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Jobs Rated

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The 10 Best Jobs of 2010



—by Andrew Strieber

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Layoffs, bankruptcies and rising unemployment – the past 12 months have been an especially traumatic time to be looking for a new job. Yet when considering the best and worst jobs for 2010, the upheaval that spread across multiple industries last year hasn't altered the old adage:

"the more things change, the more they stay the same." For the second year in a row, job hunters will want to brush up their math, science and computer skills if they want to land a top-ranked, highly rewarding position.

Actuary, a job that entails calculating the probability and financial impact of illness and property loss, ranks as the best job for 2010, based on research into 200 different positions in this year's exclusive CareerCast.com Jobs Rated report. Using five key measurement criteria – stress, working environment, physical demands, income and hiring outlook – the Jobs Rated report seeks to compare and contrast careers across a multitude of industries, skill levels and salary ranges, sorting them into a definitive list of jobs that can be called "worst" and "best."

So why is Actuary rated number one? For starters, the position ranks especially well for its low physical demands and stress levels, finishing 2nd and 3rd, respectively, out of all 200 jobs. But more importantly, it is actuary's consistently strong performance *overall* that helped the job rise to the top of the 2010 Jobs Rated list. While we may admire the exceptional – famous stars, successful billionaires and life-saving heroes, for example – top careers in the Jobs Rated report typically don't stand out as the most glamorous, highest paying or most noble. Instead, they are the jobs that offer the greatest chance of enjoying a combination of good health, low stress, a pleasant workplace, solid income and strong growth potential.

Job Scores in Context

Category	Scoring Range
Physical Demands	3.95 – 43.23
Work Environment	89.520 – 3314.030
Income	\$300,118 – \$17,057
Stress	18.776 – 110.936
Hiring Outlook	45.39 – -39.67

In compiling the list of highly-ranked jobs for 2010, Jobs Rated researchers sought to

find careers that are likely to provide a positive experience for a *majority* of employees, not just the uniquely talented. Fitting with this goal, Actuary ranks no worse than 10th in any measurement category, save one – median income, where it finishes 22nd. And even in this case, the job's average high-end income of \$161,000 is 11th among all surveyed jobs.

Moving down the list, math and science-related professions continue to rule, with Software Engineer ranking as the second-best job for 2010. Involving the design and maintenance of software and hardware systems, the job rates well across all categories, finishing 5th for work environment and inside the top 30 for stress, income and physical demands. But what *truly* helps Software Engineer stand out from other career choices is its hiring outlook. With low unemployment compared to the national average and projected job growth of nearly 45% through 2016, Software Engineer currently has the best hiring outlook of any available job in 2010.

If equations and programming languages aren't your strong suit, there are some *other* top-ranked jobs that rely on words instead of numbers. Despite ranking just 50th for stress and median income, Historian manages to finish as the 5th best job for 2010, thanks to good ratings for work environment (4th), physical demands (15th) and outlook (15th). And while it may seem surprising that a seemingly obscure job like Historian would rank so well, in fact the career has many applications beyond just the classroom. Apart from academic settings, there is a great demand for Historians in the defense industry and State Department. Considering that the federal government is expected to be a top source of employment in 2010, this demand helps give Historian projected job growth of 24% through 2016.

Rounding out the Jobs Rated of the 10 best jobs for 2010, all of these top-ranked positions have one key element in common. Each requires a high level of education, or at least highly-specialized training:

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1. Actuary

Interprets statistics to determine probabilities of accidents, sickness, and death, and loss of property from theft and natural disasters.

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2. Software Engineer

Researches, designs, develops and maintains software systems along with hardware development for medical, scientific, and industrial purposes.

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3. Computer Systems Analyst

Plans and develops computer systems for businesses and scientific institutions.

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4. Biologist

Studies the relationship of plants and animals to their environment.

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5. Historian

Analyzes and records historical information from a specific era or according to a particular area of expertise.

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6. Mathematician

Applies mathematical theories and formulas to teach or solve problems in a business, educational, or industrial climate.

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7. Paralegal Assistant

Assists attorneys in preparation of legal documents; collection of depositions and affidavits; and investigation, research and analysis of legal issues.

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8. Statistician

Tabulates, analyzes, and interprets the numeric results of experiments and surveys.

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9. Accountant

Prepares and analyzes financial reports to assist managers in business, industry and government.

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10. Dental Hygienist

Assists dentists in diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of a group or private dental practice.

Job Ratings ✕

Overall Ranking:	1
Overall Score:	46
Work Environment:	179.440
Physical Demands:	3.97
Stress:	20.187
Income:	\$85,229
Hiring Outlook:	24.79 (Very Good)



Job Ratings ✕

Overall Ranking:	2
Overall Score:	66
Work Environment:	150.000
Physical Demands:	5
Stress:	25.000
Income:	\$85,139
Hiring Outlook:	45.39 (Very Good)



Job Ratings ✕

Overall Ranking:	3
Overall Score:	77
Work Environment:	90.780
Physical Demands:	5.08
Stress:	24.965
Income:	\$76,162
Hiring Outlook:	29.62 (Very Good)



Job Ratings ✕

Overall Ranking:	4
Overall Score:	123
Work Environment:	314.370
Physical Demands:	4.98

Stress: 26.946
 Income: \$71,279
 Hiring Outlook: 24.79 (Very Good)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking: 5
 Overall Score: 132
 Work Environment: 136.410
 Physical Demands: 5.09
 Stress: 28.419
 Income: \$62,226
 Hiring Outlook: 24.26 (Very Good)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking: 6
 Overall Score: 133
 Work Environment: 89.720
 Physical Demands: 3.97
 Stress: 24.673
 Income: \$95,161
 Hiring Outlook: 11.11 (Moderate)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking: 7
 Overall Score: 179
 Work Environment: 263.820
 Physical Demands: 5.79
 Stress: 23.084
 Income: \$46,152
 Hiring Outlook: 22.52 (Very Good)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking: 8
 Overall Score: 187
 Work Environment: 89.520
 Physical Demands: 3.95
 Stress: 27.975
 Income: \$73,193
 Hiring Outlook: 9.93 (Moderate)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking:	9
Overall Score:	190
Work Environment:	276.780
Physical Demands:	4.23
Stress:	31.138
Income:	\$59,176
Hiring Outlook:	18.76 (Very Good)



Job Ratings

Overall Ranking:	10
Overall Score:	198
Work Environment:	593.250
Physical Demands:	7
Stress:	24.719
Income:	\$67,107
Hiring Outlook:	30.07 (Very Good)



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Whatever position you're interested in learning more about, CareerCast.com's Jobs Rated data will be a valuable aid to help ensure that your choice measures up to the standards you've set for yourself. In the coming months, job rankings by stress, hiring outlook, income and more will be released, giving you the best options in fields ranging from Agriculture to Zoology.

If Actuary is the best job of 2010, followed by Software Engineer and Computer Systems Analyst, which positions should you avoid? Read on to see the Jobs Rated list of the **10 WORST jobs for 2010 and beyond**.

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Whether you're a recent college graduate or a seasoned executive, finding the best job for you can be a challenge. How do different jobs compare in income potential? Which are more stressful or physically demanding? JobsRated uses detailed analysis to measure careers by factors such as working conditions, competitiveness, hiring outlook and physical exertion, giving each a score and ranking.

For complete information on this process, visit our [JobsRated Methodology Page](#).

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