

How to Go to College

**THE COLLEGE AND
CAREER PLANNING HANDBOOK
FOR GRADES 8 AND 9**



GEAR

UP



Believe In Yourself. Go To College.

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Inside you'll find activities and case studies you can explore on your own, in a small classroom group, or with family and friends. A glossary of definitions is at the end of the book.



Getting Started

It's time to face facts. Your life is changing fast. Remember elementary school? It probably seems like ages ago. Now, that big question is staring you in the face: What are you going to do with your life after you graduate from high school?

Some of you already have a good idea of what you will do after high school. For others, this is a tough question. You might have fuzzy ideas of what you want to do in the future, but you may not know what steps to take to reach your goal.

Until now, you haven't been able to choose many classes in school. Most middle or junior high school students take the same classes. In high school, things are different. You'll have more freedom, more choices, and more challenges. But there is a catch. You get to make more decisions, but you also have to live with the effects of your choices. This change is only the beginning.

Just as high school classes build on the things you learn in middle school or junior high, the things you choose to learn and do in high school will be the foundation of your future. The decisions you make now, good or bad, will have a big impact on your options after high school.

That's why it's a good idea to start thinking about your future now— to make the most of high school and get a head start on the rest of your life.

So, how can this handbook help?

The College and Career Planning Handbook gives you five steps and lots of activities to help guide your high school choices and prepare you for college and beyond. This handbook is not going to tell you what to do with your life, but it will give you strategies and tips to help you figure it out on your own.

Let's get started!

Learn for Life



One of the best things you can do after high school graduation is continue your education. Education prepares you for fast-paced changes in the world of work. And extra training or education after high school gives you more career and job options to consider.

Recent studies show that college graduates:

- ▶ Earn more money
- ▶ Live longer
- ▶ Have better overall health
- ▶ Are less likely to be unemployed
- ▶ Are more likely to enjoy their work
- ▶ Can change careers more easily

College graduates enjoy many benefits, but a college degree by itself is not a guarantee of success. Even college graduates need to continue learning, growing, and building their skills. This mindset, called lifelong learning, applies to almost all jobs and careers.

Average yearly income of all workers ages 18 and up

Didn't finish high school	GED or high school diploma	Some college no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
\$14,349	\$23,233	\$27,260	\$31,684	\$53,043

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1999.

Case Study

Lifelong learning is a reality for most workers today.

Would you select a brain surgeon whose last training was 30 years ago? Not likely. You'd want a surgeon who kept up with the latest medical developments and trends.

Store cashiers have to learn new scanning equipment and price codes regularly, and carpenters need to know about the latest building materials and construction methods.

In a small group, name at least five other jobs that require lifelong learning.

- ▶ How have those five jobs changed in the last few years?
- ▶ Has technology changed the job tasks?
- ▶ How do you think jobs will change in the future?
- ▶ What new skills do you think workers will need?
- ▶ Do you know any lifelong learners?

All right. Some of you might be thinking, “I still don’t want to go to college,” or “My grades aren’t good enough and my family can’t pay anyway.” If you are thinking that way, you are half right. You need good grades and some money to go to college. But there are other important factors too, like determination, hard work, and planning. If you do well in school and you plan ahead, you can find the money to go to college.



Fiction: “College is only for smart, rich kids who get all A’s and B’s in school.”

Fact: Whatever your needs, career goals, or interests, there is a higher education program to match. It is important to get the best grades you can and take challenging classes. But higher education programs are available for students with all kinds of grades, as long as you’re willing to work at it.

Plus, money does not have to hold you back. Financial aid is available to help students and their families pay for college.

Fiction: “You don’t really need a higher education. Most rich people never went to college or dropped out of school anyway.”

Fact: Very few people become rich without some kind of education beyond high school. That is why you hear so much about them. They are different and they stand out. Does it make sense to quit a good job because you bought a lottery ticket or felt lucky? Probably not. The odds are against you winning the lottery.

Right now, your job is to do well in school. Don’t slack off or go easy with your studies. Chances are you will need a solid education to have the kind of life you want.

Fiction: “College isn’t as good as going to a trade school and learning a skill.”

Fact: In this handbook, you will see the word “college”, but we really mean any kind of higher education. Higher education includes all training programs or schools for high school graduates or people with GED certificates. Voc-tech or trade schools are included in this, too. The type of college you choose will depend on your individual abilities, interests, and goals. No path is better than any other.

A higher education is probably the fastest way to reach your career goals. But there isn’t one type of education that fits all people or one type of degree that everyone should have. College and career planning is a very personal process that starts with you and lasts a lifetime.

Step 1: Discover Yourself

Who are you, and what do you want?

If you ever find a permanent answer to that question, you'll be the first person on earth to do so. Most adults don't know what they want to do with the rest of their lives. No one expects you to know exactly what you want to do when you grow up either. Instead, the goal is to get you thinking about your likes or dislikes and how your interests can help you find a career direction.

On the other hand, you might already know what you want to do after high school. If so, that's great. You are ahead of the game. But it's still a good idea to work through this section and think about your interests in more detail. Your interests, likes, and dislikes change over time. You might discover a job that more closely matches the interests you have today.

To help you think more about your own interests and abilities, visit your school career or guidance counselor and talk about your ideas for the future. Talk to a parent, family friend, teacher, or friend. With help, you can develop a really good idea of who you are, including your:

▶ Interests

These are things that you like to do or that you've always wanted to do. Think about your favorite hobbies or pastimes. What subjects do you enjoy? What sports do you play just for fun? Do you prefer to work with people, ideas, numbers and calculations, or things?

▶ Abilities

Abilities are activities and things you can do well. What are your special talents or gifts? Are there things that just come naturally to you? If so, what are they?

▶ Values and Priorities

Values are not good or bad, right or wrong. They are simply rules or guidelines that you use to make decisions. Everyone's values are a little bit different. Some people express their values publicly, like saying "Treat others the way you want to be treated." Others show their values by example, like choosing to spend time with friends instead of a pesky younger brother, sister, or cousin. Each day you make choices based on your values and priorities, or what is most important to you. The job you do everyday, whether it's school work or professional work, should reflect your values, too.

Think about your values and the types of careers that match. How important to you are education, knowledge, and recognition? How much do you value the environment, safety, money, family, friends, and being yourself? These are the tough questions that will help you figure out which jobs are right for you.

Free interest inventory questionnaires are available on the Internet. These can help you discover your interests and abilities.

- ▶ www.myroad.com
- ▶ www.ncsu.edu/careerkey/you
- ▶ www.review.com/career
- ▶ www.psychometrics.com/scales/values.htm

► Money Matters

Will you be responsible for financially supporting other people? If you have a grandparent, parent, or child to support, you might not be able to get by with a minimum wage job. Consider the education you will need to meet your financial commitments and get the job you want.

► Physical Considerations

Physical challenges can be an important part of some jobs. You might be required to lift heavy objects or maintain a strenuous pace. Decide how much physical labor you are willing or able to do. Also, consider any physical or learning disabilities that might require special assistance or services.

► Academic Goals

How long do you want to stay in school? Many careers and professions require you to study for 2, 4, 6, or even 8 years after high school. What level of expertise do you want to achieve?

Use the answers to these questions to think about who you are and what you want for your future. This is a type of personal profile: a mental picture of who you are and what you want.

If you're having trouble thinking about your interests, abilities, and values, talk to a school or guidance counselor, teacher, family member, or friend. Guidance counselors often have interest inventories or short questionnaires to help you narrow your career focus and better understand your strengths and weaknesses. And, parents, friends, and teachers can often point out talents you aren't aware you have.

Discovering your interests is the first step to finding the right career path for you and making the most of your education.

Case Study

Jared is always fiddling with his guitar. In school, his teachers praise his music and encourage him to play. But his cousin, Dawn, warns that fiddlers don't make money, saying, "Jared has such good math grades that he should go into computers." Jared likes computers, too, and wants to make his family happy. But he's very confused. In a small group, discuss Jared's interests, abilities, values, and needs.

- What does Jared like or dislike, and what is important to him?
- Can you pick out some of Jared's values?
- What steps could Jared take to focus on a career path?
- Does Jared have to choose a career path right away?
- If you were Jared, what would you do?

Activity Ideas

- a) Visit your school guidance counselor and take an interest inventory. Make an appointment to discuss the results and talk about your plans.
- b) List some of your skills and abilities. Are you good at organization, drawing, writing, or fixing machines? List some areas where you would like to improve or get more experience.
- c) On a scale of 1-10 (ten being highest), how important to you are prestige, recognition, the environment, safety, money, family, friends, being yourself, fitting in, honor, intelligence, charity, kindness, faith, and fun? Talk to a guidance counselor, family member, or friend about how your answers can help you plan for college and careers.

