

warm-up: which postsecondary lifestyle is for you?

Choose the best answer for each of the questions below. Mark the three questions which are most important to you personally with an *. Mark the three questions which are least important to you with "?".

- 1. DESCRIBE YOUR IDEAL ROOMMATE:**
 - a. I don't want to deal with roommate drama; I'd rather live at home with my family.
 - b. Someone who shares my interests and who is committed to social issues or the arts.
 - c. Someone who is fun, and would introduce me to lots of different kinds of people.
 - d. Someone who is on the same postsecondary path as me, so we can study together and network together.
- 2. WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO BE DOING ON A FRIDAY NIGHT WHILE IN COLLEGE?**
 - a. Hanging with my friends from high school or people I meet at work who I can relate to.
 - b. Going to a concert, show, or art opening with a small, close-knit group of friends.
 - c. Going to a house party and gearing up for the big football game tomorrow.
 - d. Studying or practicing. No rest for the wicked!
- 3. WHICH TYPE OF CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU?**
 - a. Going to class part-time and working part-time, so I don't get overloaded with too much schoolwork.
 - b. Small classes based around discussion and debate.
 - c. Medium-to-large-sized classes based around lectures from world-famous professors.
 - d. Lab-style courses where you get to build or make something during class time, like a painting, a design, a movie, or a blueprint.
- 4. WHICH CLUB COULD YOU SEE YOURSELF JOINING?**
 - a. I wouldn't waste my time with clubs. I'd rather have a part-time job so I can make money while I'm in school.
 - b. A foreign language club, the environmental club, a social justice club, or a Take Back the Night group.
 - c. An intramural sport, a fraternity/sorority, a marching band, or a support group for minority students.
 - d. A club or activity focused on getting a job in my industry, like a Future Architects club or the IEEE.
- 5. WHEN YOU FINISH YOUR DEGREE, WHAT COULD YOU SEE YOURSELF DOING?**
 - a. Getting a better paying job at the company where I'm already working part-time.
 - b. Taking a year or two off to volunteer with Americorps to help others before starting a "real" job.
 - c. Getting a great entry-level job by using the networking connections I created while at college.
 - d. Using the portfolio of work I created in college to get a high-paying job in a specialized field, like engineering, architecture, or graphic design.
- 6. DESCRIBE THE TYPE OF CAFETERIA IN WHICH YOU'D LIKE TO EAT:**
 - a. I'd pack my own lunch or buy something at the corner deli.
 - b. Small and intimate with a wide selection of vegetarian and healthy meal options.
 - c. Huge and well-stocked. I want to choose from a million different options and types of food and create my own menu of yummy and fun meals.
 - d. It doesn't matter. I'm going to college to prepare for a career, not to eat.
- 7. WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO STUDY AT COLLEGE?**
 - a. I'm planning on doing a 2-year or 4-year program in something tangible and practical, like nursing, medical billing, computer repair, or business management.
 - b. I'm not sure. I want to explore my interests in the arts and humanities in a safe and experimental environment. I'll choose a major later.
 - c. I'm not sure. I want to try a bunch of different subjects in a challenging environment and figure out what I'm best at. I'll choose a major later.
 - d. I know exactly what I want to do! Engineering, architecture, graphic design, or computer programming.
- 8. IMAGINE IT'S YOUR FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE AND YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH ONE OF YOUR CLASSES. WHAT WOULD YOU BE MOST LIKELY TO DO?**
 - a. Figure out what I'm doing wrong and fix it on my own.
 - b. Wait for a teacher or a friend to ask me what's wrong.
 - c. Visit the college's tutoring office or writing center and ask for help.
 - d. Give up.
- 9. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL STRENGTHS IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?**
 - a. Responsibility and independence
 - b. Self-expression and creativity
 - c. Excitement and energy
 - d. Dedication and focus
- 10. HOW MUCH DEBT ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE ON IN ORDER TO FUND YOUR EDUCATION?**
 - a. None. I would rather take longer to finish school so I can work to earn money and pay my tuition without loans.
 - b. As much as it takes. I am willing to pay any price to get the right education for me.
 - c. Some. I want a good education but I also want to avoid taking out too much debt.
 - d. As much as it takes. I am so focused on my career goal, I know I will make enough money with my degree to pay back my loans.
- 11. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST SUMMARIZES YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT?**
 - a. I want to maintain close ties to my family and community.
 - b. I want to explore my creative side, learn about the world, and travel.
 - c. I want to be a part of a large, energetic, and fun community.
 - d. I want to pursue a technical career which requires specialized training.

