

COLLEGE BOUND

A Guide for Freshmen
and Sophomores



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Dear Student,

If you're thinking about going to college, congratulations! There's no better way to prepare yourself for a bright future than to continue your education.

You can start planning and preparing for college now by working hard in your classes, exploring your college options, and developing your skills and talents.

This book will provide you with the college information you need to know—and it will show you how going to college is a goal that you can achieve!

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Why Go To COLLEGE?

There are many reasons why you should make going to college your goal. Here are three of the top reasons.

1. 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!*

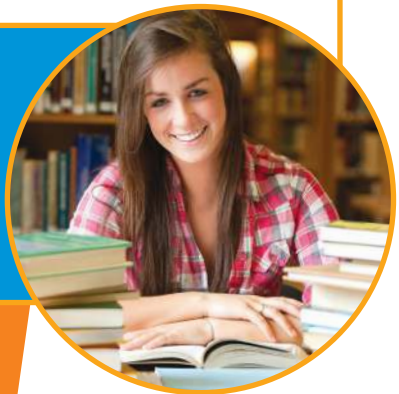
2. Greater income

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 (entertainment, hobbies, a nice car, travel, etc.).

3. Opportunities to develop and grow

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

Going to college may be hard work, but graduating from college is definitely a goal worth striving for. Having a college degree is an accomplishment you can be proud of for the rest of your life!



College Overview



Have you ever wondered what it's like to go to college? Here are a few of the things you can expect to find.

▶ **More freedom and more 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.*

▶ **Less time in class—more independent study**

College students spend about half as much time in class as high school students do, but they spend a lot more time studying on their own.

▶ **More emphasis on tests and less busywork**

Homework grades often make up only a small portion of your grade. In many cases, the midterm, a term paper, and/or the final exam make up most of your final grade.

Jack is a freshman at a four-year college. This is a typical day for him.

7:30 – 8:00	Get up, shower, get dressed
8:00 – 8:45	Eat breakfast in the dorm cafeteria
9:00 – 9:50	CLASS – Economics 101 – Schaeffer Hall
10:00 – 10:45	Study with Kate at the Student Center
11:00 – 11:50	CLASS - Psychology 125 – Rizer Hall
12:00 – 1:00	Eat lunch at East Quad cafeteria
1:00 – 3:45	Library – do research for English paper
4:00 – 4:50	CLASS – English 101 – Lindsey Hall
5:00 – 5:50	Go to Rec Center – jog and work out
6:00 – 7:30	Eat dinner at Student Union with John
7:30 – 9:00	Study for Psychology test

As you can see, even though Jack is in class less than three hours, he has a full day.

2-Year or 4-Year COLLEGE?



Will a 2-year or 4-year college be the right choice for you?

2-Year College

Two-year colleges (community and technical colleges) are less expensive than four-year colleges, and they offer programs that make it possible to begin your career after one or two years.

4-Year College

Four-year colleges offer more courses and a wider variety of extracurricular activities. A four-year college degree can also open more doors and provide more career opportunities than a two-year degree.

A comparison of 2-year and 4-year colleges

	2-Year	4-Year
Average yearly tuition cost (public in-state college)	\$3,500	\$9,900
All high school graduates are accepted	Yes	No
ACT/SAT usually required	No	Yes
Students live in dorms	No	Yes
The average yearly earnings of graduates	\$43,500 (Associate's Degree)	\$61,000 (Bachelor's Degree)

In order to save money, many students start at a two-year college and then transfer to a four-year college. A two-year college is also a great option for students who aren't quite ready to go to a four-year college.

Some Popular Programs and Majors

2-Year College	4-Year College
Automotive technology	Biology
Business management	Business
Computer information systems	Communications
Dental assisting / dental hygiene	Computer science
Engineering technology	Engineering
Medical lab technology	Education
Paralegal	Nursing
Radiologic technology	Psychology

*Most colleges have a wide variety of majors.
For a list of the majors at a specific college, visit their website.*

One Big Difference

Students in one and two-year programs spend most of their time taking the courses they need to prepare for a specific career. For example, art students take art classes; students studying automotive technology spend their time working on cars.

As a rule, four-year colleges want their students to get a broad-based education. All students are therefore required to take a number of general education courses (English, science, history, math, etc.), regardless of their major.

Other Educational Options

Career, trade, and specialty schools (art schools, culinary schools, etc.) are additional options. Students can also receive career training through apprenticeship programs and the military.

Build an Impressive Record

You are required to submit a copy of your high school record (transcript) along with your application for admission.

