

# Discovering the Possibilities: "C"ing Your Future



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The Mentoring Partnership is pleased to be able to bring to you a newly developed Resource Guide assembled for mentoring program participants:

***Discovering the Possibilities:  
“C” ing Your Future***

This Guide was made possible thanks to generous grants from the Citigroup Foundation and from the office of US Representative Steve Israel (CD 2), whose ongoing support of mentoring has been invaluable. It was developed by Cindy Sturtevant Borden, a mentoring consultant. We would like to acknowledge Cindy for her efforts in producing this excellent guide, which has organized available college and career planning resources in a way that can be used and enjoyed by mentors and mentees.

We hope that this new tool will give young people who may not otherwise be surrounded by a college culture, a chance to devote more time to imagining their future and to see the possibility of going to college as part of that future. The activities that are featured in each section offer mentors an opportunity to address typical challenges to career and college planning. With this tool, mentors can:

- Open new doors and explore possibilities for careers that may not have been considered by their mentee
- Help their mentee overcome fears or false impressions about attending college
- Fill the void experienced by many youth for information and resources that can help them be successful in planning for college

We hope this guide will help you to help many students reach higher and aspire beyond any self limiting beliefs so that they may realize their full potential.

The following Introduction for Mentors will give you an overview of how this Guide is organized and how the modules can be completed.

*Sincerely,*

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## Introduction

Experts believe that instilling the value of college and career skills planning at an early age can help young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, prepare for and achieve their educational goals. The middle school years represent a unique opportunity to engage young people in discussions concerning their futures. Research suggests that the transition to high school has dramatic consequences for a young person’s educational and economic future.

This curriculum was developed to help you as a mentor navigate this critical time period with your mentee. As you work through the various activities together, your mentee will have the opportunity to explore a wide range of possibilities for the future with you as a guide. We encourage you to be an active participant whenever possible by **doing the activities along with your mentee**. You can then compare your responses and results with those of your mentee as part of the discussion.

The most important point to remember as you work through these activities is to move at the **pace with which your mentee is most comfortable**. You may skip some modules and spend a lot of time on others. That’s fine. These activities are to be used if and when you both find them engaging, thought-provoking and fun. ***New mentor-mentee relationships should enjoy this tool once rapport and trust has been achieved on a basic level.***

## About the Curriculum

*Discovering the Possibilities* is a series of twelve modules to be completed during meetings with your mentee. Each module follows a similar format with a number of sub-sections:

- Background – a brief introduction to the topic and its relevance
- Activity – step-by-step instructions for how to cover the topic with your mentee
- Tips for Mentors – special instructions or things to keep in mind (as needed)

The twelve modules are divided into three sections or categories that will help your mentee “C” the future.

### Exploring Careers: I “C” My Future

These modules encourage mentees to learn about themselves and to apply that knowledge to an exploration of possible careers. These modules should be completed in order as each one builds upon the results of previous activities.

### Preparing for College: I “C” My Options

This section provides an introduction to college, exposing mentees to new possibilities and encouraging them to fulfill their dreams.

### Building Character: I “C” Myself

This section focuses on building concrete skills that mentees can use in their everyday lives. Furthermore, these skills are essential for success in post-secondary education and career opportunities and thus compliment the Preparing for College and Exploring Careers sections.

The modules in this category are independent, stand-alone activities<sup>1\*</sup> and, therefore, they can be interspersed with the other modules throughout the year when they are necessary or

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\*Note: *What Can I Do Outside of School? Getting Involved* refers to the self assessment worksheet. If you have not already completed the *Who Am I?* module, your mentee will need to complete part 1 of this worksheet.

relevant to your mentee. For example, if your mentee does poorly on a test after studying very hard, you may want to review study skills using *How Can I Study Smarter and Stay Organized?*

Please note that some of the topics are more involved than others and may require more than one mentoring session to cover them. In these cases, we have included a natural stopping point. You may decide to complete the activity all at once (if time allows), stop and complete the activity at a future session, or conclude the activity. If you decide to continue the activity at a later time, make sure you start the session with a brief review of what has already been covered.

## Activity and Resource Guide

The *Discovering the Possibilities* curriculum has a companion *Activity and Resource Guide* which includes worksheets and forms mentioned in the curriculum. The Guide also contains a list of additional resources and optional activities organized by module topic.

## Tips for Using the Curriculum

*Discovering Possibilities* is divided into three sections based on the topic area. Except as noted above, **the modules do not have to be completed in order**. The curriculum is designed to be flexible. We suggest you develop a series of milestones to recognize and reward mentees as they complete modules. **The milestones could be based on successful completion of an entire section or on a specific number of modules**. Coordinators may be able to use group incentives such as an outing, a pizza party, tickets to a special event, etc, so be sure to ask about this. Recognizing matches at year-end celebrations or creating a “certificate” of completion can also be considered.

This curriculum was designed to capitalize on existing high-quality resources around college preparation and career exploration. For this reason, many of the modules require mentors and mentees to visit various websites to complete activities. However, we recognize that mentor/mentee pairs will not always have access to the Internet. The modules listed below are completely self-contained within the curriculum and activity guide and do not require use of the Internet: *Why College?*; *How Can I Get to College? (Making a Plan)*\*\*

In addition to these two modules, many of the other modules can also be completed offline if the documents are downloaded beforehand. If you know the internet access at the school is inconsistent, you may want to have printed copies of the materials available for your mentors.

## Using the “Ticket to Success” Achievement Chart ([see chart and ticket files at end](#))

Use this as a visual tool to keep track of progress or to set milestones to celebrate and acknowledge participation. This tool can help mentors make associations between completing the information and how that can impact their mentees’ future. It can also be used in some way to encourage friendly competition or progress.

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\*\* The module marked with an \* can also be completed online for mentors and mentees who prefer an online setting.



