



choosing a career

### Resource

### Work Voices #7

### Henri Gonnet - Solar engineer

*It is helpful to view one segment at a time*

### Context

Henri Gonnet is from France and came to this country 25 years ago. He now works in the green tech field at Solar City, having been fascinated by the world of electricity, and in particular the growing world of solar energy. He describes how he went to [Diablo Valley College](#), which offered one of the first solar education programs in the country. This program gave him a really comprehensive grounding in alternative energy.

Henri explains that to work in this field, it is important to be comfortable in English to be able to communicate clearly, and with math at a fairly basic level. He also suggests taking the [NABCEP certificate](#) in order to be well placed for getting a job in the industry. He sees solar installation as the most accessible job in the industry, especially in the residential sector, where the market is strong. There is also employment in the commercial world which is very different. Henri describes how with this background experience, it is possible to move on to design, auditing, permitting or sales jobs, and he is optimistic about opportunities for advancement after two or three years.

Henri Gonnet is clear that working in the energy field can be hard work and it is not for everyone. Because of the way the energy market is changing, he recommends this work "as the way of the future", with the proviso that you should be really interested in electricity and renewable energy for it to be a suitable career option.

### Preview activities/Introductory questions

*Warm up questions*

What are green technologies?

Are there ways you could be greener in your life?

What is solar power?

Where is it used?

### Vocabulary

Orientated, revelation, electrical, thermal, photovoltaic, residential, commercial, obsolete, monitor, renewable energy, technical.

### Focus questions

- Why does Henri emphasize formal education?
- Where was Henri trained?

- What subjects did he have to study?
- Did he need a strong background in math?
- What is NABCEP?
- How did he learn vocabulary?
- What strategies does he describe as helpful to assist learning?
- What steps does he describe as important if you are to be successful?

*Discuss responses.*

### **Post viewing**

#### **Research**

##### **a Training courses**

- Find training programs in green technology in your area.
- Find the information you would need about each program in order to decide to apply for it.

##### **b Job opportunities**

- Look for job opportunities in the solar field and investigate the range of positions.
- Look for job opportunities in green technology in your field of interest.
- In what other areas of the green energy field are there job opportunities?

*Summarize findings for a and b in two paragraphs to share with the class*

#### **Reflection**

- Why does Henri recommend this work?
- What are the challenges he faced? Why is it not for everyone?
- What kind of personal qualities would work well for this job? List the qualities you would need.
- What personal qualities does he bring?

*Write a short reflection paragraph in response to these questions*

#### **Contact assignment**

Interview someone who works in an area green technology that interests you. Record the interview if possible.

Post it to your class blog – if you have one.

### **Further resources**

- **Health Education Resources for ESL Educators** [www.kqed.org/healtheducation](http://www.kqed.org/healtheducation)
- **Alternative Energy Program information at** [Diablo Valley College](#)
- **North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners** [NABCEP](#)