

Prepare for a Career

Four-Year College



Why attend a 4-year college?

A four-year college education, or bachelor's degree, can open doors and provide graduates with more choices and opportunities in life. A four-year college diploma provides students with more career opportunities, greater earning potential, and the pride that comes with earning a college degree.

How do I prepare for 4-year college?

Take college prep courses

Most colleges recommend that students take the following college prep courses in high school:

- 4 years of English
- 3–4 years of math (including Alg I, Geom, & Alg II)
- 3 years of social studies
- 3 years of science
- 2–3 years of the same foreign language
- 1 year of fine or performing arts

Students who haven't taken several of the above courses may want to start at a community college or at a college's branch campus, where the admissions requirements are less competitive.

Get involved

Colleges are looking for students who are involved in meaningful activities. Look for ways to develop your interests and talents—and get involved in your school and community.



VIDEO

For the differences between high school and college, watch this quick video.

Prepare for a Career

Two-Year College



Why attend a 2-year college?

Two-year colleges are an increasingly popular college choice. They provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less.

- ▶ Two-year colleges offer programs in high-growth career fields such as healthcare, computer science, and business.
- ▶ Going to a two-year college can be an excellent choice for students who have specific career goals.
- ▶ Students who want a bachelor's degree can start at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year college.

What is a 2-year college like?

They are affordable and classes are small

- ▶ It generally costs much less to attend a two-year college than a four-year college.
- ▶ Two-year colleges keep their classes small, and hire instructors who have worked in a related career field. The law enforcement instructor, for example, might be a retired police officer.

They offer activities and services

While community colleges generally do not have dorms, most have a variety of athletic programs, clubs, and social activities, as well as support services such as counseling, career placement, and tutoring.

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Career or Trade School



Why attend a career or trade school?

Students today can prepare for many high growth careers by going to a career or trade school.

- ▶ Career and trade schools focus on teaching students the skills they need for a specific career.
- ▶ If you know what career you want to pursue, going to a career or trade school might be the right choice for you.

What is a career/trade school like?

Training is available in a variety of careers

Career and trade schools offer training for a large number of careers. Many of the most popular programs are in healthcare, business, computer science, and hospitality.

Students receive hands-on instruction

Students spend the majority of their class time in job-related settings where they receive hands-on training from experienced instructors. The student-teacher ratio is low, and students generally receive a great deal of individual attention.

Programs vary in length

While some programs take one or two years to complete, others can be completed in a matter of weeks.



VIDEO

2-year colleges offer many of the same programs. For information on 2-year colleges, watch this quick video!

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Military

Why join the military?

The United States military is the country's largest employer. Here are some benefits of enlisting:

- ▶ The military offers training in over 2,000 jobs, most of which have civilian counterparts.
- ▶ Most enlistees begin at pay grade E-1 and receive about \$1,680 a month. Pay increases steadily with rank and years of service.
- ▶ Enlistees get free housing and free medical care.
- ▶ Under the Montgomery GI Bill, enlistees who contribute to a college fund can receive \$50,000+ for college.

What are some of the options?

Enlistees generally sign up for four years of active duty. These are the military's main branches:

Army

Founded in 1775, the Army is the oldest and largest branch of the armed services. The Army is primarily responsible for land-based military operations.

Navy

The Navy's mission is to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces, and to protect and defend our right to move freely on the oceans. The US Navy is the largest navy in the world.

Air Force

The Air Force became a separate military service in 1947. It includes aviation forces for both service and combat. Air Force troops are organized, trained, and equipped for offensive and defensive air operations.

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Apprenticeship

What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship programs are an excellent way to learn a skilled trade.

- ▶ Apprenticeships are available in over 1,000 occupations. While they are available in a number of career fields, the majority of programs are in construction and manufacturing.
- ▶ Apprentices start off earning approximately half of what experienced workers earn. As their skills improve, their wages increase.

Qualifications

- ▶ Most programs require that an applicant be 18 years old and a high school graduate.
- ▶ Some programs require that applicants take an aptitude test; others require a physical exam.
- ▶ Applicants who have had experience, training, or a related job generally have an advantage.

How does an apprenticeship work?

Apprentices learn their trade through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

On-the-job training

- ▶ Apprentices start by doing simple tasks under the guidance and supervision of a journey worker. Apprentices are given more difficult work to do as their skills and knowledge increase.
- ▶ Apprentices must have at least 2,000 hours of structured, supervised work experience.
- ▶ While apprenticeship programs can last anywhere from one to six years, most apprenticeships are four-year training programs.

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Education Alternatives

What is an education alternative?

Some students may not be mentally or financially ready for the rigors of college, the military, or another post-graduate option. These students may choose to get a job and receive on-the-job training, or put their plans on hold and take a gap year. Here are some tips on how to make the most of these two options.

On-the-Job Training

Students may choose on-the-job training (OJT) to gain experience in a job field, while also making some money for college. OJT is short-term training designed to teach you what you need to know to perform a specific job. To make the most of your training, do the following:

- ▶ **Find a job in a field you're considering.**
For example, if you want a career in the fashion industry, try to get a job at a clothing store.
- ▶ **Increase your chances for advancement.**
Be polite, enthusiastic, and willing to learn. Have excellent attendance, and make every effort to get along with your co-workers and supervisors.
- ▶ **Consider additional education/training.**
Remember, you can still take a course or two, even though you don't want to attend college full-time just yet. Taking an online or in-person class will help you keep your skills sharp.

For info on education options,
watch this quick video!



VIDEO