# EXPLORING CAREERS: I “C” MY FUTURE

## WHAT ARE MY DREAMS?

### Background

The American workplace is changing to accommodate continuing advances in technology and the rise in global competition. By 2010, more than 42% of all jobs in the economy will require a vocational certificate, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 65% of the fastest growing occupations in the U.S. require some form of postsecondary education.<sup>3</sup> In order to participate in and benefit from this new economy, education beyond high school is becoming increasingly important. Yet, statistics show that nationwide, nearly a third of students fail to graduate from high school and among Hispanics and African-American students, only half graduate from high school on time.<sup>4</sup> How can we help these students understand the value of continuing their education and reaching for college?

The goal of this session is to get your mentee really thinking about the benefits of going to college.

### Activity

1. Ask your mentee to think about what she wants her life to be like in 10 years.
2. Explain to her that she will be creating a “story board” of her life in the future. Using magazines, ask your mentee to tear out pictures that represent her vision for the future. You may need to prompt her with additional questions such as: where do you want to live?, what do you want to become?, what do you want to have?, etc.
3. Once she has a number of images, she should begin to lay them out on poster board eliminating those that are no longer relevant.
4. Now, ask her to glue the images on the poster board. She should also feel free to add text or writing if she wants to.
5. When the board is finished, ask your mentee to explain what each of the images represents to her. Pay attention to her lifestyle preferences, values, and interests as these topics will come up again later in the curriculum.
6. Explain that over the course of the school year, you’ll be doing a number of activities together to help her start thinking about her future and how to get there. You will be there to help her and guide her as she learns more about herself: her interests, skills and hopes for the future.
7. Now ask her how she plans to get that life. Has she thought about what to do after high school? Has she thought about going to college? Why or why not? Make a list of her answers and keep it for future use.



*(Look for the “Spark” image in future sections that will prompt you to look back at the vision board and add to it or expand it as new interests and goals are discovered.)*

**If time allows, continue with the next section of the activity, otherwise STOP HERE.**

<sup>2</sup> [Employment Outlook: Occupational employment projections to 2010](#), Hecker, Daniel. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Labor Review, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Imperative Behind No Child Left Behind, Burt Carlson, OVAE, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> America’s Promise website, <http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention.aspx>

1. Review your mentee's list of reasons why she has thought about going to college and ask her to think about why anyone would go to college.
2. Explain that while there are many reasons people choose to go to college, they tend to fall into the following categories:
  - a. Economic
  - b. Personal growth
  - c. Social
3. Review the reasons listed on the *Reasons for Attending College worksheet (Page 27: Resource Guide)* and compare them to the list generated by your mentee, adding her reasons to the list as necessary.
4. Ask your mentee to rank the reasons in order of their importance to her with 1 being the most important reason.
5. Encourage your mentee to take these ideas home and discuss them with her parents/guardians. Your mentee and her parents should make a list of any questions or concerns and she should bring them with her to your next session.

### **Tips for Mentors**

The vision board activity is designed to help mentees start thinking about the future in a creative and safe way. However, some mentees may prefer to express themselves verbally instead. If this is true for your mentee, you can replace the vision board activity (steps 1 – 5) with a discussion about the future. Begin by asking your mentee to imagine her life in 10 years. What will it be like? It's okay if she talks about family, friends, etc. but if she doesn't bring it up ask what kind of job she thinks she'll be doing? Spend a few minutes discussing what she wants her life to be like and then move on to step 6 and complete the rest of the activity.

Be prepared – some mentees may have never thought about college. Others may have negative ideas about it from family/friends, etc. Your job is to introduce the idea and provide a place where the mentee can explore it in a positive way. Do not impose your values or judge the mentee (or her family) if they do not value college in the same way you do. Your job is to help explain why college can be valuable and to encourage your mentee to consider it.

## WHO AM I? SELF AWARENESS AND ASSESSMENT

### Background

Adolescence is a time of self discovery and exploration. During this time, many young people struggle to find themselves and lack the resources to navigate the process effectively. As a mentor you can encourage and support your mentee as he learns to define himself and assist him in identifying useful resources.

The goal of this session is to help your mentee identify his interests, skills, and values as the foundation for career exploration.

### Activity

1. Ask your mentee to think about someone he knows (family member, teacher, friend) who has a job. Does the person enjoy his/her job? Why or why not? What does your mentee think is important when choosing a career?
2. Explain to your mentee, that before he starts thinking about a career, it's important that he knows and understands his:
  - Interests (what you like)
  - Skills (what you are good at)
  - Needs & Wants (your values and preferences)
3. Ask your mentee to complete Part 1 of the *Self Assessment* worksheet ([Page 34: Resource Guide](#)) emphasizing to him that there are no right or wrong answers. When he is finished review the worksheet and discuss his responses.
4. Explain that now that you have a basic understanding of his interests, skills, and needs, you'll be using a few activities to learn more. Go to [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org) and click on Career Clickers eXpress in the "Careers" section. Your mentee will be able to check the activities that are most appealing to him and submit them. He will then receive his career interest inventory code, which is a series of three letters corresponding to the following categories: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Entrepreneurial, and Conventional.
5. Explain to your mentee that this code represents a system that will help him match his interests with occupations. Record his interest code on page 2 of the *Self Assessment Worksheet* ([Page 35: Resource Guide](#)). If your mentee disagrees with the results, or is eager to take the assessment again, visit one of the sites listed under *Additional Resources* ([Page 44: Resource Guide.](#)) and have him take a different assessment and compare the results.

**If time allows, continue with the next section of the activity, otherwise STOP HERE.**

1. Explain that now that you have a good understanding of his interests, it's time to look at his abilities or skills.
2. For this activity your mentee will have to rate his abilities in five broad skill areas: communication, research & planning, human relations, organization/management/leadership, and work survival. The results will give him a percentage in each skill area allowing him to identify his strongest and weakest areas. The transferable skills survey can be found here [http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/career\\_transfer\\_survey.html](http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/career_transfer_survey.html). Record the results in Part 2 of the *Self Assessment* worksheet ([Page 35: Resource Guide.](#))
3. The final step is to have your mentee identify the things that are most and least important to him in an occupation. Using the *Career Needs and Wants* worksheet ([Page 36: Resource Guide](#)), ask your mentee to review the 10 needs/wants listed (e.g. money, freedom, challenge) and choose the two that are most important to him and the two that

are least important to him. Record his choices on the *Self Assessment* worksheet (Page 34: Resource Guide.)