the perfect match: your lifestyle and environment preferences

For the past 18 years, choices about where you will live, where you will go to school, and how you will spend your money have most likely been made by your parents or guardians. But after graduating from high school, you will get to choose the lifestyle and environment that will best fit your values, goals, and preferences. But how will you know what is right for you?

quiz results:

If you chose . . .

MOSTLY A'S: commuter college

You value your independence and are a responsible person. You want to be able to work while you are in college, and you are willing to fight to balance your family and home life, your work life, and your school life. You might have responsibilities at home, or just feel a strong connection to your community, your family, or your social circle. A local or nearby community college or small 4-year school would be best for you.

MOSTLY B'S: small liberal arts college

You are creative and dynamic. You appreciate being part of a small community of people with interests similar to yours. You want to explore and learn in a supportive and safe environment, and you value relationships with your teachers and friends. A small liberal arts college would be best for you.

MOSTLY C'S: big public or state university

You value fun, excitement, and energy. You work best when surrounded by diverse and interesting people. You don't necessarily need one-on-one attention to succeed. A place with school spirit, energy, and lots of options for fun is your idea of paradise. You should consider big public and state universities.

MOSTLY D'S: specialized technical school or program

You have a clear postsecondary plan which includes training for a specialized career, such as that of an engineer, architect, graphic designer, or computer scientist. You thrive in hands-on learning situations, and love lab or art class. You don't want to waste your time with clubs, parties, or distractions. You're on a mission to succeed, and you see college as a stepping stone to a career. You should consider specialized technical schools or programs, which might include engineering schools, art and design schools, or other special programs.

Do you agree with your quiz results? Why or why not?

TALK IT OUT
Compare your answers with those of your classmates. Which type of postsecondary lifestyle or environment would be a best fit for you, personally? How do you know?

BIG IDEA

Which college lifestyle is best for an individual student is a subjective question, not an objective one. It is based on opinions and feelings rather than data, numbers, and scientific observation. Everyone will have their opinion, but yours is the only one that matters!

STEP 2: Identify a set of criteria by which to evaluate postsecondary learning institutions.

choices, choices

Armed with a clear postsecondary plan, you're almost ready to start applying to the postsecondary learning experience of your choice. But whether your next step is a college, university, trade school, or on-the-job training, you will have a wide variety of options available to you. How do you decide where to apply?

Location	How far is this college from my hometown? Will I have to budget for gas, train, or flight money?
Cost	What is the cost of room and board ? What is the total cost of attendance ?
Financial Aid Available	What types of financial aid does this college offer? Is it merit-based or need-based ?
Size	How many undergraduate students attend this college? What is the student-to-faculty ratio ?
Reputation	What is this college famous for? What is the reputation of the program to which I'd probably apply?
Admissions Requirements	What are the minimum admissions requirements for this college? What is the average GPA? SAT or ACT score?
Academics	What are some of the class names and requirements? How hard or easy is the work?
Programs and Majors	What majors does the college offer? Do these align with my interests?
Recommendations	What do current students have to say about the school?
Setting	What is the town surrounding the school like? What do students do for fun on the weekends?
Diversity	What is the demographic breakdown of the undergraduate class?
Clubs or Sports	What clubs and sports are offered? What is the likelihood that I'll make the team or get to join the club?
Campus	New and modern? Old-timey and classic? Quality of food in the cafeteria?
Class Size/Type	Big lectures? Small, intimate discussions? Lab or hands-on classes?
Job Placement	What % of graduates get jobs after graduation? What % join Americorps , volunteer, or travel?
Values/Morals	Is this a religious school, or is the school run by a religious order? Does the school offer substance-free or women-only dorms?
Support	Where do students go for help when they struggle? Are there specific programs which address my needs?
Student Body	What types of things do students here do? What are they interested in?
School Spirit	What percentage of alumni give \$ to support the school? Who are some famous alumni?
Other:	