Step 2: Explore Your Options

What's the best job in the world?

The one that's right for you!

It might sound crazy, but with hard work and advance planning, it's possible to earn a living doing exactly what you like. Someone has to create video games, design roller coasters, become the vice president, or tap dance on Broadway. Why not you?

Remember in the last section, when you learned about developing a personal profile and discovering your interests? The next step in finding a career that you'll love is matching your personal profile (abilities, interests, and needs) with different career clusters and jobs.

If you haven't yet talked to your school's career or guidance counselor, now would be a good time. Meet with your guidance counselor to take an interest inventory. These short quizzes ask you questions like: Do you like to build things? Do you like to analyze things? Or, do you like to help people? There is no right or wrong answer to the questions, and in the end, your interest inventory results will suggest career clusters that you might like.

Career Clusters

Career clusters are groups of jobs or professions that require similar interests, skills, and abilities. Check out the career cluster chart to see the jobs and professions that match each cluster.

Interest inventories help you focus on a few career clusters, but their results are only suggestions. Your likes and dislikes change over time. Research all career clusters and jobs that interest you, not just those suggested by your interest inventory.

Also, jobs can fit into more than one career cluster. Web designers, for example, mix business, technology, and graphic design. Consider jobs that combine all of your interests.

Career Cluster	Agriculture and Natural Resources	Art, Media, Design, and Communications	Manufacturing, Construction, and Transportation	Business, Management, and Finance	Education, Social, and Health Services	Services and Hospitality	Engineering, Science, and Technology	Machine Repair and Operations
Jobs	Farmer/Rancher Veterinarian Timber Harvester Forest Ranger Geologist Surveyor	Actor Graphic Designer Spokesperson Librarian Director Journalist	General Contractor Millwright Plumber Truck Driver Electrician Line Worker	Accountant Stock Broker Business Owner Manager Marketing Specialist Secretary	Teacher Social Worker Police Officer Firefighter Doctor Physical Therapist	Hotel Clerk Cosmetologist Travel Agent Hostess Flight Attendant Cashier	Engineer Programmer Scientist Architect Computer Systems Analyst	HVAC Technician Air Traffic Controller Cable Technician Data Entry Clerk Auto Mechanic TV/VCR Repairman
Career Focus	Working with and managing resources in the natural world.	Using ideas and information to communicate with people.	Working with objects to create, move, change, or build things.	Working with data, numbers, and people in the business world.	Working to help people and solve social problems.	Working to meet the comfort and recreational needs of people.	Using ideas to develop, change, or understand things.	Using data and information to operate or repair things.
Other Information	Agriculture and natural resources work is often done in open outdoor spaces. Many people work 50 hours or more each week. Educational requirements vary widely.	Communications professions are very competitive. Creativity, reading, writing, and critical thinking are very important. Educational requirements vary widely.	Industrial careers usually require on-the-job or apprenticeship training that can last up to five years. Generally, workers must be in good physical condition.	Management professionals usually work in offices with computers, budgets, and accounts. These jobs often require a two- or four-year degree.	Human services workers need excellent communication skills. Most jobs in this cluster require at least two years of college and many require more.	This is the largest cluster of jobs in the U.S. Many require on-the-job training only. However, some positions do require a college degree, license, or certificate.	Workers in this cluster design structures, improve technology, and develop new medicines. These jobs typically require at least a four-year degree.	Equipment operators and repairers work in offices, homes, businesses, construction areas, and more. Most jobs require on-the-job or apprenticeship training.

Researching Careers

Find out what jobs and career clusters are like in the real world, and what opportunities will be available in the future. You certainly don't want to study a long time to become a VCR repairman if everyone knows that DVD's are the wave of the future. Get information about job growth trends, wages, benefits, and working conditions before you decide on a career.

There are several ways you can get this kind of career information. The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Online, www.bls.gov, offers information about career clusters in the *Career Guide to Industries*. The career guide tells you which skills, abilities, and interests are important for each career cluster, what jobs are available in each cluster, and what earnings and benefits are available in each cluster.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics Online also has information about specific jobs. Every two years, the bureau publishes the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. This tells you what workers do on the job, how much training and education is needed for the job, and how many jobs will be available in the future. All of these things can help you decide if a career cluster or job is the right one for you.

If you don't have Internet access, many public libraries have hard copies of the *Career Guide to Industries* and the *Occupational Handbook* for you to review. And talk to your school or guidance counselor. They can usually give you information about careers in your city or town.

Case Study

Cindy loves to spend hours working in the garage with her uncle. She likes to take things apart and put them back together again. Her algebra teacher is impressed by her math skills and always tells her that she is a future engineer. But Cindy is starting to worry because her friends don't act or think like her anymore, and some kids at school are starting to tease her. In a small group, discuss Cindy's interests, abilities, values, and needs.

- ▶ Which career clusters match Cindy's personal profile?
- ▶ Where could Cindy look to find information on careers?
- ▶ What are some of Cindy's special challenges?
- ▶ What advice would you give Cindy to help her find the right path?

Activity Ideas

- a) List 10-15 activities and subjects that you enjoy (or use your list from a previous exercise). Decide whether each activity involves people, things, ideas, or data (numbers and figures) and write down your answers. Based on your answers, what do you most like to work with: people, things, ideas, or data? Which career clusters match your interests?
- b) Identify five jobs that interest you and research them using the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Career Guide to Industries*. Talk to a school counselor, parent, or friend about those jobs.

When You
Do what you
Love,
work is Joy.

Opportunities for Success

Which degree or certificate will you need to reach your goals? How is a lawyer's education different from a teacher's education? Let's explore your opportunities for success.

When you research career fields and clusters, you'll notice that certain jobs require four-year degrees or more, while others require two-year degrees, certificates, or apprenticeship training. What, exactly, do these things mean?

Well, colleges offer three kinds of degrees: undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. Undergraduate degrees are usually for people who haven't yet completed a four-year or bachelor's degree program. Graduate degrees offer classes that are more advanced for people who already have a bachelor's degree. Professional degrees, such as those given to doctors and lawyers, also require more education. Generally, the higher the degree, the more you have to learn, and the more time it will take to finish the program.

Even if you're not sure which career cluster you want to pursue, it's still a good idea to understand the types of training you can get from different colleges and what it takes to complete a college degree. Then, when you make a career decision, you know you've considered all of your options and chosen the best one for you.

The following chart gives you some good ideas about the level of education required for a few jobs and professions. Think about the career clusters and jobs that interest you. What kind of higher education do they require?

Undergraduate Programs

Certificate programs

Certificates in subjects like bookkeeping or word processing prepare you for entry-level professional jobs. Others, like certificates in network administration, human services, and emergency medical technician, add to the college education you already have and increase existing job skills.

Apprenticeship programs

Apprenticeship programs combine classroom study with on-the-job training. Journey-level workers or trade professionals supervise you while you learn a skilled trade, like plumbing, masonry, firefighting, or carpentry. Students in apprenticeship programs are called trainees or apprentices.

Associate's degree programs

Many associate's degrees concentrate on the skills you need for specific careers, like electronics or early childhood education. With some associate's degrees, you can transfer to a four-year college, complete just two more years of college, and get a bachelor's degree.

Bachelor's degree programs

Bachelor's or four-year degrees can be used for many different careers because they include general and specific courses. Usually, students choose one or two subjects to study in depth. These subjects are called majors or areas of concentration.

Graduate and Professional Degrees

Master's degree programs








Master's degree students usually have a bachelor's degree, some work experience, and the desire to continue studying a specific field. These programs add to the information you learn in undergraduate classes and help you to advance your career. People often earn Master of Business Administration (MBA) degrees to get ahead in the business world.

Professional degree programs

These programs require advanced study of a profession like veterinary science, law, or social work. To work in these career fields, you often have to pass a state or national exam. Professional degree programs prepare you for the exams and the work world. Professional degrees include MD for doctors, DDS for dentists, and JD for lawyers.

Doctoral degree programs

Doctoral (PhD) degrees are the highest degrees offered by colleges. They are awarded in subjects like history, biology, and music. These programs can take many years to complete because you have to research an original topic, write a lengthy research paper, and defend your research in front of a panel of experts.