4. Ask your mentee if he feels like he knows more about himself and the kinds of things he should be looking for in a career. Explain that the information in the worksheet will help the two of you as you explore possible careers together. If possible, make a copy of the Worksheet for your mentee to take home and share with his family.

### **Tips for Mentors**

When you ask your mentee what he thinks is important when choosing a career, be prepared to hear a variety of answers. Try to connect each answer to one of the three categories discussed in the session: Interests, Skills, or Needs & Wants. For example, if “having fun” is important to your mentee, then he should pay special attention to his interests when exploring possible careers.

You may want to take one or two of the assessments yourself and then compare your results with your mentee’s results. You could then talk about the similarities and differences and how you both feel about the results.

Finally, it’s important to remember that the purpose of these assessments is to provide insight and guidance, but they are just one part of the career exploration process. Your mentee’s interests and skills may change over time and that’s okay.

## WHAT CAREERS MATCH MY INTERESTS?

### Background

If you ask a group of people how they ended up in their current occupations, chances are that several of them will say they just accidentally “fell” into it. This approach may work for some people, but for many the result is an occupation that they don’t like, aren’t good at, or both. There are a number of factors that contribute to job satisfaction including enjoying your work, having the skills to do it well, and feeling that it coincides with your personal values. Taking the time to identify careers that match your interests, skills, and values increases the likelihood of finding a career that fits you.

The goal of this session is to develop a list of possible careers and occupations that match your mentee’s interests, skills and values.

### Activity

1. Explain to your mentee that you are going to use the results of the various assessments and the *Self Assessment* worksheet to identify various occupations that might be a good fit for him.
2. Have your mentee complete the *Defining Work Terms worksheet* (Page 37: Resource Guide) then discuss the answers. While many people use the terms interchangeably, what you will be exploring with him are occupations that match his unique interest code.
3. Visit CareerShip®<sup>4</sup> (<http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/careership>) and click on “Match My Career Interest.” Have your mentee click on the three categories that match his interest code (in order).
4. The site will deliver an extensive list of occupations that match his code. You may want to start by reading through the list first. Then your mentee can go back and click on the occupations that interest him.
5. When he finds an occupation that interests him, he should add it to the *Careers that Match My Interests* chart (Page 38: Resource Guide) and fill in the details.
6. Encourage your mentee to continue exploring occupations and adding them to the chart. As he creates the list he should note in the “Learn More” column those occupations that are most appealing so you can explore them in depth together.

### Tips for Mentors

Remember, your mentee does not have to decide on a career today, tomorrow, or this year. The idea is to encourage him to explore the many possibilities that exist. He may change his mind many times over the school year (and his lifetime) and that is okay. Career exploration is a journey, not a destination and he should enjoy it. Feel free to share stories of your own, both good and bad, to reinforce these ideas.



#### **SPARK a Conversation!**

*How Does this Activity  
Connect to Your Vision  
Board?*

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<sup>4</sup> CareerShip® is a free online career exploration adventure for middle and high school students. CareerShip is a product of [Mapping Your Future](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org), a public-service website providing free career, college, financial aid, and money management information and services.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE? RESEARCHING CAREERS

### Background

Think back to when you were first exploring career options as an adolescent or young adult. What kind of information was available and how did you access it? For many of us, our knowledge about the kinds of careers available was primarily based on the jobs of people we knew and media portrayals. Our access to information about careers was also limited to the hard copy resources at the local library or career center. The former may still be true for young people today, especially those from disadvantaged neighborhoods. However, in this information age the lack of available information no longer applies. Unfortunately, many young people do not know how to access the wealth of available resources or how to assess their relative value.

The goal of this session is to demonstrate to your mentee how to research occupations that interest her.

### Activity

1. Review the *Careers that Match My Interests* chart ([Page 38: Resource Guide.](#)) If your mentee has not already selected the occupations that she wants to learn more about she should do so now.
2. Use the *Exploring Occupations In-Depth* worksheet ([Page 39: Resource Guide](#)) to guide the process of exploring occupations. Make copies of the form for each occupation you want to explore and use this time to have fun learning about different jobs.
3. Go to [http://www.bls.gov/k12/teachers\\_guide.htm](http://www.bls.gov/k12/teachers_guide.htm) to find out if the occupation (or something similar) is included in the Bureau of Labor Statistics website for kids. If so, click on the occupation to get an overview that addresses the questions below and record the answers. If not, skip to the next step.
  - What is this job like?
  - How do you get ready?
  - How much does this job pay?
  - How many jobs are there?
  - What about the future?
  - Are there other jobs like this?
  - Where can you find out more information?
4. Help your mentee identify other resources for information. Does she know anyone who currently has that occupation? Do you? If possible, set up a telephone interview with that person so your mentee can ask questions. Is there a nearby site (e.g. office, warehouse, hospital) that she can visit to see the working conditions and daily tasks? Can she take a virtual tour of the career on a professional association website?
5. Go to <http://www.careervoyages.gov/careercompass-main.cfm> and use the career compass to find out if her chosen career (or a related one) is in demand.

### Tips for Mentors

Be creative when identifying resources (people, places, etc.) for your mentee. Remember to use your networks including college alumni groups, professional associations, and fraternal organizations. Don't limit yourself. For example, if your mentee wants to be a doctor and you don't know anyone personally in the medical field, consider asking your doctor if she would be willing to speak to your mentee. If you're having trouble identifying resources for a particular occupation, involve your mentee in your search so she can learn from your example.

You should only research one occupation per session. If your mentee wants to explore three or four occupations you can spread them out over time, or after you have researched the first one together, encourage her to do the others on her own and share the results with you.

