

COLLEGE BOUND

A Guide for Sophomores





Dear Sophomore,

There are thousands of colleges and universities in the U.S. If you want to go to college, there is definitely one that's right for you!

While you don't need to know which college you want to attend until your senior year; you should start planning and preparing for college much earlier.

This booklet will tell you what you need to do this year. It will also show you how going to college is a goal you can achieve!

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Why Go to COLLEGE?



There are many good reasons to go to college. *Here is why going to college is a goal that's worth working toward.*

More career opportunities

A college education can prepare you for a variety of careers that are personally and financially rewarding. When you think of all the careers that are available to college graduates, the sky is the limit!

Greater income

College graduates earn more money than high school graduates. Having a better income means that you'll have more money for the things that are important to you, like hobbies, a nice car, entertainment, and travel.

Opportunities to develop and grow

Going to college gives you the opportunity to study a variety of subjects, try new things, make new friends, and become more independent. Most importantly, college gives you the opportunity to become the person you want to be.

Personal accomplishment

Receiving a college diploma is a testament to your hard work and your drive to succeed. It's an accomplishment that you can be proud of for the rest of your life!

A college education will open doors and provide you with more options and opportunities in life. Decide now to make going to college your goal!

What to Expect IN COLLEGE



College is very different than high school. Here are some of the things you can expect in college.

Less busywork, more tests

All instructors assign work to be done outside of class, but homework grades often make up only a small portion of a student's final grade. In many cases, a term paper, tests, and/or the final exam make up most of a student's grade in a course.

More freedom and responsibility

In college, you have a lot of freedom. No one checks to see if you're going to class or doing your assignments. You are responsible for your own academic progress—and for making sure that you are maintaining the academic standards the college requires for continued enrollment.

Less time in class, more independent study

College students spend about half as much time in class as high school students, but they spend more time studying on their own. For every hour they spend in class, college students should expect to spend two to three hours doing assignments and studying.

A wide range of class sizes

In college, class sizes vary greatly. While most college classes have fewer than 30 students, classes can have 100 or more students.

To learn more about how high school and college are different, check out this short video.



VIDEO

TWO-YEAR Colleges



Two-year colleges provide programs that make it possible for students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Here are some facts about two-year colleges.

All high school graduates are welcome

Students need only a high school diploma to enroll in most two-year college programs.

Classes are taught by experienced instructors

Two-year colleges keep their classes small, and often hire instructors who have worked in a related career field. For example, a law enforcement instructor might be a current or retired police officer.

Students prepare for a specific career

While four-year college students are required to take general education courses in addition to the courses in their major, two-year college students are only required to take the courses they need to prepare for their chosen career. Some of the most popular two-year college programs are in business, computer science, and healthcare.

Two-year colleges are affordable

Going to a two-year college for one year typically costs less than half of what it costs to go to a four-year college for a year.

Students can transfer to a four-year college

Students who want a four-year college degree can start at a two-year college and then transfer after a year or two. Because they're less expensive, many students start at a two-year college to save money. A two-year college is also a great option for any student who isn't quite ready to attend a four-year college.

FOUR-YEAR Colleges



A four-year college degree (bachelor's degree) provides students with a wide range of career choices and opportunities. Here are some facts about four-year colleges.

Four-year colleges have admission requirements

Colleges have different criteria for admission. Some colleges have an open admissions policy and accept all high school graduates until spaces are filled. Others are more selective and look for students who have high grades, good test scores, and extracurricular activities.

Four-year colleges are public or private

Public colleges are typically much larger and less expensive than private colleges. They also have more majors, programs, and activities. Private colleges generally have smaller classes and a more personal atmosphere.

Students have lots of majors to choose from

A major is the subject you choose to study in-depth. Since you will take about half of your courses in your major, it's important to choose a subject you like and will do well in. Education, business, and engineering are a few of the most popular four-year college majors.

Students must be academically prepared

All colleges want students who are prepared to do college-level work. Students who want to attend a four-year college should take college prep courses in high school and work hard to get good grades.

