

# *Preparing for College*

Developed by  
Sharon Neumann  
and  
Hilda Lopez





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# Introduction

## Purpose

This publication is designed to be a resource guide for AVID teachers who are preparing students in grades 11 and 12 for college exploration and selection. This guide is designed to be used as a primary resource that eliminates the need to look elsewhere for college preparation information. The materials presented in this guide were the most current available at the time of publication; however, college information and resources change regularly, so teachers and counselors are advised to check the websites provided in these pages to ensure that materials are up-to-date.

## Organization of Materials

This guide is organized into four units, one for each semester in the junior and senior years. Each unit provides lesson plans, handouts, activities, and a suggested timeline so that teachers and counselors can organize instruction. The sequence for each semester is:

- Exploring
- Preparing
- Testing
- Financing

**Exploring:** Practical activities that help AVID students research and explore the many options/information critical to choosing a potential college or university

**Preparing:** Lesson plans, handouts, and activities that help AVID juniors and seniors prepare for the many requirements of the college admission process

**Testing:** Information that AVID juniors and seniors must know regarding college entrance exams. Timelines, activities, lessons, and handouts help make the testing process more manageable and understandable for AVID students.

**Financing:** AVID students are often from financially disadvantaged homes. Therefore, it is of critical importance that teachers and counselors access every bit of financial aid available.



# Acknowledgment

Nancy Caine was instrumental in the conception and content of this guide. Her expertise has, over the years, shaped *Preparing for College* from what originally was a stack of handouts to the well-organized, valuable resource that it is now. I appreciate her as a friend, mentor and expert in her field.



*Sharon Neumann*

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# Section 1 Career Exploration

## Junior Year, First Semester

### Overview

The clock is ticking and students are keenly aware that it is time to access the content and skills they have learned to prepare for college admission. While college applications, scholarships, and financial aid are typically senior year activities, it is in the junior year that students prepare for these opportunities and requirements.

Throughout junior year, students will begin to tackle the many college entrance expectations including selecting colleges. This is the year of exploring, preparing, and asking many questions that will help them through the college admission maze.

### Exploring

AVID students will want to consider applying to both public and private schools. One way to explore the various elements of the college admission process is to visit a variety of websites. At College Mentor Sites and Higher Education Agency Sites (such as the College Navigator website at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>), students can find answers to their questions about entrance requirements, financial aid, career planning, and much more. Attending college fairs and meeting with college admission representatives who visit schools can provide additional information.

### Preparing

Students also begin to prepare for college admission by gathering materials and organizing them into “college crates” and by reviewing what they have accomplished in their first two years of high school. This will prepare them for writing a résumé, a good resource when completing college applications. This is also a time to look at college entrance requirements and to access a valuable research tool: the Internet.

### Testing

It is during the first semester of junior year that students realize the importance of the two college admission tests, the ACT® and SAT®, and appreciate the differences between them. One way for students to become familiar with these tests is to take practice tests. The PLAN is a practice ACT test, taken in the 10th grade. The PSAT®, the preliminary SAT, can be taken in both 10th and 11th grades. Both these tests prepare juniors for ACT and SAT testing in the spring.

### Financing

Paying for college is of major concern for AVID students and their families. In this semester, key concepts and vocabulary are introduced. Students and families must begin now to prepare for both the costs and the assistance available to college-bound students.

# Section 1 Calendar

## 1. Exploring

*August–September*

- Understand the educational options available to AVID students.
- Continue career exploration.
- Explore student self-perception.

*September–December*

- Prepare to attend college fairs.
- Invite college representatives to present to the AVID class.
- Complete activities to help determine criteria important in choosing a college.

## 2. Preparing

*August–December*

- Review the College Prep Timeline with students and have them check off activities completed.
- Have students set up their “college crate,” which is a system to collect and organize college information.
- Complete activities and document information to prepare for writing an educational résumé.
- Student athletes should register with the NCAA.

## 3. Testing

*August–October*

- Register and prepare for the PSAT.
- Review previous scores for PLAN or PSAT.
- Take the PSAT in October.

*November–December*

- Interpret PSAT score reports.

## 4. Financing

*August–January*

- Learn about the different types of financial aid.
- Refute financial aid myths.
- Develop a system to keep track of financial aid applications.



# Exploring

## Junior Year, First Semester

Fall of the junior year is an opportune time to explore educational and career options. Teachers, counselors, and students will learn about web resources and terminology to help them through the college application process and beyond. Make a plan for exploring these websites and learning these terms. A College Word Wall can be created using the information provided.

Helping students reflect on how they see themselves and then compare that to how others see them will help to determine which colleges will be a good “fit.” It is important that students decide what college factors are important to them. Knowing this will help students to narrow down their college choices.

Students should continue career exploration in preparation for choosing majors and colleges. Some students may feel pressure to select a major, but reassure them that there is time for exploration and preparation.

Choosing a college or university is an important and complex decision. Parents, AVID teachers, and school counselors play a vital role in helping students research, evaluate, and select a college that is a good fit. Many factors contribute to the process, and it is important to find an institution where students are comfortable and motivated to do their best.

### Calendar

#### *August–September*

- Understand the educational options that are available.
- Continue career exploration.
- Explore student self-perception.

#### *September–December*

- Prepare to attend college fairs.
- Invite college representatives to present in the AVID class.
- Complete activities to help determine criteria important in choosing a college.

### Lessons

- 1.1 Educational Options:** Students will understand the different types of educational options for them to pursue after high school.
- 1.2 Self-Perception:** Students identify traits that are most like them and traits they would like to improve.
- 1.3 Careers and Self:** Students learn information related to personal interests and career preferences.
- 1.4 Career Selection:** Students select and research a career based upon their new knowledge of personal interests and career choices
- 1.5 Designing the Perfect College:** Students identify which college factors are most important to them.
- 1.6 Meeting the College Representative:** Students learn the importance of meeting and networking with college representatives, including which questions to ask.
- 1.7 Preparing for the College Fair:** Students learn the purpose, opportunities, and expectations of college fairs and prepare to maximize the experience.



## LESSON 1.1

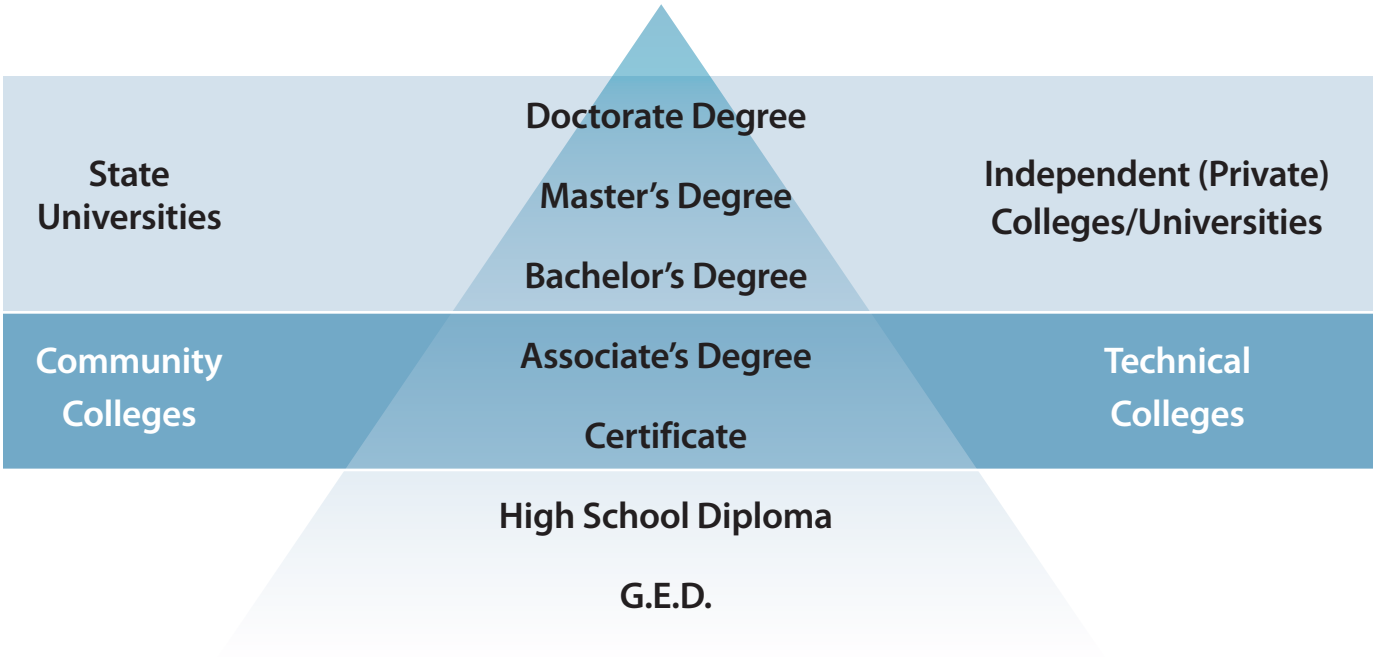
# Educational Options

**Objective:** Students will understand the different types of educational options for them to pursue after high school.

**Materials:** Pen, paper, markers, Internet access, student handout 1.1 *Educational Options*

- Instructions:**
1. Select an event that would be of interest to your students, for example: a concert, a college/professional football game, etc., and write that event on the board.
  2. Divide class into four groups and ask to students to use their four senses to describe the event. What do they see (group 1), hear (group 2), smell (group 3), and touch (group 4)? Students discuss and create a group list. Variations to this step are to have students provide oral answers, make a poster, make a commercial, etc.
  3. Keep students in the same groups and now ask them to describe what occupations/ careers are responsible for creating those experiences. For example, at a concert—we see/hear the music (musicians), the light show (engineers/light technicians), the stage or sets (stage designers/construction), audience (event planners, ushers).
  4. Introduce student handout 1.1 *Educational Options*, explaining each educational option. Choose some of the occupations the groups cited in Step 3 and ask students what educational option was required for that occupation. Example: some musicians complete only high school, but they invest thousands of hours in practice; other musicians go to college and earn a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or Doctorate degree.

## Educational Options



Doctorate Degree/ Professional Degree	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
<p><b>Master's Degree PLUS advanced graduate courses in specialized area.</b> Units vary depending on field of study. Usually referred to as Ph.D. or Ed.D. (Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education). Normally requires three to five additional years of full-time work AFTER completion of Master's Degree.</p>	<p><b>Bachelor's Degree PLUS graduate courses in specialized area.</b> Usually referred to as M.S. or M.A. (Master of Science or Arts). Normally requires two additional years of full-time work AFTER completion of Bachelor's Degree.</p>	<p><b>Major Courses PLUS General Education and Minor or Electives, 124–132 total units required.</b> Usually referred to as B.S. or B.A. (Bachelor of Science or Arts). Normally requires four years of full-time work. You may complete the first two years at a community college and then transfer to a four-year university.</p>
<p><b>Careers That Require a Doctorate Degree:</b></p>	<p><b>Careers That Require a Master's Degree:</b></p>	<p><b>Careers That Require a Bachelor's Degree:</b></p>

<b>Associate's Degree</b>	<b>Certificate</b>
<p><b>Major Courses PLUS General Education Courses and Electives, 60 units required.</b> Usually referred to as A.A. or A.S. (Associate of Arts or Science). Normally requires two years or four semesters of full-time work. Offered by community colleges and some four-year universities.</p>	<p><b>Major Courses Only.</b> Number of units required varies. A series of special major courses, all related to a particular occupational skill. Sole objective is immediate employment. Offered by community colleges and private educational organizations.</p>
<p><b>Careers That Require an Associate's Degree:</b></p>	<p><b>Careers That Require a Certificate:</b></p>



## LESSON 1.2

# Self-Perception

**Objective:** Students gather information about themselves so that they are better equipped to make the best decision about which college is right for them.

**Materials:** Pen, paper, student handout 1.2a *Self-Perception Cards* and student handout 1.2b *Self-Perception Worksheet*

- Instructions:**
1. The purpose of this exercise is to give them a chance to take a look at themselves: how they currently see themselves, how others see them, and how they'd like to be seen. Provide student handout 1.2a *Self-Perception Cards* with the list of words, some of which may describe a particular student quite well and others that probably don't fit him or her at all. Ask students to cut out the words. Also, distribute student handout 1.2b *Self-Perception Worksheet*.
  2. Have students put the card that best describes them AS THEY ARE NOW on top, the one that next best describes them immediately below it, and so on until the card that they feel is most unlike them is at the bottom. They then copy the list on the "How I See Myself" column.
  3. Next tell students, to mix up the stack of cards and re-arrange them so that the card on top best describes how they would like to see yourself. Students follow the same procedure until the card at the bottom shows how they would least like to see themselves. Then, students copy their lists on the "How I Want to See Myself" column. They circle any items that are more than four spaces (lines) apart on the two tables. Ask students to highlight the items that are the farthest apart on your first two lists. These highlighted items might suggest some areas students want to change.
  4. Next, tell students to ask a friend to arrange the cards according to how he or she sees the student. The friend needs to give an honest evaluation. Once the friend has completed the process, students copy the list on the "How Others See Me" column.
  5. Finally, instruct students to take the cards home and ask a family member (parents are a good source) to arrange the cards according to how he or she sees them. Once the family member has completed the process, students copy the list on the "How My Family Sees Me" column. Then they circle any items that have moved four or more spaces from your "How I See Myself" column.



## Self-Perception Cards

Intelligent	Inflexible	Unreliable
Shy	Satisfied/Fulfilled	Caring
Unique	Assertive	Tolerant
Insecure	Confused	Honest with myself
Talkative	Friendly	Honest with others
Insincere	Mature	Excuse-maker
Nervous	Outgoing	Avoid facing things
Likeable	Selfish	Hard-working
Open-minded	Conscientious	Athletic
Moody	Organized	Rebellious



## Self-Perception Worksheet

How I See Myself	How I Want to See Myself	How Others See Me	How My Family Sees Me
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25.			
26.			
27.			
28.			
29.			
30.			



## LESSON 1.3

# Careers and Self

**Objective:** Students learn information related to personal interests and career preferences.

**Materials:** Student handout 1.3 *Careers and Self*

- Instructions:**
1. Explain to students that since the average person works about 30 to 40 years, it is important to select an occupation that he or she will enjoy. Provide each student with the student handout 1.3 *Careers and Self*.
  2. Guide students as they complete the template and have them share their list with a partner. Ask students to think about occupations that are aligned with what they enjoy doing. They can do this independently, with a partner, or in a small group.





# Careers and Self

## My Interests

List five things you enjoy doing. Some examples are arts & crafts, hiking, working with tools, organizing events, etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Lifestyle/Work Preferences

Think about the world of work or your lifestyle in general. Do you prefer:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indoors              | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set Location         | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular/Set Schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Hours    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit at a Desk        | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Activity |

## My Skills

List five skills you perform particularly well:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Strengths/Weaknesses

List your strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses



## LESSON 1.4

# Career Selection

**Objective:** Students select and research a career based upon their new knowledge of personal interests and career choices.

**Materials:** Student handout 1.4 *Career Selection*

- Instructions:**
1. Give each student a copy of the student handout 1.4 *Career Selection*.
  2. Guide students as they answer each section of the chart. Complete the chart.
  3. Have students write the occupation they circled at the top and research the questions listed. You may add additional questions.
  4. Have students write a reflection: "After completing the student handouts 1.3 *Careers and Self* and 1.4 *Career Selection*, are your career choices in line with your interests? Cite examples to support your answer."



## Career Selection

Fill in the chart below by answering the five questions below.

- **Career/Occupation:** List four careers/occupations that interest you. Circle your top choice.
- **Why Interested:** Why does that particular career/occupation interest you?
- **Education:** What level of education is required to enter the workforce for that career/occupation?
- **Tasks/Responsibilities:** What tasks/responsibilities would you have in that occupation?
- **Required Skills:** What skills do you need?

Career/ Occupation	Why Interested?	Education	Tasks/ Responsibilities	Required Skills
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

My top career/occupation choice is: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected starting salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Education requirements (high school diploma, certificate, Associate's degree, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Degree title: \_\_\_\_\_

Three colleges/universities that offer that preparation:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 1.5

# Designing the Perfect College

**Objective:** Students design THEIR perfect college, become familiar with various college factors, and identify which of these factors is most important to them as an individual.

**Materials:** Scissors, glue, one blank sheet of paper per student, markers/crayons/colored pencils, copy of student handout 1.5 *Designing the Perfect College Priority Cards*

- Instructions:**
1. Give students a blank sheet of paper and have them draw a picture of their “Perfect College.” Set aside.
  2. Give each student a copy of student handout 1.5 *Designing the Perfect College Priority Cards*. Review each category with students to ensure they understand all the categories. Go through each category and have students brainstorm all the factors under each category. They can take notes directly on the cards or on Cornell notepaper.
  3. Have students cut apart the cards. Each student will have her or his own set of cards.
  4. On the back of each card, students write down a reflection, thought, and/or comment relating to the category. It can be anything that comes immediately to mind. This is an individual activity, and they are not to share their responses with others.
  5. Have students rank the cards in the order of importance to them, arrange them so that the card with the most importance is on the top and the one with the least importance is on the bottom, and set aside any cards in which they have no interest.
  6. Have students glue these cards, in order, on the sheet of paper where they drew a picture of their perfect college.
  7. Quickwrite: How do your rankings compare with the schools to which you are thinking of applying?
  8. Have students share their perfect colleges in small groups, and share and tell whether the ranking compares with schools to which they are thinking of applying.

### Extended Activity

Have students take the activity home and have their parents do this activity separately from them and compare the results. Emphasize how important communication is between parents and students throughout the college admission process.



# Designing the Perfect College Priority Cards

## Instructions:

Cut apart the cards. You will have 14 cards.

On the back of each card write your reflections, thoughts, or ideas about that category.

Prioritize your cards in order of what is most important to YOU. Set aside any cards in which you have no interest.

<b>Competitiveness of Admission</b> Ivy League? Will I get in? Can I stay in?	<b>Student Body</b> Single sex or coed? Diverse or homogeneous? Large geographic representation? Commuter student population?
<b>Academic Program</b> Is my major offered? When must you choose a major? Number of faculty in major? Faculty-to-student ratio? Advising system?	<b>Religious Orientation</b> Loose historical affiliation? Required religion courses? Strong emphasis?
<b>Cost</b> Tuition? Availability of aid? Co-op programs? ROTC? Parent helps or student pays entire amount? Housing costs? Meal plans?	<b>Sports Programs</b> Division I? Division II? Strong intramurals? Could I play? Are you a sports nut?
<b>Geographic Location</b> Skiing? Ocean? Warm? Exposure to new parts of the country? Close to home? In the city? Rural location?	<b>Academic Atmosphere</b> Challenging? Intense? Relaxed? Supportive? Scholarly vs. career-oriented? Who teaches the class? (Professors or graduate assistants)
<b>Size of School</b> Small? Large? Large/small classes? Housing availability?	<b>Social Atmosphere</b> Orientation program? Residential? Commuter? Political? Party atmosphere? Sororities and fraternities? Small, close knit, or large, diverse?
<b>Surrounding Community</b> Large city? Rural? Safety? Transportation? Fast or slow pace?	<b>Extracurricular Opportunities</b> School newspaper vs. journalism class only? Plays open to non-drama majors? Debate? Music opportunities available for non-music majors?
<b>Campus Safety</b> Types of incidents reported? Availability of on-campus transportation? Escort service? Campus lighting?	<b>Create Your Own</b> Is there something important to you not on the list? Write that here.

## LESSON 1.6

# Meeting the College Representative

**Objective:** Students learn the importance of meeting/networking with college representatives

**Materials:** Student handout 1.6a *Meeting the College Representative*, student handout 1.6b *Questions to Ask*, chart paper, markers, Cornell notepaper, highlighters

**Instructions** *Complete the following activity over a two- to three-day period.*

1. Put students in groups of four and have them number off 1–4. Give students one question at a time to discuss with their group.
2. Students report out by number. The student gives a brief summary of the group discussion. Questions to ask include:
  - Who has had (an) interaction(s) with a college representative and what was the nature of the interaction?
  - What is the role and function of the college representative?
  - What are some opportunities to meet with a college representative?
  - How can college representatives help high school students?
3. Review student handout 1.6a *Meeting the College Representative*, and have students add to their notebook.
4. As a quickwrite, have students write down the name of a college they may wish to attend and questions they would like to ask the college representative.
5. Have them share their questions with the group and add questions to their list.
6. Ask students, in groups, to select five questions and write the questions on chart paper to post in the classroom.
7. Distribute student handout 1.6b *Questions to Ask*, and select 10 high priority questions. Students may wish to write the questions on notebook paper or on note cards for easy reference when meeting with college representatives.



## Meeting the College Representative

The role of the college representative is to promote the institution he or she represents, provide information to prospective students, and to identify and recommend students for admission to that institution.

### It is important that you meet with college representatives to:

- Ask questions that will help you make a decision as to which college you want to attend.
- Gather information from materials provided by college representatives.
- Establish a relationship, so that they will help you with the admission process. College representatives may offer to review your application and essay, so don't be shy about asking them for help.

### Opportunities to meet college representatives:

- College fairs
- At your school. College representatives visit high schools throughout the country.
- Information events at locations in your community
- On the college campus. Be sure to make an appointment to meet with the College Admission Officer when you visit a college campus.

### When you meet with college representatives:

- Tell them why you are interested in attending the college.
- Be professional in speech, behavior, and dress.
- Ask for business cards, so that you have contact information.
- Remember to thank them for the information provided. You can thank a representative in person or formally by sending a thank-you card.
- Create business cards for yourself, and carry them with you so that you can give them to representatives when you meet them.



## Questions to Ask a College Representative

When you meet a college representative, choose your questions carefully. As soon as possible, write down what you learned. The more information you have, the better decision you will make.

### Admission Requirements

- What are the deadlines for applications and financial aid?
- What is the academic profile of the typically admitted student? (ACT/SAT/class rank, GPA)
- How important is the college essay? Recommendation letter? Other parts of the application?
- What tips can you give me for writing the essay?
- How important are extracurricular activities?
- What kind of student is your university looking for?
- When are notifications for acceptance sent?

### Affordability

- What is the cost of attendance?
- What types of financial aid are available? What percentage of students receives financial aid?
- What scholarships are available?
- How much debt does the average student graduate with?

### Housing

- Must freshmen live in the dorms?
- What are the options? (Coed? Single sex?)
- How many students per room?
- What is the availability of off-campus housing?
- What is the social life in the dorms?

### Campus Life

- What kind of clubs and activities are available for me to join?
- Is there a church on campus? Nearby? Denomination?
- What types of fitness centers are available for student use?

### Social Life

- What do students do for fun on campus? In the community?
- What entertainment is available on campus? In the community?

### Athletics

Does this college offer interscholastic sports?





## Campus Environment

- What is the campus like (appearance, size, distance between classes)?
- What is the area surrounding the campus like (availability of cultural activities, shopping)?
- How safe is the campus? What measures have been put into place to ensure student safety?
- If I have an evening class, what type of transportation is available?
- What is the availability of food (cafeteria, on campus, close by)?
- What kinds of transportation are available (to the city or town, within the campus)?

## Campus Support

- Do you have an orientation program?
- Do you have a summer bridge program?
- How will my advisor be assigned?
- What support programs (personal and academic counseling) are available?
- Who takes care of students who are sick?
- If I am having difficulty in a class, what type of support is available?
- What computer facilities are available?
- What services are available for students with physical or learning disabilities?
- Is there career planning and placement at graduation?

## College Courses

- What type of grading system is used?
- What are the strongest, most unique, and/or alternative academic programs available?
- What is the teacher-to-student ratio?
- How large are the largest freshmen classes?
- Who teaches the freshmen courses?
- What is the accessibility of regular faculty (office hours)?
- What resources or facilities are available to support my major?
- Is it OK to have an undeclared major? Dual major? Change of major?

## General Questions

- What percentage of freshmen students return for their sophomore year?
- What is the school's graduation rate?
- Why do students stay? Why do they leave?



## LESSON 1.7

# Preparing for the College Fair

**Objective:** Students will learn the purpose and opportunities that attending a college fair offers.

**Materials:** Any materials related to an upcoming college fair, such as posters, list of participating colleges, map of college booths; cardstock paper for college cards; self-stick paper to create student information cards; student handouts 1.7a *The College Fair Experience for Students* and 1.7b *Student Information Cards*

**Instructions:** The following activities are designed to prepare AVID students to visit a college fair.

1. Provide basic information such as date, time, and location of the college fair. Give students additional information, such as school-sponsored transportation.
2. From the list of participating colleges, have students circle at least eight colleges of interest. Then have students locate the colleges on the event map and plan the order in which they will visit each school.
3. If time permits, students should research the colleges they plan to visit.
4. Have students develop a short list of questions to ask.
5. Have students role play meeting the college representatives. In pairs, they can practice introducing themselves, shaking hands, asking questions, and thanking the representative for the information.
6. Take students to a computer lab and help them create student business cards on perforated cardstock paper and/or self-stick labels or use the student handout 1.7b *Student Information Cards* as a template.
7. After the fair:
  - Students can write a thank-you note to a college representative.
  - Students can create a file for colleges of which they want to keep information.
  - Students can write their impressions of a college (or two or three) that they visited.



## The College Fair Experience

While the best way to gather information about a college is by visiting it, the reality for many AVID students is that, aside from school-sponsored visits, this is not an option. Attending a college fair allows students to meet several college representatives and gather information in one stop. It is important to prepare AVID students prior to attending such an event. College representatives recognize students who are interested and prepared.

Tips for the AVID counselor and AVID teacher:

- Where is the college fair located? If the college fair is off site, consider busing your students to the college fair.
- Send information to the parents via flyer, mailed invitation, and automated phone calls, and if possible, in the home language. A college fair is an opportune time to get parents involved in the college selection process.
- Promote the college fair using posters and/or flyers provided by sponsors.
- If possible, accompany your students to the college fair. Seeing their counselor and/or AVID Elective teacher at a college fair validates the importance of the event.
- Prepare the students for the college fair experience. (See information below.)
- The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) and state associations affiliated with NACAC sponsor college fairs throughout the country. The NACAC website provides a calendar of college fairs. Or do a search of your state to find upcoming college fairs. Post information on upcoming college fairs in the classroom. Other types of college fairs target particular groups, such as the National Hispanic College Fair; religious groups, such as the National Christian College Fair; or interests, such as the Performing and Visual Arts College Fair.



## The College Fair Experience for Students

A college fair features a wide variety of college representatives who have traveled to one site in a region or school to meet and provide information to students and their parents. The event offers an opportunity to gather as much college information as possible in one day.

### College Fair Structure

- 1. College Admission Representatives** are the main focus of the fair. The individuals you meet are members of the admission offices of their institutions. These representatives are set up at a table or booth bearing many brochures, guides, and other informational items. They are here to meet with you to answer any questions you may have.
- 2. Special Interest Sessions** are part of some college fairs, particularly large ones that are designed to serve entire communities. Separate from the college booths are information sessions offered on college topics of interest, such as Financial Aid, NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Requirements, and Career Planning.
- 3. Counseling Information Centers** are also a part of some college fairs. Experienced high school/ community resource counselors assist you in navigating the fair. If you need help determining which colleges to visit, ask for help. Reference books on requirements, scholarships, and majors are available, as well as information on college entrance tests.

### Reasons to Attend

- Meet college admission representatives face-to-face.
- Gain exposure to a variety of post-secondary institutions throughout the country.
- Ask questions about current admissions and financial aid.
- Pick up free brochures on colleges you might want to consider.
- Receive answers to individual questions in the counseling center.
- Learn from experts conducting special interest sessions.

### How can I get the most out of the fair? Plan ahead!

- Put the college fair event on your calendar.
- Invite your parents to attend with you. Parents may have their own questions, and this is an opportunity for both of you to receive the same information.
- Ask for a list of colleges that are expected to participate.
- Revisit any activities you have completed relating to college searches, or visit the websites of the colleges that interest you.

### Bring these materials to the fair

- A bag or backpack to collect college literature
- Completed “student information cards” to give to college representatives
- A pen and notepad
- A short list of questions



## During the college fair

- Study the floor plan of the college fair. Circle the colleges on your program that you wish to see.
- Create a priority plan to include an initial eight colleges you want to visit.
- If possible, complete a “student information card” for each school.
- Determine questions to ask college representatives.
- Take literature and pens that are on the table. These materials are for you.
- Introduce yourself to college representatives and ask questions. This is your opportunity to impress the college staff. The representative you meet today may be the one reviewing your application.
- Present yourself well; if this college representative helps evaluate your application, your conversation may serve as a mini-interview.
- Dress as you would for an interview.
- Get business cards from college representatives for follow-up information.
- When your questions are answered, move on to the next college.

## Questions to ask

- Do you think I am a good candidate for your college (present your college information card)?
- What types of students attend your campus? What is the level of diversity?
- Where do most students live? What is the focus of social life?
- What do you think is unique about your campus?
- What percentage of students receives financial aid? What is the average aid package?

## College representatives offer these suggestions.

- Talk with college representatives first before taking materials; choose only relevant pieces.
- If a teacher has given you an assignment, *do not simply hand the assignment to the representative to complete.* Do the work yourself by reviewing college materials.
- Ask conversational questions. Speak for yourself rather than depending on your parents.
- Respect reasonable time limits with college representatives, as others will want a turn.
- Hand your college information card to the representative. This will give him or her a quick profile of you.

## After the college fair

- Read through and organize your materials; create a file for each school.
- Make notes about your impressions.
- Make plans to visit colleges of interest when they are in session.
- Send thank-you notes to representatives. (Use the business cards for names and addresses.)
- Technology provides opportunities to visit college campuses via the Internet. There are virtual college fairs.
- CollegeWeekLive, [www.collegeweeklive.com/](http://www.collegeweeklive.com/), sends weekly invitations to visit selected colleges and universities.



## Student Information Cards

A college fair is an excellent opportunity to learn about a wide variety of colleges and universities in a short time. Fill out the information below before arriving at the fair, and make copies. Give the cards to college representatives, so they can send you information about their school.

Student Information Card	
Name	Current courses
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone & Email address	
Date of birth GPA Class rank	
High school & CEEB code	
Graduation date PSAT, SAT, ACT scores	
Areas of academic interest	
Extracurricular interests	

Student Information Card	
Name	Current courses
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone & Email address	
Date of birth GPA Class rank	
High school & CEEB code	
Graduation date PSAT, SAT, ACT scores	
Areas of academic interest	
Extracurricular interests	

# Preparing

## Junior Year, First Semester

This unit has activities designed to help students prepare for the college applications they will submit during senior year. Teachers and students can follow the “Preparing for College Calendar” and check off completed items.

Setting up a college crate will help students organize the information they are gathering and creating. Teachers should select a method that works for their classroom and school. It is important that class time be given to students so that they can add items to their crate.

Teaching students how to write a résumé is a lifelong skill. High school students will use their résumé when applying to colleges, scholarships, internships, and part time jobs. As college students, they will need this skill when applying for internships or jobs. In many states, writing a résumé is part of the curriculum and learning standards for subject areas such as English, Career, and Technology-related courses. Inquire in which classes students will write a résumé and collaborate with those teachers.

While most students will have an email address by now, the technology etiquette lesson will provide technology-related ideas for students to consider when creating an email address.

### Calendar

*August–December*

- Review the *Preparing for College Calendar* with students and have them check off activities completed.
- Have students set up their “college crate,” which is a system to collect and organize college information.
- Complete activities and document information to prepare for writing an educational résumé.
- Student athletes should register with the NCAA.
- Obtain a professional email address and phone message.

### Lessons

- 2.1 My College Crate:** Students understand the purpose and contents of creating a college crate to keep college materials organized.
- 2.2 Personal Information:** An activity that assists students in collecting personal information pertinent to the college application process
- 2.3 High School and Community Activities:** An activity to learn about high school activities, community volunteerism, and their value in the college application process
- 2.4 Preparing the Résumé:** Important tips for creating a résumé that highlights students’ academic and personal strengths
- 2.5 NCAA:** Requirements for student athletes who are interested in playing at a Division I or Division II college or university
- 2.6 Technology Etiquette:** The importance of using appropriate etiquette on the phone and in email communication



## LESSON 2.1

# The College Crate

**Objective:** Students will understand the purpose of creating and the contents of a college crate, which keeps college materials organized.

**Materials:** Teacher handout 2.1 *The College Crate*, student handouts 2.1a *My College Crate...Why...? How...?* and 2.1b *My College Crate*, folders and labels

- Instructions:**
1. Give each student a copy of student handout 2.1a *My College Crate...Why...? How...?* Introduce the concept of a college crate and share student samples. Then ask students to complete the first square, "What is a college crate?"
  2. Quickwrite: Have students write down the benefits of creating and maintaining a college crate in the second square. Students can pair-share or share at their table and add to their list; then share with the class. (Variation: Have a contest to see which table can come up with the most benefits. Have them write benefits on chart paper and share with the class.)
  3. Review the list of what should be included in a college crate, and have students write these down in the third square.
  4. Pass out student handout 2.1b *My College Crate*. Ask students to bring their college crate and folders to class. Help them get organized.
  5. Determine the cost of crates and portfolios, and fundraise for these supplies, if district policy allows.





## The College Crate

As students prepare for college admission, the paperwork that is required can be daunting even for the most organized student. Therefore it is imperative that AVID students have a system to keep materials. The college crate is one system; others include keeping information electronically, in a 3-ring binder, accordion, expandable folders, or whatever organizational system works for the student.

### What are the benefits of a college crate?

- Provides a designated location to keep personal information in an organized fashion. As students complete college or scholarship applications, much of the information will be in the student's crate.
- Each section/tab in the crate will be an area of focus. For example, under "Community Service" document volunteer hours and activities.
- Putting information or items in the crate as they are received or completed means that the information will always be current.
- The crate is portable, so the information goes with the student.
- Different sections of the crate demonstrate different characteristics of the student from academics to extracurriculars, providing an overall picture of student accomplishments.
- Some universities require that a résumé or portfolio be submitted along with the application. Maintaining a college crate provides information a college might need.

### What should be included in a college crate?

- Personal Information—name, contact address, Social Security number, family affiliations (e.g., the military services)
- Academic Information—GPA, transcripts, four-year plans
- Testing Information—standardized tests (PLAN, PSAT, SAT, ACT), state exam information
- Career Information—career plans, career inventory, personality profiles
- Personal Accomplishments—membership in clubs, leadership positions held, awards received in school, community, and church. Congratulatory letters go in this section.
- Scholarships—list of all scholarships applied to and results, copies of submitted application packets



- Financial Aid—include copies of any grants, FAFSA, award letters.
- College Essays—samples of essays from different classes reflecting personal goals and aspirations, future plans, etc. Also, include scholarship and admission essays.
- College Planning—keep a log of all the colleges or universities contacted as well as any activities that help with college selection.
- Interviews—keep a list of possible interview questions and reflections on interviews.
- Community Service—keep a log of all volunteer events, dates, and hours completed.
- Letters of Recommendation—keep a list of potential writers of letters of recommendation and any copies of letters that have been written.

### What are other ways to organize college admission materials?

- Electronic Portfolios—there are many ways to set up an electronic portfolio. Check with your AVID counselor or technology teacher to see if the school has purchased any commercial programs that contain portfolio templates. Some programs are Career Cruising, Naviance, and Bridges. Otherwise, use Microsoft Office or a similar program to build a portfolio. Create folders to keep the different categories of information. Include word documents, PowerPoint presentations, imported pictures, and scanned letters. Students can also add recordings of music, plays, performances, and more.
- 3-Ring Binder—add tab dividers for each section and plastic sheet protectors to place the appropriate items in each section.
- Accordion or expandable folders—this could be as simple as an expandable folder with sections and tabs or a case with a handle. Drop the appropriate documents in each of the pockets.
- Determine a location for keeping college crates (home or classroom), and establish rules for updating and honoring confidentiality of the college crate.



## My College Crate...Why...? How...?

What is a college crate?	Why create and maintain a college crate?
What will I include in my college crate?	How will I organize my college crate?



## My College Crate

Here is a “college crate” idea to help you organize for the college admission process that you will be involved in for the next two years.

Find a plastic crate designed to hold hanging file folders. If you don’t have one around the house, they are available at office supply and discount stores. To begin, set up the following folders:

- Personal Information
- Academic Information
- Career Information
- College Planning
- Personal Accomplishments
- Academic Résumé
- Standardized Tests (PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP, etc.)
- College Admission Essays
- Interviews
- Letters of Recommendation
- Scholarships
- Financial Aid
- NCAA
- Military/ROTC
- Password

Reserve another 5–10 folders to label for each college on your “long list.” As you begin to receive information from colleges, you can set up a file for each school. As you weigh each college choice, you can move the college files around, arranging them in order of preference.

As you move through the college admission process, you will want to have more folders available. You will be adding material and making changes to your files to get yourself ready for “orientation” and “breaking away” in preparation for your freshman year of college.

It’s a challenging time and an exciting process, and it will flow more smoothly if you get organized before you begin!

*College Crate lesson from Nancy Caine, Director of College Counseling at St. Augustine High School in San Diego, CA.*

## LESSON 2.2

# Personal Information

**Objective:** An activity that helps students collect personal information for the college application process

**Materials:** Student handout 2.2 *Personal Information Sheet*

- Instructions:**
1. Distribute student handout 2.2 *Personal Information Sheet*, and review it with students. Students should write down notes to help them clarify new terms.
  2. Some questions are from college applications to give students an opportunity to answer these questions prior to completing college applications.
  3. Parent-related questions will allow students to interview their parents. Once handouts are graded and returned, give students a fresh copy of the handout and have them redo the assignment neatly and place it in their college crate.





# Personal Information Sheet

Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address, **if different** from yours: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Telephone: Home ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

College (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate School (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address, **if different** from yours: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Telephone: Home ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_



College (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate School (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Current High School \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_ CEEB/ACT Code \_\_\_\_\_

School Type:  Public  Charter  Independent  Religious  Home School

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

List all other secondary schools you have attended since 9th grade, including summer schools or enrichment programs hosted on a secondary school campus:

School Name	CEEB/ACT Code	Location (City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code, Country) Dates	Attended (mm/yyyy)



## LESSON 2.3

# High School and Community Activities

**Objective:** Students learn the importance of involvement in extracurricular activities on campus, as well as in the community.

**Materials:** Pen, paper, student handout 2.3a *High School and Community Activities Record* and student handout 2.3b *College Admission Checklist*

- Instructions:**
1. Explain to students that they must document their activities for their college crate.
  2. Hand out student handout 2.3a *High School and Community Activities Record*.
  3. Review each category and share examples. Other strategies to review this student activity are:
    - Informal discussion
    - Students take Cornell notes.
    - Use chart paper, white board, or PowerPoint to record examples given by students.
    - Divide students into groups. Have each group discuss one category and develop examples to share with the class.
  4. Hand out student handout 2.3b *College Admission Checklist*. This form will help students update the college admission process. Allow class time to review the checklist often. Students should keep it in their college crate.





## High School and Community Activities Record

List the activities you were involved in for each grade, and include any leadership positions you held (officer, committee chair, leader, etc.)

Community and School Activities	9th Grade	10th Grade
Clubs and Organizations		
Athletics (include letters earned in sports)		
Visual and Performing Arts <i>(photography, journalism, band, choir, drama, creative writing, etc.)</i>		
Student Government		
Cheer, Drill, Flags, JROTC		
Awards, Honors, and Other Achievements		
Volunteer Work		
Add Your Own Category		



Community and School Activities	11th Grade	12th Grade
Clubs and Organizations		
Athletics (include letters earned in sports)		
<b>Visual and Performing Arts</b> <i>(photography, journalism, band, choir, drama, creative writing, etc.)</i>		
Student Government		
Cheer, Drill, Flags, JROTC		
Awards, Honors, and Other Achievements		
Volunteer Work		
Add Your Own Category		



# College Admission Checklist

	Date	Date	Date	Date
<b>Personal Information</b>				
• <i>Personal Information Sheet</i>				
• <i>Résumé</i>				
<b>Academic Information</b>				
• <i>GPA—Calculating My GPA</i>				
• <i>Transcript</i>				
• <i>Four-Year Plan</i>				
<b>Career Information</b>				
• <i>Career Plans</i>				
• <i>Career Inventory</i>				
• <i>Personality Profiles</i>				
• <i>Career Selection</i>				
<b>College Planning</b>				
• <i>List of Contacted Colleges and Universities</i>				
• <i>Information Sheets or One-Pager</i>				
• <i>Information From College Fairs</i>				
• <i>Information From Interviews</i>				
• <i>Information From College Visits</i>				
• <i>Comparing Colleges and Universities</i>				
<b>Personal Accomplishments</b>				
• <i>High School Activities Record</i>				
• <i>Congratulatory Letters</i>				
• <i>Certificates/Awards</i>				
<b>Testing Information</b>				
• <i>State Exam Information</i>				
• <i>Planning for College Entrance Exams</i>				
• <i>College Entrance Exams</i>				
• <i>PLAN/PSAT Score Report</i>				
• <i>ACT/SAT Score Report</i>				
• <i>Advanced Placement Scores</i>				



<b>College Admission Essays</b>				
• Copies of Admission Essays				
• Copies of Scholarship Essays				
<b>Interviews</b>				
• List of Possible Interview Questions				
• List of Interviews Scheduled				
• Reflections From Interviews				
<b>Letters of Recommendation</b>				
• <i>The Letter of Recommendation: Who Should I Ask? When Should I Ask?</i>				
<b>Community Service</b>				
• List of Community Service Activities				
• Log of Volunteer Hours				
<b>Scholarships</b>				
• List of All Scholarships and Results				
• Copies of Scholarship Applications				
<b>Financial Aid</b>				
• FAFSA and PIN				
• Grants Applied for				
• Award Letters				

## LESSON 2.4

# Preparing the Résumé

**Objective:** Students will create an academic résumé listing activities, work experience, and educational history that will provide information to help complete college and scholarship applications.

**Materials:** Student handout 2.4a *The Art of the Résumé* and student handout 2.4b *Sample Résumé*

- Instructions:**
1. Write the word “résumé” on the board, and ask students these questions: What is a résumé? What is its purpose? What information should be included?
  2. Explain that each student will develop his or her own educational résumé that will help them to complete college and scholarship applications.
  3. Instruct students to complete the “Résumé Worksheet,” explaining each category and what information to include in each section.
  4. Give each student a copy of student handout 2.4a *The Art of the Résumé*. Walk students through these guidelines, making sure that all the important points are covered. Show students different sample résumés and how to find templates online or through Microsoft.
  5. Demonstrate how to write a résumé beginning with the contact information (heading). Give out student handout 2.4b *Sample Résumé* for them to follow as a guide as they develop their résumé.
  6. Have students write a résumé on a sheet of paper, transferring the information from their worksheet onto a résumé format. Stress organization and content in this step.
  7. When students satisfactorily complete their handwritten résumé, have students create their résumé on a computer. Taking the AVID class to the computer lab provides an excellent opportunity to assist them as they create it. There are many résumé templates students can adopt, and while an example is provided, students should select the format of their choice.



# The Art of the Résumé

## What is a résumé, also known as a curriculum vitae or CV?

A résumé is a brief but detailed synopsis of your high school activities, interests, and community involvement that tells how you spend your time, what skills you have developed during high school, and what you can contribute to a college. A good résumé can, in a few minutes, give the reader a snapshot of you.

## When is a résumé used?

A résumé is most useful as part of a job application or interview. It is also helpful to have one for a reference when you fill out college applications (helps you remember everything you have done) or have college interviews (can serve as the basis for interview questions) or are applying for an internship. Give anyone you've asked to write a letter of recommendation a copy of your résumé. It will help them write a letter that reflects who you are.