While this session encourages your mentee to choose only a few occupations to research in depth, it's important to stress that she does not have to decide exactly what she wants to do yet. As new careers interest her, she should continue to investigate them.



# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE: I “C” MY OPTIONS

## IS COLLEGE FOR ME?

### Background

For many young people, particularly those whose families do not have a history of higher education, the idea of college seems daunting and unrealistic. Because of this, these students often lack knowledge about college including the application and admission process. They may believe a number of “myths” about college and its relevance to their lives. For those who do not know anyone who has attended college, the entire process is confusing and mysterious. In addition, some of these young people may have friends or family members who discourage them from attending college for any number of reasons including costs, uncertainty about the unknown, and fear of being left behind.

The goal of this session is to help your mentee see college as a realistic option by addressing any concerns he (or his family) may have.

### Activity

1. Ask your mentee to share the list of questions/concerns about college that he and his family developed. Use this list, along with any reasons the mentee identified in the last session, to develop key areas or categories of concern. Categories might include: cost, need for mentee to help family, grades, too soon to think about it, nobody in family has gone and they are doing well (i.e. not necessary), child not ready, etc.
2. Acknowledge your mentee’s and his family’s concerns and explain that together you are going to find out more to answer these questions.
3. Play the myth-busting game (see *Going to College – Myth vs. Reality Page 28: Resource Guide.*) You and your mentee should take turns drawing cards and deciding if the statement is myth or fact. Once you’ve decided, turn the card over to read more information about the topic.
4. When you finish go to [www.knowhow2go.com](http://www.knowhow2go.com) and take the college quiz in the middle school section. Discuss the answers as you go.
5. End the session with motivational success stories or quotations which can be found in the videos or inspiration sections at [www.firstinthefamily.org](http://www.firstinthefamily.org).

### Tips for Mentors

One question or concern that will most likely come up is cost: how can I pay for college? Cost and financial aid are addressed in the myth-busting at the most basic level. When that issue first comes up, ask your mentee if he would like to learn more about financial aid. If so, there is another activity you can do together - check out the *How Will I Pay for College?* module at the end of this section.

Visit [www.firstinthefamily.org](http://www.firstinthefamily.org) before you cover this topic with your mentee. View the videos and read the quotations and decide which ones are most relevant to your mentee and the challenges he faces. Feel free to use other sources as well, the goal is to find something that will resonate with your mentee!

## WHAT IS COLLEGE LIKE?

### Background

Most middle school students are focused on the present – family, friends, school, and other obligations that keep them busy. If they do think about the future – high school is probably as far ahead as they get. Few of these young people have a real sense of what college life is like, making it even harder for them to picture themselves there in a few years. College seems very far away and unless they know someone who has been there recently, their ideas of what college is like may be based on media portrayals (e.g. television and movies). The picture of college presented is often very narrow focusing on four-year colleges and universities. Expanding the image of college to include technical schools and community colleges opens up a world of opportunities for young people to explore.

The goal of this session is to introduce the many types of post-secondary educational opportunities available and to expose your mentee to a typical college campus.

### Activity

1. Brainstorm with your mentee about what he thinks college is like. Encourage him to think about it in a variety of perspectives including the physical campus (size, location, etc.) the people (students, faculty, etc.), daily life (activities, dorms, etc.), and academics (majors, degrees offered, etc.).
2. Explain to him that there are many different types of colleges to meet the needs of the many different kinds of people.
3. Go to [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) and in the “What to Do” section, click on find schools and review the kinds of schools listed:
  - Public vs. private
  - Four year colleges and universities
  - Two year community colleges
  - Career, technical, vocational or trade schools
4. Before moving on to the “Factors to Consider” section, ask your mentee to think about how he could choose what kind of college is best for him? What factors would he want to consider? Compare his answers to those listed. Which ones are the most important to him?
5. Now that he has an understanding of the kinds of colleges that exist, it’s time for him to see what a college campus is like by taking a virtual tour. If there is a particular college he is interested in, you can visit it online and see if they have a virtual tour. If he doesn’t have anything in mind, you can choose a local college, your alma mater or go to [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org) and “take the tour” to see what a typical college campus looks like.

### Tips for Mentors

The purpose of this session is to get your mentee excited about college, give him a sense of the variety of colleges available, and help him visualize himself going to college. If you know your mentee is interested in a particular subject or career (e.g. fashion or automotive mechanics), do some research before this session so you can suggest an appropriate college to “visit” on your virtual tour. Encourage your mentee to visit the website of any college he becomes interested in as a way to find out more. If he is really excited/interested and program policies allow, you may want to suggest he visit a college in person (or take him there yourself) to take an actual tour.

## HOW CAN I GET TO COLLEGE? MAKING A PLAN

### Background

National figures show that over 90% of middle school students expect to go to college<sup>5</sup>. However, in 2004 only 55% of those students who graduated high school continued immediately on to post secondary education<sup>6</sup>. So what happens between middle and high school? While there are a number of factors, many middle school students who expect to go to college have no idea how it will happen or what they need to do to get there. Many of them, unfortunately, don't start to really think about college until their junior or senior year and find out that they aren't prepared. According to a study released by ACT in 2005, almost one-fourth (22%) of eighth and ninth grade respondents had not thought about their plans for after high school.<sup>7</sup> This is even more likely to happen to students from lower socioeconomic groups and those without a family or community history of college attendance. Taking the time to think about and make a plan for the future could be the difference between just thinking about college and actually making it there.

The goal of this session is to help your mentee develop personal goals around exploring college and career options.