THINK IT THROUGH
 What will be your guiding questions for college research? Highlight any questions that you think will be interesting to learn about, and add some of your own in space marked "Other."

evaluating colleges, schools, and programs: creating a college rubric

A **rubric** is a tool for evaluating or judging something subjective in an objective way. Your teachers may use rubrics to assess your performance and evaluate your skills. When it comes to choosing a college or program, YOU are the authority figure. You choose what's important, and you decide how colleges stack up.

THINK IT THROUGH
Based on your answers to the warm-up quiz and your prior knowledge of your postsecondary plan, you will create your own College Rubric on the next page. What criteria is important to YOU?

Joe's College Rubric

Goal after high school: Play college ball

Criteria	A1/The Best/100%	C/Average/75%	F/The Worst/0%
Sports Teams	The college has a world-famous basketball team that has a history of winning records and NCAA championships.	The college has a basketball team with a decent record.	The college doesn't have a basketball team.
Size	Large student population with lots of clubs, teams, and school spirit	Medium-size student population with some clubs, teams, and a little school spirit	Small, or has no school spirit

Julie's College Rubric

Goal after high school: Get a Bachelor's of Science in forensic science (or chemistry)

Criteria	A1/The Best/100%	C/Average/75%	F/The Worst/0%
Programs Offered	The college has a strong or famous Forensic Science program.	The college does not have a Forensic Science program, but it has a strong Chemistry program.	The college does not have Forensic Science, and its Chemistry program is terrible.
Location	Less than 3 hours from my parents' home, so I can go home to visit whenever I want	3–6 hours from my parents' home, so I can go home to visit occasionally	More than 6 hours from my parents' home

STEP 3: Create a personal **College Criteria** Rubric summarizing evaluation criteria.

my college rubric

According to my postsecondary plan, I am looking for:

- an on-the-job training program
- military service
- an apprenticeship program
- a trade or technical education program
- a certificate program
- a 2-year Associate degree program
- a 4-year Bachelor's degree program



Criteria	A +/The Best/ 100%	C/Average/ 75%	F/The Worst/ 0%

learning about your options

Now that you know what type of experience you're interested in, it's time to start identifying schools and programs you might want to apply to. Once you evaluate them, these schools will become a part of your final **College List**.

college 101

Follow these golden rules for creating your **College List**:

1. Apply to two to five **target** schools. These are schools you can be accepted to because you meet their admissions criteria (your GPA, past academic experience, and test scores match their minimum requirements).
2. Apply to one or two **foundation** schools. These are schools you will definitely be accepted to, because you exceed their admissions criteria (your GPA, past academic experience, and test scores exceed their requirements).
3. Apply to one or two **reach** schools. These are schools that you might be accepted to, because you almost meet their admissions criteria (your GPA, past academic experience, and test scores are very close to the requirements).

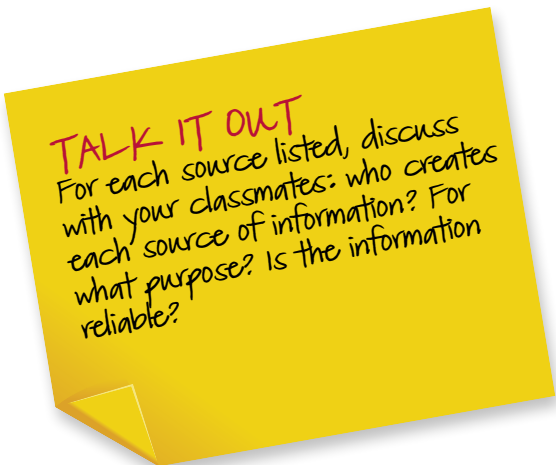
STEP 4: Research and evaluate postsecondary learning institutions using a variety of reliable sources.