## Elements of a Good Résumé

**Contact Information:** The first section of the résumé should tell the reader (college representative, scholarship committee, prospective employer) how they can contact you. Center at the top in bold:

**Name**

**Home Address**

**Phone Number(s)**

**Email Address**

**Education:** List the high schools you have attended in reverse chronological order. (Begin with the school you are currently attending.) Include the school's address. List rigorous courses you have successfully completed or are enrolled in, such as Pre-AP, AP, IB, dual-credit, and honors courses. Include your GPA if it is a 3.0 or above. For example:

Martin Luther King High School, 5500 Foxborough Road, Anytown, TX

12th grade: AP English, AP Calculus

11th grade: AP English, AP U.S. History

**Honors and Awards:** Brainstorm honors and awards you have received during high school. Use your college crate to access information. Include distinguishing details, such as "out of 400 applicants." Categorize the honors and awards if you have more than one in each category. Be sure to include any scholarships you receive.

**Academic Honors and Awards**

Top Ten Percent: 11th, 12th grades

Principal's List for 3.5 GPA and above: 9th, 10th, 11th grades

Perfect Attendance, 11th grade

**Sports**

Scholar Athlete, 11th grade

State Championship Volleyball Team, 11th grade

Most Valuable Player, 10th grade

**Scholarships**

Optimist Club Scholarship, 12th grade

Martin Luther King PTO Scholarship, 12th grade



**Clubs and Activities:** Brainstorm clubs and activities you were involved in during high school and list them in chronological order.

**Clubs and Activities**

AVID Club: 9th, 10th—Secretary, 11th—Vice President  
Student Council, 10th grade  
Drill Team: 9th, 10th grades

**Community Service:** List the organization or events you volunteered for, grade(s), a brief description of what you did, and total hours you volunteered.

**Community Service**

Girls and Boys Club: 10th, 11th grades (Peer Tutor), 5 hours per week for 36 weeks  
Anytown Church: 9th, 10th, 11th grades (Sunday School Class Assistant)  
XYZ High School Christmas Food Drive: 9th, 10th, 11th grades (organized and distributed donations)

**Sports:** If you have more than two entries under this category, list it as a separate category. Include high school sports activities and any city leagues you participated in. Also include any recreational sports you enjoy, such as surfing, riding dirt bikes, hiking, etc.

**Summer Activities:** Did you participate in any summer activities that help you succeed in college? For example, some universities offer summer activities on campus that give students a focused experience.

**Summer Activities**

Teen Summer Program, ABC College, 10th grade  
Exploration in Engineering, ABC College, 9th grade

**Employment:** Include your work history. List the name of the companies you worked for in chronological order, with the most current first. Include where the company is located and your job title or duties. If you have not had any work experience, omit this category.

**Employment Experience**

Delicious Restaurant, Anytown, Florida, January 2012–June 2012  
Hostess: Greeted customers, checked on seat availability, seated customers

**Personal Interests and Special Talents:** List your hobbies, interests, and talents. Include languages you speak other than English, computer skills, etc.

## Tips for Organizing Your Résumé

- The format of your résumé will depend on what you have done and your interests. For example, if you don't play intramural or recreational sports, you won't have a "Sports" category to complete.
- Your educational résumé can be longer than one page. It's important to have all the information and details you need to complete applications. (Work résumés are usually limited to one page, however.)
- The chronology should go from most recent to the oldest.
- Use bold-faced type and bullets, indentations, or dashes at the beginning of lines to delineate a particular category or activity.
- Put the most important information first. You will notice in the examples that the activity/award is listed first, then the grade(s). The reader's eye will go to what you did (more important) and then when you did it.
- Provide explanations for your activities. These explanations will help you add detail to college and scholarship applications.
- Avoid abbreviations that only an insider would understand.



**John Smith**  
**5550 Anderson Way**  
**Anytown, CA 91111**  
**(550) 987-6543**  
**jsmith@aol.com**

### **EDUCATION:**

John Glenn High School, 555 Madison, Anytown, California 92222

- 12th grade: AP English Literature, AP Statistics
- 11th grade: AP English, AP U.S. History
- 10th grade: Honors English, Honors Geometry
- 9th grade: Honors English

### **HONORS AND AWARDS:**

- Principal's List (4.0 or better): 9th, 10th grades
- First Honors: 9th, 10th, 11th grades
- Second Honors: 9th, 11th grades

### **CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES:**

- National Youth Leadership Forum on Law: 11th grade (1 of 350 students selected nationwide based on scholastic and leadership abilities)
- Delegate to National Youth Leadership Forum in New York City: 12th grade
- Student Newspaper: 10th, 11th grades
- Baseball Coach/Instructor: 9th, 10th, 11th grades

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

- YMCA Counselor-in-Training: 10th grade (summer camp volunteer, selected Outstanding CIT)
- Anytown Historical Society: 10th grade (museum information, sales, clerical assistance)

### **SPORTS:**

- Baseball: Varsity Baseball 11th, 12th grades; JV Baseball 9th, 10th grades
- Traveling and Club Tournament Baseball Teams: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades
- Football: 9th grade
- Recreational Sports: mountain biking, hiking/camping, fresh and saltwater fishing

### **EMPLOYMENT:**

- Jamba Juice in Parkway Center, smoothie maker, from June to September
- Teacher's Aid at Julio Elementary, from January to June

### **PERSONAL INTERESTS:**

Recreational sports, spectator sports, car restoration, and music



## LESSON 2.5

# NCAA

## (National Collegiate Athletic Association)

**Objective:** Students learn the requirements for athletes who are considering playing at a Division I or II college or university.

**Materials:** Student handout *2.5 National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA)*

**Instructions:** Provide students who are interested in NCAA eligibility with the information they need to know about strict requirements for athletes to practice, play, and get a scholarship at Division I or II schools.





## National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

Are you an athlete that is considering playing at a Division I or II college or university? The NCAA has very strict requirements for eligibility. It is important that you know the rules. This sheet will provide some basic information. Go online at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) to get comprehensive information. Work closely with your coach and school counselor throughout high school to ensure all requirements are met.

### Eligibility Requirements

In order to be able to practice, play, and get a scholarship at an NCAA Division I or II college, you need to complete the following:

- Graduate from high school.
- Complete a minimum of 16 (for Division I) and 14 (for Division II) core courses. Beginning August 1, 2013, students planning to attend an NCAA Division II institution will be required to complete 16 core courses.
- Present the required grade-point average (GPA).
- Present a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT.
- Request final amateurism certification (beginning April 1 for fall enrollees or beginning October 1 for spring enrollees).

### NCAA Calendar

#### Beginning of junior year:

- Students should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at the beginning of their junior year in high school. Go to [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) and select the link for college-bound student athletes to enter. Click on the “New Account” button at the top right of the screen and follow the instructions. Registration checklist includes items below:
- **Valid Email Address**—you need a valid email address that you check regularly for any possible updates the Eligibility Center might send.
- **Basic Personal Information**—you will be asked to provide your name, gender, date of birth, contact information, and a list of other countries in which you have lived.



- **Basic Education History**—this includes a list of all high schools you have attended and dates of attendance.
- **Additional Coursework**—this includes details pertaining to any coursework you may have taken in addition to your normal high school or secondary school education (e.g., courses taken to improve a grade, summer school courses taken at a location other than your high school, courses taken at a college or junior college, or any type of correspondence or Internet courses).
- **Sports Participation History**—this includes details for any teams with which you have practiced or played or certain events in which you may have participated, as well as information about any individuals that have advised you or marketed your skills in a particular sport.
- **Payment**—there is a cost to register. Check online to see what the current fee is. The Eligibility Center accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express. If you are a U.S. resident, you can choose to pay by electronic check. Check with your school counselor to see if you qualify for a fee waiver.

#### During junior year:

- When you register for the SAT or ACT, be sure to include the NCAA Eligibility Center as a recipient. The Eligibility Center's code is "9999." Your SAT and/or ACT scores will be forwarded directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- At mid-term, meet with your counselor to discuss any issues and confirm all core courses to be completed prior to graduation.

#### End of junior year:

- Send an official high school transcript to the Eligibility Center with six semesters of completed courses and grades earned.
- When registering for senior classes, meet with your counselor to discuss any issues and confirm all core courses to be completed prior to graduation.

*(Adapted from [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org))*

## LESSON 2.6

# Technology Etiquette

**Objective:** Students learn important factors regarding appropriate etiquette, as it relates to completing applications for college and scholarships.

**Materials:** Student handout 2.6 *Technology Etiquette*

**Instructions:** The following tips provide students with valuable information related to communicating with college representatives during the college application process.





# Technology Etiquette

## Phone Etiquette

- College representatives, scholarship contacts, and prospective employers are some of the people who will call your preferred phone number; be sure to have a professional-sounding message.
- The preferred phone number you listed on applications, cover letters, and your résumé means that you may be getting phone calls from phone numbers you will not recognize. You should develop a plan for answering important calls, even if you usually don't answer calls from unfamiliar phone numbers.
- Return phone calls within 24 hours, so you don't miss any opportunities.
- When leaving a phone message, state who you are calling, the nature of the call, and provide your name and phone number.

## Email Address

If you don't already have an email address, you need to get one as soon as possible. Colleges use email to correspond with applicants. Choose any of the sites below to register for a free email address.

Host	URL
AIM Mail (AOL)	<a href="http://www.mail.aol.com/">www.mail.aol.com/</a>
Gawab.com	<a href="http://www.Gawab.com">www.Gawab.com</a>
Google Mail	<a href="http://www.gmail.com">www.gmail.com</a>
GMX Mail	<a href="http://www.gmx.com">www.gmx.com</a>
Inbox.com	<a href="http://www.inbox.com">www.inbox.com</a>
Windows Live Hotmail	<a href="http://www.hotmail.com">www.hotmail.com</a>
Yahoo! Mail	<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a>
Zoho Mail	<a href="http://www.zoho.com/Mail">www.zoho.com/Mail</a>

## Tips for setting up your email address

- Read the terms of agreement carefully before registering.
- Do not use cute nicknames for your email address (browneyes, whoscharliebrowne, soccergirl, etc.).
- Your email address creates a first impression for a college or scholarship committee.
- Choose a professional email address—preferably one that includes part of your name (bsmith, bob.smith, bobsmith).
- Do not use social security number, birth date, or other personal information as part of your email address (bsmith061997, bsmith6929).

## Answering emails

- Check emails often, and answer within 24 hours.
- Use an appropriate subject title that relates to the body of the email.
- Keep emails concise and use formal language.
- Provide multiple methods of contacting you in your signature.
- Double check who you are sending the email to before pressing the "send" button.
- Proofread the message for clarity, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Do not use all caps when sending emails.



# Testing

## Junior Year, First Semester

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Prior to junior year, students should have taken the PLAN and perhaps a practice version of the PSAT®. The PLAN results help students prepare for the ACT®, just as PSAT results help prepare for the SAT®.

The PSAT is administered in October on a specific date. Juniors should take the exam and utilize test results to prepare for the SAT. A very high score that is earned junior year provides eligibility for National Merit programs. Register for the PSAT in September; the test is often given at the student's school. Fee waivers are available for those who qualify.

Helping students understand the format of the different college admission tests, content tested, and what to bring on test day helps to lessen anxiety. The College Board offers much support to help students prepare for the PSAT.

When students get PSAT test results, help them understand their score reports and how to use their results to improve ACT and SAT scores.

## Calendar

### *August–October*

- Register and prepare for the PSAT.
- Review previous scores for PLAN or PSAT.
- Take the PSAT in October.

### *November–December*

- Plan for college entrance exams taken in spring.
- Interpret PSAT score reports.

## Lessons

**3.1 Introducing the PSAT:** Students become familiar with the PSAT.

**3.2 Planning for College Entrance Exams:** Students learn a planning tool for documenting test dates and scores of college entrance tests.

**3.3 Using PSAT/NMSQT® Results:** Students will be able to use PSAT results to prepare for the ACT and SAT.

## LESSON 3.1

# Introducing the PSAT

**Objective:** Students will be familiar with the PSAT/NMSQT®.

**Materials:** Student handout 3.1 *PSAT Scavenger Hunt*, teacher handout 3.1 *Preliminary SAT (PSAT/NMSQT)*

- Instructions:**
1. Explain to students that most colleges and universities require either the SAT or the ACT as part of the admissions process. The PSAT and the PLAN (taken during 10th grade) prepare students for those exams.
  2. Introduce the PSAT by providing students with the information on the “Preliminary SAT (PSAT/NMSQT)” handout. Have students take Cornell notes as you explain the attributes of the PSAT.
  3. Give each student a copy of student handout 3.1 *PSAT Scavenger Hunt*.
  4. Take students to a computer lab to complete the Scavenger Hunt for the PSAT. They can do this individually or in pairs.
  5. Go to <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/psatnmsqt-fact-sheet.pdf> and download “PSAT Quick Reference,” which is a one-page document explaining the PSAT. Or use the *Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT*. Students may use this for the Scavenger Hunt, as well.
  6. Variation: The goal can be for each student to complete the entire scavenger hunt or make it a contest to see who finds the most correct answers before you call time.
  7. Once students complete the Scavenger Hunt, go over the answers and provide more information.

## Answers to PSAT Scavenger Hunt

1. 11th grade
2. In October. Look up specific weekday and weekend test administration (usually third Saturday in October and preceding Wednesday).
3. Critical reading, mathematics, writing
4. Critical reading—sentence completion and passage-based readings; Math—multiple choice and student-produced responses; Writing—multiple choice
5. Two 25-minute sections
6. Tests are ordered by the school. Check with AVID counselor and AVID teacher.
7. Two 25-minute sections
8. Answer may vary depending on school practice for paying for exams. Limited fee waivers available.
9. 30 minutes
10. You may use any four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator, unless it has features described in the prohibited list.
11. Any variation of the URL [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
12. SAT
13. Two #2 pencils, calculator (optional)



## PSAT Scavenger Hunt

1. What grade level is the PSAT designed/normed for?
2. What are the test dates for the PSAT?
3. What subject areas does the PSAT measure?
4. How are the questions formatted?
5. How much time do you have to complete the math portion?
6. How do you register for the PSAT?
7. How much time do you have to complete the critical reading portion?
8. How much does it cost to take the PSAT?
9. How much time do you have to complete the writing portion?
10. Are you allowed to use a calculator?
11. Where can you find additional information on the PSAT?
12. What national exam is the PSAT aligned with?
13. What do you need to bring on test day?





## Preliminary SAT (PSAT/NMSQT)

### Overview

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. While the PSAT/NMSQT is normed for 11th grade, some students take it earlier. During junior year, the PSAT is also used to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program as well as other national scholarship programs. The PSAT includes a writing skills section, but not a written essay, which is part of the SAT Reasoning Test.

Subject	Number of Questions	Time Allowed
<b>Critical Reading Skills</b> Sentence Completion Critical Reading	48	Two 25-minute reading sections
<b>Math</b> Numbers and Operations Algebra Geometry Data Analysis	38	Two 25-minute math sections
<b>Writing Skills</b> Identifying Sentence Errors Improving Sentences Improving Paragraphs	39	30 minutes

### Test Dates

The PSAT is offered twice a year, usually on Wednesday and Saturday of the third week in October.

### Question Format

The critical reading sections use sentence completions and passage-based readings. The mathematics section uses multiple-choice and student-produced responses. The writing section uses multiple-choice questions.

### Additional Information

Like the SAT, the PSAT uses a negative scoring system, so a student loses a fraction of a point for each incorrect answer. Because students have been trained to answer every question on a test, the PSAT and SAT present a special challenge to many. Teaching students how to recognize questions that they should skip is key part of test preparation. For more information about the PSAT®, visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).



## LESSON 3.2

# Planning for College Entrance Exams

**Objective:** Students learn a planning tool for documenting test dates and scores of college entrance tests.

**Materials:** Student handout 3.2 *Planning for College Entrance Exams* and teacher handout 3.2 *College Entrance and Placement Exams*

- Instructions:**
1. Give each student a copy of student handout 3.2 *Planning for College Entrance Exams*.
  2. Students complete information on tests they have taken.
  3. Have students look up test dates and registration deadlines and write the dates they plan to take the SAT and ACT. Encourage students to take both the SAT and ACT.
  4. Students can add test dates to their college crate.
  5. Give AVID teachers a copy of teacher handout 3.2 *College Entrance and Placement Exams*. AVID counselors can partner with AVID Elective teachers to publicize and provide registration information.



## Planning for College Entrance Exams

Test	Test Date	Register by	Test Scores
PSAT			Critical Reading Math Writing Skills
PSAT			Critical Reading Math Writing Skills
SAT			Writing Math Critical Reading
SAT			Writing Math Critical Reading
PLAN			English Math Reading Science Composite Score
PLAN			English Math Reading Science Composite Score
ACT			English Math Reading Science Composite Score
ACT			English Math Reading Science Composite Score
SAT Subject Test			
SAT Subject Test			
SAT Subject Test			



## College Entrance and Placement Exams

### ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests

The ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests are used by colleges, along with the student's class rank, high school curriculum, recommendations (and sometimes essays), to determine the probability of success at their college and, therefore, acceptance to their institution. Sometimes student scores determine placement in college courses. All colleges accept either the ACT or the SAT. The tests are offered several Saturday mornings a year and may be taken more than once.

**ACT** The scores range from 1–36. The test has four parts: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. There is a composite score and 11 sub-scores broken down by subject areas. Calculators are permitted on the math test, but not on the science test. Register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

**SAT** The scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math, and critical reading). By definition, a score of 500 on any section would mean that 50 percent of test takers did more poorly than that student on the section. One adds the writing, math, and critical reading scores to answer the question, "What did you get on the SAT?" Bring a calculator to use for the SAT math section. Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**SAT Subject Tests** Some competitive schools will also require SAT Subject Tests in one, two, or three subjects. Some will specify which subject tests must be taken; others may only recommend the SAT Subject Tests. The SAT Subject Tests are multiple choice and are one hour each; up to three may be taken on a Saturday morning. SAT Subject Tests should be taken as students complete the specific subject (e.g., U.S. history, a science, a foreign language). Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**CLEP® (College Level Exam Placement)** A series of tests in a variety of college disciplines offered at more than 1,000 test centers. There are five broad-based liberal arts areas and 34 examinations in specific areas, such as U.S. history, accounting, Spanish, etc. Students should check with their college as to whether they can receive college credit by achieving an acceptable CLEP score.

**TOEFL® (Test of English as a Foreign Language)** Often used by colleges for admitting students who have been in the U.S. for fewer than two years before applying to college. Some schools ask any student who has not been in a U.S. high school all four years to take this test.

**AP® Tests (Advanced Placement Tests)** Taken in May after completing a specific AP high school course of study. Scores range from 1 to 5. Many colleges will grant college credit based on the student's AP score. AP scores may be used to place a student in advanced college courses once accepted to the college. The minimum scores and the benefits granted are entirely up to each college.



## LESSON 3.3

# Using PSAT/NMSQT Results

**Objective:** Students will be able to use PSAT results to prepare for the SAT.

**Materials:** Student handout 3.3 *My PSAT/NMSQT Scores*

- Instructions:**
1. Provide a lesson on interpreting PSAT test results when you hand back students' score reports in December or January. Students can continue to reference the information as they prepare for SAT exams.
  2. Distribute PSAT Score Reports to students who took the exam. Download the PSAT PowerPoint® Presentation from the College Board website to help explain students' scores.
  3. As you go through each section of the Score Report, have students complete student handout 3.3 *My PSAT/NMSQT Scores*.
  4. Activities following the PowerPoint:
    - Students write an essay on the topic "What I learned from my PSAT Score Report."
    - Students write goals and strategies for improving scores.
    - Backwards Mapping Activity: Students select the test date for the SAT, then write action steps they need to complete to prepare for the exam using score report information, taking practice tests, and incorporating text-taking strategies.



## PSAT/NMSQT Score Report *Plus*

The PSAT/NMSQT is typically taken in the 11th grade; help students understand the results during December or January of junior year. The four major areas of the score report are:

- Your Scores,
- Your Skills,
- Your Answers and
- Next Steps.

### PSAT/NMQST Resources for the AVID Elective teacher and counselor

College Board provides numerous resources to assist educators to help students understand their PSAT score report. Visit the College Board website at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and look under the PSAT tab. There are many different resources for educators after students receive their scores. Below are examples.

#### AVID Test Prep

AVID Test Prep is an effective and affordable solution that provides online SAT, ACT, PSAT and PLAN test prep courses delivered by experts through engaging, on-demand video lessons. AVID Test Prep helps students of all levels improve and maximize their college entrance exam scores to attain their educational goals. AVID Test Prep uses a well-established “test-grade-review” methodology and a proprietary online, video-based delivery platform. Students will benefit from expert instruction that is engaging, convenient, and flexible. Contact AVID Center for more information.

#### Sample PSAT/NMSQT Student Score Report

This sample student score report can help students and parents become familiar with the format and contents.

#### Score Report Plus Case Study

Explains the sample score report section by section

#### PSAT/NMSQT Academic Skills List

Lists the academic skills assessed by the PSAT/NMSQT, including advice about how to improve test scores

#### Your Next Steps: Using PSAT/NMSQT Results Student Video

Walks students through the PSAT/NMSQT Score Report Plus and My College QuickStart™

#### Understanding Results from the PSAT/NMSQT

PowerPoint presentation for counselors and teachers to advise students on using the feedback provided in the score report

#### My College Quickstart™

Students can review each test question, their answers, and the correct answers with explanations. Students also receive a customized SAT study plan. Students can take a personality test linked to majors and careers that fit their strengths and interests. Finally students can explore a vast variety of majors and careers using *My Major and Career Matches*.



## My PSAT/NMSQT Scores

Scores: Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

My Score Range: Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

My Percentile: Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Mathematics: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

National Merit Index: \_\_\_\_\_ Online Access Code: \_\_\_\_\_

### My Critical Reading Skills:

Critical Reading	# Correct	Total # of Questions	# Omitted
• Determining the Meaning of Words			
• Author's Craft: Style, Tone, Technique			
• Reasoning and Inference			
• Organization and Ideas			
• Understanding Literary Elements			

### My Mathematics Skills:

Mathematics	# Correct	Total # of Questions	# Omitted
• Numbers and Operations			
• Algebra and Functions			
• Geometry and Measurement			
• Data, Statistics, and Probability			

### My Writing Skills

Writing Skills	# Correct	Total # of Questions	# Omitted
• Relationships Between Words			
• Words, Phrases Used to Modify or Compare			
• Phrases and Clauses			
• Correctly Formed Sentences			
• Relationships of Sentences and Paragraphs			

Review the section titled "Your Answers." This lists your answer to each question and identifies if you answered correctly and the level of difficulty.

The college major I am interested in (according to the report):



# Financing

## Junior Year, First Semester

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Across the country, newspaper headlines announce that the cost of attending college has gone up. It is important that students know the “real” cost of attending college. The aim is to teach students not only to compare college costs, but also to plan financially. The junior year students will learn about the different types of financial aid and what they can do to prepare. There are a limited number of scholarships available to juniors, but completing scholarship applications is good practice for the work that will come senior year.

### Calendar

*August–December*

- Learn about the different types of financial aid.
- Refute financial aid myths.
- Develop a system to keep track of financial aid applications.

### Lessons

- 4.1 Financial Aid—Separating the Myths from the Realities:** Students will develop an understanding of important facts regarding financial aid.
- 4.2 Financial Aid Facts and Reducing the Cost of College:** Students learn how to make good financial aid decisions.
- 4.3 Keep Track of All Parts of Financial Aid:** Students maintain a checklist in order to keep track of all parts of financial aid.



## LESSON 4.1

# Financial Aid— Separating the Myths from the Realities

**Objective:** Students will develop an understanding of important facts regarding financial aid.

**Materials:** Student handouts 4.1a *Financial Aid Glossary*, 4.1b *Financial Aid Myths* and 4.1c *Financial Aid Myths... and Realities*

**Instructions:**

1. Cut student handout 4.1b *Financial Aid Myths* into strips, fold them, and put them in a container.
2. Select a student to draw one myth and read it. Ask other students to share why they think it is a myth. Then read the answer from student handout 4.1c *Financial Aid Myths... and Realities*
3. Using the student handout 4.1a *Financial Aid Glossary*, introduce students to the terms they will encounter as they research financial aid opportunities.
4. Introduce a word a day as a “sponge” or “bell-ringer” activity, and have students add the word to their notes.
5. Play a game to reinforce new terms. Search the Internet for templates to create games.
6. Go to <http://teach.fcps.net/trt10/PowerPoint.htm> for templates for *Jeopardy*, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, and *Hollywood Squares*.

### A Game Called *Bluff*

- Divide students into two teams.
- Teacher reads either the word or the definition. When the teacher reads the definition, students must provide the word. When the teacher reads the word, then students must provide the definition.
- Students who know the answer stand up; and those who don't and wish to “bluff” the answer stand up, also.
- One of the students who is standing is to give either the definition or word.
- If the student provides the correct answer, count the number of students standing and award that number of points to the student's team.
- If the student answers incorrectly, count the number of students standing and deduct that number of points from the student's team.



## Financial Aid Glossary

**Award Letter:** A letter from the college financial aid office that is sent to the student listing all financial aid awarded to the student. Award letters vary among institutions, but they generally list the expected family contribution, cost of attendance, and the terms of the aid awarded.

**Cost of Attendance:** The student's cost of attendance includes tuition, fees, and a standard allocation designed to cover reasonable living expenses while attending school. The cost of attendance is determined by the school using guidelines established by federal regulations.

**Default:** This term applies to loans. It is the failure to repay a student loan according to the terms of the loan. If you default, your school, the organization that holds your loan, the state, and the federal government can all take action to recover the money, including notifying national credit bureaus of your default.

**Estimated Family Contribution (EFC):** The total amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs. This is determined from family and student income and assets for the prior year. The amount is derived from a need analysis of the family's financial circumstances.

**FAFSA:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid determines a student's financial aid. Apply online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Forms may be filed any time after January 1, of the year for which the student is seeking aid. January of the senior year will be the first opportunity for high school students to apply.

**Federal Direct Student Loan Program:** Federally sponsored loan programs, which include the Stafford Loan and the Parent PLUS Loan (for parents of undergraduate students)

**Financial Aid Package:** The total financial aid a student receives. Federal and non-federal aid, such as grants, loans, work-study, and scholarships, are combined in a "package" to help meet the student's need.

**Financial Need:** The amount by which your family's contribution falls short of covering your college expenses. It is determined by subtracting the expected family contribution (EFC) from the total cost of attendance.

**Gift Aid:** Financial aid that does not have to be paid back, such as scholarships and grants

**Grant:** A type of financial aid award based on need or merit that does not require repayment

**Interest:** A fee charged when you take out a loan. Interest is calculated as a percentage of the principal loan amount. The rate may be constant throughout the life of the loan (fixed rate) or it may change at specified times (variable rate).

**Merit-Based Aid:** Financial aid that is awarded based on a student's academic, leadership, or artistic talent, or some other criteria. Merit-based aid may consider a student's grades, test scores, special talents, or extracurricular activities to determine eligibility.

**Need Analysis:** A process of reviewing a student's financial aid application to determine the amount of financial aid eligibility. Completing a need analysis form is the required first step in applying for most types of financial aid.

**Need-Based Financial Aid:** Financial aid that is awarded based on a student's financial circumstance. Need-based aid can be awarded in the form of grants, loans, or work-study.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** A form sent to the student after submitting the FAFSA. The SAR shows the information that was processed and indicates Pell Grant eligibility.

**Work-Study:** An opportunity for a student to work part-time and attend college. Work-study is designed to help students fund their college.



## Financial Aid Myths

**Myth #1:** You can't afford college, or you can't afford the college of your dreams.

**Myth #2:** My dream college is a private school. My family can't afford the tuition.

**Myth #3:** You have to be very poor, very smart, or uncommonly talented to qualify for financial aid.

**Myth #4:** The college with the lowest price will be the most affordable.

**Myth #5:** You can get more scholarships or financial aid by paying someone to search for you.

**Myth #6:** I'm expecting to receive a lot of scholarships, so I don't need to apply for aid.

**Myth #7:** I will pay for college myself, so it doesn't matter how much money my parents make.

**Myth #8:** You can wait until you get accepted to a college before worrying about financial aid.

**Myth #9:** I want to go to college, but my parents don't have the money, and I can't afford to take out loans to pay for college.

**Myth #10:** There is no money for college.

**Myth #11:** My parents make too much money to qualify for any aid.

**Myth #12:** The process of applying for financial aid is too complicated.



## Financial Aid Myths...and Realities

### Myth #1: You can't afford college, or you can't afford the college of your dreams.

**Truth:** When students and parents see the tuition price, the cost of living in the dorms, and the price of textbooks they get “sticker shock.” Paying for college is the largest single investment many families make. Two out of three students get at least some financial aid to help make college more affordable. Students can receive a combination of grants, loans, scholarships, or work-study jobs to help reduce the cost of college.

### Myth #2: My dream college is a private school. My family can't afford the tuition.

**Truth:** Don't rule out the college of your dreams just because of the cost. If a college has higher tuition and expenses, students often get more financial aid to help cover the extra cost. For example, Harvard University has pledged that a family with an income of \$60,000 or less will not be expected to contribute to college costs.

### Myth #3: You have to be very poor, very smart, or uncommonly talented to qualify for financial aid.

**Truth:** Financial aid comes in many forms—grants and scholarships, which don't have to be repaid, and loans, which do have to be repaid. There is need-based aid for students who come from lower income families and merit-based aid for students who excel in athletics, drama, debate, instrumental music, community service, and many other areas.

### Myth #4: The college with the lowest price will be the most affordable.

**Truth:** Not necessarily! Some of the more expensive colleges have raised significant amounts of money for scholarships from their alumni and friends. As a result, they have more money to give to students in the form of scholarships, which reduces the “sticker price.” If a student qualifies for need-based aid, they may receive more financial aid at the more expensive school, thus reducing the final cost.

### Myth #5: You can get more scholarships or financial aid for college by paying someone to search for you.

**Truth:** Beware of any group or individual that guarantees a scholarship or financial aid if you pay a fee. These groups utilize high pressure tactics to get parents to pay for a service they don't need. There are many very good, free scholarship and financial aid sources.

### Myth #6: I'm expecting to receive a lot of scholarships, so I don't need to apply for aid.

**Truth:** Apply for all types of aid: scholarships, grants, work-study opportunities, and loans. If your final tab after paying tuition, fees, books, room and board, computer, etc., is completely covered by your scholarships, you can turn down the other aid. Also, in the unlikely event that you need to switch schools unexpectedly, you've already secured some aid towards your potential new school.



**Myth #7: I am going to pay for college myself, so it doesn't matter how much money my parents make.**

**Truth:** Most need-based financial aid is based on parents' income and assets. Most schools require students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to qualify for need-based aid. That form asks for parents' income information.

**Myth #8: You can wait until you get accepted to a college before worrying about financial aid.**

**Truth:** Most financial aid is distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Planning should start junior year for what sources of financial aid you will apply to. There are some scholarships that are available to juniors, so starting early may mean more money for college.

**Myth #9: I want to go to college, but my parents don't have the money, and I can't afford to take out loans to pay for college.**

**Truth:** Almost all students today can get low-interest education loans to help them pay for college, and education loans typically don't have to be paid back until a student is out of school. The average loan debt of undergraduate students today is roughly \$20,000—that's less than the cost of most new cars!

**Myth #10: There is no money for college.**

**Truth:** Total annual financial aid available to students is approaching \$200 billion. This includes the entire spectrum of aid, such as grants, scholarships, work-study, low-interest and government-subsidized loans. However, students must apply for the different types of financial aid, meet the requirements, and meet the timelines.

**Myth #11: My parents make too much money to qualify for any aid.**

**Truth:** This is the biggest myth of all and the most dangerous. There are no income limitations on aid. While a family with significant income may not be eligible for need-based aid, there are dozens of strategies available to lower the cost of college. Always submit the FAFSA to see what you qualify for. There may be family circumstances that increase your chances of getting some aid, including number of family members in college, household size, age of older parent, etc.

**Myth #12: The process of applying for financial aid is too complicated.**

**Truth:** For many schools, the only step involved in applying for financial aid is to fill out the FAFSA. Completing the FAFSA is actually very easy, especially if you do it online. There are detailed instructions for every question, as well as online help.



## LESSON 4.2

# Financial Aid Facts and Reducing the Cost of College

**Objective:** Students learn how to make good financial aid decisions.

**Materials:** Pen, paper, Internet access, student handouts 4.2a *Federal Student Aid at a Glance* and 4.2b *Reducing the Cost of College*

- Instructions:**
1. Review the information from student handout 4.2a *Federal Student Aid at a Glance* as a whole classroom discussion, or jigsaw the activity by putting students in five groups and ask groups to discuss these types of financial aid and share with the class.
    - What is Federal Student Aid?
    - How do you apply for Federal Student Aid?
    - What are the types of student aid?
    - What happens after the FAFSA is submitted?
    - Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
  2. Take students to a computer lab and have them research their first choice college for financial aid opportunities.
  3. Ask students to share what they learned from their research by creating a poster.
  4. Ask students to do a quickwrite on this topic: "What I can do to reduce the cost of college."
  5. Discuss the strategies for reducing college costs using student handout 4.2b *Reducing the Cost of College*.



## Federal Student Aid at a Glance

More than \$150 billion is available in federal aid for students who qualify

### 1. What is federal student aid?

Federal student aid comes from the U.S. Department of Education. It is money that helps a student pay for education expenses at a postsecondary school. Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation.

### 2. What are the types of student aid?

There are three main categories of federal student aid: grants, work-study, and loans.

### 3. Who gets federal student aid?

The most basic eligibility requirements include demonstrated financial need, be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen with a valid Social Security number, maintain satisfactory academic progress in postsecondary school, and register with the Selective Service if you are a male between the ages of 18–25.

### 4. How do you apply for federal student aid?

Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. Go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to complete the FAFSA online, which is faster and easier than using a paper FAFSA. Apply after January 1 of senior year. Also, schools and states often use FAFSA information to award nonfederal financial aid.

### 5. What happens after the FAFSA is submitted?

You will receive a Student Aid Report, or SAR. The SAR contains the information reported on your FAFSA and usually includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC determines your eligibility for federal student aid. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data.

### 6. Anything else?

Make sure the financial aid office at each school you're interested in has all the information needed to determine your eligibility. If you are eligible, each school's financial aid office will send you an award letter showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the school will offer you. You can compare award letters from the schools to which you applied and see what aid you can receive from each school.

**Important Note:** Your EFC is likely to remain the same whether you go to a low-cost school or a high-cost school. So, don't automatically eliminate colleges with higher costs. If EFC is \$5,000, at a college with a total cost of \$8,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$3,000 in financial aid. At a college with a total cost of \$25,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$20,000 in aid. In other words, your family would be asked to contribute the same amount (EFC) at both a low-cost and a high-cost school.

*Compiled from Federal Student Aid Fact Sheet "Do You Need Money for College?"*



# Reducing the Cost of College

## During High School

- Take AP (Advanced Placement) or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses and take the corresponding exams. Check with the colleges you are considering to make sure that they will grant credit and ask what is the minimum score required to receive credit. Some students have entered college with 18 or more credits.
- Take a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum. Unfortunately too many students enter college having to take remedial courses. Remedial courses cost the same per credit hour and do not count toward a college degree. They cost you time and money. Taking a rigorous curriculum while in high school will help prepare you for the rigor of college classes.
- Take dual or concurrent credit courses. These are courses that count for both high school and college credit. Like with AP and IB, you may walk into college with several college credits. Remember that if you take dual/concurrent courses you have started your college transcript, and grades are important.
- Research and apply for financial aid. Complete the FAFSA.
- Apply for every scholarship you are eligible for and do not dismiss small awards. There have been many students who have received several small scholarships that when added together were sizeable awards. Watch those deadlines and make sure you meet them.
- As you consider which college to attend, compare the cost of attendance and the financial aid package you receive from each college.
- Take a career interest inventory, explore different career fields, and identify your interests and passions. All this is an effort to narrow your academic and career goals to help select a major. Changing majors can add additional requirements to your degree plan, which translates into more money. If you receive financial aid, there will be a cap in terms of money and time.
- Research the colleges you want to attend. Without sound research you may choose a college for all the wrong reasons and find that, once there, you don't like it. Transferring to another college may mean a loss of credits, which is a loss of time and money.
- Prepare for scholarships by getting good grades, participating in extracurricular activities, completing community service, and taking on leadership roles.

## During College

- Once you get into college, there are several things to consider that will reduce the cost of attendance.
- Serve in Peace Corp, AmeriCorps, or enroll in ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corp), which offer either scholarships or loan forgiveness options.
- If attending college out of town, consider taking courses during the summer when you are at home. Coordinate with your college/university to make sure the courses will transfer for credit. Many colleges and universities will accept community college or local college credits.
- Take the CLEP (College Level Examination Program) in college. There are 34 exams and your scores may give you college credit.





## LESSON 4.3

# Keep Track of All Parts of Financial Aid

**Objective:** Students maintain a checklist in order to keep track of all parts of financial aid.

**Materials:** Student handout 4.3 *Financial Aid Checklist*

- Instructions:**
1. As students apply to colleges and universities, it is important that they develop a system for keeping track of financial aid, including information below:
    - Required forms and/or information
    - Follow-up required
    - Contact information for the financial aid office
    - All communication regarding financial aid
  2. **Introduction:** In the AVID Elective, students learn different organization methods. What are some examples? Have students quickly popcorn some methods (binder, portfolios, calendars, assignment logs, etc.). Today students will learn a method for keeping track of all financial aid information and forms.
  3. Give each student a copy of student handout 4.3 *Financial Aid Checklist*.
  4. Ask students to select their first-choice college and begin to complete the form.
  5. Students will need a copy of this sheet for each college. You can make copies or provide the checklist electronically for them to complete.
  6. Financial aid checklists should be kept in the college crate.



# Financial Aid Checklist

College Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and Website \_\_\_\_\_

Email Contact \_\_\_\_\_

FAFSA	Date Due	Date Completed	Comments
• Gather information			
• Complete worksheet			
• Complete online			
• Received SAR			
• Follow-up			
CSS Profile	Date Due	Date Completed	Comments
• Gather information			
• Complete online			
• Confirmation			
• Follow-up			
College Forms	Date Due	Date Completed	Comments
• Gather information			
• Submit information			
• Confirmation			
• Follow-up			
College Scholarship	Date Due	Date Completed	Comments
• Gather information			
• Submit information			
• Confirmation			
• Follow-up			
College Scholarship	Date Due	Date Completed	Comments
• Gather information			
• Submit information			
• Confirmation			
• Follow-up			

# Section 2

## Foundation for Admission Junior Year, Second Semester

### Overview

#### Exploring

Second semester of junior year is when students explore colleges and narrow their list, so that they can focus their energy on their top choices. They will look closer at “fit” as they narrow their choices. AVID-friendly colleges are of particular interest.

#### Preparing

Activities to help students write college essays and prepare to request letters of recommendation are added to the college crate. The Common Application is introduced, and students continue acquiring information required to finish the application. The senior year “to do” list is packed with activities, and the junior year provides much of the prep work.

#### Testing

Encourage students to access low-cost and free test preparation resources. They should take both the ACT and SAT college entrance exams during the spring and then choose the test on which they scored best to focus on as they prepare to retake their best test during the fall of their senior year. Score reports will help students prepare to retake the test.

#### Financing

Financial aid is always of concern for AVID students. A financial aid “one-pager” helps students list the cost of attending a specific college. Applying for a FAFSA PIN can be done during junior year, also. Instead of waiting until senior year, students can estimate federal student aid eligibility at *FAFSA4caster*. Students continue to learn about financial aid and continue scholarship searched.

# Section 2 Calendar

## 1. Exploring

*January–June*

- Research colleges in order to refine the student’s college list.
- State mentor websites offer a wealth of information about public institutions.
- College “one-pagers” are an efficient way to view information that is important to the student.

## 2. Preparing

*January–June*

- SMART goals help students set and reach academic goals.
- Add to self-perception information in order to begin the college essay.
- Write a first-draft college essay.
- Practice completing a college application using the Common Application.
- Prepare materials students will need to request letters of recommendation.
- Determine summer priorities and commit to follow through.

## 3. Testing

*January–March*

- First, learn the basics about college entrance exams.
- Learn about the ACT and SAT.
- Register for both entrance exams.

*April–June*

- Prepare to take both the ACT and SAT, using the many free resources available.
- Compare the differences between the two tests.
- Set goals to improve scores when retaking in the fall.

## 4. Financing

*January–June*

- Learn the vocabulary of financial aid.
- Distinguish financial aid myths from realities.
- Review the types of financial aid.
- Estimate eligibility for federal student aid.
- Learn about ways to reduce the cost of attending college.
- Use a checklist to track all parts of the financial aid process.

Exploration activities during the second semester of the junior year help students narrow the college list. College visits will help refine their choices.

A college research project focused on one school and presented to the class helps students learn about AVID-friendly colleges they might not have considered.

Online college search sites offer excellent tools for gathering the information. ACT and College Board college finder are two sites students can explore. Every state has a higher education office that also offers online support and college search sites.

Their college lists should include an equal number of each:

- *Safety schools*—where students are certain to be accepted
- *Likely schools*—where students should be accepted because they fit the school's profile
- *Reach schools*—"dream schools," but ones that are realistic

The summer between a student's junior and senior year is important to the college admission process. Check with counselors both at the high school and college level for summer programs or courses students can enroll in. Scholarship searches continue during the summer because some scholarships have fall deadlines. Test prep, college and campus research, and community service will help complete a productive summer.

### Calendar

January–June

- Complete college selection and priorities activities, such as "College One-Pager" and "University Quick Sheet."
- Continue college research through the Internet, college fairs, and visits by college reps.
- Conduct college research (including career, degree, major, aptitude, and discovery research) using a variety of resources, such as websites, printed materials, speakers, and visits.
- Create potential college lists. Use comparison worksheets.
- Finalize summer college prep plans.

### Lessons

- 5.1 The College Admission Game:** A game that helps students see the characteristics that selective colleges look for in the college admission process
- 5.2 Admission Decision Options:** Review the many admissions options that students have, so that they choose the best option for them.
- 5.3 Planning a College Visit:** How to plan for a college visit and gather helpful information during a visit
- 5.4 College Mentor Sites:** State-specific college admission and financial aid websites that introduce students to the higher education opportunities within each state
- 5.5 College Research Project:** Students research and compile information on an AVID-friendly college that may be unfamiliar to them.
- 5.6 My Top 10 College Choices:** Students identify their "Top 10 College Choices."
- 5.7 College One-Pager:** Students develop a format for synthesizing and presenting information about their favorite colleges.
- 5.8 Comparing Colleges and Universities:** Students compare colleges and universities that interest them.

## LESSON 5.1

# The College Admission Game

**Objective:** Students see some of the characteristics selective colleges look for in the college admission process.

**Materials:** Teacher handouts 5.1a *Student Profile Sheet* and 5.1b *College Admission Game Directions*

### Front

4.1 GPA

### Back

- You are the top 10% of your class.
- You forgot to change the name of the college when word-processing the essay that was sent to several different schools.

- Instructions:**
1. Use the teacher handout 5.1 *Student Profile Sheet* to make Student Profile Cards. Write/word process the GPA in large letters on the front side of 8 ½ x 11 sheet of cardstock. Copy each corresponding profile statement on the back. One profile per card, 8 cards total.
  2. Introduce the activity by asking questions such as: What type of students are selective colleges actively recruiting for their institution? What student behaviors impact your chances of being considered or accepted? What special circumstances draw attention to your application?
  3. Ask for 8 volunteers. Give each student a Profile Card, and allow a few minutes for them to read over the card.
  4. Have students line up in front of the classroom in order of GPA. Then hold up the card with the GPA facing the students, so they can read the information on the back.
  5. The game host (teacher) reads each statement from teacher handout 5.1b *College Admission Game Directions*, and students move up or back according to what is written on their Profile Card.
  6. After the game, debrief the activity.