### Activity

1. Explain to your mentee that you are going to be discussing goals and goal setting in this session.
2. Ask your mentee what a goal is? Can she define it? A good working definition for goal is: a statement describing what you want to be, do, or achieve in the future.
3. Talk about why it's important to set goals. Some reasons include the following:
  - It helps you identify what you want
  - It helps you see the steps you need to take to get there
  - It keeps you accountable
  - It makes it more likely to happen
4. Review the *Key Characteristics of Goals* ([Page 32: Resource Guide](#)) with your mentee and answer any questions she has.
5. Work with your mentee to set a goal for the year about exploring college and careers. What does she want to accomplish during your time together? Use the *Goal Setting* worksheet ([Page 33: Resource Guide](#)) to document her goal.
6. Explain to your mentee that you will be working on some of these steps (e.g. career exploration, study tips, etc.) together over the course of the year and that you will periodically be checking back to assess her progress on the goal.



#### ***SPARK a Conversation!***

*How Does this Activity  
Connect to Your Vision  
Board?*

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<sup>5</sup> Markow Dana, Margot, Liebman and Jackie Dunbar (2007). *Middle School Poll*. (prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Phi Delta Kappa). Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

<sup>6</sup> The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). *Public High School Graduation Rates, 2004*.

<sup>7</sup> "College Readiness Begins in Middle School", ACT Policy Report, George L. Wimberly & and Richard J. Noeth, 2005.

## **Tips for Mentors**

This activity can also be completed online using the Life Map function on [www.youthhood.org](http://www.youthhood.org) instead of the worksheet. More information about youthhood.org is available in the *Additional Resources* section (Page 44: Resource Guide.)

If your mentee is ready and open to the idea, encourage her to set a goal around exploring college and thinking about what she wants to do after high school. If that kind of goal seems unrealistic or too intangible for your mentee, start with a more concrete goal on any topic that is important to her. You can always come back to this activity after you have completed more of the curriculum and set a college exploration goal at that time.

Remember – goals should be about what your mentee wants. Your role is to support her, guide her and offer advice when asked, but not to direct the process. However, few people can believe in something that they haven't seen for themselves. Many mentees have never known anyone who has gone to college so it is difficult for them to believe that college is possible. Mentors can expose mentees to the idea of college and help them understand that college is an option without pushing or forcing. As a mentor you should encourage your mentee to explore college. Emphasize that she does not have to decide now if she wants to go to college or what she wants to do, but that it is important to keep her options open.

## HOW WILL I PAY FOR COLLEGE?

### Background

Many low-income students often say they would have applied for college if they had known more about financial aid. Sharing information about the many resources for financial aid is a useful role for mentors. While actually filling out forms involves confidential financial information that only parents can provide, mentors can still have a role in guiding students to sites that walk them through the financial aid process, and just making sure students are aware of the resources for financing education. While 8<sup>th</sup> grade is too early to start filling out FAFSA and other forms, it is not too early to start thinking about how to pay for college and taking some concrete steps.

The goal of this session is to provide your mentee with a basic understanding of the many types of financial aid that are available.

### Activity

1. Remind your mentee that you talked about financial aid in a previous session as part of the myths about college.
2. Go to [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov), review the “Financial Aid 101” section, and take the financial aid quiz at the end.
3. Then review the different kinds of aid available (scholarships, grants, loans, work study, etc.) in the “Learn What’s Available” section and answer any questions.
4. Which of these kinds of aid might be helpful for your mentee and their family? Make a list and encourage your mentee to share it with her parents/guardians.

### Tips for Mentors

Be careful – financial information is very personal and some mentees (or their parents) may be uncomfortable discussing it. It is not your role to apply for financial aid – your mentee’s parents/guardians will have to do that. However, you can ease anxiety and provide resources that will help your mentee and his family tackle this serious challenge.

Your mentee will need a social security number to apply for federal financial aid. If he doesn’t have one, encourage him to apply now.



# BUILDING CHARACTER: I “C” MYSELF

## Background

According to a brief released by Public/Private Ventures in January 2009, a smooth transition from middle school to high school is strongly related to the likelihood of both finishing high school and staying in college until graduation.<sup>8</sup> While almost all ninth graders show declines in grades and attendance, some students are better able to recover. According to the brief, these students share certain characteristics in addition to strong academic skills that help make the transition to high school smoother and more successful. These traits include effective time management, problem-solving and study skills; strategies for balancing social and academic life; and accurate expectations about high school.<sup>9</sup> This section of the curriculum includes a series of modules to help you foster these traits in your mentee as he/she prepares to make the transition to high school.

## HOW CAN I STUDY SMARTER AND STAY ORGANIZED?

The goal of this session is to help your mentee understand good study skills and assess his study habits.

### Activity

1. Ask your mentee to describe himself academically. What kind of student is he? What are his study habits? Note: if academics (grades or I'm not smart enough) were identified during the *Why College?* session as reasons why the mentee shouldn't go to college, make sure to connect that to this session and explain that there are strategies and tips that can help improve the mentee's study skills which usually leads to better grades.
2. Ask your mentee to complete the *Study Skills Checklist (Page 40: Resource Guide.)*
3. The mentor should keep a list of any areas that the mentee needs to work on (time scheduling, concentration, listening & note-taking, reading, exams, or writing skills) and use a later session to follow up on those areas.
4. Review basic study skill tips at the following sites:
  - [http://knowhow2go.org/middle\\_college\\_study.php](http://knowhow2go.org/middle_college_study.php) - identifies five key ideas: focus, plan ahead, pay attention, check your work, and don't go it alone.
  - <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/collegeprep/mhsc tips.htm> - discusses tips for making your classes count (e.g. sit close to the front, ask questions, take good notes, etc.)
5. Log onto [www.youthhood.org](http://www.youthhood.org) and use the Life Map to help your mentee to develop one goal to improve his study habits. (Note: If you are not registered on youthhood.org you can use the *Goal Setting* worksheet on page 33 of the Resource Guide.) Make sure you follow up with your mentee periodically to check his progress on this goal.

