

warm-up: what's your decision-making style?

- 1. YOUR FRIEND INVITES YOU TO A PARTY. WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU ASK?**
 - a. Do you want me to go?
 - b. I don't ask anything. I'm there!
 - c. Who's going to be there? What kind of party is it? What should I bring? How late do you think it will go?
- 2. YOUR FAMILY WINS \$5,000 IN THE LOTTERY. HOW WILL YOU DECIDE WHAT TO SPEND IT ON?**
 - a. Let the rest of the family decide. They don't care about your opinion, anyway.
 - b. Go with your gut and spend all the money on something you think the family needs. They'll thank you, someday.
 - c. Have a family meeting where you create a list of everyone's ideas, and then have a debate. Each person can present their idea and the reasons behind it, and then you can have a vote. Majority wins.
- 3. YOUR PLANE CRASHES ON A DESERTED ISLAND. DO YOU:**
 - a. Lay back, work on your tan, and wait for the rest of the survivors to decide what to do about food and water.
 - b. Run around, screaming and crying for help until another survivor has to calm you down.
 - c. Gather the rest of the survivors and hold a meeting to assign jobs based on the group's priorities.
- 4. YOUR CAR IS A PIECE OF JUNK AND BARELY RUNS. WOULD YOU:**
 - a. Go to the dealership and let the salesman tell you which car you should buy.
 - b. Wait until it breaks down, and then buy the fanciest car you can afford.
 - c. Use the internet to research a large variety of makes and models of cars to determine which is the most affordable and will best fit your needs.
- 5. YOU'VE BEEN RECEIVING ACCEPTANCE LETTERS FROM YOUR SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS. DO YOU:**
 - a. Put the letters in a big pile and don't look at them until half are past their deadline. Oops! Guess you'll have to go to the one school who will still take you.
 - b. Immediately accept the offer at the first school that accepted you. Yay! You got in!
 - c. Wait until you've heard back from all your top choice schools and then do some research and figure out which school is offering you the best educational experience for the least amount of money.

TALK IT OUT
Choose one of the scenarios here and role-play how each style would approach the decision. Who would make the quickest decision? Who makes the best decision in the long-term?

quiz results

MOSTLY A'S: you're a passive decision maker.

You tend to let others influence you or decide for you, or you wait so long to make a decision that you often limit your options.

MOSTLY B'S: you're an impulsive decision maker.

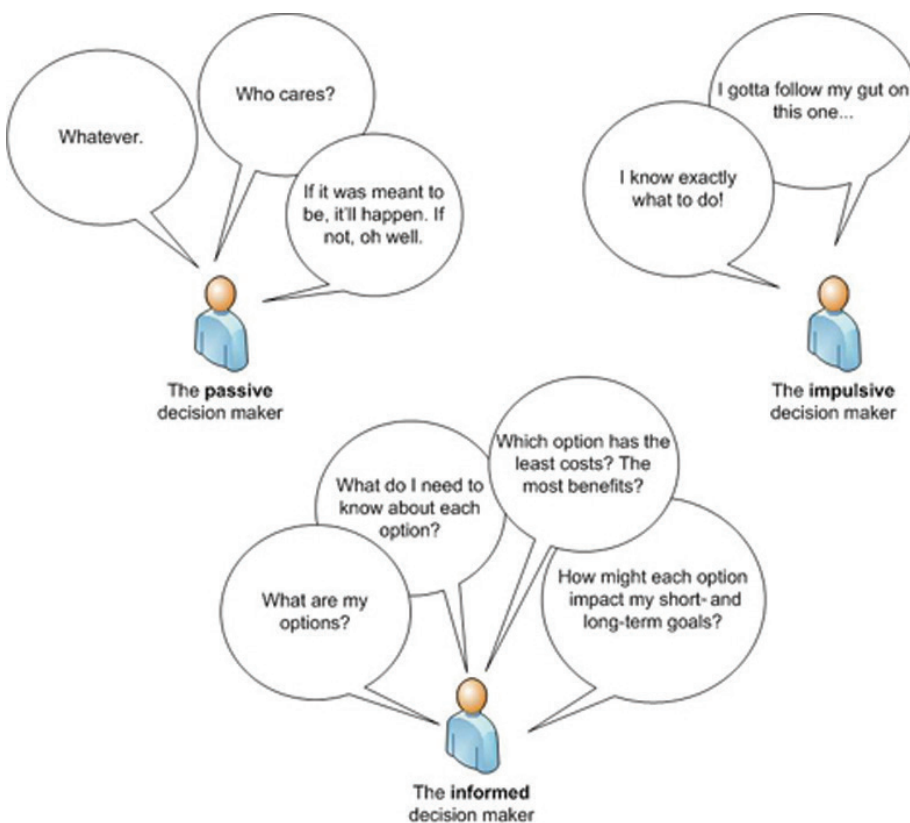
You often make a quick choice without reflecting on your options or considering your long-term goals.

