”

Show students a photo of an impressive outdoor space with several elements: trees, flowers, lawn, patio, retaining wall, irrigation, lighting, walkways, and outdoor furniture.

ASK

“How many different people do you think it took to create this?”

Then ask: “What did those people actually have to know how to do?”

LISTEN FOR

- Plant trees
- Build the patio
- Move dirt
- Design it
- Water the plants
- Drive machines
- Build walls
- Maintain it

After several responses, reveal the big idea: “Landscaping isn’t one job. It’s an entire industry filled with different kinds of jobs.” Then give the challenge: “Today we’re going to figure out which part of that industry someone like you might enjoy.”

WHY THIS WORKS

Students begin with a familiar image and discover complexity themselves. Prior knowledge comes first; terminology comes second.

3:00–10:00 / MEET THE TEAMS

Six ways people fit into landscape work



THE DESIGNERS

What should this place become?

Imagine outdoor spaces before they exist. They draw plans, choose materials, place plants, and shape the customer’s idea.

Landscape designer • Landscape architect CONNECT: Likes drawing, designing, rearranging, Minecraft, imagining.



THE BUILDERS

How do we build it?

Turn a plan into something real: patios, walks, walls, outdoor kitchens, drainage, and landscape beds.

Hardscape • Installation • Construction CONNECT: Likes LEGO, forts, woodworking, fixing things, fitting pieces together.



THE PLANT PEOPLE

What will grow well here?

Understand trees, shrubs, flowers, grass, soil, sunlight, water, insects, and plant health.

Nursery • Horticulture • Plant health CONNECT: Likes gardening, nature, science, growing things, solving plant mysteries.

Meet the Teams, continued

The goal is breadth: “There is a place for different kinds of people here.”



THE PROPERTY CARE TEAM

How do we keep this place looking great?

Maintain landscapes after they are built: mow, edge, prune, mulch, manage turf, remove leaves, and care for beds.

Maintenance • Turf • Seasonal care CONNECT: Likes turning messy into clean, organized, and finished.



THE PROBLEM SOLVERS

Why isn't this working?

Diagnose and fix irrigation, drainage, tree health, plant problems, equipment issues, and specialized systems.

Irrigation • Drainage • Tree care CONNECT: Likes puzzles, fixing things, machines, and figuring out why something failed.



THE LEADERS + OWNERS

How do we get the whole job done?

Lead crews, talk with customers, estimate jobs, schedule projects, manage equipment and people, sell work, and run companies.

Crew lead • Estimator • Sales • Owner CONNECT: Likes organizing people, leading, selling, planning, and getting everyone moving.

BIG TAKEAWAY

Different strengths belong in the same industry.

The student who likes drawing, the one who likes machines, the one who loves plants, and the one who wants to lead can all have a place.

TEACHER MOVE

Name the thinking.

When a student connects an interest to a team, affirm the connection without assigning an identity.

EXAMPLE

“I love LEGO.” → “Builders think about how pieces fit, stay level, and support weight.”

The response gives the interest legitimacy without telling the student what they should become.

Career Corners

10:00–15:00 / Turn the six pathways into places students can physically choose.

Place six career-team signs around the room. Tell students: “There are no right answers. You can switch teams every time.” Read each scenario aloud, have students move to the team that best fits, then ask two or three students to explain why.

01

EMPTY BACKYARD

“You are given an empty backyard and told you can turn it into anything you want.”

02

WATER PROBLEM

“A customer has water collecting beside their house every time it rains.”

03

PILE OF STONE

“You have a pile of stone, some tools, and a drawing for a new patio.”

04

OVERGROWN PROPERTY

“A beautiful property has become overgrown and messy.”

05

50 PLANTS

“You have 50 plants and need to decide which belong in sun and which belong in shade.”

06

CREW + SCHEDULE

“You have four workers, three jobs, two trucks, and one day to get everything finished.”

DEBRIEF

“Did anyone keep choosing the same type of work?”

Then ask: “Did anybody surprise themselves?” The purpose is repeated, low-stakes choice. Students discover patterns instead of receiving a label.

PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSE

Movement is doing instructional work.

The physical choice keeps 10–12-year-olds engaged, but more importantly it makes preference visible. “I keep walking toward the builder activities” is more powerful than being told “You are a builder.”

Build the Career Map

15:00–20:00 / Turn repeated choices into a personal visual artifact.

STEP 1

Circle what sounds like you.