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<sup>8</sup> Paving the Way for Success in High School and Beyond: The Importance of Preparing Middle School Students for the Transition to Ninth Grade, Jean Baldwin Grossman and Siobahn M. Cooney, Public/Private Ventures, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## **Tips for Mentors**

This session provides an overview of basic study skills; helps your mentee assess his study habits; and identifies his strengths and areas for improvement. Due to the number of possibilities, covering each skill in depth is beyond the scope of this curriculum. However, we encourage you to spend a future session(s) exploring those skills where your mentee needs improvement. The Cook Counseling Center in the Division of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech website (<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdyhelp.html>) has a number of resources connected to the specific skills identified in the checklist. Additional suggestions are included in the Resource Guide.

## HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF MY TIME?

The goal of this session is to teach your mentee how to manage her time effectively.

### Activity

1. Start by asking your mentee what she has to do this week and make a list. Make sure she includes non-academic responsibilities (e.g. chores) as well as social ones. Does she feel like she has enough time to fit everything in?
2. Explain to your mentee that today you are going to be discussing time management. Does she think it's important? Why or why not? Has there been a time when she didn't manage her time well (e.g. waited until the last minute to study for a test)? What happened as a result? If appropriate, the mentor should share an example from her own life (e.g. missing a work deadline or being late to a meeting).
3. You and your mentee should take the time management style quiz from [scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com/KIDS/homework/organizer.htm) <http://www.scholastic.com/KIDS/homework/organizer.htm> and compare your results. Have fun going through the other tools and activities that can be found on this website, including "Ranking Your Priorities, To-Do List Maker, and Get Organized Now!" Develop a list of ideas for how each of you can improve your time management and organizational skills.

**If time allows, continue with the next section of the activity, otherwise STOP HERE.**

4. One key to successfully managing your time is prioritizing things you have to do. Go to <http://www.lifelearning.utexas.edu/handouts/habits%20of%20effective%20students.pdf> and read and discuss the 5 habits discussed. Develop a plan to use one or more of these strategies in the week ahead as a way to test them and integrate the habit into everyday life.
5. If your mentee has developed a "to do" list, use the Important/Not Important and Urgent/Not Urgent chart which can be found at <http://www.lifelearning.utexas.edu/handouts/setting%20priorities.pdf> as a guide to help with prioritizing. Discuss how items may change places in time (e.g. a term paper that is due in 2 months may be important but not urgent today, but as the due date approaches it will move into the urgent category.)

### Tips for Mentors

Many people have trouble understanding the difference between importance and urgency so this may be difficult for your mentee. It may help to define each of the terms first:

- Important - of great significance or value
- Urgent - pressing: compelling immediate action

If necessary go through each task with her and help her decide if it is important or just urgent. You may also want to include examples from your schedule to help her understand the difference.

## WHAT CAN I DO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL? GETTING INVOLVED

### Activity

1. Begin by asking your mentee why it's important to get involved in the community and have interests beyond schoolwork.
2. Go to the "Getting Involved" section in the Community Center of [youthhood.org](https://www.youthhood.org): [https://www.youthhood.org/community/getting\\_involved/important.asp](https://www.youthhood.org/community/getting_involved/important.asp) and review the reasons listed for why people volunteer (e.g. discovering interests, developing confidence, etc.) and compare them to your mentee's reasons. Which of these reasons are important to him?
3. Move on to the next section, "Terms and Definitions," and discuss each of these ways to get involved with your mentee.
4. Now that your mentee has a basic understanding of the ways people get involved, it's time for him to think about what he can do. Review the *Self Assessment* worksheet (Page 34: Resource Guide) he completed earlier, focusing on the things he likes and the things he does well. Ask your mentee how he might use these interests and skills to get involved in activities, clubs, or community service.
5. Go to the next section of the website, "How to Get Involved," and ask your mentee to begin the *Finding Something I Want to Do Activity*. When he gets to the point of finding a match, ask him to come up with two or three options of different activities he could be involved in. Make sure to save the activity so you can return at a later time.
6. Talk to him about how he can find out more information about each activity/organization (e.g. reviewing the website, calling the organization, etc.) and help him develop a list of questions for each one.
7. Ask him to take the list of activities and questions home to his parents/guardians and explain that he is interested in finding out more about them.



### ***SPARK a Conversation!***

*How Does this Activity  
Connect to Your Vision  
Board?*

### **Tips for Mentors**

Activities and volunteering are great ways for a young person to explore potential career interests. However, youth should be encouraged to explore a variety of interests even if they don't directly relate to a possible career.

You may want to review the "Leading" section of the Community Center at [www.youthhood.org](http://www.youthhood.org). This section contains activities and insight into a number of leadership-related topics such as respecting others, embracing diversity and communicating well that may be useful for your mentee.

Let your mentee know that service can also help him with his educational goals. Service can help demonstrate that he is a well-rounded individual and it can also help pay for college through scholarships and programs like Americorps.

## HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF HIGH SCHOOL?

The goal of this session is to help your mentee create a plan to make the most of high school.

### Activity

1. Ask your mentee if she has started to think about high school. What will it be like? How does she feel about it (nervous, excited, etc.)? Explain to her that you'd like to help her start planning for the academic side of high school.
2. Review the key steps for planning high school courses from Adventures in Education - <http://www.aie.org/MiddleSchool/Planning/highschoolcourses.cfm>
  - Think ahead
  - Plan courses necessary for graduation
  - Review college admission course requirements
  - Investigate courses that will count for college credit
  - Complete a four-year plan
3. Now you'll explore each of these steps in more detail (with the exception of thinking ahead, which is the topic for the entire session).
4. Review the list of high school graduation requirements with your mentee. Note: ideally this list would be obtained from the guidance counselor before this meeting. A list of requirements can found by conducting a web search using the phrase "graduation requirements for \_\_\_\_" (your state and the current year). As you review the list, start adding courses to the attached High School Planning Chart ([Page 42: Resource Guide.](#))
5. Review recommended classes for college entrance from the College Board (creators of the SAT) at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/high-school/33.html>. Compare this list to the graduation requirements already on the chart and add anything that is not already included.
6. Encourage your mentee to think about courses that will count for college credit such as AP or IB courses. She should plan to discuss which, if any, of these courses are available to her with her guidance counselor.
7. Review the Planning Chart with your mentee. Now that all of the graduation requirements and recommended classes are included, how many spots are left for electives? What classes might she want to take? Remind her that electives provide an opportunity to explore her interests and experiment with new subjects.
8. Encourage your mentee to use this chart throughout high school to track her progress and record her grades. She should also share the chart with her guidance counselor and update it as necessary.