Here is how you can build an impressive high school record.



1. Take college prep courses

In order to be prepared for college level work, four-year colleges recommend that students take the following college prep courses in high school:

4 years of English

3-4 years of math (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II)

3-4 years of science

2-3 years of the same foreign language

3 years of social studies

1 year of fine or performing arts

Make a Four-Year Plan

A four-year plan is a listing of the courses you plan to take each year in high school. If you want to go to a four-year college, try to make a plan that includes all of the above courses.

If you haven't made a four-year plan yet, now is the time to do so. For help and advice, see your counselor.

2. Get good grades

Colleges consider the grades earned in college prep courses to be the most important criteria for college admissions. The stronger your courses and the higher your grades, the more college choices you will have.

Remember, you aren't working to get good grades for your parents or for anyone else. You are working hard in your classes for yourself—and for your future.

To learn how you can improve your high school record, see your counselor.

3. Prepare for college tests

Most four-year colleges require that applicants submit ACT or SAT scores. Students should take these tests in the spring of their junior year. *Taking college prep courses is the best way to prepare for these tests.*

4. Be involved in activities

Colleges are looking for students who are active in their school and community. They are also looking for students who have leadership abilities, unique experiences, and an interest in community service.

Colleges want to see students engaged in meaningful activities—playing a sport, working on the yearbook, being in the band, volunteering at charity events, etc. Quality is more important than quantity!



Things to Consider

You don't need to decide which colleges you want to apply to until your senior year—but now is the time to start thinking about what's important to you in a college.

To find the colleges that will be a good match for you, consider the following:

Type of College

Do you want to go to a two-year 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? While most colleges offer popular majors such as business, not every college will offer the major you may be interested in.



If you have a favorite subject, or a class that you do well in, learn as much as you can about the careers and majors related to that subject.



Special Programs

Perhaps you want to go to a college with a boy's soccer team, an orchestra, or a 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 an important consideration for most students. Talk to your parents about how your education will be paid for. Will you need to get financial aid? Will you apply for scholarships?

Don't ever think that you can't go to college because you don't have enough money. Financial aid is available for families who qualify, and there are many ways to make college affordable.

To get an estimate of the federal financial aid you may be eligible for, use the FAFSA4caster at fafsa.ed.gov.

Start Searching Online

To find the colleges that might be a good match for you, go to bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

Your To Do List



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/class rank, all of the courses you've taken, and all of the grades you've received, beginning with grade nine.

Your freshman and 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, copies of test scores, etc.



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 do some volunteer work. Community service, such as volunteering for a local food bank or animal shelter is very worthwhile, and it's impressive on any application.

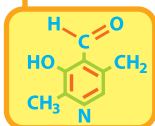
Colleges are looking for students who have something that makes them stand out. If you have a specific interest, talent, or passion, take time this year to develop it.





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.



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.

Got Questions?

Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about college.

Q. How hard is it to get into college?

A. Some colleges accept all high school graduates until the spaces are filled. Other colleges are more selective and harder to get into. If you apply to colleges whose students have academic records (grades and test scores) similar to yours, you are very likely to be accepted.

Q. What if I haven't taken all of the recommended college prep courses?

A. You may need to take some additional or remedial courses in college. If there are a number of college prep courses you haven't taken, you may want to start at a community college or a branch campus.

Q. What if I don't know what I want to major in?

A. Many students go to college with an undecided major. These students spend their first year taking their general education classes (English, math, history, science, etc.).

Q. Am I allowed to change my major?

A. Yes. Many students change their major in college.



Q. What if I don't have the money to go to college?

A. There is a great deal of financial aid available for families who need help paying for college. Talk to your parents and your counselor about your concerns, and plan to apply for financial aid your senior year.

Q. What if I want to play a sport in college?

A. College athletes need to meet specific eligibility requirements. Talk to your counselor to make sure you're taking the right courses, and to discuss NCAA requirements.

Q. Where do I go for additional information?

A. The following websites have a great deal of excellent information. For personal advice, see your counselor.

- bigfuture.collegeboard.org
- www.educationplanner.org
- nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator
- www.mappingyourfuture.org



Looking Ahead

Your junior and senior years are going to be very busy! During your junior year you will need to take college tests, make college visits, and narrow the list of schools you want to apply to.

In the fall/winter of your senior year, you will fill out applications for admission—and perhaps apply for financial aid. In the spring, you will make the decision of where you'll go to college.

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**This book is filled with
expert advice on how to
make your college
dream a reality.**



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