STUDENT HANDOUT

research skills:
consider the source

Once you know the colleges you want to evaluate, all you have to do is gather the information you need to give each a grade based on your rubric. But remember, not all information sources are equal! Consider the source of the information before making a judgment about whether or not to believe it.

Here are some places you can go to get more information about colleges, universities, trade schools, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training programs.



 Sources of Information on Schools and Programs

Information Source	Who creates the information? For what purpose?	Is the information reliable, somewhat reliable, or unreliable?
College websites	<i>The college creates the website in order to promote the school to students and funders</i>	<i>Somewhat reliable</i>
College brochures		
College representatives or presenters		
Commercials on TV, the subway, or buses		
YOUiversity TV and other virtual campus tour sites		
A real-life campus tour		
A blog or Facebook note or Tweet written by a current student		
A personal interview with a current student or alum		
Information on another website or book about college		

STEP 5: Create a finalized **College List** which includes all the schools and programs to which you plan to apply.

STUDENT HANDOUT

navigating college websites

It's a good idea to visit the college's website yourself in order to get up-to-date and accurate information. Here are some tips for making it easier to find the information you need to evaluate whether the school is right for you or not.

TIPS FOR FINDING THE INFORMATION YOU NEED ON A COLLEGE WEBSITE:

Avoid using the Search box. College website search engines don't work like Google; they usually return useless and confusing information that can quickly get you lost.

- Begin by clicking on *Admissions*, *Future Students* or *Potential Students* on the homepage.
- Once you get to the *Admissions* section, pay attention to information for *undergraduate* or *first year* students.
- At the bottom of the *Admissions* page, there is usually an address, phone number, and email address for the Admissions office. Write this down! You will need it later!
- Look for a link that says, *Application Requirements* or *Requirements for Admission*. This should summarize what you need to get in.

On the Admissions page, you can usually find information about:

- Scheduling a campus tour or info session
- Filling out an online application
- A campus map, and directions to the Admissions office
- For information on Financial Aid, look for links that say, *Financial Aid Office* or *Bursar*.
- For information on diversity or student body, look for links that say, *Student Life*, *About*, or even *Registrar*.
- For information about majors, classes, and programs, look for links that say, *Academics*, *Schools and Programs*, or *Undergraduate*.

your college list

School or Program Name					
City and State					
Target, Foundation, or Reach?					
Public or Private?					
Average Rubric Grade					
Why?					

college list: a world of possibility

Your **College List** represents a great deal of possibility; depending on how many schools you plan to apply to, you could end up anywhere in the fall! However, it is also exciting! Chances are, one or more of the schools or programs on your list will accept you, and you will get to make a decision to attend an institution that meets your needs and your preferences.

1. Which criteria did you decide were most important to you this week? Why?

2. Which criteria did you decide were not so important to you? Why?

3. How was the process of searching for and evaluating schools and programs? Did you find the information you needed to make an informed decision? Why or why not?

UNIT 1: SENIOR PORTFOLIO CHECK-IN

By the end of Unit 1, you should have completed the following **Senior Portfolio** items:

- Created a personal mission statement (an ultimate goal), Lesson 1
- Created a postsecondary plan (which included your long-term and intermediate goals), Lesson 2
- Created an **action plan** to meet your short-term academic goals, Lesson 3
- Created a **College Rubric** and a **College List**, Lesson 4

You should have completed the following:

- Completed the Interest Profiler and saved careers to your portfolio, Lesson 2
- Ultimate, Long-term, Intermediate, and Short-term Goals, and Goals into Action, Lesson 3
- Saved Schools and Programs to your portfolio, Lesson 4

Give yourself a grade for each of the above items based on this rubric:

- A+ I am 100% done with this, and I did a fabulous job! I love it!
- A I finished this, and it's pretty good.
- B I finished this, but it's not so good. I could have done better.
- C I started this, but it needs some finishing touches.
- D I barely started this. It needs a lot more work.
- F Huh? What's this? I haven't even started it.

Based on the above, how would you evaluate your progress this year?

- Ahead of the game On track A little behind Off track

What can you do to improve?