# The College Admission Game

## Student Profile Sheet

<p><b>4.1 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You're in the top 10% of your class.</li> <li>• You forgot to change the name of the college when word-processing the essay that was sent to several different schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.0 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior year.</li> <li>• You decided not to take AP® classes (even though your school offered them) because you wanted to protect your grade point average.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.7 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The topic of your essay was sports (as a metaphor for life).</li> <li>• You're an Eagle Scout.</li> <li>• You're all-region in basketball.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.5 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your intended major is Greek.</li> <li>• You participated in NO extracurricular activities.</li> <li>• You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.3 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You applied early decision to your first-choice college.</li> <li>• Your intended major is psychology.</li> <li>• You plagiarized your college essay and got caught.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.1 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your intended major is psychology or pre-med.</li> <li>• You wrote an essay that was passed around the office because it was so good.</li> <li>• You're the first in your family to attend college.</li> <li>• You're a varsity athlete.</li> <li>• You earned a "D" in your junior year but wrote to the college to explain extenuating circumstances.</li> <li>• You've taken an exceptionally strong academic program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.9 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You direct the gospel choir at your church.</li> <li>• You are quiet and don't know your teachers well enough to ask for a recommendation.</li> <li>• You've participated in community service.</li> <li>• You've taken an exceptionally strong academic program.</li> <li>• You're from a single-parent household and must work to help with expenses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.8 GPA</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You're a legacy at the college to which you're applying.</li> <li>• You did not write the optional essay for your college application.</li> <li>• You've participated in some community service.</li> <li>• Your last name is Gates and the college library is named after you.</li> </ul>



## College Admission Game Directions

1. If you have taken an exceptionally strong academic program, move up two spaces.
2. If you direct the gospel choir at your church, move up one space.
3. If you clearly stated that this college is your first choice by making an early decision application and commitment, move up two spaces.
4. If your intended major is psychology or pre-med, move back one space.
5. If your intended major is Greek, move up one space.
6. If you do not know any of your teachers well enough to ask for a recommendation, move back two spaces.
7. If, when you word-processed your college essay, you forgot to change the name of the college you were applying to, move back three spaces.
8. If you are a legacy, move up two spaces.
9. If you did not write the optional college essay, move back one space.
10. If the topic of your college essay was sports as a metaphor for life, move back one space.
11. If you wrote the “Essay of the Year,” the one that was passed around the office, move up two spaces.
12. If you plagiarized your college essay and got caught, sit down—you’re out of the competition entirely.
13. If you will be the first in your family to attend college, move up two spaces.
14. If you attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years, move up two spaces.
15. If you come from a single-parent household and must work part-time to help with expenses, move up two spaces.
16. If you have participated in no extracurricular activities, move back three spaces.
17. If you have participated in a significant community service project, move up one space.
18. If you are an Eagle Scout, move up two spaces.
19. If you are a varsity athlete, move up one space. If you’re all-region in a sport, move up another space.
20. If you earned a “D” in an academic course at the end of your junior year, move back three spaces.
22. If you wrote a letter to the college admission officer and explained the extenuating circumstances surrounding a grade of “D,” move up one space.
23. If you decided to protect your GPA by not taking AP classes offered at your school, move back two spaces.
24. If you are in the top 10% of your graduating class, move up two spaces.
25. If your last name is Gates, and the name on the college library is Gates, and it’s not a coincidence, move all the way to the front of the line and stay there.



## LESSON 5.2

# Admission Decision Options

**Objective:** Review the many admissions options that students have, so that they choose the best option for them.

**Materials:** Information below

**Instructions:** Review the information below with students, and ask them to determine which option is best for them for each school to which they apply.

**Early Decision** This option allows a student to commit to his or her first choice of college well before May 1. In exchange for admission, the college or university will require a nonrefundable deposit by a date that is typically not extended. Students should not apply to more than one college under this option because once admitted, students are expected to enroll unless the financial aid award is inadequate. Students should withdraw all other applications upon acceptance of an early-decision offer. Not every college has an early-decision plan. Students who apply under Early Decision typically do so because they are sure that this is their first choice school. This is the number one school they want to attend. This is the school that is the right “fit.” In other words, students are absolutely sure of their college choice.

**Early Action** This option allows a student to apply to a preferred college and receive an admission decision well before the normal response, usually in the spring. Students who apply under this option are not obligated to enroll or deposit prior to May 1. Students can apply to other colleges and make a decision once all colleges have responded. Early Action is ideal for students who are seriously considering a particular college but would also like to keep their options open and receive admission decisions from other schools.

**Regular Decision** This option requires a student to apply by a given date with a promise that they will be notified if they were accepted by a given date. This option allows colleges and universities to review most of its applications before notifying the majority of its candidates. The timeline is usually late March or early April.

**Rolling Admission** This option allows students to receive an admission decision as soon as their files are received and reviewed. Colleges usually do not state deadlines, although they may recommend a date when files should be complete.

**Wait List** The waitlist is for applicants who were not offered admission due to enrollment limitations, but who are considered excellent candidates for admission should space become available in the current admission cycle. Being on the waitlist is not a guarantee of receiving an offer of admission at a later date. Colleges make admission decisions by August 1st. Students are not required to submit a commitment deposit to remain on the wait list.

## LESSON 5.3

# Planning a College Visit

**Objective:** Students will plan for a college visit and gather valuable information while on a visit.

**Materials:** Student handouts *5.3a Planning a College Visit* and *5.3b The College/University Visit Questionnaire*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students who have visited a college: What did they see? Do? What questions did they ask? What new information did they learn? Then ask, "How did you plan/prepare for the visit?"
  2. Tell students that visiting a college is unique opportunity to explore "fit." Give each student a copy of student handout *5.3a Planning a College Visit* before any AVID college visit.
  3. Give each student a copy of student handout *5.3b The College/University Visit Questionnaire* to take on the visit.
  4. After the college visit, ask students to share what they learned (e.g., information from bulletin boards, brochures, and handouts).

## Extended Activity

As an extended activity students can make an informational college poster.

## College Visits

Any time students visit a college independent of the AVID class, allow them an opportunity to share their experiences. Some colleges will fund a student and a parent/guardian visit. Encourage AVID students to ask admission representatives if these opportunities exist.



## Planning a College Visit

As you begin to narrow your lists of colleges, a campus visit is the best way to learn about a school. It is the college visit that will help to finalize your selection. Planning for the college visit will maximize your experience to provide valuable information.

### Before the Visit:

- Schedule a student-guided campus tour.
- Schedule an interview with the Admission Office.
- Schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid Officer.
- Schedule an appointment with a professor in your major.
- If playing a sport is of interest, schedule an appointment with a coach.
- Develop a list of questions to ask during the visit.

### During the Visit:

- Dress neatly and wear comfortable shoes. (There will be lots of walking.)
- If you scheduled interviews, dress for the interview.
- Take a campus tour led by a university representative.
- Explore the campus on your own to get a complete picture.
- Read the bulletin boards around campus to get a feel for activities, campus life, etc.
- Talk with an admission representative.
- Obtain a school calendar and fee schedule; pick up a course catalog if available.
- Meet with faculty from your major and attend a class in your major.
- Talk with students both in your major and outside your major.
- Visit the student residence halls.
- Eat on campus and visit the library.
- Visit areas of interest to you, such as the gym, swimming pool, and computer labs.
- Drive around the campus and surrounding areas.
- Take pictures and notes to document your visit.

### After the Visit:

- Place the information gathered in your college crate with the college name on the folder.
- Complete one column in the College Comparison Worksheet Activity.



# The College/University Visit Questionnaire

(Answer these questions for each school that you visit.)

## Size of the College/University

What is the typical class size for freshmen? \_\_\_\_\_ Largest lecture class size? \_\_\_\_\_

Do professors teach freshman classes?  Yes  No

How accessible are faculty members to students? \_\_\_\_\_

What percentage of freshmen gets their first-choice classes? \_\_\_\_\_

What facilities are available in my major area of interest? \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Life

What extracurricular activities and athletics are available? \_\_\_\_\_

What activities does the surrounding community offer? \_\_\_\_\_

What ethnic and/or religious groups are available for student participation? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have fraternities and sororities?  Yes  No What is the percentage of students who join? \_\_\_\_\_

Are freshmen required to live on campus?  Yes  No Is housing guaranteed?  Yes  No

What are the deadlines to secure freshmen housing? \_\_\_\_\_ Are dorms co-ed?  Yes  No

Do students feel safe on campus?  Yes  No How safe are students walking on campus at night? \_\_\_\_\_

## Academic Support

What are the library hours? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a writing center that reviews student work?  Yes  No

What type of tutoring is available? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a fee for this service?  Yes  No

What about computer labs—equipment, hours, availability? \_\_\_\_\_

## Financial Aid

What financial aid and scholarship services are available? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your average financial aid package? \_\_\_\_\_

What work-study opportunities are available? \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Services

Is there a career planning and placement center?  Yes  No

What counseling services are available for students? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of medical facilities are available for students? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a campus shuttle service?  Yes  No

## Leisure Activities

What kinds of activities are available for students? \_\_\_\_\_

What events did the college host last year (concerts, plays, speakers, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of recreational facilities does the school offer? \_\_\_\_\_

What types of intramural sports are available? \_\_\_\_\_



## LESSON 5.4

# College Mentor Sites

**Objective:** Students learn about the mentor sites available for most states.

**Materials:** Student handout 5.4 *State-Specific College Mentor Sites*

- Instructions:**
1. Let students review the information provided for the mentor sites of each state by taking them to the computer lab.
  2. Mentor websites are state-specific college and financial aid planning sites that offer a one-to-one “mentoring” environment, complete with an overview of campus life, costs, admission requirements, and financial aid advice.
  3. Students can get an overview of colleges in their state and create personalized, secure online portfolios to track their college admission progress. Mentor sites feature virtual campus tours and specialized planning tools, along with information about state-specific financial aid. Colleges and states pay for this service, so the state mentor site list may change based on funding.
  4. If your state does not have a mentor site, there will be a similar resource. Check your state department of education online.
  5. Students will find information and tools to:
    - Meet college admission requirements.
    - Create a personalized, secure online college admission portfolio.
    - Research campuses that match their needs and interests.
    - Manage their college applications.
    - Understand state financial aid opportunities.
    - Choose an educational program related to their career goals.
    - Communicate with campuses and financial aid sources.



## State-Specific College Mentor Sites

State	Mentor Site	Web Address
Arizona	ArizonaMentor	<a href="http://www.arizonamentor.org">http://www.arizonamentor.org</a>
California California State University	California Colleges CSU Mentor	<a href="http://www.californiacolleges.edu/">http://www.californiacolleges.edu/</a> <a href="http://www.csumentor.edu">http://www.csumentor.edu</a>
Christian Colleges		<a href="http://www.nationalappcenter.com">http://www.nationalappcenter.com</a>
Colorado	College in Colorado	<a href="http://www.secure.collegeincolorado.org">http://www.secure.collegeincolorado.org</a>
Connecticut	CT Mentor	<a href="http://www.ctmentor.org/">http://www.ctmentor.org/</a>
Delaware	DelawareMentor	<a href="http://www.delawarementor.org/">http://www.delawarementor.org/</a>
Electronic Campus (Southern Regional Education Board— Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, N. Carolina, Oklahoma, S. Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, W. Virginia)	Southern Regional Education Board's Electronic Campus	<a href="http://www.electroniccampus.org/">http://www.electroniccampus.org/</a>
Georgia	GA College 411	<a href="http://gacollege411.org/">http://gacollege411.org/</a>
Hawaii	HawaiiMentor	<a href="http://www.hawaiimentor.org/">http://www.hawaiimentor.org/</a>
HBCUMentor® (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)	HBCUMentor®	<a href="http://www.hbcumentor.org/">http://www.hbcumentor.org/</a>
Illinois	What's Next Illinois	<a href="http://www.secure.whatsnextillinois.org">http://www.secure.whatsnextillinois.org</a>
Iowa	I Have a Plan Iowa	<a href="http://secure.ihaveaplaniowa.gov">http://secure.ihaveaplaniowa.gov</a>
Kentucky	Go Higher KY	<a href="http://www.gohigherky.org/">http://www.gohigherky.org/</a>
Maryland	MarylandMentor®	<a href="http://www.marylandmentor.org/">http://www.marylandmentor.org/</a>
Massachusetts	MassMentor®	<a href="http://www.massmentor.edu/">http://www.massmentor.edu/</a>
Mississippi	MississippiMentor®	<a href="http://www.mississippimentor.org/">http://www.mississippimentor.org/</a>
Nevada	NevadaMentor®	<a href="http://www.nevadamentor.org/">http://www.nevadamentor.org/</a>
North Carolina	College Foundation of North Carolina	<a href="http://www.cfnc.org/">http://www.cfnc.org/</a>
Ohio	OhioMentor®	<a href="http://www.ohiomentor.org/">http://www.ohiomentor.org/</a>
Oklahoma	OK College Start	<a href="http://www.okcollegestart.org">http://www.okcollegestart.org</a>
Oregon	OregonMentor®	<a href="http://www.oregonmentor.org/">http://www.oregonmentor.org/</a>
Pennsylvania	PennsylvaniaMentor®	<a href="http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/">http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/</a>
Tennessee	College for TN®	<a href="http://www.collegefortn.org/">http://www.collegefortn.org/</a>
Utah	UtahMentor®	<a href="http://www.utahmentor.org/">http://www.utahmentor.org/</a>
Washington	WashingtonMentor®	<a href="http://www.washingtonmentor.org/">http://www.washingtonmentor.org/</a>
West Virginia	College Foundation of West Virginia	<a href="https://secure.cfww.com/Default.aspx">https://secure.cfww.com/Default.aspx</a>
Wisconsin (Private Colleges)	Private College Zone	<a href="http://www.privatecollegezone.org">http://www.privatecollegezone.org</a>
XAP Student Center	Supports Mentor sites	<a href="http://www.xap.com/">http://www.xap.com/</a>

## LESSON 5.5

# College Research Project

**Objective:** Students will research and compile information on a college that is unfamiliar to them.

**Materials:** Student handouts 5.5a *AVID-Friendly Colleges You May Not Have Considered*, 5.5b *Information Sheet—Research Project* and 5.5c *Rubic Research Project*

- Instructions:**
1. Name some of the colleges on the list from student handout 5.5a *AVID-Friendly Colleges You May Not Have Considered* to see if students know of any of the colleges.
  2. Assign one college to each student to research.
  3. Review the student handout 5.5c *Rubic for Research Project* with students.
  4. Give each student a copy of the student handout 5.5b *Information Sheet-Research Project*, and brainstorm sources for research in addition to the Internet.
  5. Have students request information from their college admission office as soon as possible, and allow time for colleges to respond.
  6. Once students have had an opportunity to research online and have received information, have students create a poster and display. The ideal display board is a 3-sided “Science Fair” poster board because it can stand on its own. The poster should include:
    - a. Information from all 11 categories on the research chart
    - b. Pictures of the college
    - c. Maps of the college
    - d. Other relevant information
    - e. A copy of the college application
  7. Have students prepare a presentation to the class about their college using the display board.

### Extended Activity

Arrange a college fair sponsored by the AVID class. The “admission representatives” will be the AVID students who created the posters. Students can create other materials in preparation for the college fair, such as a brochure, view book, and an information sheet typically found at college fairs.



## 33 AVID-Friendly Colleges You May Not Have Considered

*By Nancy Caine, College Counselor, Saint Augustine High School, San Diego, CA*

1. **Augsburg College (MN):** repeatedly mentioned by counselors as AVID friendly
2. **California Lutheran University (CA):** very generous admissions, willing to host AVID students on campus, and very good financial aid packages
3. **California Maritime Academy:** very generous with admissions and individualized academic counseling
4. **Central Florida University:** a long tradition of working with first-generation students and generous financial aid
5. **Colorado Mesa University:** very affordable and first-generation friendly
6. **Emanuel College (MA):** very first-generation friendly
7. **Gettysburg College (PA):** a rural area and on the battlefield, only an hour from Washington DC with generous admissions and financial aid
8. **High Point University (SC):** financially very generous and focused on serving individual students
9. **Holy Names University (CA):** will send speakers, do application and essay workshops, and friendly in the admission process
10. **Johnson & Wales (RI):** friendly to AVID students in admissions and will send speakers to AVID classes
11. **Lawrence University (WI):** will host AVID tours and speak to AVID classes
12. **Lewis University (IL):** a long tradition of working with first-generation students and has good financial aid packages
13. **Loyola University (IL):** very generous with representatives who present workshops and host AVID visits on campus
14. **Marymount College (CA):** especially good with first-generation students who will thrive with individual attention, financially generous
15. **Maryville University (MO):** very generous with money and very generous admission standards
16. **Northern Arizona University:** very generous admissions and scholarships, host on-campus AVID tours





17. **Oklahoma City University:** host AVID tour groups and friendly to AVID students in admissions, generous financial aid
18. **Our Lady of the Lake (TX):** very generous admissions
19. **St. Peters College (NJ):** small school very close to New York City, very generous admissions and financial aid
20. **Southern Utah University:** very generous admissions and generous financial aid
21. **Suffolk University (MA):** a long tradition of working with first-generation students, an international population of students
22. **University of Colorado, Boulder:** gives extra consideration for AVID in admissions; representative will do workshops on writing the college essay
23. **University of Houston (TX):** AVID admissions friendly
24. **University of La Verne (CA):** good about admitting AVID students, hosting AVID students on campus, and sending speakers to AVID classrooms
25. **University of New Mexico:** very generous admissions and many scholarship opportunities
26. **University of Nevada, Reno:** liberal admissions program and very good financial aid
27. **University of North Carolina/Wilmington Campus:** willing to host AVID tours and give consideration and support to first-generation students
28. **University of Scranton (PA):** generous admissions, a long tradition of serving first-generation students
29. **University of Washington, Bothell:** will send representatives to AVID classrooms, AVID-friendly admissions
30. **Whittier (CA):** hosts AVID visits, generous in admissions, and generous with financial aid
31. **Whitworth (WA):** very generous admissions and financial aid.
32. **William Woods University (MO):** very first-generation friendly, willing to send out speakers, and very generous financial aid
33. **Wichita State University (KS):** AVID admissions and first-generation friendly

*This is a list of schools that you may not have considered, but there are many more AVID-friendly schools. Feel free to add to this list with AVID-friendly schools in your area.*



## Information Sheet—Research Project

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC	INFORMATION NOTES
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City, state</li> <li>• Distance from home</li> </ul>	
<b>Size</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Campus (physical) size</li> </ul>	
<b>Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of school</li> <li>• School setting (urban/rural)</li> <li>• Location and size of nearest city</li> <li>• Co-ed, male, female</li> <li>• Religious affiliation</li> </ul>	
<b>Admission Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Tests required</li> <li>• Average test scores, GPA, rank</li> </ul>	
<b>Academics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majors offered</li> <li>• Special requirements</li> <li>• Accreditation</li> <li>• Student-faculty ratio</li> <li>• Typical class size</li> </ul>	



TOPIC	INFORMATION NOTES
<p><b>College Expenses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition, room and board</li> <li>• Estimated total budget</li> <li>• Application fee, deposits</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Financial Aid</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Required forms</li> <li>• Percentage receiving aid</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residence hall requirement</li> <li>• Food plan</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic</li> <li>• Recreational</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clubs, organizations</li> <li>• Greek life</li> <li>• Athletics, intramurals</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Campus Visits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When</li> <li>• Special events</li> </ul>	



# Rubric for Research Project

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Information:

Assessment in each category will use the following numerical scale:

- 1—Poor: limited information; little effort involved
- 2—Fair: some information, although not detailed; some effort
- 3—Good: adequate information with some detail; effort is evident
- 4—Excellent: substantial, detailed information; strong effort is obvious

- 1. Location ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Size ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Environment ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Admission Requirements ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Academics ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. College Expenses ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Financial Aid ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Housing ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Activities ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Campus Visits ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- Subtotal** ..... **\_\_\_\_\_ /40**

## Artifacts (10 points for each):

- 1. Catalog ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Application ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Pictures ..... \_\_\_\_\_
- Subtotal** ..... **\_\_\_\_\_ /30**

## Appearance:

- 10—Handwritten, often sloppy; little effort involved
- 20—Some typed, some handwritten, mostly neat; some effort
- 30—Typed and expertly arranged; obvious effort involved
- ..... **\_\_\_\_\_ /30**

**Total** ..... **\_\_\_\_\_ /100**



## LESSON 5.6

# My Top Ten College Choices

**Objective:** Students identify their Top 10 College Choices

**Materials:** Pen, paper, student handout 5.6 *My Top Ten College Choices*

- Instructions:**
1. Review the work that was completed with self-exploration, career selection, and designing the perfect college.
  2. On Cornell paper, have students list all the colleges in which they are interested, then circle the top three choices, and write why each college interests them.
  3. In small groups, have students share one college they listed and explain why. Go around the group until students have shared all three choices.
  4. As they listen to their peers, students may add to their list.
  5. Give each student a copy of student handout 5.6 *My Top 10 College Choices*.
  6. Have students complete the first column “College Choice” by transferring the names from their Cornell notes to this sheet.
  7. Next have students complete the “What I Know” column and, finally, the “What I Want to Know” column.
  8. Students can use this sheet in subsequent months to research colleges. As students learn about other colleges, they can add to their list.

### Extension Activity

Invite guest speakers to enrich lessons relating to college admission.

- College representatives speak about preparation, admission, financial aid, programs, etc.
- Parents speak about their career field.
- Community members speak about their career field and the preparation.



# K•W•L

## My Top 10 College Choices

College	What I <b>Know</b>	What I <b>Want</b> to Learn	What I <b>Learned</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			



## LESSON 5.7

# College One-Pager

**Objective:** Students develop a format for synthesizing and presenting information about their favorite colleges

**Materials:** Pen, paper, computer, student handouts 5.6 *My Top Ten College Choices*, 5.7a *College One-Pager* and 5.7b *University Information Sheet*

- Instructions:**
1. Students select their top choice college and create a College One-Pager. Make this a monthly activity, so spending extra time now explaining the one-pager will pay off when students do this activity again.
  2. Variation: Students can complete the student handout 5.7b *University Information Sheet*.
  3. Give each student a copy of student handout 5.7a *College One-Pager*, and follow the instructions. Note that there are 11 requirements students must include in their one-pager. You may elect to lower the number of requirements and add one per month or change the requirements each month.

### Extended Activities

Students can use the one-pager to:

- Give a 5-minute presentation to the class.
- Present to elementary or middle schools.
- Present at AVID parent night.
- Hang on classroom wall for a gallery walk. Students can stand before their poster and explain contents, or students may just walk and read and ask at least one follow-up question.
- Decorate the hallways of the campus to help promote a college-going culture.



## College One-Pager

Create a one-page poster on a college from your “Top 10 College Choices” list. Fill the entire page with information and follow the criteria below to receive full credit:

### Include the following and check off as you complete:

- Title: Name of the college/university
- Include the information from the University Information Sheet.
- Include a graphic representation of the college/university, e.g., mascot, school logo.
- Include a personal response about the college.
- Creative page border
- Neatness and color
- Fill the entire page.
- Put your name, class, and date in the lower right-hand corner.

### Locate the following information on the college you selected:

1. Name of college/university
2. Location
3. Student enrollment (undergraduate, graduate/professional)
4. Tuition and fees per year (in state and out of state)
5. College entrance exam scores required for admission
6. Top five majors
7. Two reasons to attend
8. Percent of undergraduate students receiving financial aid
9. Average GPA of admitted students
10. Tell whether you are interested in attending, and explain why (two sentences)





# University Information Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College \_\_\_\_\_

School Address, City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Website Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Application Deadline \_\_\_\_\_

Admission Test Requirements & Scores \_\_\_\_\_

High School Courses Required \_\_\_\_\_

Other Admissions Requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Life of Interest to You \_\_\_\_\_

- Student Body Profile
- Sports Offered
- Extracurricular Activities
- Safety

Housing Information \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of Room/Board \_\_\_\_\_

Academics \_\_\_\_\_

Programs/Degrees Offered \_\_\_\_\_

Majors/Career-Oriented Programs \_\_\_\_\_

Special Programs/Services \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Aid Deadline \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Aid You Can Apply for \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 5.8

# Comparing Colleges and Universities

**Objective:** Students compare colleges and universities that interest them.

**Materials:** Student handout 5.8 *Comparing Colleges and Universities*.

- Instructions:**
1. Give each student a copy of student handout 5.8 *Comparing Colleges and Universities*.
  2. Students complete this activity sheet as they explore a college.
  3. For additional information, students can complete a college one-pager.
  4. Once students have completed the activity sheet for three universities, have them:
    - Compare colleges to each other using the categories on the activity sheet.
    - Compare colleges based on the “Designing the Perfect College” (Lesson 1.5, page 14) activity.
  5. Provide an opportunity for students to share their work.



## Comparing Colleges and Universities

<b>Name of College</b>			
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City, state</li> <li>• Distance from home</li> </ul>			
<b>Application Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements</li> <li>• Deadlines</li> <li>• Additional requirements</li> </ul>			
<b>Student Enrollment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate</li> <li>• Graduate/professional</li> </ul>			
<b>Tuition per year</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In state</li> <li>• Out of state</li> </ul>			
<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Availability</li> <li>• Special requirements</li> <li>• Meal Plans</li> </ul>			
<b>College Entrance Exams &amp; Scores Required</b>			

(continued)

**STUDENT HANDOUT 5.8** (2 of 2)

<b>Name of College</b>			
<b>Majors Offered</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your major?</li><li>• Average class size</li><li>• Accreditation</li></ul>			
<b>Financial Aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Availability</li><li>• Requirements/deadlines</li><li>• Special programs</li><li>• Scholarships</li></ul>			
<b>GPA/Rank Required?</b>			
<b>Campus Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clubs</li><li>• Athletics</li><li>• Recreational activities</li></ul>			
<b>Academic Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tutoring</li><li>• Study groups</li><li>• Advising</li></ul>			
<b>Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reported incidents</li><li>• Safety measures</li></ul>			

Course selection is critical to college preparation both in terms of student preparation and courses required for college admission. It is essential that students review their transcripts after each term to make sure all of the information is correctly recorded. This is a prime example of students being responsible for their educational plan. Reviewing transcripts and calculating the GPA are useful activities to include with goal-setting lessons that give students the opportunity to set academic goals based on their current grades. Students should update their GPA every grading period, as well as their résumé, data sheets, and college crates.

Many colleges require a college admission essay in order to learn more about a student. It is an important part of the application. Students should write first draft college essays, using Common Application topics or topics specific to the state and/or region. Students may wish to use the Common Application, which is accepted at more than 450 colleges and universities, as a practice college application.

Students should begin thinking about letters of recommendation: how to ask for them, who will write them, and what materials they will need to provide the writer. Students will want to have letters from at least one teacher and one counselor. A personal recommendation from someone outside of school (but not a family member) is often helpful for admission and/or scholarship applications. The importance of a strong letter cannot be overstated because each item in the college application is considered an advocacy piece for the student.

### Calendar

#### *January–June*

- Review second semester courses to ensure correct placement.
- Review first semester grades and compute GPA.
- Update data sheets and résumé.
- Write a draft college essay.
- Explore the Common Application.
- Prepare for the letter of recommendation.

#### *Summer Priorities*

- Attend summer programs or courses.
- Begin/complete scholarship applications with fall deadlines.
- Test prep activities—there are many online—free
- Participate in community service activities.

### Lessons

- 6.1 Set SMART Goals:** Students review transcripts after each marking period and set personal and academic goals.
- 6.2 Preparing for the College Essay:** Students will explore “self” by answering guided questions that prepare them to write a draft college essay.
- 6.3 Writing the College Essay:** Students learn the importance of the college admission essay and the attributes of a strong essay, and write first draft essays their junior year.
- 6.4 The Common Application:** Students will explore all the information that is available on the Common Application website.
- 6.5 The Letter of Recommendation:** Students learn what materials to gather and how to prepare their AVID information forms for writers of letters of recommendation.
- 6.6 Summer Priorities:** Students determine what is most important to accomplish during the summer before senior year.

## LESSON 6.1

# Set SMART Goals

**Objective:** Students learn how to set personal and academic goals.

**Materials:** Student handout 6.1 *Setting SMART Goals to Improve GPA*. After each marking period, provide students with a copy of their transcript.

- Instructions:**
1. Begin the semester by providing students with an updated transcript that includes their grades from the marking period that just ended.
  2. Ask students questions about their transcript: Do they know their current GPA? Do they know how GPAs are used for class rank, college admission, scholarships, financial aid, pass/fail grades, etc.? Discuss why the GPA is so important. Include the AVID counselor in this discussion.
  3. Ask students if they would they like to have a better GPA? Then introduce the importance of goal setting.
  4. Distribute student handout 6.1 *Setting SMART Goals to Improve My GPA*, and ask students to develop a SMART goal.
  5. After students write their smart goal, have them evaluate their goal using the criteria required of a SMART goal.
  6. After students check their goal, do a pair share and have a partner check off if the student has met the criteria of a SMART goal.
  7. Give students time to write more goals for each of their classes in which they wish to improve.
  8. Remind them to keep their SMART goal(s) in their binder or in their college crate and refer to it/them frequently.
  9. After each marking period, have students review their SMART goal(s) to see what has been achieved and set new goals for the next grading period.



# Setting SMART Goals to Improve GPA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Grading Period \_\_\_\_\_ GPA \_\_\_\_\_

I want to improve my grade in these classes: \_\_\_\_\_

Set a SMART goal for each class in which you want to improve. Because each class is different, your goals may be different, also.

<b>S</b> Specific	Goals should be specific and easily understood. The goal should say what you are going to do, why it is important, and what you want to accomplish.
<b>M</b> Measureable	Goals should have concrete criteria for measuring progress.
<b>A</b> Action Oriented	Goals should be action oriented. What are you going to do to accomplish your goals?
<b>R</b> Realistic	Goals should be worth working toward, realistic, and attainable.
<b>T</b> Timely	Goals should be achieved within a specific time frame.

SMART Goal #1

SMART Goal #2

SMART Goal #3

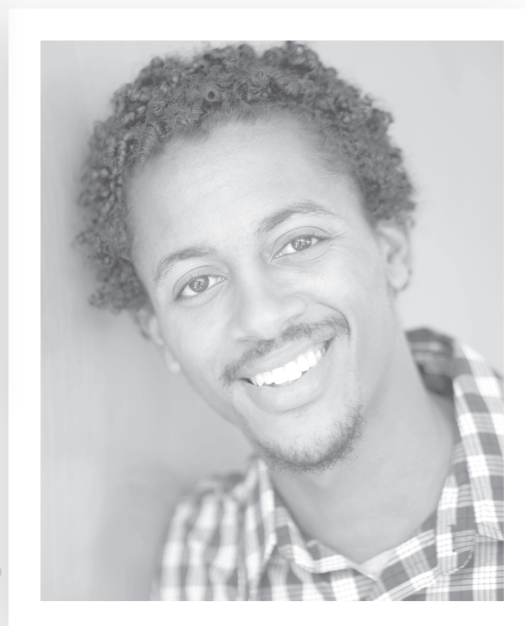
## LESSON 6.2

# Preparing for the College Essay

**Objective:** Students will explore “self” by answering guided questions to prepare them to write a first draft college essay

**Materials:** Student handout 6.2 *Me Personally*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to answer the questions from student handout 6.2 *Me Personally*, using Cornell notepaper.
  2. Answering these questions helps students examine themselves in preparation for writing their college essays.
  3. After students complete the activity, have them pair with another student to share their responses.







## Me, Personally

Answer the following questions about yourself as completely as possible. Use Cornell notepaper, and file your answers in your college crate. You will refer to this information when writing your college essay.

1. What are some of my strongest abilities?
2. What things interest me most?
3. What activities, people, and things make me feel happy?
4. What issues, world problems, and current events concern me most?
5. What are my personal strengths? (For example, I get along with people, I'm not a quitter, I am a good friend, etc.)
6. What do I need improvement in?
7. What have I had to overcome?

### Brainstorming:

- Think of words or phrases that someone who knows you well might use to tell someone about you.
- List 8 words or phrases.
- Now rank these characteristics in the order of importance and explain your reasoning.

### My Ideal Self:

- Write a paragraph description of your "ideal self."
- What would you do if you had the power and resources to do what you wanted?
- What activity would give you the most fulfillment?

### In What Am I...

- Unique, pleasant, friendly, intelligent, an individual, quiet, thoughtful, talented, mischievous, studious?
- What different qualities do I have that would enhance a college campus?

## LESSON 6.3

# Writing the College Essay

**Objective:** Students prepare to write the college essay, write a first draft essay, and revise the essay.

**Materials:** Student handouts 6.3a *The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft*, 6.3b *College Essay Topics*, and 6.3c *General College Admission Essay Tips*

- Instructions:**
1. Even though students have completed the student handout 6.2 *Me, Personally*, it may still be difficult for them to begin the college essay.
  2. In only 20 minutes, using student handout 6.3a *The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft*, every student can write a first draft college essay.
  3. The student handout 6.3b *College Essay Topics* is a fun list for students to review, reflect, discuss, and choose a topic to use in writing practice college essays.
  4. Many sources of college essay tips exist. The student handout 6.3c *General College Admission Essay Tips* summarizes important tips for students at this stage in the admission process.
  5. Once students have a draft essay, they can use student handout 6.3c *General College Admission Essay Tips* to evaluate their essay or another's.



## The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft

Okay, it's time. You've made a list of college options, you've read over some applications, and you've settled into the first marking period. Time to think **ESSAY!** You've probably looked at the questions, wondered what the colleges meant by the phrase "a significant experience" (does someone have to die?), and hoped this part of the application would go away.

Let's take it on. Here's a recipe for getting started.

### Assemble these ingredients:

- 3 sheets of paper
- a timer or stopwatch
- a pen or pencil

### Procedure:

- Begin by thinking about yourself. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are your best qualities? Are you an intellectual? A creative type? Curious? Passionate? Determined? Resourceful?
- Choose a positive quality you'd like to convey to the admission committee, a strength that makes you an addition to any group. (DON'T pick an event or something you've done. President of the Nuclear Awareness Club is not a personal quality.) Focus on a quality of your mind or of your character. Now complete this sentence: "I am a very \_\_\_\_\_ person."
- Set the timer for 20 minutes. Pretend you're taking an exam at high school and the question is: "Tell a story about an experience or time when you showed you were a very \_\_\_\_\_ person." Use the characteristic you identified above. Write non-stop for 20 minutes; force yourself to keep telling the story and what it reveals until the timer goes DING.

OK...that's it. You've got a rough draft for your application essay!

You can look at the college application forms now and see what questions they ask. No matter what the questions are, you've already identified the important characteristic you want to convey to each college. You've actually answered any question that asks, "Tell us about yourself," or "Tell us about a significant experience in your life," or "We'd like to get to know you better." And for "Tell us about a person..." or a book, or a quote, you can make your choice based on the same quality you want to convey.

The key here is that the focus is on YOU and not on THEM, not on what they want but on what you are. So **WRITE ON!**

*Sarah M. McGinty, [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), 1999*



## College Essay Topics

Read through the topics listed below. All are topics that have been required on college admission forms. Choose the one that you feel you can answer best. Write a 2–3 page essay developing the topic.

- What have you undertaken or done on your own in the last year or two that has nothing to do with academic work? (Northwestern)
- Imagine that you have the opportunity to travel back through time. At what point in history would you like to stop and why? (Swarthmore)
- What is the best advice you ever received? Why? And did you follow it? (University of Pennsylvania)
- Select a creative work—a novel, a film, a poem, a musical piece, a painting or other work of art—that has influenced the way you view the world and the way you view yourself. Discuss the work and its effect on you. (New York University)
- What do you think has been the most important social or political movement of the 20th century? Do you share a personal identification with this cause? (Trinity College, CT)
- If you were to look back on your high school years, what advice would you give to someone beginning their high school career? (Simmons)
- It has been said [by Andy Warhol] that “in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes.” Describe your fifteen minutes. (New York University)
- What single adjective do you think would be most frequently used to describe you by those who know you best? Briefly explain. (Stanford)
- Describe an intellectual experience of the past two years that has given you great satisfaction. (Amherst)
- If you were to describe yourself by a quotation, what would the quote be? Explain your answer. (Dartmouth)
- Tell us about the neighborhood that you grew up in and how it helped shape you into the kind of person you are today. (Yale and the University of Chicago)
- You’ve just written a 300-page autobiography. Send us page 217. (University of Pennsylvania)
- If you could be a “fly on the wall” to observe any situation (historical, personal, or otherwise) describe what you would choose to observe and why. What would you hope to learn and how would it benefit you? (University of Pittsburgh)
- If we could only admit one more student to the University of Pittsburgh, why should it be you? (University of Pittsburgh)
- Describe a risk that you have taken and discuss its impact on your life. (Kalamazoo College)
- If you could spend a year with any real or fictional person in the past, present, or future, whom would you choose? Why? (Kalamazoo College)



- What invention would the world be better off without, and why? (Kalamazoo College)
- If you had the gift of telepathy, the ability to read other people’s minds, would you use this gift or not? Explain. (Middle East Technical University)
- Tell us about one of the best conversations you’ve had. (Stanford)
- If you were to write a book, on what theme or subject matter would it be based, and why? (Stanford)
- Tell us how a particular book, play, film, piece of music, dance performance, scientific theory or experiment or work of art has influenced you. If you choose a novel, film, or play, assume we know the plot. (Notre Dame)
- Select a technological innovation of this century and discuss its effects on your family, local community or nation. (Notre Dame)
- Read Annie Dillard’s *An American Childhood*. Choose one of her observations or ideas and write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (Notre Dame)
- Read Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Drawing upon personal experience, write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (Notre Dame)
- If you had only \$10 to plan a day’s adventure, where would you go, what would you do, and whom would you take with you? (Johns Hopkins)
- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you. (Common Application)
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. (Common Application)
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence. (Common Application)
- Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence. (Common Application)
- A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity on you. (Common Application)



# General College Admission Essay Tips

## When You Write Your Essay...

1. Start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite. Write several drafts and revisit your essay after a few days. You can improve on your presentation.
2. Read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the question as directly as possible, and you'll want to follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and as clearly as you can.
3. Tell the truth about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you; you are completely unknown to it. Even if you run into a committee member in the future, he/she will have no way of connecting your essay (out of the thousands read) to you.
4. Focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalizations.
5. Go beyond writing about an impacting event, achievement, greatest asset, etc. Add reflection and tell why this made you who you are or changed you.
6. Tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this particular school can do for you. Your essay can have different slants for different colleges.
7. Speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.
8. Write about your greatest assets and achievements, but balance with humility.
9. Proofread! Your essay should be free of typos and grammar errors. Use more than spell check. Your computer may miss words that are spelled correctly but out of context.
10. Share your essay with your AVID teacher and/or counselor. Have them edit and give you suggestions.

## But...

1. **DON'T** repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it—and it looks as though you have nothing better to say.
2. **DON'T** write on general, impersonal topics—like the nuclear arms race or the importance of good management in business. The college wants to know about you.
3. **DON'T** use the college essay to excuse your shortcomings. (It would give them additional attention.)
4. **DON'T** use clichés.
5. **DON'T** go to extremes: too witty, too opinionated, or too “intellectual.” Be yourself.
6. **DON'T** plagiarize. College admissions representatives have electronic means of verifying whether your essay is written by you or if you copied someone else. Plagiarizing is the quickest way of ruining all chances of admission.

## Remember:

- The college essay is YOURS. If it looks like Madison Avenue, the admission committee will probably assume that it is your mother's or your father's (or another adult's) work.
- A “gimmick” essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee may be amused but unimpressed with your candidacy.
- Write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

## LESSON 6.4

# The Common Application

**Objective:** Students will be able to utilize all the information that is available on the Common Application website.

**Materials:** Student handout 6.4 *The Common Application* and computer access

- Instructions:**
1. Introduce the Common Application by asking students what they know about the Common Application.
  2. Show students *The Common Application Online Demonstration* located on the Common Application website.
  3. Explore the Common Application website. Take students to a computer lab where they can access the Internet. Have them complete Student handout 6.4 *The Common Application*. This activity can be done individually or in pairs.
  4. Quickwrite activity: "How will I use this new Common Application information?"
  5. Have students, in small groups, share how they will use the information and then share with the whole class.

### Extension Activities

1. Have students register for a Common Application account.
2. Have students download 2 copies of the email they receive from the Common Application citing that they are registered. File the email in their college crate because it provides their username and password.
3. Have students complete one of the college search activities using this website. They can complete a one-pager or a college information form.
4. Have students complete (but not submit) the Common Application online. If computer access is not available, have students complete a paper copy of the Common Application. Have students file it in their college crate to reference when they apply to Common Application institutions.



## The Common Application

**Instructions:** Log on to <https://www.commonapp.org> and complete the following questions by navigating the Common Application website.

1. How many colleges are members of the Common Application association?
2. In what year did the first international colleges join the Common Application?
3. Where would I find the list of colleges that are members of the Common Application?
4. Where would I find Admissions Advice?
5. What kind of tests can I find information on?
6. Do all colleges use and accept the Common Application? Explain your answer.
7. What is the Common Application online school forms system?
8. What is the cost to the student or high school to use the Common Application?
9. Give three advantages to using the Common Application.
10. What is the disadvantage of the Common Application?
11. What items are included in the First Year Application Packet?
12. Which colleges/universities that interest you use the Common Application?



## LESSON 6.5

# The Letter of Recommendation

**Objective:** Students learn what materials to gather and how to prepare their AVID information forms for writers of letters of recommendation.

**Materials:** Student handouts 6.5a *The Letter of Recommendation* and 6.5b *AVID Information Form*

- Instructions:**
1. Introduce students to the concept of letters of recommendation by asking these questions.
    - What is a letter of recommendation?
    - When might you use one (college, scholarships, job, internship)?
    - Who can write one for you?
  2. Go over the elements in student handout 6.5a *The Letter of Recommendation*.
    - Who to Ask
    - When to Ask
    - How to Ask
  3. Give each student a copy of student handout 6.5a *The Letter of Recommendation* and help students identify people that would be a good choice.
  4. Give each student a copy of the student handout 6.5b *AVID Information Form* to complete and turn in for teacher review.



## The Letter of Recommendation

Many colleges require letters of recommendation as part of the application packet. Some scholarships may request letters of recommendation as well. When you apply for summer internships or university bridge programs, letters of recommendation may be required.

### Who to ask:

- The most effective letters are obtained from teachers, coaches, and counselors who know you well. Colleges are looking for personal insights about student applicants.
- The most selective colleges prefer letters from teachers of core courses (English, history, science, math, and language) who are familiar with your capabilities.
- In selecting people to write your recommendations, choose those writers who can illustrate a variety of your interests: recommendations from an English teacher, a math teacher, and a coach would give a broad picture.

### When to ask:

- Provide the letter writer at least two weeks for completion.
- Requesting the recommendation early will help you get a thoughtful, carefully written letter.

### How to ask:

- Make an appointment to personally ask the teacher to write a letter of recommendation for you. This allows for confirmation that they will write the letter and offers an opportunity to ask questions. **DO NOT** assume the letter will be completed if you send a request by email or leave a note in the teacher's mailbox.
- Provide your teacher with a Letter of Recommendation Packet that includes:
  - A cover letter asking for the letter of recommendation and telling the writer the letter's purpose (admission, scholarship, employment) and the name and address of the institution.
  - Completed AVID information form
  - Copy of your educational résumé
  - Copy of your college essay
  - Unofficial copy of your transcript
- About a week before the deadline, **politely** ask if the letter has been completed.



## AVID Information Form

When requesting a letter of recommendation, provide the writer with a completed AVID information form, a copy of your educational résumé, and a copy of your college essay.

