

*Westborough High School
Post-Secondary Planning
Handbook*

~ Class of 2020 ~

<http://westboroughk12.org>

<http://westboroughschoolcounselingdept.weebly.com>

Naviance: <https://student.naviance.com/westborough>

On Twitter: @WboroCounselors

Westborough High School CEEB Code: 222-300

WHS SAT Test Center Code: 22-860

WHS ACT Test Center Code: 224-180

*Prepared by:
The WHS School Counseling Department*

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Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

We are pleased to provide you with this Post-Secondary Planning Guide as you begin planning for life after high school! With focus and an understanding of the process, you will be able to progress through your college applications and/or career planning confidently, and leave WHS comfortable that you know the direction in which you are headed.

We encourage you to read through this entire guide over the course of the next eighteen months. However, different sections of this guide may be more applicable to you at different times during the process. It is unnecessary to read it like a book, from cover to cover. Review the table of contents and focus on the sections that are most relevant to you on any given day. This guide is meant to provide you with the most often sought-after information, but is in no way the only place you should seek post-secondary planning advice. We hope you find this guide useful but also encourage you to connect with your counselor for continued support. We are available to help you throughout the process and are happy to provide assistance and additional information!

Sincerely,

The Westborough High School Counselors

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As you prepare for your path after high school, know that there is no such thing as the “correct path”. The best and most meaningful way for you will be something individual. Opportunities that end up being the most valuable could be the ones you don’t yet realize exist. And if you still reach your goals in the end, where and how you started won’t matter.

While you must start somewhere, make sure you do your research and find the options that will fit you best.

Are you applying to colleges? Be confident in knowing why you are applying to “this” school instead of all the others with the same characteristics. You may be considering schools with a specific major, a co-op program, a highly selective reputation, a beautiful campus, a competitive athletic program, or any number of other things. What else is important to you? What else speaks to you?

If you are considering opportunities other than college, be confident that you are making the right choice for you, and empower yourself with the knowledge and experiences to help you take those first steps. Don’t know where to start? Make the effort now to find out.

Realize that there are:

- Close to 100 institutions considered “Highly Selective” and many of which have admissions rates four or five times higher than the most competitive schools
- Hundreds of schools with spirited and competitive athletic programs
- Scores of colleges and universities to transfer from two-year to four-year schools
- Close to 100 well-paying career paths that do not require a four-year degree.
- So many unique programs and opportunities out there, many of which will make you smile and say “Wow!”

Own your path. Own it at the beginning and every step of the way. For the next 5 years, the next 15 years, and every year after that.

And before you know it, you could find yourself right where you want to be, doing exactly what you want to be doing with your life and your career.

Are you willing to do what it takes to get there?

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Website Address and Password Worksheet

Naviance

Website Address	Student's Email Address / Username	Password
https://student.naviance.com/westborough		
	Parent's Email Address / User Name	Password

College Board / SAT Website

Website Address	Username	Password
www.collegeboard.org		

ACT Website

Website Address	Username	Password
www.act.org		

The Common Application Website

Website Address	Username	Password
www.commonapp.org		

College Portal Logins

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

School Name:		
Website Address	Username	Password

FAFSA

Website Address	FSA ID	FSA Password
www.fafsa.ed.gov		

Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

(Adapted from Petersons.com)

~ Junior Year / Fall & Winter ~

Evaluate your education options.

Now is the time to follow a more specific path. Decide whether you want to pursue full-time employment, further education or training (such as a vocational-technical school, career college, or two-year or four-year college), or a military career. If you're interested in attending a military academy, talk to your school counselor about starting the application process now.

Stay on track with your classes and grades.

Meet with your counselor to see what you still need to take. Even if your grades are not at a level where you would want them to be, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.

Make an initial college list and gather information.

Your list of colleges should include schools that meet your most important criteria (for example, size, location, cost, academic majors, or special programs). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you and develop a preliminary ranking of the schools on your list. Go to college fairs, attend college nights, and visit college web sites. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a school to your list.

Organize your college information.

Set up an organizational system that works for you. This will make it easier to locate the specific information you're looking for.

Organize a testing plan.

Figure out when you'll be taking important tests like the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams, and mark the dates on your calendar. You'll want to have plenty of time to prepare. Find out which exams the colleges you are considering require. Register to take the tests you need; most juniors take them in the winter or spring. You can take them again in the fall of your senior year if you want to improve your scores.

Make sure you're meeting any special requirements.

If you want to play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process and check with your counselor to make sure you're taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements. If you are considering going to a college to study visual or performing arts, a portfolio or audition may be required.

Stay involved with extracurricular activities.

Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Taking on leadership roles and making a commitment to the same groups are more important than trying out tons of new activities each year.

Talk to your family.

Have a discussion about the colleges you're interested in. Your family can learn about what you want to pursue and you can hear any concerns or suggestions they might have.

Learn more about financial aid.

Examine your family's financial resources and gather information about financial aid from the schools you're interested in.

~ Spring ~

Prepare a challenging schedule for senior year.

Meet with your counselor to determine what classes you'll take next year and to make sure you're on track for graduation. When you pick your classes, don't load up on easy electives. Colleges do consider your senior year courses and grades, so stick with a schedule that challenges you.

Begin narrowing down your college choices.

Make sure you have all the information you need about the colleges you're interested in (entrance requirements, tuition, room and board costs, course offerings, student activities, financial aid, etc.). Then begin comparing the schools by the factors that are most important to you and rank your choices.

Visit colleges and set up appointments.

You'll often have to plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor or coach if you're interested. You may also be able to talk to students if some classes are in session. If you have an interview, be sure to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer once you return home.

Take standardized tests.

Register for and take the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests as necessary. Be sure you have requested that your test scores be sent to the colleges of your choice.

Start a scholarship search.

There are lots of scholarships out there; you just need to spend a little bit of time and effort to find them. Use online scholarship search tools to find a wider range of options. The sooner you start looking for scholarships, the easier it will be to select some to apply to during your senior year.

Contact your recommendation writers.

Teachers and school counselors are often asked to write recommendations for lots of students. Consider whom you want to ask now and let them know so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall. Ask teachers who know you well and who will have positive things to say. Letters of recommendation from a coach, activity leader, or adult who knows you well outside of school may also be valuable.

Apply for a summer job or internship.

Summer employment and internships in fields you're interested in will look appealing on a college application or resume. The money you earn can also be used to help pay application and testing fees in the fall.

~ Summer ~

Continue to visit colleges.

Take a tour and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff.

Get advice from other college students.

If you have friends or relatives in college, talk to them about what college life is like; especially if they attend a school you're interested in. Although it's important to hear what the admissions staff has to say about a school, it's also important to get the students' perspective.

Create a Common Application account.

Visit www.commonapp.org and begin reviewing the requirements for completing this application. You can create and begin filling this out at any time.

Organize your financial aid information.

Develop a plan that includes a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines. Getting organized will make the process of applying a lot easier because you'll know where to find important information.

Start working on your application essays.

Compose rough drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. Make any revisions to your application essays and prepare final drafts. Don't forget to proofread your final essays a few times.

Make Early Decision and Early Action preparations.

If you plan to apply Early Decision to any school, take the time to visit the school again and make sure you're willing to commit. If you elect to apply Early Decision or Early Action, you should start working on your application as soon as possible because its deadline will be earlier than others.

~ Senior Year / Fall ~

Continue to learn about schools.

You'll have opportunities to speak with college representatives who visit your high school and attend college fairs. Fall is also a great time to visit the schools on your college list because classes are in session and you are better able to meet and talk with students and professors. You may even be able to sit in on a class or two.

Finalize your college list.

Use the information you've gathered from college visits, interviews, and your own research to decide which schools you will apply to. It's okay to apply to colleges that you think will be more difficult to get into. But it's also important to have a few schools where you're more confident you'll get in. Talk to counselors, teachers, and family about your final choices.

Submit financial aid forms.

Fill out the FAFSA, and if necessary, the CSS Profile. These forms can be obtained online. No matter what your family's income level is, the FAFSA is your main priority for financial aid purposes because it will determine how much you're expected to pay. Pay attention to deadlines. You can submit the FAFSA as early as October 1st.

Stay on track with your grades and extracurricular activities.

Colleges will look at what you've done in your senior year, so stay focused on doing well in your classes and maintaining a commitment to extracurricular activities.

Take standardized tests again, if necessary.

Colleges typically consider your highest scores, so there is no risk to giving the exams another shot. Remember to request that your new test scores be sent to the colleges of your choice.

Keep track of deadlines for applications and financial aid.

You'll be filling out lots of forms this year, so it's important to know what form is due when. Make a calendar showing the application deadlines for admission, financial aid, and scholarships. Early deadlines can be as soon as October 15. Financial aid forms such as the CSS Profile may have early deadlines as well.

Confirm letters of recommendation.

Discuss your goals and ambitions with your teachers so they'll be more prepared to write about you. Remember to write thank you notes to those that have written your recommendations.

Meet with your school counselor.

Your counselor can help you stay on track with admissions requirements. Make sure they know which colleges you want transcripts and letters sent to. Give your counselors any necessary forms at least four weeks before the actual deadlines so they'll have time to prepare the forms.

Complete applications.

Finish the application forms for the schools you're interested in and proofread them. Make sure you and the school counseling office have sent all necessary materials, including test scores, recommendations, transcripts, and application essays. No matter how late your deadlines are, you should plan to get everything done before winter break, so you won't be rushing as the deadlines arrive.

Schedule interviews and auditions.

If schools you are applying to require or recommend these, now is the time to make arrangements to schedule them.

Continue your scholarship search.

Apply for scholarships and keep searching for more scholarship and grant opportunities. Using online scholarship search tools is a great way to find potential aid. Ask colleges about what scholarships you may qualify for. The downtime after applications have been sent is a great time to focus on financial aid.

~ Winter ~

Get ready for the results of early applications.

If you applied Early Decision or Early Action, you'll soon find out if you were accepted. If you get in Early Decision, you have to withdraw your applications from other schools. If not, keep your other applications out there and focus on those colleges. Since Early Action applications are non-binding, you are free to apply to additional schools and continue your research.

Follow up on your applications.

Verify with your counselor that all forms are in order and have been sent out to colleges. Check with the schools to make sure they have received all your information, including test scores, transcripts, and recommendations.

Keep Working Hard

1st quarter and 1st semester grades are automatically sent. Remember that the schools will continue to keep track of your grades, so it's important to keep working hard throughout your senior year.

~ Spring ~

Watch for notification from colleges.

If you applied under the regular application process, you should receive an admissions decision by March or April. Notifications of financial aid awards should arrive by the end of April.

Check out your options if you're put on a waitlist.

Being put on a waitlist is not a rejection. You must notify the college if you want to remain on the waitlist. In the meantime, keep your options open in case you don't get in. Check out schools that have late or rolling application deadlines.

Compare financial aid packages.

Make sure to consider each financial aid award carefully. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact the financial aid office of the college to get more information. Financial aid is a key factor in deciding where you will attend.

Prepare for any last standardized tests.

You may be taking AP exams to earn some college credit as the school year winds down.

Make your final college decision.

Notify all schools of your intent by May 1. If you're not sure which offer to accept, make one more campus visit to the schools you're considering. Make sure to send your deposit to your chosen school and ask your school counselor to send your final transcript.

Follow up on financial aid information.

Make sure you have received a FAFSA acknowledgement. If you applied for a Pell Grant, you will receive a Student Aid Report statement. Review this notice, make a copy for your records, and send the original to the college you plan to attend. If necessary, apply for loans.

Complete enrollment paperwork for the college you will attend.

Once you accept an offer, you should receive information from the college about course scheduling, orientation sessions, housing arrangements, and other necessary forms. Be sure to complete all required paperwork by the appropriate deadlines.

Congratulations!

You've finished high school and are about to embark on an exciting new phase of life. Good luck!

Junior Year Action Plan

Prior to Scheduling the Junior Post-Secondary Planning Meeting with your Counselor You Must

- Complete the Junior Questionnaire and Parent Questionnaire in Naviance
- Complete and submit your first Activity Resume draft to your counselor
- Update your 'Colleges I am Thinking About' list in Naviance

Senior Scheduling Planning

- Select and enroll in appropriately challenging senior courses that will match your interests and post-secondary goals. Check individual colleges for any required course work for programs you are interested in.
- Identify and meet with a teacher if you have an interest in an internship. Complete the necessary forms for your internship.
- Meet with the VHS Coordinator if you plan to take a VHS course.

College Entrance Testing

- Take SAT or ACT practice tests (free on their websites)
- Decide if you plan to take a SAT/ACT Test Prep Course. If you are on free/reduced lunch, ask your counselor for a fee waiver for the SAT and/or ACT.
- Register for the ACT www.act.org and the SAT at www.collegeboard.org. Consider registering for the optional Writing section for both exams. Refer to colleges you are interested in for requirements.
- Check the colleges you are considering to see if they also recommend/require SAT Subject Tests (or if the ACT can cover both).
- If you are on an IEP or a 504**, you are required to submit needed paperwork to your counselor for submission to College Board and ACT for accommodations requests at least seven weeks before the test date. See your counselor for the paperwork requirements.

Tips:

- Answer the SAT Question of the Day (online, email, Twitter)
- Review questions and scores
- Read, read, read.....

College/Career Research

- Read the Westborough High School Post-Secondary Planning Handbook.
- Utilize career resources in Naviance (career interest profiler, Do What You Are Personality Assessment).
- Start an organizational system at home for your college materials.
- Determine if there are any volunteer/internship opportunities that would enhance your personal development and add to the richness of your applications.
- Research colleges regularly to help refine your list.
- Visit and tour colleges during junior year while the students are on campus. April school vacation is a great time to visit. **3 excused absences are given for college visits.**
- Request 2 teacher recommendations by having a personal conversation with those teachers by the end of junior year.
- Use Naviance, reference books, view books, books and brochures and school/college websites available to assist you in your search in the School Counseling Office as well as online resources.
- Have a conversation with your family to develop a plan when you will visit colleges.

College Fairs

- Boston National College Fair **April 4th and April 5th 2019** at www.nacacnet.org
- NEACAC New England Association of College Admission Counseling College Fair, TBA in 2019.
- Metro West College & Career Fair, **TBA in 2019.** www.mwccf.org
- Colleges That Change Lives College Fair, **May 18, 2019.** www.CTCL.org
- Be on the lookout for other college fairs in the spring, summer, and fall.

Other

- Request two teacher recommendations by having a personal conversation with those teachers by the end of junior year.
- Continue to update your activity resume.
- Start your Common Application.
- Register with the NCAA if you plan to play Division I or II sports.
- Check for important college application deadline dates.
- Begin searching for scholarships.
- Write down questions for your counselor.
- Begin working on your application essay over the summer.

Senior Year Action Plan

Fall Action Items

- Review your transcript and GPA.
- Attend Senior Information Night in September.
- Begin working on your college applications. Create a Common Application account if you haven't yet. www.commonapp.org.
- Review your college list. How many of your schools participate with the Common Application?
- Communicate with your counselor regularly.
- Possibly take SAT or ACT exams for the second/third time. SAT – August, October, November and December. ACT – September, October and December.
- Possibly take an SAT Subject Test.
- Continue to visit college campuses.
- Submit the Counselor Recommendation Request form and supporting items as early as possible. See deadlines on the request form.
- Counselor Recommendation - Discuss special circumstances to be addressed in recommendation.
- Teacher Recommendations - You must have a conversation with your teacher(s) this year regarding your letter of recommendation.
- After speaking with your teacher(s), remember to have the recommendation form signed **one month** prior to your first college deadline. Always follow up with a thank you note.
- Review, update, and finalize your college list. What is the timeline of your applications?
- Make sure your list is balanced in terms of level and difficulty for you to get in.
- Review the CSS Profile for financial aid on College Board. Do you have schools that participate? If yes, complete the profile as early as possible. Check college websites for specific CSS deadlines.
- Attend Financial Aid Night.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships.
- Create a FSA ID in order to complete the FAFSA.
- Create a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) account. Begin working on your FAFSA. The earliest you can access and submit is October 1, 2019. The earlier the better! Everyone should complete the FAFSA.
- Continue to work hard in school. Your colleges will see Q1 grades!

Winter Action Items

- Continue to work on your application(s).
- Last chances to take the SAT and/or ACT exam in December.
- Submit applications depending on your deadline.
- Keep up your performance in your classes. Mid-year grades will be sent to your colleges.
- Check colleges' financial aid web pages for deadlines to submit the FAFSA, CSS Profile and any other financial aid forms.
- College decision letters will begin to arrive if you applied early.
- Update your Naviance account with your college decisions.
- Remember to send your scores directly from College Board and/or ACT to your colleges.

Spring Action Items

- College decision letters continue to arrive. May 1 is "National College Decision Day"! Notify your college/university of your decision to attend by this date.
- Update your Naviance account with your college decision.
- Carefully review your financial aid award letter. See your School Counselor with questions.
- Complete the WHS Scholarship application. You will receive more information with directions in the Spring of 2020.
- Continue searching and applying for outside scholarships.
- Submit your deposit to your selected college/university.
- Review your college orientation dates/times. Complete the appropriate paperwork.

Student - Parent/Guardian - Counselor Responsibilities Throughout the Process

Student Will:

- Take ownership of and be responsible for the process.
- Exhibit seriousness of purpose by making use of available resources and by asking for assistance.
- Do the best academic work of which you are capable through the end of senior year
- Communicate with your school counselor and parent/guardian throughout the entire process.
- Complete all tasks outlined in the junior/parent letter, prior to your appointment with your counselor.
- Engage in an honest, thoughtful analysis of your strengths, opportunity areas, goals and dreams, and apply this knowledge in the college/career search and application.
- Read this booklet and become familiar with critical information necessary to have a successful experience.
- Select and enroll in appropriate courses for senior year.
- Research as necessary to identify and apply to a variety of colleges/careers that meet your goals.
- Register for the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject, TOEFL as necessary. Send scores directly from test companies to your colleges.
- Plan for college visits throughout junior year as well as April and summer vacation.
- Meet with and request two teacher recommendations by the end of junior year.
- Write your essay thoughtfully and honestly.
- Send your transcript to NCAA if you plan on playing Division I or II.
- Start working on your applications early enough so you are ready for all deadlines.

Parent/Guardian Will:

- Read this booklet and become familiar with critical information necessary for your student to have a successful outcome.
- Discuss future plans, including financial guidelines, with your child early in the research process.
- Have a conversation with your student about their junior appointment with their counselor.
- E-mail/call counselor with any questions or concerns.
- Check with your student periodically about their progress.

Counselor Will:

- Communicate with both students and parents, and be available and accessible throughout the process.
- Publicize and communicate important information to keep you informed about upcoming deadlines, events, responsibilities, etc.
- Advise you about colleges and programs that fit your academic profile and interests.
- Provide information on SAT, ACT, Subject Tests, TOEFL and encourage students to register for their testing dates.

Student Responsibilities for College Applications

Counselor & Teacher Recommendation Request Timeline

Application Due Date	Submit Required "Recommendation Request" Materials to Teachers/Counselors by:
October 15	September 17
November 1	September 30
November 15	October 18
December 1	November 1
January 1	November 20
January 15	December 13
Any Other Deadline	At least 4 weeks before

*Counselors and teachers do not work during school vacations.

As a Senior Student You will be Responsible for:

- Submitting a Counselor Recommendation Request Form along with:
 - A draft of your college essay,
 - A copy of your most up to date activity resume.
 - Completed Junior Questionnaire in Naviance
- Requesting two letters of recommendations from teachers in person by the specified deadline dates and submitting an official request.

If your teacher(s) are not submitting recommendations electronically, provide the teachers with envelopes that are stamped and addressed to each college with the following return address:

Westborough High School
90 West Main Street
Westborough, MA 01581

- Check college application deadlines and submitting application, fee, and other supplemental documents including essay(s) and resumes (if requested) to colleges.
- Requesting official scores from **College Board for SAT and SAT Subject Tests, ACT and TOEFL** testing organizations to be sent to the colleges to which you will be applying. Be sure to allow sufficient time for the scores to arrive as close to the college application deadline(s).

The School Counseling Office does not send test scores to colleges.

(Visit http://youtu.be/amH_PmlqZXY to see a video on how to send SAT scores to colleges.)

- Following the "Westborough High School 19-20 College Application Procedures," which will be available in early fall.
- Completing the FERPA Waiver and Authorization on the Common Application.

- Matching your Naviance and Common Application accounts.
- Requesting your transcripts.
- Tracking your application activity and ensuring your complete application materials have been received by your colleges.
- Reporting all admissions decisions including acceptances, denials, deferrals and waitlists to his/her counselors through Naviance.

The School Counseling Office Will:

- Send your high school transcript, counselor recommendations, teacher recommendations (if being sent electronically), school profile, and secondary school report.
- Work with your through the entire college application process as needed.