Certificate	Apprenticeship	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Professional degree	Doctoral degree
 <p data-bbox="79 756 308 906">High school diploma or GED plus 1 to 2 years -or- Associate's/bachelor's degree plus 1 to 2 years</p> <p data-bbox="79 922 254 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="350 756 579 813">High school diploma or GED plus 2 to 3 years</p> <p data-bbox="350 922 525 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="636 756 865 813">High school diploma or GED plus 2 to 4 years</p> <p data-bbox="636 922 810 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="919 756 1148 813">High school diploma or GED plus 4 to 6 years</p> <p data-bbox="919 922 1094 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="1203 756 1432 813">Bachelor's degree plus 1 to 2 years</p> <p data-bbox="1203 922 1377 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="1491 756 1719 813">Bachelor's degree plus 3 to 4 years</p> <p data-bbox="1491 922 1665 946">Jobs/Professions</p>	 <p data-bbox="1782 756 2011 813">Bachelor's or master's degree plus 5 to 7 years</p> <p data-bbox="1782 922 1957 946">Jobs/Professions</p>
<ul data-bbox="79 979 308 1382" style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical or Dental Assistant • Physical Therapist • Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) • Pharmacy Technician • Truck Driver • Clerk • Data Processor • Paralegal/Legal Assistant • Bookkeeper • Day Care Worker • Instructional Aide • Library Technician • School Secretary 	<ul data-bbox="350 979 579 1382" style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispensing Optician • Stone Mason • Electrician • Plumber • Clerk • Data Processor • Paralegal/Legal Assistant • Bookkeeper • Day Care Worker • Instructional Aide • Library Technician • School Secretary • Photo Processing Technician • Printing Press Operators 	<ul data-bbox="636 979 865 1438" style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) • Radiology Technician • Paramedic • Medical Transcriptionist • Home Health Aide • Drafter • Engineering Technician • Human Resources Benefits Specialist • Administrative Assistant • Court Reporter • Preschool Teacher • Case Worker • Announcer • Production Assistant • Sound Technician 	<ul data-bbox="919 979 1148 1438" style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurse (RN) • Science Teacher • Laboratory Assistant • Architect • Engineer • Land Surveyor • Financial Planner • Loan Officer • Stock Broker • Computer Programmer • Teacher (Kindergarten and up) • Case Manager/Social Worker • Script Writer • Dance Instructor • Cartoonist • Photographer 	<ul data-bbox="1203 979 1432 1409" style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician Assistant (PA) • Researcher • Hospital Administrator • Marriage/Family Counselor • Marketing Analyst • Counselor • Principal • Clinical Social Worker • Senior Administrator • Managing Director • Physical Therapist • Museum Curator • Speech Pathologist • Community College Instructor 	<ul data-bbox="1491 979 1719 1268" style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor • Veterinarian • Lawyer • Dentist • Psychiatrist • Pharmacist • Priest or Minister • Chiropractor • Podiatrist • Optometrist 	<ul data-bbox="1782 979 2011 1239" style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthropologist • Research Scientist • Economist • Superintendent • College Professor • Psychiatrist • Psychologist • Physicist • Astronomer

School Choice

Did you know that some higher education programs that can lead to very profitable careers aren't offered at four-year colleges? Sometimes, the best way to a great career is through a two-year college, or vocational school. Other times a four-year college is the only way to get the job of your dreams.

► Four-year colleges and universities

are popular choices for students who go to college right after high school. These can be public, like the University of Washington, or, private, like Gonzaga University. State and federal governments operate public colleges. Private organizations and religious groups operate private colleges. Both types offer certificates, bachelor's (sometimes called four-year degrees), master's, professional, and doctoral degrees in broad subject areas like business administration, history, or biology.

► Two-year colleges

are usually called community and technical colleges. Examples of these include Yakima Valley Community College and Bates Technical College. They offer associate's degrees (sometimes called two-year degrees) and certificate programs. Washington community and technical college programs are in areas like computer programming, graphic design, early childhood education, automotive technology, and culinary arts, to name a few. You can also go to a two-year college and transfer to a four-year school later on.

► Private vocational colleges

are sometimes called voc-tech or trade schools. They offer apprentice and journeyman programs for skilled tradesmen and technicians like plumbers, machinists, electricians, or carpenters. The length of each program varies, but many can take three or more years to complete.

► Proprietary or for-profit schools

can offer master's and bachelor's degrees, but most offer associate's degrees or certificates in office management, medical assistance, cosmetology, dental hygiene, computer systems engineering, and more. Examples of proprietary schools include Bryman Technical College, City University, ITT Technical Institute, or Clare's Beauty College. Although the length of each program varies, many take less than one year to complete.

To participate in any of these higher education programs, you have to apply. Each college has different admissions requirements and rules. So, make sure you know how to get into the school of your choice.

Did You Know?

If you earn an associate of arts or sciences degree at a Washington community or technical college, you can transfer your associate's degree coursework to any four-year public college or university in the state, go to school for another two years, and complete a bachelor's degree.

To search for more information about colleges and universities, visit:

- College Is Possible www.collegeispossible.org
- College Net www.collegenet.com
- College Express www.collegexpress.com
- Making School Count www.makingitcount.com

Service to Your Country

Community Service

Did you know you can help others and get money to help pay for college? AmeriCorps puts volunteers to work in their communities. Members can gain valuable experience and earn scholarship money for college. More than 50,000 people participate in national community service programs. Check out the AmeriCorps Web site for more information.

U.S. Armed Forces

The U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marines give you the chance to lead others, learn new skills, travel the world, meet new people, and test your character, all at the same time. The military also offers sign-on bonuses and money for college.

Military fields of work are like career clusters. You could choose a job in human services, media and public affairs, health care, engineering, combat specialty, transportation, and more. There are more than 4,100 different jobs to choose from.

Military jobs can be full-time (active duty) or part-time (reserve duty), and you don't have to enlist right after high school. You can join the military after college as an entry-level supervisor or officer. Military training can lead to exciting careers in or out of the military.

► The Service Academies

These four-year military colleges are run by the government and have names like West Point and Annapolis. They offer students or cadets a free education and monthly allowance. In return, students agree to serve in the military on active duty for at least five years. Competition to get into the academies is extremely fierce.

► Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

During college, and on top of regular classes, students take military science courses. Cadets wear uniforms once a week and participate in military training activities during the summer.

► Officer Candidate Schools (OCS) or Officer Training Schools (OTS)

After graduating from college, you can apply to go to an OCS or OTS. These schools are 10-week to 17-week intensive physical and leadership training programs.

For more information about military and community service programs, visit:

AmeriCorps	www.wa.gov/wcncs
Information, all branches of military service	www.todaysmilitary.com
Army	www.goarmy.com
Navy	www.navyjobs.com
Air Force	www.airforce.com
Marines	www.marines.com
Coast Guard	www.gocoastguard.com
National Guard	www.ngb.dtic.mil

For more information about the U.S. military academies, visit:

U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York	www.usma.edu
U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland	www.usna.edu
U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado	www.usafa.edu
U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut	www.cga.edu

If you're interested in the military and want to see what life is like for soldiers, sailors, and air personnel, consider joining the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC).

JROTC is a high school course you take during the regular school day. It's also an after-school activity. Just like ROTC in college, cadets wear uniforms once a week and on special occasions. They learn how to motivate others, study, take tests, and interview for jobs. Some cadets go to summer camps to train on obstacle courses, play team sports, and learn land navigation and water safety techniques.

There are many reasons to serve your country. These options might be right for you.

Step 3: Set Goals

By now, you've probably thought a lot about your plans for high school and beyond. Hopefully, you've talked to a parent, friend, family member, or school counselor about your options. Maybe you've even chosen a career or educational path.

The next question is, "How will you get there from here?" The answer is to set SMART goals. Setting goals and reaching them helps increase your drive, improve your self-esteem and performance, and give you focus.

Imagine being lost in a forest and following a star to safety. That far-away star gives you a sense of direction – an idea of where you're headed. Goals do the same thing. They help guide you toward something you want. When you are focused on a goal, you are less likely to be distracted by small or unimportant things.

Setting SMART Goals

All goals are not created equal. SMART goals challenge you to get things done on time. They also help you track your progress and record your achievements. Not-so-SMART goals can be unclear and unrealistic.

S

Specific

For example, instead of saying, "My goal is to be a doctor," try, "I will earn an M.D. degree by my 30th birthday." Be specific about what you want to accomplish and when you plan to finish.

M

Measurable

With a smart goal, you can set up milestones along the way to measure your progress. If your goal is simply to get a degree, how will you know when you've reached the goal? A degree could mean 2, 4, or even 8 years of study. A SMART goal would be, "I want to earn a bachelor's degree by age 24."

A

Achievable and ambitious

Make sure your goals are reasonable, too. If your goal is set too high, you might get discouraged and give up. If your goal isn't challenging enough, you could miss out on a sense of achievement when you reach the finish line. Decide what stands between you and your goal and what information or help you will need. Allow plenty of time to get information and overcome any challenges.