MOSTLY C'S: you're an informed decision maker.

You like to have all the facts before making a serious decision. You conduct research, ask for advice, and consider your short- and long-term goals, as well as your time and money, before making a final decision.

decision-making styles

We all have our own decision-making styles, which determine how we approach tough choices. In some situations, one decision-making style might be more appropriate than another.



BIG IDEA

We make many choices every day, but during your senior year, you will be confronted with serious decisions that will determine whether or not you meet your ultimate goals. Chances are you have a number of opportunities to decide between right now. The key to making the best choice is following an informed decision-making process.

STEP 2: Summarize the steps of the decision-making process.

decision making for admissions committees

When you sent your application packet in to your schools and programs earlier this year, you triggered a complicated decision-making process. Your schools and programs had to decide:

- Whether or not you met their admissions requirements
- Whether or not they believed your personal strengths fit with their community
- Whether or not they believed you would **persist** in their school or program

Schools and programs do not treat this decision lightly. Instead, they carefully **research** your strengths and weaknesses, and then **compare** you with the other applicants, in order to **prioritize** who they want to accept.

When schools and programs **decide** what to do, usually after one or more members of the admissions committee have read your application and discussed your qualifications, they **act** on their decision by **admitting or rejecting you**.

STEP 3: Identify your postsecondary options.

decisions, decisions

Schools make their decisions by April 1st. Depending on the admissions decisions you receive, you will likely have a big choice to make: Which school will be the best for you in the short- and long-term?

If you were **accepted**, your options include:

- **Accepting** an offer of admission — sending your intent to enroll and your deposit. You may only accept one school or program's offer.
- **Declining** an offer of admission — sending your regrets. You will need to decline offers at all the schools and programs you don't pick.
- **Deferring** admission — accepting an offer of admission, but putting off enrolling and registering for up to a year.

If you are **wait-listed**, your options include:

- **Accepting** your spot on the waitlist — Follow the instructions given to claim your spot on the waitlist. Then, wait.
- **Moving on** — Decide to go with another school or program.

steps to making an informed decision

- Identify your options.
- Research your options and learn all that you can about the pros and cons.
- Compare your options to see which is the best fit.
- Prioritize your options, from best to worst.
- Decide on your #1 choice.
- Act on your decision.
- Reflect on the results of your decision. Did you do the right thing?

TALK IT OUT
How could you apply the decision-making process to each of the scenarios in the Quiz?

THINK IT THROUGH
Take a moment to reflect. How do the results of your applications compare to the amount of work and effort you put into researching, choosing, and applying to colleges? Were you correct in guessing which schools or programs would be target, reach, and safety? What can you learn from this experience?

my admissions status

Record the decisions you've received here.



Accepted 😊

ACTION NEEDED: Choose one.

Waitlisted 😐

ACTION NEEDED: Choose one.

Rejected 😞

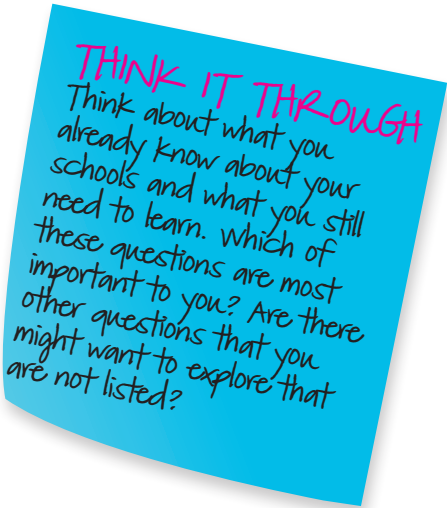
ACTION NEEDED: None, unless you want to "appeal."

STEP 4: Generate a list of questions you still have about each school or program which accepted or waitlisted you.

making the right decision

Deciding which school or program to attend might seem like an easy choice, especially if you only have one or two acceptances. But although it might be tempting to make a “gut call,” it’s important to follow the decision-making process to ensure you’re doing the right thing for both your short-term goals and your ultimate goals.

The first step in making a good decision is figuring out what information you will need in order to inform your decision. What do you need to know about each school or program before you really know whether it’s right for you?



What I Know and Want to Know About My Schools and Programs

If **money and financial aid** are most important to you, you might ask . . .

- How much financial aid will I get?
- How much debt will I have at the end of four years?
- What will my earning potential be after graduation?
- OTHER:

If **lifestyle and social activities** are most important to you, you might ask . . .

- What is the campus lifestyle like?
- Will I fit in among the students there? Why or why not?
- What clubs or organizations might I join?
- OTHER:

If **academics** are most important, you might ask . . .