How Do Colleges Measure You?

Many college admission committees accept applicants on the basis of the following criteria listed in order of usual priority. Emphasis on these considerations can vary from college to college.

Academic Qualifications

THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR APPLICATION

✓ **High School Transcript**

- Final grades
- Level of courses
- Have you taken the most rigorous course load that you could manage?
- Consistency and an upward trend. Has there been improvement over the four years of high school?
- High school performance in relation to your graduation class
- Academic honors and awards
- Strong junior year

Junior year is the most important year as it will be the last complete set of grades you send to colleges when you apply. It corresponds to classes that are much closer in difficulty to college level work than freshman and sophomore year classes. For these reasons, you should make sure your academic performance reaches and stays at a high level throughout junior year.

In addition to your transcript, the following items are also extremely important factors.

- ✓ **Standardized Test Scores (SAT, ACT, etc.)**
- ✓ **Essay or Personal Statement**
- ✓ **Extra-Curricular Activities and Awards**
- ✓ **Recommendations from Teachers and Your Counselor**
- ✓ **Visits**
- ✓ **Interviews**
- ✓ **Demonstrated Interest/Meaningful Engagement**
- ✓ **Other Potential Considerations**
 - Alumni connections or legacy
 - Siblings at the same college
 - Institutional priorities
 - Reputation of WHS

Standardized Testing

The Tests of College Admission

PSAT: Official Name: **Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.**

Cosponsored by the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, the PSAT serves as valuable practice for the SAT. Usually taken during the fall of junior year (and sometimes offered to sophomores), the PSAT (when taken as a junior) is also used to select students for National Merit Scholarships. Duration: 2 hours, 45 minutes. www.collegeboard.org or www.nationalmerit.org.

SAT: Produced by College Board. Focuses on skills for college readiness. It includes two components: Mathematics and Evidence Based Reading and Writing. The SAT also has an optional essay component, which some colleges require. Duration: 3 hours, 50 minutes with the essay; 3 hours without the essay. www.collegeboard.org

ACT: Formerly called the American College Testing Program, the test is now officially simply the ACT (pronounced “A-C-T” not “act”). While still a test of problem-solving skills, the ACT closely tests a student’s knowledge of the “core curriculum” taught in most classrooms. The format of the ACT consists of five subject tests in English, math, reading, writing, and science reasoning. Colleges will not accept ACT without writing. Duration: 2 hours, 55 minutes. www.act.org

SAT Subject Tests: The College Board’s college admissions exams has 20 subject tests, each designed to measure what a student has learned in specific subjects such as English, history, language, mathematics, and science. SAT Subject Tests measure the extent of a student’s knowledge in a specific discipline. Students should consider taking these subject exams after the course material is completed. Duration: one hour for each subject test (up to three may be taken on one test date.) www.collegeboard.org

TOEFL: If English is not your first language, you may be required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in addition to SAT/ACT. TOEFL has become an admission requirement for non-native English speakers at many English speaking college/universities. ETS is the Educational Testing Service that administers the TOEFL Test. www.ets.org/toefl

AP Exams: The AP Exams are part of the College Board’s Advanced Placement Program, which gives students the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school. By doing well on the AP exam at the end of the course, high school students may earn credits toward their college graduation. Duration: 2-3 hours. www.collegeboard.org

- Tips:**
- * We encourage taking both the SAT’s and ACT’s at least once in the spring of junior year to determine which test is most appropriate for you.
 - * It is possible that students may score significantly higher on one of the exams (SAT or ACT) than the other
 - * Colleges accept scores from either the SAT or ACT for admission.
 - * There is a growing list of colleges that are “Test Optional”. Check out the list at www.fairtest.org.
 - * Check college requirements/recommendations to decide whether or not to take the SAT and/or ACT with Essay.

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SAT vs. ACT Basics

Your test score can be a key factor determining whether or not you get accepted by the colleges to which you are applying. But before you sign up for the ACT or SAT, you should do a little research to determine which of these two tests will present you in the best possible light.

The Two Tests Compared		
	SAT	ACT
Structure	3 tests + optional essay	4 tests + optional writing test
Number of Questions	154	215
Time per Question	1 minute, 10 seconds	49 seconds
Score Range	Composite 400-1600 (SAT Essay: reported in 3 dimensions, each 2-8)	Composite 1-36 (writing domain scores: 2-12)
Test Length	<p>Reading Test* 65 minutes 52 questions</p> <p>Writing and Language Test* 35 minutes 44 questions</p> <p>Math Test 80 minutes 58 questions.</p> <p>*Part of the Evidence Based Reading and Writing Component</p>	<p>Reading Test 35 minutes 40 questions</p> <p>Writing and Language Test 45 minutes 75 questions</p> <p>Math Test 60 minutes 60 questions.</p> <p>Science Test 35 minutes 40 questions</p>
	No guessing penalty	No guessing penalty

So How Do I Choose?

Colleges will accept either exam, giving you the opportunity to take both tests—and then use the highest scores to your benefit. Some students may perform significantly better on one test than the other, so you should consider taking both.

SAT to ACT Concordance Table

Table A1: SAT Total to ACT Composite

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1250	26	910	16
*1590	36	*1240	26	900	16
1580	36	1230	26	*890	16
1570	36	1220	25	880	16
1560	35	*1210	25	870	15
1550	35	1200	25	860	15
*1540	35	1190	24	*850	15
1530	35	*1180	24	840	15
1520	34	1170	24	830	15
1510	34	1160	24	820	14
*1500	34	1150	23	810	14
1490	34	*1140	23	*800	14
1480	33	1130	23	790	14
1470	33	1120	22	780	14
*1460	33	*1110	22	770	13
1450	33	1100	22	*760	13
1440	32	1090	21	750	13
*1430	32	*1080	21	740	13
1420	32	1070	21	730	13
1410	31	1060	21	720	12
*1400	31	1050	20	*710	12
1390	31	*1040	20	700	12
1380	30	1030	20	690	12
*1370	30	1020	19	680	11
1360	30	*1010	19	*670	11
1350	29	1000	19	660	11
*1340	29	990	19	650	11
1330	29	980	18	640	10
1320	28	*970	18	*630	10
*1310	28	960	18	620	10
1300	28	950	17	610	9
1290	27	940	17	600	9
*1280	27	*930	17	*590	9
1270	27	920	17		
1260	27				

Table A2: ACT Composite to SAT Total

ACT	SAT	SAT Range
36	1590	1570–1600
35	1540	1530–1560
34	1500	1490–1520
33	1460	1450–1480
32	1430	1420–1440
31	1400	1390–1410
30	1370	1360–1380
29	1340	1330–1350
28	1310	1300–1320
27	1280	1260–1290
26	1240	1230–1250
25	1210	1200–1220
24	1180	1160–1190
23	1140	1130–1150
22	1110	1100–1120
21	1080	1060–1090
20	1040	1030–1050
19	1010	990–1020
18	970	960–980
17	930	920–950
16	890	880–910
15	850	830–870
14	800	780–820
13	760	730–770
12	710	690–720
11	670	650–680
10	630	620–640
9	590	590–610

*Use this SAT score when a single score point comparison is needed.

Note: Concordance tables for the ACT Composite were derived from concordances of the ACT sum score.

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SAT Subject Tests

Most colleges do not require the Subject Tests. However, it's important to plan ahead. The SAT Subject Tests offer colleges a way to gauge your knowledge of particular subjects. Some colleges require one or more SAT Subject Tests, but even if a college does not require it, you may want to take the test to demonstrate your knowledge—especially if your high school grades are not a good indicator of what you have really learned.

SAT Subject Tests Offered	
English	Literature
Mathematics	Math Level 1, Math Level 2
Science	Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics
History	U.S. History, World History
Languages	Chinese Listening, French, French Listening, German, German Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese Listening, Korean Listening, Latin, Spanish, Spanish Listening,

Students can take one, two, or three SAT Subject Tests on each test date. Each SAT Subject Test is one hour in length.

Visit <http://www.compassprep.com/subject-test-requirements-and-recommendations/> to learn which colleges require or recommend SAT Subject Tests, as well as how many are required, if specific tests are necessary, or if the ACT can replace Subject Test requirements.

Subject Tests scores can also be used for consideration for the Stanley Z. Koplik Award. For more details on this, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery/>.

Test Prep

Test prep resources range from free online programs such as Khan Academy and test prep apps, private individual tutors, and large testing companies such as Kaplan and Princeton Review. In addition, there are a number of computer software packages available as well as printed materials sold at bookstores. All of these offer intense review of tests designed to improve student performance. When reviewing the myriad of options, the following factors should be considered:

Any quality preparation requires significant commitment of time and energy on the part of the individual student. Even then, there is no guarantee at all that scores will improve. Commitment to a test prep plan should not compromise a student's academic and personal involvement at Westborough High School. Remember, **the transcript will be the most important credential** as students apply to college. An increase in scores combined with a drop in academic performance is not a good trade off. As well, there are no "quick fixes" or easy methods that will have a significant impact on scores. Existing academic research (2009 NACAC Discussion Paper-Preparation for College Admission Exams) suggest average gains as a result of committed test preparation are in the neighborhood of 30 total points on the SAT and less than one point on the ACT, substantially lower than gains marketed by test preparation companies.

In addition to any for-pay test prep you may use, the counseling staff highly recommends that students take advantage of the free services and resources offered at the College Board and ACT websites, as well as other free resources on-line. Given the academics and social time constraints of The Westborough High School schedule, the best preparation for doing well on any standardized test continues to be working hard in the most challenging courses a student is capable. Any other review strategy, from an organizational program to individual tutoring, is best left to the summer when students can devote the full attention required to yield meaningful results.

SAT & ACT Test Prep Resources

Please note that the resources listed are not endorsed in any way by our Counseling Department.

Khan Academy SAT Prep www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat Free prep for the SAT, including videos and practice tests.

Sylvan Learning Center: www.sylvanlearning.com

Offering SAT & ACT test prep, personalized instruction in a small group setting, and timed practice tests.

Kaplan Test Prep www.kaptest.com

Offering SAT & ACT test prep, in a classroom setting, online, or private and small group tutor sessions.

Princeton Review www.princetonreview.com

Offering SAT & ACT test prep, in a classroom setting, small group session, private tutoring, or online.

Summit Education Group: www.mytutor.com

Offering SAT & ACT test prep, either one-on-one or in a classroom setting, plus free practice testing.

Quinsigamond Community College: <https://www.ed2go.com/qcc/online-courses/sat-act-preparation-1?tab=detail>

Offering SAT prep classes through the Continuing Education program.

Ivy Bound Test Prep: www.ivybound.net or call: 877-975-1600

Offering SAT & ACT Test prep in either a private, online or classroom setting. Also offers a "summer boot camp" for test prep. Based out of Boston.

SAT/SAT Subject Test Dates & Registration Deadlines 2019-2020

TEST	TEST DATES	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LOCATION
SAT Only	March 9, 2019	February 8, 2019	February 27, 2019	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	May 4, 2019	April 5, 2019	April 24, 2019	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	June 1, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 22, 2019	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	August 24, 2019	TBD	TBD	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	October 5, 2019	TBD	TBD	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	November 2, 2019	TBD	TBD	WHS
SAT & Subject Tests	December 7, 2019	TBD	TBD	WHS

SAT Registration is completed on www.collegeboard.org. Students must create a College Board account before registration.

SAT QUESTION AND ANSWER SERVICE (QAS) provides your test questions, the correct answers, scoring instructions, and a form to use to order a copy of your answer sheet. For all the questions, you get the question type; level of difficulty; and whether you answered correctly, incorrectly, or omitted the answer. QAS is offered for the Saturday test only in October and March, and for Saturday, Sunday, and school testing dates in May. QAS materials are mailed six to eight weeks after the test.

LATE REGISTRATION means that candidates who miss the Regular Closing Date must pay an additional fee to register as a Late Registrant.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL): If English is not your first language, check with colleges whether you are required to take the test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) instead of, or in addition to, the SAT. www.ets.org/toefl

Check out the Official **“SAT Question of the Day”** at www.collegeboard.org

SAT School Code: 222300
SAT Test Center Code: 22-860

SAT Scores and SAT Score Reports FAQs

How are score reports sent to colleges?

When you register to take an SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Test, you are allowed **four free score reports** to colleges **at the time of registration**. A complete report must be sent to all colleges to which you plan to apply that require scores.

You can use the College Board website, www.collegeboard.org, to send additional score reports to colleges and scholarship programs (Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card required). After the first four for free, there is a fee per score report—and scores are typically sent to colleges within one to two weeks.

- **Can't a college just download my scores when I apply?**
No. You must have an official score report sent to the college.
- **Do colleges see all of my SAT scores?**
Colleges will see all scores from completed exams at the time you arrange to send them. The only exception to this is if you use the Score Choice option (see below for details). Colleges are NOT sent new scores unless you opt to send a report after a future exam.
- **Does my School Counselor have copies of my scores?**
School Counselors receive students' SAT scores. However, when a student fails to note their high school code number (6 digit code) at the time of registration and/or the testing itself, the scores are not forwarded.

Score Choice for the SAT

Score Choice gives students the option to send SAT scores by test date in accordance with a particular college's score-use practice. Score Choice is optional, and if students choose not to use it, all scores are sent automatically. Each college, university and scholarship program has different score-use practices. Students are responsible for following an institution's practice, and colleges and universities will only receive the scores that students send them.

Availability

- Only scores from an entire SAT test (EBRW, Math, and Writing, if taken) can be sent. Scores of individual sections from different sittings cannot be selected independently for sending.

No Additional Cost

- Students can send any or all scores to a college on a single report — it does not cost more to send one, multiple or all test scores.
- Students receive four free score reports with their test registration fee. We continue to recommend that students take full advantage of the four free score reports included with their registration.

More Information

- Score Choice does not affect score reports sent to students or to their high schools — both will continue to receive all scores.

ACT Test Dates & Registration Deadlines 2019-2020

TEST DATES	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE FEE REQUIRED	LOCATION
February 9, 2019	Jan 11, 2019	Jan 18, 2019	WHS
April 13, 2019	March 8, 2019	March 25, 2019	WHS
June 8, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 20, 2019	WHS
July 13, 2019	June 14, 2019	June 24, 2019	Not @ WHS
September 7, 2019	August 9, 2019	August 25, 2019	WHS
October 26, 2019	September 27, 2019	October 13, 2019	WHS
December 7, 2019	November 1, 2019	November 18, 2019	WHS

Register online at www.act.org

ACT School Code: 222-300

ACT Test Center Code: 224-180

Advice On Sending Scores to Colleges

Remember

- You can send a limited number of score reports to colleges for free each time you register, but you can't see your scores before deciding to send the free reports.
- After you see your scores, you are charged for each new school you send them to.
- Colleges primarily consider your highest section scores, even if they are from different testing dates.
- Colleges will accept scores from either the SAT or ACT and generally do not require you to send both. Unless the college requires something specific, try to send your scores so you are putting your best foot forward.
- When in doubt, check in with your school counselor!

Massachusetts State University System and UMASS Minimum Admissions Requirements

The admissions standards for the state universities and UMass emphasize a strong academic high school background so that students enter college ready to learn. These standards represent minimum requirements; meeting them does not guarantee admission, since campus officials consider a wide range of factors in admissions decisions. Students shall have fulfilled all requirements for the high school diploma or its equivalent upon enrollment. *It is important to note that admissions standards for the state's community college differ. Community colleges may admit any high school graduate or GED recipient.*

Freshman Applications

The admissions standards for freshmen applicants at Massachusetts Public four year institutions have three primary components:

1. Successful completion of required academic courses in specific subjects; and
2. A minimum average and weighted grade point average (GPA) earned in high school level academic courses; and completed at the time of application.
3. The submission of SAT or ACT scores. (This may vary at different campuses. Review their websites for the most accurate information.)

Academic Course Requirement

All freshmen applicants are required to successfully complete the following courses in each academic subject, for a total of 17 required courses.

Subject	Requirement
English	4 courses
Mathematics	4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school.
Sciences	3 courses with laboratory work (drawn from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering) Technology/engineering courses must be designated as science courses (taken for science credit) by the high school
Social Sciences	2 course (including 1 course in U.S. History)
Foreign Languages	2 courses (in a single language)
Electives	2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)

High School Grade Point Average and SAT/ACT Sliding Scale Requirements

The required minimum weighted high school GPA is 3.0 for the four-year public campuses in Massachusetts. For freshman applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement, they must earn the following SAT or ACT scores in order to be eligible for admission.

The University of Massachusetts

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
University of Massachusetts, Boston
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Weighted High School GPA	Combined SAT Score (Evidence Based Reading and Writing and Math)	ACT
2.51 – 2.99	1030	20
2.41 – 2.50	1070	21
2.31 – 2.40	1110	22
2.21 – 2.30	1140	23
2.11 – 2.20	1180	24
2.00 – 2.10	1220	25
Less than 2.0	May not be admitted.	

State Universities

Bridgewater State University
Fitchburg State University
Framingham State University
MA College of Art
MA Maritime Academy
MA College of Liberal Arts
Salem State University
Westfield State University

Weighed High School GPA	Combined SAT Score (Evidence Based Reading and Writing and Math)	ACT
2.51 - 2.99	990	19
2.41 - 2.50	1030	20
2.31 - 2.40	1070	21
2.21 - 2.30	1110	22
2.11 - 2.20	1140	23
2.00 - 2.10	1180	24
Less than 2.0	May not be admitted.	

Please refer to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education website at www.mass.edu for more specific information regarding these admissions standards. Please note that these are minimum standards and meeting them does not guarantee admissions to a state college or university.

College Research

Initial Thoughts on College Research

A. How Do I Develop a List of Schools?

- Conduct a search using the college section of Naviance.
- View college websites.
- Discuss the research you have completed with your School Counselor.

B. How Do I Get More Information?

- Request information through Admissions Offices (websites, college fairs, etc.)
- Meet with college admissions representatives during fall visits to WHS (senior year). You can also speak with admissions representatives at an area College Fair.
- Keep up to date by checking college websites often and following schools on (social media, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc.)

C. How Can My School Counselor Help Me?

- Your School Counselor is available to review your progress in researching college options and assist in comparing your academic profile with individual college admissions requirements.
- You are encouraged to make appointments with your School Counselor for assistance throughout the admissions process.

D. When You Finish Your Research, Ask Yourself:

- What sets this school apart from others of its type?
- Does the school fit my academic profile?
- Would I be challenged here?
- Could I be happy here? Would I be comfortable?

E. Some Final Thoughts:

- Giving careful consideration to all information obtained during your research and campus visits, you should discuss tentative choices with your parent/guardian and your School Counselor as you decide where you will be applying for admission.
- It is recommended that students apply to a balanced list of colleges so that you have options at the end of the application process. Most students apply to 5 to 8 colleges that vary in terms of difficulty of getting in but that possess the characteristics you have concluded are important to you. Some students will apply to more; others will apply to fewer.

Types of Colleges

(Adapted from the College Board)

Is a college the same thing as a university? What does "liberal arts" mean? Why some colleges are called public and others private? Here are the basics on the types of colleges:

Public and private colleges

Public colleges are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located. Private colleges rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students.

For-profit colleges

These are businesses that offer a variety of degree programs which typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges, so be sure to check with the admission office at each college.

Four-year and two-year colleges

Four-year colleges offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.

Two-year colleges offer programs that last up to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges.

Liberal arts colleges

These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Universities

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Community colleges

Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

Vocational-technical and career colleges

Vocational-technical and career colleges offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

Colleges with a special focus

Some colleges focus on a specific interest or student population. These include:

- Arts colleges
- Single-sex colleges
- Religiously affiliated colleges
- Specialized-mission colleges

Arts colleges

Art colleges and conservatories focus on the arts. In addition to regular course work, these colleges provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor's degrees in the fine arts or a specialized field.

Single-sex colleges

All four-year public colleges, and most private colleges, are coed. But there are some private colleges that are specifically for men or for women.

Religiously affiliated colleges

Some private colleges are connected to a religious faith. The connection may be historic only, or it may affect day-to-day student life.

Specialized-mission colleges

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) focus on educating African American students. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are colleges where at least 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve.

Finding the College That's Right for You

Different schools have different personalities; your job is to find the right personality match for you. Look at some of the following questions you should consider.

Questions about the College

1. Where the college is located (city, small town, rural)?
2. What is the surrounding community like?
3. Is the college public, private, church affiliated?
4. What is the current enrollment?
5. What special or unique programs are offered?
6. Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements? What are they?
7. Are foreign language classes required while enrolled at the school?
8. What is the academic calendar (semesters, trimesters, and quarters)?