R

Relevant to you

SMART goals are those that are important to you. It is easy to let other people set goals for you based on what they want. But goals set by others can be difficult to reach because your heart isn't in it.

T

Trial and error

Your interests change as you grow older. Goals that fit you now may not suit you later. Don't be afraid to get off track, make mistakes, or adjust your goals. Be determined and persistent as you go after your dreams, but don't feel obligated to follow a goal as your life and interests change.

“ True
Genius is a
Mind Focused in
One particular
Direction.”

Samuel Johnson

Finally

No matter how hard you try to set a SMART goal and stick with it, you might discover that your goal is too easy, too hard, or just not right for you. If that happens, try to learn from the experience and do better next time.

- ▶ Do you need to put in more effort?
- ▶ Do you need more information? If so, talk to a family member, friend, teacher, or counselor for help.
- ▶ Was your goal unrealistic?
- ▶ Or, did something beyond your control cause problems for you?

Take time to evaluate your progress, adjust your goals, and celebrate your achievements.

Step 4: Develop an Action Plan

Imagine your long-term goals as clouds in the sky. How are you going to reach the clouds? A ladder might help, right? Step by step, a ladder helps you move closer to your dreams. That's what action planning is all about: setting short-term goals and planning the steps that will help you reach them.

Planning For The Future

One of the best ways you can plan for college or work is to create a four-year high school course plan. When you make a course plan, you map out the classes you need to take each year to reach your career and academic goals.

There's a sample course plan on page 33 for you to review.

When you register for classes, take your course plan with you. Check off each of the classes you've taken and consider those you still need to take. This way you can ensure you're on track to graduate from high school and go on to college or work.

If you have a hard time keeping track of papers, ask your school guidance counselor to put your completed course plan in your student file. This gives you a reason to visit your counselor more often to discuss your progress. It also helps your counselor learn more about you and keep up with your progress. Later, when you request letters of recommendation for colleges and scholarships, your counselor will know what to write.

Getting Ready for College

High school graduation requirements vary from school to school and district to district. All high school graduates must meet minimum state standards, and you'll learn about those here. But your high school or school district can add extra requirements. Make sure you check with your school counselor to find out what the graduation requirements are for your specific school.

In middle school or junior high, choices are basic. Take math, science, English or language arts, and social studies every year. These are core courses. If there is room in your schedule for more, sign up for classes in art, music, or world language. Increase the difficulty of your schedule by taking honors or advanced classes or by taking pre-algebra or algebra 1 before you reach high school. Studies show that students who take algebra 1 before high school are more likely to go to college. Not all schools offer these options, so check with your teachers and school counselor for details.

As a high school student, you need to take classes in English, social studies, math, and science, too. But you'll have to add classes in occupational education, Washington state history, health, or physical education (PE), and other electives. Washington high schools will also require senior projects or portfolios beginning with the class of 2004. This might seem like a lot of rules, but you will still be able to focus on classes and subjects that you like...if you plan ahead.

Criteria Colleges Use to Review Applications:

1. Did you take more academic classes than what's required?
2. How difficult was your senior year course schedule?
3. Did you take honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Running Start, or Tech Prep courses?
4. Did you enroll in college and university courses while in high school?
5. Have you received any academic awards?
6. Which school and community activities did you participate in?
7. Do you have an educational or economic disadvantage, or cultural awareness? Have you overcome personal adversity?
8. Have your grades and test scores steadily improved?
9. Does your high school have an unusually difficult grading system?
10. Do you have an exceptional athletic or artistic talent?

Getting Into College

To go to college, you have to apply. That is the only firm rule about higher education programs. Almost everything else can vary.

For example, community and technical colleges have open admissions policies. Anyone with a high school diploma can apply, enroll, and take classes. But most four-year colleges have competitive admissions policies. Not all students who apply are accepted.

Four-year colleges usually look at the strength of your class schedule, test scores, and grades in admissions. They also consider community and school activities and potential for success before admitting students. Colleges don't usually have an absolute "cutoff" for grades or test scores because they are interested in your entire academic record and personal history.

Students who take demanding high school courses, earn good grades, and get involved in activities have the best chance of getting into a four-year college. But, students with not-so-good grades can go to college, too. Obviously, colleges prefer students who have strong grades throughout high school. But they know that some able students don't get it together right away. So, if you struggle early on in high school, you can still get back on track and achieve your goals. Special attention is paid to 11th and 12th grade academic performance.

Remember, different colleges and universities have different requirements and course recommendations. Ask a parent, friend, or counselor to look over your course plans, help you choose your classes, and make sure your plan will help you reach your goals.



This chart shows Washington's minimum high school graduation requirements as of September 2001 and recommended college prep courses for high school students.

Your high school or college of choice might have additional requirements. Talk to your principal or school counselor for more information.

	Minimum State Requirements for High School Graduation	Minimum State Requirements for Four-Year Public Colleges and Universities	Recommended Courses for Highly Selective Colleges and Universities
English	3 years	4 years	4 years
Math (algebra or higher)	2 years	3 years	3-4 years
Science (one must be a lab)	2 years	2 years	3-4 years
Social studies (including Washington state history)	2.5 years	3 years	2.5 years
Work-related education	1 year	None	None
World Language (same language)	None	2 years	3-4 years
Fine, visual, performing arts or academic elective-or-choose an extra class from those listed above	1 year	1 year	2-3 years
Health and physical education	2 years	None	None
Electives	5.5 years	None	Varies
Senior project	Class of '04+	None	None
Certificate of Mastery (pass 10th grade WASL)	Class of '08+	None	None
Minimum Grade Point Average	None	2.00	Varies

Earn College Credits in High School

Motivated and capable teens should consider adding Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Running Start, or Tech Prep classes to their four-year course plans.

With AP, IB, Running Start, or Tech Prep, you can earn college credits while you are still in high school. You can even graduate from high school with a two-year degree already completed or save on tuition by completing a degree more quickly.

► Advanced Placement (AP)

AP courses offer college level coursework in high schools. Classes are offered in calculus, U.S. history, physics, chemistry, world languages, and more. And, the classes count toward high school graduation. If you want college credit, you can take an end-of-the-year exam that covers all of the course material. The test is not required and does cost money, but fee waivers are available.

► International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB program is similar to AP, but is offered in only a few select schools. IB concentrates on multi-subject study more than AP and Running Start. Students enrolled in IB can earn a special diploma by taking IB courses and passing comprehensive examinations.

► Running Start

Running Start allows you to take classes at community and technical colleges and get double credit for high school and college. You can earn a high school diploma and associate's degree at the same time. You do not have to pay tuition at the local college, but you do have to buy textbooks for each class and pay some required fees. Check with your guidance counselor for details.

► Tech Prep

Tech Prep is a four-year program that usually begins in 11th grade. You take classes that train you for selected career fields and receive college credits in return. While in the program, you work in business and industry, testing your skills in the real world. After high school, you'll have a portfolio of work to offer employers and college admissions representatives, and you'll be able to complete an associate's degree at a community or technical college.

Study now, save later!

Successfully complete an AP exam or Running Start course and save up to \$300* in tuition at Washington's four-year public colleges or up to \$1,500[◇] at Washington private colleges and universities. A two-year degree through Running Start saves at least \$3,800*!

- ★ Based on three credits of full-time undergraduate tuition at Washington four-year public colleges and universities in 2001-02.
- ◇ Based on three credits of full-time undergraduate tuition at Washington independent colleges and universities in 2001-02.
- ✳ Based on average tuition and fees for Washington community and technical colleges in 2001-02.



College credit classes are challenging and they require you to put in a lot of time and energy, but the benefits of finishing a degree early may be worth the extra effort. If you're up to the AP, IB, or Running Start challenge, visit your school counselor. He/she can give you more information about the programs available through your school.

Get Job Skills In High School

Students who plan to get a job after high school need a four-year course plan, too.

Core courses teach you to read, write, reason, communicate, and compute. These are all skills that you will need on the job. Employers also prefer workers who have on-the-job or hands-on experience. High school gives you the chance to get this experience before you graduate. Besides getting a job, you can get work experience in high school with:

► Internships

Internships, like paying jobs, give you hands-on experience with careers that interest you. Usually, you work with a mentor to establish your goals and job responsibilities. Internships are available through hospitals or senior citizen facilities, law enforcement agencies, and many private businesses. Talk to your school counselor to find or create an internship for you.

► Job shadowing

Some professionals allow students to observe what they do on the job. This is called job shadowing. Often you can learn how people behave on the job and what's expected of each employee.