1. Name (*as it appears on applications*)
2. Address
3. Birthplace, first language, relevant family history
4. Most significant experience(s)
5. Greatest challenge(s) in your life
6. College and career plans; college majors that are of interest
7. Personal goals; professional goals
8. Three words that best describe you
9. Describe what is special and unique about you.
10. Anything else that describes you and your accomplishments

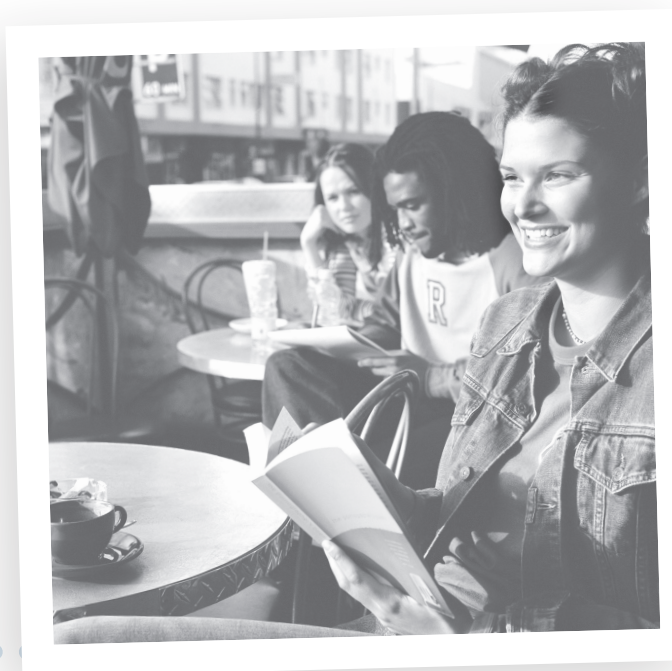
## LESSON 6.6

# Summer Priorities

**Objective:** Students reflect on where they are and where they need to be with regard to the college application process.

**Materials:** Student handout 6.6 *Summer Priorities*

- Instructions:**
1. The summer between junior and senior year is the last opportunity to prepare for college admission before senior year. Students should take full advantage of this time.
  2. Hand out a copy of student handout 6.6 *Summer Priorities*.
  3. Ask students to look at the list of *Summer Priorities* and determine which of these areas are the *most important* and which are the *least important*.
  4. Use the column on the left to rank them in order of importance from 1 to 7.
  5. Keep them in the student's college crate; review in the fall to see which priorities have been met.





## Summer Priorities

**Directions:** Look at the list below. Decide which of these areas are the *most important* to you and which are the *least important*; use the column on the left to rank them in order of importance from 1 to 7.

Order of Importance	Item	Additional Information	Notes
	Coursework	How are your grades? Do you have any past D's or F's that would make you ineligible to apply to college? Will you be able to complete all the necessary coursework during your senior year to meet the eligibility requirements for the colleges of your choice?	
	Test Scores	How are your SAT and ACT scores? Are they where you need them to be to reach your goals and get accepted at your first-choice colleges? Can test preparation help you raise your scores?	
	Extracurricular Activities	Review your extracurricular activities list. Have you pursued all the activities in which you are interested? In what ways can you extend your current activities or interests during the summer? Are there internships or work experience available?	
	College Research	Have you finalized your list of colleges, or do you still feel uncertain about where you want to apply? What else do you need to know to finalize your list?	
	College Visits	How many of the colleges on your list have you visited? It's important to make a visit to a school before you make your final decision in your senior year. Is it possible to visit some of the colleges in which you are interested during summer?	
	College Essays	Do your college essays need more work? How important are they in the application packet of the colleges on your list? Do they reflect what you want colleges to know about you? Do they help colleges know you as a person?	
	Scholarship Research	What is your financial outlook for college? Will scholarships be important when you make your final decision about where to attend? What kinds of scholarships are you eligible for?	

# Testing

## Junior Year, Second Semester

During the spring of junior year, students should take BOTH the SAT and the ACT. Review the SAT and ACT testing schedules online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). Have students enter the registration deadlines and the test dates in their AVID binder. Fee waivers are available for students who meet eligibility criteria. These criteria can change annually, making it important for the AVID teacher to check current year requirements.

Utilize the many test prep resources to help students prepare for both exams. A list of resources, both free and for a fee is provided in this section. Note that websites change and many websites offer free resources because of their sponsors.

Students who are eligible to attend highly selective schools should also register for the SAT Subject Tests. These are one-hour tests that are required by some schools for admission. Try to coordinate the SAT Subject Tests with the completion of AP or honors classes as these classes help prepare students for the exams. Students should also explore whether the college will accept the ACT scores in place of SAT Subject Tests.

Have students file test results in their college crates, and offer instruction on how to read SAT and ACT score reports.

Finally, let students know that an increasing number of colleges and universities are ACT/SAT test score optional. Go to [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org) for a list of test-exempt colleges and universities.

### Calendar

#### *January–March*

- Register for ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests.
- Provide test-taking strategies.
- Set goals for preparing for the exams and/or improving test scores.
- Dedicate time to test preparation.
- Give students practice SAT and ACT tests.

#### *April–June*

- Take SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests.
- In May, take the appropriate AP tests.
- Take SAT Subject tests if the college requires them.
- Review score reports.
- Set goals for improving test scores during students' senior year, if needed.
- Compare both SAT and ACT scores to see on which test students did better.



## Lessons

- 7.1 College Entrance Testing 101:** Provides a quick overview for students and parents that answers what, when, and how.
- 7.2 What is the ACT?:** Students will understand what is required of them to be successful when taking the ACT test.
- 7.3 What is the SAT?:** Students will understand what is required of them to be successful when taking SAT tests.
- 7.4 Preparing for the SAT and ACT:** Students will be familiar with the ACT and SAT and set goals for test preparation and improved scores.
- 7.5 Registering for the SAT and ACT, Using Fee Waivers:** Students will learn how to register for the SAT and ACT, and ensure that all eligible AVID students have access to fee waivers.
- 7.6 Comparing the SAT and ACT:** Students will understand the differences between the two tests.
- 7.7 Improving Scores; Setting Goals:** Help students to improve test scores by setting goals for test preparation and/or improved scores.

## LESSON 7.1

# College Entrance Testing 101

**Objective:** Provide an overview of college entrance testing for students (and parents) that answers what, when, and how.

**Materials:** Student handout 7.1 *College Entrance Testing 101*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students/parents what they know about college entrance tests and what they would like to know.
  2. Provide the handout and review the information about each of the tests, beginning with *Words of Advice*.
  3. Use this as an introduction to testing, so students/parents get just the facts first because there is a lot of information to digest.
  4. This handout will be helpful for parents at a college information session.



*College Entrance Testing 101 Lesson from Louise McClain, retired AVID staff developer and Granite Hills High School counselor, El Cajon, CA*





# College Entrance Testing 101

## Where to Begin: Words of Advice

- Plan ahead and register early online, so you can get your first-choice test site.
- Prep for the test: Take practice timed tests and/or a test prep class.
- Do all testing in spring of the junior year. (Senior year is for damage control.)
- Be rested and positive on test day, and arrive early to the test site; bring a photo ID.

## SAT Reasoning Test

- Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com); fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Students with disabilities can apply online to file accommodations at [www.collegeboard.com/ssd](http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd). Plan ahead for this, as additional time is required.
- A reasoning test with three sections: writing, critical reading, and math
- Writing is first and is not optional; the test takes up to five hours.
- Each section scored is 200–800; a perfect score is 2400.
- Critical Reading has short and long passages from natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and literary fiction.
- Math includes some Algebra II; use of a calculator is allowed, but not required.
- Essay is a 25-minute persuasive essay; readers look for length, neatness, organization, clearly stated opinion, and a conclusion.
- PSAT in grades 10 and 11 is good practice.

## ACT Test

- Register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org); fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Students with disabilities must apply early in order to request accommodations by mail.
- A curricular test with four parts and an optional writing section that is taken last; the test takes up to four hours with the writing option.
- There is no penalty for guessing.
- Four-part test: reading, math, English, and scientific reasoning
- Reading includes comprehension and reasoning.
- Math tests some trigonometry; use of a calculator is allowed, but not required.
- English includes grammar and usage.
- Scientific reasoning tests interpretation and problem-solving skills.
- Each subtest score ranges from 1 to 36; composite score is the average of four subtests.
- Optional essay is a 30-minute persuasive essay.
- PLAN test in grade 10 is good practice for the ACT.

## SAT Subject Tests (formerly called SAT II)

- Additional 1-hour subject tests that are required by some selective universities
- Subjects include history, English literature, math, laboratory science, and foreign language.
- A student can take one, two, or three tests at any sitting.

## LESSON 7.2

# What is the ACT?

**Objective:** Students understand what is required of them to be successful when taking the ACT test.

**Materials:** Student handout *7.2 ACT Scavenger Hunt* and computer access. The teacher handout *7.2 ACT College Entrance Exam* provides specific information about the sections of the ACT.

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students what they know about the ACT.
  2. Ask students why college entrance exams are important.
  3. Tell students that colleges know grades and scores on a student's transcript can vary widely from school to school, but the same ACT test is given on the same day throughout the country, so all students are assessed in the same manner.
  4. Distribute the student handout *7.2 ACT Scavenger Hunt*, and let students work alone, in pairs, or in small groups. All the answers are available on the ACT website, under FAQs. Computer access will help students find the answers.
  5. Review the answers with the class to ensure that students have a good understanding of the ACT test.



## ACT Scavenger Hunt

*Answer the questions below using the resources you have available to you.*

1. How many times is the ACT test given this year, and what are the test dates?
2. What is the cost to take the ACT with and without optional writing?
3. What are the four subject areas tested?
4. How long does the ACT take and how many questions are on the test?
5. How does a student register for the ACT?
6. What is the highest composite score possible on the ACT?
7. How can a student prepare for the ACT?
8. What is the difference between the ACT and SAT?
9. Why would a student retest, and what does research show about retest scores?
10. What is required to be eligible for a fee waiver?
11. What should a student bring to the test?
12. What are some tips for successful testing?
13. How soon can a student see his or her scores?
14. How can a student send scores to a college? What is the cost?
15. When will a college need to have a student's scores?



## ACT College Entrance Exam

The ACT is a standardized college entrance examination that measures students' knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, reading, science reasoning, and the application of these skills to future academic tasks. Total testing time without the writing portion is two hours and 55 minutes with the writing test taking an additional 30 minutes. The ACT is offered several Saturdays throughout the traditional school year. The writing test on the ACT is optional, and students may choose whether or not to take it depending on the requirements of the colleges to which they are applying.

Section	Content	Number of Questions	Time Allowed
<i>English</i>	Usage/Mechanics	75	45 Minutes
	Rhetorical Skills		
<i>Mathematics</i>	Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra	60	60 Minutes
	Intermediate Algebra and Coordinate Geometry		
	Plane Geometry and Trigonometry		
<i>Reading</i>	Social Studies/Natural Sciences reading skills	40	35 Minutes
	Arts/Literature reading skills		
<i>Science</i>	Skills required in Natural Sciences: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem solving	40	35 Minutes
<i>Writing (optional)</i>	Writing Skills in entry-level college composition courses	1 Prompt	30 Minutes

### Skills Tested

- English test covers standard written English including punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure. Also covered are rhetorical skills including strategy, organization, and style.
- Mathematics test measures skills students have typically acquired by the end of 11th grade. Students will need knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills, but are not required to know complex formulas or perform extensive computation. Students may use an approved calculator for this section.



- The reading test requires that students show understanding of both direct and implied meaning. Students are asked to use referring and reasoning skills to determine main ideas; locate and interpret significant details; understand sequences of events; make comparisons; comprehend cause-effect relationships; draw generalizations; analyze the author’s or narrator’s voice and method; and determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and meanings.
- The science test assumes that students are in the process of taking the core science course of study (three years or more) and have completed a course in earth science and/or physical science and a course in biology. The test presents scientific information in the form of data representations (graphs, tables, etc.), research summaries, and conflicting viewpoints. Students are asked questions that require them to recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information; examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed; and generalize from given information and draw conclusions, gain new information, or make predictions.
- The optional writing test consists of one writing prompt that will define an issue and describe two points of view on that issue. Students are asked to respond to a question about their position on the issue. They may take one of the viewpoints offered in the prompt or develop a different one.

## Types of Questions

Except for the writing test, multiple-choice questions are used in all the sections.

## Scoring

Number of correct answers is counted in each test, and there is no penalty for wrong answers (no penalty for guessing).

## How to Register

Online registration is preferred.

## Additional Information

ACT provides practice materials on the website [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). Fee waivers are available for qualifying students.

## LESSON 7.3

# What is the SAT?

**Objective:** Students understand what is required of them to be successful when taking SAT tests.

**Materials:** Student handout *7.3 SAT Scavenger Hunt* and computer access. The teacher handout provides specific information about the sections of the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests.

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students what they know about the SAT.
2. Ask students why college entrance exams are important.
3. Tell students that colleges know grades and scores on a student transcript can vary widely from school to school, but the same SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject tests are given on the same day throughout the country, so all students are assessed in the same manner.
4. Distribute the student handout *7.3 SAT Scavenger Hunt* and let students work alone, in pairs, or in small groups. All the answers are available on the College Board website. Computer access will help students find the answers.
5. Review the answers with the class to ensure that students have a good understanding of the SAT tests.



## SAT Scavenger Hunt

Answer the questions below using the resources you have available to you.

1. How many times are the SAT tests given this year, and what are the test dates?
2. What is the cost to take the SAT Reasoning Test? The SAT Subject Tests?
3. What does the SAT test? What do the SAT Subject Tests test?
4. How long does the SAT take and how many questions are on the test?
5. How does a student register for the SAT?
6. How is the SAT scored?
7. How can a student do well on the test?
8. When is the best time to take the SAT?
9. How many times should a student take the SAT?
10. What is required to be eligible for a fee waiver?
11. What should a student bring to the test?
12. What are some tips for successful testing?
13. How soon can a student see his or her scores?
14. How can a student send scores to a college? What is the cost?
15. When will a college need to have a student's scores?



## SAT College Entrance Exam

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is used in college admission to assess a student's readiness and potential for success in college. Scores from the SAT are used by colleges to supplement students' high school records. The SAT measures students' abilities in critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills. Total testing time is three hours and 45 minutes, and the test is offered several Saturdays during the traditional school year.

Section	Content	Number of Questions	Time Allowed
<b>Reading</b>	Extended Reasoning	36–40	<b>70 minutes</b> (two 25-minute subsections and one 20-minute subsection)
	Literal Comprehension	4–6	
	Vocabulary in Context	4–6	
	Sentence Completion	19	
	<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>67</b>	
<b>Mathematics</b>	Number Operations	11–14	<b>70 minutes</b> (two 25-minute subsections and one 20-minute subsection)
	Algebra and Functions	19–22	
	Geometry and Measurement	14–16	
	Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability	5–8	
	<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>54</b>	
<b>Writing</b>	Essay	1	<b>60 minutes</b> (one 25-minute essay, one 25-minute multiple-choice subsection, and one 10-minute multiple-choice subsection)
	Improving Sentences	25	
	Identifying Sentence Errors	18	
	Improving Paragraphs	6	
	<b>Total Questions</b>	<b>50</b>	





## Skills Tested

The SAT Reasoning test is a measure of critical thinking skills students will need for college; the SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems.

- Critical reading section measures a student's ability to identify genres, relationships among parts of a text, cause and effect, rhetorical devices, and comparative arguments. Reading passages are taken from different fields including the natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, and literary fiction.
- The mathematics section measures a student's ability in numbers and operations; Algebra I, II, and functions; geometry; and statistics, probability, and data analysis. Students may use an approved calculator for this section.
- The multiple-choice writing section measures a student's ability to recognize errors, improve sentences, and improve paragraphs within a written context. The essay section measures a student's ability to develop and support a position on a topic. The student must first analyze a topic and consider his or her own viewpoint on it, and then support this position with reasoning and observations taken from the student's own reading, studies, experiences, or observations.

## Types of Questions

- Critical reading sections—sentence completions and multiple-choice items based on reading passages
- Mathematics sections—multiple-choice items and student-produced responses
- Writing section—multiple-choice items and an essay

## Scoring

- Students receive one point for each correct answer.
- Students lose one-quarter ( $1/4$ ) point for a wrong answer to a multiple-choice question.
- No points are deducted for unanswered questions or for wrong answers to mathematics student-produced response questions.

## How to Register

- Online registration
- Mail registration—this may be required when there are special circumstances.
- Phone registration—for those students retaking the test. Previous registration information is in the system and students need only pay the testing fee.

## Additional Information

- For more information visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Practice questions are available.
- Fee waivers are available for qualifying students.

## LESSON 7.4

# Preparing for the SAT and ACT

**Objective:** Students will be familiar with the variety of preparation materials for the ACT and SAT.

**Materials:** Student handout *7.4 Test Prep Resources* and computer access

- Instructions:**
1. Explain to students that the SAT and ACT are important exams for college admission and preparing for these exams is essential.
  2. Give each student a copy of student handout *7.4 Test Prep Resources* and review. Two of the best resources are the authors of the exams: College Board and ACT. Focus students' test prep by using score reports and online resources.
  3. Assign students to research each of the free test prep resources and share with the class the strengths and weaknesses of the test prep resources.
  4. Add to the list when a new test prep resource is discovered.
  5. Share with AVID students any test preparation classes that are nearby and at low cost.



## Test Prep Resources

### For Purchase

#### AVID Test Prep™

AVID Test Prep is an effective and affordable solution that provides online SAT, ACT, PSAT and PLAN test prep courses delivered by experts through engaging, on-demand video lessons. AVID Test Prep helps students of all levels improve and maximize their college entrance exam scores to attain their educational goals. AVID Test Prep uses a well-established “test-grade-review” methodology and a proprietary online, video-based delivery platform. Students will benefit from expert instruction that is engaging, convenient, and flexible. Contact AVID Center for more information.

Ask at your high school or neighboring schools to see if the school offers test prep classes. Often these classes are reasonably priced. Companies such as Princeton Review and Kaplan offer test preparation classes, but at greater cost, but financial aid may be available.

A number of companies offer online preparation courses and practice PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP examinations. Here are a few, and you can search for additional resources.

- [petersons.com](http://petersons.com)
- [princetonreview.com](http://princetonreview.com)
- [kaplan.com](http://kaplan.com)
- [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com)
- [testmasters.net](http://testmasters.net)
- [naviance.com](http://naviance.com)

### Free Resources

Many online resources offer study guides, preparation courses, and practice tests at no charge. Below is a list of free resources. Do an online search for additional resources.

1. Check with your high school to see if the school has a license for any test prep materials.
2. [ACT.org](http://ACT.org)
  - PLAN and ACT test prep resources
  - Retired exams
3. [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com)
  - Practice tests for the SAT
  - SAT question of the day

## STUDENT HANDOUT 7.4 (2 of 2)



Test Prep Resources continued

4. [freerice.com](http://freerice.com)
  - Vocabulary builder for the SAT
  - When vocabulary questions are answered correctly, the site's sponsors donate to the United Nation's World Food Program.
5. [Ineedapencil.com](http://Ineedapencil.com)
  - Comprehensive online SAT prep program which provides dozens of lessons, hundreds of practice questions, and practice exams
6. [majortests.com/sat](http://majortests.com/sat)
  - Self-study SAT prep
  - Practice questions
  - Eight-week guided study plan
7. [number2.com](http://number2.com)
  - Free tutorials and practice materials for the SAT, ACT
  - Preparation courses for SAT, ACT
  - Tracks student progress
8. [petersons.com](http://petersons.com)
  - Tips and strategies for PSAT, SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject, and AP
  - Practice tests for PSAT, SAT, ACT
9. [sparknotes.com/testprep](http://sparknotes.com/testprep)
  - List of common SAT words
  - Free diagnostics, practice tests, and flashcards
  - Test prep resources for the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests
10. [studyguidezone.com](http://studyguidezone.com)
  - Study guides for PSAT, SAT, ACT, CLEP
  - Study resources for many tests
  - College and study tips
11. [studyhall.com](http://studyhall.com)
  - Practice for PSAT/SAT
12. [sylvum.com](http://sylvum.com)
  - Practice exercises for SAT
13. [Test-guide.com](http://Test-guide.com)
  - Test prep for ACT and SAT
  - Online practice tests
14. [testprepreview.com](http://testprepreview.com)
  - Practice tests for PSAT, SAT, ACT, ASVAB, and Accuplacers

## LESSON 7.5

# Registering for the SAT and ACT, Using Fee Waivers

**Objective:** Students will know how to register for the SAT and ACT, and all eligible AVID students will be provided with access to fee waivers.

**Materials:** Student Handout 7.5 *Registering for the SAT and ACT*, computer access, and SAT and ACT fee waivers for eligible students

- Instructions:**
1. Remind students that registering for the SAT and ACT is time-consuming but worthwhile.
  2. Both the ACT and SAT have a series of questions for students to answer that will guide career and college choices.
  3. Each year high schools receive a specific number of fee waivers, which is based on the number of fee waivers used the previous year. When those fee waivers are exhausted, counselors can request more fee waivers.
  4. Make sure that all eligible AVID students get fee waivers!
  5. Fee waivers can be used online; students simply provide the fee-waiver number when payment is requested.
  6. Provide eligible students with one ACT and one SAT fee waiver. Let them know these fee waivers are the same as money, and they should guard them carefully.
  7. AVID teachers and counselors may want to keep a master list that includes the type of fee waiver, the fee waiver number, and the name of the student.
  8. Students can file fee waivers in their college crate.
  9. Provide students with student handout 7.5 *Registering for the SAT and ACT* to guide them through registration.
  10. After students have registered for both entrance exams, the AVID teacher and counselor should remind students of their test dates. Research has shown that fee-waiver students have a higher rate of test day non-attendance.
  11. Do all you can to ensure that AVID students do not add to this list of students who miss taking their college entrance exams on test day.



## Registering for the SAT and ACT

*Online registration is preferred, so that you will know if your preferred test center is available, and you can print their admission ticket. Paper registration forms are sent to all high schools, so you can register by mail, also.*

1. **Register for the SAT at <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>.**
2. Online registration is the simplest and quickest way to register for the SAT. Online registration allows you to choose your test date and test center, get immediate registration confirmation, and print your admission ticket.
3. Be sure to file your admission ticket in your college crate because you will need to bring it to the test center on your testing date.
4. Sign in with your College Board account. If you do not have one, it is easy to create one. Be sure to save your College Board username and password in your college crate.
5. Test preparation materials provided by the College Board are excellent! Be sure to confirm that you wish to have test prep information sent/emailed to you (especially the SAT question of the day).
6. You will be asked questions in order to create a personal profile and a college profile. Take your time and ask for help from your teacher and/or counselor if you're uncertain of the answers.
7. Select a test date and location that is convenient for you.
8. Payment will be required at checkout. If you qualify for a fee waiver, insert the number here. Otherwise, you will be asked for credit card information.
9. Print your admission ticket and file it in your crate. Put the test date on your calendar. Take advantage of all the free SAT preparation materials and tips.

- 
1. **Register for the ACT at <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html>.**
  2. Sign in with your ACTWeb account. If you do not have one, it is easy to create one. Be sure to save your ACT username and password in your college crate.
  3. Complete information about high school, college, and ACT's interest inventory. Take your time, as this information helps ACT to assist you in the college admission process.
  4. Select test date and test option. It is recommended that you choose ACT plus writing, unless you are certain that all the colleges to which you plan to apply do not require the writing portion of the ACT.
  5. Select a test date and location that is convenient for you.
  6. Payment will be required at checkout. If you qualify for a fee waiver, insert the number here. Otherwise, you will be asked for credit card information.
  7. Print your admission ticket and file it in your crate. Put the test date on your calendar.

## LESSON 7.6

# Comparing the ACT and SAT

**Objective:** Students will have a good understanding of the differences between the two tests.

**Materials:** Student handout *7.6 Comparing the ACT and SAT* and computer access

- Instructions:**
1. Explain to students that the ACT and SAT are two different types of college entrance exams, and reassure students that both are accepted by all colleges and universities.
  2. Students can work individually or in pairs or groups to fill in the missing parts of student handout *7.6 Comparing the ACT and SAT*.
  3. Once students have completed the handout, review and add any additional information students may have discovered.
  4. Remind students to file this information in their college crate.
  5. After students have completed their first round of ACT and SAT tests, they can compare test scores using the Concordance Table, which is available on both the ACT and College Board websites.
  6. If student scores need improvement, students should retake the test in which they scored the HIGHEST in the fall of senior year.



## Comparing the ACT and SAT

	ACT <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>	SAT <a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>
<b>Test Fee</b>	\$	\$
<b>Purpose</b>	Measures English, mathematics, reading, and science.	
<b>Test Content</b>	<b>ACT English Test</b> (75 items, 45 minutes)	<b>SAT Writing is mandatory.</b> (60 minutes) <b>Multiple Choice</b> (35 minutes)
	<b>ACT Mathematics Test</b> (60 items, 60 minutes)	<b>SAT Mathematics</b> (70 minutes)
	<b>ACT Reading Test</b> (40 items, 35 minutes) Arts and Literature Social Studies and Natural Sciences History, Political Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Sciences	<b>SAT Critical Reading</b> (70 minutes)
	<b>ACT Science Test</b> (40 items, 35 minutes) Interpretation analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills in Biology, Earth/Space Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics	<b>Science Test</b>
	<b>ACT Writing Test is optional</b> (1 prompt, 30 minutes)	
<b>Method of Scoring</b>	Scores based on number of right answers No penalty for guessing	
<b>Test Score Scales</b>	<b>ACT English Test:</b> <b>ACT Reading Test: 1–36</b> <b>ACT Mathematics Test:</b> <b>ACT Science Test:</b> <b>ACT Composite:</b> <b>ACT English and Writing:</b>	<b>SAT Writing: 200–800</b> <b>SAT Critical Reading:</b> <b>SAT Mathematics: 200–800</b> <b>SAT Science Test:</b> <b>SAT Total:</b>
<b>Student Information</b>		<b>Student Descriptive Questionnaire</b>

Source: ACT College and Career Resource Manual





## ACT and SAT Concordance Tables

Students and parents frequently ask for guidance as to which test to take: ACT or SAT. Encourage students to take BOTH tests by citing the differences between the exams and the possibility that a student may do better on one or the other. The concordance tables were jointly developed by ACT and College Board (and available on both websites). They provide a way to compare student performance on both tests.

When students take ACT and SAT practice tests, students can utilize the concordance tables to determine in which test they are stronger. It is important for students to take practice tests under standard testing procedures following all the rules and regulations for taking the exams. Students applying to selective colleges that require SAT Subject Tests should research the requirements for each exam. In some cases, the colleges may accept the ACT with the optional writing in lieu of the SAT Subject Tests.

Concordance tables are utilized by different people and institutions. For example, college admission officials use concordance tables for comparing the SAT and ACT scores of applicants. Students use these tables to help them determine which scores to submit with their college application. Military recruiters can use college entrance exams to *forecast* AFQT (Armed Forces Qualification Test) Category for potential recruits. In this case, the information is to be used for information purposes because the scores are not precise indicators. The AFQT score is derived from four sections of the ASVAB.

While the national concordance tables are utilized by most colleges and universities, some large universities have developed their own. For example, the University of Texas at Austin, which is the largest university in the country, developed its own concordance tables in 2000.

## LESSON 7.7

# Improving Scores; Setting Goals

**Objective:** Help students to improve test scores by setting goals for test preparation and/or improved scores.

**Materials:** Student handouts *7.7a Improving SAT and ACT Scores* and *7.7b Goal Setting Outline*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students what they can do to improve their SAT and ACT scores. Review student handout *7.7a Improving SAT and ACT Scores*. Add to this list based on student responses.
  2. Have students develop a plan for preparing for the exam and/or for improving their scores. Use student handout *7.7b Goal Setting Outline*.





# Improving SAT and ACT Scores

## Before the Exam

1. Take several practice tests under the same conditions that you will be taking your SAT and ACT.
2. Use test questions from *The Real ACT Prep Guide* and *The Official SAT Study Guide* to prepare for the exams.
3. Take a SAT Subject Test when you complete the corresponding high school course. For example, take the SAT Subject U.S. History Test as soon as you complete the AP U.S. History class.

## During the Exam

1. **Some sections are more challenging.** Recognize that SAT math questions become more difficult as you work through each section. If you can't answer the last few questions in a section, devote your time to reviewing questions from the beginning and the middle.
2. **Read questions carefully** to avoid misinterpreting them.
3. **Make calculated guesses.** Avoid random guessing in the multiple-choice section of the SAT, which will penalize you for incorrect answers. However, if you can eliminate at least one answer as incorrect, it is in your best interest to guess.

## After the Exam

1. Use your Score Report to determine your strengths and weaknesses. Consider the suggestions for improvement based on your scores.
2. Continue to take the most rigorous courses you can. Challenging high school courses help prepare you for these exams.



## Goal Setting Outline

**Directions:** Use the form below to complete the **GPA (Goal, Plan, Action)** outline.

G	<p>Use the space below to describe your goal to prepare for college entrance exams.</p>         <p>Specify the time frame of your goal below.</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> short-range             <input type="checkbox"/> mid-range             <input type="checkbox"/> long-range         </p>
P	<p>Use the space below to briefly explain your plan.</p>                   
A	<p>Use the space below to list action steps needed to achieve your goal.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p>

# Financing

## Junior Year, Second Semester

Money for college is an important part of the AVID curriculum. Students must plan and apply for the various funding streams available to them and be aware of financial aid opportunities. Grants and loans will be a major source of funding for AVID students, which requires submitting the FAFSA in January of their senior year.

Scholarships are a funding source that juniors can pursue. Scholarships come in large and small amounts and are available for all types of students. Help your students apply for scholarships by making it part of the AVID curriculum. It is important to start the research during the junior year as a few scholarships are awarded to juniors. Some scholarships have fall deadline dates, but most are due in spring of the senior year.

Use the activities below to help your students get started on the work of financial aid planning. Be sure to access your school counselors to learn about local and community scholarships that are available to students from your school.

The PIN website ([www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)) provides an introduction to the federal financial aid process. Students should have an email address before applying for a PIN. A lesson on the FAFSA PIN will help eligible students register online. Keep a master list of students' PINs.

As students consider the real cost of attending college, they need to be aware of financial aid options and start planning early. While the cost of attendance may be high, there are numerous opportunities to fund their college dreams. Students can estimate their eligibility for federal student aid at *FAFSA4caster*, which will give them better insight when making college choices. Financial aid for the undocumented student presents a challenge in many states. Check to see if your state offers in-state tuition or state financial aid to undocumented students. Another source of information for the undocumented student is MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) at [www.maldef.org](http://www.maldef.org). MALDEF is the leading nonprofit Latino litigation, advocacy, and educational outreach institution in the United States. The California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (<http://www.crlaf.org>) provides assistance for undocumented students and/or students who are in citizenship transition. The College Board has excellent resources posted on their website, also.

Students interested in applying for the service academies should start preparing in the spring of the junior year to ensure they meet admission requirements.

### Calendar

- January–June*
- Register for FAFSA PIN.
  - Explore different types of financial aid.
  - Estimate eligibility for federal student aid at *FAFSA4caster*.
  - Learn about scholarship scams.
  - Continue scholarship searches.
  - Register with a scholarship match sites such as Fast Web.

## Lessons

- 8.1 Types of Financial Aid + FAFSA4caster:** Students will understand the different types, sources, and how to apply for financial aid, and get an estimate of eligibility for federal student aid.
- 8.2 Financial Aid One-Pager:** Students have an opportunity to research issues related to financial aid at an institution of their choice.
- 8.3 Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Officer:** Students learn valuable information regarding communicating with financial aid advisors.
- 8.4 Show Me the Money! The Truth About Scholarships:** Students become familiar with information related to applying for scholarships.
- 8.5 The Real Cost of Attending College:** Students know about the various costs of attending college.



## LESSON 8.1

# Types of Financial Aid + FAFSA4caster

**Objective:** Students will understand the different types, sources, and how to apply for financial aid, and get an estimate of eligibility for federal student aid.

**Materials:** Student Handout 8.1 *Types of Financial Aid* and Internet access

- Instructions:**
1. Introduce the topic by sharing a current article from a newspaper, magazine, or the Internet relating to the cost of attending college.
  2. Review student handout 8.1 *Types of Financial Aid* through whole group presentation and discussion, or jigsaw the activity by putting students in eight groups and having them discuss, and then report out on the eight topics below:
    - a. State and federal grants and scholarships
    - b. Private and corporate grants and scholarships
    - c. Institutional grants and scholarships
    - d. Student loans
    - e. Parent loans
    - f. Private student loans
    - g. Institutional grants and scholarships
    - h. Work-study
  3. Instead of waiting until senior year to find out eligibility, students can use FAFSA4caster to estimate eligibility early, which will give them more information when making college choices. Knowing their estimated federal student aid eligibility will help students better understand the types and approximate amounts of federal student aid for which they may qualify. To complete the FAFSA4caster, go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) and click on *FAFSA4caster*. They will need the most current information (below) to accurately answer the questions, although students can estimate or guess and update their answers at any time for a more accurate forecast.
    - a. Federal tax information or tax returns, including W-2 information, for student and parents (if dependent)
    - b. Information on savings, investments, and business and farm assets for the student and parents (if dependent)



# Types of Financial Aid

## How will YOU pay for college?

Many students receive financial aid to help pay for college. Families are expected to contribute to the student's education, even if the contribution is a small one. Most families use a combination of resources to help pay for college that includes:

- Money that has been saved over time
- A portion of current income
- The student's part-time job and summer earnings
- Financial aid
- Other resources

Money for college is available through a variety of means, but you have to be purposeful about applying. Research and good planning can make a difference in the amount and types of aid you receive. Your junior year is the opportune time to research, plan, and prepare items that may be required when applying. While most scholarship opportunities take place during senior year, there are some scholarships that are offered for juniors.

Many types of financial aid are available and how they are categorized will depend on the institution, publication, or website. What is most important is to familiarize yourself with all the opportunities and requirements so that you can apply. Financial aid packages are frequently a combination of different types of financial aid.

**Federal Student Aid** from the U.S. Department of Education is the largest source of aid in America, providing more than \$150 billion in grants, work-study, and federal loans for students attending four-year colleges or universities, community colleges, and career schools. Use the **FAFSA4Caster** to estimate your federal student aid eligibility.

**State and Federal Grants and Scholarships** provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Most of these grants and scholarships are need-based, and some may require that the student maintain a certain grade point average. Some examples are:

- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- State grants are awarded by individual states for students graduating from a high school in that state. Check with your state department of education for specific grants and/or scholarships they may offer. Here are some examples:
  - CALIFORNIA: Cal Grant A, Cal Grant B, Cal Grant C, California Chafee Grant for Foster Youth
  - FLORIDA: Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, Florida Resident Access Grant, Access to Better Learning and Education (ABLE)
  - MARYLAND: Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant, Howard P. Rawlings Educational Assistance Grant
  - TEXAS: TEXAS Grant, Texas Educational Opportunity Grant





**Private and Corporate Grants and Scholarships** provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. The provider sets the criteria for the grant/scholarship. Using search engines that match your profile to these grants and scholarships is a good way to get started. Another source of private scholarships is those offered by local businesses, organizations, and associations. These target graduates in your city, which reduces the number of applicants. Ask if your parents' employers offer any scholarships. The following are some examples of corporations that sponsor scholarships:

- Coca Cola
- Microsoft
- Wal-Mart
- Best Buy
- Toyota
- Dell Scholars Program

**Institutional Grants and Scholarships** provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. They are provided by the college or university to make up the difference between the cost of attending and the family's ability to contribute. Other institutional grants and scholarships may be merit awards based on a student's academic achievement. As you narrow your list of colleges, check for the types of institutional grants and scholarships your colleges of interest offer.

**Self Help Aid** is financial aid awards that a student must either repay or work for the assistance. These are in the form of loans and work-study.

**Student Loans** have to be repaid. There are two key words: subsidized and unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are essentially interest-free until you finish school OR are not a full-time student for six months. (If you leave school, six months later you are expected to start paying back the loans.) Unsubsidized loans accrue interest while you are in school, even though you do not start paying them back until six months after you are out of school, finished or not.

**Parent Loans** are given to parents of college students to help pay for college costs and must be repaid. Both private and federal parent loans are available.

**Loan Forgiveness and Repayment** programs will repay or forgive a percentage of a student's loan after a specific work commitment has been completed. Students must work in a specific field or job in an underserved area of the country. Examples are:

- National Health Service Corps
- Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program
- Outstanding Rural Scholar Program
- Peace Corps
- Equal Justice Works

**Work-Study** is employment through a college's financial aid office. Employment will typically be on campus, helping with research, working in a business office, or almost anywhere that the need arises, and you will be paid by the school. Off-campus employment opportunities exist, also.

## LESSON 8.2

# Financial Aid One-Pager

**Objective:** Students have an opportunity to research issues related to financial aid at an institution of their choice.

**Materials:** Internet access, student handout 8.2 *Financial Aid One-Pager*, pens, and paper

- Instructions:**
1. Take students to a computer lab and have them research the college they cited in their "Top Ten Colleges." Ask students to look for financial aid opportunities at that college.
  2. Pass out student handout 8.2 *Financial Aid One-Pager* to use in the computer lab to guide research. The activity lists the elements students must include in their final product.
  3. Allow for the opportunity to share.
  4. Display one-pagers in the classroom or on a bulletin board in the school.





# Financial Aid One-Pager

Find answers to the questions below; use your answers to complete a financial aid one-pager.

1. Name of college:
2. Location (city and state):
3. Size of college:
4. Estimated cost of attendance:
5. Three scholarships offered by this university:

Scholarship	Amount	Deadline	Who can apply?

6. Three grants available at this university:

Grants	Amount	Deadline	Who can apply?

7. Three other sources of financial aid at this university:

Source	Amount	Deadline	Who can apply?

## LESSON 8.3

# Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Advisor

**Objective:** Students learn what questions to ask a financial aid advisor.

**Materials:** Student handout 8.3 *Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Advisor*

- Instructions:**
1. Introduction: Now that students have prepared questions for the admissions representative, questions to ask at a college fair, and questions to ask when they visit a college campus, one more key person is the financial aid advisor.
  2. Give each student a copy of student handout 8.3 *Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Advisor*. Review the questions and their meanings with students. Ask students for other questions they would like to ask, and add them to the list.
  3. Assign questions to one, two, or a group of students.
  4. Choose a college that is popular among AVID students, and have the class research financial aid about the school.
  5. Share out—design an opportunity to have students share the answers to their financial aid questions, so that all students will have the answers.
  6. Invite a financial aid representative from a local college or university that is guided by questions and answers using this student activity.



## Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Advisor

1. What is the estimated cost of attending your college for one year? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please break that down into:  
Tuition: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Fees: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Room: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Board: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Books/supplies: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Personal expenses: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the expected increase in costs each year? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Were there any increases last year? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how much? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you require information from both of my parents if they're divorced or separated?
6. How will outside scholarships (such as ones I may get at high school graduation) affect aid I receive from your college?
7. Will my financial need affect whether I'm admitted to your college?
8. If I receive work-study as part of my financial aid, will earnings come directly to me or go to the college?
9. What happens if my family circumstances worsen after you award financial aid to me? Can my award be reconsidered based on a change in our situation?
10. Can I expect a comparable award each year?
11. How much of my financial need will be met with student loans?
12. What is the average anticipated debt for a graduate from my class?
13. If any of the awards offered to me are estimates, what happens if the actual awards turn out to be lower?
14. Are there any special scholarships or loan programs at your college that I may be eligible for, and do I need to file separate applications for them?
15. Do you require additional forms from me in order to finalize this award (for example, tax returns, return acceptance letter, or promissory note)?
16. Additional questions?

## LESSON 8.4

# Show Me the Money! The Truth About Scholarships

**Objective:** Students become familiar with information related to applying for scholarships.

**Materials:** Student handouts 8.4a *Seven Major Scholarship Scams*, 8.4b *Scholarship Search* and 8.4c *Financing Your College: Military Resources*

- Instructions:**
1. Take students to the computer lab to have them register on a scholarship pairing site. Your school may have a commercial service for scholarship matching. If not, have students register on Fast Web at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). This is a free service that matches students with scholarships. Caution students about the advertisements on some websites and that they should not answer any ads.
  2. Walk students through the registration process on the scholarship pairing website.
  3. Have students research two scholarships and complete student handout 8.4b *Scholarship Search*. They may not qualify for the scholarship, but this activity will give them an idea of format, requirements, etc. Students can also plan for information or activities they may need to add to their college crate. Allow for a sharing opportunity.
  4. As students get results from Fast Web or other services, have them share the information with the class. Since they may not be able to apply for most of these until their senior year, have them save the information in their college crate.
  5. Hand out student handout 8.4a *Seven Major Scholarship Scams*, and go over each one with students. Remind them that companies do target students and families who are least able to afford such services. You can download information and public service announcements that AVID students can read as part of school announcements at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/scholarship/index.shtml>.
  6. Share student handout 8.4c *Financing Your College: Military Resources*, which will provide information to students who are interested in the military. Additional presentations may include:
    - Military recruiter to speak about military resources
    - Counselor versed on the different service academies and entrance requirements
    - Representative from your congressman's office to speak about Congressional Appointments to the service academies
  7. School counselors can give a presentation on how local scholarships are advertised throughout the year.



## Seven Major Scholarship Scams

Fraud takes many forms, and this is true of scholarship con games. Seven of the most common kinds are discussed here. If you receive an offer that uses any of these tactics, be on your guard! Some of these scams have been around for years, but people keep falling for them. Sadly, most people, even when they discover they've been cheated, fail to file a complaint.

1. **The Vanishing Scholarship:** Many scams ask for money up front but provide nothing in exchange. Most victims just write it off, thinking that they just didn't win the scholarship.
2. **Scholarships for Profit:** This scam looks just like a real scholarship program but requires an application fee. The typical scam receives 5,000 to 10,000 applications and charges fees of \$5 to \$35. They take in hundreds of thousands of dollars, then pay out a couple of \$1,000 scholarships and pocket the difference as a huge profit. Some award no scholarships at all. You are more likely to win the lottery than one of these scholarships. No legitimate scholarship program ever requires an application fee.
3. **The Advance-Fee Loan:** This scam promises you a great student loan, one with unusually low interest. The problem is that to get the educational loan, you must first pay a fee. But guess what? After you pay the money, nothing happens. The promised loan never materializes. Legitimate educational loans may charge a fee, but invariably they deduct the fee from the loan check. Real loan programs never require an up-front fee when you submit the application. A good tipoff is that if the loan is not issued by a bank or other recognized lender, it is probably a scam. Show the offer to your local bank manager and ask for his advice.
4. **The Scholarship Prize:** Good news! This scam tells you that you've won a college scholarship worth thousands of dollars. The only catch is that you have to pay a "disbursement" or "redemption" fee or the taxes before they can release your prize. If someone says you've won a prize and you don't remember entering the contest or submitting an application, be suspicious.
5. **The Guaranteed Scholarship:** Watch out for scholarship-matching services that guarantee you'll win a scholarship or they'll refund your money. They may simply pocket your money and disappear, or if they do send you a report of matching scholarships, you'll find it extremely difficult to qualify for a refund.
6. **Investment Required for Federal Loans:** Insurance companies and brokerage firms sometimes offer free financial aid seminars that are actually sales pitches for insurance, annuity, and investment products. When a sales pitch implies that purchasing such a product is a prerequisite to receiving federal student aid, it violates federal regulations and state insurance laws.

7. **Free Seminar:** You may receive a letter advertising a free financial aid seminar or “interviews” for financial assistance. Sometimes, the seminars do provide some useful information, but more often they are cleverly disguised, very convincing sales pitches for financial aid consulting services. Attending these “free” seminars can be very expensive. You’ll end up shelling out money for promised help with maximizing your eligibility for financial aid, dubious investment products, bogus scholarship-matching services, and overpriced student loans.

## Don't Get Cheated

To avoid being victimized by a scholarship scam, follow these seven simple guidelines.

1. If you have to pay money to get money, it's probably a scam.
2. If it sounds too good to be true, it isn't true.
3. Invest the time, not the money.
4. Never invest more than a postage stamp to get information about scholarships.
5. A legitimate scholarship guarantee does not exist.
6. Legitimate scholarship programs never charge application fees.
7. Respect your own intuition. If it sounds fishy, it probably is.