Questions about the Student Population

1. Where do the majority of students come from?
2. Do most of the students commute or live on campus? What percentages of students live on campus?
3. What kinds of activities are offered?
4. Are there sororities and fraternities on campus? What percentages of students participate in frats and sororities?
5. What club teams and/or intramural teams are offered?
6. Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
7. Does the college have a campus visitation program?
8. Is housing available/guaranteed for freshmen? Is it available all four years?

Questions about Academics

1. What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
2. How many students in last year's freshman class returned for sophomore year?
3. What was the GPA for the freshman class last year?
4. What is a college's procedure for student orientation, class placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
5. How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
6. What services does the school offer for the student who is undecided about a major?
7. How many students complete a degree program?
8. Do students graduate in four or five years?
9. What are the most popular majors?
10. Are students taught by full time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of the two?
11. What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (i.e., tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study skills workshops, job placement, etc.)?
12. Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?

Questions about Social Life

1. What is the average age of your student body?
2. What is the male-to-female ratio?
3. What percent of the students reside on campus?
4. Do you have coed dorms?
5. Is yours a "suitcase college" where most students leave on the weekends?
6. What are the procedures for selecting a roommate? Can you change roommates?
7. What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?

Questions about Admissions Policies

1. Which high school courses are required?
2. Are entrance exams required? Which ones? What range of scores is accepted?
3. Does the college require a certain GPA or rank in class?
4. Will my activities and involvement in school be considered?
5. Is there an Early Decision or Early Action option? Does the admissions office give preference to those students applying ED or EA?
6. On what basis are applicants accepted?
7. Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
8. Are there special requirements for certain majors? Does the school require foreign language to be accepted?
9. What percent of applications is accepted?
10. Can admission denials be appealed?
11. What are the application deadlines?

Questions about College Costs

1. What are the costs for tuition? Room & board? Are there other fees?
2. How much did your cost increase from last year to this year?
3. Is there a difference in the costs for in-state and out-of-state students?
4. Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
5. By when must an accepted student decide whether they will attend?
6. Are deposits required each year for returning students?
7. When do bills have to be paid?

Questions about Financial Aid

1. What percent of students receive financial aid based on financial need? What percentage of financial need does the college meet? 100%? 90%? 80%?
2. What percent of students receive scholarships based on academic ability?
3. What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
4. What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
5. Will my financial aid be adjusted if my need increases?
6. What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
7. When are financial aid applicants notified of their awards? How long do they have to respond?

Developing an Initial List of Schools

Westborough High School students are able to utilize Naviance to help with college searching and to stay organized throughout the process. To log in to Naviance, visit <https://student.naviance.com/westborough>.

With SuperMatch and other college search tools in Naviance, students can get matched from over 20 search criteria that will help them find colleges that are the right fit for them. Then, they can research the resulting schools and add them to their “Colleges I’m Thinking About” list.

College Search Criteria on Naviance Include:

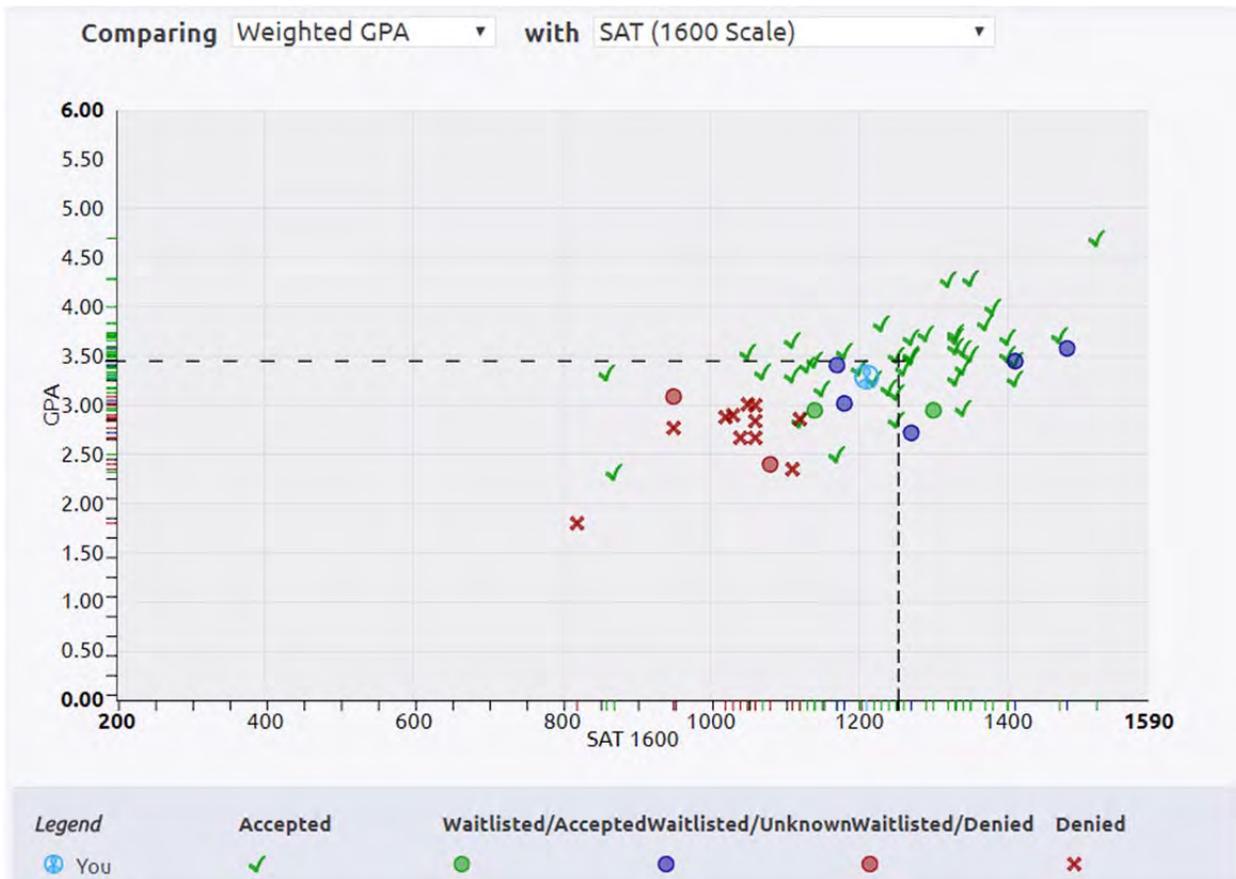
- Location
- Test Scores
- Ethnicity
- School Size
- Campus Setting
- Gender Mix
- Getting In
- Organizations
- Disability Services
- Greek Life
- Liberal-Conservative
- Great College Towns
- Majors
- Tuition and Fees
- School Type (4-year or 2-year)
- On Campus Housing
- Public or Private
- Historically Black
- Graduation Rate
- Special Services
- Sports
- Religious Affiliation
- LGBTQ-Friendly

College Data Comparison Tools in Naviance

Students can research colleges from the Naviance database and compare their own test scores and GPA to other students from Westborough High School who applied to the same colleges. Students can also see the application history of Westborough High School for specific colleges.

Scattergrams

Scattergrams are a visual representation of a school's applicant history and their admission results, plotted on a graph to share the intersection of GPA and standardized test scores. Scattergrams are used to analyze the history of specific applicants to a college, and show you exactly where you fall on the graph.



Balancing Your College List

The most effective college application lists have two key components: every school is one where you would happily attend, and the ENTIRE range of admission difficulty (from easiest to most difficult for you) is represented by the schools you are considering. Degree of difficulty is different for each applicant, so consider how your GPA and ACT/SAT scores compare to the data provided from the colleges as well as in Naviance. Remember that **final admissions decisions are based on a variety of factors**. There is no guarantee you will be admitted to a safer school, just as there is no guarantee you won't get into a school that is more of a reach.

Keep in mind that schools with acceptance rates of approximately 15% or lower are EXTREMELY competitive for any student, no matter how good grades and test scores are. If you are considering applying to a school in this group, do your research to make sure it is a good personal fit, and consider it separately from the rest of your balanced college list.

Range of Difficulty	How you can tell where a school falls in the range of difficulty.	Is Your List Balanced?
<p>Most Difficult for You</p> <p>While schools are often referred to in categories such as Reaches, Targets and Safeties, there is no exact line to neatly place each school on one side or another. You may find your list includes “harder targets” or “easier reaches.” Balance your list throughout the entire range.</p> <p>Safest for You</p>	<p>A vast majority of the admitted students have grades and test scores that are higher than yours.</p> <p>↕</p> <p>The average admitted GPA and test scores are higher than yours, but students with lower stats still got in.</p> <p>↕</p> <p>On paper, your academic profile is typical of the average student who is admitted.</p> <p>↕</p> <p>You are just exceeding the GPA and test scores of the average admitted student.</p> <p>↕</p> <p>Academically, you are among the top students that are admitted every year.</p>	<p>Most Difficult for You</p> <p>Safest for You</p>

Use the box on the right, or a separate piece of paper, to list the colleges you are considering, based on their range of difficulty for you as a unique applicant to be admitted. Is your list balanced? Do you have clusters of schools that are too big? Is your list too heavy at the top or bottom? Take the time to consider these questions as you make your final list.

How to Learn About Colleges on their Websites

Take a virtual tour

In addition to basic information—like the size of the campus and the student body—many college websites offer virtual campus tours. Get closer looks at different parts of the campus using interactive maps and other tools.

Learn about everyday life

A college's website, Facebook page and Twitter feed can tell you all about campus living. Look for information on campus clubs and organizations, cultural events, student government, sports, and more.

Browse the course catalog

Basic course information is often available in an online catalog. You can read short descriptions of all the current classes, learn about frequently offered elective classes and find out the requirements for each major.

Visit an academic department

Check out a posted syllabus to learn about the subjects a course explores and to estimate a class's workload. Read about professors' interests and expectations to find out what sorts of teachers you'll learn from. If you find a particular professor's research interesting, consider sending him or her an email.

Investigate support services

On a college's website, you can learn about the services it provides to help its students succeed. Academic support can include tutoring, writing assistance and study-skills courses. Other support includes things like help with the financial aid process, counseling and career-planning services.

Look into housing options

Find out what sorts of housing options are available for both freshmen and upperclassmen. You may be able to see images of dorm rooms, group houses, on-campus apartments and more.

Visit the library

Curious about how large a college's book collection is? Browse the online library catalog, find out which databases the college uses and learn how the library informs new students about its services.

Explore dining options

College campuses offer all sorts of dining choices, such as restaurants, cafés, dining halls and more. Many college websites feature menus so you can see what sorts of food a college serves.

Read the college newspaper

A college's newspaper can reveal campus issues and introduce you to a college's activities. What types of stories do current students report on? What local events get coverage? College papers can also give you a feel for the level of student thinking and writing on campus.

Contact alumni and current students

If you want to talk to someone who really knows a college, use online resources to look up the contact information for alumni and current students. You can send emails requesting an interview or feedback. Some colleges even have live chat rooms in which prospective students can mingle with current students.

Making the Most out of College Fairs

(Adapted from "Faring Well at a NACAC National College Fair"
NACAC: the National Association of College Admissions Counselors)

Mapping out a strategy

You can register for many college fairs online. By registering, you will receive a scannable code that colleges will use to collect your contact information electronically (name, address, phone number and email address) onsite, leaving you more time to speak with representatives at the fair.

Before you leave for the fair, make sure you have the following supplies: a copy of your registration admittance pass, a small notebook with your list of colleges and questions you want to ask; a pen or pencil; and a backpack or tote-bag to hold all of the college information you'll be collecting.

If you can't register online, students may wish to print up a few sheets of self-stick address labels. Include your name, address, phone number, email address, high school, year of graduation, intended major(s), and any extracurricular activities you're interested in. At the fair, slap the address labels on the college information cards to save you time in filling out the same information over and over at each college's table.

Although this may be a lot to consider, the real strategizing begins when you arrive at the fair. Look for a map of where each college is located and map out your route. Note where each college is located and plan the most efficient way to visit the colleges on your list. (For example, you want to make sure to visit all the colleges of interest to you in one room before moving to the next.) Also, make sure to check out the schedule of information sessions: many fairs have sessions on the search process, applications, financial aid, and other issues run by experts in the field. These sessions are a great place to ask general questions about the college admission process.

Your notebook and pen are great tools for keeping all those conversations straight. After you leave a table, jot down your impressions of the college and the answers the admission representatives gave you. Try to do this before you visit the next table, while your impressions are still fresh.

Teaming up

Depending on the time of day of the fair, both students and parents/guardians may be encouraged to attend. If a family member attends the fair with you, talk about your plan ahead of time. You may decide to split up--perhaps a parent can attend the financial aid seminar so you can visit more colleges. Another option is staying together for part or all of time. You may find that your parents/guardians or siblings ask different questions than you do. Also, it can be helpful to get a second opinion on your impressions of particular colleges.

Browsing

Planning ahead ensures that you get to visit the colleges that most interest you. But also make sure to leave time for browsing. "Be adventurous! Don't just focus on 'name' schools," says an admission director. "You may find that a school you've never heard of offers the exact major, extracurricular program, etc., that you're seeking."

Following up

By the time the fair is over, you'll have a bag filled with information about colleges--and a possible case of information overload. Don't succumb to the temptation of just piling all those brochures in some obscure corner of your bedroom. If you're feeling overwhelmed, take a day or two away from the college search. Then get out all of those brochures, along with the notes you took while at the fair, and read through them. You may find that some colleges aren't as interesting as you first thought. Others only look better the more you research them. For those colleges, follow up by filling out the information cards in the brochures or by starting to schedule college visits.

College Visit Planning

On most campuses, the tour guides are students selected by the college for their ability to project a favorable image of the school. Some may be hesitant to contradict the admissions department and others may be very honest and open about their own experiences.

At each college visit, you will want to see the campus as it's formally presented by the admissions office and in informal ways as well. Use the following tips to help organize your visit. To make sure you have time to see everything, remember to contact the college and schedule a visit.

Formal activities for a college visit

- Take a campus tour
- Interview with an admissions officer, if offered.
- Visit the financial aid office and ask questions
- Participate in a group information session at the admissions office
- Arrange through admissions to spend the night in the dorm with a current student, if offered.

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Questions to ask your tour guide

- How large are all of your classes? Who teaches you in your courses (a professor or a teaching assistant?)
- Does this school have a core curriculum? How restrictive is it?
- How is the library? Are you able to get books when you need and want them?
- When do you have to declare a major? What are the most popular majors?
- Tell me about housing. Are some dorms much better than others? Do many students live off campus?
- What percentage of students study abroad during any given year?
- What percentage of the student population is in a fraternity or sorority? Is it an important part of campus life?
- What are weekends like? What are alternatives to the typical party scene?
- What do you like best about your experience and education here?
- What kind of academic and/or personal support services are available?

Informal activities for a college visit

- Read the student newspaper—even the ads.
- Try to find other student publications—department newsletters, 'alternative' newspapers, etc.
- Eat in the cafeteria.
- Ask students why they chose the school.
- Wander around campus by yourself.
- Search for a favorite book in the library.
- Read the bulletin boards in the student union.
- Ask students what they like and dislike about the school.
- Sit in on a class (or two!)
- Talk to a professor in your chosen major(s)
- Talk to a coach in your chosen sport
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center
- Read the bulletin boards in the academic department to which you are applying.
- Eavesdrop on students to hear what they are talking—or complaining—about.

- Walk or drive around the community surrounding campus.
- Listen to the college's radio station.
- Try to see a dorm that you did not visit on the tour.
- See if you can imagine yourself at this college.
- Tour the athletic facilities. How modern is the equipment? Can you use the ice rink when the hockey team isn't practicing? What about the tennis courts?
- Visit the Career Center. Is it professionally staffed? How extensive are the job postings? What companies recruit on campus?
- Visit the college bookstore. Does it sell used textbooks? What kinds of books would you is required to read for your possible major?

Not all these ingredients will be possible for each visit. For example, classes are not usually held on Saturdays and some institutions frown on strangers spending the night in the dorms. Many colleges, however, will offer incentives (for example, free meal tickets and an overnight host program) to make certain that prospective applicants do visit and make the most of their opportunity. Again, ask specifically about such programs when scheduling your visit.

Students may have up to three absences excused to visit colleges during Junior and Senior years.

Campus Visit Checklist

Research the College

- Visit the college's website
- Read the view book, catalog, and/or brochures

Call Ahead (Don't Write) and Ask About

- Appointment for interview
- Tour times and starting point
- Distance / Directions
- Special accommodations
- Dining
- Dorms
- Class/Events Schedule
- What to bring
- Information that can be mailed to you in advance

Prepare an Agenda

- What do I need to know about the college?
- List of questions
- What do I want the college to learn about me?
- Resume
- Transcript
- Portfolio

During Your Visit Allow Plenty of time to

- Take a tour
- Have an interview
- Sit in on a class that interests you
- Try the food
- Meet a professor
- Stroll around the town and campus and browse through stores

After the Visit

- Make notes to refresh your memory later on.
- Jot down lingering questions.
- Send a Thank You note to the Admissions Office via E-mail or mail.

How Important is an Interview?

There are several reasons why an interview is important:

- Many schools track demonstrated interest or meaningful engagement as one way to judge the seriousness of a student's interest. When you make the time and effort to be present for an interview, you demonstrate a sincere interest in the institution. You are saying "I respect you and value your school's educational opportunities. I want to learn more about you and hope you want to learn more about me."
- The interview is an opportunity to learn firsthand about the school's academic philosophy and admission policy. It's a time for you to confirm or dispel any rumors you may have heard and to glean important facts. Understanding how the selection process works will help you make yourself a better candidate.
- The interview is an opportunity for you to present yourself in a very personal way. If you are articulate and outgoing with a depth of personal insight that makes you an attractive candidate, you should make certain to interview at every college in which you have a strong interest if interviews are available. If, however, you come across in a negative way, it may have damaging effects on your candidacy.

Different schools have different policies regarding interviews so you will have to contact each school before you visit. These are the possibilities:

- No interviews are offered. Instead, the college offers group information sessions only.
- Alumni interviews (typically off-campus).
- Interviews are optional and informational only (sometimes conducted by students who attend the college).
- Interviews are encouraged or required and become a part of the student's application folder.

If a college does offer on-campus interviews, take advantage of the experience. Consider interviewing first at a school that is not your first choice. This experience will be helpful for the next interview.

Planning Your Visit/Interview

The best way to approach visits/interviews is to sit down with a map and plan your trip. Only plan to visit one or two colleges in a day, and allow at least 3 hours for interviews, tours, and personal investigation. Once you have planned your trip, then telephone each college and ask if they give interviews. If they do, then make your appointment. Also inquire about tour times. Be sure to take a tour at each school; you will really gain a sense of the college if you make the best use of the visit.

Some Helpful Hints for Interviews

- Dress neatly and appropriately, not too formal and not too casual either.
- Have questions in mind for the interviewer. You can bring a notebook into the interview with a list of questions that you are prepared to ask.
- Look the interviewer straight in the eye.
- Answer questions directly.
- Be natural. Be yourself. Be relaxed.

What Are They Looking For?

The admission staff wants to gather information on the "total" student: academic and educational potential, motivation, and personality traits. More specifically, the interviewer will be collecting evidence of the following:

Intellectual Promise: This is a favorite area of faculty interviewers who see in each prospective student a potential colleague—one who will join them in the pursuit of knowledge. Questions about favorite books or courses are often attempts to measure your level of intellectual curiosity or determine your interest in learning as an end in itself.

Motivation: Your interviewer will try to measure your inner drive, probably by asking you to list some of your important accomplishments. When doing so, remember to explain why each accomplishment was important.

Values: There is no "right" or "wrong" being tested. Your interviewer simply wants to know what values you will bring with you to the campus. This should not be misconstrued as an attempt to purge the student body of undesirable elements. Be relaxed and prepared to state your beliefs with firmness and conviction.

Personality: As with values, there are no rights or wrongs in this area. Your interviewer will try to measure your approach to everyday life in an attempt to determine if you are a good fit with the personalities of the current student body. Not being so does not mean a denial of admission. Being different may actually be a plus, but you never know until the admission committee's final analysis.

Interest in the Institution: Demonstrating a sincere interest in the school to its admission officers during the interview.

Leadership: Every college hopes to enroll a certain number of students who will generate activity and provide the student leadership so necessary for successful extracurricular activities. The types of positions you have held (elected or appointed) and how well you have carried out your responsibilities will be an important factor in most college interviews. If you haven't held an official position in a club or activity, think of other ways you have demonstrated leadership in your life and share those. Leadership can show itself anywhere!

Preparation: Your interviewer will expect some familiarity with the college and its admission process and will attempt to discover how much you learned about the institution prior to your visit. Being well prepared (taking time to learn about the institution) will demonstrate your sincerity and enable the interviewer to go into higher levels of discussion much more quickly. Poorly prepared students (those who ask whether the school has a crew team or requires SAT scores, for example) lose points in the interview process.