► Volunteer work

Check with your local chamber of commerce to find nonprofit organizations in your area. You could learn carpentry skills by helping build homes for needy families, or you could practice your communication skills by talking with residents at a retirement home. Volunteer experiences can help you reach your career goals.

► Occupational classes

Many high schools offer courses in debate or public speaking, computer keyboarding, woodworking, welding, and even computer network maintenance. Take advantage of these classes to develop your workplace skills.

“The Harder
you Work, the
Luckier
you Get.”
Gary Player

Testing Your Progress

Today's students often take standardized tests. For students your age, these tests include the EXPLORE[®], Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), PLAN[®], and Preliminary SAT[®] (PSAT[®]). Some of the tests are required, some are recommended, and some are just for your own practice and knowledge. Let's look at each of these tests, why they're important, and how they can help you reach your goals.

► EXPLORE[®]

EXPLORE[®] is a multiple-choice, timed test, and has four sections: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. It's designed to test 8th and 9th grade students on the things they learn in school. EXPLORE[®] helps you find out what you know and don't know about your school subjects and where you need some help. The test also has a built-in interest inventory to suggest careers that match your interests. EXPLORE[®] gives you an idea of how you would do on the 10th grade PLAN[®] test. It is usually given in the spring of 8th grade or fall of 9th grade.

► Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

WASL is a series of subject tests including reading, writing, listening, and mathematics. You might remember taking WASL in 4th grade or 7th grade. But is also given in 10th grade, with a separate science test in grade 8. Test questions are multiple-choice, short answer, and essay. Beginning with the class of 2008, students must pass the 10th grade WASL to earn a Certificate of Mastery and graduate from high school.

► PLAN[®]

PLAN[®] is a multiple-choice, timed test for 10th grade students. It has the same four sections as the EXPLORE[®] test: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. PLAN[®] helps you learn where you are compared to other students with similar goals and plans for high school and beyond. This test is very similar to the college admission test, ACT[®], and tells you how well you can expect to do on the ACT[®] Assessment. PLAN[®] also has an interest inventory built in. You can use it to see if your goals and interests have changed. PLAN[®] is usually given in the fall.

► Preliminary SAT[®] (PSAT[®])/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT[®])

The PSAT[®] is a multiple-choice, timed test that serves many purposes. It prepares you for the SAT[®] college admission test and predicts you how well you might do. It measures your verbal and math ability, asking questions about sentence structure, analogies, reading comprehension, and math concepts. It also includes a writing section. PSAT[®] is used to identify 11th grade students for National Merit Scholarship competition. This is a very prestigious national award. You can choose to give your scores to colleges and universities across the nation. If the colleges think you are a good match for their school, you could receive lots of catalogs and admissions information in the mail.

Students generally take PSAT[®] for practice in 10th grade, then again in the 11th grade to be considered for the scholarship. PSAT[®] is usually given in October.

Standardized tests may not be fun, but they can be very helpful. The PSAT[®] and PLAN[®] can be excellent practice for the SAT[®] and ACT[®]. So, each time you take them, do your best. But also relax. When your scores come back, check to see what you did well and where you can improve. Remember, they are one tool to tell you how you're doing. They don't determine who you are or what you will become. Make each test a learning tool that helps you reach your goals.

For more information about pre-college tests and college admissions exams, visit:

EXPLORE[®] www.act.org/explore

PLAN[®] www.act.org/plan

PSAT/NMQT[®] www.collegeboard.com/planning

Saying is
One Thing,
Doing is
Another.

Final Planning Tips

- ▶ Once you've made a course plan, try to stick with it! You can always take a different class or decide to take a class during a different school year, but do continue to have a plan.
- ▶ Keep your options open. Get involved in activities, study hard, and do your best. College admissions professionals and employers want to see good grades in tough classes, solid test scores, and a history of participation and leadership.
- ▶ Keep in touch with your school counselor. As your interests or career plans change, work with your counselor to revise your course plan or class schedule. Your counselor will be better able to help you choose a higher education program if he/she knows a little bit about you and your plans.
- ▶ Take advantage of standardized tests. Use each test and test result to practice for the SAT® or ACT®. Examine your test results and see where you can improve.

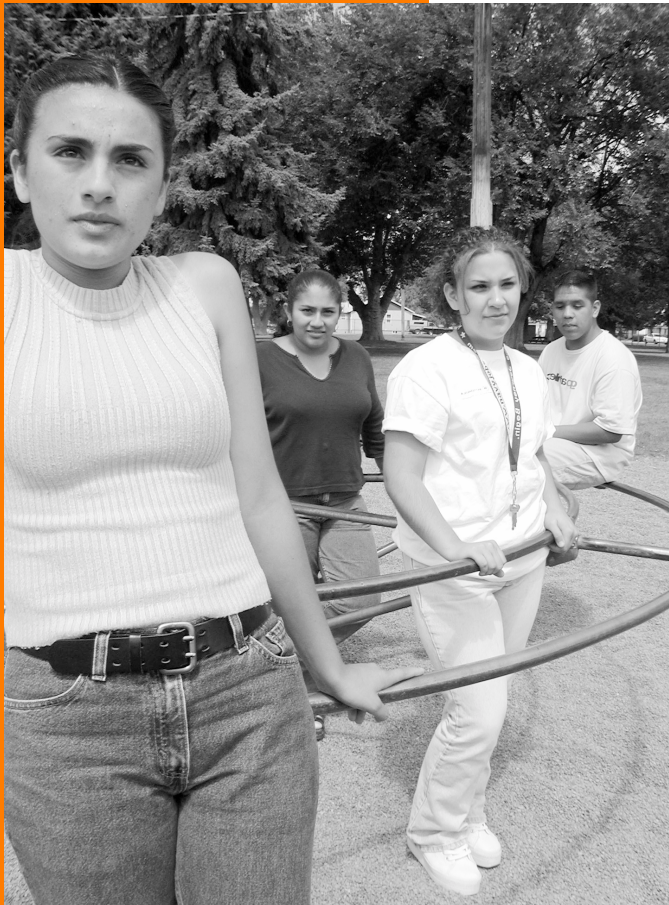
Remember, don't panic about college admissions tests. You can't fail them, and you can take them as many times as you like.



Step 5: Make it Happen

Wow! This handbook has covered a lot of information. You could probably use a summary to tell you exactly what steps you should take over the next few years.

Well, you're in luck. Here's a college prep checklist to help you take the steps you need for college and beyond.



8th grade

- Continue to focus on learning
- Improve or continue good study habits
- Identify things that you find interesting
- Start thinking about your high school years
- Explore potential career fields and jobs
- Get involved with activities outside school
- Ask questions and participate in class
- If you haven't already, start saving for college

Never
put off until
Tomorrow
what you
Can Do
Today.

9th grade

- ❑ Create a four-year high school course plan. Review your school's graduation requirements and make sure you are taking courses that will prepare you for college
- ❑ Take the most challenging classes you can handle
- ❑ Continue to focus on learning (remember, your grades will be a permanent part of your transcript; colleges will see them)
- ❑ Improve or continue good study habits
- ❑ Stay or get involved in after-school activities or clubs
- ❑ Continue to analyze your abilities and interests, and consider appropriate career possibilities
- ❑ Consider seeking a tutor for difficult subjects
- ❑ If you haven't already, start saving for college

10th grade

- ❑ Review your course plan, and discuss types of colleges with friends, parents, teachers, and counselors
- ❑ Keep your options open by taking the most challenging classes you can handle
- ❑ Ask your guidance counselor about Advance Placement, Running Start, Tech Prep, and IB programs
- ❑ Take the PLAN[®] test and/or PSAT[®] to prepare for the ACT[®], SAT[®], and NMSQT[®]. These tests are offered in the fall
- ❑ Continue to focus on learning (remember, your grades will be a permanent part of your transcript; colleges will see them)
- ❑ Attend a college fair and begin to research colleges that interest you
- ❑ Improve or continue good study habits
- ❑ Take part in after-school activities or clubs to develop teamwork and leadership skills
- ❑ Visit college Web sites and begin preparing for the ACT[®] and/or SAT[®]
- ❑ Begin to research college majors
- ❑ Begin to search for scholarships
- ❑ Consider getting a part-time summer job, internship, or volunteer position

Finance Your Future

If you want to go to college and get a higher education, you can do it.

First, college may not be as expensive as you think. Second, financial aid is available to help students and their families cover the costs. And third, saving money now can help you reduce the amount you need to come up with later.

College Costs

The cost of going to college in Washington varies. Generally, the costs include tuition, mandatory fees, room, board (food), books, transportation, and other supplies.

Community and technical colleges typically cost less than four-year colleges and universities. And, four-year state colleges and universities usually cost less than four-year private colleges and universities.

Look at the graphic below.

