



PARENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Is my teen ready for the future?

Thirty-two honest questions about the world your teenager already lives in.

AGES 13-18 • 32 QUESTIONS • 10-15 MINUTES

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You do not need to know every answer today

Some questions will make you realise “**I actually don't know.**” That is useful information too — often the most useful in the whole guide.

Do not turn this into an interview. If you are unsure, notice it and come back to the topic naturally over the next few days — in the car, over dinner, on a walk, after watching something together. You are not checking whether they can produce the right answer. You are checking whether these habits are already part of their ordinary life.

INSTEAD OF ASKING

“Do you know how to find reliable information online?”

TRY

“If you really needed to know whether this story was true, where would you check?”

Then listen. TikTok? Google? ChatGPT? A newspaper? Someone they trust? There is no need to correct them on the spot. First, understand how they currently think.

HOW TO ANSWER

Four choices, sixty-four points

YES	SOMETIMES	NOT YET	DON'T KNOW
2	1	0	?
They can usually do this independently, or have real experience with it.	Some experience, but they still need help or prompting.	Little or no experience with this so far.	You are genuinely unsure. Don't score it — circle it.

Tick one circle for each of the 32 questions, then add up your total on the score sheet at the end.

PART 1

How wide is their world?

Q1-5

1

Does your teenager regularly become curious about something outside school?

an animal

a country

a celebrity

history

technology

sport

a crime story

fashion

money

space

music

cars

a game

The subject does not matter. The question is whether they sometimes want to know more **without anybody assigning it**.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

2 Does something they see ever make them want to understand how it works?

They do not need to follow the news. It is enough that something occasionally makes them think: “Wait — how does that actually work?”
How do self-driving cars work? How does Spotify know what to recommend?
Why are houses so expensive? How does a new medicine get invented?

IF YOU DON'T KNOW

“What are you interested in?” is too broad to answer. Try instead:

“What's something you saw online recently that you wanted to understand better?”

Or make it concrete: *“You watch a lot of football / gaming / beauty. What part of that world do you actually find interesting?”* Then leave it there — it does not have to become a career conversation.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

3 Do they know people who do less obvious or newer kinds of work?

Not only doctor, teacher, lawyer, accountant.

AI product manager cybersecurity specialist UX researcher game designer drone operator
biotech researcher sports data analyst sound engineer 3D artist food technologist
startup founder forensic scientist wind turbine technician geologist event producer

They don't need to know all of these people. The question is simply whether their picture of work is wider than the professions they see every day.

PARENT NOTE

A teenager's sense of what's possible is partly built from the adults they see. If everyone around them works in the same few fields, nothing is wrong — it just means you may need to **deliberately show them more worlds**.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

4 Do they understand what people in those jobs actually do all day?

Knowing the title is not enough. Pick one person they already know and ask three questions: **What do you think they actually do? What happens between arriving at work and going home? What do you have to be good at to do that job?**

WHAT A FULLER PICTURE SOUNDS LIKE

“They stop hackers” → a cybersecurity specialist monitors systems, investigates suspicious activity, tests defences, explains risk to teams, and handles emergencies.

“They draw buildings” → an architect also meets clients, works with engineers, follows regulations, revises plans and manages budgets.

Easy shortcut. Instead of “*Can you tell my child about your profession?*” ask an adult “*Can you tell us what you actually did at work yesterday?*”

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

5 Have they ever been inside a real workplace — or tried a small piece of real work?

restaurant kitchen office factory laboratory farm hospital theatre backstage airport
architecture studio car workshop warehouse startup

And even a few hours of the work itself counts: a cooking masterclass, volunteering, helping in a shop, taking photos at an event, packing orders, helping at a school festival, repairing bikes, minding younger children at camp.

PARENT SHORTCUT

Do not wait for a perfect internship. A two-hour masterclass or one afternoon observing someone is enough to create a new reference point. The goal isn't an impressive CV line — it's knowing what real work feels like.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

6 Does your teenager read anything voluntarily?

☐ novels
 ☐ comics
 ☐ manga
 ☐ biographies
 ☐ non-fiction
 ☐ magazines
 ☐ long articles

It does not need to be “serious literature”.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

7 Have they recently chosen a book for themselves — not one school required?

Do they browse in shops, download books themselves, ask for a particular title, follow an author or a series, keep reading because they genuinely want to know what happens next?

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

8 Do they ever choose to visit or attend something because they are curious?

The question is not whether **you** have taken them to museums. Would they ask to go, send you an event they noticed, go with friends — and stay interested once there?

IF THE ANSWER IS “NOT YET”

Don't conclude that they hate museums. They may not have found **their kind** of museum yet.

☐ Formula 1 exhibition
 ☐ fashion exhibition
 ☐ gaming museum
 ☐ aerospace museum
☐ true-crime exhibition
 ☐ science festival
 ☐ music studio tour
 ☐ street-art walk
 ☐ robotics competition

Shortcut: send them three very different options and ask “*if we had to pick one this weekend, which?*” Their choice is itself information.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

9 Can they teach themselves something small?

a recipe a new game photo editing a football technique makeup repairing something
playing a song a new app making a video

The subject is not important. What matters is whether they can think: “I don't know how to do this yet. I'll figure it out.”