### Tips for Mentors

We suggest your mentee complete the *High School Planning Chart* ([Page 42: Resource Guide](#)) in pencil so she can make changes as necessary. If possible, ask your mentee to get a copy of the high school graduation requirements from her guidance counselor before this session.

In addition to reviewing the recommended classes from the College Board, you may want to review entrance requirements for a specific college or two with your mentee. Ask her if there are any colleges she'd like to look up. If she doesn't have any ideas, choose a couple to explore with her (e.g. a local college, your alma mater, etc.)





# ACTIVITY AND RESOURCE GUIDE

## **WORKSHEETS**

Reasons for Attending College .....	27
Going to College – Myth vs. Reality .....	28
Key Characteristics of Goals .....	32
Goal Setting Worksheet .....	33
Self-Assessment Worksheet .....	34
Career Needs and Wants .....	36
Defining Work Terms .....	37
Careers That Match My Interests.....	38
Exploring Occupations In-Depth .....	39
Study Skills Checklist .....	40
High School Planning Chart .....	42

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**..... 44-47



## REASONS FOR ATTENDING COLLEGE

Read through each reason and its explanation. Add any additional reasons at the bottom of the page. Rank each reason in the order of its importance to you with 1 being the most important.

Reason	Explanation	Ranking
Higher Salary (Economic)	On average, a person who goes to college earns more money than a person who doesn't. Over a lifetime, a college graduate can earn over <b>\$1,000,000</b> more than a high school graduate!  Source: studentaid.ed.gov	
Job Stability (Economic)	A college degree increases your chance of employment by nearly 50%. A two-year degree or even some college can have a positive impact on your ability to find and keep a job, too.  Fast Fact: The higher your education level, the higher your chances of finding and keeping a job.  Source: college.gov	
Job Opportunities (Economic)	According to one estimate, by the year 2028 there will be 19 million more jobs for educated workers than there are qualified people to fill them.  Source: knowhow2go.org	
Job Requirements (Economic)	It's estimated that by 2014, 90% of the fastest-growing careers will require some postsecondary education.  Source: knowhow2go.org	
Exposure (Personal)	College opens up a whole new world, exposing you to opportunities and interests you may not know exist.	
Passion (Personal)	Many people wish they could earn a living doing what they love. By opening up new opportunities and expanding your choices attending college increases your ability to find your passion and do what you love.	
Prove You Can Do It (Social)	Other people may be telling you that you can't go to college because of who you are or where you are from – don't let them stop you!	
Provide Help and Support to Your Family (Social)	With a college education you'll be in a better position to help your family and provide them with additional resources.	
Your Reason		
Your Reason		
Your Reason		

## Going to College – Myth vs. Reality

Adapted from “Mentors: College Myths”, [www.knowhow2go.com](http://www.knowhow2go.com).

To prepare for the myth-busting game you will need to create “cards” from the items below. Make a photocopy of this worksheet. Then cut out each card and fold in half so the statement is on one side and the explanation is on the other. If conversations with your mentee suggest that he believes in other myths about college that aren’t included here, feel free to make additional cards to address those topics.

Card 1

<p><b>Economic Benefits</b></p> <p>I can make a good living without going to college.</p>	<p>There is no doubt that some people have done well without a college degree. However, a college graduate will earn on average about a million dollars more than a high school graduate in his/her lifetime. For most people, college pays.</p>
---	--

Card 2

<p><b>Costs</b></p> <p>My family doesn’t have the money to pay for college and I (mentee) can’t afford to take out loans to pay for it.</p>	<p>Almost all students today can get low-rate education loans to help them pay for college, and education loans typically don’t have to be paid back until a student is out of school. The average loan debt of undergraduate students today is roughly \$20,000 – that’s less than the cost of most new cars! A car lasts a few years. A college education lasts a lifetime.</p>
---	---

Card 3

<p><b>Costs</b></p> <p>The college with the lowest price will be the most affordable.</p>	<p>Not necessarily! Some of the colleges with a high “sticker price” have raised significant amounts of money for scholarships from their graduates and friends. As a result, they have more money to give to students in the form of scholarships, which reduces the “sticker price.” After taking financial aid into consideration, a seemingly more expensive college may be more affordable than a college with a lower list price. <i>Tip:</i> Find out what kinds of scholarship options are available at the colleges you are considering.</p>
---	---

Card 4

<b>Timing</b>	While some students may wait to do certain things like visiting potential colleges or taking the SATs, there are other things that you can do now. For example, high school course selections and grades represent the single most important consideration in most colleges' admissions decisions. High school course decisions are made sometimes as early as middle school. Financial planning, saving for college and finding out which colleges will be affordable are other things you can start doing now.
There are a number of things I can do now, in middle school, to prepare for college.	

Card 5

<b>Costs</b>	During the 2002-03 academic year, more than \$105 billion dollars in financial aid was awarded. The vast majority of this money was doled out by the federal government through grant, loan and work-study programs, while colleges' own grants and scholarships accounted for almost 20 percent of all financial aid. States helped too by contributing more than \$5.5 billion to the pot. That's a lot of money for a lot of students. In fact, more than 70 percent of students nationally receive some kind of financial aid.
There is a lot of financial aid available, even if I'm not the best student.	

Card 6

<b>Economic Benefits</b>	After high school, you may have 40 or 50 years of employment ahead. Many changes will occur in the job market during this time. A college education will certainly give you more options for the long-term. Many of today's jobs that require only a high school diploma may no longer exist a few years from now. Your education should prepare you for the job market of the future, not the present.
Nobody in my family has gone to college and they all have good jobs so I shouldn't go either.	