Estimated College Costs in Washington 2001-2002

	Two-year community and technical colleges	Four-year public regional colleges and universities*	Four-year public research colleges and universities [◇]	Four-year private colleges and universities**
Tuition and Fees	\$1,700/year	\$3,000/year	\$3,900/year	\$18,000/year
Living costs (transportation, housing, food, books, and supplies)	\$9,200/year	\$9,200/year	\$9,200/year	\$9,200/year
TOTAL	\$10,900/year	\$12,200/year	\$13,100/year	\$27,200/year

* Eastern, Western, and Central Washington University, and The Evergreen State College

◇ University of Washington and Washington State University

** SOURCE: Washington Financial Aid Association

Financial Aid

Financial aid helps students and their families pay for college. It is divided into two categories: need-based and merit-based aid. Need-based financial aid is awarded to students who cannot pay for college without help. This includes loans, grants, and work study programs. Merit-based aid is awarded for high performance or good grades. Scholarships are considered merit-based financial aid.

Financial aid awards or packages usually include more than one type of financial aid. Colleges may use a combination of all four to meet each student's financial need.

Need-Based Aid

Loans	Money for college that must be repaid after you leave college.
Grants	Money for college from the federal government, state government, or the college you plan to attend that you do not need to repay.
Work Study	Money for college that you earn in a part-time job while you are in college. Colleges usually help you find a job.

Merit-Based Aid

Scholarships	Money for college that is often given for high academic achievement, community service, or athletic ability.
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Getting Financial Aid

Most colleges try to meet 100 percent of your determined financial need. Your financial need will depend on the higher education program you choose, the college or university you attend, and the amount you and your family can afford to pay.

Cost of Education

$$\begin{aligned} & - \text{Expected Family Contribution} \\ & = \text{Determined Financial Need} \end{aligned}$$

At state colleges and universities, costs are generally less than at private colleges and universities. However, private colleges and universities usually make up the difference in costs by providing more financial aid. Also, more students receive financial aid at private colleges than at state colleges and universities.

Regardless of which type of school you choose to attend, your expected family contribution, or the amount of money your family is expected to pay, won't change very much. Each college will use the same income information to decide how much your family should contribute.

All colleges and universities use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine your eligibility for financial aid. The FAFSA asks you and your parents to provide information about your family's income, property, and more. This information helps colleges and private organizations give financial aid to those who need it most.

Blank FAFSA forms are available at high schools and colleges for you to review and show to a parent or guardian. However, you do not file a FAFSA until your senior year of high school.

Some colleges require additional financial aid forms. When you're ready to apply to a college or university, check with the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend to ask about extra forms.

Financial Aid Programs

Both the state and federal government help students and their families pay for college. Here's a brief list of some of the largest financial aid programs.

Federal Aid

▶ Pell Grants

These are awarded to undergraduate students based on financial need and do not have to be repaid.

▶ Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)

SEOG is available to eligible students with exceptional financial need. It does not need to be repaid. Funds may not be available for all eligible students.

▶ Federal Work Study

Federal work study programs allow eligible students to earn money and work experience while in college. Jobs are usually part-time, allowing you to attend classes and to study. When possible, jobs are related to your career interests.

▶ Perkins Loans

Perkins loans are low-interest loans awarded by colleges to students with exceptional financial need. They are generally repaid over a 10-year period after you leave college. Under some circumstances, part of the loan may be deferred or cancelled.

▶ Federal Direct Loan Program (Direct Loan) and Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL)

Using Direct Loan or FFEL, students and parents may borrow money for college from the federal government, banks, and other participating lenders. These loans are generally repaid over a 10-year period.

State Aid

▶ State Need Grant (SNG)

SNG is given to eligible students who demonstrate financial need; it does not need to be repaid. Students must be Washington residents, admitted and enrolled at least half-time at a participating institution, and cannot be pursuing a degree in theology.

▶ State Work Study (SWS)

The SWS program allows eligible students to earn money and experience while in college. Jobs are usually part-time, allowing you to attend classes and to study. Jobs must also be related to your career or academic interests.

“In Dreams Begins Responsibility.”

W.B. Yeates

Other State Aid

If you plan ahead and do well in school, you might be able to participate in one or more of Washington's college scholarship programs. These generally go to students who earn good grades throughout high school and get involved in activities.

► Washington Promise Scholarship

Students who graduate in the top 15 percent of their graduating classes, choose to attend an eligible institution in Washington, and meet income requirements, may be eligible for a Washington Promise Scholarship. Check with your high school guidance counselor or principal for details.

► Washington Scholars

Students who graduate in the top 1 percent of their classes can be considered for the Legislature's Washington Scholars program. Three students in each legislative district are chosen for this award. Students then receive a four-year college scholarship. These can be used for undergraduate study at most Washington colleges and universities.

► Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE)

WAVE recognizes three students from each of the 49 state legislative districts for outstanding achievement in voc-tech or Tech Prep programs. This grant is equal to about two years of tuition at a Washington college.



Saving for College

Colleges try to meet each student's financial need, but in many cases, financial aid awards include student loans. Students often forget that loans must be repaid after they leave school.

You might not make a lot of money right after you leave school, and student loan payments could be a burden. One way to reduce lots of student loans is to save money for college in advance. Every little bit of savings helps you lower the amount you borrow for college.

For specific information about college savings options, visit a banker at your local credit union or bank, or talk to a qualified investment advisor. They can tell you more about saving for college using:

- ▶ Savings accounts
- ▶ Federal savings bonds
- ▶ Stocks and mutual fund accounts
- ▶ Educational Individual Retirement Accounts (Education IRAs), and more

You and your family could also participate in Washington's pre-paid college tuition program, Guaranteed Education Tuition or GET. GET allows Washington students and families to buy tomorrow's tuition today. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends can purchase tuition for a student, and the money can be used at colleges and universities nationwide. To learn more, call toll-free, (877) GET-TUIT or visit the GET Web site, www.get.wa.gov



Ninety
Percent of
Inspiration is
Perspiration.

Finding Scholarships

Start to look for scholarships and merit aid in 10th and 11th grades.

- 1. Check with your school guidance counselor.**
Many groups send scholarship notices to high schools.
- 2. Pay attention to school announcements.**
High schools often announce scholarship opportunities over the loudspeaker or in homeroom classes.
- 3. Read everything you receive from your college of choice.**
Colleges usually include information about university scholarships with admissions applications and advertising brochures.
- 4. Visit free scholarship search sites on the Internet.**
Many sites allow you to register your ethnic, academic, and interest information and receive regular updates on scholarships that might work for you.
- 5. Go to your local library.**
Many libraries have copies of the *College Blue Book*. This series of books lists thousands of scholarships.
- 6. Ask your parent or guardian to check with his/her human resources department or benefits specialist.**
Many companies offer scholarships to the children of current and/or former employees.
- 7. Contact organizations you or your parents belong to.**
Many organizations offer scholarships to children or members.
- 8. Consider community or military service.**
The government offers many programs for students who want to earn money for college and serve their country.
- 9. Avoid scholarship scams.**
Beware of any service that wants you to pay for a scholarship search. Most scholarships are listed online and in your local library for free.

For more information about financial aid and scholarships, visit:

- ▶ The Smart Guide to Financial Aid www.finaid.org
- ▶ The Free Application for Federal Student Aid Online www.fafsa.ed.gov
- ▶ FastWeb Scholarship Search www.fastweb.com
- ▶ Free Scholarship Search Service www.scholarships.com

Final Thoughts on Financial Aid

Paying for college is the responsibility of students and their families, but financial aid can help. You and your family are encouraged to start a college fund, savings account, or participate in programs like ROTC, Washington Promise Scholarship, or GET.

Often, financial aid packages contain loans that must be repaid. If you start saving for college now, you can reduce the amount you need to borrow for college and reduce the amount you must pay after you graduate.

Start your financial preparation now.

Toolbox Additions

The older you get, the more responsibility you have for the direction your life takes. If you want to accomplish something, plan for it. If you need help, ask for it; demand it. Teachers, school officials, parents, guardians, and friends are available to help you reach your goals. But some things will be up to you.

10 Study Tips

- ▶ Decide what to study, how long to study, or how much to study before you get started. Set goals and stick to your deadlines.
- ▶ Break big projects into smaller sections. Start working on the interesting parts and reward yourself as you complete tasks. The trick is to do some each day.
- ▶ Have special places to study. Take into consideration lighting, temperature, and the location of a desk, pen, paper, etc.
- ▶ Study 30-50 minutes then take a 10-minute break. Stretch, relax, and have a snack.
- ▶ Allow plenty of time for reading, outlining, and writing papers. Use less time for memorization, review, and self-testing.
- ▶ If you get tired or bored, move to a different location, subject, or task.
- ▶ Use memory activities to review just before you fall asleep.
- ▶ Study with a friend. Quiz each other, compare notes, and predict test questions.
- ▶ Read all assignment and test instructions carefully.
- ▶ Speak up! If you need help, ask for it.