## Scholarship Search

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of scholarship: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Due date: \_\_\_\_\_ Award amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Requirements of scholarship: What requirements must be met to apply for the scholarship? Each organization sets its own requirements. Put "N/A" if the requirement listed below is not part of the scholarship requirements.

GPA? Test scores? \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level? \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic (where you live)? \_\_\_\_\_ Religion? \_\_\_\_\_

Class rank? \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. citizen? \_\_\_\_\_ Sports? \_\_\_\_\_ Gender? \_\_\_\_\_

Must attend a particular college? \_\_\_\_\_ Special talent? \_\_\_\_\_

Specific to a major? \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's employer? \_\_\_\_\_

List other requirements not listed above:

Will you apply for this scholarship? Explain your reasons:



# Financing Your College: Military Resources

## U.S. Armed Forces

- Service Academies:** You can attend one of the service academies. Service academies are highly selective and preparation for admission should begin well before a student's senior year. These are four-year colleges that are tuition free and offer bachelor's degrees and a commission in the military after graduation. The service academies are:
  - US Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado
  - US Military Academy at West Point, West Point, New York
  - US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland
  - US Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut
  - US Merchant Marines Academy, Kings Point, New York
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC):** Enrolling in an ROTC program will pay for your tuition, fees, and books, and provide you with a monthly allowance. ROTC programs are specific to service:
  - Army ROTC—provides college-trained officers for the Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard. It is offered at more than 600 colleges throughout the nation. For more information go to [www.armyrotc.com](http://www.armyrotc.com).
  - Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC)—is the largest single source of Navy and Marine Corps officers. NROTC also trains qualified students for service as commissioned officers in the Naval Reserve or Marine Corp Reserve. NROTC offers both two- and four-year scholarships. For more information go to <https://www.nrotc.navy.mil>.
  - U.S. Air Force ROTC (AFROTC)—provides college-trained officers for the United States Air Force. This college program is offered at over 1,000 colleges across the country. For more information go to [www.afrotc.com](http://www.afrotc.com).
- Join the Armed Forces before** you go to college and take advantage of tuition assistance and the Montgomery GI Bill, which provides financial support to those who attend school after serving in the military.

*From Military Handbooks—2011 Military Children's Scholarship Handbook*

## LESSON 8.5

# The Real Cost of Attending College

**Objective:** Students know about the various costs of attending college.

**Materials:** Internet access, student handouts 8.5a *The Real Cost of Attending College* and 8.5b *My Cost of Attending College*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to write down the name of one university they are considering attending. Now give them a minute or two to think about the costs of attending that institution and then write down a list of the costs.
  2. Ask students to share from their list with the class while the teacher/counselor writes their answers.
  3. Go over student handout 8.5a *The Real Cost of Attending College*. This can be a teacher-directed lesson, or you may wish to jigsaw the activity by assigning one cost item per student and then have them share out. Students can be placed in small groups of four and be assigned four items to read, discuss, and share out, also.
  4. As students share out, check off any cost item mentioned as part of the introduction.
  5. After all costs have been discussed, ask students if there are other costs not on the list that should be considered, and discuss these costs.
  6. Take students to computer lab and distribute student handout 8.5b *My Cost of Attending College*.
  7. Have students select one college they are interested in attending and research the costs for that particular college. They can use the Internet to explore the cost of each item and write this year's cost in the appropriate column. Under "Source," have them write "College website" and add any other websites they used to locate the information.
  8. Students may write a reflection about what they discovered and their reactions to the real cost of attending college.
  9. Use the financial aid predictors on the ACT and College Board websites. These resources will help students and their families plan for the costs of college.



# The Real Cost of Attending College

## How much does college really cost?

Going to college will be the single largest investment you make in your future both in time and money. This investment in your future is worth it in career opportunities, quality of life, and job satisfaction. Your college degree will open many doors allowing you to choose your path.

The cost of attending college will vary depending on whether the college is in state or out of state, is public or independent, you live at home or in a dorm, etc. Costs vary from state to state. In-state tuition is usually cheaper than out-of-state tuition, but current tuition hikes may have changed that. Independent colleges that offer generous financial aid can be less expensive than in-state tuition. Do your homework and discover the real costs of attending college. Colleges are required to have a net price calculator on their website to help you determine the cost of attendance.

## College Costs

1. **Tuition** is the cost of attending a class. How tuition is determined is specific to each college, so it is important that you research this. Tuition may be calculated “per unit” or “per college credit” or at a flat rate. Some colleges charge the same for 12 credits as for 18 credits.
2. **Fees** are unique to each college. Examples of some fees are *service fees, health fees, curriculum fees, student activity fees, technology fees*, etc. Fees have increased at faster rates than tuition. In some colleges fees can be four times higher than tuition. It is important to know the cost of fees because sometimes financial aid only covers tuition. Many college websites list the cost as *tuition and fees*, and do not separate the two.
3. **Room and Board** includes where you will live and the food you will eat while attending college. Will you be required to live in a dorm? What are the options for student housing and the price for each option? What are the meal plans and how much do they cost? Will you be living at home? Off campus in an apartment? What costs are associated with apartment living besides rent?
4. The cost of **Books** will depend on the courses you take and the number of books required. Another factor that influences the cost is whether a new edition is required or you can buy a used book. Colleges will give you an average cost for books, but students and parents are often shocked at the cost of a single book.



5. A **Computer** may be an additional expense for college. The ability to complete assignments, do research, and communicate with professors and other students are just a few reasons for having a computer. Don't forget to consider the cost of using the Internet.
6. **Supplies** are the tools you need to succeed in college and might include notebooks, paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, etc.
7. **Transportation:** Are you driving, taking the bus, or walking? If you are attending college out of town, what is the cost of coming home? How often do you plan to come home? Factor in the costs to your mode of transportation.
8. Consider **Parking Fees** if you are taking a car to school; there may be a cost for parking your vehicle.
9. **Laundry** is an expense if you live away from home. If you live in student housing or in an apartment, calculate the cost of using coin-operated machines.
10. **Entertainment**, some of which is provided by the college at no cost and some that will cost you depending on what you choose to do.
11. **Clothing:** Will you be attending college in a climate that will require you to purchase new clothes? For example, students living in the south and attending college in the north will need warm coats and sweaters.
12. **Fraternities and Sororities** have a cost for joining.
13. **Health Care** may have to be purchased from the college.

Don't let this long list of costs scare you. There is financial aid available and you may have to make some sacrifices while attending college but it will be worth it in the end.



# My Cost of Attending College

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	This Year's Cost	Source
1. Tuition		
2. Fees		
3. Room & Board		
4. Books		
5. Computer		
6. Internet Fee		
7. Supplies		
8. Transportation		
9. Parking Fees		
10. Laundry		
11. Entertainment		
12. Clothing		
13. Fraternities & Sororities		
14. Health Care		
15. Other		
16. Other		
<b>Total—add items 1–16</b> <b>My total cost</b>		

  
*Section***3****The College Application**  
Senior Year, First Semester**Overview**

The first semester of the senior year is a critical time for the college-bound student, for this is when all the elements of college admission come together and the application is completed and submitted.

**Exploring**

Students should finalize their choice(s) of colleges, and, ideally, visit college campuses. If visiting is not possible, they should plan to meet with college representatives who visit the school or community. This is also the time to review admission requirements for selected colleges, determine the requirements that have been satisfied, and continue to work toward completing any unmet requirements.

**Preparing**

The preferred method for completing and submitting a college application is online, although students may want to prepare for this by using a paper application as a worksheet. Students should also finalize requests for letters of recommendation, finish college admission essays, update résumés, and gather materials needed to complete college applications. All required materials should be taken to the school's computer lab to begin the application. Submission deadlines vary. A good rule of thumb is to submit public or state college and university applications prior to Thanksgiving. Independent college applications are usually due in December or January. Some application fee waivers are automatic; in other cases, fee waivers are available (through College Board and NACAC).

**Testing**

Students will have a final chance in the early fall of their senior year to retake college admission tests (ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject Tests). Test results should then be sent to all schools to which students intend to apply.

**Financing**

This is also the time to make financial aid arrangements, beginning with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form is the foundation to nearly all types of financial assistance and should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1 (the earliest date for submission). In some cases, the CSS PROFILE form will be required as well as institutional financial aid forms. Financial aid application reference materials are available, at no cost on the FAFSA website, to assist teachers, students, and parents with this process.

# Section 3 Calendar

## 1. Exploring

*September–October*

- Complete college research and determine final list.
- Meet with college representatives who visit schools.
- Attend college fairs and information nights.
- Visit colleges of interest.
- Review guidelines for applying to college online.
- Create an application deadline spreadsheet.
- Determine application options (early decision, early action, or regular decision).

## 2. Preparing

*August–September*

- Update résumé.
- Compute final GPA to be submitted with applications.

*October*

- Ask selected teachers/counselors/others to write letters of recommendation, and provide each with a packet of information.
- Revise essays and finalize for submission.

*October–November*

- Submit public college applications online.

*November–December*

- Submit independent college applications online. Utilize the Common Application when possible.
- Schedule interviews.

## 3. Testing

*August–December*

- Register for ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject Tests, as appropriate.
- See testing timeline.
- Send scores to colleges of interest.
- File test results in the testing folder in the student's college crate.

## 4. Financing

*August–January*

- Continue to apply for scholarships.

*October*

- Complete the PROFILE® application, if needed.



### *October–January*

- Research financial aid requirements and deadlines.
- Check college and university graduation rates (<http://collegeresults.org/>).
- Attend financial aid information events.

### *January*

- Complete FAFSA application checklist and worksheet.

## Exploring

## Senior Year, First Semester

Finding the right college, one that is a good “fit” for the student, is extremely important. To help make the best decision, students should visit schools of interest and meet with college representatives who visit the high school campus. Remind students to question representatives carefully for information about the campus and continue to fill out their college comparison worksheets. Attending fall college fairs/on-campus workshops/information sessions is also helpful; most colleges value such activities as part of the *Demonstrated Interest Process*. Students should narrow their college list to the schools to which they will apply. Now that they have a reasonable list of reach and safety schools, students can research requirements for admission to each school. Once the research is complete, students can prepare a deadline spreadsheet. Now is the appropriate time to determine whether to apply early (action or decision) to any schools on the list.

### Calendar

#### *September–October*

- Complete college research and determine final list.
- Meet with college representatives who visit schools.
- Attend college fairs and information nights.
- Visit colleges of interest.
- Review guidelines for applying to college online.
- Create an application deadline spreadsheet.
- Determine application options (early decision, early action, or regular decision).

### Lessons

- 9.1 Ice Breakers and Warm-Ups:** A list of warm-up suggestions that may reduce anxiety about preparing for college and help students focus
- 9.2 College Cube:** Research of a student’s top choice school, displayed as a cube
- 9.3 YOUR Responsibilities:** A one-page chart that will help to encourage student accountability in the college admission process
- 9.4 Panel of AVID Graduates:** Invite recent AVID graduates to speak to AVID seniors and share their college experiences after completing their first term.
- 9.5 Compare Costs of Different Types of Schools:** Students develop a realistic understanding of the costs to attend different types of colleges and universities.

## LESSON 9.1

# Ice Breakers and Warm-Ups

Seniors are fraught with anxiety about college and the unknown. We often assume they will remember what we say the first time—and they don't!

**Objective:** Reducing anxiety and adding a little humor with warm-up activities will help students function better throughout the college selection/admission process.

**Instructions:** Begin college preparation lessons with one of the following activities. By warming up students, you can ensure they will be ready to receive and process information and stay on track.

### 1. College IQ Test

Ask 5–10 multiple-choice questions, ranging from the serious to the silly. This way, students will learn a little about college (e.g., How many colleges are there in the country? How many seniors have perfect SAT®s?) as well as something interesting and fun (Which college offers a bagpipe scholarship?).

### 2. The Worst Thing

Tell students: “Imagine what awful things could happen during your interview.” Act them out.

### 3. Write a Letter Rejecting a College

Tell students: “Write a letter to a college rejecting them! Add hyperbole to make your letter that rejects a college sound worse than one they would ever send.”

### 4. What “Bugs” Me About College?

Tell students: “Do a quickwrite about something that *bugs* you about college and then crumple it up and toss it into the garbage.” Keep score to see who makes the most baskets.

### 5. College Sweatshirt

Tell students: “Draw a sweatshirt on your paper and write the name of your dream college in the middle of the sweatshirt. Under the college name, design a logo that describes what you want out of college. On the left sleeve, write your best academic strengths. On the right sleeve, write your best personal qualities. Above the sweatshirt, write a post-college goal you are striving for. Under the sweatshirt, write something you need to work on to get to your goal.”

### 6. Why Do You Want to Go to College?

Ask three to four questions to help students get started talking about themselves and their feelings about college. An index card will help them organize their ideas. Have them share in small groups and then as a large group.

### 7. Make a College Pennant

Ask students to design a pennant for the college of their choice and hang it on the wall or from the ceiling. Or, decorate the ceiling tiles in the classroom like college pennants.

## 8. Design Your Own Business Card

Have students determine what to put on a business card that they would hand to college admission counselors at a college fair. Then create their business card.

## 9. Mock College Interviews

Invite college admissions counselors (or school personnel) to conduct mock interviews with individual students.

## 10. Musical Chairs

Use this activity when students have created something at their seats you would like others to see (e.g., college sweatshirt, pennant, or business card). Have students stand and ask them to move as the music plays. Like musical chairs, when the music stops everyone finds a seat, sits down, and reviews the targeted item. When you play and stop the music again, students find another seat and repeat.

## 11. Stand Up, Sit Down

Choose the name of a college. As you spell out the word, ask students to stand up when you say a consonant and sit down when you say a vowel. Switch it up by asking males to sit (consonant) and stand (vowel) and females to sit (vowel) and stand (consonant).

## 12. Team Huddle

Instruct students to move around the room when they hear the music playing, and then start the music. When you turn off the music, call out, "Huddle" and a number. For example, if you call out, "Huddle four," then students huddle in groups of four. Any extra players should form their own huddle. Once players are in huddles, call out a question about the college process and ask students to share their answers. Turn the music back on and continue calling out huddle groups of different numbers and giving students different topics about college to share. You may wish to increase the depth and complexity of each topic and allow more time for groups to share.

## 13. Brain Gymnastics

Ask students to take out a piece of scratch paper. Then say, "When I say 'Go!' please write the numbers by one as fast as you can (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Ready? Go!" Give students 3–5 seconds. Then say, "Please pause. Put your pencils down. When I say, 'Go!' please say your numbers by two as fast and as loud as you can (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.). Ready Go!" Give them 3–5 seconds. Next say, "Please pause. Pick up your pencils. When I say, 'Go!' please write your numbers by one as fast as you can while, at the same time, reciting your numbers by two out loud as fast as you can. Ready? Go!" Give them about 5 seconds. Then ask, "How many could do this? Great! How many found yourselves writing what you were saying? Very natural!" This exercise is called "brain gym" because it forces students to use both sides of the brain simultaneously.

## 14. Colleges and States

Ask students to stand up. Call on students in random order and have them give the name of a college or university and the state where it resides. Students must listen carefully because if they repeat a state, then they will have to sit down, and they are out of the game. If a student lists a college incorrectly or cannot think of one, that student must sit down. Go around until there are only a few students left standing (you decide how many), and these are your winners!



## LESSON 9.2

# College Cube

**Objective:** Students research their top-choice school, represent it in a 3-dimensional cube, and share this information with the class. This gives students an opportunity to do more research on their #1 school prior to applying to the school. Other students in the class have the opportunity to learn more about another college.

**Materials:** Student handout 9.2 *College Cube*, Internet and/or viewbook of top-choice school, cube or box, scissors, and adhesive. Students find or make a box about the size of a tissue box or larger.

**Instructions:** Tell students, “You will research your top-choice college or university, create a cube that contains information about the school, and present your college cube to your classmates. You will decorate your cube as well as put the information you find on the sides.” Pass out student handout 9.2 *College Cube*.



## College Cube

Research your top college or university. Create a cube that contains the following information about the school, and present your college cube to your classmates. Decorate your cube!

Side 1: Picture of the university

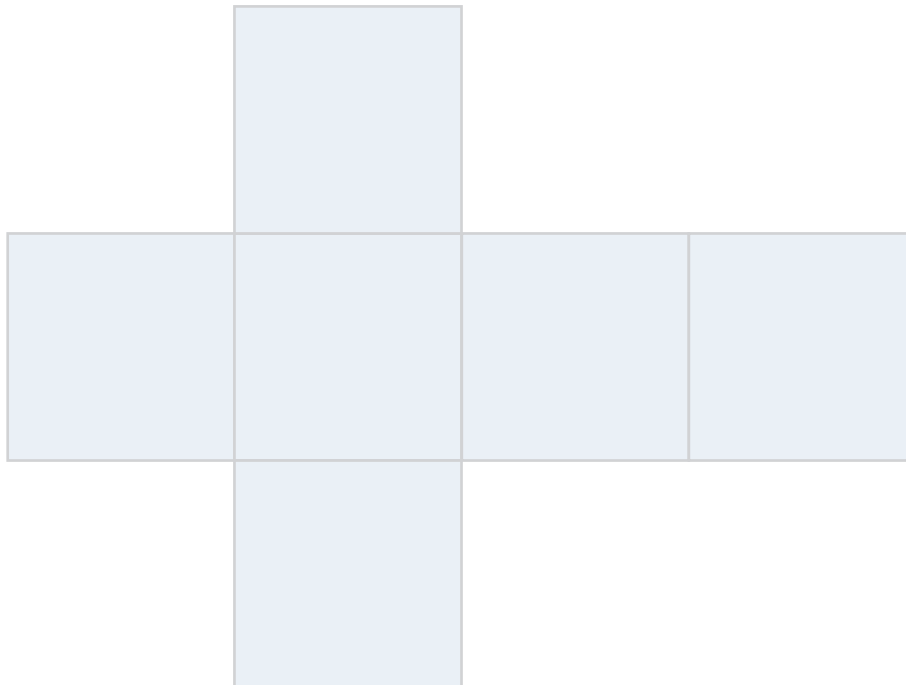
Side 2: Admission requirements

Side 3: Cost of attendance. Make this a detailed list that includes tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, and transportation.

Side 4: Enrollment and demographic information

Side 5: Pros and cons of going to this school FOR YOU

Side 6: Student life (clubs, athletics, fraternities/sororities, etc.)



*College Cube lesson from AVID Elective teachers Andrea Arrieta, Santana High School, Santee, CA, and Debbie Burton and Angela Scott, Granite Hills High School, El Cajon, CA.*



## LESSON 9.3

# YOUR Responsibilities

**Objective:** Students will create a chart to keep track of the college application process. It is titled “*YOUR Responsibilities*” because it is important that each student accepts this important task.

**Materials:** Student Handout 9.2 College Student handout 9.3 *YOUR Responsibilities*

**Instructions:** Provide the student handout 9.3 *YOUR Responsibilities* to students, and help them complete the chart as needed. The chart includes spaces to record important information, such as application and financial aid deadlines and scheduled visits/interviews. This chart will help to remind students about the many responsibilities they have in the college admission process.

Students can keep this chart in the front of their college crate and update it often. Or, they may prefer to keep this chart electronically.



## YOUR Responsibilities

College Information	College A	College B	College C	College D
Name of College				
Website Address				
Phone Number				
Name of College Representative				
Date of Visit				
Time of Information Session				
<b>Deadlines</b>				
Application				
Transcript				
Recommendations				
Test Scores Due				
Financial Aid—Federal				
Financial Aid—College				
<b>Interview</b>				
Required?				
Date of Interview				
Location of Interview				
<b>Application</b>				
Essay Completed				
Date Application Submitted				
Date Test Scores Sent				
Date Financial Aid Submitted				
Date School Report Submitted				
<b>Teacher Recommendations</b>				
#1 Given to				
Date Submitted				
#2 Given to				
Date Submitted				
#3 Given to				
Date Submitted				

## LESSON 9.4

# Panel of AVID Graduates

**Objective:** Arrange for a group of AVID graduates who have just completed a first term of college to speak to AVID seniors and share their initial impressions of college.

**Materials:** Obtain contact information of recent AVID graduates in order to invite them to participate in a panel. Utilize a list of questions that introduces the panel. Also, have additional questions in case your AVID seniors don't ask questions.

- Instructions:**
1. At the end of the first term, invite AVID graduates to participate in the *Panel of AVID Graduates* prior to winter break, when many college students are home for the holidays. Put together a list of students who are articulate and represent a variety of universities.
  2. Choose a date and time for the AVID Graduates Panel. The day prior to winter break is a good one. Invite AVID graduates to be a part of the panel. You will find that they are eager to return and share their experiences.
  3. Plan for 45–60 minutes for this activity, and publicize it with your AVID seniors. Have the AVID graduates seated at the front of the room, and facilitate the panel.
  4. Opening introduction: “Welcome to our AVID Graduate Student Panel. Would each student introduce him or herself? Tell us your name, your college, your major, your classes, and one specific way that AVID helped you be successful in college.”
  5. After introductions, the AVID seniors can ask their questions. Not only do the AVID seniors learn a great deal about preparation for college and first-year transition to college, but also the AVID teacher learns how to modify and revise future lessons and information about preparing for college.
  6. Some additional questions to ask:
    1. Describe your living conditions and roommate(s).
    2. Where and how long do you study?
    3. Tell us about the food. What’s good and not so good?
    4. Do you get homesick? How do you cope?
    5. What’s the social life like?
    6. What do you like best about your school? The least?
    7. What extracurricular activities have you joined or will join?
    8. What kind of academic and personal support is available?
    9. Describe the students. Friendly? Diverse? Socioeconomic class?



## LESSON 9.5

# Compare Costs of Different Types of Schools

**Objective:** Students develop a realistic understanding of the costs to attend different types of colleges and universities.

**Materials:** The most current information is available online, so access to the Internet will be important. Otherwise, resources such as *College Board Book of Colleges* or *Princeton Review's Top Colleges* will be necessary.

**Instructions:** Students should have a realistic understanding of the costs to attend different types of colleges and universities. Often the institution with the higher “sticker price” turns out to be the better value when financial aid and graduation rate are considered.

1. Have students use their list of colleges to which they plan to apply. Make sure their list contains different types of schools (in-state publics, out-of-state publics, and independents).
2. Ask students to research the cost of attendance for each of the schools on their college list. College websites are required to have a net price calculator to help students understand the cost of attendance (including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation). A list of costs should be available at public schools for both in-state and out-of-state residents. (The cost is the same for in-state and out-of-state residents at independent colleges and universities.)
3. Students can estimate federal student aid available to them from the FAFSA4caster. Ask them to do this now if they did not do this junior year ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) and click on *FAFSA4caster*).
4. Explain the importance of college graduation rates. Students may find that it takes five or six years to graduate, depending on availability of college classes. Graduation rates are available at <http://www.collegeresults.org/>. This site has information about admission, financial aid, college characteristics, and the ability to compare colleges.

# Preparing

## Senior Year, First Semester

Ideally, students applying to the same public university system or using the same common application for an admission application (Texas Common Application or the Common Application for independent schools) will do so as a group in the school's classroom or computer lab. Make sure students pay special attention to the informational pages. Family status, income, and level of parental education may be optional, but they are important elements of the application and should be included.

Students should already have an unofficial copy of their transcript in their college crate. Now that they have completed their junior year, they will be able to compute their GPA using all four semesters of Grades 10–11. Be sure that students continue to monitor their course selections in order to meet college admission requirements.

Students should update their résumés to reflect summer activities and add any new information to their Mentor Web pages (if applicable). Background materials needed for letters of recommendation should be prepared and given to the selected teachers and counselors no later than October 15.

The activities and leadership pages of the application need to state and demonstrate student service, activities, and leadership. Remind students to include their AVID participation under the special programs section of an application.

Rough drafts of essays that were begun last year should be revised and finalized for submission. AVID teachers need to make sure all college application essays have been read by a qualified adult before essays are deemed "ready to submit." Counselors, English teachers, and AVID teachers have experience in reading college application essays and may have helpful suggestions.

The final draft of the admission essay can be attached to the application by copying and pasting it from a computer file. Remind students to mention AVID in their admission essay, if applicable. The deadline for some college and university applications is as early as November 30, so instruct students to submit applications before Thanksgiving break in order to avoid last-minute stress.

If possible, have students complete private college applications before the winter break. Ask them to schedule appointments for interviews and help them practice their interviewing skills. Remind students to send thank-you notes to interviewers and to those who wrote letters of recommendation. They may also want to send thank-you notes to college representatives who visited the AVID classroom.

Undocumented students wishing to apply to public colleges and universities should obtain help from AVID teacher, counselor, and college admission representatives.

## Calendar

*August–September*

- Update educational résumé.
- Compute 6-semester GPA to be submitted with applications.
- Request application and/or financial aid information.

- October*
  - Ask selected teachers/counselors/others to write letters of recommendation, and provide each with a packet of information.
  - Revise essays and finalize for submission.
- October–November*
  - Submit public college applications online.
- November–December*
  - Submit independent college and university applications online. Utilize the Common Application when possible.
  - Schedule interviews.

## Lessons

- 10.1 Create/Update the Educational Résumé:** The educational résumé will be helpful for students as they complete college and scholarship applications.
- 10.2 How to Calculate a College Application GPA (grade point average):** Colleges and universities may recalculate a student’s grade point average, using their own guidelines.
- 10.3 Sample Application/Financial Aid Request Letters:** Provide a template for students to request application or financial aid information.
- 10.4 How to Request Letters of Recommendation:** How students ask for the letter and the timeliness of the request will help ensure quality letters of recommendation.
- 10.5 Teacher Guidelines for Writing Letters of Recommendation:** Provide training for staff members who want to write effective Letters of Recommendation.
- 10.6 How to Refine the College Essay:** How to help the student edit his or her rough draft essay and improve it until it becomes a finished, polished application essay that is ready for submission
- 10.7 What Do Colleges Look for in the Application Essay?:** This information will be especially helpful as students revise/finalize their essays; they can check the list of personal characteristics and descriptions to ensure their essays truly reflect who they are.
- 10.8 Tips for Completing College Applications:** Emphasize the need to devote time and thought to the various parts of the college application.
- 10.9 What Students Will Need When Applying Online:** Time in a computer lab is limited, so ensure students bring the documents they need to complete a college application.
- 10.10 Tips for Completing Online Applications:** Brainstorm ideas to help ensure that students submit an application that is free of errors.
- 10.11 Avoid These Application Mistakes:** Share this list of common application mistakes with your students.



## LESSON 10.1

# Create/Update the Educational Résumé

**Objective:** Create an academic résumé to provide all the information needed to complete the college application and most scholarship applications.

**Materials:** Student handout 10.1a *Improve the Educational Résumé*, academic résumé from junior year; current transcript; updated list of activities, community service, honors and awards, internships, and work experience. Student handout 10.1b *Sample Résumé*.

**Instructions:**

1. Each semester students should update their academic résumé in preparation for college and scholarship applications.
2. Have students update their résumé they created junior year.
3. Suggest students refer to their updated “college admission checklist” that is kept in the college crate.
4. A current transcript will remind students of courses recently completed.
5. Students may want to update college entrance exam scores, honors and awards, internships, and work experience, also. Using the college crate will help them.
6. Provide student handout 10.1b as an example of an educational résumé.



## Improve the Educational Résumé

Remember that this is *not* the résumé you will use to apply for a job. Your academic résumé is an information sheet that you can use when applying to college, writing scholarship essays, and building your work résumé. Keep this in mind when updating your educational résumé: How can information on my résumé help my college application?

**Personal Information:** Make your name stand out. It could be slightly larger than the rest of the text, a different font, or a bold font. Your contact information should be easy to read, and the email address must be professional, usually incorporating part of your name.

**Educational Information** should be as detailed as possible. Include the name, address, and CEEB of all high schools you have attended. Include current GPA and college entrance exams because you will need this information for college and scholarship applications.

**Honors or Awards** should be detailed. What was the award (use the full name of the award, no abbreviations), where did you earn it (school? county? national?), and what did you do to earn it? Applications often ask you to write a sentence or more describing the award. It's much better to do the writing ahead of time.

**Extracurricular Activities and Community Service:** Be sure to include activities both in and out of school. List AVID activities because you want to emphasize your AVID involvement on your application. List the full name for each activity (no abbreviations), and write a sentence or more describing what YOU did. Also, include the number of hours/week and weeks/year. Don't forget to include leadership positions you have held.

**Work Experience:** Explain where you worked and who you worked for. Include dates, responsibilities, titles, employer's name, and employer's contact information. Jobs and internships show that students are capable, experienced, and well-rounded. If you have duties at home that limit your extracurricular activities, community service, and awards, list your responsibilities here and include the hours per week you work at home taking of family responsibilities. This will help to explain your lack of other activities.

**Personal References** are people who you might ask for a letter of recommendation. Include all contact information: name, email address, phone number, your relationship to each other, and the number of years you have been associated with each other.



## Sample Résumé

4000 Federal Lane, Pasco, WA 99301  
(509) 555-5555 • dsuarez@mail.com

### DIANA SUAREZ

#### EDUCATION

- 2012–present      **Grossmont Middle College High School**, El Cajon, CA 92020  
Will graduate June, 2013 with High School Diploma  
Concurrently enrolled in high school and college courses
- 2010–2011      **Valhalla High School**, El Cajon, CA 92020  
Enrolled in AVID and honors courses; 3.22 GPA

#### HONORS AND/OR AWARDS

- Spring 2011      Outstanding AVID Student Award for most improved performance and GPA
- Spring 2011      Alvarado Hospital Service Excellence Award and \$1,500 college scholarship as  
outstanding volunteer
- Fall 2011      Dean's List for 3.5 GPA fall semester
- Spring 2010      Track and Field "Best Newcomer" award for positive attitude and enthusiasm

#### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2012–2013      **Yearbook Editor-in-Chief**, Grossmont Middle College High School: Created yearbook  
design, supervised editors and writers to ensure accuracy and deadlines, reviewed all  
photos and copy.
- 2011–present      **Sunday School Teacher**, Presbyterian Church, Fletcher Hills, CA: Taught Sunday School  
for grades 7–11, taught community service program for children, collected canned food  
for Presbyterian Crisis Center.
- 2010–2013      **Girl Scout Gold Award Winner**, Troop 6733, Fletcher Hills, CA: Gold Award—created a  
video presentation of Holocaust survivors. Silver Award—organized a food-a-thon to  
feed 500 homeless.
- 2012–present      **Team Captain, Varsity Lacrosse**, Grossmont High School: Recognized as most improved  
player in 2012. County Champions in 2013.
- 2010–present      **AVID Student**: Enrolled in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), elective for  
4 years of high school to help prepare for college admission.

#### WORK EXPERIENCE AND INTERNSHIPS

- 2013–present      **Hostess**, Denny's Restaurant, La Mesa, CA: Restaurant maintenance, cleaning, customer  
service.
- 2012–2012      **Front Lobby Receptionist**, Alvarado Hospital, San Diego CA: Greeted guests, answered  
phones, data entry of patient information.

#### REFERENCES

- John Smith**, English Teacher, Grossmont Middle College High School, (619) 555-5555, jsmith@gccd.edu
- Jane Smith**, Presbyterian Church Office Manager, (619) 555-5555, jsmith@mail.com

## LESSON 10.2

# How to Calculate a College Application Grade Point Average (GPA)

Most colleges and universities will provide information regarding expectations for a student's grade point average. Students will want to know whether they meet these expectations, and what chance they have of being accepted. Below is a generalized method for calculating the high school GPA for college admission. However, colleges and universities often recalculate a student's grade point average, using their own guidelines. So, it is most helpful to use the guidelines they use.

**Objective:** Learn to calculate a college application GPA.

**Materials:** Student transcript

**Instructions:** Calculating a college application GPA is often different from the GPA that appears on a student's transcript. Often only core courses are used in the calculation. Colleges usually calculate either a 6-semester GPA (that includes grades 9–11) or a 4-semester GPA (grades 10–11).

Many college websites have a calculator to do the calculations for the students. These are the steps to calculating a student's grade point average.

- Count up the number of A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's earned in core courses (exclude any remediation-type courses and physical education courses) and enter each in the *Counts* column.
- Typically, pluses and minuses do not matter in calculating the GPA for college admission.
- Honors, AP®, IB, or college classes earn an additional point (A=5, B=4, C=3; usually D and F grades do not earn honors points).
- Multiply each letter grade in this manner: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1 (if the university accepts a D grade). Any F's receive no points. Put the totals in the *Points* column for each letter grade.
- Total the number of counts (courses taken) and put on the *Totals* line. Then total the number of points and put in the *Totals* line.
- Divide the *Total Points* by the *Total Counts* (number of classes taken), and this is the student's GPA.

Grade	Count	Points
A		
B		
C		
D		
F		
<b>Totals</b>		
<b>Calculated GPA</b>		



## LESSON 10.3

# Sample Application/ Financial Aid Request Letters

**Objective:** Provide a template for students to request an application or financial aid information.

**Materials:** Student handout 10.3 *Sample Application/Financial Aid Request Letters* and business address or email address of recipient.

**Instructions:** Student interest may be tracked by colleges and universities, and this may include any type of communication with the school. So, it can be of benefit to contact a school requesting information.

1. Ask students, “What types of information might you ask for?” and “Which schools do you want to contact?” and “How would you contact the school?”
2. Students will need a return address or email in order to receive the requested information. This is a good time to reinforce the importance of appropriate email addresses and appropriate voicemail greetings on their phones.





## Sample Application/ Financial Aid Request Letters

October 5, 2012

Admission Office  
Name of University  
Address of University  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Admission Officer,

I am interested in attending your university in the fall of 2013. Please send me the necessary information to apply to your campus: admission application forms, priority or deadline dates, housing forms, tuition information, and any other college program information (e.g., EOP) that will be helpful in the application process.

Thank you for taking the time to answer my requests.

Sincerely,

William A. Jones  
1234 Any Street  
Minneapolis, MN 00000

### Sample financial aid request:

I am interested in attending your university in the fall of 2013 and will need financial assistance. Please send me any information that will be helpful and all the necessary forms regarding scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans. Please include priority or deadline dates required by your institution and your Title IV Code for Financial aid/FAFSA.



## LESSON 10.4

# How to Request Letters of Recommendation

**Objective:** Students will learn how to request letters of recommendation in a timely manner that includes a packet of helpful information to ensure a quality letter of recommendation.

**Materials:** Student handout 10.4 *How to Request Letters of Recommendation*

- Instructions:**
1. Pass out student handout 10.4 *How to Request Letters of Recommendation*.
  2. Go over the required information with AVID seniors to make sure they understand what is required.
  3. Create a sample packet to demonstrate each part of the packet, or ask a student to do this for you ahead of time.
  4. Let students know that how they ask for the letter and the timeliness of the request are important aspects of the application process.
  5. Requesting the letter of recommendation well in advance will provide writers the time to create quality letters of recommendation.
  6. Communication with letter writers during the writing process to remind them of deadlines and after by dropping a thank-you note in a mail box is important.



## How to Request Letters of Recommendation

1. Ask teachers, counselors, and administrators who know you well and who will write you a personalized, glowingly positive letter of recommendation. If this person is a teacher, it is preferable that you are currently in his or her class or were a student of theirs last year.
2. Make your request *at least two weeks* before the letter is due. Explain any extenuating circumstances to the potential letter writer.
3. Provide the recommendation form for the colleges with all the student information completed.  
**Note:** You should waive the right to see the letter if given this option. If there are no recommendation forms, then provide a photocopy of any information you have about the school or organization requesting the recommendation. Be sure to include the exact name of the organization or college and to whom the letter should be addressed.
4. Provide a photocopy of your AVID information sheet and/or educational résumé, and application essay. Keep the original for future requests.
5. Provide an up-to-date copy of your unofficial transcript.
6. Place all of the above in a file folder or 9"x12" envelope. On the front, print your name, the list of colleges to which you are applying, and the due date for each letter. Letter writers usually have the option to submit electronically or return the letter in a sealed envelope to the student to mail.
7. Mark on your calendar the date you need to give a "friendly reminder" to the letter writer. (This should be about four days before the letter is due.)
8. **Important:** After you have received the letter of recommendation, or the letter has been electronically submitted, send the writer a thank-you note. He or she will appreciate it, and chances are you will need to request another letter later in the year.
9. If the letter is given to you directly and you have not waived your right to see it, photocopy the letter before putting it in the mail. Obtain a certificate of mailing from the post office for your records.
10. NEVER hand materials to the writer on the day before you need them!



## LESSON 10.5

# Teacher Guidelines for Writing Letters of Recommendation

**Objective:** Provide training for staff members who want to write effective letters of recommendation.

**Materials:** Teachers handouts 10.5a *Teacher Guidelines for Writing Student Letters of Support* and 10.5b *Words That Win Because They Add Specificity*

**Instructions:**

1. Provide information that will simplify the letter-writing process for teachers, counselors, coaches, and other potential letter writers by reviewing the key points of the teacher handout 10.5a *Teacher Guidelines for Writing Student Letters of Recommendation*.
2. Make sure writers understand that each item in the application packet is an advocacy piece for the student and critically important.
3. Some ways to provide training include:
  - Formal presentation at a staff meeting or department meeting
  - AVID Site Team training, then each Site Team can share this information at department meetings
  - Send this information to the staff in an email



# Teacher Guidelines for Writing Student Letters of Support

The letter of support written by a teacher for the college applicant is an important ingredient of the student's total application package. In fact, this part of the student's application just might be the deciding admission factor.

Colleges say that they are looking for more than a "recommendation." They want a characterization that helps to make the student come alive as a person. Knowing this often causes a feeling of panic as a teacher sits down to tackle those inevitable requests each year. The purpose of these guidelines is to give suggestions that will help to make the recommendation writing process easier and less stressful.

## Before the Request

Get into the habit of being "tuned in" to watching for incidents that might be used later in a letter. Teachers observe these occurrences all the time, but often forget about them during the actual letter-writing process.

Think of this observation as a future "anecdote" in which you will briefly describe an event or happening that will make the student come alive. Be on the lookout for such things as:

1. A kindness to another student
2. A particularly astute comment in class discussions
3. An instance in casual conversation that illustrates a student's sense of humor, fairness, honesty, etc.

The hardest part of this procedure is actually *writing the anecdote* down as soon as it is observed. You may have the time to write up a full description, or you may simply wish to jot down a one-word reminder on a scrap of paper. This reminder can then be stored for later use in whatever filing system you choose. Of course, you may never get a request from that student, but if you do, this will save you time and it will be an excellent starting point for your letter.

## The Request

Writing a college recommendation letter is a *volunteer* duty for the teacher. Because the teacher letter should be a letter of support, if you cannot support the student, it is best not to write the letter. If you feel uncomfortable about writing a supportive letter, it is perfectly permissible to say "no."

### *Keep in Mind That:*

1. Timing is important, and if the request comes too close to a due date or at a busy time for you, it is okay to refuse.
  - a. The student has the responsibility of asking early enough unless there is a very good, specific reason for a late request.
  - b. A two-week notice is not unreasonable to expect. If you receive less than that, you have every right to refuse to write the letter.
2. If you feel you cannot write a complimentary letter, you have two choices:
  - a. Simply tell the student you will be unable to write the letter (no explanation is necessary).
  - b. Tell the applicant honestly how you feel about writing the letter. Share any reservations you may have with him or her.



## The Letter

### *Preparation for Writing*

1. Pull out the recorded “anecdotes,” if any.
2. Ask the student about academic and career goals.
3. Identify the student’s strengths and weaknesses as you see them.
4. Review the student’s transcript.
5. Read the “Student Information Sheet” that the student provided.
6. Ask another teacher for a “quotable” quote about the student. Use this as a backup or to add variety.

### *Content of the Letter*

1. Give background information, which relates to your class or classes.
  - a. Explain briefly what you teach.
  - b. Give the length of time you have known the student.
  - c. Give the classes you have taught the student.
  - d. Relate briefly the type of learning and thinking required in your class.
2. Explain your relationship to the student.
3. Provide comparisons if at all possible. Compare the applicant to previous candidates to the same college or to his or her classmates.
4. Discuss any growth and maturity you have noted in the student. This applies particularly well if you have had him or her for more than one year.
5. Explain what the student is like in class.
  - a. How does the student relate to peers?
  - b. In what ways is the student appealing to teachers?
  - c. Is the student the center point of classroom discussions?
6. Discuss some or all of the following traits that you have observed in this applicant.
  - a. Creative, original thought
  - b. Motivation
  - c. Initiative
  - d. Intellectual ability
  - e. Academic achievement
  - f. Written expression of ideas
  - g. Disciplined work habits
  - h. Potential for growth

## Do

1. Keep your letter concise and easy to read. Brevity is extremely important. One page or less is better than two.
2. Remember the importance of your first sentence. Try to write a first sentence that will grab the attention of the reader.
3. Feel free to provide your telephone number if you have information you would like to convey verbally (in the strictest confidence).
4. Be on time! Deadline dates are *very* important.

## Do Not

1. Rehash the student's extracurricular activities, as this has already been addressed in other parts of the application. The exception would be if the activity could be shown specifically to relate to something in the classroom.
2. Use routine praise such as "good student" or "steady worker."
3. Include GPA, test scores, and other items that are shown clearly on the student's transcript.
4. String together a laundry list of non-specific, affirmative adjectives.
5. Use vague generalizations.
6. Worry about saying something negative. Sometimes this helps to make the student seem more human. (Example: "His interests are still too unfocused, and his roles and responsibilities are too many to excel in all that he would like. When deadlines and demands compete for his time, he has trouble. He will be able to address these problems successfully with time and maturity, however.")

## After the Letter

You only need to write one letter for each student. This same letter can be used each time a new request is made by that student.

1. Save a copy of the letter you write.
2. Add a "P.S." pertaining to the specific university in your own handwriting at the bottom of each new letter if you wish.
3. Write "see attached" and enclose the letter rather than complete the "Teacher Recommendation Forms" that many colleges provide. This is perfectly acceptable unless stated otherwise on the form.
4. Keep a record of when you mailed each letter.

Finally, at times a tough situation might arise about sharing the letter with the student. Remember, the student does not have the right to see the letter. Showing the letter is solely the prerogative of the teacher. But if teachers only write letters for students whom they can support, sharing the letter can be one more positive interaction cementing an already excellent student/teacher relationship.



# Words That Win Because They Add Specificity

## 1. Mental Qualities:

educated	erudite	scholarly	learned	wise
astute	talented	intellectual	precocious	capable
gifted	reasonable	rational	sensible	shrewd
prudent	observant	clever	ingenious	inventive
subtle				

## 2. Moral Qualities:

idealistic	exemplary	temperate	truthful	honorable
decent	trustworthy	straightforward	respectable	

## 3. Social Qualities:

tactful	courteous	polite	cooperative	genial
affable	gracious	amiable	cordial	amicable
sociable	cheerful	sensitive	convivial	ebullient

## 4. General Personal Qualities:

admirable	eminent	distinguished	influential	impressive
imposing	generous	benevolent	charitable	imposing
munificent	humane	gentle	patient	compassionate
sympathetic	tolerant	ambitious	conscientious	persevering
industrious	persistent	efficient	assiduous	courageous
resourceful	scrupulous	droll	punctual	self-reliant
zealous	sober	strong-willed	determined	resolute
confident	earnest	self-starter	pensive	valorous
intrepid	diligent	indomitable	imperturbable	enthusiastic
solemn	serious	sedate	discreet	cautious
garrulous	wary	eloquent	persuasive	reserved
taciturn	laconic	witty	uncompromising	considerate
responsive	natural	candid	unaffected	ingenuous
reticent	humble	self-effacing	modest	unassuming
amenable	serene	nonchalant	indifferent	philosophical





## LESSON 10.6

# How to Refine the College Essay

**Objective:** To help a student be able to edit his or her rough draft essay and improve it until it becomes a finished and polished college essay that is ready for submission

**Materials:** Rough draft essay, student handouts 10.6a *How to Refine the College Essay*, and 10.6b *Tips from College Essay Readers*

- Instructions:**
1. Tell students that they will be revising and refining the college essay they wrote last year.
  2. Ask them to pull out last year's first draft college essay, which should be in their college crate.
  3. Hand out a copy of student handout 10.6a *How to Refine the College Essay*, and go over the information with the class. Give students time in and out of class to revise and refine their essays.
  4. Once students have a final draft essay, hand out student handout 10.6b *Tips from College Essay Readers*, and ask them to make sure their essay follows these tips.
  5. Now it's time to ask others to read the essay and make comments: students, parents, teachers, and counselors.
  6. Then students should complete one more revision, incorporating others' suggestions, if they are valid.
  7. Finally, have the student proofread it and perfect it, and then it's ready to be submitted with the applications!