Attending a four-year college can be expensive

While college can be expensive, there is a great deal of financial aid available, and there are lots of ways to cut college costs.

Other Educational OPTIONS



Most careers require education or training after high school. College is a great option, but it's not the only one. You may also want to consider one of the following educational options.

Career or trade school

These schools offer short-term training programs in a variety of career fields. While some programs last only a few weeks, others can take two years or more to complete.

Career and trade schools can be expensive, and not all of them are reputable. These schools, therefore, need to be thoroughly checked out. Credits from these schools generally cannot be transferred to a two- or four-year college.

Apprenticeship

Students who like hands-on learning may want to consider an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn their trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprenticeship programs are an excellent way to receive training in the skilled trades, including carpentry, construction, and plumbing.

The military

The U.S. military offers free job training in over 2,000 job specialties, such as airplane mechanic, computer technician, and paramedic/EMT. Enlistees can also take college classes while they are in the military.

Specialty college

Specialty colleges have a limited number of programs. Examples of specialty colleges include art, nursing, and culinary schools. The costs for these colleges and the lengths of their programs vary depending on the school and the program.

Choosing A COLLEGE



Deciding which college to go to is really about finding a college that's a good match for *you*. Here are the factors students need to consider when choosing a college.

Type of college

Do you want to go to a two-year college (community or technical college) or to a four-year college?

Size

Do you want to go to a large school with lots of majors, programs, and activities, or to a small school with fewer students, a more personal atmosphere, and smaller classes?

Location

Where do you want to go to college? Close to home? In your home state? Close to nature? Near a big city?

Academic programs

Is there a specific subject that you want to study or career you want to pursue? While most colleges offer popular majors such as business and education, not every college will offer the major you may be interested in.

Activities/special programs

Perhaps you want to go to a college with a soccer team, orchestra, or study abroad program. Having a program, activity, or sport that's important to you will help you narrow your list of college choices.

Cost

The cost of a college is important to most students. Talk to your parents about how your education will be paid for.

Getting into COLLEGE



In the college admissions process, nothing is more important than your high school academic record. Colleges consider some or all of the following when deciding which students to accept.

Grade point average (GPA)

A student's GPA is what most colleges look at first. Colleges know that students who get good grades in high school are much more likely to succeed in college.

Courses taken

Four-year colleges look very carefully at the classes listed on a student's high school transcript. They are particularly interested in which college prep courses a student has taken—and in the grades they received in those courses.

As a general rule, high school students should take as many college preparatory math, science, English, social studies, and world language courses as they can handle.

Test scores

Many four-year colleges require that students submit ACT or SAT scores when they apply for admission. Students usually take these tests in the spring of their junior year. Unless you are certain the colleges you want to apply to don't require tests scores, you should plan to take one of these tests next year.

For information on how to build an impressive high school record, watch this short video!



Paying for COLLEGE



College can be expensive, but don't ever think that you can't go to college because you don't have enough money. There's a great deal of financial aid available, and there are many ways to make college affordable.

What is financial aid?

Financial aid is money that's given, earned, or lent to help students pay for college. The four kinds of financial aid are grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. Grants and scholarships are considered "free money" because they don't have to be repaid. Loans and work-study are considered "self-help" programs.

- ▶ Grants – money given, usually because of financial need
- ▶ Scholarships – money awarded for academic achievement or an outstanding talent or skill
- ▶ Work-study – money earned at a part-time job
- ▶ Loans – borrowed money that must be repaid

Ways to cut college costs

- ▶ Go to a public four-year college in your home state.
- ▶ Get an associate degree at a community college.
- ▶ Start at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two.
- ▶ Live at home instead of in a dorm or apartment.
- ▶ Go to school part-time and work your way through college.

Figuring out how to pay for college can be confusing, but there are people who can help. Your high school counselor can provide information and advice, and all colleges have financial aid counselors available to help students and parents.

