

# STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF

Your future begins with you! Asking yourself these 10 questions can help you figure out who you are and where you want to go

1

## What are some things you feel you do well?

Think about the talents you already know you have, and ask friends and family what they think you're good at. You might be surprised by what they say.

2

## What challenges you?

The things that challenge you might be opportunities to improve and move toward your goals — and they might suggest areas of study and work that will keep you interested long into the future.

3

## What do you like to do for fun?

Think about the reasons you enjoy your favorite activities, the things they have in common and the strengths they bring out in you.

4

## Who do you look up to?

The people you admire — whether they're celebrities, historical figures or people you know personally — can tell you something about who you are and what you value. Consider what it is about them you like and whether those qualities are worth reaching for.

5

## What's something you've always wanted to try?

Consider your reasons for wanting to do this — and why it is you haven't done this yet. Do you find it exciting? What do you expect to get out of it?

6

## What accomplishment has made you most proud?

Your answer might have nothing to do with a hard-won A or a trophy — it might be the time you stuck up for someone who needed your help. What you're proud of can help you see what matters most to you.

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## What's your favorite class?

Don't limit yourself to the subjects that come easiest to you. Think about which classes make you lose track of time. Is it the teacher or the subject matter that holds your interest?

8

## What do you read about in your free time?

The kinds of stories you follow in the news, your favorite books and websites — these can help you figure out what really makes you curious.

9

## If you could do any job for a day, what would it be?

Think about which careers you want to try on. What is it about them you find so appealing? What would you change to make them fit you better?

10

## As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Even if your childhood dreams seem silly now, remembering them may show you what's always been important to you.

Once you've gotten a clear idea of who you are and what you want for your future, it's time to move on to step 2.

STEP 2: CREATE YOUR COLLEGE LIST

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## What Kind of College Do I want?

- Do I want to attend a two-year or four-year college? A two-year offers an associates degree while a four-year offers a bachelors degree.
- Do I want to attend a public or private college? Be sure to do your research. Many students exclude private schools because they think they are more expensive, but that is not always the case.

## Location

- Do I want to be close to home or far away?
- Do I want to live near a big city or in a small town?
- Is there a certain climate that is more appealing to me, like the beach or the mountains?

## Campus Setting

- Do you I see myself at a college with lots of students or in a smaller community?
- Do I want to be with a larger more diverse crowd, or do I want to be with people who share similar interests with me?
- Do I want to be at a school where sports are a big deal? Or one that's know for its academic clubs?

## Cost

- Do I have the facts about what colleges will cost? Students don't usually pay the published price because of financial aid — and shouldn't rule out colleges early in their search because of cost.
- Will I qualify for financial aid? All students should apply for aid, whether or not they think they will qualify. Most students get financial help from the government or the college itself.
- Am I eligible for scholarships? Certain characteristics or accomplishments might qualify students for private or college scholarships that award money they do not have to pay back.

## Majors

- What do I want to do after college and which majors can help me get there?
- What are my favorite school subjects? What do I like doing when I'm not in class?
- Do I want to take classes in many different subjects or focus mainly on one subject?
- If I am certain of my major, does the school I am interested in offer it?

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## Learning Environments

- Do I learn best when I'm academically comfortable or academically challenged?
- Do I prefer to be part of small group discussions or to listen to lectures? How much interaction do I want with my professors?
- What sort of balance am I looking for between studying and having a social life?
- Do I want to choose most of my classes myself, or do I prefer more structure?

## Extracurriculars

- Is there a specific club or activity I would like to participate in while attending college?
- Am I interested in joining a fraternity or sorority?
- Do I want to play a particular sport?
- If my school of interest does not offer what I am looking for, is there an organization in the surrounding community that does?

## Admissions

- What is my current class rank?
- What is my GPA?
- What scores did I receive on the PSAT, SAT or ACT?
- Be sure to visit the Admissions and Records page on the website of your school of interest to see if you currently meet the entry requirements. You may need to make adjustments in your final two years of high school in order to be accepted.

**Once you've created your specific college list, it's time to use that list to search for your future school!**

**STEP 3: SEARCH FOR COLLEGES**

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## Collegeboard.org

Find colleges, explore careers, learn how to pay for college, plus other helpful resources.

## College Scorecard

This website is managed by the US Department of Education. Students can search for and compare schools to one another in areas of size, financial aid, graduation rate, etc.

## College Navigator

Interactive website that provides information about different institutions, including programs and majors, admissions considerations and more.

## Assist.org

ASSIST is an online student-transfer information system that shows how course credits earned at one public California college or university can be applied when transferred to another. ASSIST is the official repository of articulation for California's public colleges and universities and provides the most accurate and up-to-date information about student transfer in California.

## University of California - <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

There are 9 undergraduate universities in the UC system: Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz. Use this website to view the admission requirements of California Universities.

## California State University - <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/freshman>

There are 23 campuses in the CSU system. CSU tuition is significantly lower than that of a UC. CSU also offers a wider range of campuses across the state of California. The acceptance rate of a CSU is also much higher than that of a UC. Use this website to view the admission requirements of the California State University.

## California Community College - <https://www.cccco.edu/>

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, with 2.1 million students attending 115 colleges. CCCs provide students with the knowledge and background necessary to compete in today's economy. With a wide range of educational offerings, the colleges provide workforce training, basic courses in English and math, certificate and degree programs and preparation for transfer to four-year institutions.