- What are the courses like?
- What majors and programs do they have?
- How challenging is it?
- OTHER:

If **support services** are most important, you might ask . . .

- What sort of supports are there for time management, conflict resolution, self-care, and students with special needs?
- OTHER:

If **relationships** are most important, you might ask . . .

- Will my family and friends support my decision?
- Will I be able to visit my family and friends often enough?
- Are any of my friends planning to attend this school or program?
- OTHER:

If **your future career** is most important, you might ask . . .

- What percentage of graduates of this school or program get a job in their field after graduation?
- Is there a career services office or job placement program to help graduates?
- How does the prestige of this school or program compare to my other schools and programs? Is it well regarded and respected by employers in my field?
- OTHER:

OTHER: Size, Location, Diversity, etc.

OTHER:

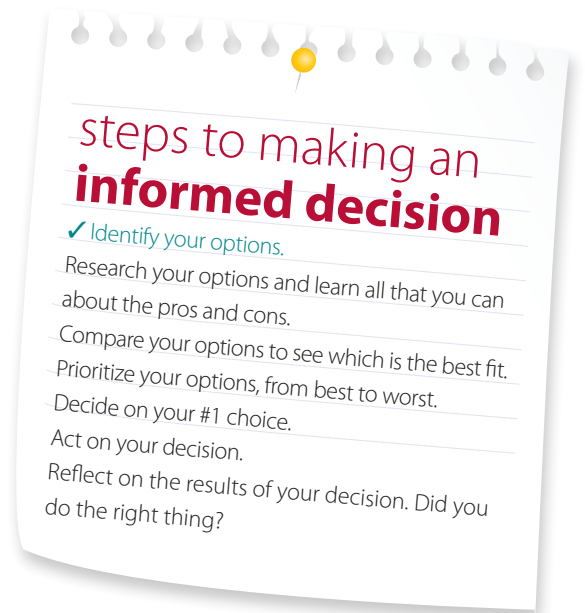
STEP 5: Use online sources to research and compare your options.

understanding your postsecondary options

Use online sources, including the website for the colleges on your College List to find answers to your research questions. Use those same sources to compare the financial information for each school. If you need a source, try the College Board Big Futures site.

COLLEGE CAREER CONNECTION

Hiring committees at companies often make the same kind of decisions as admissions committees. They evaluate and compare applicants and make **job offers** to their top choices. See Lesson 21 for tips on how to decide whether to accept, negotiate, or decline a job offer.



Comparing My Financial Aid Award Packages

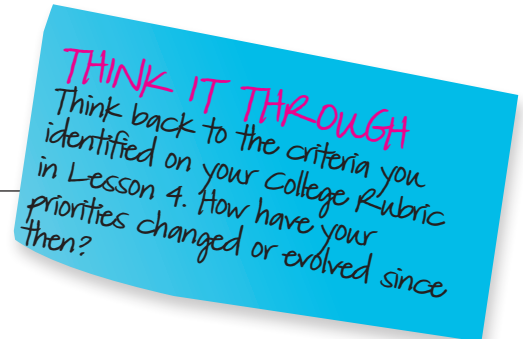
School name:	Cost of attendance:	Total \$ in grants and scholarships offered:	Total \$ in loans offered:	Total "personal contribution" expected:

college 101

If a school or program **rejected** you, don't take it personally. Every year, colleges get hundreds of applications from diverse applicants. A rejection doesn't mean you aren't good enough; it simply means that the college doesn't have space or money for you **at this time**. If you really have your heart set on a school or program and were rejected, you still have a chance. You can always **apply again** next year, or **transfer** after spending your freshman year at your second choice school. As a matter of fact, transfer admissions are often easier and less competitive than freshman admissions. A final option is to **appeal** the admissions decision. This is a smart move if anything has changed for you since you submitted your application — if your grades have gone up or if you've won an award or honor.

your research

Use online information sources to answer each question you have about your schools, and list these on the charts on the following pages. Note that you might need to use different sources of information for each school or each question, depending on what information is available.



School Name:

Admissions Status (check one): Accepted Wait-listed

Q1:

A:

Source:

Q2:

A:

Source:

Q3:

A:

Source:

School Name:

Admissions Status (check one): Accepted Wait-listed

Q1:

A:

Source:

Q2:

A:

Source:

Q3:

A:

Source:



understanding your options: knowing the facts

This week, you began the decision-making process by identifying your options and researching your options to understand the pros and cons of each. Next week, you will examine your research in order to compare, prioritize, and decide which school or program is right for you. After a “gut check,” you’ll act on that decision.

1. Right now, what is your gut telling you to do? What do you think, in your heart, is the right choice to make?

2. Do you think that the decision-making process will prove your heart right or wrong? Why?