Confidence: Once again, your body language is a good sign of your attitude toward new and challenging tasks. Be careful not to be boastful, egotistical, or overconfident. At the same time, do express your positive attitude toward new and challenging opportunities.

Independence: How well would you cope in an unusual situation without family and close friends? Evidence of your independence can usually be brought out with questions such as "How do you spend your free time?" and "Have you ever been away from home for a relatively long period of time?"

Articulation: Your ability to speak well, using good diction, will make a positive impression on the interviewer. Role-playing with a friend is terrific practice, but beware of allowing your answers to become over-rehearsed. Pure spontaneity can be a big plus if you are clear in what you have to say and concise in how you say it.

Other Traits: Other areas that might be of interest to the institutional representative include your organizational skills, sincerity, commitment to task, and social conscience. These vary by institution and may or may not become critical to decisions made later on in the selection process.

Sense of Humor: Be ready to crack a smile if your interviewer is in a good mood or detects you might be too tense and tries to loosen you up a bit. Don't be afraid to laugh (that is, if the interviewer has said something amusing).

Integrity: This should be self-explanatory but there are many ways of being dishonest in an interview. Little white lies (for example, "my School Counselor told me not to tell anyone my SAT scores") can be just as damaging to the interviewer's overall opinion as outright falsehoods.

Originality: This is particularly important as so many young people seem governed by peer pressures to conform. Before your interview, take some time to think about those aspects of your character which make you unique. Bring expressions of your creativity into the conversation so they may be recognized by the institution.

Self-Image: Your body language is often a tip-off about how you really feel about yourself. Many admission officers say there is no more important character trait to succeeding in college than a healthy self-image. This is what brings you through the difficult days every student has during the college years

Sample Questions from College Admissions Interviews

Here are a few questions that college interviewers have told us they like to ask.

- If you could read the evaluation your teacher has written about you, what would it say?
- Are your test scores an accurate reflection of your true abilities?
- Are you satisfied with your academic record to date?
- What has been your most satisfying contribution to your school?
- How would you describe your two or three best friends?
- Do you have any anxieties about going to college?
- What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
- If you could become head of your school for a month or so, what are some of the most significant changes you would make?
- What do you want to learn during your college experience?
- What priorities have you established for your college experience relative to your career goals?
- If you had to convince someone who dislikes your favorite subject that it can be worthwhile, what would you say?
- What have you done in the last six months to help another person?
- How do you like your high school? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The most negative? What would you like to change about your high school?
- What would your teachers say about you as a person?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
- What are you looking for in a college? What interested you in this college?
- What are some of your goals—personal and career? Talk about a particular class assignment in which you found yourself most stimulated intellectually.
- What is your reason for participating in athletics (student government, community service, theater, etc.)?
- How do you expect, hope, or plan to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, and activities to the college level?
- What is your favorite subject in high school and why? What might you study in college?

- What books or authors have made a lasting impression on you? What book has inspired, entertained, or challenged you? What was the last book that you read for pleasure?
- What are the critical events in your life so far? Who has influenced you the most?
- How have you spent your summers?
- What are your reactions to certain current events? (Be somewhat versed on the headlines or prominent stories in the last few weeks.)
- How would you describe yourself as a person?
- How do you spend your free time?

Remember that these are sample questions. None may be asked, but the important thing is to think about how you would answer questions like these. The very process of doing that is a good exercise in preparation for the interview. Once your thinking is stimulated, you can handle most questions.

Be sure to write a thank you note after the interview. The thank you note should be brief and specific about your interview (a hand-written note OR email is appropriate).

Pieces of Your Application

Tips for a Great College Essay

The purpose of the essay is to show admission officers (whom you've never met) that you would be a good match for their colleges.

At the most basic level, it allows admission officers to evaluate your communication and writing skills. In addition, the essay allows admission officers to discover more about you as a person – a side of you not shown by statistics like grades and standardized test scores. The essay gives information about your history, attitudes, interests and creativity; it gives a sense of your values and goals. What admission officers are doing is creating a community, looking to see how you would fit in that community, what you would bring to that community, and what sets you apart.

How the Essay is Evaluated

- Is your writing mechanically sound? Is your writing style comfortable? Can you write a good sentence? Can you write a good paragraph? Do you address the question asked?
- Can you form a thesis? Can you discuss a theme? Can you get in and out of the essay with some finesse?
- Do you write with style, nuance and creativity? Do you write with a distinctive voice?

Choosing a Topic

Choose the essay topic that appeals to *you* most. The topic is less important than your delivery. Remember: there is no right or wrong answer. The college just wants to know who you are and how your mind works.

There are no bad topics; but be careful about the following common topics:

- Winning or losing the big game.
- Relationship problems
- Telling troubles to a journal
- Anything that suggests that you don't see the world beyond high school
- Simple solutions to world problems
- Essays in poor taste
- Parent-bashing
- Cynicism – it almost never plays well.

The First Draft

- Spend as much time thinking as you do writing.
- Narrow your topic and try to be as specific as possible.
- Brainstorm – scribble down everything you can think of about your chosen topic. Pick out the good stuff and work it into a brief outline.
- Write a rough draft. Read it – out loud.
- Ask yourself: Have I answered the question? Have I focused on the topic? Is it specific and detailed? Have I written in my own voice?

Writing the Essay

- A good opening sentence will hook the reader. If *you're* bored, the reader will be bored.
- Add details to make it richer and more interesting.
- Be revealing... let us know things about you, but don't be confessional.
- Be careful with sentimentality... use it sparingly.
- Beware of trying to impress admissions officers with what you think they want to hear.
- Don't try to "prove" your intelligence by choosing a topic you think makes you sound smart. Avoid sophisticated words when simpler ones will suffice.
- Don't be afraid to use your imagination. Don't be afraid to be unconventional. But, don't be weird just for the sake of being weird.
- Be concise. Ask yourself: "Did I make my points directly and without a lot of unnecessary padding?"
- Show; don't tell. Don't just list what you have done – detail it with action words. Use quotations wisely – if it's window dressing, you probably don't need it.
- Ask a teacher, parent or friend to read your second draft. Ask them: "Is it interesting? Does it sound like me? Was it fun to read?" Listen to what they have to say, but don't let someone else rewrite the essay for you.
- Read what the application says about essay length, but don't write just to fill space.

Navigational Hazards

The little details aren't the most important part of the essay, but you *are* trying to make a good impression. You don't want to the admission committee to think you're a sloppy, careless writer.

- *Proofread!* If you are sick and tired of the essay, let someone else proof it. Spell-check won't catch everything!
- Check your word choice by reading out loud.
- Make sure that if you are including the name of the college in the essay, it's the correct school. *Wesleyan* doesn't want to know you've always wanted to go to *Smith*.
- If you are going to take risks (which is OK), be sure you know your subject matter and feel comfortable with that style of writing. For instance, poetry is often risky.
- Don't try to inject humor if you're not funny. Be careful even if you *are* funny... it often doesn't translate in writing.
- Remember: a college essay is not a research paper – make it about you.

The Biggest Mistake of All

- Don't plagiarize: admission officers have read all the books and seen all the websites.

The Good News

- Don't stress too much – write what you feel, do it well... and they'll like you!

Adaptation from Deb Shaver / Dean of Admission / Smith College / 2012

Build Your Activity Resume

Your activity resume is an important way you will communicate personal initiatives and achievements with colleges.

Participation in extracurricular activities either at Westborough High School or in your community will contribute to your overall development as an individual. As you pursue post-secondary plans, it will be important for you to clearly communicate your involvement. As you create your activity resume, be sure to give yourself credit for your contributions by using **ACTION** statements of your extracurricular activities on your resume.

Examples on how to Help you Demonstrate your Personal Initiatives

- **Recruited** volunteers organized and led a team to participate in a charity event.
- **Solicited** donations to sponsor participation in a walk to raise money for a charity.
- **Taught** a skill to others (i.e. softball to youngsters).
- **Collected** donations (i.e. can drive for a food pantry).
- **Led** committee or a sub-committee for planning an event (i.e. junior prom).
- **Contributed** time and talents (i.e. singing in a church choir).
- **Engaged** others through encouragement to participate in an activity (i.e. encourage kids to participate in arts and crafts activities).
- **Organized** an event to raise awareness about world issues (i.e. dinner to raise awareness about animal extinction or environmental issues).
- **Provided** orientation for new group members (i.e. orient new alter serves to familiarize them with the surroundings and teach them responsibilities associated with their role).
- **Helped** produce, advertise, and distribute a product (i.e. a school monthly magazine or newspaper).
- **Responsible** for sharing information (i.e. notifying other students of all announcements, distributing flyers, and putting up displays).
- **Recruited** others for membership in a group (i.e. recruited others to join a sports team or after school activity group).
- **Promoted** awareness on issues (raised awareness of teen issues by offering discussion groups).
- **Motivated** others through team spirit, positive attitude, role modeling.
- **Acknowledged** others personal contributions.

Leadership: A student's participation that has resulted in motivating others to do work toward the goals of the organization. A student can exhibit leadership in the classroom, at work, or in other school or community activities, as long as student's participation has resulted in:

- Motivating others to work toward the goals of the organization.
- Resourcefulness in identifying problem and posing solutions.
- Demonstration of initiatives, reliability, and dependability.
- Inspiration of positive behavior in others.
- Delegation of responsibilities to others.

Sample Activity Resume

School Clubs/Activities

Activity Name	Your Role and/or Leadership Position if Applicable	Describe this activity including what you accomplished and any recognition you received, etc.	Participation Grade Levels 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Timing of Participation School Yr./All Yr./ School Break	Hrs Per Wk	Wks Per Yr
					-	
					-	
					-	

Athletics

Activity Name	Your Role and/or Leadership Position if Applicable	Describe this activity including what you accomplished and any recognition you received, etc.	Participation Grade Levels 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Timing of Participation School Yr./All Yr./ School Break	Hrs Per Wk	Wks Per Yr
					-	
					-	
					-	

Outside of School Clubs/Activities

Activity Name	Your Role and/or Leadership Position if Applicable	Describe this activity including what you accomplished and any recognition you received, etc.	Participation Grade Levels 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Timing of Participation School Yr./All Yr./ School Break	Hrs Per Wk	Wks Per Yr
					-	
					-	
					-	

Community Service

Activity Name	Your Role and/or Leadership Position if Applicable	Describe this activity including what you accomplished and any recognition you received, etc.	Participation Grade Levels 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Timing of Participation School Yr./All Yr./ School Break	Hrs Per Wk	Wks Per Yr
					-	
					-	
					-	

Work Experience

Activity Name	Your Role and/or Leadership Position if Applicable	Describe this activity including what you accomplished and any recognition you received, etc.	Participation Grade Levels 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Timing of Participation School Yr./All Yr./ School Break	Hrs Per Wk	Wks Per Yr
					-	
					-	
					-	

Other Activities

Academic Awards/Honors

Name of Award	Grade Level 9 / 10 / 11 / 12	Description of Award

The Terrific 250 Action Verbs

acted	convinced	fabricated	motivated	served
activated	corrected	facilitated	negotiated	serviced
actuated	corresponded	familiarized	observed	set goals
adapted	coordinated	fashioned	obtained	shaped
addressed	counseled	figured	operated	simplified
administered	counted	fixed	orchestrated	sold solved
advised	created	forecast	ordered	sorted
allocated	critiqued	formulated	organized	sparked
analyzed	customized	founded	originated	spearheaded
approved	cut	functioned as	overhauled	specified
arbitrated	dealt	funneled	oversaw	staffed
arranged	debated	gathered	perceived	started
assessed	decided	generated	performed	stimulated
assigned	decreased	governed	persevered	studied
assembled	defined	guided	persuaded	strengthened
assisted	delegated	handled	pioneered	suggested
attained	delivered	headed	planned	summarized
audited	demonstrated	hired	prepared	supervised
authored	demystified	identified	presented	supplied
balanced	designed	illuminated	presided	surveyed
billed	detected	illustrated	prioritized	synthesized
brought	determined	imagined	processed	systematized
budgeted	developed	implemented	produced	taught
built	devised	improved	programmed	tested
calculated	diagnosed	increased	projected	took charge
carried out	diagrammed	influenced	promoted	too over
chaired	directed	informed	proposed	trained
channeled	disciplined	initiated	provided	translated
charted	dispatched	innovated	publicized	triggered
clarified	dispensed	inspected	published	upgraded
classified	disseminated	installed	purchased	validated
coached	distributed	instituted	realized	verified
collaborated	documented	instructed	recommended	worked
collected	doubled	integrated	reconciled	wrote
communicate	drafted	interpreted	recorded	
compared	drew	interviewed	recruited	
compiled	edited	introduced	reduced costs	
completed	eliminated	invented	referred	
composed	educated	investigated	remodeled	
compounded	enabled	judged	repaired	
computed	encouraged	launched	represented	
conceived	engineered	lead	researched	
conceptualize	enhanced	lectured	resolved	
concluded	enlarged	maintained	restored	
conducted	enlisted	managed	retrieved	
confirmed	established	marketed	reviewed	
conserved	estimated	managed	revised	
consolidated	evaluated	maximized	revitalized	
constructed	examined	mediated	safeguarded	
consulted	executed	minimized	saved	
contacted	expanded	moderated	scheduled	
contracted	expedited	modernized	screened	
contributed	explained	modified	secured	
controlled	extracted	monitored	selected	

Letters of Recommendation

Most colleges and universities—and many other programs including scholarship applications—require that students provide recommendations to support their applications. If there is a cardinal rule for the recommendation process it is this: **ASK EARLY (Spring of Junior Year)**.

How many recommendations do I need? Typically you will be required to have a counselor letter and two teacher letters. But the answer depends on the application requirements of the colleges to which you are applying. Your School Counselor recommendation is a standard part of your application package, along with your transcript, that is sent from the high school to the college. Apart from that, a college will usually specify how many other recommendations they want and if they want letters from teachers in specific subjects. That number varies from school to school. This is one of the many reasons that it is absolutely essential that students read all application instructions very carefully and early. The most accurate place to check application requirements is on the college website under the Admissions section.

Should I include extra recommendations? You may want to ask someone who is not a teacher to write one more if there is something substantial to be said, or that is distinctly different than what your teachers will say. We strongly suggest speaking with your counselor if you are considering an additional recommendation.

Who should write my recommendations? Be sure to note any requirements in your application instructions. A college may dictate the subject areas from which they want your recommendations. Generally, at least one of your recommendations should be from a core academic teacher and you should generally choose teachers who know you well. Senior year teachers who have only had you in class for a short time are generally not the best choice.

Best Choices:

- Junior year teachers (but not required)
- teachers whom you have had more than once
- teachers who know you in other capacities (i.e. as a coach or club advisor), and
- teachers in the field in which you intend to major

Ask teachers who have seen the best of you and who can make the most positive remarks. This does not, however, mean that you have to choose a teacher in whose class you received an 'A'. Sometimes, a teacher who has witnessed your efforts in trying to be successful in a particularly challenging class can have more to say about you as a student who can overcome obstacles than a teacher can who saw you breeze through his or her course material.

You should try to avoid overlap in subject area (i.e. don't have two science teachers). Try to have some balance.

~ REMEMBER TO ASK EARLY ~

~ IN PERSON ~

~ BEFORE SCHOOL LETS OUT FOR SUMMER ~

Starting Senior Year

College Representative Visits to WHS

During the fall, WHS hosts a number of college and university representatives that will meet with students in a group setting. Below are the guidelines for attending these visits.

College Visit Policies

1. College visits are open only to seniors.
2. Students may only sign up for **one visit per day**.
3. Students must sign up in Naviance, print out a pass to attend, and get approval at least a day in advance of the visit. It is at the teacher's discretion, based on the day's planned lesson, whether or not to honor the pass. Classes come first!
4. Students are to report to their scheduled classes first, present the pass, and then arrive at the School Counseling Office with the pass at the scheduled time of the visit.
5. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed work.
6. Please remember that it is a privilege to attend a visit. Please make sure that the college matches your interests and abilities.

NOTE: All College Visits are listed in Naviance.

Signing Up for College Representative Visits

- Login to Naviance, <https://student.naviance.com/westborough>
- Under the heading, "**Quicklinks within Naviance**", select "**Register for Fall College Visits.**"
- Review list of colleges attending and if interested, select "**Register Now**"
- You will receive a reminder email two days prior to the visit
- You must have your teachers permission to attend. See the policy above.
- Passes are available in the School Counseling Office, the department website, and Naviance.

"Beyond the Guidebook" College Questionnaires

Colleges that visit WHS all complete a questionnaire we call "Beyond the Guidebook", which includes their contact information and pertinent details about their school that can't easily be found elsewhere. Visit <http://bit.ly/whsbeyondtheguidebook> to see questionnaires from over 100 institutions.

Managing Your List of Schools

Keep an updated list of all the schools you are considering in your “Colleges I’m Thinking About” page. Finalize your list after conferencing with your counselor and after discussing your choices with your family.

Colleges I’m thinking about				
+ Add Colleges to List				
		UPDATE INTEREST	MOVE TO APPLICATION LIST	
	College	Delivery type 	Added By	Expected Difficulty*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridgewater State University		Student	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Massachusetts Maritime Academy		Student	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worcester State University		Student	N/A

Admission Prospects: Make sure that your list includes schools across the entire range of difficulty for you to get in. See the section titled “Balancing Your College List” for more information, and use the scattergrams and other data in Naviance for assistance.

These icons in Naviance indicate how the college accepts documents from WHS (transcript, school profile, letters of recommendations, and secondary school reports)

-  **Electronic Submission (Accepts the Common Application)**
-  **Electronic Submission (Does NOT Accept the Common Application)**
-  **Traditional U.S. Mail (Does NOT accept the Common Application)**

In senior year when you add colleges to your “Colleges I’m Applying To” list in Naviance, different icons may appear, depending on how you choose to apply. Details about these icons will be available in the fall.

APPLICATION DEADLINES: Check for Early Decision, Early Action, Rolling, Priority and Regular Deadlines.

The Common Application

What is it? The Common Application is a single application for undergraduate college admission, used by over 750 of colleges and universities. Students have been using the Common Application since 1975.

The Common App is comprised of:

1. The application core (e.g., information on your classes, your GPA, your test scores, your activities, your personal statement (or college essay), etc.) that is sent to all the colleges for which you are using the Common App.
2. College specific questions: writing supplements, additional short answer or essay questions, and additional information requested of you by each college. Not all colleges require a writing supplement.

How do I find it? www.commonapp.org

When can I create an account?

You can create an account during Junior year and continue using it for your applications next year. Be mindful to use the correct year of entry.

Which colleges are members of the Common Application?

You can find the member list on the Common Application website, www.commonapp.org

Do colleges prefer that I use their own application?

No. Feel free to use the Common Application or the college's own application. As well, if you receive a no-fee application or fee waiver for a college, you may apply that to the Common Application if you choose. (Important: Do not submit both the Common Application AND a college's own application to the same college.)

Additional Writing Questions

In addition to the standard "College Essay," some schools require or recommend for you to submit written answers to additional questions. If applicable, these prompts can be found on the "My Colleges" tab, in either the individual college's Application Questions, or as a separate "Writing Supplement." Answer length will vary, depending on each question asked. Some could be as short as 50 words while others could be as long as 500 words or more. Some examples of questions may be why you want to attend the specific school or enroll in a specific program or, to write about yourself in a specific way. Be sure to review these areas early on for each college so you are aware of all requirements.

TIPS

- Once you have submitted your application to a school, you cannot edit your application for that school. You can edit it for future applications.
- Don't wait until the last minute to submit! The Common App website becomes very busy close to deadlines.

The Coalition Application

What is it? A new application platform for over 130 different schools. Some schools use this application exclusively. Work with your school counselor if you are using this application.

How do I find it? www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.

Definitions of Admission Options in Higher Education

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST *SUITS YOU?*

<u>Non-Restrictive Application Plans</u>			<u>Restrictive Application Plans</u>	
Regular Decision	Rolling Admission	Early Action (EA)	Early Decision (ED)	Restrictive Early Action (REA)
<p><u>Definition:</u> Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.</p> <p><u>COMMITMENT:</u> NON-BINDING</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.</p> <p><u>COMMITMENT:</u> NON-BINDING</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.</p> <p><u>COMMITMENT:</u> NON-BINDING</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.</p> <p><u>COMMITMENT:</u> BINDING</p>	<p><u>Definition:</u> Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.</p> <p><u>COMMITMENT:</u> NON-BINDING</p>
<p>Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.</p>			<p>Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.</p>	

Adapted from NACAC.

* Be on the lookout for invitations from colleges to apply through institutional applications that offer incentives such as application waivers or priority review. Examples of these applications include, "Fast Forward" and "Priority Application," among others. You may find however that it is possible to receive these benefits without applying through these means. It is best to research each of the application options a school offers before committing to one.