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

PART 3

How do they find information?

Q10-13

10 Do they know how to look beyond the first answer?

Starting with Google, ChatGPT, YouTube or TikTok is fine. The question is what happens **next**. Do they ever open more than one result, compare two explanations, look for who made the information, check the date, ask whether somebody is selling something, or notice when sources disagree?

HOW TO FIND OUT WITHOUT TESTING THEM

Take a real question that comes up naturally — “*Someone said energy drinks are terrible for teenagers. How could we check whether that's true?*” — then say “*show me how you'd look it up,*” and watch.

Do they open the first answer and stop? Check several sources? Recognise a hospital, university or major publication? Notice whether it's current? You are not looking for perfect research skills — only the beginning of a habit: **one answer is not always enough.**

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

11 Do they know that some sources are more trustworthy than others?

Could they explain why a university, a hospital, a government institution or an established newspaper may need to be treated differently from a random TikTok, an anonymous post, or an influencer advertisement?

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

12 Do they have any sources they personally trust?

BBC

Reuters

National Geographic

NASA

WHO

a good local paper

university sites

scientific bodies

They don't need dozens. Even a few is a good start.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW

Rather than “*what are your trusted sources?*”, ask: “*If ChatGPT and TikTok gave you two different answers, what would you do next?*”

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

13 Do they ever question what they see online?

“Is this real?” · “Who posted it?” · “Why are they trying to convince me?” · “Is this an ad?” · “Could this video be edited?” · “Who benefits if I believe this?”

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

PART 4

Everyday independence

Q14–22

14 Can they prepare breakfast for themselves?

Nothing special — eggs, toast, porridge, a sandwich, fruit, tea or coffee.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

15 Could they make a basic dinner if you were not home?

Pasta, an omelette, a salad, soup, rice, or something simple in the oven.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

16 Can they do their own laundry if necessary?

Sort it, run the machine on a sensible programme, dry it, put it away.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

17 Can they solve a small household problem without immediately giving up?

Wi-Fi stops working

flat bicycle tyre

dead battery

blocked sink

bulb needs changing

machine is leaking

can't assemble something

They don't have to know the answer immediately. Can they stop, think, search, ask the right person and act?

PARENT NOTE

Independence is not “they must fix everything themselves.” Knowing when something is unsafe and asking the right person for help is part of it.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

18 Can they travel around their own city alone?

Find the stop, understand the route, buy or validate a ticket, notice when they're going the wrong way, and change plans if something goes wrong.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

19 Could they work out how to reach an unfamiliar place by public transport?

Finding the route, checking the timetable, knowing where to change, buying the right ticket, knowing where to get off.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

20 Would you be comfortable with them alone in an airport for a while?

Find the gate, read the departure screens, understand a delay, ask staff for help, keep track of passport and phone, notice a gate change.

PARENT NOTE

This does not mean sending a 13-year-old travelling alone. It's simply a useful way to picture **practical confidence in unfamiliar environments**.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

21 Could they handle a small surprise when you are not reachable?

train cancelled

lost key

phone nearly dead

missed the bus

wrong ticket

the place is closed

has to ask a stranger

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

22 Can they make an appointment or handle a basic admin task?

Depending on age: calling a hairdresser, booking online, asking about opening hours, contacting a teacher, filling in a simple form, asking customer service a question.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

23 Do they know roughly what everyday things cost?

groceries

a phone plan

transport

a restaurant meal

clothes

electricity

rent

a laptop

PARENT SHORTCUT

Ask casually: “How much do you think our weekly groceries cost?”

You're not testing for the exact number — only whether they have any realistic sense of money.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

24 Have they ever managed their own money for more than a few days?

Managing money means more than having €20 in a wallet. It means having faced the trade-off: “if I spend this today, I'll have less for something else later.” Pocket money that has to last, a holiday budget, saving for headphones, spending money on a school trip, earnings from a summer job.

A STRONGER VERSION OF THE QUESTION

Could you give them **€100 for a month** and trust them to decide, within clear rules? Not whether they'd choose what you would — whether they'd understand how much they have, how fast it's going, and what they want to prioritise.

Never tried? Start small. Hand over the budget for one real thing — a month of school lunches, a day trip, birthday gifts for friends. The learning happens in the trade-offs.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

25 Have they ever earned money themselves?

summer job

babysitting

helping neighbours

selling something

tutoring

online work

family business

helping at an event

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

26 Can they save for something they want instead of spending everything at once?

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

27 Do they have responsibilities at home that others genuinely rely on?

walking the dog

cooking

shopping

feeding animals

helping a sibling

the recycling

part of a family routine

The key word is **rely**. Not “they help when I ask five times,” but “this is theirs, and they know people depend on it.”