Solutions To Common Studying Problems

The best way to make sure you get good grades is to start the year practicing good study habits and stick with them all year long. It's a lot easier to maintain good grades than to improve poor grades later on.

Some of the most common studying challenges are listed below, along with tips to overcome them. Maybe some of these tips will help you get more from your schoolwork.

1. Balancing school and friends...

This can be a challenge. Friendships are important, but so is school. The best way to balance school and friends is to study together. That way, you can visit, have fun, and accomplish your school goals, too. Good friends will support you with your academic and future goals. Or, you can make friends with kids who are as interested in schoolwork as you are, or spend less time with unsupportive friends.

2. Add interest to your reading assignments...

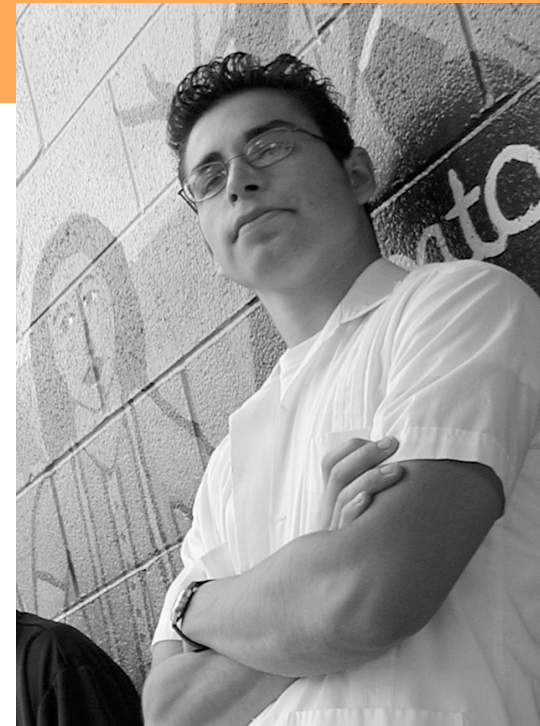
To get through a long reading assignment, imagine yourself in the story. Get involved. Ask yourself, "What is important to remember about this section?" Take notes or underline key sections and discuss the material with others in your class. You could also create a study group to break the assignment into sections. Each person could be responsible for closely studying one part of the text. You could skim or outline the other parts. Then, get together as a group to share what you learned and study for tests.

3. Cramming before a test...

Cramming before a test is a bad idea. Start studying well in advance, and keep studying as you go along in the school year. Begin with an hour or two a day, then increase your study time as exams approach.

“ There is
no Such Thing
as a
Great Talent
without Great
Will Power.”

Honore de Balzac



4. Don't know where to start...

Your challenge is to prioritize. With big projects, list all the things you have to do. Then, split the project into small, manageable chunks. Ask, "Which part is due first? Which part of the assignment is worth more points? And, which task will take the most time to complete?" Decide which tasks are most important and what order you'll use to get things done. Then, get started! The most important thing to remember is to start early and do some each day. You'll be amazed at how much progress you make.

5. Staying up all night to study...

Before a test, it is important to have a rested mind. You should relax and unwind, mentally and physically, before each test. Eat well, sleep well, and maybe get some exercise. These help you stay relaxed and do better on the test.

6. Not enough time to study...

The trick to solving this problem is getting organized. Assemble all your notes and textbooks. Identify the most important information and the things you don't understand. Focus your study time and energy on learning those things. If you need extra help, ask a teacher or tutor. If after-school activities are the problem, keep a calendar with game days, meetings, assignments, and practices listed. Start assignments right when you get them, and use lunch hours and breaks to make extra progress.

7. Trouble remembering things...

If you only have trouble sometimes, try connecting new information with your own examples and experiences. Use rhymes, poems, or mental pictures to help remember important facts. Some people even make up songs to help them remember. If you always have trouble remembering, no matter how long or hard you study, talk to your school counselor. Your counselor can talk with you about your specific problems and recommend strategies to help.

4-year High School Course Planner

If your goal is to go to college after high school, you need to plan ahead. Colleges look at more than just grades to make admissions decisions. The variety and depth of your high school courses will also be a key factor.

It's up to you to challenge yourself and choose classes that match your career and academic goals. This course planner can help you with this. You can choose the classes you want to take each semester or trimester and make sure you're taking enough tough classes to prepare you for high school and beyond.

Remember, every school offers different classes and has different requirements. So make sure you ask your school or GEAR UP counselor to look over your plans and help you choose your classes. If you have questions about the specific classes that your school offers, visit the Higher Education Coordinating Board Web site, www.hecb.wa.gov, and click on "Getting Into College." There you can type in your school's name and find the classes that meet each requirement.

Use the courses here (or your school's course catalog) to fill in your four-year course plan. There's a sample plan on page 33 to help you out. Ask your school counselor or GEAR UP staff if you have questions or need help.

Finally, when you register for classes, take your completed course plan with you. That way you know you have registered for the right classes and that you're on track for graduation and beyond.

Take these classes to graduate high school:

ENGLISH 3 years

English 9, 10, 11, or 12
Creative Writing
Composition
Literature

MATHEMATICS 2 years

Algebra I and II
Geometry
Trigonometry
Integrated Math I, II, & III
Pre-Calculus
Calculus

SCIENCE 2 years, (one must be a (*) lab class)

Astronomy
Biology*
Chemistry*
Earth Science
Environmental Studies
Geology
Integrated Science
Oceanography
Physical Science
Physics*
Principles of Technology*

SOCIAL STUDIES 2.5 years (including Washington State History)

Economics
European History
Government and Politics
Native Cultures
U.S. History
World Studies

FINE, VISUAL, PERFORMING ARTS-OR- ACADEMIC ELECTIVE 1 year

Band
Orchestra
Choir
Drawing
Photography
Drama, etc.

—OR—

Choose an extra class
in Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
World Language
Social Studies

WORK-RELATED EDUCATION 1 year

Accounting
Business Law
Communication Technologies
Desktop Publishing
Family and Consumer Sciences
Internship or Job Co-op
Keyboarding
Material Science
Record Keeping
Voc-Tech or Industrial Arts

ELECTIVES 5.5 years Choose extra courses from above

HEALTH and PHYSICAL EDUCATION 2 years

Health
P.E.
Sports

EXTRA REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR SCHOOL:

Add these courses to get into Washington's public four-year colleges and universities:

WORLD LANGUAGE 2 years, same language

- Latin
- French
- Spanish
- German
- Russian
- Mandarin (Chinese)
- Japanese
- Other world language

ENGLISH 1 extra year

MATHEMATICS 1 extra year

SOCIAL STUDIES 1/2 extra year

GRADE LEVEL 9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <input type="checkbox"/>			GRADE LEVEL 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 <input type="checkbox"/>		
Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session
English 9 Algebra I Biology Spanish I Washington State History Volleyball Choir	English 9 Algebra I Biology Spanish I Washington State History Track and Field Choir		English 11 Algebra II Geology Spanish III US History Volleyball Keyboarding	English 11 Trigonometry Geology Spanish III US History Track and Field Keyboarding	
GRADE LEVEL 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <input type="checkbox"/>	GRADE LEVEL 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
English 10 Geometry Chemistry Spanish II World History Volleyball Advanced Choir	English 10 Geometry Chemistry Spanish II World History Track and Field Advanced Choir		English 12 Pre-Calculus Spanish IV AP Government & Politics Volleyball Desktop Publishing	English 12 Pre-Calculus Spanish IV Economics Track and Field Job-Co-op Senior Project	

Each box represents one year of study. Orange boxes are the minimum required for high school graduation and admission to Washington's public four-year colleges and universities. Your high school or college of choice may require more.

Language Arts/English	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Studies/History	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts or Academic Elective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work-Related Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Electives (choose several from the black boxes)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Student Name _____

Parent/Sponsor Name _____

GEAR UP Site _____

Date _____

GEAR UP Staff Name _____

Student Counselor Name _____

Just like the sample 4-year plan on page 33, fill in the courses you plan to take each semester. For each class you write down, check off that subject on your list of requirements. If you'd like, you can also write in your course grades as you complete each semester. Don't forget to bring along this sheet when you register for class!