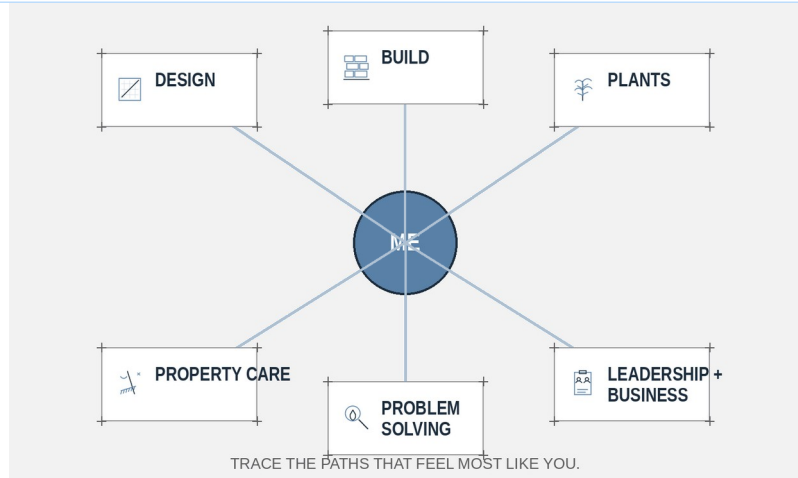
- Create things
- Build things
- Fix things
- Draw or design things
- Work outside
- Grow things
- Use tools
- Solve puzzles
- Help people
- Make messy things look better
- Learn how machines work
- Lead other people
- Work with nature
- Organize things
- Sell or trade things
- See something finished

STEP 2

Draw the connections.

Connect favorite activities to one or more career teams. Overlap is expected.

Examples: LEGO → BUILD / Drawing → DESIGN / Plants → PLANTS / Figuring things out → PROBLEM SOLVING



The map should feel exploratory, not diagnostic. Students are tracing possibilities, not taking a career aptitude test.

TEACHER RESPONSE

Reinforce the connection, not the label.

Student: "I picked hardscape because I like LEGO." Instructor: "That makes sense. Hardscape crews think a lot about how pieces fit together, how things stay level, and how structures support weight."

Exit Challenge + Home Activity

20:00–25:00 in class / Then take the investigation into the real world.

20:00–23:00 / EXIT CHALLENGE

Pick your top three — for now.

FIRST CHOICE

01

The landscape team I would most like to try is...

SECOND CHOICE

02

Another one I would like to try is...

WILD CARD

03

One I do not know much about but want to see someone actually do is...

Students finish: “I picked these because I like...” Then invite several to share. The teacher reinforces the student’s reasoning rather than evaluating the choice.

HOME ACTIVITY / 15–25 MINUTES

Build Your Landscape Career Map: Real-World Investigator

Find three examples of landscape work in the real world. Use a yard, neighbor’s property, park, school, sports complex, shopping center, church, photograph, or nearby landscape company. The landscape around the student becomes the textbook.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?	WHO MIGHT HAVE WORKED ON IT?	WHAT SKILLS DID THEY NEED?	TRY IT?	WHY?
Retaining wall	Hardscape crew	Measuring, cutting, leveling, moving material	YES / MAYBE / NO	
			YES / MAYBE / NO	
			YES / MAYBE / NO	

OPTIONAL FAMILY CONNECTION

Ask an adult: “What kind of work do you think I’d be good at, and why?”

Students record the response, but they do not have to agree with it. The conversation is the point; ownership remains with the student.

Assessment + Facilitation Notes

No traditional quiz. Look for evidence of connection, curiosity, and explanation.

INDUSTRY

01

Can the student explain why landscaping contains many different careers?

PATHWAYS

02

Can the student name several different kinds of work in the industry?

CONNECTION

03

Can the student connect at least one personal interest to a landscape pathway?

TEACHER NOTE

What not to do

Do not turn this lesson into a vocabulary exercise. Students do not need to leave Module 1 knowing the technical distinction between every specialist role. At this stage, they need a mental framework that gives future career terminology somewhere to fit.

IMAGINE IT Some people imagine it.	BUILD IT Some people build it.	GROW IT Some people grow it.
CARE FOR IT Some people maintain it.	FIX IT Some people solve problems.	LEAD IT Some people lead the whole operation.

CURRICULUM DESIGN PRINCIPLE

SEE IT

TRY IT

CONNECT IT

EXPLAIN IT

FIND IT

Students encounter the idea visually, physically engage with it, connect it to themselves, explain their thinking, and then recognize the concept outside the classroom.

PROGRAM NOTE

Let the Career Map travel with the student.

Instead of treating this as a one-time worksheet, make it a living artifact across the 20-module pathway. After each module, students can add a mark such as “Loved It,” “I’d Try It,” or “Not My Thing.” By the end, they have a record of actual experiences rather than a single career-interest test.

DESIRED RESULT: “I DIDN’T KNOW PEOPLE DID ALL OF THIS FOR A LIVING. I THINK I’D LIKE TO TRY SOME OF IT.”