# How to Refine the College Essay

## 1. What if you think your essay is terrible?

- Expect that any first draft will need to go through many revisions.
- Make sure that what you've written is salvageable and can be made better through editing.
- If you think what you've written is terrible and can't be improved, then start over.
- Make sure that you have a good story to tell and that the story is all about you.

## 2. How do you edit your essay's content?

- Look at the parts you like the least and see if you can add more information to make your point clear.
- Some parts of the essay that you dislike can be improved by writing less and more succinctly or even deleting much of it.
- See if your essay flows well. Is it easy to understand and does it have a rhythm?
- Make sure your essay has a "focus," and that every part, paragraph, and sentence contributes to that focus. Do not wander away from your focus.

## 3. How do you edit for style?

- Look at the details of your essay and make sure every sentence is carefully crafted?
- This does not mean grabbing a thesaurus to add more sophisticated vocabulary. You want to maintain your own voice, and it's easy for a reader to tell when you lose your voice.
- Be sure to eliminate all spelling and grammar mistakes. Improve transitions, vary sentence length, use active voice, and make sure each word is used correctly.

## 4. Have others read your essay.

- Someone new can point out mistakes that you are too close to notice.
- Ask someone who will provide honest, helpful criticism. This may be a teacher or a very smart friend.
- Have this person read your essay, and then ask him or her what the main point of the essay is.
- Ask your reader what parts are best and worst; what's confusing, missing, or doesn't belong; and if there are grammar or spelling errors.
- General comments are not helpful; your reader must be brutally honest to be helpful.

## 5. In the end it's your essay.

- Make only the corrections you believe will improve your essay.



## Tips From College Essay Readers

The college essay is often the most difficult part of a college application. To help you, we've put together the following tips and hints. These are comments from our admission staff that read your essays and evaluate them in the admission process. We can't guarantee results, but this advice might help you refine your essay.

- 1. Be yourself.** If you are funny, write a funny essay; if you are serious, write a serious essay. Make sure you don't reinvent yourself with the essay.
- 2. Make it fun.** If you're recounting an amusing and light-hearted anecdote from your childhood, it doesn't have to read like a Congressional Act—make it fun!
- 3. Tell us something different** from what we will read on your list of extracurricular activities or transcript.
- 4. Take the time to go beyond the obvious.** Think about what most students might write in response to the question and then try something a little different.
- 5. Don't try to take on too much.** Focus on one "most influential person," one event, or one activity. Tackling too much tends to make your essay too watered down or disjointed.
- 6. Concentrate on topics of true significance to you.** Don't be afraid to reveal yourself in your writing. We want to know who you are and how you think.
- 7. Write thoughtfully and from your heart.** It'll be clear who believes in what they are saying versus those who are simply saying what they think we want to hear.
- 8. Essays should have a thesis** that is clear to you and to the reader. Your thesis should indicate where you are going and what you are trying to communicate from the outset.
- 9. Don't write a history report.** Some background knowledge is okay, but nothing too lengthy.
- 10. Proofread, proofread, and proofread again.** Nothing says "last-minute essay" like an "are" instead of "our" or a "their" instead of "there."
- 11. Keep it short** and to the point.
- 12. Limit the number of people** from whom you request feedback on your essay. Too much input creates an essay that sounds as though it has been written by a committee or results in writing that is absent your own voice.
- 13. Appearances count.** Formatting and presentation cannot replace substance, but they can certainly enhance the value of an already well-written essay.

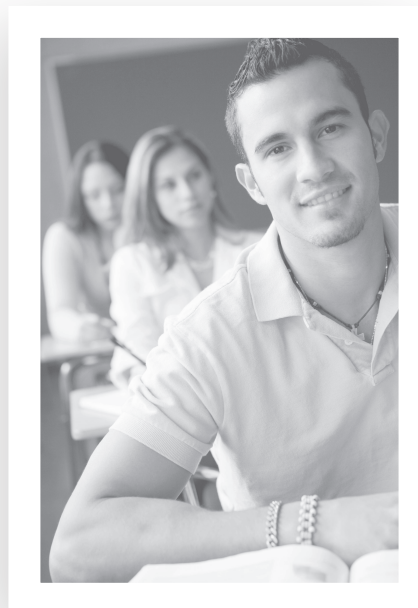
## LESSON 10.7

# What Do Colleges Look for in the Application Essay?

**Objective:** Help students focus on characteristics to highlight in their college essay.

**Materials:** College essay and student handout 10.7 *What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to form small groups (3–4) in order to read each other’s college essays.
  2. Look for examples of characteristics listed in student handout 10.7 *What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?*
  3. Students should highlight and label each characteristic that is found in the essay.
  4. Ensure that each essay is read by at least one person in the group. Ideally, all group members read all essays.



## What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?

Characteristic	Description
<b>Creativity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation, imagination</li> </ul>
<b>Intellectual Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm for learning</li> <li>• Independent pursuit of knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Exceptional Recognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prestigious or unusual honor, award, citation</li> </ul>
<b>Hardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic, educational, physical, familial ability to overcome as well as the degree of hardship</li> </ul>
<b>Initiative/Motivation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Going far beyond normal expectations in academics and/or extracurricular activities</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding, directing, taking responsibility, and following through</li> </ul>
<b>Persistence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resoluteness, tenacity</li> </ul>
<b>Special Spark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraordinary attribute(s) not described elsewhere on this list (could be unusual insight or maturity)</li> </ul>
<b>Substantial Experience With Other Racial/Cultural Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in or with another culture, resulting in distinguishable personal growth or insight</li> <li>• Highly unusual or extraordinary background/experience that adds to awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Rare Talents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncommon ability in the arts, sports, academics</li> </ul>



## LESSON 10.8

# Tips for Completing College Applications

**Objective:** Emphasize the need to devote time and thought to ALL parts of the college application.

**Materials:** Paper copy of a college application (consider using the Common Application or a local college application) and student handout 10.8 *Tips for Completing College Applications*

**Instructions:** In an admission report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Education Council, the following reminder was given to future applicants: "People do not apply to colleges, folders do. The folder and application are a single opportunity to influence the process. Approach each aspect of the application as an opportunity. Devote time and thought to each of the various portions."

1. Go over the student handout 10.8 *Tips for Completing College Applications*, in preparation for completing a college application draft.
2. Hand out the college application draft, and discuss all the parts of the application.
3. Ask students to complete the college application to the best of their ability.
4. Then, ask students to choose a partner and exchange applications.
5. Ask students to use *Tips for Completing College Applications* to evaluate the application and make suggestions for improvement. Make sure they compliment their partners on parts of the application that were well done.
6. Take time to debrief the activity with the class.
7. Have students file the tips and draft application in the college crate.



## Tips for Completing College Applications

As you think about your folder circulating among the admission committee, consider the following:

1. Read *every word* of the directions before you even print your name.
2. Make a copy of the application and use that copy as a work sheet.
3. Demonstrate your *best* work—something of which you can be proud.
4. Essays should be error-free, thoughtful, logical, and organized. Do not overreach. Use comfortable vocabulary. Be yourself. “The essay should say something the rest of the application doesn’t say, or at least should elaborate on something the application barely suggests—a talent, an interest, thoughts on a world or local problem, a personal accomplishment.”
5. Do not write what you think the admission office wants. The committee reading your application wants to know *you*—whatever you think and do. No matter how “ordinary” you may feel, your folder represents a different individual from all others.
6. Use specific examples when describing your interests and achievements. Explain your involvement—why the things you chose to discuss are important to you. It is better to emphasize the degree of involvement in a few activities than a long list of superficial interests.
7. Why are you going to college? To learn? To learn what? Why? A college should be convinced that you truly want an education. *Avoid simplistic answers and reasons.* If you want to be an engineer, for example, cite some experience from your own life that led you to this present choice.
8. If humor is a part of your style, feel free to use it.
9. Proofread. Spelling errors are unacceptable.
10. Proofread again!



## LESSON 10.9

# What Students Will Need When Applying Online

**Objective:** Students begin the process of applying to colleges online.

**Materials:** Student handout 10.9 *What Do I Need When Applying Online?*

- Instructions:**
1. Pass out and review the information in student handout 10.9 *What Do I Need when Applying Online?* several days prior to beginning the online application.
  2. Allow your students time to gather their materials. It is most frustrating not to use time allotted to work on the college application, so make sure students are prepared.
  3. Schedule a trip to the computer lab to work on college applications. Time in a computer lab is limited, so ensure that students bring the documents they need to complete a college application.
  4. Advanced preparation will allow efficient use of the computer lab where students have access to computers AND valuable assistance from other students and the AVID teacher.





# What Do I Need When Applying Online?

## Your college crate OR...

1. Paper college/university application, if available, to use as a draft
2. Current high school transcripts (also college transcripts, if applicable)
3. Educational résumé
4. Social Security card number
5. Payment option
  - a. **Credit or debit card.** You will need the card number, the complete name as it appears on the card, and the expiration date. (Some schools will also ask for a special code number, usually a 3-digit number, on the back of the card.)
  - b. **Fee waiver.** Usually a part of the application process or many schools will accept the College Board, or NACAC fee waiver. See your counselor or AVID teacher if you are eligible.
  - c. **Payment by mail.** Some schools will allow you to send payment by mail using a check or money order.
  - d. **Billing.** Some schools will bill you by mail for the application.
6. All your test scores (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP tests)
7. Use one (appropriate) email address for all your college and financial aid applications, and check it regularly.
8. The websites for the colleges where you are applying
9. For some schools, you will need a copy of your college essay, so you can copy and paste it in the application. (**Note:** Make sure the essay has NO errors and that you have appropriately answered the correct question.)

## LESSON 10.10

# Tips for Completing Online Applications

**Objective:** Ensure that students submit an error-free application.

**Materials:** Pen and paper

**Instructions:** Senior jitters about the college application process often begin in the fall. Open up a discussion by asking seniors about their fears. Don't problem solve, just let students air their concerns. You will hear comments like, "What if I'm not accepted?" or "I don't know where to apply." Or "I can't afford college." Or "I'm afraid I will mess up the application."

The last comment is the one that you want to focus on. Talk about other types of applications that students have completed (job, school, club, AVID). What problems did they encounter, either online or on paper?

Emphasize the importance of carefully reading all the instructions first before beginning the application as a topic to get group discussions started. Then give students 5–10 minutes in groups to brainstorm other tips for completing an online application. Ask each group to share tips and have students write down these tips.

Here are tips that may be added to the list.

1. Thoroughly read all instructions before beginning.
2. Print out a paper copy and use it as a rough draft.
3. Answer questions succinctly and accurately. Try not to repeat information.
4. Utilize your educational résumé to help complete the application.
5. When asked for parents' income, be sure to submit accurate information. The student may qualify for a fee waiver but may not be able to revise the amount.
6. Don't rush through the application. Find a time that is free of interruptions, and take your time.
7. Ask questions of your AVID teacher or counselor, or utilize the application's help information.
8. PROOFREAD! Print out the application and proofread a hard copy to ensure correction of ALL errors.
9. Print out a final copy of the application (for college crate) before hitting the "send" button. The final application may not be available once submitted.

Finally, remind students not to submit ANY application before a teacher or counselor has reviewed it online.

Then schedule appointments with AVID students to check their online applications.

## LESSON 10.11

# Avoid These College Application Mistakes

**Objective:** Review these common college application mistakes, so that AVID students don't make them.

**Materials:** Student handout 10.11 *Avoid These Application Mistakes*

- Instructions:**
1. Tell students, "After years and years of preparation, you don't want to ruin your chances of going to the school of your dreams by making a mistake on your application."
  2. Hand out student handout 10.11 *Avoid These Application Mistakes*. It lists some of the most common mistakes made on college applications.
  3. In groups, have students discuss the mistakes and determine ways to avoid them.





## Avoid These College Application Mistakes

After years and years of preparation, you don't want to ruin your chances at going to the school of your dreams by making a mistake on your application. Below are some of the most common mistakes made on college applications.

- 1. Misspellings and grammatical errors**—this is a big pet peeve of admissions people. Misspellings on something as important as the application show that either you don't care or you aren't good at spelling. Don't just use spell check. Proofread for grammatical errors, too.
- 2. Applying online, but the application isn't actually submitted**—if you apply online, you should receive confirmation that the college or university received it. Confirmation could be an email message, a web page response or a credit card receipt. Follow through and make sure that your application has been received.
- 3. Incomplete application**—make sure you complete all parts of the application. Often students skip a part of the application because they don't understand what's being asked. Check that all spaces are completed.
- 4. Not reading carefully**—for example, if the form asks what County you live in, don't misread it as Country and write United States.
- 5. Listing extracurricular activities that aren't**—those that make the list include sports, the arts, formal organizations, and volunteer work. Make sure your activity information is accurate because colleges may check with your high school.
- 6. Not telling your AVID counselor where you've applied**—let your counselor know which colleges you're applying to, and ask him or her to review your high school transcript before sending it to colleges. Sometimes transcripts have errors.
- 7. Writing illegibly**—first impressions count, so take your time and use your best handwriting. It will make a better impression. This includes your SAT and/or ACT essay. Did you know these essays are available online?
- 8. Using an email address that friends might laugh about, but colleges won't**—select a professional email address. Use an email address with your name for college admissions.
- 9. Not checking your email regularly**—if you've given an email address, the college will use it. You don't want to miss out on anything because you didn't read your email.
- 10. Letting Mom or Dad help you fill out your application**—admissions people know if your parents help. It's fine to get advice, but do the work yourself.

# Testing

## Senior Year, First Semester

Students should retake the college admission test on which they scored **highest** (ACT or SAT). Encourage students to register early for the test at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (SAT) or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) (ACT) so they can take it on the earliest date in the fall and at their first-choice location. This will give students one more opportunity to improve their test score before they submit their college application. Fee waivers are available for AVID students. The regular registration deadline for the October ACT is in August. Some colleges and universities require students to take the ACT/SAT no later than October of their senior year, and many schools ask students to complete testing by December.

Some students may want to retake the SAT Subject Tests in November and December or take additional SAT Subject Tests at this time. Make sure students send their scores to schools of interest.

As students receive test results, they should place them in their college crates and record the scores on “College Tests and Scores” form.

## Calendar

*August–December:*

- Register for ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject Tests, as appropriate.
- Send scores to colleges of interest.
- File test results in the testing folder in student’s “crate.”

## Lessons

- 11.1 Utilize ACT and SAT Results to Determine Which Test:** Help students determine which test they should **retake** in the fall of senior year.
- 11.2 What ACT and SAT Score Reports Mean:** Are confusing at first glance. Help students understand their score reports.
- 11.3 ACT and SAT Fee Waivers:** Ensure that all AVID students receive ACT and SAT fee waivers.
- 11.4 Online Registration for the SAT and ACT:** Ensure that students register to retake the SAT or ACT college admission test as soon as they return to school in the fall.
- 11.5 Strategies for Free Applications:** Students who use test fee waivers also qualify for application fee waivers to participating colleges.



## LESSON 11.1

# Utilize ACT and SAT Results to Determine Which Test

**Objective:** Help students determine which test they should **retake** in the fall of senior year.

**Materials:** ACT and SAT test results from spring of junior year and ACT/SAT Concordance Table (available online at <http://www.act.org/aap/concordance/>)

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students if they are satisfied with their test scores. If they are, tell them “Congratulations!” Then they have more time to focus on SAT Subject Tests, AP exams, and applications.
  2. However, students shouldn’t despair if their score should be higher. Most students take college entrance exams more than once, and some even take them three times! Use the information in the score report to help understand strengths and weaknesses in order to hone preparation for retaking either the SAT or ACT.
  3. Ask students to compare their ACT and SAT test scores to determine which test to retake in order to improve their scores. If the ACT and SAT scores are similar, students can choose to take the one on which they believe they will score the highest. Or they may choose to retake both tests. It’s important to register as soon as possible when students return in the fall.
  4. Remind students that they do NOT need test scores prior to submitting the application.

## LESSON 11.2

# What ACT and SAT Score Reports Mean

**Objective:** To understand ACT and SAT score reports

**Materials:** Score reports from both tests, teacher handout 11.2 *What ACT and SAT Score Reports Mean*

- Instructions:**
1. A report showing test results is mailed home to the student, and a copy is sent to the school. Have students file their test results in the testing folder in their college crate and record their scores on the “College Entrance Exam Comparison.”
  2. Ask students to review their score reports. Have them share what they notice from the score reports and any questions they may have. Detailed score report information is available on the ACT website (<http://www.actstudent.org/scores>) and the College Board website (<http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>), including sample score reports.





## What ACT and SAT Score Reports Mean

**ACT scores** are a measure of educational development in English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing (if the writing test was taken).

1. The number of questions answered correctly is counted. Points are not deducted for incorrect answers.
2. Test scores (English, Math, Reading, and Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). A composite score is the average of the four test scores.
3. The seven sub-scores (usage/mechanics, rhetorical skills, etc.) range from 1 (low) to 18 (high).
4. The Combined English/Writing ranges from 1 (low) to 36 (high) and takes into account both the English test score and the writing sub-score.
5. The essay is scored holistically. Two readers will read and rate the essay, scoring from 1 (low) to 6 (high). The sum of those ratings is the writing sub-score, which can range from 2 to 12.

**SAT scores** tell colleges how a student did compared with other students who took the test. The SAT is a reasoning test that measures a student's ability to solve problems.

1. The number of questions answered correctly is counted. A fraction of a point is deducted for each incorrect answer.
2. Raw scores are converted to a 200–800 scaled score for each section (Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing).
3. The essay is scored holistically, and the sub-score can range from 0 to 12.

### SAT® Writing Section

In 2005, College Board changed the SAT to include a multiple-choice grammar section and a 25-minute essay, which came under criticism initially. However, more schools are using the writing section for either admission decisions or college placement in first-year writing classes. Other schools may look at the writing score but not give it much consideration. Be sure to find out what select schools require (and if and how they will use the writing score).

**Test Optional** schools that do not require college admission tests can be found at [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org), and their number is growing.



## LESSON 11.3

# ACT and SAT Fee Waivers

**Objective:** To ensure that all AVID students receive ACT and SAT fee waivers

**Materials:** SAT and ACT test dates and fee waivers

**Instructions:** Many AVID students qualify for ACT and SAT fee waivers. Senior counselors and/or AVID counselors should have these forms. AVID students can receive two ACT test fee waivers during high school, and up to four SAT test fee waivers (two for the SAT and two for SAT Subject Tests). Students who utilize either ACT or SAT fee waivers are also eligible for a limited number of college admission application fee waivers.

To be eligible for **ACT Fee Waivers**, students must meet specific requirements.

1. Information about eligibility and how to request fee waivers is mailed each fall to every high school, and the AVID counselor should have this information.
2. Students may receive up to two ACT fee waivers; ideally, one is used during junior year and the other during senior year.
3. The fee waiver has been used once a student registers, even if he or she does not test.

Fee waivers cover only the basic registration fee for either the ACT (No Writing) or the ACT Plus Writing, including up to four valid college choices (listed at the time of registration). Waivers do not cover test date changes, test center changes, or any other fees. Students can't request a waiver directly from ACT; they have to do it through their high school guidance office.

The SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service is designed to help students for whom test fees represent obstacles on the road to college.

High school juniors and seniors in the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories who cannot afford to pay the test fees can request fee waivers through their school counselors. The fee waiver covers the basic test fees for SAT or Subject Tests, four additional flexible score reports, as well as either the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or the Student Answer Service (SAS).

Online registration is preferred. A student using a fee waiver will be asked to enter the fee waiver identification number, which is the preprinted numbers on the fee waiver card, and the school's six-digit code. The fee-waiver identification number can only be used once.



## LESSON 11.4

# Online Registration for the SAT and ACT

**Objective:** To ensure that students register to retake the SAT or ACT college entrance exam as soon as they return to school in the fall.

**Materials:** Computer access, fee waiver, student log-in and password for ACT or SAT website

- Instructions:**
1. Explain the importance of the college entrance exam as part of the college application.
  2. Often retaking a test results in a higher score simply because the student is familiar with the test.
  3. Students may register online at *www.act.org* and *www.collegeboard.com* with a fee waiver number.
  4. Test dates and registration deadlines are also listed on the ACT and SAT websites.
  5. It is important to make sure that students register as soon as they return to school because fee waivers will not cover late registration fees, test date or test center changes, or any other services.



## LESSON 11.5

# Strategies for Free Applications

**Objective:** To help AVID students with the application fees, especially students who are applying to several schools. The application fee may range from \$35 to \$60 for each school.

**Materials:** Teacher handout 11.5 *Strategies for Free Applications*, and College Board and NACAC fee waiver forms

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students if they know what it costs to apply to college. Some may be surprised that there is an application fee.
  2. Then let them know that there are several ways to help with the cost of application fees.
  3. Go over teacher handout 11.5 *Strategies for Free Applications*, so students are aware of the opportunities available to them.
  4. Have students take Cornell notes.
  5. Brainstorm additional ideas and add to the list.



## Strategies for Free Applications

### College Board Application Fee Waivers

1. Students who have used SAT or SAT Subject Test fee waivers and plan to enter college in the fall are eligible for **four** *Request for Waiver of College Application Fee* forms.
2. College Board has a directory of colleges who cooperate with the SAT program fee waiver service that can be downloaded on their website. For colleges that participate, complete, sign, and mail the form with your college application. (Your AVID counselor has the forms.)

### The National Association of College Admissions Counselors or NACAC

1. NACAC has application fee waivers for students with limited financial resources.
2. Students are eligible for **four** NACAC fee waivers.
3. The application fee waiver form and information about its use are available at <http://www.nacacnet.org>.

### Other strategies to obtain application fee waivers:

1. The AVID teacher or counselor can sign a statement that says paying an application fee would be a hardship for the family and the student cannot afford to pay the fee.
2. Some colleges include fee waiver forms with their application.
3. When asked for family income, be sure the information is accurate because students may be able to enter it only once.
4. Sometimes schools waive application fees for those who apply online.
5. Schools may give waivers to students who show an interest in the school by requesting information, visiting the school website, or visiting the campus.
6. Don't forget to "ask" for a fee waiver.

**NACAC and College Board limit fee waivers to four per student. Only use these fee waivers when all other strategies have failed to provide a fee waiver.**

Completing the financial aid process is one of the most daunting tasks in the college-application process. *It absolutely requires parent involvement.* The financial aid foundational form is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Almost all sources of financial aid for college, including federal and state grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study, are based on the FAFSA. The FAFSA is available online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) in both English and Spanish.

Although some students may think they do not qualify for need-based financial aid, many colleges use the FAFSA to award their private dollars. Have both students and parents work together to complete the FAFSA application checklist in readiness for the January submission of the FAFSA. The FAFSA cannot be submitted until January 1.

Often independent colleges require additional forms, such as the College Board's CSS/PROFILE® or the college's own supplemental financial aid form(s). Have parents and students complete the PROFILE®, if necessary, and any other required forms. Students should check directly with each college's financial aid office to find out what is required.

Students will also want to compare expenses at different colleges. It's important for them to continue to apply for scholarships, including college-based special scholarships (merit, ethnic, leadership, etc.). ROTC scholarship applications should be completed by October. Encourage students and parents to attend financial aid events offered in the fall in order to learn more about available assistance.

### Calendar

- September–January:* Continue to apply for scholarships.
- September–October:* Complete the PROFILE if required.
- October–January:* Attend financial aid events.
- January:* Complete FAFSA application worksheet.

### Lessons

- 12.1 Senior Year—Important Dates to Remember!**: A list of key dates for financial aid planning during the senior year
- 12.2 Financial Aid Resources for Seniors**: Financial aid resources which are pertinent to seniors in the fall and will help simplify the financial aid process
- 12.3 Federal Student Aid Programs**: A chart that students need to update with current information about federal student aid programs
- 12.4 Questions for Families to Ask Colleges**: Help for families to plan and understand how financial aid works.
- 12.5 Submit CSS Profile and Institutional Financial Aid Forms**: An activity that helps students submit financial aid forms that may be required for a specific college or university
- 12.6 Information Needed to Complete the FAFSA**: A list that will help families gather the documents needed prior to beginning their FAFSA application
- 12.7 How to Organize a Financial Aid Information Program**: Questions and suggestions to consider when planning a financial aid information program
- 12.8 Applying for the FAFSA Pin**: Students will learn about the FAFSA PIN, how it is used, and how to apply.

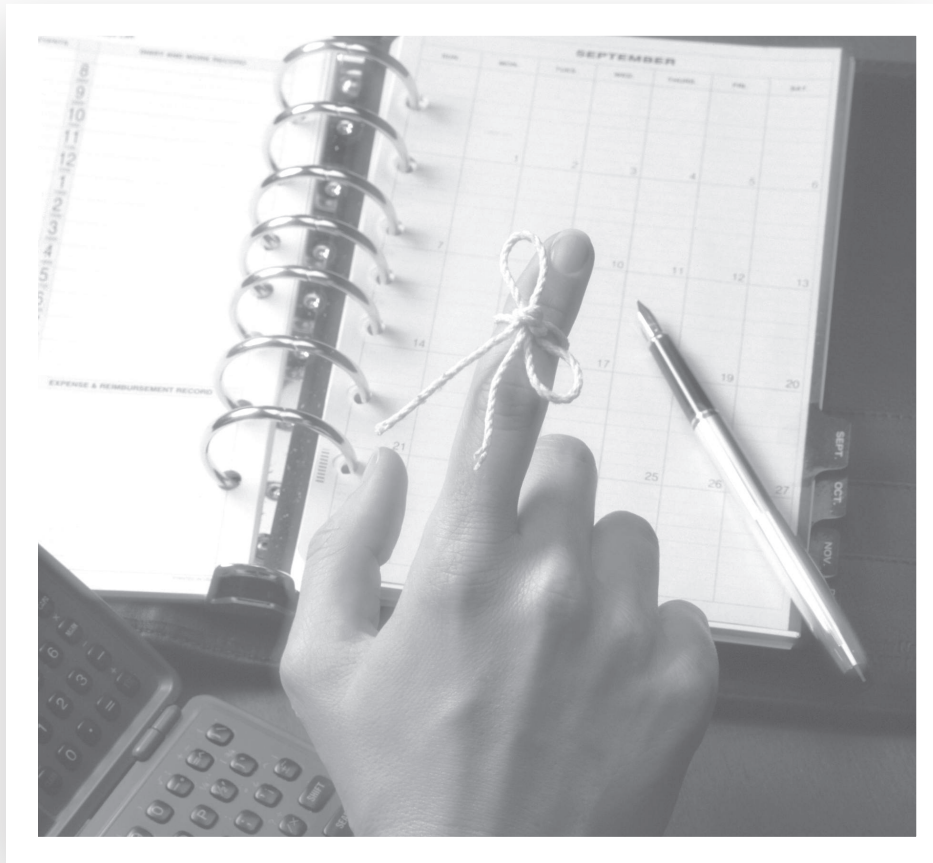
## LESSON 12.1

# Senior Year—Important Dates to Remember!

**Objective:** To make sure that seniors are aware of financial aid deadlines.

**Materials:** Student handout 12.1 *Senior Year—Important Dates to Remember!*

**Instructions:** Remind students well in advance of deadlines, many of which occur during the second semester of the senior year. You may wish to use this list of dates to plan financial aid activities in the classroom.





# Senior Year—Important Dates to Remember!

## October–November

- Attend high school college fairs and financial aid workshops.
- As you complete college admission applications, ask about deadlines for financial aid applications such as the PROFILE.

## December

- Gather information from the FAFSA application checklist.
- Complete the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet in preparation to submit the FAFSA in January.

## January–February

- Complete and submit your college financial aid application (if required) and the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1.
- Keep a photocopy or printout of everything you send.
- Make sure your parents complete their income tax forms as soon as possible in anticipation of the FAFSA and other financial aid forms. If they have not completed their taxes, providing estimated figures is acceptable.
- Review your Student Aid Report, or SAR, which you should receive within days of filing your FAFSA online.
- Respond promptly to any requests for additional information from your college, private scholarship organizations, or your state's higher education agency.

## March–April

- You will probably hear from the colleges whether or not you are accepted by April 15. Compare your acceptance letters, financial aid, and scholarship offers. Consider grants, scholarships, and other aid you don't have to repay before accepting a student loan.
- When you choose a college that has accepted you, you may be required to pay a nonrefundable deposit for freshman tuition. (This should ensure your place in the entering freshman class.)

## May–June

- Decide by May 1 which college you will be attending, and submit your commitment deposit.
- Return your college's financial aid award letter, noting the awards you're accepting and the ones you're declining.
- Contact your college to determine when fees for tuition and room and board are due and how much they will be.



## LESSON 12.2

# Financial Aid Resources for Seniors

**Objective:** To learn about financial aid resources that are pertinent to seniors in the fall

**Materials:** Student handout 12.2 *Financial Aid Resources for Seniors*, Internet access

**Instructions:** The financial aid process can be complex. Knowing what resources are available can help simplify this process. Learning how to obtain a Social Security number, a FAFSA Pin, Pell Grants, and other student aid is beneficial for AVID students.

1. Have students pair up and work together to find information about each of the topics in the student handout 12.2 *Financial Aid Resources for Seniors*.
2. Ask partners to share what they learned about financial aid resources with their classmates.





## Financial Aid Resources for Seniors

1. Go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) in December and complete the **FAFSA on the Web Worksheet** in preparation of submitting the FAFSA.
2. Students (but not parents) need a **Social Security number** to apply for federal student aid. You can apply for a SSN at your local post office or Social Security office. To learn more, go to [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
3. Apply for a **FAFSA PIN** at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) so that you'll be able to electronically sign the online FAFSA in January. Your parents should get a PIN too. (You can print, sign, and mail in the FAFSA signature page or submit the online FAFSA without e-signing it, also. You'll simply receive an incomplete Student Aid Report that must be signed and returned. Just be sure to give yourself enough time.)
4. Browse [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) or call toll-free 800.433.3243 to learn more about **Federal Pell Grants** and other federal student aid.
5. Consider a **federal student loan** if you need to borrow. For details go to [www.edfund.org](http://www.edfund.org) and [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).
6. Check out **scholarships, AmeriCorps, military** and **veterans' benefits**, and other options by visiting  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org)  
[www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)  
[www.hsf.net](http://www.hsf.net)  
[www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org)  
[www.todaysmilitary.com](http://www.todaysmilitary.com)
7. Attend **Goal Sunday**, which provides students and parents with the opportunity to receive free help in completing the FAFSA. Participating states and the District of Columbia host College Goal Sunday during the months of January and February. For dates, times, and locations, visit [www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/](http://www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/).

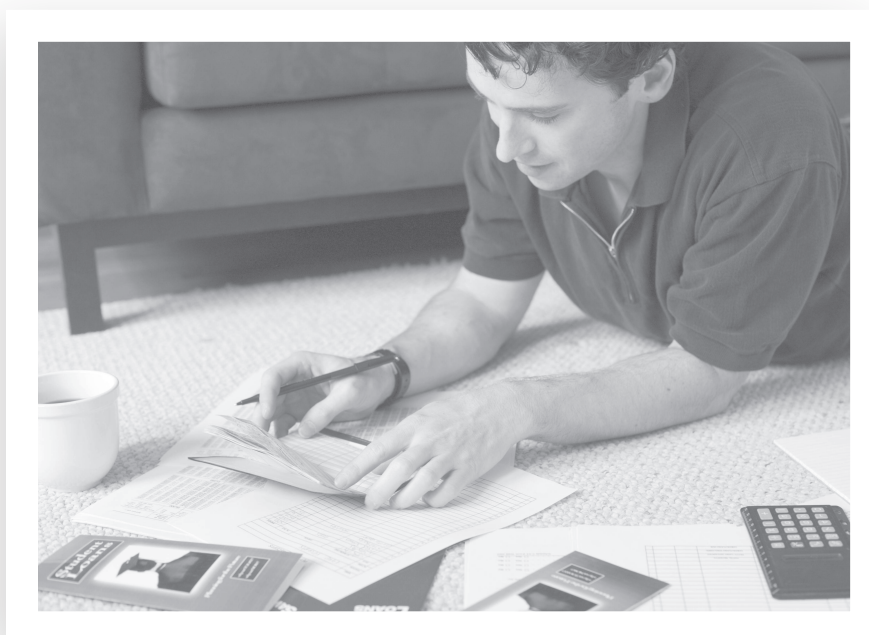
## LESSON 12.3

# Federal Student Aid Programs

**Objective:** To provide updated details and annual amount information about federal student aid programs

**Materials:** Student handout 12.3 *Federal Student Aid Programs* and Internet access

- Instructions:**
1. Federal Student Aid Program amounts and details change annually.
  2. Students will want the most up-to-date information.
  3. Ask students to complete student handout 12.3 *Federal Student Aid Program*. (Program details are incomplete and annual amount is blank.)
  4. This chart can be found in *The Counselors and Mentors Handbook on Federal Student Aid*, and it contains much valuable information. (Download it or order it for free at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/).)





## Federal Student Aid Programs

Program	Type of Aid	Program Details	Annual Amount
<b>Federal Pell Grant</b>	Grant does not have to be repaid.	Available almost exclusively to undergraduates	
<b>Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)</b>	Grant does not have to be repaid.	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need	
<b>Federal Work-Study</b>	Money earned while attending school; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students	
<b>Federal Perkins Loan</b>	Loan must be repaid.	For undergraduate and graduate students	
<b>Direct Subsidized Stafford Loan</b>	Loan must be repaid.	Subsidized: U.S. Department of Education pays interest while borrower is in school.	
<b>Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan</b>	Loan must be repaid.	Unsubsidized: Borrower is responsible for all interest.	
<b>Direct PLUS Loan</b>	Loan must be repaid.	For parents of dependent undergraduate students	



## LESSON 12.4

# Questions for Families to Ask Colleges

**Objective:** To help families plan and understand how financial aid works

**Materials:** Student handout 12.4 *Questions for Families to Ask Colleges*

- Instructions:**
1. You may want to review these questions with your students.
  2. Or you may want to have students work in groups to find the answers to these questions.
  3. Or you may wish to use this list of questions, along with the answers, at a financial aid evening for parents.



## Questions for Families to Ask Colleges

1. What are the average costs for tuition/fees, books/supplies, room/board, transportation, and personal expenses?
2. How does financial need affect admission decisions at a particular institution?
3. What types of financial aid programs does the institution offer?
4. Does the institution offer merit scholarships that do not include consideration of financial need?
5. How and when should students apply for need-based and merit aid?
6. What forms are required to complete the financial aid process, and what is the priority deadline for applying for aid?
7. When will families be notified about the financial aid decisions?
8. How much financial aid will the student receive?
9. Will the student be billed for his or her share of the costs?
10. Are there any other costs the student should anticipate that are not accounted for in the aid offer (e.g., books, transportation, and personal needs)?
11. If parents cannot meet the financial responsibilities from current income or assets, what financing options are available to help pay their share?
12. Will the aid office provide each family with an explanation of the award package and how the expected family contribution is determined?
13. If financial aid is insufficient to make it possible for our child to attend this institution, under what condition, if any, will the aid office reconsider its offer?
14. What terms and conditions of the financial aid program are included in our child's aid package (e.g., treatment of outside scholarships, renewal criteria, etc.)?
15. When can we expect to receive bills from the institution?
16. How many times a year are we billed?
17. Are penalties assessed if the bill is not paid by the deadline?
18. Does the institution accept payment via credit card?



19. Is there an option to pay monthly?
20. Is all financial aid credited to our child's account, or will our child receive checks for some of the financial aid awarded?
21. Can financial aid be used to pay for books and supplies?
22. How much money will our child need during the first week of school for such things as books, parking permit, etc.?
23. Can books and supplies be charged to our child's account?
24. What are the typical out-of-pocket incidental expenses incurred during the year by most students?
25. Are banking services available on or near campus with fee-free ATM and/or check cashing?
26. Does your institution provide information to students regarding budgeting resources, money management, and establishment of good credit?
27. What will happen to the financial aid award if there is a significant change in family financial circumstances or in our child's or a sibling's enrollment status?
28. How are jobs assigned for student employment including federal work-study?
29. How many hours per week will our child be expected/allowed to work?
30. What are the academic requirements for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
31. How often and in what manner will earnings be paid?
32. How will our child's aid package change from year to year?
33. How will cost increases impact the aid package?
34. What amount of student loan indebtedness from student loan programs does the typical student borrower have upon graduation?

Source: College Scholarship Service® (CSS®) Disclosure Work Group



## LESSON 12.5

# Submit CSS Profile and Institutional Financial Aid Forms

**Objective:** To help students submit financial aid forms required by the college or university

**Materials:** Institutional forms and Internet access

- Instructions:**
1. Find an independent college that requires its own financial aid forms. Show students how the required information can be accessed. Then utilizing the colleges on their list, ask students to work in teams and research financial aid requirements and deadlines for financial aid forms. This works especially well when students have independents in common.
  2. You may wish to demonstrate how to complete the CSS Profile to help students complete it or other institutional financial aid forms. The CSS Profile can be accessed at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>.

## LESSON 12.6

# Information Needed to Complete the FAFSA

**Objective:** To help students and parents prepare to complete the FAFSA

**Materials:** Student handout 12.6 *Information Needed to Complete the FAFSA*

- Instructions:**
1. Students and their parents need specific information in order to complete the FAFSA. Distribute student handout 12.6 *Information Needed to Complete the FAFSA* to help families gather the documents needed prior to beginning their FAFSA application.
  2. Discuss items needed and answer questions students may have.







## Information Needed to Complete the FAFSA

You will need records of income earned in the year prior to when you will start school. You will also need records of your parents' income information if you are a dependent student.

For the upcoming college school year you will need financial information from the current year that ends in December. You may need to refer to:

1. Your Social Security card. It is important that you enter your Social Security number correctly!
2. Your driver's license (if any)
3. Your W-2 forms from the previous year and other records of money earned
4. Your (and your spouse's, if you are married) Federal Income Tax Return
  - a. IRS 1040, 1040A, 1040 EZ
  - b. Foreign Tax Return, or
  - c. Tax Return for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, or Palau
5. Your Parents' Federal Income Tax Return (if you are a dependent student)
6. Your untaxed income records
7. Your current bank statements
8. Your current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, and stock, bond, and other investment records
9. Your alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)

To organize your information, print and complete a **FAFSA on the Web Worksheet** before you begin entering your information online.

*FAFSA on the Web* will guide you through the questions that you must answer, and you can save your application and return to it later if you don't have the information you need to answer any of the questions.

Keep these records! You may need them again. Do not mail your records to Federal Student Aid.

*Information from <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/help.htm>*

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## LESSON 12.7

# How to Organize a Financial Aid Information Program

**Objective:** What to consider when planning a financial aid program for AVID families

**Materials:** Teacher handout 12.7 *5 Steps to Organizing a Financial Aid Information Program*

**Instructions:** Use the 5-step teacher handout to help organize a financial aid information program at your school for AVID parents and students.





# 5 Steps to Organizing A Financial Aid Information Program

## 1. Selecting a Location and Facility

Is the facility in a convenient location? (Can families who depend on public transportation attend easily?) Is parking adequate? Is the room large enough to comfortably seat the number of people you expect? Is there enough space for participants to spread out their materials and have room to write? Is the room well lit? Can the room's lighting be adjusted when using audiovisual equipment? Is the facility/room accessible to participants with disabilities? What are your audiovisual needs? (PowerPoint® projector and laptop? Overhead projector? Microphones?) Is the temperature of the room adjustable? Are extra chairs available if there is an overflow crowd? Do you need bilingual materials? What about translators? Is child care available for parents who need it?

## 2. Selecting a Date and Time

You don't want to have the program so early in the fall that the participants forget what they learned before they actually complete the FAFSA, and you don't want to hold the program so late in the winter that many schools' financial aid deadlines have passed. After you narrow down the timeframe, you need to look carefully for potential conflicts that would prevent people from attending. Be sure the date does not conflict with any holidays, religious observances, or planned school closings, that school sporting events or other extracurricular activities do not occur that day, and that there are not any major community-wide events on that date. You should allow time for parents to get home from work and have some dinner before going to the program, and set a time for the program to end as well. (People usually like to know how long they need to stay.) Typically, starting at 7:00 or 7:30 pm works well. Be sure, however, to consider any special patterns and needs in your area. For instance, in some areas, a weekend program or an afternoon program might be more effective than an evening program.

## 3. Selecting a Presenter

You can be the presenter! A PowerPoint presentation provided by the U.S. Department of Education, office of Federal Student Aid at [www.fsa4schools.ed.gov/counselors](http://www.fsa4schools.ed.gov/counselors), together with other materials, will give you the resources you need to conduct a presentation on financial aid for your students. Or, you might consider asking a financial aid administrator from a nearby postsecondary institution. As an alternative approach, you could have two or more speakers take a team-teaching approach, or even use a panel approach, which can provide some variety in financial aid experience. Ask the prospective presenter(s) to give you a copy of his/her presentation before making the final selection of presenters in order to determine whether the materials to be presented are appropriate for your audience.

## 4. Gathering Publications and Handouts

You will want to have information for your students and parents to take home and read later. The Department of Education is a good source for free information. You may want to order some of the free publications available at [www.FSAPubs.org](http://www.FSAPubs.org) or from 1-800-394-7084. Additionally, you might find several of the fact sheets at [www.studentaid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/pubs) useful to your students.

## 5. Announcement and Notification

You can't publicize your financial aid awareness program too much! Get the word out as early as possible and in as many ways as possible. Consider using a direct email or mailing to parents, advertisements and/or articles in local newspaper(s), flyers and/or posters in school, announcements on the school's public address system, advertisements and/or articles in the school newspaper, a notice in the parent/teacher/student association (PTSA) newsletter, and flyers or posters within the community. GOOD LUCK!



## LESSON 12.8

# Applying for the FAFSA PIN

**Objective:** Students will learn about the FAFSA PIN, how it is used, and how to apply.

**Materials:** Internet access and student handout 12.8 *Applying for the FAFSA PIN*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students how many plan to apply for financial aid. If all hands do not go up, remind students that there are many types of financial aid and they should all apply for some form of financial aid.
  2. Tell students they are going to explore FAFSA today and ask if anyone knows what that is. Allow for students to share.
  3. Pass out and review student handout 12.8 *Applying for the FAFSA PIN*.
  4. Give students a day to gather materials.
  5. Take students to a computer lab the following day, or when available, to explore the FAFSA website and apply for a PIN.
  6. Variation: Have students apply for a PIN on their own after participating in this lesson.
  7. Remind students to keep their PIN in their college crate.



# Applying for the FAFSA PIN

## What is a PIN?

A Personal Identification Number (PIN) is a 4-digit number that is used in combination with your social security number, name, and date of birth to identify you as someone who has the right to access your own personal information on federal student aid websites, such as *FAFSA on the Web*.

## Where can I use my PIN?

That depends. When you first apply for your PIN, it is considered to be conditional until your information is verified with the Social Security Administration (SSA). You may sign a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with it, but nothing else. Once verification is completed with the SSA (1–3 days from the date of applying), you will be able to use your PIN to access your personal information on federal student aid websites.

## How do I apply for a PIN?

The PIN application process consists of 3 steps:

### Step 1: Enter Personal Information

- Provide your social security number, name, date of birth, mailing address, and email address.
- (Optional) Choose your own 4-digit PIN so it is easier for you to remember. If you don't choose your own PIN, one will randomly be assigned.
- Select a challenge question and answer, which adds an extra level of security to your PIN.