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

PART 6

Initiative and real experience

Q28-32

28 Have they ever started something because they wanted to, not because school required it?

a small business

a YouTube channel

a gaming community

an art project

a sport goal

a coding project

an event

a club

a collection

redesigning their room

a fitness plan

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

29 Have they ever finished something that took weeks?

Not homework that had to be done — something where they had to keep going after the first excitement wore off. Trained for a race, learned a song, built something, made a video, finished an online course, saved for a purchase, prepared for a competition, held down a part-time job.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Starting is easy. The real signal is having lived through the full arc: *enthusiasm → boredom or difficulty → continuing → finishing.*

If you don't know, ask: “What have you got noticeably better at this year?” Gaming, sport, drawing or makeup can show persistence just as clearly as school does.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

30 Have they ever dealt with something not working out?

And then tried again, changed approach, asked for help, learned something — or stopped for a good reason.

PARENT NOTE

We're not looking for a teenager who “never gives up”. Sometimes stopping is the smart call. The useful question is whether they can think about **why** something failed and decide what to do next.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

31 Have they had an experience outside school and family?

camp

volunteering

a competition

a job

an exchange

a sports trip

a course

a youth organisation

independent travel

a summer programme

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

32 Can they comfortably speak to an unfamiliar adult when they need to?

Ask an employee for help, speak to a teacher, order something, call to book an appointment, explain a problem, return something to a shop, ask a question at an event.

☐ YES

☐ SOMETIMES

☐ NOT YET

☐ DON'T KNOW

YOUR RESULT

Where they are today

TOTAL SCORE

_____/ 64 ____ of 32 answered ____ circled “don't know”

0-16 POINTS

Their world may still be quite small

This does not mean your teenager is behind. They may simply have had fewer chances to practise independence or meet unfamiliar environments.

FOCUS ON — EXPOSURE

New places, new people, practical responsibilities, workshops, excursions, different kinds of work. Don't start with “what career do you want?” Start with “**what else can we let you experience?**”

17-32 POINTS

Exploration has started

They already have useful experiences, but may still lean heavily on school, you, or familiar routine to decide what happens next.

FOCUS ON — EXPERIENCE

More chances to decide, travel independently, solve practical problems, research things themselves, meet people with different lives, manage a small budget, own something real.

33-48 POINTS

They are building real-world confidence

Useful independence and curiosity are already there. The goal now is not simply to add more activities.

FOCUS ON — DEPTH

Take one project further, build stronger skills, carry more responsibility, see what real work looks like from the inside, finish longer things, sharpen how they handle information.

49-64 POINTS

They are becoming an active explorer

A strong foundation of curiosity, independence and real experience. The next step is turning it into intentional choices.

FOCUS ON — DIRECTION

Which interests are worth taking further? Which skills are worth building seriously? Which environments bring out their best? What could they test in the real world before a major decision?

LOOK BEYOND THE TOTAL

The gaps matter more than the number

Look back through your answers. Where did **NOT YET** and **I DON'T KNOW** cluster? Choose the three areas that deserve attention, then one simple action for each.

1

2

3

WHERE TO START, BY GAP

If curiosity is low

Don't buy another course. Visit an unusual place, watch a documentary together, find an exhibition connected to something they already like, or let them choose the next family outing.

If information habits are weak

Skip the lecture on fake news. Take one interesting story and ask “*how could we check whether this is true?*” — then compare Google, ChatGPT, social media and an official source together.

If everyday independence is low

Give them ownership of something real: one breakfast each weekend, their own laundry, the groceries from a list, planning one family journey, calling to make one appointment.

If money confidence is low

Give them a real budget — an outing, a birthday, one month of personal spending. Don't correct every small mistake. A €10 mistake now is a very cheap lesson.

If real-world exposure is low

Don't wait for the perfect internship. A masterclass, a company visit, an afternoon shadowing a family friend, a university open day, helping in a café — any of it creates a new reference point.

If initiative is low

Don't start with a big project. Ask: “*What's one thing you'd like to try for two weeks?*” Keep the experiment small enough that starting feels easy.

You do not need to turn every weakness into a lesson.

And you don't need to fix everything at once. Choose one or two areas that would most expand your teenager's world right now. Give them the experience. Watch what happens. Then decide what to explore next.

YOUR NEXT 30 DAYS

Six blanks. You don't have to fill them all

One place to visit

One adult with an interesting job to talk to

One practical responsibility to hand over

One thing they could manage independently

One topic worth exploring together

One small experiment they could try

Even **one good new experience** can open a new direction.

WHAT COMES NEXT

What are we actually preparing them for?

This assessment shows you where your teenager is **today**. The harder question is what comes after. Work, education and independent life are changing quickly, and the choices teenagers make now will land in a world

shaped by new technology, shifting industries and entirely new ways of working.

In the **Map Your Horizon: Future of Work** webinar we look at:

- how AI is reshaping the professions that already exist
- which industries and global problems may create new ones
- which human skills are becoming more valuable
- how university choices may change
- what teenagers can start exploring before any major decision
- how to widen your child's world without choosing their future for them

Your teenager does not need to have their future figured out. They need enough independence, curiosity and exposure to start making better choices for themselves.

—●— MAP YOUR HORIZON

CLARITY TODAY, DIRECTION TOMORROW