

COLLEGE PLANNING

Activities for High
School Students



Your College Thoughts



There is no better way to work toward a bright future than to earn a college degree—but planning and preparing for college takes determination and hard work.

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following.

1. Why do you want to go to college? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> to prepare for a career | <input type="checkbox"/> to become more independent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to study a specific subject | <input type="checkbox"/> to please parents or others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to get a good job | <input type="checkbox"/> to meet new people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to play a sport | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

2. Do you feel that you're on the path to college? Why or why not?

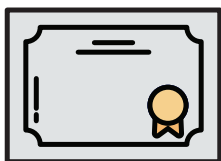
3. What concerns or questions do you have about college?

4. Who will help and support you as you plan and prepare for college?

5. Check the box that best describes how you feel about going to college.

- I definitely want to go to college and I'm doing the things I need to do.
- I want to go to college, but I need help figuring out what to do.
- I'd like to go to college, but I don't think I will be able to because _____

2-Year and 4-Year Colleges



The main reason students go to a two-year or four-year college is to prepare for their future career. In many cases, a student's career choice will determine which college option is the most appropriate for them.

Which is best for you?

2-year colleges – Two-year colleges prepare students for a career in two years or less. Students take just the courses they need to prepare for their chosen career field.

4-year colleges – Four-year colleges prepare students for a wide variety of careers. Students attending a four-year college take about half of their courses in their major (the subject they've chosen to study in-depth). The rest of their courses are in required general education courses (like English, math, and science) and electives (courses they choose to take).

Look at each career below and decide if you think someone would need to go to a 2-year or a 4-year college to prepare for that career. *Hint: You should have four checks in each column type.*

2-year **4-year**

architect

chemist

paralegal

dental hygienist

2-year **4-year**

high school teacher

auto mechanic

paramedic

engineer



For more information on 2-year and 4-year colleges, watch these quick videos.



Answers: 4-year: architect, chemist, high school teacher, engineer
2-year: paralegal, dental hygienist, auto mechanic, paramedic

Choosing a College



Knowing what you're looking for in a college will help you choose a college that will be a good fit for you.

Here are some things to think about when you're considering your college options.

Type of college

Four-year colleges offer a wide variety of majors and programs. Two-year colleges offer affordable one- and two-year career programs. Students can also start at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year college.

What type of college do you think you might be interested in?

- two-year college four-year college

Location

The location of a college is often important to students. (Remember, in-state public colleges are generally less expensive than out-of-state colleges.)

Where would you like to attend college? Check all that apply.

- in your home state in another state close to nature
 near a big city close to home Other _____

Campus size

Larger colleges offer lots of majors, programs, and activities. Smaller colleges usually have smaller classes and a more personal feel.

What size college are you most interested in attending?

- small (less than 5,000) medium (5,000–10,000) large (15,000+)

Why did you choose that campus size? _____

Areas of study

While most colleges offer popular majors (areas of study) such as business and education, not every college will offer the major you are interested in.

Do you have a specific major in mind?

Programs & activities

Colleges have a variety of programs and activities. They have music and drama programs, intramural sports, study abroad programs, and much more.

Is there something that's important to you in a college campus, such as a certain activity, sport, or program?

College costs

College can be expensive, but don't ever think that you can't afford it. Financial aid (grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study) often makes it possible for students to attend colleges that would otherwise be too expensive. If cost is a concern, be sure to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) your senior year.

very important important not that important

To do an online search for the colleges that meet your criteria, go to bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

Making a college visit is the best way to find out if a college is right for you. For information on how to get the most out of your college visits, watch this short video.



What Colleges Look For



When considering which students to accept, colleges first look at a student's grades. But grades aren't the only thing they consider!

In the right-hand column are 10 things that colleges like to see on college applications. In the left-hand column are examples of how a student might demonstrate each of them. Write in the correct letter (A-J) for items 2-10.

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u> </u> F | 1. captain of a team | A. is a good student |
| <u> </u> | 2. can play the harp | B. had a unique experience |
| <u> </u> | 3. lived in Mexico for a year | C. has overcome an obstacle |
| <u> </u> | 4. took advanced classes | D. has a special talent |
| <u> </u> | 5. gets very good grades | E. is highly thought of |
| <u> </u> | 6. volunteers at a shelter | F. has leadership skills |
| <u> </u> | 7. was hurt in a car accident | G. has good writing skills |
| <u> </u> | 8. played soccer all four years | H. takes on challenges |
| <u> </u> | 9. has great recommendations | I. is a caring person |
| <u> </u> | 10. wrote an outstanding essay | J. shows commitment |

Answers are below.

Look through the list above (A-J) and circle any that might describe you. Choose one and explain how you demonstrate that quality.

For tips on how to build an impressive high school record, check out this short video.



Paying for College



College can be expensive, but there is a great deal of financial aid available. There are also a number of ways to cut college costs.

Learn about the four types of financial aid.

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

For more information on financial aid, visit finaid.org and studentaid.gov.

Think about ways to cut college costs.

Put a check in front of any of the following that are options for you.

- ___ Go to a public four-year college in your home state.
- ___ Get an associate degree at a two-year college.
- ___ Start at a two-year college and transfer to a four-year college.
- ___ Live at home instead of in a dorm or apartment.
- ___ Go to school part-time and work to help pay for college.

Check your knowledge!

Circle true or false. (Answers are at the bottom.)

1. **T** **F** Most financial aid is awarded based on your family's financial situation.
2. **T** **F** Every student who needs money for college should complete a FAFSA.
3. **T** **F** No matter where you apply, the financial aid you receive will be the same.
4. **T** **F** You can get a loan that you don't have to start paying back until you've left college.
5. **T** **F** Students must have a B average to complete a FAFSA.

Your College To-Do List



It can be hard for college bound students to keep track of all of the things they need to do. Doing the following will help you stay on the path to college.

Work hard in your classes. When you apply to a college, you are required to submit a copy of your high school record (transcript) along with your application. Your transcript will include your GPA, all of your courses, and all of your grades.

What can you do this year to improve your academic record? _____

Meet with your counselor. Talk to your counselor to make sure you are on the right track, and that you're taking the courses you need for college. Also discuss your college plans and ask questions.

What questions do you have for your counselor? _____

Take college tests. Unless you're certain test scores aren't required at the colleges you're considering, be sure to take the ACT or SAT.

Have you taken the ACT or SAT? Yes No

If not, do you plan to take the ACT or SAT? Yes No

Learn all you can. Visit college websites, and if possible, make college visits. If you can't visit a college in person, you may be able to take a virtual tour at campustours.com or on the college's website.

Which colleges would you like to learn more about? _____