### Step 2: Submit Your PIN Application

- Choose how you'd like to receive your PIN. (Note: If you selected your own PIN, this option will not display.) You can choose to:
  - instantly view your PIN online
  - receive an email with the PIN immediately, or
  - have your PIN sent by postal mail.

### Step 3: Receive Your PIN

- A confirmation page displays and indicates that your application has been successfully submitted. If you chose to view your PIN online, it will display on this confirmation page.
- If you chose to receive an email, you will receive it immediately.
- If you chose postal mail, you will receive your PIN in the mail within 7–10 days.



# Section 4

## Financing and Deciding Senior Year, Second Semester

### Overview

#### Exploring

Encourage students to visit the schools to which they have been accepted and to attend freshman “Accepted Students” events. Avoid senioritis!

#### Preparing

Celebrate college acceptances by creating a “Hurrah Board” that honors the student and university. Sending thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who have helped with the admission process is highly recommended. Once students have decided where they will attend, they must notify the school and send in any required deposits (usually by May 1). Students should also notify other colleges that have accepted them that they will not be attending there. As graduation nears and students prepare for the transition to college, discuss important topics with the class such as academic, personal, and social success in college.

#### Testing

Depending on which college they are applying to, students may still have time to take college admission tests (ACT or SAT) in January. Once students have been accepted, there may be additional enrollment requirements; some students may be required to show proof of proficiency in writing and math and may have to take placement tests for these subjects. Advanced Placement students will also be taking AP tests in May.

#### Financing

Filing for FAFSA as early as possible (after January 1) is the financial priority for this semester. The process can be complex, but there are many resources to help students and their parents. Comparing financial aid awards is an important part of the college decision process. Scholarship applications are ongoing until the end of the school year.

# Section 4 Calendar

## 1. Exploring

*February–mid-April*

- Visit/revisit campuses where the student has been accepted, if possible.
- Attend “Accepted Students” events.

## 2. Preparing

*February–April*

- Celebrate college acceptances and post on the “Hurrah Board.”
- Submit mid-year transcripts, if requested.

*April–May*

- Begin transition activities (from high school to college).
- MAKE A DECISION; inform the college of choice by May 1, and send deposit. Decline offers of admission from other colleges.
- Write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who helped during the application process.

*June*

- Request that a final transcript be sent to the college of choice.

## 3. Testing

*January–February*

- Make sure all test scores have been submitted to colleges, especially if tests were taken in January for admission to independent or out-of-state colleges.

*February–May*

- Register for and take any required placement tests.
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) tests; be sure to indicate to which college the scores should be sent.

## 4. Financing

*January–February*

- Submit FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible.
- Make sure financial forms for all colleges are submitted.

*January–June*

- Continue to apply for scholarships and pay attention to deadlines.
- MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING.



*February–April*

- Carefully review all financial aid offers, complete financial aid award letter comparisons, and file in student’s college crate
- If necessary, appeal financial aid award of first-choice college. This should be done by the student in writing and submitted with additional relevant information.
- MAKE A DECISION by May 1, and submit all required documents and deposits for college of choice. If required, send in tax forms as soon as prepared.

## Exploring

## Senior Year, Second Semester

Once applications have been submitted, students may experience a “let-down.” Waiting for admission offers can be stressful. Exhausted students may experience symptoms of senioritis, so it’s important that students stay on track and continue rigorous coursework.

As soon as students begin receiving admission offers, the decision-making process begins. Encourage students to visit the colleges to which they have been accepted. Then they can complete college acceptance comparison spreadsheets. Also valuable is attending freshmen “Accepted Student” events.

Another way to assist students in their decision-making process is to connect seniors with AVID graduates who are currently attending the colleges they are considering. You may wish to have AVID graduates visit the classroom and share their college experiences, especially their freshmen year experiences.

### Calendar

*February to May*

- Visit/revisit campuses (where students have been accepted), if needed.
- Attend “Accepted Students” events.

### Lessons

- 13.1 How to Avoid Senioritis:** A crippling disease that strikes high school seniors. Ask students to think of symptoms and remedies for the disease.
- 13.2 Application Anxiety:** An activity that provides stress-relief and support for anxious seniors
- 13.3 Making the Most of Campus Visits:** A list of activities for students when visiting a college campus after being accepted that can help them make a decision
- 13.4 Researching College Majors:** Students individually or in groups research information about requirements for completing a college major.
- 13.5 College vs. High School:** A reading and writing exercise that helps students see differences between college and high school

## LESSON 13.1

# How to Avoid Senioritis

**Objective:** How to recognize and avoid senioritis.

**Materials:** Paper and pen

**Instructions:** According to the Urban Dictionary, “Senioritis is a crippling disease that strikes high school seniors.” Have seniors add to the urban dictionary and, by working together in small groups, come up with symptoms and remedies for senioritis. Students should have fun with this activity, although it is a serious disease.

Remind students that:

- Colleges and universities will rescind offers of admission (remember, these are “conditional offers”) as a result of senioritis. Share with students the most recent numbers of admission offers that were rescinded at a nearby college or university.
- Colleges expect students to continue rigorous classes and complete the courses they enrolled in (and put on their application).
- Colleges expect students to maintain their grade point average during senior year.
- Colleges often ask for mid-year reports, so they can see a student’s first semester grades from senior year before extending an offer of admission.
- Seniors should consider themselves in training for college, and slacking off during senior year will not prepare students for the rigor of college classes.

### Here is an example of symptoms and a possible cure from Urban Dictionary:

“Symptoms include laziness, an over-excessive wearing of track pants, old athletic shirts, sweatpants, athletic shorts, and sweatshirts. Also features a lack of studying, repeated absences, and a generally dismissive attitude. The only known cure is a phenomenon known as graduation.”

## LESSON 13.2

# Application Anxiety

**Objective:** The senior year is fraught with anxiety surrounding the application process. Provide students with ways to lessen their stress.

**Materials:** Paper and pen

**Instructions:** Ask students to do a quickwrite about what worries them in terms of the application process. Then in small groups, have them read and discuss anxieties. Allow time for discussion, problem-solving, advice, and support. When everyone has shared, have students take their quickwrite and tear it into little pieces and/or throw it away, which is symbolic for ridding students of their college application worries.

Students can share the advice or support that was discussed in their groups, such as:

1. There are more than 4,000 colleges and you will get into at least one.
2. If you're freaked out by the SAT, take the ACT or vice-versa.
3. Apply to a college that doesn't require test scores. (Go to [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org).)
4. Look for the college that fits you; don't change and try to fit a college.
5. Take the application process one step at a time.
6. You don't need to know your major; most students change their major at least once.
7. Be open to the unexpected.
8. Trust your instincts.
9. Ask for help from friends, family, teachers, and counselors.
10. Often your most valuable college experiences occur *outside* the classroom.
11. There are no wrong choices because you can always transfer.

## LESSON 13.3

# Making the Most of Campus Visits

**Objective:** To help students decide where to go to college by visiting college campuses where they have been accepted

**Materials:** Student handout 13.3 *Making the Most of Campus Visits*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to think about ways to help them decide where to go to college.
  2. Popcorn ideas. Then ask them what they think is one of the best ways to decide from the list of suggestions.
  3. Remind them that one of the best ways to help decide is to visit the campuses of colleges they are considering, and imagine attending each college for the next four years.
  4. Hand out student handout 13.3 *Making the Most of Campus Visits*, and discuss ways to make this happen.
  5. Help to organize groups of students to visit nearby campuses.
  6. Select a time to do a virtual visit if a physical visit to the campus is not possible.
  7. Connect AVID seniors with former AVID students attending schools of interest.
  8. Brainstorm other ways to learn more about attending college at a campus that is far away and impossible to visit.



## Making the Most of Campus Visits

College acceptances are arriving daily. The challenge is choosing which school to attend. One of the best ways to help decide is to visit the campuses of colleges you are considering, and imagine attending each college for the next four years. Here are some suggestions that may help you decide:

- Schedule an **interview** with an admission officer, and participate in **group discussions** in the admission office.
- Take a **campus tour**. Walking in and out of buildings gives you a sense of the campus facilities.
- **Talk to other students**, and not just the tour guide. Informal talks in the student union or other meeting places can give you a chance to see what students say about the college.
- Ask students what they **like and dislike** most about this college.
- If you are interested in competing on a varsity team, see if you can **talk to a coach** of a sport in which you might be interested.
- **Sit in on a class** in a subject that interests you. Then ask to meet with the professor after class.
- **Wander around the campus**. Stop in at the library and find a book to read. Try to find a quiet place where you could study.
- Find the cafeteria and **have lunch**. Read the student newspaper and other student publications. Check out the bulletin boards to see what student life is like.
- **Browse** at the student bookstore.
- If you are thinking about living on campus, see if you can **spend a night** in a dorm.
- Drive or walk around the **community that surrounds** campus. Listen to the **campus radio** station, or watch a show or two on the **campus TV** station.

## LESSON 13.4

# Researching College Majors

**Objective:** To understand the requirements for earning a college degree

**Materials:** Computer access for the most current college information or (10–15) college catalogs

- Instructions:**
1. Have the class brainstorm a list of 10–15 college majors.
  2. Ask students to self-select a major as individuals, pairs, or small groups.
  3. Provide students with instructions on how to list the prerequisites and requirements for their specific major.
  4. You may wish to have students research the matriculation model for the same major at different types of schools (community college, independent, university, state college, etc.)
  5. Ask students to put together a sample schedule of classes for the first year of college.
  6. When students share their findings with other like schools they may be able to fill in any research gaps.
  7. Ask students to share their findings with the entire class through some sort of visual presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, website, blog, poster, etc.).

*Researching College Majors lesson from Gene Cook, Counselor, Ghidotti Early College High School, Grass Valley, CA*

## LESSON 13.5

# College vs. High School

**Objective:** To discover the academic and cultural differences between high school and college.

**Materials:** Student handout 13.5a *How College is Different From High School*, from *Redefining College Readiness* by David Conley, and student handout 13.5b *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

- Instructions:**
1. Distribute copies of the article *How College is Different From High School*.
  2. Ask students to read and mark the text.
    - a. Number paragraphs.
    - b. Label "H" for descriptions of high school.
    - c. Label "C" for descriptions of college.
    - d. Write questions in the margins.
  3. Make a "T" chart with High School on one side and College on the other.
  4. Fill in the information from the article on each side.
  5. Get with a partner (either assigned or chosen).
  6. Compare and discuss lists.
  7. Hand out *The Road Not Taken* poem and read with a volunteer. Point out the format of the poem.
  8. Assign each partner group to write an imitation of the poem with one "character" being High School and one "character" being College. Minimum of three stanzas (1 stanza = difference + difference + similarity).
  9. Have each group read their poems. Or if time is short, ask for volunteers.
  10. Share questions written on the article and discuss them.
  11. Debrief the activities.

**Time: 1–2 class periods.**

*College vs. High School lesson from Beth Osowski, AVID Elective teacher, Gila Ridge High School, Yuma, AZ*

**ARTICLE:**

## How College is Different From High School

College differs from high school in many obvious—and not so obvious—respects. College is the first setting where we expect young people to function as adults, not large children. Almost all the rules of the game that students have so carefully mastered over the preceding 13 years of schooling are either discarded or modified radically. The student-teacher relationship changes dramatically, as do expectations for engagement, independent work, motivation, and intellectual development. All this occurs while young people are also grappling with significant independence from their families and with the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is not surprising that moving from high school to college is one of the most difficult transitions that many people experience during their entire lives.

Because college is genuinely different from high school, college readiness is fundamentally different than high school competence. Detailed analyses of college courses reveal that although a college course may share the same name as a high school course, college instructors pace their courses more rapidly, emphasize different aspects of material taught, and have very different goals for their courses than do high school instructors (Conley, Aspengren, Stout, & Veach 2006). Students fresh out of high school may assume a college course will be very much like a similarly named high school class they have taken only to find that expectations are fundamentally different. College instructors are more likely to emphasize a series of key thinking skills that students typically do not develop extensively in high school. They expect students to make inferences, interpret results, analyze conflicting explanations of phenomena, support arguments with evidence, solve complex problems that have no obvious

answers, draw conclusions, offer explanations, conduct research, engage in the exchange of ideas, and generally think deeply about what they are being taught (National Research Council, 2002).

Research findings describe college courses that require students to read eight to ten books in the same period that a high school class requires only one or two (Standards for Success, 2003). In these college classes, students are expected to write multiple papers in short periods of time. These papers must be well reasoned, well organized, and documented with evidence from credible sources (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2003, 2004, 2006). By contrast, high school students may write one or two research papers, at the most, during high school, and may take weeks or months to do so. Increasingly, college courses in all subject areas require well-developed writing skills, research capabilities, and what have been commonly identified as critical thinking skills.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2006), a vast majority of first-year college students are actively engaged in small groups and are expected to work on complex problems and projects with others inside and outside of class. They are then expected to make presentations and to explain what they have learned. Freshman students are expected to be independent, self-reliant learners who recognize when they are having problems and know when and how to seek help from professors, peers, or other sources.

At the same time, college faculty consistently report that freshman students need to be spending nearly twice as much time as they actually report to prepare for class (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2006). Students generally do not enter



college with a work ethic that prepares them for instructor expectations or course requirements. The most successful first-year college students are those who come prepared to work at the levels faculty members expect. Those who do not arrive at college fully prepared are significantly less likely to progress beyond entry-level courses, as witnessed by the high failure rates in these courses and the high dropout rate among freshman students.

Finally, the student-teacher relationship is much different in college than in high school. A common example cited by college faculty is the first-term freshman who is failing a course and approaches the professor near the end of the term to request extra credit in order to be able to pass the course. College instructors are often perplexed by such requests, students are equally baffled by the instructor's reaction, since their high school teachers were usually amenable to such an arrangement. In other words, the cultural and social expectations about learning and performance that students encounter tend to vastly differ as well.

In short, the nature of expectations in high school and in college are significantly different. Students must be prepared to draw upon a different array of learning strategies and coping skills to be successful in college than those they developed and honed in high school. Current measures of college readiness do not necessarily do a good job of capturing these multifaceted dimensions of readiness.

Based on this assessment of the nature of college, an important question to ask is: How well do current measures gauge student readiness along these and other related important dimensions necessary for college success? The next section describes current means of determining college readiness and some of

the limitations of those approaches. This is followed by a section that provides a more comprehensive notion of what it means to be college ready and then details each of its dimensions. Next, this paper presents some ways in which these dimensions might be measured and identifies how a more integrated approach to measuring college readiness might benefit students. Finally, this paper considers the changes required of high schools, colleges, and students for this new approach to be put into practice.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to present a full critique of current conceptions and constructions of college readiness, it is worthwhile to consider briefly some of the limitations of current key measures, most notably among them course titles, grade point averages, and tests, as well as a related measure: performance in entry-level general-education courses. This brief overview is presented to accentuate the need for a more robust, comprehensive definition of college readiness, one that leads to new tools, methods, and indices that will help students understand their relative level of preparedness for college and will help high schools make systematic changes to increase the college readiness of students. The major measures and their limitations are discussed in turn.

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## *The Road Not Taken*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood and I –  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

**Robert Frost**

# Preparing

## Senior Year, Second Semester

During spring, students will begin receiving letters from colleges announcing their acceptance or rejection. As students receive acceptance letters, they should update their college comparison spreadsheet and consult with their parents in anticipation of making a decision and choosing a college to attend by May 1.

It is important to celebrate college acceptance letters. One way to do this is to create a “Hurrah Board” that honors each student and the school that has accepted him or her. Cut out stars or some other shape (e.g., school logo or mascot) and then write in each student’s name and the school selected; pin to the “Hurrah Board”—and watch the acceptances of your students multiply!

Remind students to send mid-year transcripts, if requested. Begin discussing with them the transition from high school to college. Finally, if students haven’t already done so, they should write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who have helped them throughout the college admission process.

Finally, it is time for students to **MAKE A DECISION** and inform the college of their acceptance by **MAY 1**. They should send registration and housing deposits by this date, and request that a final transcript is sent to the school.

### Calendar

#### *February–April*

- Complete comparison spreadsheets for colleges from which acceptance letters have been received.
- Post acceptances on the “Hurrah Board.”
- Submit mid-year transcripts, if requested.

#### *May–June*

- Begin transition activities (from high school to college).
- If not already done, write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who helped during the application process.
- **MAKE A DECISION**; inform the college of choice and send deposit. Notify other colleges of decision not to attend.
- Request that final transcript is sent to the college of choice.

*(continued)*

## Lessons

- 14.1 Be Aware of Deadlines:** Once the application is submitted, more deadlines loom. Miss these deadlines and students could miss out on housing, financial aid, or even admissions.
- 14.2 Celebrate Successes:** Ideas about how to celebrate each student's college acceptance
- 14.3 Rejection Letter Activities "I Reject This College!":** Students incorrectly think that a rejection letter is a rejection of them as a person. So, writing a rejection letter to the college or other activities will help put the rejection behind them.
- 14.4 The College Interview:** Tips and a list of questions that may be asked will help students prepare for a college interview.
- 14.5 What to Consider When Choosing a College:** Concise, helpful tips on choosing a college
- 14.6 Senior Form:** This form provides a place for students to list all colleges/universities that have accepted them and to specify the school they will attend.
- 14.7 Sample Letters:** For wait-listed students and how to accept or decline an offer of admission
- 14.8 Mini College Fair:** Senior AVID students will share their knowledge of their chosen school with AVID underclassmen.
- 14.9 Issues Facing College Freshmen:** Topics to consider before heading off to college
- 14.10 Transition from High School to College:** A list of topics to consider about how high school will be different from college
- 14.11 Creating a College Survival Guide:** Topics that will help students navigate the freshman year of college
- 14.12 The 4-Year College Plan:** Research activity to acquaint students with the pathway of courses required to earn a 4-year college degree
- 14.13 Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes...and Passing Them:** Provides information on how to succeed academically in college
- 14.14 What Should I Bring to College?:** An activity to help determine what students need for the first year of college
- 14.15 Roommates: Enuf said!:** Problems that may occur between roommates and what to do

## LESSON 14.1

# Be Aware of Deadlines

**Objective:** Remind students of college admissions deadlines, especially once the application has been submitted.

**Materials:** Students' college calendars

**Instructions:** Add to this list of deadlines; post in the classroom and review each month. Students may wish to create a spreadsheet to track their deadlines AFTER applications have been submitted.

- **January:** Contact colleges to ensure that all application materials have been received, and send ACT/SAT test scores by college deadline.
- **February:** Contact colleges to ensure that all application materials have been received, send ACT/SAT test scores by college deadline, and submit housing deposit.
- **March:** Look for admission decisions and respond promptly to any inquiries, submit housing deposit, and sign up for required placement exams.
- **April:** Look for financial aid award letters and respond promptly to any questions, sign up for required placement exams, and respond to a college of interest if you are wait-listed.
- **May:** Notify all colleges of your admission decision by May 1 and submit required deposit(s), sign up for required placement exams, and send AP scores to your college.
- **June:** Have your counselor submit your final high school (and college, if applicable) transcript to the college, sign up for first-year orientation, and review pre-entrance health requirements (health history, vaccines, etc.).

## LESSON 14.2

# Celebrate Successes

**Objective:** Recognize the hard work that goes into a college application by celebrating every acceptance received by every student.

**Materials:** List of acceptances, bulletin board, colored paper, student photo, college pennant, t-shirt, sticker, cake, cupcakes, cookies, etc.

**Instructions:** Many ways exist to celebrate successes. At the very least, an announcement in class by the AVID teacher: "Drum roll, please... Congratulations to *Name of student* who has been accepted to attend college at *Name of college*."

Brainstorm ideas with your students. Ask them how they would like to celebrate college acceptances.

### Here are some additional ideas:

1. Create a "hurrah" bulletin board and post each college acceptance (student photo + name of college).
2. Post college acceptances on the walls in the classroom. Have each student create his or her own "hurrah" chart. Include the student's name and photo, and list each college acceptance.
3. Congratulate the student by giving him or her something from the school (pennant, T-shirt, calendar, sticker, etc.).
4. Every Friday host a celebration with honorary guests being those who have received acceptances. Be sure to provide "goodies to eat" (a cake, cupcakes, brownies, etc.).
5. Announce college acceptances in the student bulletin, either daily or weekly.
6. Host a college success assembly at the end of the year. Recognize students by listing their college acceptances, along with the school they have chosen. Invite friends and family.

## LESSON 14.3

# Rejection Letter Activities “I Reject This College!”

**Objective:** It hurts to be rejected, especially if it is the student’s first-choice college, but there are ways to ease the pain.

**Materials:** Pen, paper, student handout 14.3 *I Reject this College!*

**Instructions:** Tell students they now have the right to say, “I reject *Name of College!*” Often this simple sentence can help.

Here is a sample rejection letter.

Dear Admissions Committee,

I have applied to many colleges this year, and I have received almost as many rejection letters. However, I must inform you that I am extremely disappointed in the quality of your rejection letter.

There were several ways in which I found your letter lacking the quality that I have come to expect.

The other letters provided a clear and coherent explanation for the rejection. You did not.

The other letters provided me with alternatives to attending the college of my dreams, including remediation, community college, joining the military, or working for my father. You did not.

The other letters featured a kind, sympathetic tone with just a bit of encouragement. Your letter did not.

Therefore, I have no other recourse than to reject your rejection letter, and you can expect to see me in the fall!

On the other hand, I may decide to attend one of the other schools who rejected me in a much better fashion!

Sincerely,

A disgruntled, rejected applicant



## I Reject this College!

Here are some ideas to help you get beyond the rejection. You may wish to add to the list.

- Receiving a rejection letter doesn't make you a bad person. At many schools, a rejection letter means that there simply isn't enough room for all qualified students.
- Some people who were rejected by their first-choice schools include billionaire Warren Buffet, former *Today* host Meredith Vieira, Sun Microsystems co-founder Scott McNealy, entrepreneur Ted Turner, and broadcast journalist Tom Brokaw.
- You have other options because you have applied to a wide range of colleges and this is only a first response.
- You may want to talk with your school counselor. Counselors have been through this before with other students, and they will have suggestions, such as applying to other colleges that are still accepting applications. It's surprising how many schools accept applications throughout spring and even summer.
- You may wish to contact the college admission office to learn why you weren't accepted. Was it the academic record? Test scores? Essay? Extra activities? Also, ask if there is an appeal process if you have new information that may give cause for a second review of the application.
- If there is no other option, you may want to consider transferring to your first-choice college after spending a year at another college. This way, you will have the opportunity to show that you are capable of succeeding at college-level work.

## Senior Mantras

- College admission isn't a judgment on my life.
- College admission isn't a judgment on my parents or my upbringing.
- There will be some sort of rejection in all this.
- Successful college admission is about ending up with a choice... and being happy a year from now.
- I have all the information and guidance that's available; I will take charge, believe in myself, and trust the process.



## LESSON 14.4

# The College Interview

**Objective:** To prepare students for the college interview

**Materials:** Student handout 14.4 *The College Interview*

**Instructions:** Cut up the college interview questions and put them in a hat. Have one student draw a question, and give him or her 15–30 seconds to think about the question and one minute to answer the question. Go on to the next student and follow the same format until all students have had a chance to answer at least one question. It is okay to recycle the questions.





# The College Interview

**What is an interview?** An interview is a conversation with a purpose. Look at the college interview as not only an opportunity to impress your interviewer, but also a chance to get your questions answered by someone who represents a college in which you are interested. The interviews should be informative as well as evaluative. Keep in mind that interviewers interview students because they enjoy meeting young people who are interested in the institutions they represent. The best interviews are those that are comfortable, interesting, and fun!

## 1. Preparing for the Interview

- Wear something neat, clean, and comfortable that does not make you self-conscious. Jeans are, in most cases, too casual.
- Know the location of the interview and how to get there. Lateness shows a lack of regard for the interviewer's time. Call if you are unavoidably delayed. Be prepared to stay to complete the interview.
- Know what you want to get across to your interviewer before you walk in.

## 2. The Interview

- Smile and stand as you meet the interviewer. Give a firm handshake and state your name clearly. Make sure to introduce anyone else who has come to the interview with you, pronouncing their names and offering their relation to you.
- Use the interviewer's name, addressing the person as Mr., Miss, Ms., Dr., etc. Unless invited, do not use the interviewer's first name.
- Keep eye contact while speaking; this is another way of "connecting" with your interviewer.
- Nervousness is understandable. If you become aware that it is showing, don't overreact. Breathe deeply and concentrate on the conversation. Be confident—you know what you are talking about!
- Be truthful, honest, and sincere. Neither exaggerate nor discount your qualifications. Exaggeration is often obvious and reflects poorly on your credibility. Minimizing what you have accomplished may not be seen as humility but rather as a missed opportunity.
- Speak clearly with confidence and enthusiasm. Listen to the interviewer's questions and do not interrupt. Give thoughtful and complete answers.
- Offer more than is asked of you. Interviewers do not know you before you arrive. Questions are used as prompts to allow you to share yourself. Simple yes and no answers or one-line responses make the interview more difficult for the interviewer, hence less enjoyable.
- Have a few questions to ask at the end of the interview. Make sure the answers are not found readily in the college literature, or else it is obvious that you have not done enough research. Take notes if you like.



### 3. After the Interview

- Write some quick notes to yourself about how you thought the interview went and what kind of impression you made with the interviewer. Pay attention to “gut feelings.” Send a thank-you note to the person who conducted your interview.

### 4. Questions to ask yourself to prepare for an interview...

1. How have I liked high school? If I could change one thing, what would it be?
2. What are my academic strengths and interests? Why?
3. What are my personal strengths and interests? Why?
4. How do I spend my free time? In what sorts of activities am I engaged in when I “lose track of time”?
5. What do I like to read? Why?
6. With what kinds of people do I like to spend my time?
7. How do I feel about people who are different from me?
8. How do I feel about competition?
9. What do I expect to get out of college besides a degree?
10. Why do I feel that I am a good fit for this college? Why would they want me?
11. If I could go anywhere or do anything I wanted for a year, what would I do?
12. What would I like others to know about me that isn’t always obvious?

### 5. Questions you may want to ask your interviewer...

You can ask any question that is on your mind, but it is best to ask questions that are not easily answered in a brochure. This is a chance to “read between the lines.” Use this opportunity to ask the interviewer about his or her “sense” of the institution.

#### 1. Academic Standards and Policies

1. What are the strongest programs or majors?
2. What percentage of graduates go directly to graduate school? Professional schools?
3. What percentage of the faculty hold a Ph.D. degree?
4. How large is the library? Does it have open stacks? Any special features?
5. What is the SAT® range of the middle 50% of the applicant pool?
6. Do graduate students teach courses?



7. What are the required freshman courses? Is there a core curriculum?
8. What computer facilities are available? In the library? In the dorms?
9. Ask about transfer and AP® credits if they apply to you.

## 2. Student Body

1. What is the geographical distribution of the student body?
2. How many international students attend the college? Students of color?
3. What is the average size of the freshman class?
4. What percentage return for sophomore year? Why do students leave the college?

## 3. Campus Regulations

1. May freshmen have cars on campus? May upperclassmen have cars on campus?
2. Are parking facilities available?
3. Are there curfews in the dormitories?

## 4. Housing

1. What percentage of students live in the dorms? Is housing guaranteed?
2. What are the dorms like?
3. Is there preferred housing for freshman/upperclassmen? Are the classes mixed in each dorm?
4. Are the dorms co-ed?
5. Are laundry facilities available in the dorms?
6. Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What percentage of students is involved?

## 5. Extracurricular Activities and Social Life

1. What is the form of student government? Is it active?
2. What percentage of students remains on campus during weekends? What do they do?
3. Ask specifically about activities, events, and clubs that interest you.

## 6. Support and Personal Services

1. Are academic advisors assigned to entering freshmen?
2. Is there an orientation program for freshmen?
3. Does the college have 24-hour infirmary/health center service?
4. What is religious life like on campus?
5. Ask specifically about any concerns you may have.

## 7. Financial Aid

1. What percentage of the student body receives grant aid from the college?
2. What percentage works to meet tuition costs?
3. Ask any specific questions that you may have.

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## LESSON 14.5

# What to Consider When Choosing a College

**Objective:** Students and families have much to consider when choosing a college, and costs are a very important option to consider.

**Materials:** "Designing the Perfect College" (page 14) from junior year, student handout 14.5 *What to Consider When Choosing a College*, pen and paper

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to look back at their college list from the junior year activity "Designing the Perfect College" (cost, academics, location, size, athletics, activities, etc.) to help them keep in mind what is most important in choosing a college.
  2. Distribute the student handout 14.5 *What to Consider When Choosing a College*, and review with students.
  3. Ask them to do a quickwrite about each of the colleges using the student activity questions to guide them.

## Extended Activity

Students can go a step further and create a matrix to compare their list of colleges.



## What to Consider When Choosing a College

*What is important in choosing a college? Below are some options to consider:*

1. Look at details of the academic offerings of the institutions you are considering. What is the school's core curriculum?
2. Does the school offer your area of interest and/or major?
3. Take a close look at what the actual costs are going to be and compare prices:
  - a. Tuition and fees
  - b. Room and board
  - c. Basic furnishings (refrigerator, microwave, TV, stereo, etc.)
  - d. Books, lab fees, participation fees, computer, cell phone
  - e. Travel between school and home for holidays, winter and spring breaks
  - f. Money for fun (pizza, movies, and other entertainment)
  - g. Other living expenses (bicycle upkeep, gym fees, groceries)
4. Can you and your parents afford the costs?
5. Will you have to work to attend this school?
6. Do the medical facilities meet your needs?
7. Does the college have the extracurricular activities and events you want?
8. Does this school meet your priorities in terms of proximity to home and family?
9. Are you choosing this school simply because others say that it is "the best," or "the most fun," etc.?
10. Can you tolerate the differences in weather, attitudes, etc.?
11. Remember that a college education, regardless of the school you attend, is a valuable investment in your future.

## LESSON 14.6

# Senior Form

**Objective:** Provide data about your students.

**Materials:** Student handout 14.6 *The Senior Form*

**Instructions:** Ask students to complete the senior form to provide data on AVID graduates. You will want to wait until the end of the school year because this information will be helpful for Senior Awards and graduation ceremonies and programs.





# The Senior Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the information below about college applications:

Colleges Applied to	Colleges Accepted by	College Attending & Major

2. Provide the college and address you will be attending for Fall \_\_\_\_\_ below:

College Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

3. Indicate below any honors or awards you have received for our graduation program:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. List any financial aid that you plan to access for next fall. Include all scholarships and grants that you have received.

Name of Scholarship or Grant	\$\$ Amount

5. Use the back of this form to add additional information.



## LESSON 14.7

# Sample Letters

**Objective:** To help students write a letter to a school that has placed them on a wait list, or write a letter to decline an offer of admission.

**Materials:** Paper and pen, or computer and printer, student handout 14.7 *Sample Letters*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students to complete the senior form to provide data on AVID graduates. You will want to wait until the end of the school year because this information will be helpful for Senior Awards and graduation ceremonies and programs.
  2. Provide sample letters for students as they are applicable. Remind students to respond to all colleges that offer them admission or to be placed on the wait list.



# Sample Letters



Student Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date  
Director of Admission  
College Address

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your letter notifying me that I have been placed on your wait list. I want to assure you that I am very serious about my application to \_\_\_\_\_ and express my hope that I will be able to gain admission for fall.

Let me also assure you that I am maintaining my high academic standards this year and would be more than willing to come for a second interview or send further academic proof of my eagerness to attend \_\_\_\_\_.

Please let me know if there is any way I can convince you of my sincerity.

Sincerely,  
Your Name

## Sample Wait List Request Letter

## Sample Accept Admission Letter

Your Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date  
Director of Admission  
College Address

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you very much for offering me admission at \_\_\_\_\_. I am writing to inform you that I am delighted to accept your offer of admission. Enclosed are all deposits and fees for admission.

Again, thank you for choosing me to attend \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,  
Your Name

## Sample Decline Admission Letter

Thank you for offering me admission to your university. I am writing to inform you that I will not be attending next fall. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

## LESSON 14.8

# Mini College Fair

**Objective:** Seniors will share their knowledge of their select school with AVID underclassmen.

**Materials:** Internet research and poster boards

**Instructions:** Senior AVID students will put on a mini-college fair and showcase the school they have chosen to attend. Seniors will prepare a project board on their select school. Information to include on the project board may include:

- School name, location, size, and setting
- Type of school and student body makeup
- Admission requirements and profile of accepted student
- Retention and graduation rates
- Cost and financial aid available
- Academics and support
- Housing and campus life
- Athletics
- Why student chose this school
- Any additional information, such as photos, videos, application essay, interview, portfolio, audition, communication with the school, financial aid award, scholarships, etc.

*Mini College Fair lesson from Raphael Farkouh, Huy Hoang, Miguel Tejada, Gretchen Sherk, Melissa Schmidt, Hawthorne High School, Lawndale, CA*

## LESSON 14.9

# Issues Facing College Freshmen

**Objective:** Help seniors prepare for the transition to college.

**Materials:** Student handout 14.9 *Issues Facing College Freshmen*

- Instructions:**
1. Ask students what they think will be the most challenging about college. Academics? Living away from home? Money? Making good choices?
  2. Distribute student handout 14.9 *Issues Facing College Freshmen* and give students time to read it.
  3. This handout poses questions about situations that college freshmen will face, including dealing with newfound independence, stress, roommates, homesickness, drinking, and drugs.
  4. Divide students into groups and have each group role play these situations to share with the class.
  5. Students may want to script what occurs; they may wish to make a video or perform a skit for classmates.





## Issues Facing College Freshmen

- 1. Independence.** How will you handle it? Make your own decisions—make your own mistakes. No one to remind you...no one to do it for you...no one to fix it for you...no one to pick up after you...no one to wake you up...no one to make you study.
- 2. Social issues.** Making friends...dating...“How come everyone else is so cool and I feel like such a nerd?”
- 3. Managing time.** 24 whole hours every day—and absolutely no one to tell you where to go, when to go, and what to do. It only seems like no one else ever studies and is always out having more fun than you are.
- 4. Dealing with stress.** What are the “stress busters” for you—running, working out, talking with friends?
- 5. Finances.** Making your monthly allowance last. No more refrigerator to raid—you have to pay for every Twinkie and Diet Coke. Do you realize how much it costs to do your laundry?
- 6. Academics.** No one takes attendance—do you have to go to class? There’s no daily homework—the tests are the grade. A whole semester’s grade may depend upon one exam. “Everyone here was the smartest kid in their high school, except me.” Finding a quiet place to study—it probably won’t be your dorm room. Tutors and getting help.
- 7. Living with a roommate.** Liking each other is not as important as being considerate of each other.
- 8. Drinking and drugs.** You had better have your answer ready because the peer pressure can be tremendous.
- 9. Tolerance.** You will meet lots of different types of people, lots of strange ideas, and lots of controversial subjects.
- 10. Campus activities.** How will you get involved, what activities will you pursue, how many activities can you realistically handle?
- 11. The home ties.** What and how often will you call home? Or email? Should you make an “official break” with the high school sweetheart?
- 12. Your values system.** It will be challenged.
- 13. Will you be getting a campus job?** How much time will you have to work? How much money do you need to earn?
- 14. Athletics.** Are you planning to go out for a team your freshman year? Do you have a scholarship that requires you to play? How much practice and play time will be required?
- 15. Homesickness.** Like the tides, it comes and goes.
- 16. Keeping in touch.** Collect names and phone numbers of your friends so you can keep in touch and share freshman experiences. Caution!! Everyone else’s college experiences will sound better than yours. Take them with a grain of salt.

## LESSON 14.10

# Transition from High School to College

**Objective:** To help seniors prepare for the transition to college

**Materials:** Student handout 14.10 *Transition to College*, pen and paper

- Instructions**
1. This is a Think-Pair-Share activity.
  2. Provide student handout 14.10 *Transition to College* and ask students to think about the differences between high school and college.
  3. Have students write down their thoughts about each topic and share with a partner.
  4. When pair-discussion wanes, ask students to discuss in a group and create a chart or a spreadsheet to post in the classroom.
  5. You may wish to add to the list of topics.





# Transition to College

Topic	High School	College
Independence		
Teachers		
Resources/Help		
Schedule		
Activities		
Class Attendance		
Class Size		
Textbooks		
Homework/Studying		
Reading & Writing		
Tests		
Grades		
Extra Credit		
Friends		
Parties		
Parents		
Alcohol		
Money & Bills		
Housing		
Food		
Laundry		
Clubs		
Athletics		

## LESSON 14.11

# Creating a College Survival Guide

**Objective:** Help students successfully transition from high school to college.

**Materials:** College and Internet resources

**Instructions:** Students need to learn how to survive college. Below are some “projects” students can research and share with others. They may wish to research on the Internet or in the many *College Survival* books, or interview college students. You may wish to add to the list of topics.

1. Academic Terminology—make flashcards.
2. Navigating the Campus—create a map of your campus.
3. Money Talks—books, bucks, and banking and personal finance
4. People to Know—R.A., academic advisor, professor
5. After Hours—dorm life, game tickets, intramurals, parties



## LESSON 14.12

# The 4-Year College Plan

**Objective:** Students research general education and major requirements at a 4-year college (or at their chosen college).

**Materials:** College catalog or Internet access, student handout 14.12 *2-Year Sample College Plans* (both lower division and upper division)

- Instructions:**
1. Review with students the requirements to graduate from the college most attended by your students.
  2. Explain the difference between general education courses, preparation for major courses (typically taken the first two years of college as lower division courses), and the requirements to earn an undergraduate degree in a specific major.
  3. Using the major that you have earned is easiest.
  4. This is usually a 2-part assignment because of its complexities.
  5. Ask students to create a 2-year plan that consists of meeting general education requirements and preparation for major courses. This is their ideal education plan the first two years of college. Providing an example is helpful.
  6. The second part of the assignment is for students to choose a major and create a 2-year plan to meet the requirements for the major that they have chosen.
  7. This is their ideal education plan for the last two years of college and will consist of upper division courses.
  8. Providing an example (2-year upper division) is helpful.
  9. Have the students fill in the specific courses, however, because they have the list of courses available to them in the college catalog.
  10. Some colleges provide a “map” that helps students navigate the course requirements for their majors. Your nearby university may provide a map or diagram similar to the sample.



## 2-Year Sample College Plan (Lower Division)

MY COURSES PLAN					
Major name:	PSYCHOLOGY – BA				
Catalog Year:	2011				
Major Code:	00000				
First Year					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
Description	Course	Units	Description	Course	Units
GE Composition		3	GE Intermediate Composition		3
GE Oral Communication		3	GE Math/Major Prep	PSY 260	4
GE Social and Behavioral Science/Major Prep	PSY 101	3	Major Prep	PSY 210	3
GE Social and Behavioral Science		3	Language 2nd Semester		4
GE Humanities/Language 1st Semester		4	Major Prep	PSY 220	3
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>17</b>
<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>33</b>
Second Year					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
Description	Course	Units	Description	Course	Units
Major Prep	PSY 201	1	Take the Writing Placement Assessment		
GE Life Science/Major Prep		3	Exam aka WPA		
GE Lab		1	Major Prep	PSY 240	3
American Institutions		3	GE Physical Science		3
GE Humanities		3	American Institutions		3
Language 3rd Semester		4	GE Humanities		3
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>15</b>	GE Humanities		3
<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>15</b>
			<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>63</b>



## 2-Year Sample College Plan

(Upper Division)

Third Year					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
Description	Course	Units	Description	Course	Units
GE Explorations		3	GE Explorations		3
Major	PSY 201	4	Major Group II		3
or	PSY 301		Major Group III		3
Major Group I		3	Major Elective		3
Major Elective		3	Elective		3
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>94</b>
Fourth Year					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
Description	Course	Units	Description	Course	Units
GE Explorations		3	Major Electives		6
Major Group II or III		3	Elective		3
Major Elective		3	Elective		3
Elective		3	<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>12</b>
Elective		2	<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>120</b>
<b>Total Units:</b>		<b>14</b>			
<b>Cumulative Total:</b>		<b>108</b>			

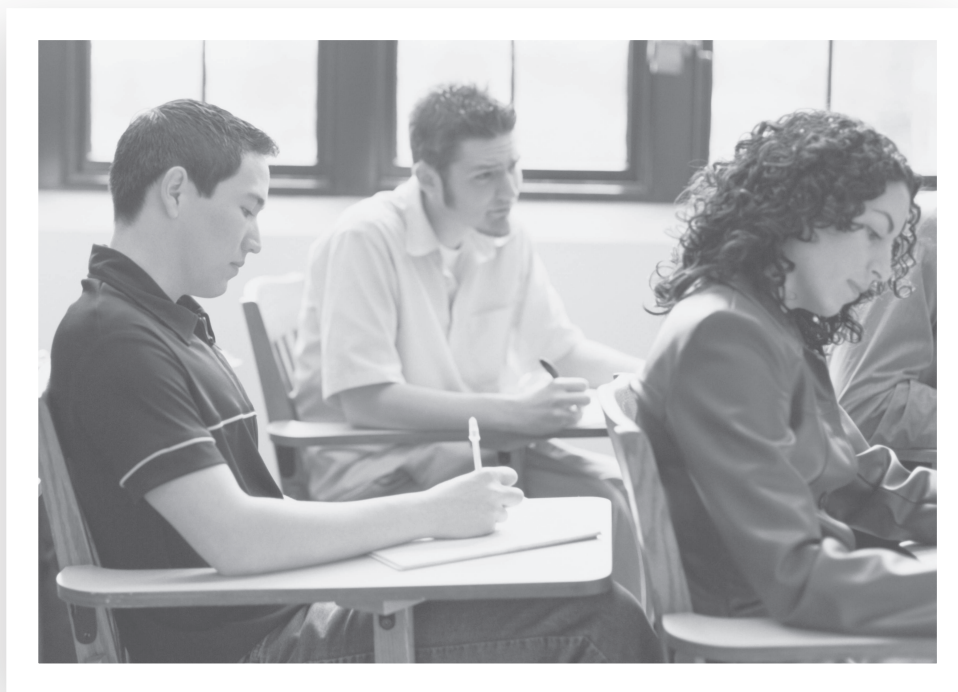
## LESSON 14.13

# Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes... and Passing Them

**Objective:** Help students prepare for the academic rigor of college classes.

**Materials:** Student handout 14.13 *Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes...and Passing Them*

- Instructions:**
1. Review this information with students...and add tips of your own.
  2. Ask students to pair with a partner and take turns explaining why/how each item will add to their success in college.
  3. Have students reflect, then write what they have discovered.





## Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes... and Passing Them

1. Attend freshman orientation.
2. Read and try to understand the college catalog.
3. Meet with an academic advisor when deciding what classes to take.
4. Try to pick classes that meet more than one requirement, but don't take too many classes.
5. Take a wide variety of classes; freshman year is the best time to experiment.
6. Go for the good teachers and the bad times, instead of the good times and...
7. If you are not a morning person, DO NOT schedule early morning classes!
8. If you are a minority student (African-American/Asian/Hispanic/Pacific Islander/Native American), take advantage of classes offered by your school's OMA (Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs) and/or EOPs (Educational Opportunity Programs).
9. Get a map of the school and find where your classes are *before they begin*.

### Once Classes Begin

1. Stay after class and introduce yourself to your professors.
2. Don't skip class! Go to every class and sit in front.
3. Take notes and review them often.
4. If you need a tutor, get one! The longer you wait, the harder it gets.
5. Calendar the dates of all upcoming tests and papers.
6. Keep all of your syllabi handy throughout the term.
7. Set aside a time every day when you study, no matter what.
8. Find one place on campus where you can study without being interrupted.
9. Buckle down early. Work really hard and establish a good foundation.

## LESSON 14.14

# What Should I Bring to College?

**Objective:** Review what students will want to take to college.

**Materials:** Student handout 14.14 *What Should I Bring to College?* and Internet access

- Instructions:**
1. Lots of websites have advice for what to bring to college. Have students review the list on student handout 14.14 *What Should I Bring to College?* for what they currently have and what they would like to have for college.
  2. Students can make a “wish list” for potential graduation gifts and/or research the costs for items on their list.
  3. Finally, ask students to list which items they will need to purchase for college and the costs.