Community College and Joint Admissions

More and more students are enrolling in community colleges across the nation, even as media attention focuses on the most selective four-year colleges. Why are students choosing community colleges, and should you consider a community college as a part of your college search?

The Economic Option

One reason for the growing popularity of community colleges is their relatively low tuition. Overall, the average cost of public community colleges is less than half the cost of public four-year colleges and about one-tenth the cost of private four-year colleges. As a result, students who spend two years at a community college and then transfer to a four-year college spend less money for the same bachelor's degree as their classmates.

The Associate's Degree Option

The two-year associate's degree is a goal itself for many community college students. Community colleges offer a wide variety of programs that train students to work in specialized fields, such as dental hygiene, computer technology, nursing, and culinary arts.

The Transfer Option

For students who want the four-year degree, community colleges work with four-year colleges to make sure those students can make a smooth transfer. Most community colleges maintain transfer or "articulation agreements" with a number of four-year colleges. These agreements map out exactly which community college courses will transfer to a specific four-year college. They may even guarantee admission as a junior to students who fulfill certain course work and grade requirements. For more information on whether the community college you're considering has articulation agreements with the four-year colleges that interest you, talk to an academic advisor at the community college. Some students even use their two years at community college to improve their chances of getting into a more selective four-year college.

The Flexible Option

Most community colleges cater to students of all ages and backgrounds. As a result, you'll often find more options in class scheduling, including evening and weekend classes. Distance learning is also one of the strengths of community colleges, with a variety of courses offered online, by correspondence or by other alternative methods.

An Option for You?

Community colleges can have some drawbacks for students who want the residential college experience. The majority of community colleges do not offer dorms (although you can find some that do), and many community college students have full-time work or family obligations. As a result, you may not find the same breadth or depth of social options and extracurricular activities that you would at a traditional four-year residential college. On the other hand, community college often provides a more supportive learning environment, with smaller class sizes and an emphasis on academic and career counseling, than do larger universities.

As with all college decisions, make sure to research the specific community colleges that interest you. Like their four-year counterparts, each community college is unique, and you must decide for yourself which colleges may be right for you.

Transfer and Joint Admissions Programs for Students in Massachusetts

Students can search for approved transfer and joint admissions programs between the different community colleges and four-year campuses by visiting www.masscc.org/transfer%20 and www.mass.edu/masstransfer/a2b/home.asp

Financial Aid

Among the many things that must be considered to help choose a “best fit” college, it is important that students and families begin a conversation early in the process about the realities of college costs.

Financial Aid Basics

Types of Financial Aid

Need-Based Determined by standardized applications such as the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* or the *CSS Profile*.

Merit-based Need is not considered. Merit awards are determined by each specific college and may require their own application.

FAFSA

- Available on the web at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- There is no fee associated with this application.
- The FAFSA becomes available and may be submitted as early as October 1st of senior year.
- The FAFSA considers your finances from the “Prior-Prior Year (PPY)” of when you will enter college. Students entering college in the Fall of 2020 will submit financial information from 2018.
- Once in college, students must resubmit the FAFSA every year for continued financial aid.
- To be eligible for any federal aid programs, students **must** submit the FAFSA.
- Student and one parent/guardian must get a FSA ID in order to electronically sign the FAFSA.
- Parents/Guardians use the same FSA ID for all children who are completing the FAFSA.

CSS Profile

- This form is used by many private colleges to determine institutional aid.
- An application fee is required.
- Once you have decided on the colleges you will be applying to, you should check online at <http://cssprofile.collegeboard.org> to see if any of your college choices require this application.
- Check the deadlines for any ED/EA schools. You may have to submit the CSS Profile as early as **October**.

Individual College/University Forms

- Some schools require financial aid forms specific to their own campus.
- This information is often used to assist in distributing a school’s own financial aid money.

Deadlines

- Financial aid deadlines may be different than colleges’ application deadlines.
- Check the college website or contact the financial aid office of the specific college for their financial aid deadline.

Help is Available

- Meet briefly with the **Financial Aid Officer** during a campus visit.
- Attend **Financial Aid Night** at Westborough High School in the Fall.
- Contact the college’s financial aid office with any specific questions, concerns, or problems.
- Contact **Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA)** at (800) 449-MEFA or on the web at www.mefa.org.
- Get free help completing your FAFSA at Massachusetts FAFSA Days during the fall and winter months. Check www.FAFSADAY.org for details.

*Everyone should submit the FAFSA. Remember that no matter how high your income or savings may be, financial aid is always available in the form of government backed loans with preferred interest rates. Some schools offer merit scholarships that are tied to FAFSA completion, regardless of need.

Financial Aid Vocabulary

FAFSA - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This must be filled out by students and parents/guardians seeking financial aid each year.

FSA ID - Used as your electronic signature on the FAFSA.

CSS Profile - An additional financial aid form required by **some** schools, administered by the College Board. Must be filled out by students and parent/guardian; a fee is required.

EFC - Expected Family Contribution – the amount that a family is expected to pay for college for the next year. This is calculated as a result of filling out the FAFSA and used by colleges to figure out financial aid.

PLUS Loan - A federal loan program that parents/guardians of dependent undergraduate students can use to help pay for college or career school.

Pell Grant - Federal Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need and have not earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution (EFC); the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less. Pell grants do not have to be repaid. Grant amounts can change yearly. The maximum award for 2018-2019 is \$6,095.00.

Direct Loans - Federal student loans for eligible students to help cover the cost of higher education at a four-year college or university, community college, or trade, career, or technical school. The U.S. Department of Education offers eligible students at participating schools Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans. (Some people refer to these loans as Stafford Loans or Direct Stafford Loans.)

Direct Subsidized Loans - Direct Subsidized Loans are available to undergraduate students with financial need. Your school determines the amount you can borrow, and the amount may not exceed your financial need. The U.S. Department of Education pays the interest on a Direct Subsidized Loan while you're in school at least half-time, for the first six months after you leave school (referred to as a **grace period**), and during a period of **deferment** (a postponement of loan payments).

Direct Unsubsidized Loans - Direct Unsubsidized Loans are available to undergraduate and graduate students; there is no requirement to demonstrate financial need. Your school determines the amount you can borrow based on your cost of attendance and other financial aid you receive. You are responsible for paying the interest on a Direct Unsubsidized Loan during all periods. If you choose not to pay the interest while you are in school and during grace periods and deferment or **forbearance** periods, your interest will accrue and be capitalized (that is, your interest will be added to the principal amount of your loan).

Grace Period - For certain types of federal student loans, the Grace Period is a period of time after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment when you are not required to make payments. You are responsible for paying the interest that accrues on unsubsidized loans during the grace period. If the interest is unpaid, it will be added to the principal balance of the loan when the repayment period begins.

Work Study - Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study. It provides part-time employment while you are enrolled in school. It's available to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with financial need and is available to full-time or part-time students. It's administered by schools participating in the Federal Work-Study Program. Check with your school's financial aid office to find out if your school participates.

Financial Aid Package - The amount of financial assistance the college is offering for the next academic year. A typical package includes a combination of gift aid (federal and state grants, institutional grants or scholarships) and self-help aid (loans, work study).

Unmet Need - The "gap" between what a college awards in financial aid and your EFC.

Certification of Finances - A financial form available from each college, accompanied by a bank statement, that is required for all international students applying to US institutions.

529 Plan - A tax-advantaged savings plan designed to encourage savings for future college costs.

Questions to Ask a Financial Aid Officer

- What financial aid forms do I need to complete?
- What is the deadline for applying for financial aid? Is it different for Early Decision or Early Action?
- Can you estimate the cost increase for each year?
- How many students receive financial aid?
- What is the average financial aid package?
- Will there be other costs in the award letter that I should know about?
- If my family cannot meet the financial responsibilities, what financing options are available to help me pay my share?
- How will my financial aid package change year to year?
- How do you handle outside scholarships? Do they lower my award?
- What is the typical loan debt that a student accrues once they have finished college at this institution?
- When can we expect to receive bills from the college?
- Are there monthly payment options?
- Are there extra costs such as parking and lab fees that I need to be aware of?

Helpful Financial On-Line Planning Tools for Students, Parents/Guardians

- *The College Board Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculator*
This calculation will give you an estimate of what the federal government determines you and your family can contribute for college expenses. Go to bit.ly/collegeboardEFC for their EFC Calculator.
- *Net Price Calculators*
This gives students and families an early estimate of what a specific student may receive for financial aid from a specific college. This calculator is mandated by the US Department of Education and is found on college websites.
- *MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority)*
A not-for-profit quasi-public entity serving students and families in Massachusetts. www.mefa.org
- *Federal Student Aid*
Read about the types of financial aid available from the government and other sources. Information on eligibility and applying is also available. www.studentaid.ed.gov

Understanding Your Financial Aid Award

Once a college admits you – and crunches the numbers you provided on your financial aid applications – it will offer you a “financial aid package” (sometimes called an award). In this package are different types of financial aid intended to meet all or part of your financial need for one academic year. The size and makeup of a financial aid package can be a major factor in determining which college to choose.

The Award May Not Cover Everything

Many aid packages appear to cover all or most college expenses. But not all financial awards decrease what you will actually pay out-of-pocket. Before you accept any financial aid, make sure that you have reviewed each aid offer carefully and that you understand how it will – and will not – reduce your college costs. Here are some guidelines to follow.

Read the Award Letter Carefully

An “award letter” describing your aid package in detail usually arrives online or by mail soon after you are accepted. In fact, it may be part of your college acceptance notification. The letter will list the types and amounts of aid being offered to meet your financial need.

Aid may be a grant, a scholarship, a loan, or work-study. The amounts in the award letter may be estimates, but you can count on receiving aid fairly close to those estimates if you accept the aid promptly.

The award letter should also include:

- A breakdown of the college’s **Cost of Attendance (COA)**
- Your **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**
- The amount of your financial need the college is meeting
- The deadline for accepting the aid offered
- How and when the money will be disbursed
- The academic period the award covers
- The process for accepting or declining aid
- Any additional documentation needed

The content of award letters can vary dramatically from college to college. It may not contain all the information listed above. For example, some colleges omit the COA or do not show all its components. Award letters may use terminology and acronyms that you do not recognize. Before accepting any aid, be sure to ask the financial aid office for missing information and clarification of anything you don’t understand.

Identify Aid That Reduces College Costs

Although your aid package may seem to cover most or all of your financial need, not all aid actually reduces your college cost.

Gift aid (scholarships and grants) does reduce your college cost. To identify gift aid, look for words like “scholarship” or “grant” in your award letter. Sources for gift aid may be the federal government, the state, or the college itself. For example, Pell Grants are federal gift aid for lower-income families.

Self-help aid (loans and work-study) does not reduce your college costs. For example, the college may award you a federally subsidized Stafford loan, or loans provided by the state or the college. If you qualify for work-study, your award letter will list the maximum amount that you can earn from a work-study job during an academic period. You might have the option to convert all or a portion of your work-study aid to a loan, or vice versa.

Figure Out Your “Net Price” to Attend

Let's say someone gave you a gift of \$1,000 towards buying a \$3,000 car. Your “net price” (what you pay out of your own pocket) is \$2,000. Let's say you decide to cover that \$2,000 with a loan. Your net price is still \$2,000 even though you did not pay that amount up front.

Financing a college education works the same way. Gift aid reduces your cost dollar for dollar. Self-help aid simply makes it easier for you to pay for college out of your own pocket. To figure your net price for one year of college, subtract your total gift aid from the college's full cost of attendance. The resulting number is the dollar amount you will have to cover, whether you use loans, income, or savings.

If an award letter provides a “net price” figure, look at it closely. It may treat loans and work-study as aid that reduces your net price, when in fact these types of aid do not. Your actual net price always includes the dollar amount of loans or work-study aid.

Compare Aid Packages

Comparing aid packages from different colleges can be tricky because there is not standard approach to award letters. Here are some tips to ensure you are comparing apples to apples.

- **Be sure the Cost of Attendance (COA) contains the same elements for each college.** The major components of a college's cost of attendance are tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, local transportation, and personal expenses. If the college does not show the components of its COA or does not show all components, ask the financial aid office for a full COA breakdown.
- **Separately add up all gift aid and self-help aid for each college.** For each award letter, identify every offer of gift aid and self-help aid and their amounts. Then total up all gift aid and all self-help aid.
- **Run the numbers for each college.** Once you know each school's full COA and the total amount of gift and self-help aid, you can compare the net price of each college. Simply subtract the total gift aid from each college's cost of attendance. To understand how much debt and work commitment you might take on, compare the total self-help aid offered by each college, plus any other loans you might get to cover your unmet need or your estimated (EFC). Ultimately, you may not choose the college with the lowest net price or the college that will put you in the least amount of debt, but the information can be invaluable when making your final college decision.

Before You Accept

- **Check the loan terms and conditions.** Make sure that you know the interest rate, fees, how many years you have to pay off the loan, whether the loan is a student or parent/guardian obligation, and whether the interest is subsidized or unsubsidized. Make sure that you or your family can afford to make the payments.
- **Find out what happens after the first year.** Usually, your aid award is good for only one year. Find out whether the college typically offers less gift aid and more loan aid after the freshman year. Find out if your scholarships are renewable for subsequent years and what the requirements are for renewal.
- **Identify any strings attached.** Many scholarships and grants require students to maintain a certain GPA and take a specific number of course credits to remain eligible for the aid. Don't wait until your scholarship or grant has been cancelled to learn about these requirements.

- **Find out the college's policy on outside scholarships.** Colleges require you to report any outside scholarships you won, which may affect your financial aid package. Some colleges apply the scholarship to any unmet need, some will reduce your loans, and others will reduce your gift aid. If the total amount of your aid plus any outside scholarships is more than the college's COA, your financial aid package may be reduced.
- **Understand how you will receive the financial aid.** Colleges normally deduct your financial aid from your college bill. The school usually will give any excess funds to you by check or electronic transfer. You may have the option of applying the excess funds to your next college term.

Accepting and Declining Aid

You don't have to accept every offer of aid. For example, you may decide to accept a subsidized loan, but not an unsubsidized loan. If you change your mind later, the rejected aid will usually not be reinstated for the same academic year. Nor will the college increase other aid to make up for the aid you rejected. Your award letter should explain these consequences. Accept or decline each aid offer as soon as you are comfortable and certainly before the acceptance deadline.

Taking Care of Your EFC and Unmet Need

If your total award does not meet your full financial need, or you need help covering your EFC, you have options. You may be able to take out a private education loan. Your parents/guardians may qualify for a PLUS loan. You can ask the college about staggered payment plans. You can also review your situation with the financial aid office. If your financial circumstances have changed since you filed your FAFSA, the office may be able to adjust your package.

Some financial aid packages offer welcome relief from daunting college expenses. Others may be disappointing. Weighing your hopes and dreams against the actual cost of a college education is a sobering moment. But the more savvy you are about financial aid, the more able you will be to make a solid, informed decision about where to spend your college years.

Questions To Ask Regarding Merit Scholarships

- Does your college/university offer merit scholarships?
- Does your college/university offer athletic scholarships or other non-academic scholarships, i.e. band, leadership, etc.?
- Which office awards merit scholarships?
- What are the selection criteria? Are there different criteria for different scholarships?
- Are there set values for the scholarships or do they vary?
- Will the scholarship increase as tuition increases?
- Is there a separate application or interview required?
- Do I need to apply for financial aid to be considered?
- Do I need to take a test to qualify?
- What are the deadlines, if any?
- Do I need to participate in a program to keep the award?
- If I apply and qualify for need-based awards, what happens to my merit scholarship?
- What are the requirements to renew the scholarship in future years? Is it a four-year scholarship?
- If I lose the scholarship for poor academic performance, can it be reinstated?
- If I don't receive a scholarship in my first year, can I qualify in subsequent years?
- Are there general requirements for consideration of an endowed scholarship, i.e., financial need, GPA, SAT/ACT scores, etc.?

Scholarships

There are two categories of scholarships:

- Regional, state, area, local and national scholarships
- WHS local scholarships

Regional, State, Area, Local and National Scholarships

As the School Counseling Office starts to receive regional, state, area, local and national scholarships, we make these scholarships available through Naviance and in the school counseling office. Parents/Guardians may want to consider reviewing these scholarships and sharing information with student given their busy schedule.

To view a list of these scholarships, sign into your Naviance Account:

1. Select the Colleges tab
2. Scroll down and select "Scholarships and Money"

Each scholarship is listed in Naviance by name with the criteria, amount, and other relevant information.

You can research for other scholarships on your own as well. **fastweb.com** and **studentscholarships.org** are great resources!

WHS Local Scholarships

The Westborough High School Local Scholarships are awarded exclusively to WHS graduates and are presented at graduation. We are fortunate to be a part of a very generous community that is willing to invest in the future of our graduates through these scholarships. The application for the WHS Local Scholarships will be available in March/April of senior year.

Comparison of Stanley Z. Koplik and John & Abigail Adams Scholarships

Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery with Distinction Award	John and Abigail Adams Scholarship
Students qualify for the Koplik certificate by 1) scoring at the <i>Advanced</i> level on the grade 10 MCAS test in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, or Science and Technology/Engineering and <i>Proficient</i> or higher in the other two subject tests and 2) Demonstrating additional academic achievements on AP and/or SAT Subject Tests. The Koplik certificate provides a tuition waiver to a Massachusetts state college or university.	Students qualify for the Adams Scholarship by 1) scoring at the <i>Advanced</i> and <i>Proficient</i> levels on grade 10 MCAS tests and 2) having a combined score that places them in the top 25% of students in their district. The Adams scholarship provides a tuition waiver to a Massachusetts state college or university.
Students may take the grade 10 MCAS tests * a second time in grade 11 in an attempt to meet the eligibility requirements for the Koplik certificate. <small>*STE re-take added per Commissioner's Update 12/22/11</small>	Students are not allowed to take grade 10 MCAS tests a second time. The Adams scholarship is based on first time grade 10 test takers.
Students must submit an application for the Koplik award to their guidance counselor by the beginning of May of their senior year.	There is no application for the Adams scholarship award. Students who qualify for the scholarship receive an award letter in the fall of their senior year.
In order to use the award, students must present a copy of their certificate to the financial aid office at the Massachusetts state college or university they plan to attend and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.	In order to use the award, students must present their award letter to the financial aid office of the Massachusetts state college or university they plan to attend and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
The tuition credit must be used in the fall of the year the student graduates from high school.	The tuition credit must be used within 6 years of a student's high school graduation.
The tuition credit is in effect for eight consecutive semesters provided that the student maintains a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher. If the GPA falls below 3.3 the student loses the tuition waiver.	The tuition credit is in effect for eight semesters provided that the student maintains a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. If the GPA falls below 3.0 the student loses the tuition waiver.
The tuition credit applies to all Massachusetts public state colleges and universities with the exception of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.	The tuition credit applies to all Massachusetts public state colleges and universities with the exception of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.
A student who receives both the Koplik Scholarship and a Pell Grant is eligible for funds through the Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grant.	A student who receives both the Adams Scholarship and a Pell Grant is not automatically eligible for funds through the Academic Competitiveness (AC) Grant.

Additional information is available on the following websites:

Koplik: www.doe.mass.edu/scholarships/mastery

John and Abigail Adams: www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/adams.html

Please Note: While a student may *receive* both the Adams Scholarship and the Koplik Certificate, **ONLY ONE** may be used to waive tuition. The other will be considered recognition of outstanding achievement.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Services Basics

All colleges and universities have programs or services that respond to the needs of students with disabilities. This page will help you gather the necessary information to find a match between your needs and the array of options available. Before starting your college search, you should be clear about the specific services you will need in a college. The best college or university for you is the one that meets your individual needs and academic goals.

Accommodations - Without Fee

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, accommodations for eligible students are available without fee at all colleges. Eligibility under these statutes is determined case-by-case based on documentation of a disability. The disability must currently substantially limit a major life activity.

Fee-For-Service Programs

In addition to these accommodations, many universities also offer a comprehensive fee-for-service program staffed by professionals with advanced degrees.

Questions and Considerations for Students with Learning Disabilities

List the services you will need, and ask for specific details about how you would receive these. (Whom to see, what are the services, when are they given, by whom, and where are they provided?)

- What services are available without fee?
- What documentation of my learning disability is required?
- Who is responsible for coordinating services for students with learning disabilities? Is this a full-time permanent position?
- Does availability of these services depend on the enlightenment and good will of each instructor or is it established by school policy?
- How hard must students advocate for themselves to get special services?
- How many students with learning disabilities are in the school?
- Is faculty responsive to the needs of students with learning disabilities?
- Is there a learning center where content tutoring is available for all students?
- Are there course modifications for students with learning disabilities?

