



Unusual Professions

Introduction

This resource is intended as a directory of unusual professions that might be used to create unique characters (either contemporary or historical). The accompanying definitions give a brief overview, but to really understand what each job involves, an internet search should give a much more detailed description.

Modern day professions

Adult toy tester

Airport scarecrow = person employed to scare off birds around an airport

Apology ghostwriter = someone who writes apologies for others

Bed tester

Beekeeper

Bicycle fisher = person whose job involves removing bicycles (and other similar objects) from canals and waterways

Bingo caller

Body double

Bounty hunter

Champagne tester

Chocolate taster

Christmas tree farmer

Consultant bank robber = someone who carries out bank heists to test the bank's security systems

Crime scene cleaner

Cuddle professional = person who gives hugs for a living

Cytotechnologist = lab technician who analyses cell samples for medical conditions

Dictionary compiler

Dog surfing instructor

Drying paint watcher = person employed to observe how new paint varieties dry in terms of texture and colour

Embalmer

Ethical hacker = hacker employed to identify vulnerabilities in computer systems

Fingerprint analyser

Fragrance chemist = someone who formulates new perfumes and other scented goods

Food critic

Food stylist = someone who arranges food to maximise how appetising it looks in media images

Forensic dentist = individual who examines and evaluates dental evidence in criminal justice investigations

Fortune cookie writer

Furniture tester

Golf ball diver = divers who retrieve golf balls from lakes and rivers on (or near) golf courses

Greeting card writer

Guinness World Records adjudicator

Handwriting analyser = forensic expert who specialises in handwriting analysis

Hippotherapist = therapist who uses horses and horse riding as a therapeutic treatment

Iceberg mover = individual who moves icebergs out of shipping lanes

Ice rink hand holder

Island caretaker

Jam doughnut filler

Lifeguard on a nudist beach

Life model

Living statue = street performer

Movie watcher = someone who is paid to watch films for market research / feedback purposes

Odour judge = laboratory technician employed to improve the smell of chemical products

Online dating site profile writer

Paper towel sniffer = scent tester for paper towels

Pathologist

Personal shopper

Pet food taster

Pet psychologist

Polygraph examiner = individual who conducts lie detector tests

Professional bridesmaid

Professional car watcher

Professional mermaid

Professional queuer

Professional mourner

Professional sleeper = tester of mattress, pillows and sleep-related devices

Professional wedding guest

Quiz-show question writer

Reindeer walker

Rollercoaster tester

Skyscraper window cleaner

Sleep technologist = individual responsible for monitoring participants in sleep studies or patients of sleep therapy

Snake milker = specialist zoologist who extracts venom from snakes and other venomous animals

Sniffer dog handler

Space psychologist = individual responsible for emotional wellbeing of astronauts or researcher into psychological affects of space travel

Stuntman

Teddy-bear repair technician

Thatcher

Undertaker

Veterinary acupuncturist

Video game tester

Voiceover artist

Water slide tester

Wine taster

Worm picker = someone who catches worms to sell to fishermen or for scientific purposes

Historical professions that (mostly) no longer exist

Alchemist = individual engaged in the study of elements (and how to transmute base metals into noble metals) and the pursuit of panaceas (global cures)

Bobbin boy = boy employed in textile mills to take bobbins to and from loom workers

Bowyer = maker of bows

Breaker boy = boy employed in coal mines to separate impurities from coal

Castrato = male singer with high voice who underwent castration prior to puberty

Chandler = maker or seller of candles

Cigarette girl = young woman who sold cigarettes from a tray at nightclubs, cinemas, casinos and other

public spaces

Clock winder = person employed to keep clocks at the right time

Cobbler = maker or repairer of shoes

Computer = person who performed mathematical calculations

Cooper = maker of barrels and casks

Cordwainer = shoemaker

Court jester = individual employed to entertain guests at the royal court

Crossing sweeper = individual employed to sweep a path ahead of people crossing a dirty street

Cup-bearer = individual who served wine (or other alcoholic beverage) in noble households

Executioner

Fletcher = maker of arrows

Garden hermit = individual encouraged to live alone in a hermitage or grotto on the lands of a large estate, often as an “ornamental” addition

Gong farmer = someone who emptied cesspits and latrines

Groom of the stool = individual whose job involved assisting the monarch with matters of personal hygiene

Iceman = seller of ice from wagon or truck

Knocker-up = person employed to knock on everyone’s doors to wake them up in the morning

Lamplighter = person employed to light a town’s street lamps

Lector = individual who read to factory workers as they worked

Leech collector = person who procured leeches for use in medicine

Link boy = boy who would carry a flaming torch to light the way of travellers after dark

Mudlark = person who made their living by scavenging riverbanks, looking for items of value

Nursemaid

Pinsetter = individual employed to re-position the pins at a bowling alley

Powder monkey = boys who moved gunpowder around a ship during a sea battle

Rag and bone man = collector and re-seller of unwanted household items

Resurrectionist = someone who dug up corpses for use in medical research

Scribe

Sin-eater = person who consumes a ritual meal following an individual’s death in order to take on their sins

Sluggard waker = individual who would watch for and wake up anyone who fell asleep during church services

Telegraphist = individual who would send and receive messages in Morse code using a telegraph key

Telephone exchange operator

Tosher = scavenger who would search sewers for loot

Town crier

Wainwright = maker and repairer of wagons and carts

Trumped-up job names

Beverage dissemination officer = bartender

Colour distribution technician = painter and decorator

Conversation architect - Digital marketing manager

Digital overlord = website manager

Media distribution officer = newspaper delivery person

Nourishment consultant = dinner lady

Retail jedi = shop assistant

Wet leisure attendant = lifeguard



ENDNOTE

Bio:

This resource has been created by Matt Kendrick. Matt is a writer, editor and teacher based in the East Midlands, UK. His short fiction has been widely published both online and in print. He has been placed or listed in various writing competitions including Bath, Flash 500, the Oxford Flash Fiction Prize, Reflex and Leicester Writes. His work has been included on the Biffy 50 list for 2019-20, in Best Microfiction 2021, Best Small Fictions 2022 and the Wigleaf Top 50 list for 2022. He has also been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize.

Other Resources:

For links to other free resources, please visit my website: <https://www.mattkendrick.co.uk/resources>

Services and Courses:

Information about my [courses](#) and [editorial services](#) can also be found on my website.



Support me on Ko-fi

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**Any money donated to my [Ko-fi page](#) will be used to fund free and reduced-price places for my Write Beyond The Lightbulb courses, as well as to provide free editing and mentoring opportunities for low-income writers, and to support other opportunities that seek to level the playing field.*