## What Should I Bring to College?

Below is a list of items you may not think of taking to college. Brainstorm additional items and add them to the list below.

1. Flip-flops for the shower and a shower caddy
2. Headphones or earbuds to drown out distractions
3. Tape—to help decorate your walls
4. Garbage bags, cleaning wipes
5. A phone card
6. Lots of money for textbooks (They can cost from \$150 to \$300 per book.)
7. Shelf organizers/closet organizers
8. Hooks for towels, a bathrobe, etc.
9. A tool kit
10. A water purifier (The water is cloudy when it comes out of the faucet and drinking fountain.)
11. Vitamins
12. Other items:

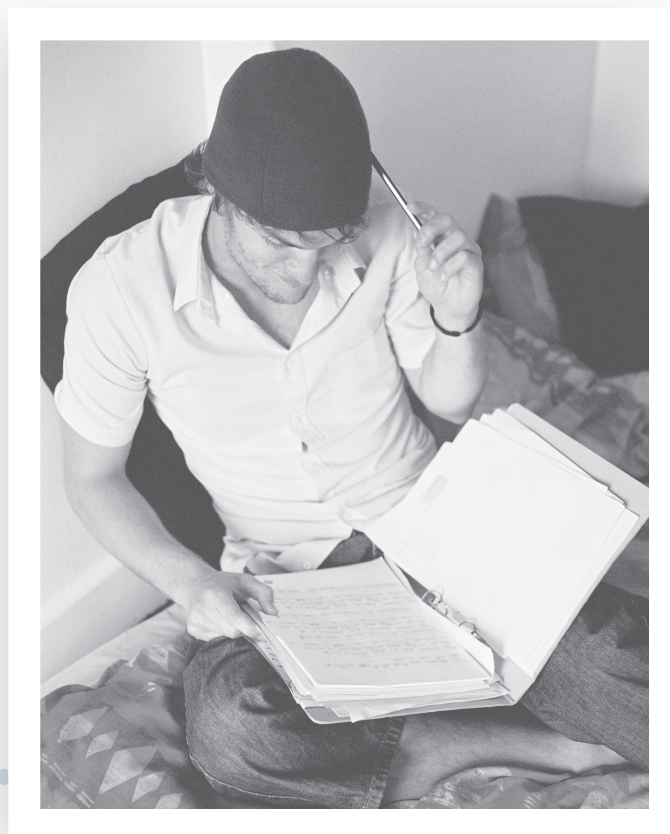
## LESSON 14.15

# Roommates: Enuf said!

**Objective:** How to successfully navigate living with people you've never met before

**Materials:** Student handout 14.15 *Roommates!*

**Instructions:** Dorm life is one of the biggest issues on the minds of many freshmen. Living in the dorms for first-year college students is the number one best way to meet other students. However, dorm-living comes with a whole new set of priorities, freedoms, rules, and regulations. Student handout 14.15 *Roommates!* has commonly-asked-questions about roommates that can be the basis of a quickwrite, followed by small group, then large group sharing.







## Roommates!

### Q: How do I AVOID problems with my roommate?

A: First, before you even move in with your new roommate, make contact and get to know each other before you get to school. Decide who's going to bring what to the dorm (like a refrigerator, computer, television, dishes, microwave, etc.).

### Q: What do I do if I don't get along with my roommate?

A: Two options:

1. Stay out of each other's space, and have respect for the other person.
2. Move out. If there is absolutely no chance that you will get along, move out as soon as possible and definitely after the first term.

### Q: What happens if we have completely different priorities in regards to school and studying?

### Q: How do we discuss his or her snoring, sleep walking, sleep talking, etc.?

### Q: What if you suspect your roommate is stealing your food, wearing your clothes, or smokes?

### Q: What happens if your roommate thinks you are messy and you think she or he is too neat?

### Q: How do you adjust to a roommate who gets up every morning at 5 am to go to basketball practice?

### Q: If you have an unstable roommate, with huge mood swings, what do you do?

### Q: In a triple, two people combine and go off together. What if you are the one left behind?

### Q: What if you and your roommate's music tastes are completely different?

### Q: What happens if you think you will have just one roommate, but you have a permanent visitor: your roommate's boy/girlfriend?

### Q: What if your roommate is conservative, very traditional and you are not?

Make sure that students have submitted all required admission test scores (ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests) to their colleges. Let students know that the application deadline does NOT mean all test scores must be submitted by the same deadline. Colleges create “folders” for each student. Then the college collects information for each student’s folder as the information arrives. It is important for students to meet their application deadline. However, test score reports, recommendations, and transcripts may have different deadlines and arrive at different times, all to be collected in the student’s folder. Be sure that students know the specific deadline for each part of their application.

Students will want to submit their AP test scores, also. Ask students to write the name of the college they plan to attend when they take AP test(s) in May, so their scores can be sent to that college. Otherwise, there is a fee to have this done later. Students should file their completed AP® student booklet in their college crate for future reference.

Students may be required to take placement tests prior to registering for college classes. Most common are mathematics and/or English placement tests. Requirements for placement tests should be on the college website and/or received with acceptance information. Be sure that students research placement test requirements. Colleges may require summer or fall remediation courses if students’ test scores do not meet college standards. Prepare students who need to take these tests by giving them practice tests. Some students may be exempt from these required tests, usually based on a student’s standardized testing scores. Ask the AVID counselor for up-to-date testing information.

## Calendar

### *January–May*

- Make sure all test scores have been submitted to colleges, especially if tests were taken in January for admission to independent or out-of-state colleges.
- Register for and take any required placement tests.

### *May*

- Take Advanced Placement (AP) tests; be sure to indicate to which college the scores should be sent.

## Lessons

**15.1 College Placement Tests:** Provide information about placement tests that may be required, and help students prepare for these tests.

**15.2 Score Reports:** Provide information about what, when, and how to submit score reports for SAT, ACT, and AP tests.

## LESSON 15.1

# College Placement Tests

**Objective:** Provide an explanation of placement tests because these tests may be a condition of enrollment. Help students to check with individual colleges to see whether placement tests are required, and, if so, provide resources to help students prepare for the tests.

**Materials:** Computer access and/or college acceptance information, teacher handout 15.1 *Placement Tests*

- Instructions:**
1. Review information with students about placement tests.
  2. Visit a college website to show students how to access placement test information.
  3. Provide information on how to enroll and prepare (practice) for placement tests.
  4. Incorporate placement test preparation into AVID tutorials.





## Placement Tests

The purpose of college placement tests is to assess skills of entering undergraduate students so that they can be placed in appropriate courses. Students who do not demonstrate college-level skills may be directed to courses or programs designed to help them attain these skills. Placement tests are not a condition for admission, but they may be a condition of enrollment.

Placement tests may be free or at a minimal cost. Contact the test office at the campus where a student will take the tests for information about costs and if fee waivers are available.

Placement test results will determine where students can begin their studies. In some cases, students may be exempted from some or all of the placement tests. SAT and/or ACT minimum test scores may exempt students, as well as scores earned on Advanced Placement® tests. Students may also be exempt if they have completed a college-level course in the area to be assessed and received a satisfactory grade.

Schedule placement tests after college commitment letters are sent. Usually the college will contact the student and provide details on how and when to take these tests. In some cases, students may need to sign up for placements tests prior to May 1.

Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for modified testing.

- The **COMPASS**® computer-adaptive college placement test helps educators evaluate students' skill levels in Reading, Writing Skills, Math, and English as a Second Language. Information is available at <http://www.act.org/compass/>.
- **ACCUPLACER** tests provide information about students' academic skills in math, English, and reading. The results of the assessment, in conjunction with academic background, goals, and interests, are used to determine a student's course selection. For information go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/index.html>.

## LESSON 15.2

# Testing Score Reports

**Objective:** How to provide test score reports to colleges and universities

**Materials:** Computer access, student handout 15.2 *College Entrance Exam Score Reports*

**Instructions:** Most colleges and universities will request *official score reports* at some time during the application process. Student handout 15.2 *College Entrance Exam Score Reports* has information regarding SAT, ACT, and AP score reports. Additional information can be found online at <http://www.collegeboard.com/testing/> or <http://www.act.org/aap/>.

1. Provide student handout 15.2 *College Entrance Exam Score Reports* to students and schedule time in the computer lab.
2. Help students to access their entrance exam score reports, and make sure they know how to send them to the colleges and universities when they are requested.
3. Students can work in pairs and share information.



## College Entrance Exam Score Reports

**SAT Score Reports** You can specify up to four colleges to receive your scores as part of your test registration; or you can send scores to other colleges and scholarship programs by ordering additional score reports online, by mail, or by phone for a fee. If you are fee-waiver eligible, you can order four reports at no cost.

- Scores are delivered approximately five weeks after the request is received.
- Students may select specific test dates through *Score Choice* to be reported. If you do not wish to use *Score Choice*, all scores will be sent automatically.
- SAT® rush reporting is available for an additional fee. Rush scores are sent two business days after a request is received.

**ACT Score Reports** ACT scores can be sent to other colleges in addition to the ones selected during registration. Requests are processed AFTER the test has been scored and results—ACT (No Writing) or ACT Plus Writing—are ready.

- ACT reports ONLY the scores from the test date a student authorizes and not any other test scores.
- A complete report is processed within one week after the request is received. ACT delivers these to colleges and agencies selected, depending on their preferred schedule, at least every two weeks.
- A priority report (available for institutions within the U.S.) is processed within two work days after ACT receives the request and usually delivered three to four business days later.

**AP Score Reports** AP score reports are provided to the college designated on the student's registration answer sheet, to the student, and to the student's secondary school and district. The reports are cumulative and include scores for all the AP Exams a student has ever taken, unless the student has requested that one or more scores be withheld from a college or canceled. Most AP score reports are provided in July.

Ask students to gather documents they need in order to complete the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* in readiness for submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January. The easiest and fastest way to apply for federal and state student aid is to complete a FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Students can apply at any time beginning January 1. The site uses skip logic, so students need to answer only those questions that apply to them; prompts and on-the-spot corrections help eliminate errors. Also, make sure students have registered for the CSS PROFILE® financial aid form, or any other forms required by their selected schools.

Once the FAFSA is submitted, students should receive their student aid report (SAR) within 72 hours via email. The SAR recaps submitted information for correction and computes the expected family contribution (EFC). Have students check their SARs carefully and make corrections promptly, paying special attention to the loan portion of their package to ensure the amount is not excessive.

Remind students that they do not have to accept the entire financial aid package, but rather they can pick and choose (e.g., accept the grant, but reject the loan). If a student receives a financial aid offer from his or her first-choice campus that seems unreasonable, the student can appeal the offer. This appeal must be in writing and needs to include new and *compelling* information.

Students should continue to apply for scholarships; remind them to explore special college-based scholarships (merit, ethnic, leadership, etc.). Encourage students and parents to attend financial aid events offered in the region. As students explore financial aid options, they should keep copies of everything they send and receive so they can compare financial aid awards.

Students must make a decision and send a deposit to the college of their choice by May 1. They should base their decision not only on the financial aid package, but also on how well the college “fits” their needs and wants.

## Calendar

### *January–February*

- Submit FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.
- Complete additional financial forms that may be required by selected colleges.

### *January–June*

- Continue to apply for scholarships.
- MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING.

*(continued)*

### March–April

- Carefully review all financial aid offers, complete financial aid comparison sheets, and file in college crate.
- If necessary, appeal financial aid award of first-choice college. This must be done in writing complete with additional information.
- **MAKE A DECISION;** sign all appropriate documents for college of choice. Send in tax forms as soon as prepared (if required).

## Lessons

- 16.1 Steps for Applying for Financial Aid:** An overview of the steps students should follow to complete the FAFSA and reinforce that applying for grants and scholarships is an ongoing process
- 16.1 Gather These Documents...:** The list of documents needed to be able to complete the FAFSA online
- 16.1 Complete Your FAFSA on the Web Worksheet, Submit Your FAFSA:** A worksheet to prepare students and parents in completing the FAFSA online
- 16.1 Compare Financial Aid Award Letters:** Classroom activity that has students compare financial aid award letters and determine which is best using a comparison worksheet or resources that are available online
- 16.1 Show Me Your Deposits!:** A list, which is a work-in-progress, of deposits and deadlines students need to adhere to after they commit to a college by May 1
- 16.1 Real Life Money Management:** Some ideas on how students can safely manage ATM/bank cards and credit cards



## LESSON 16.1

# Steps for Applying for Financial Aid

**Objective:** To explain the FAFSA process to students

**Materials:** Student handout 16.1 *Steps for Applying for Financial Aid*, computer access

- Instructions:**
1. Review information in student handout 16.1 *Steps for Applying for Financial Aid* with students at the beginning of the semester.
  2. If they haven't already, have students get a FAFSA PIN for themselves and one for their parents (if possible).
  3. Be sure to register at Fastweb for Educators (<http://www.fastweb.com/content/educators>). This website offers excellent, FREE materials. Especially helpful are high school bulletins. The *FAFSA Step-by-Step* student bulletin greatly simplifies the FAFSA process.





# Steps for Applying for Financial Aid

## 1. Submit required financial aid forms.

- a. To prepare to apply for federal student aid, be sure to get a PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) so that you can complete your application and access your information online. One of your parents should get a PIN, also.
- b. Encourage your parent(s) to complete income tax forms early. If your parent(s) has (have) not completed their tax forms, you can provide estimated information on your federal student aid application, but remember to make any necessary changes later.
- c. As soon after Jan. 1 as possible, complete and submit your *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), along with any other financial aid applications your school(s) of choice may require. You can complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) or on paper, but completing the application online is faster and easier.
- d. After you submit the FAFSA, you should receive your *Student Aid Report* (SAR) within three days to three weeks. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.

## 2. Apply for scholarships and grants.

- Everyone wants free money to help them attend college. Many scholarships don't require that you have outstanding grades, and they are provided by many different organizations. Free sources of information include:
  - State government grants and scholarships
  - College websites or financial aid offices have scholarships for students.
  - U.S. Department of Education: [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship)
  - Library reference section
  - Foundations, religious or community organizations, local businesses, or civic groups
  - Organizations (including professional associations) related to your field of interest
  - Ethnicity-based organizations
  - Your employer or your parents' employers

## LESSON 16.2

# Gather These Documents...

**Objective:** Prepare students for FAFSA application by gathering all documents they will need

**Materials:** Student handout 16.2 *Gather These Documents*

- Instructions:**
1. The student handout 16.2 *Gather These Documents* is a list of documents that student will need to complete the FAFSA.
  2. You may wish to hand out this list and review each item with students.

**Note:** To ensure you have the most updated list, click on the federal student aid link (at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)), and search publications.





## Gather These Documents

You should have the following information and documents with you as you fill out the FAFSA:

- Your **Social Security number**
- Your **parents' Social Security numbers**, if you are providing parent information\*
- Your **driver's license number**, if you have one
- Your **Alien Registration Number**, if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Federal tax information or tax returns including IRS W-2 information for you (and your spouse, if you are married) and for your parents, if you are providing parent information
  - If you have not yet filed an income tax return, complete and submit the FAFSA using estimated tax information.
  - Use income records for the year prior to the academic year for which you are applying.
- Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans' non-education benefits for you and for your parents, if you are providing parent information
- Information on cash; savings and checking account balances; investments, including real estate but not including the home in which you live; and business and farm assets for you and for your parents, if you are providing parent information

\*Not sure whether you will need to put your parents' information on the FAFSA? Check out "Am I Dependent or Independent?" at [www.studentaid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/pubs) or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

## LESSON 16.3

# Complete Your FAFSA on the Web Worksheet, Submit Your FAFSA

**Objective:** To gather FAFSA information on a worksheet, so that students can complete the FAFSA online in the computer lab.

**Materials:** Computer access, FAFSA on the Web Worksheet

- Instructions:**
1. To organize FAFSA information, provide copies of the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* (available mid- to late-December at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)).
  2. The worksheet is updated annually, lists the questions in the order they appear online, and is available in English and Spanish.
  3. Ask students to fill in the worksheet with help from their parents.
  4. Schedule time to complete the FAFSA in the computer lab.
  5. You may wish to ask a financial aid advisor from a nearby college to assist and answer any questions students may have regarding FAFSA completion.
  6. The *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* can also be used at a financial aid evening event.



# FAFSA on the Web Worksheet

**SECTION 3 - PARENT INFORMATION**

**Who is considered a parent?** "Parent" refers to a biological or adoptive parent. Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older siblings and uncles or aunts are **not** considered parents on this form unless they have legally adopted you. In case of divorce or separation, give information about the parent you lived with most in the last 12 months. If you did not live with one parent more than the other, give information about the parent who provided you the most financial support during the last 12 months or during the most recent year you received support. If your divorced or widowed parent has remarried, also provide information about your stepparent.

**Providing your father's information? You will need:**  
 Father's/Stepfather's Social Security Number  
 Father's/Stepfather's name  
 Father's/Stepfather's date of birth  
 Check here if your father/stepfather is a dislocated worker

**Providing your mother's information? You will need:**  
 Mother's/Stepmother's Social Security Number  
 Mother's/Stepmother's name  
 Mother's/Stepmother's date of birth  
 Check here if your mother/stepmother is a dislocated worker

**Did you know?**  
 If your parents file a tax return with the IRS, they may be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which is the easiest way to provide accurate tax information. In a few simple steps, they may be able to view their tax return information and transfer it directly into your FAFSA.

**Did your parents file on time?**  
 My parents have filed on time  
 My parents have not filed on time

**What was your parents' adjusted gross income for 2011?**  
 Skip this question if your parents did not file taxes. Adjusted gross income is on line 1040A—line 2; or 1040EZ—line 4.

The following questions ask about earnings (wages, salaries, tips, etc.) in 2011. This information may be used for the FAFSA (Form 1065); 1040A—line 1040A—line 2; or 1040EZ—line 4.

**How much did your father's earnings exceed the 2011 federal poverty level?**  
 Supplemental Security Income  
 Food Stamps  
 Free or Reduced Price Lunch  
 Note: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) name in your parents' state.

**Did your parents have any other income?**  
 Check all that apply.  Yes  No

**Additional Financial Information**  
 American Opportunity, Pell, Learning tax credits  
 Child support paid  
 Taxable earnings from work or fellowships  
 Taxable grant and scholarship from the IRS  
 Combat pay or special pay  
 Cooperative education

**Your parents may be able to sign for you.**  
 Your parents may be able to sign for you.  Yes  No

**NOTES:**  
 WWW.FAFSA.GOV

**SECTION 4 - STUDENT INFORMATION**

**Did you know?**  
 If you file a tax return with the IRS, you may be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which is the easiest way to provide accurate tax information. In a few simple steps, you may be able to view your tax return information and transfer it directly into your FAFSA.

**Did you file or will you file a 2011 income tax return?**  
 I have already completed my tax return  
 I will file, but I have not completed my tax return  
 I'm not going to file an income tax return  
**You will need your tax returns and/or W-2 forms to complete the FAFSA.**

**What was your adjusted gross income for 2011?**  
 Adjusted gross income is on IRS Form 1040—Line 37; or 1040A—line 2; or 1040EZ—line 4.  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**What was your household's adjusted gross income for 2011?**  
 Adjusted gross income is on IRS Form 1040—Line 7 + 12 + 18 + Box 14 (Code A) of IRS Schedule K-1.  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 1 - STUDENT INFORMATION**

After you are online, you can add up to ten colleges on your FAFSA. The colleges will receive the information from your processed FAFSA.

**Student's Last Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **First Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Social Security Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Citizenship Status** (check one of the following)  
 U.S. citizen (U.S. national)  Neither citizen nor eligible noncitizen  
 Eligible noncitizen (Enter your Alien Registration Number in the box to the right.)

**Generally, you are an eligible noncitizen if you are:**  
 • A permanent U.S. resident (with a green card)  
 • A conditional permanent resident (with a two-year green card)  
 • A refugee  
 • An asylee  
 • A Cuban-Haitian Entrant  
 • A victim of human trafficking

**Your Alien Registration Number**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Divorced or widowed

I have never had a drug conviction

College or beyond  
 Other/unknown

College or beyond  
 Other/unknown

I am homeless or I am at risk of being homeless

**STATE AID DEADLINES**

**APPLICATION DEADLINES**  
 Federal Deadline - June 30, 2013  
 State Aid Deadlines - See below.

Check with your financial aid administrator for these states and territories:  
 AL, AS, AZ, CO, EM, GA, GU, HI, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, and WY.\*

**Pay attention to the symbols that may be listed after your state deadline.**

AK AK Education Grant and AK Performance Scholarship - June 30, 2012 (date received)  
 AR Academic Challenge - June 1, 2012 (date received)  
 AR Workforce Grant - Contact the financial aid office.  
 AR Higher Education Opportunity Grant - June 1, 2012 (date received)  
 CA Initial awards - March 2, 2012 + \*  
 CA Additional community college awards - September 2, 2012 (date postmarked) + \*  
 CT February 15, 2012 (date received) # \*  
 DC June 30, 2012 (date received) \* For priority consideration, submit application by May 15, 2012.  
 DE April 15, 2012 (date received)  
 FL May 15, 2012 (date processed)  
 IA July 1, 2012 (date received); earlier priority deadlines may exist for certain programs.  
 ID Opportunity Grant - March 1, 2012 (date received) # \*  
 IL As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted.  
 IN March 10, 2012 (date received)  
 KS April 1, 2012 (date received) # \*  
 KY As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted.  
 LA June 30, 2013 (July 1, 2012 recommended)  
 MA May 1, 2012 (date received)  
 MD March 1, 2012 (date received)  
 ME May 1, 2012 (date received)  
 MI March 1, 2012 (date received)  
 MN 30 days after term starts (date received)  
 MO April 2, 2012 (date received)  
 MS WIRG and MESO Grants - September 15, 2012 (date received)  
 MT HELP Scholarship - March 31, 2012 (date received)  
 NC March 1, 2012 (date received) #  
 NC As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted.  
 ND April 15, 2012 (date received) # Early priority deadlines may exist for institutional programs.  
 NH NH is not offering a state grant this year.  
 NJ 2011-2012 Tuition Aid Grant recipients - June 1, 2012 (date received)  
 NJ All other applicants - October 1, 2012, fall & spring terms (date received) - March 1, 2013, spring term only (date received)  
 NY June 30, 2013 (date received) + \*  
 OH October 1, 2012 (date received)  
 OK March 1, 2012 (date received) #  
 OR OSAC Private Scholarships - March 1, 2012 (date received)  
 OR Oregon Opportunity Grant - February 1, 2012 (date received)  
 PA All first-time applicants at a community college - a business/trade/technical school, a hospital school of nursing; or enrolled in a non-transferable two-year program - August 1, 2012 (date received)  
 PA All other applicants - May 1, 2012 (date received)  
 RI March 1, 2012 (date received) #  
 SC Tuition Grants - June 30, 2012 (date received)  
 SC Commission on Higher Education - As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted.  
 TN State Grant - As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted.  
 TN State Lottery - September 1, 2012 (date received) #  
 VT As soon as possible after January 1, 2012. Awards made until funds are depleted. \*  
 WV Promise Scholarship - March 1, 2012 (date received) # \*  
 WV Higher Education Grant Program - April 16, 2012 (date received) #

# For priority consideration, submit application by date specified.  
 \* Applicants encouraged to obtain proof of mailing.  
 \* Additional form may be required.

**DO NOT MAIL THIS WORKSHEET.**

The FAFSA on the Web Worksheet provides a preview of the questions that you may be asked while completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).

You must complete and submit a FAFSA to apply for federal student aid and for most state and college aid. Write down notes to help you easily complete your FAFSA anytime after January 1, 2012.

See the table to the right for state deadlines. Your application must be submitted by midnight Central time. Also pay attention to the symbols that may be listed after your state deadline. Check with your high school counselor or your college's financial aid administrator about other deadlines. The Federal deadline is June 30, 2013.

- This Worksheet is optional and should only be completed if you plan to use FAFSA on the Web.
- Sections in purple are for parent information.
- This Worksheet does not include all the questions from the FAFSA. The questions that are included are ordered as they appear on FAFSA on the Web. When you are online you may be able to skip some questions based on your answers to earlier questions.

**Applying is easier with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool!**  
 Beginning February 1, 2012 students and parents who have completed their 2011 IRS tax return will be able to use FAFSA on the Web to electronically view their tax information. With just a few simple steps, the tax information can also be securely transferred into the FAFSA.

**Sign your FAFSA with a Federal Student Aid PIN!**  
 If you do not have a PIN, you can apply for one at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Your PIN allows you to electronically sign when you submit your FAFSA. If you are providing parent information, one parent must also sign your FAFSA. To sign electronically, your parent should also apply for a PIN.

**Free help is available!**  
 You do not have to pay to get help or submit your FAFSA. Submit your FAFSA for free online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Federal Student Aid provides free help online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) or you can call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). TTY users (hearing impaired) can call 1-800-730-8913.

**NOTES:**

WWW.FAFSA.GOV

## LESSON 16.4

# Compare Financial Aid Award Letters

**Objective:** Provide information so that students can compare their award letters

**Materials:** Sample award letters (available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov), [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), etc.), students' own award letters, and student handout 16.4 *Compare Financial Aid Award Letters*. Many websites (including those listed above) have calculators to help students compare financial aid award letters.

- Instructions:**
1. A financial aid award letter will provide a student with information about college costs and the amount of financial aid he or she is eligible to receive from that particular college.
  2. Unfortunately, there is no standard for award letters, so students and parents will need to carefully examine each award letter.
  3. In preparation for comparing students' own award letters, provide sample award letters, or create your own sample letter.
  4. Working in groups, have students determine which award letter is best and why.
  5. Then, hand out student handout 16.4 *Compare Financial Aid Award Letters*, and help students fill in information using their own award letters.



## Compare Financial Aid Award Letters

	College A	College B	College C
<b>TOTAL Cost of Attendance</b>	\$	\$	\$
Grants & Scholarships			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
<b>TOTAL Grants &amp; Scholarships</b>	\$	\$	\$
Work-Study			
Loans			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
<b>TOTAL Loans</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>TOTAL Financial Aid Award</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>Net Cost to Attend</b> <i>(subtract TOTAL Financial Aid Award from TOTAL Cost of Attendance)</i>	\$	\$	\$



## LESSON 16.5

# Show Me Your Deposit!

**Objective:** Ensure that students meet all financial commitments required by their chosen college by May 1.

**Materials:** Computer access, student admission information, student handout 16.5 *Show Me Your Deposit!*

**Instructions:** May 1 is the deadline for students to submit a *Statement of Intent to Register* or SIR. Accompanying a student's SIR is a mandatory deposit that confirms his or her intent to enroll. The deposit amount can range from \$100 to \$1,000, is usually nonrefundable, and usually is applied to tuition fees. Some schools may waive this deposit if a student's FAFSA shows a \$0 or low expected family contribution (EFC). Housing deposits, along with other deposits and requirements, may be due at this time, also.

1. Help students complete the student handout 16.5 *Show Me Your Deposit!* to ensure they have met all financial commitments and deadlines.





# Show Me Your Deposit!

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ College \_\_\_\_\_

	Due Date	Amount	Date Sent	Misc.
Registration Deposit				
Registration Balance				
Housing Deposit				
Housing Balance				
Orientation				
Placement Tests				
Tuition Fees				
Health Information				
Vaccinations				

## LESSON 16.6

# Real Life Money Management

**Objective:** Ways to be smart about bank cards, credit cards, and your money

**Materials:** Student handout 16.6 *Real Life Money Management*

**Instructions:** Usually college is the first time students have been on their own, so they should start building smart money skills now. Student handout 16.6 *Real Life Money Management* has some suggestions on handling money, along with ideas on how to stretch your money. Discuss in groups and see if students can add to the list.



## Real Life Money Management

**ATM or Bank Cards** Keep a careful record of the withdrawals from automated teller machines (ATMs), so you don't spend more money than you have in your account. When you make a withdrawal, write down the amount, date, and reason for the withdrawal. Then, subtract the amount from your previous balance. Balance your account monthly.

**Credit Cards** can help you through an emergency, such as unexpected car repairs. You can use credit cards to make purchases by telephone or online. They can help you build a credit record for the future, but don't let credit cards tempt you to spend money that you don't have. They can cost a lot of money if you have to pay annual fees or interest on amounts that you don't pay off every month. If you go too far in debt with a credit card, you can hurt your credit record for years to come. A poor credit record may mean that you can't get a loan in the future when you need it. A poor credit record can even hurt your chances of getting a job or renting an apartment.

- Here are some tips to make sure you stay in charge of your credit card, instead of letting it take charge of you!
- Choose ONE bank credit card that can be used many places.
- Shop around for a card with no or low fees and a lower interest rate (called an annual percentage rate or APR).
- Pay off your credit card bill in full each month. If you can't do that, at least make more than the minimum payment.
- Don't use your credit card to get a cash advance unless you have an emergency. Cash advances are expensive. Besides paying a fee for the money, you also will be charged interest immediately, often at a higher rate.

Imagine if you decided to skip your daily mocha and saved \$3 every day. You would end up with an extra \$90 a month, which would turn into an amazing \$1,080 every year!

Now imagine putting that money into savings, or investing it at 8 or 9 percent interest. The chart below shows the power of compound interest over different periods of time. The first row assumes your money stays in a savings account with a 3 percent interest rate. The second row uses a 9 percent rate, which assumes that your money is in a long-term investment, such as a mutual fund.



\$90 a month	2 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	20 years
3% return	\$2,223	\$5,818	\$12,577	\$20,428	\$29,547
9% return	\$2,357	\$6,788	\$17,416	\$34,057	\$60,110

Here are some ideas to cut expenses and keep more money in your pocket. Think of other ideas to help save money.

- **Ask for student discounts.** Simple things like going to the movies, buying a pizza, or riding the bus may cost you less—right now—if you show your student I.D.
- **Buy only what you need.** Before you make a purchase, ask yourself, “Do I really need this? Or do I just want it?”
- **Learn how to cook.** You’ll save yourself a lot of money in the future.
- **Use public transportation or a bicycle.** It’s much cheaper to ride the bus than it is to own a car. Another option is to ride your bike. Not only is cycling inexpensive and good for the environment, it’s great for your body, too.
- **Shop around for clothes.** Look for sales, off-season bargains, and overstock stores. Also, check out garage sales and thrift stores for gently used (and sometimes really funky and cool) items.





# Section 5 Appendix

## Overview

The appendix contains resources that are valuable throughout junior and senior year. You may wish to provide this information to your students in paper or electronic format. You may wish to provide the entire glossary and website list, or parts of each, throughout junior and senior year. Feel free to add to the lists and make them your own.

**AVID Preparing for College Glossary:**  
contains college admission vocabulary and definitions.

**Websites for the AVID Elective Teacher and Student:**  
websites that provide accurate, helpful information for the college admission process.

**Financial Aid Websites for the AVID Teacher and Student:**  
websites that will help students move through the financial aid process.

## AVID Preparing for College

# GLOSSARY

**ACT®:** A college entrance exam that measures English, math, reading and science reasoning. Scores range from 1–36 along with a composite score. An optional writing test is offered.

**Advanced Placement (AP®) Tests:** Designed for students who have completed college-level work in high school, AP® tests are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing in college.

**Admission:** The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

**Application:** A formal request for admission to a college or university; requires the submission of forms and other materials.

**Aptitude:** A natural ability or talent.

**Associate’s Degree (A.A., A.S.):** A two-year degree that generally prepares a student for further study at a four-year institution or may provide sufficient training for a specific career.

**Award Letter:** A financial aid letter or document indicating the amount and type of financial support the school is able to provide for the upcoming year.

**Bachelor’s Degree:** A four-year degree from a college or university for a prescribed course of study. Also referred to as Baccalaureate degree, B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.S. (Bachelor of Science), etc.

**Certificate:** Awarded upon successful completion of a short-term vocational or career training program.

**Class Rank:** A student’s approximate standing in her/his graduating class, based on grade point average (e.g., 72nd in a class of 410; in the “upper fifth” of the class).

**College Entrance Exam:** Standardized exam used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student’s success in college.

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP):** the College Board’s credit-by-examination program enabling students to demonstrate college-level achievement in 34 different subject areas and receive up to two years of college credit.

**Common Application:** A standardized undergraduate application used by more than 400 colleges (mostly selective, independent) for admission.

**Credit Hour:** Unit of value given to college classes that denotes the amount of time a student will invest in formal instruction. Credit hours may be used to determine part-time and full-time course loads. Specific numbers of credit hours in certain areas of study are required for graduation.

**Deferral:** When a student’s application for early decision or early action is postponed, and will be considered with the regular applicant pool.

**Deferred Admission:** Allows an admitted/accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.



**Degree:** The rank or title given by a college or university to a student who has met certain academic requirements.

**Diploma:** Certificate issued by a school, college or university to a student who has met coursework and graduation requirements.

**Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.):** One of the highest levels of an academic degree. Typically requires the completion of a Master's Degree plus advanced graduate courses in a specialized area.

**Early Action (EA):** Early action is a plan under which a student applies early in the fall and often receives an admission decision prior to January. EA allows the accepted candidate until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission.

**Early Decision (ED):** Early decision is a plan under which a student applies to the first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1 of the senior year) and *agrees by contract to enter that college if offered admission*. Early decision applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year test scores, class rank, and grades.

**Educational Testing Service (ETS):** A non-profit agency established by the American Council on Education (ACE), Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the College Board to produce a variety of educational tests and conduct research ([www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)).

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** An amount the student *and* student's family are expected to contribute toward his/her education. It is used in determining eligibility for federal student aid.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Any school activity, such as athletics, drama or music, that offers the student an opportunity to complement his or her classroom experiences.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program. A FAFSA determines the specific federal student aid programs that contribute to a student's total college financial aid package and in what proportions. High school seniors should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.

**Financial Aid or Assistance:** Any financial award to a student (e.g., grant, scholarship, work-study, or loan).

**Grade point average (GPA):** An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance.

**Grants:** Awards are usually based on financial need and do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, private organizations and educational institutions.

**Honors program:** University programs offering the opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced or accelerated study.

**Letter of Recommendation (LOR):** An assessment of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

**Major:** The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years of college.

**Master's Degree (M.S., M.A.):** Bachelor's Degree plus graduate courses in specialized area. A Master's Degree usually requires two additional years of full-time study after completion of a Bachelor's Degree.

**Open admission (open enrollment):** The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission scores.

**PLAN®:** a pre-ACT®, curriculum-based test and examination of interests and skills for 10th graders.

**Post-secondary:** Opportunities that are available after graduation from high school (secondary school); usually refers to colleges and universities in the admission process.

**PSAT/NMSQT®:** Preliminary SAT® and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Enables students to practice for the SAT® Reasoning Test and serves as the qualifying test for scholarship competitions conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

**Regular Decision:** The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

**Rolling Admission:** The application process whereby a college reviews an application when the application is completed and communicates the admission decision within a few weeks of reviewing the application.

**SAT® Reasoning Test:** College entrance exam designed to measure critical reading, math and writing skills needed for academic success in college. SAT® scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math and critical reading).

**Scholarship:** Financial aid based on merit and/or criteria set by the donor. This award money does not have to be repaid and is either paid directly to the student or deposited in a university account.

**Standardized Tests:** Tests such as the ACT™ and SAT® that provide college admission officers with a comparative standard for evaluating a student's academic aptitude and likelihood of success in college.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** The information received after the FAFSA has been processed. The SAR summarizes the data in the FAFSA and reports the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

**Transcript:** The official record of high school or college courses and grades; generally required as part of the college application.

**Work-Study:** Money earned in a job obtained through the help of the college's financial aid office. Hours and location of the job are compatible with academic life and school schedule.

## Websites for the AVID Elective Teacher and Student

### **ACT®** <http://www.act.org/>

Provides free information and resources to support all tests and products produced by ACT, as well as great college info. Offers resources for educators, parents and students. Some ACT products are also available for purchase.

### **America's Career Info Net** <http://www.acinet.org/>

Find free wage and employment trends, occupational requirements, state-by-state labor market conditions, millions of employer contacts nation-wide and the most extensive career resource library online.

### **Campus Explorer** <http://www.campusexplorer.com/>

A free college search engine with over 8,000 colleges in their database. Provides detailed information on colleges and has easy to use tools to match your profile to a college.

### **Campus Tours** <http://www.CampusTours.com/>

Free virtual tours of hundreds of colleges and universities.

### **College Board Online** <http://www.collegeboard.com/>

The College Board website provides free information on all tests and products produced by the College Board, as well as great college information. The College Board also offers some products and services for a fee.

### **College Navigator** <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

The college selection search tool helps find any school in the country, provides basic information about the school and links to the school's website.

### **CollegeNET College Search** <http://cnsearch.collegenet.com/cgi-bin/CN/index>

CollegeNET offers a general guide to colleges and universities. You can search for schools by geography, tuition, enrollment, and more.

### **College Outreach USA** <http://www.collegeoutreachusa.org>

A consortium of colleges and universities dedicated to supporting students who are minority, from the inner-city and/or from a low income family to stay in high school and graduate from college. They provide free information and the opportunity for students to make a personal connection with the colleges and universities in the consortium.

### **College Results** <http://www.collegeresults.org/>

College Results Online (CRO) is an interactive, user-friendly Web tool designed to provide policymakers, counselors, parents, students, and others with information about college graduation rates for nearly any four-year college or university in the country.

### **College View** <http://www.collegeview.com/>

Free career, college and financial aid information, as well as virtual college tours. Students can also input information to see which of over 3 million scholarships they may qualify for.

### **College Week Live** <http://www.collegeweeklive.com>

Free website designed to connect students to colleges/universities in an interactive way. Students can visit virtual college fairs and gather information on admission, financial aid, housing, etc., by chatting live with admission counselors and university students.

**Common Application** <http://www.commonapp.org>

Common college application for more than 400 (mostly) selective, independent colleges and universities.

**FAFSA** <http://www.fafsa.gov/>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid; this is **the** site to apply for financial aid online.

**Fastweb** <http://www.fastweb.com/>

Free scholarship and college resources to assist students and parents with all aspects of applying to college. Fastweb utilizes matching technology to give students a list of possible scholarships they may qualify for based on their profiles.

**Federal Student Aid Publication Ordering** <http://www.fsapubs.gov/>

Offers numerous free publications, Power Point presentations and posters, on financial aid and college preparation. Many of the resources are available in English and Spanish (some resources are also available in Braille).

**Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)** <http://www.hacu.net/>

HACU represents more than 300 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America and Spain.

**Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)** <http://www.hbcuconnect.com/>

The website for the 100+ historically black colleges and universities; sorted by state, size, tuition, conference and ranking.

**Kaplan** <http://www.kaplan.com/>

Test prep and college comparison information. Offers some free information and fee-based resources.

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)** <http://www.ncaa.org>

The NCAA website provides important information for the student athlete and educators about NCAA requirements.

**National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** <http://nsse.iub.edu>

The National Survey of Student Engagement College Student Report gathers information about students' college experiences, including their views about the quality of their education and ways they spend their time, directly from students via survey.

**Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)** <http://ope.ed.gov/security>

The OPE Campus Security Statistics website lists reported criminal offenses for more than 6,000 colleges and universities in the United States.

**Peterson's** <http://www.petersons.com/>

Free information about colleges and universities, career schools, graduate programs, distance learning, executive training, private secondary schools, summer opportunities, study abroad, financial aid, test preparation and career exploration.

**The Princeton Review** <http://www.princetonview.com/>

Offers some free and fee-based information on colleges and universities, careers and test preparation.

**SallieMae College Answer** <http://www.collegeanswer.com/>

Free information on preparing for college and paying for college.

**Schools in the USA** <http://www.SchoolsintheUSA.com>

Students can use this site to research schools, review admission requirements and request application materials from multiple universities by completing one form. Site also provides direct links to university websites.

### **The Career Key** <http://www.careerkey.org>

Based on John Holland's theory of vocational choices. For a fee, students can take tests that help them find the right career path and learn about jobs that fit their personality types.

### **Unigo** <http://www.unigo.com>

This site is written by students for students. It includes reflections about college life on hundreds of campuses, along with articles on dorm life, cutting textbook costs, and *An Adult To-Do List: Things to Do Before Going to College*, etc.

### **U.S. News Education** <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm>

A resource for the college application process, covering school selection, financial aid, test prep, admissions, applications, campus visits and tuition.

### **Xap Corporation** <http://www.xap.com/>

Fee-based site; provides schools with a variety of resources and services to guide students through all stages of preparing for college (comparison, selection, application, admission, financial aid, etc.).

### **Yahoo!** <http://education.yahoo.com/>

Comprehensive site that includes free college search, test prep, college survival tips and college news.

## **Financial Aid Websites for the AVID Teacher and Student**

### **Financial Aid Resource Publications from the U.S. Department of Education**

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/guide>

The U.S. Department of Education's *Funding Your Education: The Guide to Federal Student Aid – 2012-2013*, a comprehensive resource for Title IV programs, can be accessed here. Other federal student aid publication websites include:

**Federal Student Aid Publication Ordering** (<http://www.FSAPubs.gov>) order federal student aid publications in bulk

**ED Pubs** (<http://www.edpubs.gov>) ordering site for students and parents to order single copies of publications

**Federal Student Aid Information for Counselors** (<http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov>) publications specifically for AVID counselors and teachers

### **College Board CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®** <http://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

Use the College Board's website to register for the College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE®. The CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® is the application used to apply for non-federal financial aid.

### **National Commission for Cooperative Education** <http://www.co-op.edu>

Learn more about cooperative education, a work-learn program, at this site.

### **EdFund** <http://www.edfund.org>

Information on applying for financial aid and managing student loans.

### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** <http://www.fafsa.gov>

Online registration for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, along with answers to frequently asked questions about the financial aid process.

**Fast Aid** <http://www.fastaid.com>

A free online scholarship database. Also includes financial aid information and gives you help in understanding the SAR (Student Aid Report).

**Fastweb** <http://www.fastweb.com>

This destination is among the largest and most well-known online database of private-sector sources of financial aid and scholarships.

**Fedmoney** <http://www.fedmoney.org/>

A comprehensive, full-text, online resource on all federal government student financial aid programs.

**The SmartStudent™ Guide to Financial Aid** <http://www.finaid.org>

This site pulls together information on financial aid and how to apply for it. It has calculators to estimate expected family contribution.

**Federal Trade Commission Scholarship Scams** <http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams>

Learn how to avoid scholarship scams.

**The Gates Millennium Scholars** <http://www.gmsp.org>

These scholarships, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and administered by the United Negro College Fund, are for outstanding Pell Grant-eligible students who are African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanic Americans or Asian-Pacific Islanders.

**Guaranteed Scholarships** <http://www.guaranteed-scholarships.com>

This website lists scholarships offered by specific colleges to students with a good combination of SAT® scores and GPA. The amount of the scholarships and the level of scores/grades needed to qualify vary widely.

**Hispanic Scholarship Fund** <http://www.hsf.net>

Explores scholarships offered by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

**Mapping Your Future – Pay for College** <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/paying>

Federal Family Education provides information on loan programs, financial aid, savings plans, etc.

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)** <http://www.ncaa.org>

The NCAA provides information for students who would like to participate in college sports and learn about athletic scholarships.

**SallieMae** <http://www.salliemae.com>

Guidance on financial aid includes interactive calculators to help forecast college costs, estimated eligibility, education loan payments and more.

**Scholarships101®** <http://www.scholarships101.com>

Scholarships101® has a database of more than 6 million awards, as well as information on federal and state programs. Students submit a profile and are matched with scholarships.

**Scholarships.com** <http://www.scholarships.com>

Free scholarship service that provides a variety of information including a list of scholarships by state. Teachers and counselors can order or download college resources.

**ScholarshipExperts.com** <http://www.scholarshipexperts.com>

Free scholarship service that customizes its scholarship database for each student using an extensive questionnaire.

**Inspired to Serve** <http://www.todaysmilitary.com>

Provides information on financial aid for college provided by the military.