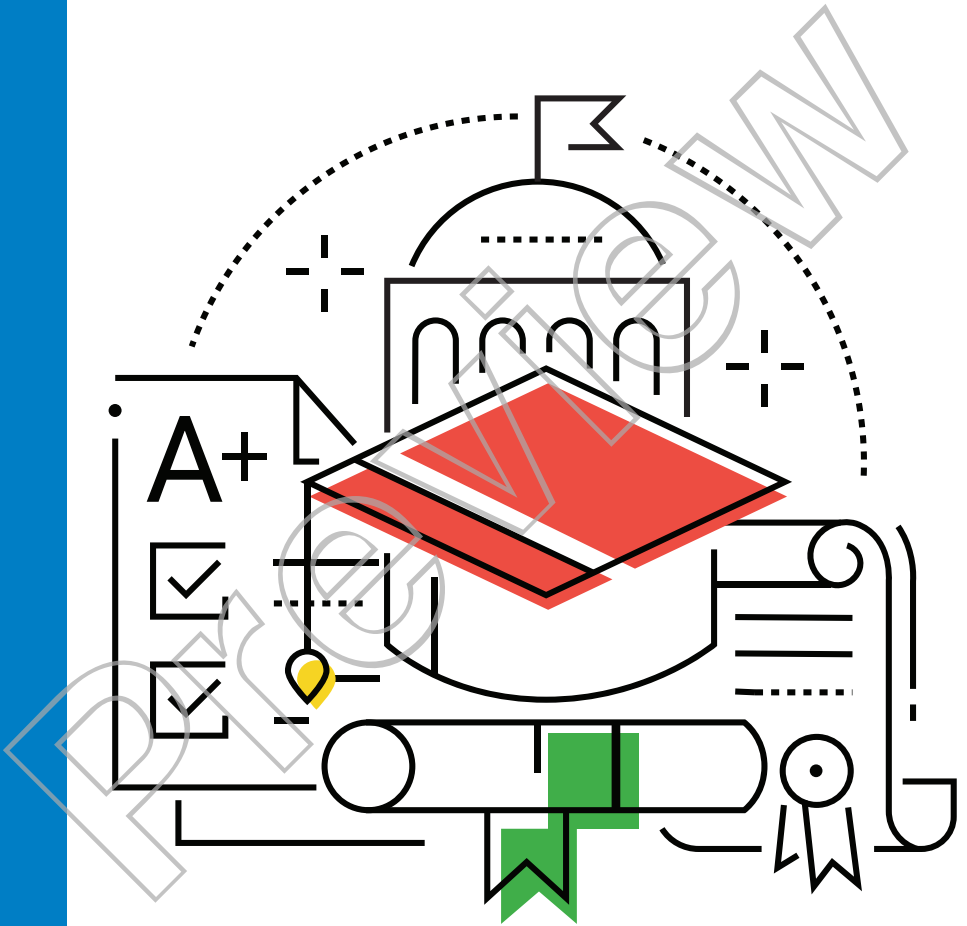


# COLLEGE PLANNING



**ACTIVITIES FOR MIDDLE  
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

# THINKING AHEAD

What do you want to do after high school? Maybe you already know. Maybe you have no idea. Both are okay. Even though you still have several years until you graduate, this is a good time to start thinking about how going to college can help you prepare for a great future.

## Why go to college?



### 1. You will have more career opportunities.

Going to college can prepare you for a career you'll enjoy—and one that's also financially rewarding.

What career or career fields are you currently interested in?

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### 2. College graduates earn more money.

Four-year college graduates earn almost twice as much money as high school graduates do. That comes out to \$1,000,000 or more over a lifetime! *The more you learn, the more you earn!*

Having a good income means that you're more likely to:

- A.** have a nice place to live.
- B.** own a car.
- C.** have money for entertainment.
- D.** take vacations.
- E.** do all of these.

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. College provides opportunities to develop and grow.

Going to college gives you the opportunity to study lots of different subjects, make new friends, and become more independent.

What can you do this year to grow and improve yourself?

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# YOUR THOUGHTS ON COLLEGE



As a middle schooler, you may not have thought too much about college, and that's okay. But now is a good time to think about college as something to consider for your future.

Do you think you want to go to college? Why or why not?

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Are there any roadblocks that might make going to college difficult for you?

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**Check the box that best describes how you feel about college.**

I definitely want to go to college and plan to work hard to get there.

I think I want to go to college, but don't know enough about it.

I don't know yet if college will be right for me.

I'd like to go to college, but don't think I will be able to because \_\_\_\_\_

I don't think going to college is right for me because \_\_\_\_\_

# 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 are interested in seeing, in addition to good grades. Write in the letter that shows how a student might demonstrate each of these.

(Answers are at the bottom of the page.)

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

Look through the 10 descriptions above (A-J) and choose one that describes you. How might you demonstrate that quality?

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# 2- AND 4-YEAR COLLEGES

Whether someone goes to a 2-year or 4-year college often depends on their career goals. For example, if you want to be a firefighter, you would go to a 2-year community college. However, if you want to become an elementary teacher, you must go to a 4-year college and earn a bachelor's degree.

## Which is best for you?

**2-Year Colleges.** Two-year community 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 variety of careers. To ensure that students get a well-rounded education, four-year colleges generally require that all students take courses in English, science, math, and social sciences.

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 4 checks in each column type.*

**2-year** **4-year**

- |                          |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Architect        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chemist          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paralegal        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dental hygienist |

**2-year** **4-year**

- |                          |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | High school teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Auto mechanic       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paramedic           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Engineer            |

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



# CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Choosing a college is about finding a college that's a good match for you. Your ideas will likely change over the next several years, but now is a good time to start thinking about what kind of college you would like to attend.



## 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 at a two-year college can also transfer to a four-year college after a year or two. What type of college do you think you might be interested in?

- Two-year college       Four-year college

## Location

Where might you want to attend college?  in your home state  
 close to nature     near a big city     in another state  
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       medium       large

# CHOOSING A COLLEGE

## Area of Study



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

Is there a specific subject you want to study?

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## Programs & Activities



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

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

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## Cost of Attendance



College can be expensive, but don't ever think that you can't afford to attend college. Financial aid (grants, loans, and scholarships) often makes it possible for students to attend colleges that would otherwise be too expensive. How important is cost to you?

very important     important     not that important

# YOUR TO-DO LIST



Doing the following will help make you a more successful person in middle school and high school. It will also help put you on the path to college.

**Work hard in your classes.** If you're considering going to college, it's very important that you work hard in your classes now so that you'll be ready to take college prep classes later on.

*What can you do this year to get better grades?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Get involved.** When you're involved in your school and community, you learn new skills, meet new people, and have fun.

*What activities and hobbies are you involved in this year?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Read.** Reading improves your vocabulary, presents you with new information and ideas, stokes your imagination, and broadens your view of the world.

*What are your favorite things to read?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Try new things.** Find out what kinds of activities, programs, and sports are available at your school and in your community.

*What's something new you would like to try this year?*

\_\_\_\_\_