COLLEGE LIFE



From dorms to campus activities, college life is full of new people and experiences. Here are a few things you can expect when you attend college.

Living in a dorm

If you go away to a four-year college, you may be required to live in a residence hall (or dorm) during your freshman year. Living in a dorm is a wonderful way to meet new people and make new friends.

College activities

Colleges offer a variety of clubs, organizations, community service opportunities, and campus events. A large university may have hundreds of activities available to students. Getting involved is a great way to meet students with similar interests and have fun.

A typical day

While every day is different, the following will give you an idea of what a typical day might look like for a college student. Notice how this student is in class for only three hours, but still has a full day!

8:00 – 8:45	Eat breakfast in the dorm cafeteria
9:00 – 9:50	CLASS – Economics 101
10:00 – 10:45	Meet Ada for coffee
11:00 – 11:50	CLASS - Psychology 125
12:00 – 1:00	Eat lunch at student union
1:00 – 3:45	Work on English paper at library
4:00 – 4:50	CLASS – English 101
5:00 – 6:00	Go to Rec Center and work out
6:15 – 6:45	Eat dinner in dining hall
7:00 – 8:30	Study group

LEARN ALL YOU CAN



If you want to learn more about what going to college is like, try doing the following.

Talk to people you know

Ask people you know to tell you about their college experience. Here are some questions to ask.

- ▶ Where did you go to college?
- ▶ What was your program or major?
- ▶ What was the best part of your college experience?
- ▶ What was the most difficult part of college for you?
- ▶ Is there anything you wish you would have done differently in college?
- ▶ Do you have any advice for me?

Do some research

Once you know what you're looking for in a college, you can do an online search at bigfuture.collegeboard.org to find the colleges that meet your specific needs.

The websites below also have excellent information for students and parents. If you have questions, or if you can't find the information you're looking for, see your school counselor.

collegeboard.org

act.org

mappingyourfuture.org

educationplanner.org

For more on how you can plan and prepare for college your sophomore year, watch this short video!



Your Sophomore TO-DO LIST



Doing the things on this to-do list will help ensure that you have lots of college options and opportunities.



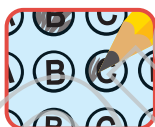
Work hard to get the best grades possible

When you apply to a college, you must submit a copy of your high school transcript. Your transcript will include your GPA, all of the courses you've taken, and all of the grades you've received beginning with grade nine. *Your sophomore grades count just as much as your junior and senior grades!*



Create a college file

Use this file to keep brochures, notes on college visits, report cards, and copies of test scores.



Consider taking a practice test

To help sophomores prepare for the ACT and SAT, some high schools offer the PSAT 10 or PreACT. Many sophomores also take the PSAT/NMSQT for practice, even though this test is primarily for juniors. Your counselor will have information on which tests are available at your school.



Develop your interests and be involved

Participate in activities in and out of school, and try to do some volunteer work. Community service, such as volunteering for a local food bank or animal shelter, is very worthwhile and impressive on any application.



Make informal college visits

Visiting different colleges is the best way to determine what kind of college will be the best fit for you. Take a walk around a college campus, go to a sporting event, or have lunch in the student union. As you walk around the campus, try to imagine yourself as a student there.



Think about a major

At some point, you must choose a major—this is the subject you will study in depth. Start thinking about your interests, talents, and abilities in terms of a possible major.



Explore your college options

Check out college websites and meet with college representatives who visit your school. Think about what you're looking for in a college and learn about the schools you want to consider.



Meet with your counselor

Talk to your counselor to make sure you're taking the courses you need for college. Discuss your college plans and ask questions. *Your counselor can help you make your college dreams a reality!*

Make College Your Goal

Decide right now that college is a goal you're going to work toward. Tell your family that you want to go to college, and ask them to help you reach your goal.

Keep your goal in mind as you go to class, do your homework, and study for tests. Remember, you're not working hard in school for your teachers or your family. *You are working hard for yourself and for your future!*

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This booklet is filled with expert advice on how to make your college dreams a reality.

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