Classes Taken	GRADE LEVEL			
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session	

Classes Taken	GRADE LEVEL			
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10 <input type="checkbox"/>	11 <input type="checkbox"/>	12 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session	

Classes Taken	GRADE LEVEL			
	9	10	11	12
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session	

Classes Taken	GRADE LEVEL			
	9	10	11	12
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer Session	

Each box represents one year of study. Orange boxes are the minimum required for high school graduation and admission to Washington’s public four-year colleges and universities. Your high school or college of choice may require more.

Language Arts/English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Studies/History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts or Academic Elective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work-Related Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Electives (choose several from the black boxes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

College and Career Vocabulary

Academic Elective - Classes you can choose to add to your course schedule that have an academic focus. Often these are core courses students take beyond what's required for high school graduation.

ACT® and SAT® - These tests are designed to measure your knowledge in math, science, English and social studies. Colleges may require SAT® or ACT® test results with your college applications.

Admission/Application/Acceptance - You must apply to get into college. The process colleges use to decide who gets in is called admission. Colleges review each application and decide which students to accept. Students receive a letter of acceptance or rejection to tell them whether they have been admitted to the colleges they applied to.

Advanced Placement (AP) - AP courses offer college-level coursework in high schools. If students want college credit, they can take an end-of-the-year exam that covers all of the course material.

Apprenticeship - An apprenticeship program combines on-the-job training in a skilled craft or trade with classroom study. The student, also called an apprentice, is trained and prepared for advanced training or employment in a higher-than-entry-level position.

Associate's Degree - To earn an associate's degree, you must complete a program that is at least two, but less than four, years of college work usually at a community or technical college. These programs are often designed to transfer to a four-year college.

Bachelor's Degree - This is the undergraduate degree offered by four-year colleges and universities.

Career Cluster - Groups of jobs that require similar skills and interests.

College - A college is an institution of higher education that awards degrees and certificates.

Community and Technical College - A community and technical college is a two-year institution of higher education. Courses and credits can generally transfer to a four-year college. These also offer work-related and technical programs to prepare students for the world of work.

Core Course - Core courses include math, science, English, and social studies or history.

Cost of Education - This is the total cost for one year of college. It includes tuition, fees, books, food, housing, and transportation.

Curriculum - A curriculum is a group of classes needed to complete a program, degree, or certificate.

Degrees - Degrees are what you earn when you complete a program of study. The most commonly earned degrees are: associate's, bachelor's, and graduate.

Doctoral Degree - This is the highest degree offered by colleges and universities. This can take five or more years after a bachelor's degree to complete.

Electives - Classes you can choose to add to your school schedule; they are not required.

Enlist/Enlisted - Joining the military, or someone who serves in the military as a high school graduate.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) - The amount you and your family are expected to contribute toward the costs of your higher education. This amount is determined using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Extra-Curricular Activities - These are non-classroom or after-school activities. They can include sports, clubs, student government, community service, religious groups, and social organizations or events.

Fees - Fees are college costs not included in tuition. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of materials and equipment needed in certain courses, and they may be charged for student events, programs, and publications, like a yearbook.

Financial Aid - Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, loans, and part-time employment from federal, state, institutional and private sources. These types of aid are combined to create an "award package." The types and amounts of aid you receive are determined by financial need, available funds, student classification, academic performance, and sometimes the timeliness of your application.

Four-year colleges and universities - These offer certificates, bachelor's (sometimes called four-year degrees), master's, professional, and doctoral degrees in broad subject areas like business administration, history, or biology.

Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - This free application must be filed every year to receive most forms of financial aid, including loans, grants, and work study.

Grade Point Averages (GPA)/Letter Grades - Most colleges consider letter grades and GPAs in admissions.

Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) - GET allows Washington students and families to buy tomorrow's tuition today. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends can purchase tuition for a student, and the money can be used at colleges and universities nationwide. To learn more, call toll-free, (877) GET-TUIT or visit the GET Web site, www.get.wa.gov

Guidance Counselor/Academic Advisor - This person will help you choose high school courses, review the requirements for your chosen career, and help you with any problems you may have.

Higher Education - Any program of study or degree program for high school graduates or people with General Education Development (GED) certificates.

Interest Inventories - These are short quizzes that help you learn which jobs or career clusters might be right for you.

International Baccalaureate (IB) - IB concentrates on multi-subject study. Students enrolled in IB can earn a special diploma by taking IB courses and passing comprehensive examinations.

Journey-level Worker/Trade Professional - A master of a specific skilled trade, like carpentry, masonry, plumbing, etc.; one who has studied and worked in a skilled trade for many years.

Lifelong Learning - This is the idea that a person can learn throughout his/her whole life.

Master's Degrees - A graduate degree that is usually added to a bachelor's degree. It usually takes two years to complete.

Merit-based Financial Aid - Financial aid that is given out based on high academic, athletic, artistic, or community service achievement.

Need-based Financial Aid - Financial aid that is given out to students who have a demonstrated financial need.

Occupational Education - These are work-related classes or programs of study. Examples include bookkeeping, keyboarding, and business technology.

Officer - Someone who joins the military after college or receives a commission to become a military leader/supervisor.

Officer Candidate Schools (OCS) or Officer Training Schools (OTS) - These 10-week to 17-week schools train college graduates to become entry-level supervisors in the military.

Open Admissions Policy - Open admissions institutions are usually public two-year community and technical colleges. The term "open admission" refers to an admission policy that says almost anyone with a high school diploma or General Education Development certificate (GED) can be admitted to that college.

Personal Profile - A mental picture or written description of your interests, abilities, values, priorities, and other information.

Private vocational colleges - These are sometimes called trade schools or voc-tech programs. They offer apprentice and journeyman programs for skilled tradesmen like plumbers, machinists, electricians, or carpenters. The length of each program varies, but many can take three or more years to complete.

Proprietary or for-profit schools - These can offer bachelor's and master's degrees, but most offer associate's degrees or certificates in office management, medical assistance, cosmetology, dental hygiene, computer systems engineering, and more.

Public/Private Colleges - Public colleges are run by the state or other government agency and are managed by public boards. Private colleges are not run by the government.

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) - This program helps students in high school and college pay for their education. In return for scholarship money, students agree to serve in the military. Junior ROTC participants do not have to join the military to receive scholarships.

Running Start - Running Start programs allow students to take classes at community and technical colleges and get double credit for high school and college. Students can earn a high school diploma and associate's degree at the same time.

Schedule of Classes - High schools and colleges publish class schedule books. With the help of guidance counselors and/or parents, you create your own class schedule for each school term.

Service Academies, The - These four-year military colleges are run by the federal government and have names like West Point and Annapolis. They offer students or cadets a free education and monthly allowance. In return, students agree to serve in the military on active duty for at least five years.

State Need Grant (SNG) - SNG is available to eligible students who demonstrate financial need. Students must be Washington residents, admitted and enrolled at least half-time at a participating institution, and cannot be pursuing a degree in theology.

State Work Study (SWS) - The State Work Study program allows students to earn money and work experience while in college. Jobs are usually part-time, allowing you to attend classes and to study. Jobs are related to your career interests.

Tech Prep - Tech Prep is a four-year program that usually begins in 11th grade. Students take classes in selected career fields and receive college credits in return. While in the program, students work in business and industry, testing their skills in the real world.

Transcript - A transcript is a permanent record of all the classes you take and grades you earn while in high school or college. It may also show any honors or awards you receive.

Transfer of Credits - Some students attend more than one college during their college careers. When they move or transfer from one college to another, they can transfer certain credit hours or classes from the old college to the new one. The new college determines which courses will count toward its graduation requirements.

Tuition - Tuition is the amount colleges charge for each hour of class time. Tuition does not include the cost of books, fees, room, or board (food). Tuition charges also vary from college to college. Students who attend the same college may pay different tuition.

Tutor - A person who helps a student with homework or study skills.

Undergraduate - An undergraduate student is pursuing either a one-, two-, or four-year degree.

University - A university offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees.

Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) - WAVE recognizes three students from each of the 49 state legislative districts for outstanding achievement in voc-tech or Tech Prep programs. This grant is equal to about two years of tuition at a Washington college.

Washington Promise Scholarship - Students who graduate in the top 15 percent of their graduating classes, choose to attend an eligible institution in Washington, and have a financial need may be eligible for a Washington Promise Scholarship. Check with your high school guidance counselor or principal for details.

Washington Scholars - Students who graduate in the top 1 percent of their classes can be considered for the Legislature's Washington Scholars program. Three students in each legislative district are chosen for this award. Students then receive a four-year college scholarship. These can be used for undergraduate study at selected Washington colleges and universities.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

GEAR UP is a national effort to encourage more young people to have high expectations, study hard, and go to college.

Washington State GEAR UP is a partnership of the Office of the Governor, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the University of Washington.

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