General Questions About Admissions for Learning Disabled Students

- Is there a separate procedure for admission to the learning disability program?
- Are SAT or ACT examinations required?
- What documentation is required for admission in addition to standard requirements?
- Is a personal interview required?
- Is any special testing required? If so, what tests and who should administer the testing? How recent do tests have to be?
- Are there different application deadlines for special programs available?

Transition from High School to College for Students with Disabilities

*Adapted from Literature for NCLD by Colleen Lewis,
Director Office of Disability Services, Columbia University*

Transition Checklist

High School	College
<p>Special Education model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School personnel “find you”. 	<p>Accommodations Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must request help; no one will come to find you.
<p>Where you receive services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education classroom, resources room, related service provider room (e.g. speech). 	<p>Where you receive services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differs from one school to another (“Office of Disability Support Services,” “Disabled Student Services,” “Special Services”,...)
<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated by school psychologist or other appointed staff person • Team develops IEP or 504 Plan from documentation and test results. 	<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must provide “proof” of your disability (e.g. educational testing, HS records, independent reports from medical and/or mental health professionals). • Colleges can set their own guidelines for documentation (e.g. no more than 3 years old, adult assessment measures, etc.). • High schools are not required to do a comprehensive evaluation before graduation.
<p>Special Education Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the mandate and funding to schools for in-school special education services as well as transportation/buses to school, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring. 	<p>Civil Rights Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation • Colleges are required only to offer accommodations & support services; not services of a personal nature. • Tutoring is not required under ADA. Some colleges offer tutoring through disability services and some colleges have tutoring centers for all students. • Foreign Language waivers & other course substitutions are not automatic.

While still in high school you need to:

1. Find out about your disability:
 - Talk to your parents/guardians, high school special education teacher, or school counselor to learn about your specific disabilities.
 - Understand the academic impact of your disability.
 - Understand your areas of strength and weakness.
 - Understand how your disability might affect future employment and/or career choices.
 - Make sure that you have current documentation (request updated testing or a re-evaluation before you leave high school).
 - Read your disability documentation and understand what it says.

2. Actively participate in all transition related meetings (i.e. IEP, 504)
 - Participate in self-advocacy training.
 - Learn to express your current and future needs, concerns, interests, and preferences.
 - Know what your rights and responsibilities are and what the grievance procedures are at your selected colleges.
3. Develop a personal information file with disability related information:
 - Disability documentation
 - Current high school records (e.g. grade transcript, standardized achievement testing scores).
 - Medical records (if relevant to educational progress).
 - Copy of current IEP or 504 Plan.
 - College Entrance Exam results/info (SAT, ACT).
 - Psychological and educational evaluation records.
4. Select and Plan College Choices
 - Select the colleges you'd consider attending (Important tip: DO NOT choose schools by the amount of services that they offer; make your initial selections based on whether the school offers the characteristics and programs of study that most interest you).
 - Visit each campus. (Make sure to meet the person(s) in charge of the Office of Disability Services.)
 - Do your homework! Consider:
 - What services/programs each prospective college provides through their disability support office or other office that handles disability accommodations?
 - How often are services available? Are the service providers on campus and available on an as-needed basis?

Guides for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD

The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- Author: Marybeth Kravets & Amy Wax

The Colleges That Change Lives

- Author: Lauren Pope

Ready for Take Off: Preparing Your Teen with ADHD or LD for College

- Authors: Patricia O. Quinn & Theresa L. Maitland

Military Options

Enlisting in the U.S. Military

Joining the United States military is a career path that many take after high school because of the numerous benefits that come with it. Although a career in the armed forces can be a dangerous job in some cases, you can also receive several benefits that you cannot get from many other jobs available in the civilian sector.

Education Benefits

One of the primary benefits that come with joining the military is the educational programs. When you get into the military, you can get access to the GI Bill. This gives you a certain amount of money to pay for your post-secondary education. You can get money to pay for your tuition as well as for your living expenses. You can also get some training in various college-level classes while you are in the military.

Health Care

Another major benefit of joining the military is the health care that comes with it. When you are in the active military duty, in the National Guard or in the Army Reserves, you get access to a military health care plan called TRICARE.

Bonuses

As a way to recruit new military personnel, the government has set up a bonus program. The incentives that are being offered to join the military constantly change, but they can be substantial depending on a particular situation.

Skill Set that Employers Want

Employers are finding that all veterans of all ranks have marketable technical and leadership skills. People with a military background also possess numerous attributes, including loyalty, leadership ability, respect, integrity, duty, reliability, and working as team members, that employers value in their employees.

Serving the Country

Another benefit of joining the military is that you get to serve your country and make a difference in the world. You get to help protect the country and do what many civilians cannot do. During military conflicts, it can be a very dangerous job.

If you are interested in exploring careers in the military, contact a local recruiter to set up an appointment to learn more about the enlisting process. See contact information below.

US Navy Recruiting
255 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA
(508) 756-6158

US Marines Recruiting
186 Main Street, Marlborough MA
(508) 303-0908

US Army Recruiting
328 Worcester Road, Framingham MA
(508) 875-5550

US Air Force Recruiting
255 Park Avenue, Worcester MA
(508) 926-0052

US Coast Guard Recruiting
Centre Plaza
221 Centre Street
Malden, MA
(781) 338-9480

Service Academies and ROTC Scholarship Programs

While all juniors should begin exploring possible educational programs following graduation, those interested in the Service Academies and the ROTC. Scholarship programs must begin as soon as possible to insure that they receive full consideration. SATs and/or ACTs should be taken by May of the junior year. Open houses can be visited during the summer.

The **first step** in securing an appointment to one of the academies is to request a Pre-Candidate questionnaire.

The Academies	
Admissions Office U.S. Military Academy 606 Thayer Road West Point, NY 10996-1797 845-938-4041 www.westpoint.edu	Admissions Office U.S. Air Force Academy 2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 200 U.S.A.F. Academy, CO 80840 800-443-9266 www.usafa.af.mil
Admissions Office U.S. Naval Academy 121 Blake Road Annapolis, MD 21402 410-293-4361 www.usna.edu	Admissions Office U.S. Merchant Marine Academy 300 Steamboat Road Kings Point, NY 10024 866-773-5390 www.usmma.edu

The **second step** is to contact each of your senators and your congressman and follow the directions to be considered as one of their nominees.

Your request for consideration should be sent to:

- The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
<https://www.warren.senate.gov/academynominations/>
- The Honorable Edward J. Markey
<https://www.markey.senate.gov/services/academy>
- Congressman James McGovern
<https://mcgovern.house.gov/helping-you/service-academy-nominations.htm>

Deadlines may differ.

The Coast Guard Academy has an admissions procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. However, there is no nomination process involved.

Admissions Office U.S. Coast Guard Academy 31 Mohegan Avenue New London, CT 06320-4195 800-883-8724 https://www.uscga.edu/

ROTC Scholarship programs involve a competitive application process as well. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical examination, formal interview, and a physical abilities test. The first step in the process is to contact the local recruiting station for an application.

College Athletics

NCAA Eligibility Basics



Thinking about playing sports while in college?
Are you being recruited by a college coach?

NCAA Eligibility Division I & II

Students must register on NCAA Eligibility Center:

www.eligibilitycenter.org/

- Review Academic Standards (Division I & II)
- Graduate from high school
- Complete a minimum of 16 core courses for Division I & II
- Earn a minimum required GPA in core courses
- Earn a qualifying test score on either the SAT or ACT
- Request final amateurism certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center

*****Students are responsible to review NCAA approved courses at WHS.**

Visit bit.ly/wboroncaa to view approved courses. WHS's NCAA code is 222300.

NCAA Eligibility Division III

- Division III colleges and universities set their own admission standards. The NCAA does not set initial eligibility requirements in Division III.

Guidelines for College Bound Athletes

If you intend to participate in **Division I or II** athletics as a freshman you must register and be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Prospective **Division III** athletes are not held to NCAA Division I or II requirements, but are encouraged to check with their prospective schools to learn about their particular requirements and registration processes. This process can be started after junior year. For more specific information and to learn how to register, visit the NCAA Clearinghouse website at www.eligibilitycenter.org

Meeting NCAA Academic Requirements

In order to compete in Division I or II athletics, you **MUST** meet academic requirements that are based on Grade Point Average (GPA) and SAT/ACT scores. All prospective NCAA athletes are required to take either the SAT or ACT. Division I and II require 16 core academic courses to be eligible; NCAA specifies which courses are approved and which are not. Go to www.eligibilitycenter.org to view these eligibility requirements.

Recruitment Rules for Division I and II Athletics

Contacts: In all sports other than football and basketball, phone calls from faculty members and coaches are not permitted until July 1st after completion of your junior year. After this, the coach is limited to one phone call a week to either you or your parents. You may contact a coach as much as you wish.

Visits: Coaches are allowed seven opportunities to set up recruiting visits or meetings during the academic year; however, these visits are limited to one per week.

Official Visits: Any time after your first day of classes of senior year you are allowed ONE expense-paid visit. This can only occur after the coach has received an official SAT/ACT score and a high school transcript.

Questions to Ask During Your Athletic Visit

Before you decide to make your first visit to a college, it's a good idea to think carefully about the kind of information you are going to need in order to eventually make your decision. Once you do, you'll be able to ask the right kinds of questions. The following are some good ones to get you started.

Ask the College Athletic Recruiter (most likely a coach):

- What position do you want me to play, and how many others are you recruiting for the same position?
- What is your philosophy of offense? Defense? Are you considering any changes?
- Will I be red shirted?
- If I need a fifth year, will you finance it?
- What happens to my scholarship if I am injured or ineligible?
- What kind of academic support is in place for athletes?
- Are all injuries handled by the school's insurance policy?
- If injured, may I use my family doctor? Who determines my fitness to compete after an injury?
- What is expected of players during the off season?

Ask of the Players at the College:

- What does your day typically look like? In season? Off-season?
- Approximately how many hours do you study?
- What, generally, are the attitudes of professors in different fields of study? In my field of study towards athletes?
- How do you like the living arrangements?
- Who is available to help you if you have academic problems?

Ask of the Non-Athletes at the College:

- What do you think of the quality of education you are receiving at this college?
- If you had to do it over again, would you choose this college to attend? Why?
- What is the general opinion of athletes on this campus?

Ask of School Officials/Admissions Officers:

- What is the graduation rate for athletes? In my sport?
- About how long does it take someone in my sport to earn a degree from this college?
- What is my eligibility for additional financial aid?

Basic Differences Between NCAA Divisions

Division I schools, on average, enroll the most students, manage the largest athletics budgets, offer a wide array of academic programs and provide the most athletics scholarships.

Division II schools provide growth opportunities through academic achievement, high-level competition and a focus on community engagement. Schools may offer athletic scholarships

Division III schools provide an integrated environment focusing on academic success while offering a competitive athletics environment. If you are planning to attend a Division III school, you do not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Schools do not offer athletic scholarships

(adapted from <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future>)

Gap Year Programs

American Gap Association A standards-setting organization for Gap Years that is recognized as such by the US Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. Find lists of accredited and pending Gap Year programs and organizations. www.americangap.org

LEAPnow has long been a leader in alternative education. The program specializes in unique semester-long and full-year experiential programs in the U.S. and abroad. All programs feature a balanced blend of language study, cultural immersion, service and environmental work, and outdoor adventure. www.leapnow.org

Idealist/Action Without Borders Over 35,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 165 countries which can be researched by name, location or mission. Thousands of volunteer opportunities in local communities and around the world, and a list of organizations that can help you volunteer abroad. www.idealists.org

Global Volunteers Global Volunteers' goal is to help establish a foundation for peace through mutual international, cross-cultural understanding. As the preeminent private, non-profit, non-sectarian organization offering volunteer vacations worldwide, Global Volunteers mobilizes some 150 service-learning team's year-around to work in 19 countries on five continents. www.globalvolunteers.org

Americorps NCCC This is a ten-month residential service program. Participants live in one of five regional campuses and focus on environmental, public safety, or disaster relief issues. Members will help to meet the needs of the community through individual and community efforts. (857-317-5285) www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/amicorps-nccc

Americorps VISTA This program is similar to Americorps NCCC; however, participants live in the disadvantaged communities they serve. www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/amicorpsvista

CityYear This is a national service organization where participants devote one year to community service. The program focuses on building leadership skills and civic responsibility. Participants are paid a weekly stipend and receive health coverage. Examples of service include coordinating after-school programs, renovating houses for homeless, or serving as a teacher's aide. www.cityyear.org

Class Afloat This program is designed to have students work as crewmember aboard the S/V Concordia and sail the world for one academic year. In addition to the responsibilities of being a crewmember, students also complete an academic curriculum. It is open to students in grade 11, 12 and the junior college level. www.classafloat.com

Dynamy This program is a full academic year beginning with three weeks of outdoor adventure followed by three nine-week internships in career fields of interest. Interns live in one of three multi-apartment residences in Worcester, MA. www.dynamy.org

GlobalQuest Gap Year This program offers twelve-week semesters in international settings in Thailand that includes experimental learning, reading, individual research, writing and oral presentation, and experiencing and learning Thai culture. It is open to high school seniors and graduates between high school and college.

Oxford Advanced Studies Program This postgraduate semester is aimed at US high school graduates who wish to study in Oxford for a semester or a year, usually with a view to improving their chances of getting into a good college. www.advancedstudiesprogram.com

National Outdoor Leadership Students learn valuable outdoor experience learning outdoor skills, leadership, and wilderness values. Participants may elect to register for the 10-day session or the semester program in national and international expeditions. www.nols.edu

Outward Bound With outdoor courses in various parts of the United States and overseas; this program has students participate in activities of their choice: sailing, desert trekking, sea kayaking, etc. www.outwardbound.org

Sea Semester This program consists of various options for high school students to college students offering classroom instruction and adventures at sea aboard a 125-foot schooner or a 134-foot brigantine. Experience will be gained in oceanography, maritime studies, and nautical science through intensive research. www.sea.edu

Nature's Classroom Students work as interns teaching children ages 8-14 focusing on environmental education, cognitive learning and social dynamics. Interns receive a small stipend and room and board. www.naturesclassroom.org

IVPA The International Volunteer Program offers recent graduates the opportunity to volunteer/internships in one of over 30 countries. You go as a group of 10-20 international volunteers, you will spend 2-4 weeks working and living in a community. Must be 18 years old or older. www.volunteerinternational.org

Earthwatch Students interested in science gain research and travel experience that expands their understanding of science and supports their personal growth and career development. Most scientific research projects are 10-14 days long but there are one week, three weeks, and weekend opportunities available. Students must be at least 16 years old; some projects demand that you be at least 18 or older. www.earthwatch.org

New England Aquarium This volunteer program offers many different experiences from performing research to feeding the fish. Many positions require commitment of at least one full day per week and some may pay a small stipend. www.neaq.org

The Road Less Traveled This program offers students aged 13 –19 wilderness expeditions and community service in Western United States, New England, Alaska, Australia, Costa Rica, Canada and Nepal. The expeditions vary in length from 8 to 39 days.
www.theroadlesstraveled.com

The Student Conservation Association Offers students and adults the opportunity to work on outdoor projects while learning about the environment along with the opportunity to travel and explore new areas of the country. www.thesca.org

Habitat for Humanity Habitat for Humanity International Global Village trips offer participants a unique opportunity to support local communities. Team members work along with the host community helping to bridge awareness of poverty housing and building decent, affordable housing worldwide. Participants can register for one or three week experiences. www.habitat.org

Consulting Sources:

16 Center Street

Suite #318

Northampton, MA 01060

413-585-0980

www.interimprograms.com This is a fee-charging counseling organization which offers referral to summer or one-year programs designed for high school seniors before they go on to college. This program assists with helping students locate the most suitable interim year program. Contact Cornelius Bull, Box 3247, Cambridge, MA 02238

Taking Off

PO Box 104

Newton Highlands, MA 02161

617-630-1606

www.takingoff.net This is a consulting service for students who are taking time off from a traditional classroom to pursue experiential learning. It helps students find and secure experiential opportunities.

Career Information

Resumes and Cover Letters

Professional Resumes and Cover Letters

(Adapted from "Youth Moving Forward," from the Partnership For a Skilled Workforce, Inc. in Marlborough, MA. <http://ywforward.org/resume-wizard>)

Resumes

Before you sit down for a job interview, fill out an application, or even talk to a potential employer, you're going to need a resume. Think of a resume as a fact-sheet, listing everything from work history to school achievements. The topic? You.

Since your resume is a first introduction to a potential employer, it should be flawless. So, what questions do resumes often answer?

- Do you have special skills?
- Have you worked before?
- Can you hold down a job long term?
- Have you won awards?
- Are you a good student?
- Are you careless?
- Are you responsible?

Your resume isn't going to answer every question about who you really are, but a good resume, however, can easily land you an interview and give employers a glimpse of what you're made of. And don't be afraid to tailor your resume to different kinds of jobs and employers. Think about how you might make changes to target what each employer is specifically looking for, so that your resume helps portray you as a perfect fit.

Here's a list of elements you'll need to include in your resume:

- Contact info. This should include the basics: Your name, address and phone number, and social media accounts if applicable.
- Your goals. Why do you want this particular job? Add goals to boost your interview chances.
- Education. Have you finished high school? Gotten your G.E.D? Are you taking college classes full or part-time? List that info.
- Experience. Have you ever had a job? If not, have you taken care of a family member, volunteered at your local nonprofit or had an internship? Add that to your resume.
- Accomplishments. If you've won awards for academics, sports, music or even volunteering -- even small ones -- put 'em in.

Here are a few other ways to make your resume stand out:

- Keep it simple. Resumes are better when they're straightforward and simple to read.
- Use action verbs. These will make your resume more exciting without making it more complicated. Did you learn how to change a transmission? No, you **MASTERED** the skills for changing transmissions.
- Triple-check everything. Employers sometimes get dozens of resumes for each job opening. The first ones thrown out are the ones with bad grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes.

- Never misrepresent yourself. Keep it accurate, but don't be afraid to take credit for your accomplishments.
 - List your strongest traits first. A resume isn't the place for a slow buildup with a big finish. Don't hide the ball.
 - Portray yourself in the best light. Do you have a bad mark on your record that can't be avoided? Explain how you rose above it, and portray it as a learning experience.

Cover Letters

A cover letter is a one-page letter you may need to write to introduce yourself to a potential employer. Here's why a cover letter is important:

- It's the first thing your potential boss will see. You have an amazing resume. No cover letter? If you're required to send one and you don't, no one's going to see it.
- It puts you ahead of the competition. By sending a cover letter, you'll beat out the people who never sent one in.
- It sets you apart. You're a problem solver, positive thinker, and a force for good. Your cover letter will let you express that.

If your potential employer asks you to send one, a cover letter is just as important as your resume.

A cover letter should have three main components: an intro paragraph, middle copy, and a closing. Between those three sections, you'll "make the case" that you're the perfect person for the job, period.

Section 1: The intro

In this opening paragraph, you're going to do two things. First, in one sentence, you're going to tell the interviewer how you found out about the job. In the second sentence, give a very brief rundown of your skillset and experience, how it relates to the job, and why you're the right fit for the position.

Section 2: The middle

In this section, you're going to shed the stiff language of your resume and get a bit more personal. The purpose of this paragraph is to describe how your background and skills have prepared you for this position. Don't be afraid to pat yourself on the back and focus on a major accomplishment. Use this section to talk about how you're a workhorse with a heart of gold, a wildly creative thinker, and a resourceful, ninja-level problem solver. Try and highlight the traits the employer is seeking. Close all this off with a sentence telling your potential boss that yes; you're the best choice for the job.

Section 3: The closing

This is the part where you say goodbye. Come right out and state that you would like an interview to discuss the position. Make sure you add the best ways to contact you (a phone number and email address are best), thank the interviewer for their time and consideration, and add that you're looking forward to hearing from whoever receives the letter.

A great cover letter (if you are required to send one) is a well-rounded piece of writing that "sells" you as a potential employee. Make your cover letter confident, gracious and interesting and you'll soar past the competition.

Occupational Outlook Handbook

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)* is a career resource offering information on the hundreds of occupations that provide the majority of jobs in the United States. Each occupational profile describes the typical duties performed by the occupation, the work environment of that occupation, the typical education and training needed to enter the occupation, the median pay for workers in the occupation, and the job outlook for the next 10 years for that occupation. Each profile is in a standard format that makes it easy to compare occupations. People can search for jobs based on 25 different occupational groups, median salary, growth rate, minimum education level and other factors.

Workforce Central Career Center

<http://www.workforcecentralma.org/youth-services> (508) 799-1600

Workforce Central Career Center offers services to provide employment and training opportunities to In-School and Out-of-School youth in collaboration with our community partners who receive a grant or contract. Programs vary in design. Services may include one or more of the following: Work Readiness and Job Search Assistance, Work Experience/Internship Opportunities, Training, Counseling and Mentoring, Career Development, Adult Mentoring and Follow-up Services.

Youth service programs include HSE (High School Equivalency Exam Preparation), Occupational Skills Training, MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Test Preparation), Connecting Activities (Workplace Skills Training) and Youth Works/Summer Employment.

Career Exploration Activities

Students have access to various career exploration assessments in Naviance. Read below about three of the most used assessments. All can be found in the "About Me" tab in Naviance.

Career Interest Profiler (Focus on Interests)

The Career Interest Profiler is a series of 180 questions about work activities that people do at their jobs. Students are asked to choose whether they would like or dislike doing a particular work activity if they had a chance to do it. There is no right or wrong answer in the assessment and no expectation that a student has already done any of the activities. Upon completing the assessment, students receive a three-letter code that best matches categories of jobs that may be most interesting, and a list of top matching careers. The three-letter codes (known as "Holland Codes") are based off of the work of Dr. John Holland, a psychologist who theorized that there were six personality types into which people could be categorized: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional (often seen as RIASEC). Since individuals are multifaceted, Holland realized that most people would fall into multiple categories. Each letter of your "Holland Code" represents the top three types into which you could be categorized, based on each one's first letter.

The Six RIASEC Categories

- **Realistic [R]:** A realistic person prefers concrete tasks. He or she likes working alone or with other realistic people. Some of the occupations included in this category are engineer, plumber, audio and video equipment technician, chemist, dentist, furniture finisher and rail car repairer.
- **Investigative [I]:** Someone who is investigative likes to use his or her abstract or analytical skills to figure things out. He or she is a "thinker" who strives to complete tasks and often prefers to do so independently. These are a few investigative occupations: sociologist, political scientist, psychologist and economist.
- **Artistic [A]:** The artistic members of our society like to create things. They are imaginative and usually extroverted. Artistic occupations include reporter, creative writer, performing artist (including actor, singer and dancer) and fashion designer.
- **Social [S]:** A social person prefers interacting with people. He or she tends to be concerned with social problems and wants to help others. Here are some social occupations: home health aide, certified nurse's aide, occupational therapist assistant or aide, teacher and clergy member.
- **Enterprising [E]:** Those who are enterprising lean toward leadership roles. They are willing to take on challenges and are extroverted. They can be aggressive as well. Enterprising occupations include restaurant host or hostess, retail salesperson, attorney, chief executive, chef and wholesale or retail buyer.
- **Conventional [C]:** Someone who is conventional prefers structured tasks and tending to details. He or she is often conservative. These are some conventional occupations: accountant, bookkeeper, actuary, human resources assistant and loan interviewer.

Do What You Are (Focus on Personality)

“Do What You Are” is a personality assessment that helps students to identify their natural preferences, gifts and talents, and link their personality types to matching careers. Students are given different scenarios and then asked questions on how they might respond to dilemmas in the scenario. Students choose which response choice would be most like how they would act if they were really in the situation. Upon completing the assessment, students receive a four-letter code and a list of careers that match their personalities and self-reported interests. This assessment and resulting four-letter code (known as the Personality Type Indicator), is based off the work of Dr. Carl Jung, Katharine Briggs, and Isabel Briggs Myers who, were psychologists and career theorists who studies personality types. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (the four-letter code) can be one of sixteen different personality types based on preferences in four different categories: Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I), Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), and Judging (J) or Perceiving (P). Learn more about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator at <http://www.myersbriggs.org>.

The Myers-Briggs Categories Explained

- **E (Extroversion)**: energy directed outwardly, energized by the outside world
- **I (Introversion)**: energy directed inwardly, energized by reflecting on their inner world
- **S (Sensing)**: pays attention to details and current realities
- **N (Intuition)**: pays attention to meanings, patterns, and future possibilities
- **T (Thinking)**: chooses decisions based on principles and logical consequences
- **F (Feeling)**: chooses decisions based on values and consequences for people
- **J (Judging)**: comes to conclusions quickly
- **P (Perceiving)**: takes more time to gather information before comfortably coming to a decision

MI Advantage (Focus on Skills)

The MI (Multiple Intelligences) Advantage measures intelligence and skill in each of nine categories, including: bodily-kinesthetic, existential, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, naturalistic, and spatial. The 15-20 minute assessment will ask students about their abilities and preferences. The results provide students with detailed descriptions of the intelligences, traits from their top intelligences, tips on using each intelligence when learning, and ways to develop each intelligence. It will connect students with top career matches based on their interests and skills. Multiple Intelligences Theory was developed by Dr. Howard Gardner and is based on the theory that everyone possesses intelligence in varying degrees in multiple categories. It suggests that more traditional measures of intelligence may not factor in other areas where individuals may be gifted and have potential for excellence.

The Nine Multiple Intelligences

- **Bodily-Kinesthetic**: This intelligence provides the mind and body coordination required to move the body and other objects. It affects both gross and fine motor skills, and the ability to perform and remember complex movements.
- **Existential**: This intelligence is the ability to see the big picture in everything -- the relationships and connections, vastness and limitations, and how everything fits together. This intelligence is used in considering questions about our existence, such as purpose, life, death and our place in the universe. (This is measured in the MI Advantage assessment, but is not included as an original intelligence category by Dr. Gardner.)
- **Intrapersonal**: This intelligence includes the ability to understand oneself -- emotions, fears, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. This intelligence allows him to reflect upon his own thinking and behavior, learn from that reflection, find ways for self-improvement and build self-confidence.

- **Interpersonal:** This intelligence includes understanding and working with people, building relationships, seeing the world from others' points of view, communicating well verbally and non-verbally, cooperating in a group, having influence, and responding to the mood, personality and goals of others.
- **Linguistic:** This intelligence helps him to understand and use language properly in reading, writing and speaking, including the use of sign language and Braille. It also affects vocabulary and the ability to understand and use humor, create pictures using words, notice language patterns and recognize relationships between words. Linguistic intelligence is one of the main intelligences linked with succeeding in school.
- **Logical-Mathematical:** This intelligence includes the ability to reason inductively (make conclusions based on observations) and deductively (make conclusions based on hypotheses). This intelligence also involves finding relationships between abstract ideas (numbers, for example), recognizing logical sequences and patterns, recognizing problems and solving them. This intelligence is closely linked with being successful in school.
- **Musical:** This intelligence includes the ability to play an instrument or sing, as well as a number of other skills such as: recognizing various tones, patterns, rhythms, beats and sounds; enjoying and analyzing music; understanding musical structures; and, creating melodies and rhythms.
- **Naturalist:** This intelligence involves being able to recognize, appreciate and group different things in the environment: plants, animals, people, structures, weather patterns, landscapes and so on. It also allows one to see the connections between different parts of the environment, to easily recognize when environmental changes happen, and to understand what impacts those changes might have. People with a strong naturalist intelligence are typically viewed as being "in tune" with nature.
- **Spatial:** This intelligence includes the ability to identify objects accurately, change and recreate images, and recognize how shapes and objects relate to each other. While this intelligence is typically applied through visual means, spatial intelligence does not only rely on vision. It can also be used through touch and sometimes even hearing.

Career Clusters

(Adapted from Naviance)

Career clusters are ways of grouping careers with common features, skills. Exploring clusters can be a useful way to find a good career match, especially if you have general areas of interest but are unsure of what specific careers match those interests. Career clusters can also help you better understand how your coursework in school can prepare you for certain types of careers. Career clusters are separated into different Pathways, which are grouped by common knowledge and skills required. Each pathway provides instruction as a basis for success in an array of careers and educational pursuits.

Visit Naviance for additional details on these Career Clusters, including career outlooks, needed education or licensure credentials, related careers and plans of study.

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources - This diverse Career Cluster prepares learners for careers in the planning, implementation, production, management, processing, and/or marketing of agricultural commodities and services, including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products. It also includes related professional, technical and educational services.

Architecture and Construction - Architecture and construction comprise one of the largest industries in the United States. Based on the latest statistics, this career cluster has 9.1 million jobs. In the next few years, many new jobs will be added and many employment opportunities will result from the need to replace experienced workers who leave jobs.

Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications - Careers in Audio-Video Communications Technology, Telecommunications or Printing Technology require strong backgrounds in computer and electronic-based technology and a solid foundation in math and science. All pathways require the ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written form. In addition, the creative aspects of this cluster are rapidly merging with the technological, making it even more challenging. Preparation for careers in this cluster must begin in the elementary grades and continue through high school, allowing students to gain experience in the performing and visual arts as well as in the academic foundations.

Business Management and Administration - The Business Management and Administration Cluster prepares learners for careers in planning, organizing, directing and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations. Career opportunities are available in every sector of the economy and require specific skills in organization, time management, customer service and communication.

Education and Training - This diverse Career Cluster prepares learners for careers in planning, managing and providing education and training services, and related learning support services. Millions of learners each year train for careers in education and training in a variety of settings that offer academic instruction, career technical instruction, and other education and training services.

Finance - The Finance Cluster prepares learners for careers in financial and investment planning, banking, insurance and business financial management. Career opportunities are available in every sector of the economy and require specific skills in organization, time management, customer service and communication.

Government and Public Administration - Government affects Americans in countless ways. In a democratic society, government is the means of expressing the public will. This includes a variety of activities. In fact, virtually every occupation can be found within government. There are, however, some activities that are unique to government. The federal government defends us from foreign aggression; represents American interests abroad; deliberates, passes and enforces laws; and administers many different programs. State and local governments pass laws or ordinances and provide vital services to constituents. There are many opportunities in government in every career area. The Government and Public Administration Career Cluster focuses on those careers that are unique to government and not contained in another Career Cluster.

Health Science - This Career Cluster orients students to careers that promote health, wellness, and diagnosis as well as treat injuries and diseases. Some of the careers involve working directly with people, while others involve research into diseases or collecting and formatting data and information. Work locations are varied and may be in hospitals, medical or dental offices or laboratories, cruise ships, medevac units, sports arenas, or within the community.

Hospitality and Tourism - The Hospitality and Tourism Cluster prepares learners for careers in the management, marketing and operations of restaurants and other food services, lodging, attractions, recreational events and travel-related services. Hospitality operations are located in communities throughout the world.

Human Services - This diverse Career Cluster prepares individuals for employment in career pathways related to families and human needs, including Consumer Services, Counseling and Mental Health Services, Early Childhood Development and Services, Family and Community Services and Personal Care Services.

Information Technology - IT careers involve the design, development, support and management of hardware, software, multimedia and systems integration services. The IT industry is a dynamic and entrepreneurial working environment that has a revolutionary impact on the economy and society. In addition to careers in the IT industry, IT careers are available in every sector of the economy - from Financial Services to Medical Services, from Business to Engineering and Environmental Services. A career in IT is challenging and ever-changing. Those who pursue jobs in the IT sector will quickly discover ongoing opportunities to learn about and work with exciting new technologies that are transforming our world. IT education can be obtained in four-year colleges, two-year community colleges, technical colleges and institutes, and high schools. Even in times of economic downturn, there is still a large market for people with IT skills in organizations of all sizes.

Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security - The Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security Cluster helps prepare students for careers in planning, managing, and providing legal, public safety, protective services and homeland security, including professional and technical support services. Sports arenas, space centers, or within the community.

Manufacturing - This diverse Career Cluster prepares learners for careers in planning, managing, and performing the processing of materials into intermediate or final products. Careers also include related professional and technical support activities such as production planning and control, maintenance and manufacturing/process engineering. Industry plays a major role in training and career development by supporting apprenticeships, training, joint industry/school programs and industry training leading to certification and college credit.

Marketing - This diverse Career Cluster prepares learners for careers in planning, managing and performing marketing activities to reach organizational objectives. Different areas include communications, management, marketing research, merchandising and professional sales.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - A career in science, technology, engineering or mathematics is exciting, challenging, and ever-changing. Learners who pursue one of these career fields will be involved in planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.

Transportation, Distribution and Logistics - This diverse Career Cluster exposes students to careers and businesses involved in the planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and products by road, air, rail and water. It also includes related professional and technical support services such as infrastructure planning and management, logistic services, and the maintenance of mobile equipment and facilities.

72 Well-Paying and Growing Career Paths that Do Not Require a Four-Year College Degree

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, the following career paths all have three things in common:

- You can enter them by completing an Associate's Degree, Certificate, or other educational training.
- They each have a median salary that is higher than the median salary for all jobs.
- Their employment availability is expected to grow over the next ten years as fast as average or better.

These career paths are organized by career cluster and more information about each can be found in the Occupational Outlook Handbook online at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh>.

Architecture and Engineering

Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technicians

Aerospace engineering and operations technicians operate and maintain equipment used in developing, testing, producing, and sustaining new aircraft and spacecraft. Increasingly, these workers are using computer-based modeling and simulation tools and processes in their work, as well as advanced automation and robotics.

Quick Facts: Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technicians	
<u>2016 Median Pay</u>	\$68,020 per year \$32.70 per hour
<u>Typical Entry-Level Education</u>	Associate's degree
<u>Job Outlook, 2016-26</u>	7% (As fast as average)

Civil Engineer Technicians

Civil engineering technicians help civil engineers to plan, design, and build highways, bridges, utilities, and other infrastructure projects. They also help to plan, design, and build commercial, industrial, residential, and land development projects.

Quick Facts: Civil Engineering Technicians	
<u>2016 Median Pay</u>	\$49,980 per year \$24.03 per hour
<u>Typical Entry-Level Education</u>	Associate's degree
<u>Job Outlook, 2016-26</u>	9% (As fast as average)

Drafters

Drafters use software to convert the designs of engineers and architects into technical drawings. Most workers specialize in architectural, civil, electrical, or mechanical drafting and use technical drawings to help design everything from microchips to skyscrapers.

Quick Facts: Drafters	
<u>2016 Median Pay</u>	\$53,480 per year \$25.71 per hour
<u>Typical Entry-Level Education</u>	Associate's degree
<u>Job Outlook, 2016-26</u>	7% (As fast as average)

Mechanical Engineering Technicians

Mechanical engineering technicians help mechanical engineers design, develop, test, and manufacture mechanical devices, including tools, engines, and machines. They may make sketches and rough layouts, record and analyze data, make calculations and estimates, and report their findings.

Quick Facts: Mechanical Engineering Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$54,480 per year \$26.19 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Surveying and Mapping Technicians

Surveying and mapping technicians collect data and make maps of the Earth's surface. Surveying technicians visit sites to take measurements of the land. Mapping technicians use geographic data to create maps. They both assist surveyors and cartographers and photogrammetrists.

Quick Facts: Surveying and Mapping Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$42,450 per year \$20.41 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	11% (Faster than average)

Construction and Extraction Occupations

Boilermakers

Boilermakers assemble, install, maintain, and repair boilers, closed vats, and other large vessels or containers that hold liquids and gases.

Quick Facts: Boilermakers	
2016 Median Pay	\$62,060 per year \$29.84 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Carpenters

Carpenters construct, repair, and install building frameworks and structures made from wood and other materials.

Quick Facts: Carpenters	
2016 Median Pay	\$43,600 per year \$20.96 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Construction and Building Inspectors

Construction and building inspectors ensure that construction meets local and national building codes and ordinances, zoning regulations, and contract specifications.

Quick Facts: Construction and Building Inspectors	
2016 Median Pay	\$58,480 per year \$28.12 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Construction Equipment Operators

Construction equipment operators drive, maneuver, or control the heavy machinery used to construct roads, bridges, buildings, and other structures.

Quick Facts: Construction Equipment Operators	
2016 Median Pay	\$45,040 per year \$21.65 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Electricians

Electricians install, maintain, and repair electrical power, communications, lighting, and control systems in homes, businesses, and factories.

Quick Facts: Electricians	
2016 Median Pay	\$52,720 per year \$25.35 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	9% (As fast as average)

Elevator Installers and Repairers

Elevator installers and repairers install, fix, and maintain elevators, escalators, moving walkways, and other lifts.

Quick Facts: Elevator Installers and Repairers	
2016 Median Pay	\$78,890 per year \$37.93 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Flooring Installers and Tile and Marble Setters

Flooring installers and tile and marble setters lay and finish carpet, wood, vinyl, and tile.

Quick Facts: Flooring Installers and Tile and Marble Setters	
2016 Median Pay	\$39,150 per year \$18.82 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	No formal educational credential
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Glaziers

Glaziers install glass in windows, skylights, and other fixtures in storefronts and buildings.

Quick Facts: Glaziers	
2016 Median Pay	\$41,920 per year \$20.16 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	11% (Faster than average)

Hazardous Materials Removal Workers

Hazardous materials (hazmat) removal workers identify and dispose of asbestos, lead, radioactive waste, and other hazardous materials. They also neutralize and clean up materials that are flammable, corrosive, or toxic.

Quick Facts: Hazardous Materials Removal Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$40,640 per year \$19.54 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	17% (Much faster than average)

Insulation Workers

Insulation workers, also called *insulators*, install and replace the materials used to insulate buildings and their mechanical systems.

Quick Facts: Insulation Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$39,280 per year \$18.89 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Ironworkers

Ironworkers install structural and reinforcing iron and steel to form and support buildings, bridges, and roads.

Quick Facts: Ironworkers	
2016 Median Pay	\$50,830 per year \$24.44 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	13% (Faster than average)

Masonry Workers

Masonry workers, also known as *masons*, use bricks, concrete blocks, concrete, and natural and manmade stones to build walls, walkways, fences, and other masonry structures.

Quick Facts: Masonry Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$41,330 per year \$19.87 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Painters, Construction and Maintenance

Painters apply paint, stain, and coatings to walls and ceilings, buildings, bridges, and other structures.

Quick Facts: Construction and Maintenance Painters	
2016 Median Pay	\$37,570 per year \$18.06 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	No formal educational credential
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters

Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters install and repair pipes that carry liquids or gases to, from, and within businesses, homes, and factories.

Quick Facts: Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	
2016 Median Pay	\$51,450 per year \$24.74 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	16% (Much faster than average)

Roofers

Roofers replace, repair, and install the roofs of buildings, using a variety of materials, including shingles, bitumen, and metal.

Quick Facts: Roofers	
2016 Median Pay	\$37,760 per year \$18.15 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	No formal educational credential
Job Outlook, 2016-26	11% (Faster than average)

Sheet Metal Workers

Sheet metal workers fabricate or install products that are made from thin metal sheets, such as ducts used in heating and air conditioning systems.

Quick Facts: Sheet Metal Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$46,940 per year \$22.57 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	9% (As fast as average)

Solar Photovoltaic Installers

Solar photovoltaic (PV) installers, also known as *PV installers*, assemble, install, and maintain solar panel systems on rooftops or other structures.

Quick Facts: Solar Photovoltaic Installers	
2016 Median Pay	\$39,240 per year \$18.87 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	105% (Much faster than average)

Computer and Information

Computer Support Specialist

Computer support specialists provide help and advice to computer users and organizations. These specialists either support computer networks or they provide technical assistance directly to computer users.

Quick Facts: Computer Support Specialists	
2016 Median Pay	\$52,160 per year \$25.08 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Web Developers

Web developers design and create websites. They are responsible for the look of the site. They are also responsible for the site's technical aspects, such as its performance and capacity, which are measures of a website's speed and how much traffic the site can handle. In addition, web developers may create content for the site.

Quick Facts: Web Developers	
2016 Median Pay	\$66,130 per year \$31.79 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	13% (Faster than average)

Food Preparation and Serving Occupations

Chefs and Head Cooks

Chefs and head cooks oversee the daily food preparation at restaurants and other places where food is served. They direct kitchen staff and handle any food-related concerns.

Quick Facts: Chefs and Head Cooks	
2016 Median Pay	\$43,180 per year \$20.76 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Health Care Occupations

Dental Hygienists

Dental hygienists clean teeth, examine patients for signs of oral diseases such as gingivitis, and provide other preventive dental care. They also educate patients on ways to improve and maintain good oral health.

Quick Facts: Dental Hygienists	
2016 Median Pay	\$72,910 per year \$35.05 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	20% (Much faster than average)

Diagnostic Medical Sonographers and Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians, Including Vascular Technologists

Diagnostic medical sonographers and cardiovascular technologists and technicians, including vascular technologists, also called *diagnostic imaging workers*, operate special imaging equipment to create images or to conduct tests. The images and test results help physicians assess and diagnose medical conditions.

Quick Facts: Diagnostic Medical Sonographers and Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians, Including Vascular Technologists	
2016 Median Pay	\$64,280 per year \$30.90 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	17% (Much faster than average)

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) provide basic nursing care. They work under the direction of registered nurses and doctors.

Quick Facts: Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	
2016 Median Pay	\$44,090 per year \$21.20 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Massage Therapists

Massage therapists treat clients by using touch to manipulate the muscles and other soft tissues of the body. With their touch, therapists relieve pain, help heal injuries, improve circulation, and relieve stress, increase relaxation, and aid in the general wellness of clients.

Quick Facts: Massage Therapists	
2016 Median Pay	\$39,860 per year \$19.17 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	24% (Much faster than average)

Medical Records and Health Information Technicians

Medical records and health information technicians, commonly referred to as *health information technicians*, organize and manage health information data. They ensure that the information maintains its quality, accuracy, accessibility, and security in both paper files and electronic systems. They use various classification systems to code and categorize patient information for insurance reimbursement purposes, for databases and registries, and to maintain patients' medical and treatment histories.

Quick Facts: Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$38,040 per year \$18.29 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	13% (Faster than average)

Nuclear Medicine Technologies

Nuclear medicine technologists prepare radioactive drugs and administer them to patients for imaging or therapeutic purposes.

Quick Facts: Nuclear Medicine Technologists	
2016 Median Pay	\$74,350 per year \$35.75 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides

Occupational therapy assistants and aides help patients develop, recover, improve, as well as maintain the skills needed for daily living and working. Occupational therapy assistants are directly involved in providing therapy to patients; occupational therapy aides typically perform support activities. Both assistants and aides work under the direction of occupational therapists.

Quick Facts: Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides	
2016 Median Pay	\$56,070 per year \$26.96 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	28% (Much faster than average)

Physical Therapist Assistants Aides

Physical therapist assistants sometimes called *PTAs*, and physical therapist aides work under the direction and supervision of physical therapists. They help patients who are recovering from injuries and illnesses regain movement and manage pain.

Quick Facts: Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides	
2016 Median Pay	\$45,290 per year \$21.77 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	30% (Much faster than average)

Radiation Therapists

Radiation therapists treat cancer and other diseases in patients by administering radiation treatments.

Quick Facts: Radiation Therapists	
2016 Median Pay	\$80,160 per year \$38.54 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Radiologic and MRI Technologists

Radiologic technologists, also known as *radiographers*, perform diagnostic imaging examinations, such as x rays, on patients. MRI technologists operate magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners to create diagnostic images.

Quick Facts: Radiologic and MRI Technologists	
2016 Median Pay	\$58,960 per year \$28.35 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Respiratory Therapists

Respiratory therapists care for patients who have trouble breathing—for example, from a chronic respiratory disease, such as asthma or emphysema. Their patients range from premature infants with undeveloped lungs to elderly patients who have diseased lungs. They also provide emergency care to patients suffering from heart attacks, drowning, or shock.

Quick Facts: Respiratory Therapists	
2016 Median Pay	\$58,670 per year \$28.21 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	23% (Much faster than average)

Surgical Technologists

Surgical technologists, also called *operating room technicians*, assist in surgical operations. They prepare operating rooms, arrange equipment, and help doctors during surgeries.

Quick Facts: Surgical Technologists	
2016 Median Pay	\$45,160 per year \$21.71 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations

Aircraft and Avionics Equipment Mechanics and Technicians

Aircraft and avionics equipment mechanics and technicians repair and perform scheduled maintenance on aircraft.

Quick Facts: Aircraft and Avionics Equipment Mechanics and Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$60,270 per year \$28.98 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Automotive Body and Glass Repairers

Automotive body and glass repairers restore, refinish, and replace vehicle bodies and frames, windshields, and window glass.

Quick Facts: Automotive Body and Glass Repairers	
2016 Median Pay	\$40,370 per year \$19.41 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics

Automotive service technicians and mechanics, often called *service technicians* or *service techs*, inspect, maintain, and repair cars and light trucks.

Quick Facts: Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	
2016 Median Pay	\$38,470 per year \$18.50 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Diesel Service Technicians and Mechanics

Diesel service technicians (also known as *diesel technicians*) and mechanics inspect, repair, and overhaul buses and trucks, or maintain and repair any type of diesel engine.

Quick Facts: Diesel Service Technicians and Mechanics	
2016 Median Pay	\$45,170 per year \$21.72 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers

Heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers—often called *heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration (HVACR) technicians*—work on heating, ventilation, cooling, and refrigeration systems that control the temperature and air quality in buildings.

Quick Facts: Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	
2016 Median Pay	\$45,910 per year \$22.07 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	15% (Much faster than average)

Heavy Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Service Technicians

Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians, also called *mechanics*, inspect, maintain, and repair vehicles and machinery used in construction, farming, rail transportation, and other industries.

Quick Facts: Heavy Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Service Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$47,690 per year \$22.93 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Machinery Maintenance Workers, and Millwrights

Industrial machinery mechanics and machinery maintenance workers maintain and repair factory equipment and other industrial machinery, such as conveying systems, production machinery, and packaging equipment. Millwrights install, dismantle, repair, reassemble, and move machinery in factories, power plants, and construction sites.

Quick Facts: Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Machinery Maintenance Workers, and Millwrights	
2016 Median Pay	\$49,100 per year \$23.61 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	7% (As fast as average)

Line Installers and Repairers

Line installers and repairers, also known as *line workers*, install or repair electrical power systems and telecommunications cables, including fiber optics.

Quick Facts: Line Installers and Repairers	
2016 Median Pay	\$62,650 per year \$30.12 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Medical Equipment Repairers

Medical equipment repairers install, maintain, and repair patient care equipment.

Quick Facts: Medical Equipment Repairers	
2016 Median Pay	\$48,070 per year \$23.11 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Wind Turbine Technicians

Wind turbine service technicians, also known as *windtechs*, install, maintain, and repair wind turbines.

Quick Facts: Wind Turbine Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$52,260 per year \$25.13 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	96% (Much faster than average)

Legal Occupations

Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Paralegals and legal assistants perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research, and drafting documents.

Quick Facts: Paralegals and Legal Assistants	
2016 Median Pay	\$49,500 per year \$23.80 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	15% (Much faster than average)

Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations

Agricultural and Food Science Technicians

Agricultural and food science technicians assist agricultural and food scientists by performing duties such as measuring and analyzing the quality of food and agricultural products.

Quick Facts: Agricultural and Food Science Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$37,550 per year \$18.05 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Environmental Science and Protection Technicians

Environmental science and protection technicians monitor the environment and investigate sources of pollution and contamination, including those affecting public health.

Quick Facts: Environmental Science and Protection Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$44,190 per year \$21.25 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	12% (Faster than average)

Geological and Petroleum

Geological and petroleum technicians provide support to scientists and engineers in exploring and extracting natural resources, such as minerals, oil, and natural gas.

Quick Facts: Geological and Petroleum Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$56,470 per year \$27.15 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	16% (Much faster than average)

Management Occupations

Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural managers operate establishments that produce crops, livestock, and dairy products.

Quick Facts: Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	
2016 Median Pay	\$66,360 per year \$31.91 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	7% (As fast as average)

Food Service Managers

Food service managers are responsible for the daily operation of restaurants or other establishments that prepare and serve food and beverages. They direct staff to ensure that customers are satisfied with their dining experience, and they manage the business to ensure that it is profitable.

Quick Facts: Food Service Managers	
2016 Median Pay	\$50,820 per year \$24.43 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	9% (As fast as average)

Lodging Managers

Lodging managers ensure that guests on vacation or business travel have a pleasant experience at a hotel, motel, or other types of establishment with accommodations. They also ensure that the establishment is run efficiently and profitably.

Quick Facts: Lodging Managers	
2016 Median Pay	\$51,840 per year \$24.93 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers

Property, real estate, and community association managers take care of the many aspects of residential, commercial, or industrial properties. They make sure the property is well maintained, has a nice appearance, and preserves its resale or leasing value.

Quick Facts: Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	
2016 Median Pay	\$57,040 per year \$27.42 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	11% (Faster than average)

Media and Communication Occupations

Broadcast and Sound Engineering Technicians

Broadcast and sound engineering technicians set up, operate, and maintain the electrical equipment for radio programs, television broadcasts, concerts, sound recordings, and movies.

Quick Facts: Broadcast and Sound Engineering Technicians	
2016 Median Pay	\$42,550 per year \$20.46 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Office and Administrative Support Occupations

Financial Clerks

Financial clerks do administrative work for many types of organizations. They keep records, help customers, and carry out financial transactions.

Quick Facts: Financial Clerks	
2016 Median Pay	\$38,080 per year \$18.31 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	9% (As fast as average)

Police, Fire and Ambulance Dispatchers

Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers, also called *public safety telecommunicators*, answer emergency and nonemergency calls.

Quick Facts: Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers	
2016 Median Pay	\$38,870 per year \$18.69 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

Personal Care and Service Occupations

Fitness Trainers and Instructors

Fitness trainers and instructors lead, instruct, and motivate individuals or groups in exercise activities, including cardiovascular exercises (exercises for the heart and blood circulation), strength training, and stretching. They work with people of all ages and skill

Quick Facts: Fitness Trainers and Instructors	
2016 Median Pay	\$38,160 per year \$18.34 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Funeral Service Workers

Funeral service workers organize and manage the details of a funeral.

Quick Facts: Funeral Service Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$54,830 per year \$26.36 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Associate's degree
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Production Occupations

Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators

Stationary engineers and boiler operators control stationary engines, boilers, or other mechanical equipment to provide utilities for buildings or for industrial purposes.

Quick Facts: Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators	
2016 Median Pay	\$59,400 per year \$28.56 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers

Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers use hand-held or remotely controlled equipment to join or cut metal parts. They also fill holes, indentations, or seams in metal products.

Quick Facts: Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	
2016 Median Pay	\$39,390 per year \$18.94 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	5% (As fast as average)

Protective Service Occupations

Firefighters

Firefighters control and put out fires and respond to emergencies where life, property, or the environment is at risk.

Quick Facts: Firefighters	
2016 Median Pay	\$48,030 per year \$23.09 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	7% (As fast as average)

Fire Inspectors

Fire inspectors examine buildings in order to detect fire hazards and ensure that federal, state, and local fire codes are met. Fire investigators, another type of worker in this field, determine the origin and cause of fires and explosions. Forest fire inspectors and prevention specialists assess outdoor fire hazards in public and residential areas.

Quick Facts: Fire Inspectors	
2016 Median Pay	\$56,130 per year \$26.98 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Police and Detectives

Police officers protect lives and property. Detectives and criminal investigators, who are sometimes called *agents* or *special agents*, gather facts and collect evidence of possible crimes.

Quick Facts: Police and Detectives	
2016 Median Pay	\$61,600 per year \$29.62 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	7% (As fast as average)

Private Detectives and Investigators

Private detectives and investigators search for information about legal, financial, and personal matters. They offer many services, such as verifying people's backgrounds and statements, finding missing persons, and investigating computer crimes.

Quick Facts: Private Detectives and Investigators	
2016 Median Pay	\$48,190 per year \$23.17 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Sales Occupations

Insurance Sales Agent

Insurance sales agents contact potential customers and sell one or more types of insurance. Insurance sales agents explain various insurance policies and help clients choose plans that suit them.

Quick Facts: Insurance Sales Agents	
2016 Median Pay	\$49,990 per year \$24.03 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Real Estate Brokers and Sales Agents

Real estate brokers and sales agents help clients buy, sell, and rent properties. Although brokers and agents do similar work, brokers are licensed to manage their own real estate businesses. Sales agents must work with a real estate broker.

Quick Facts: Real Estate Brokers and Sales Agents	
2016 Median Pay	\$46,410 per year \$22.32 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Wholesale and Manufacturing Sales Representatives

Wholesale and manufacturing sales representatives sell goods for wholesalers or manufacturers to businesses, government agencies, and other organizations. They contact customers, explain the features of the products they are selling, negotiate prices, and answer any questions that their customers may have about the products.

Quick Facts: Wholesale and Manufacturing Sales Representatives	
2016 Median Pay	\$60,530 per year \$29.10 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Transportation and Material Moving Occupations

Flight Attendants

Flight attendants provide routine services and respond to emergencies to ensure the safety and comfort of airline passengers while aboard planes.

Quick Facts: Flight Attendants	
2016 Median Pay	\$48,500 per year
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Job Outlook, 2016-26	10% (Faster than average)

Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers transport goods from one location to another. Most tractor-trailer drivers are long-haul drivers and operate trucks with a gross vehicle weight (GVW) capacity—that is, the combined weight of the vehicle, passengers, and cargo—exceeding 26,000 pounds. These drivers deliver goods over intercity routes, sometimes spanning several states.

Quick Facts: Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers	
2016 Median Pay	\$41,340 per year \$19.87 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	Postsecondary nondegree award
Job Outlook, 2016-26	6% (As fast as average)

Water Transportation Workers

Water transportation workers operate and maintain vessels that take cargo and people over water. The vessels travel to and from foreign ports across the ocean and to domestic ports along the coasts, across the Great Lakes, and along the country's many inland waterways.

Quick Facts: Water Transportation Workers	
2016 Median Pay	\$54,870 per year \$26.38 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	See How to Become One
Job Outlook, 2016-26	8% (As fast as average)

College Guidebooks

FACTS AND FIGURES

General information guides that provide the facts; location, size, student life, housing, sports, activities, special services, deadlines and admission criteria

Baron's Profiles of American Colleges

State by state guide filled with facts and figures: size, location, majors, helpful hints, and a selectivity guide.

Peterson's Four -Year Colleges/Peterson's Two-Year Colleges

All the basic information you need to know. Contains 2-page profiles on many colleges in the white pages at the back.

The College Handbook by the College Board

State by state guide for two- and four-year schools with lots of facts and figures

Peterson's Colleges with Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities

A great resource book for students seeking Learning Disability support

NARRATIVE

Filled with anecdotal information from students. Can be useful in getting a feel for the school's environment and culture. These books often provide a short list of overlap schools.

The Fiske to Colleges by Edward B. Fiske

Selective guide filled with student impressions of academics and environment. Students with a 3.0 and 1100 minimum will find the greatest opportunity at colleges in Fiske.

The Princeton Review: The Best 379 Colleges

School profiles written from the students' perspective.

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges by the Yale Daily News

Gives two or three pages of information followed by a FYI section that lists the three best and worst things about the school.

The College Finder by Steven Antonoff

Compiles lists of schools in various ways: where values are important, where there are Greek systems, where there are no Greek systems, where many students study abroad, where many students go on to law and medical schools and so on.

Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope

Profiles exceptional colleges that will turn "average" high school students into achievers.

Making a Difference by Miriam Weinstein

Outstanding Colleges to help you create a better world.

Online Resources

WHS School Counseling Department Website: <http://westboroughschoolcounselingdept.weebly.com/>

Naviance: <https://student.naviance.com/westborough>

Twitter: @wborocounselors

College Board Online: <http://www.collegeboard.org>

College search and database of college information. Register for SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject tests; register for and complete the CSS PROFILE.

ACT: <http://www.act.org>

Fair Test - The National Center for Fair and Open Testing: <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>
815+ schools that do not use SAT and ACT scores for admission.

Federal Student Aid: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>

Financial aid information from the U.S. Department of Education.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Please note that it is necessary to submit the FAFSA if you would like to qualify for need and most merit scholarships.

New England Board of Higher Education: www.nebhe.org

Find out about the New England Regional Student Program's tuition break for New England residents enrolled in approved majors at out-of-state public colleges and universities in New England.

MEFA: www.mefa.org

MEFA is a state-created non-profit organization that works to make higher education more accessible and affordable for students and families in Massachusetts. MEFA provides community education programs, college savings plans and low-cost financing options.

FastWEB (Scholarship Search): <http://www.fastweb.com>

An online college & scholarship search.

The Common Application: www.commonapp.org.

The application is accepted at more than 750 colleges.

BigFuture: <http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college>

(College and Scholarship searching)

Armed Services:

Air Force <http://www.af.mil>

Army <http://www.army.mil>

Marine Corp <http://www.marines.mil>

Coast Guard <http://www.uscg.mil>

Navy <http://www.navy.mil>

Occupational Outlook Handbook

www.bls.gov/ooh/

Profiles feature hundreds of occupations describing: What They Do, Work Environment, How To Become One, Pay, and more.

Career Exploration: www.mynextmove.org

Search careers with keywords and browse careers by industry.

College Vocabulary List

Arts Resume - A formal list consisting of educational background, artistic accomplishments, and other relevant details, used for college/summer arts programs.

Associate's Degree – A 2 year degree: AA, AS, etc.

Athletic Resume - A formal list consisting of educational background, athletic accomplishments, and other relevant details, used for college coaches.

Baccalaureate/Bachelor's Degree - A 4-year undergraduate degree: BA, BS, etc.

Coalition Application – An online application platform that is used by numerous colleges.

College – An institution that grants Bachelor's Degrees and/or Associate's Degrees; may be public or private.

College Calendar – The calendar explains the basic method used to divide the academic year (for instance: semester, trimester, quarter term) and lists all pertinent dates for beginning terms, holidays, vacations, exams, etc.

Common Application– An application form which is accepted by more than 750 institutions. www.commonapp.org

Common Application Writing Supplements – Additional required writing used by Common App schools that request further information not found in the main Common App.

Community College – A two year college leading to an Associate's Degree. These colleges are local and often do not provide housing.

Concentration – Usually referred to as a major, particular subject or area in which a student specializes. Usually most of the courses taken in the junior and senior year are in the major field.

Consortium – Several colleges and universities within close proximity of each other that allow students the opportunity to use the libraries or take classes at all member institutions. Consortium members often present joint lecture programs or unusual courses.

Deferred - Students who are deferred under an early application program have their applications reviewed again during the review of the regular pool of applicants.

Doctorate – A 2+ year degree following a Master's Degree: PhD, PsyD, DPT, etc.

Double Depositing - The practice of depositing at more than one school is highly frowned upon by colleges and universities and can lead to the rescinding of admissions decisions.

For-Profit Institution – A 2-4 year educational institution that is run as a for-profit business.

Fraternity - A social society for men who are students at a college or university, with a name consisting of letters from the Greek alphabet.

Freshman Profile – A document published by a college that includes a summary of the GPAs and SAT or ACT scores of the previous freshman class. It can give you a sense of where you stand in relation to other students.

Grade Point Average (GPA) – The cumulative average of all your grades on a 4.0 weighted and unweighted scale.

Early Action (EA) – A non-binding early application program. Students may apply to multiple colleges EA and have until May 1 to decide where to attend.

Early Decision (ED) – A binding early application program whereby a student makes a commitment to attend the college if admitted. Students may apply to only one school ED and must withdraw all other applications in admitted.

Gap Year – A one year hiatus from academic studies after high school graduation to allow for non-academic activities. Examples: community service, travel, career exploration.

Graduate Degree – Either a Master's, PhD or other advanced degree beyond the Bachelor's Degree.

Greek Life - A college or university social network consisting of fraternities and/or sororities.

Information Session - The general information session in the Admissions Office that is part of a college visit.

Legacy - Student applying to a particular institution where immediate family members have/are attending.

Liberal Arts - College and university subjects that are intended to provide students with general cultural knowledge, e.g. languages, literature, history, and philosophy.

Likely/Probable/Safety - a school that is a reasonable choice for the student, where a student has an excellent chance of acceptance, based on GPA/testing and other relevant factors.

Master's Degree – A 1+ year degree following a Bachelor's Degree: MA, MBA, etc.

May 1st - The universal deadline for depositing at ONE school for the fall.

Post-Doctorate – Further educational study following a Doctoral program.

Pre-professional - A program of student that leads to a professional degree e.g. nursing, engineering, law.

Priority/VIP Application - A special application particular to an institution sent to targeted applicants.

Private Institution - A privately funded college or university.

Public Institution - A college or university funded by the state in which it is located.

REA - Restrictive Early Action - A non-binding early application program that has specific restrictions determined by the individual college. Students have until May 1st to decide.

Reach - A school that is a very selective choice for the student based on GPA/testing and other relevant factors.

Resume - A formal list consisting of educational background, accomplishments, employment and other relevant details, used for job-searching and college/summer programs.

Semester System – Academic school calendar where the academic year is divided into two parts.

Sorority - A social society for women who are students at a college or university, with a name consisting of individually pronounced Greek letters.

SSR – Secondary School Report form required by many colleges, usually filled out by the school counselor.

Teacher Recommendations – Required by most colleges, usually up to 2. At least one should be filled out by an academic teacher.

Test Optional – An admissions policy where some applicants can choose not to submit SAT or ACT scores as part of their application. The rules vary from college to college. You can find the testing policy on each college's website. Speak to your counselor if you are considering this option.

Transcript – The student's academic record that is sent by the high school to the colleges where the student is applying. This includes courses taken, final grades, cumulative GPA, and work in progress (senior classes).

Undergraduate – Student at a college or university studying for a Bachelor's Degree.

University - A four year plus institution that grants Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Degrees.

Waitlist - Students who are not accepted but who are viable candidates for admission can be placed on the waitlist. If a spot should open up after May 1st, that student may be admitted from the waitlist. Most schools keep some financial aid for waitlist candidates.



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