Card 7

<p><b>Timing</b></p> <p>My family really needs me to work for a year or two before I go to college.</p>	<p>Many students who don't go to college right after high school never get around to it. Others bring great experience to the college when they enroll because of what they did with the time off from school. It is wise for a student to apply to colleges of interest during senior year just like any other student. He/she can then ask a college to defer enrollment for a year or two, if the student needs the time away. Most colleges will hold the offer of admission, especially if the student has plans that will ultimately make the student even more interesting or valuable as a member of the campus community.</p> <p><i>Caution:</i> If the student works during this time away, the income of the student (if substantial) may hinder his/her need-based financial aid eligibility when he/she goes back to school. Because the student will in many cases still qualify as a dependent student, only a small amount of income will be protected under the federal formula. Amounts beyond that can hurt financial aid eligibility.</p>
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Card 8

<p><b>Economic Benefits</b></p> <p>Education beyond high school will improve my employment outlook in the future.</p>	<p>Whether it's a 2-year or 4-year college degree, or a trade or technical certification program, more education opens doors to more opportunities.</p> <p>Research proves that education beyond high school leads to better paying jobs and lower unemployment. In fact, some studies show that a college education benefits the entire family, now and into the future. (Source: <a href="http://www.college.gov">www.college.gov</a>)</p>
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Card 9

<p><b>Family Concerns</b></p> <p>I'm very close to my family and we'll miss each other too much if I go to college.</p>	<p>You can continue your education by attending a nearby school while still living at home. If you decide to attend an out-of-town school, there are lots of ways to stay in touch, like letters, e-mails and phone calls. And there will be a lot of opportunities to see your family, like winter and summer breaks, and even parents' weekends.</p>
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Card 10 (Create Your Own)

<p><b>Topic</b> _____</p>	<p>Explanation:</p>
---------------------------	---------------------

Card 11

<p><b>Topic</b> _____</p>	<p>Explanation:</p>
---------------------------	---------------------

Card 12

<p><b>Topic</b> _____</p>	<p>Explanation:</p>
---------------------------	---------------------

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF GOALS

(Adapted from *Mentor Training Curriculum*, National Mentoring Working Group, 1991)

When developing a goal, make sure it meets the following characteristics:

- **Conceivable.** You must be able to conceptualize the goal so that it is understandable and be able to identify clearly the first step or two.
- **Believable.** In addition to being consistent with your personal value system, the goal must be one you believe you can reach.
- **Achievable.** The goals you set must be goals you can accomplish with your given strengths and abilities. For example, if you have never exercised, it would be foolish for you to set the goal of running a four-minute mile in the next week—that simply would not be achievable.
- **Controllable.** If your goal includes the involvement of anyone else, you should state it so that another person's cooperation (or lack of it) won't interfere with your achievement of your goal.
- **Measurable.** Your goal must be stated so that it is measurable in time and quantity. For example, if your mentee's goal is to pass English, the goal should include components necessary to pass the class: the number of assignments to be completed, when the quizzes are and how much time is needed to study for them, which chapter should be read and by when. That way, the mentee can gauge her progress day by day or week by week.
- **Desirable.** Your goal should be something you really want to do. Whatever your ambition, it should be one that you want to fulfill, rather than something you feel you should do. Of course, there are many things in life we have to do (earn a living, provide for a family if we chose to have one), but to be highly motivated, we must commit a substantial percentage of our time to doing things we want to do.
- **Stated without an alternative.** Research has shown that people who say they want to do either one thing or another (give themselves an alternative) do neither.
- **Growth-facilitating.** Your goal should never be destructive to yourself, others or society.

## GOAL-SETTING WORKSHEET

My Goal for the Future Is: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to finish this goal by: \_\_\_\_\_

Things I Can Do	Things to Learn	People that Can Help (w/contact information)	How They Can Help	Resources That Can Help

### Steps to Take:

- List each step you will need to take to reach your goal.
- Write down notes about each step to help you remember why you need to do this.
- When you're done, check off the step.

Step	Notes	Finished
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

# SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

## Part 1 – What I Know About Myself

5 Things I Like to Do:

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

4 Things That I Do Well:

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

3 Things that are Important to Me:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2 Things I Really Want in a Job:

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

1 Thing I Really Don't Like:

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

**Part 2 - What I've Discovered About Myself**

Career Interest Inventory Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Transferable skills scores:

\_\_\_\_\_ communication      \_\_\_\_\_ research & planning      \_\_\_\_\_ human relations  
\_\_\_\_\_ work survival      \_\_\_\_\_ organization/management/leadership

The two most important things to me in a career are:

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_

The two least important things to me in a career are:

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

## CAREER NEEDS AND WANTS

(Source: America's Career Resource Network, Career Decision-Making Tool  
<http://cte.ed.gov/acrn/cdmt/und/value.htm>)

### Purpose

To identify your top two career needs and wants.

### Instructions

- ◆ Think of the 10 career needs and wants below in terms of their importance to you.
- ◆ Circle the answer that best describes its' relevance to you.
- ◆ Look at your choices in the "Very Important" column, go through them and choose no more than two that you view as the most important.
- ◆ Write these two career needs and wants below.

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

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

<b>MONEY</b> — A need for extras beyond what you live on	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>RESPECT</b> — The prestige that some occupations provide (Example: a doctor)	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>FREEDOM</b> — Being able to work independently with little supervision	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>STABILITY</b> — Occupations that have little turn-over or that offer job security	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>VARIETY</b> — Occupations that expose you to diverse experiences and locations	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>LEISURE</b> — Occupations that provide you with ample time for family and hobbies	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>LEADERSHIP</b> — Occupations with responsibility for others and for planning	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>SERVICE</b> — Occupations that help people and society in a very direct way	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>INTEREST</b> — Working in a field that you find stimulating	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
<b>CHALLENGE</b> — A field that repeatedly tests your skills and abilities	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>

## DEFINING WORK TERMS

America's Career Resource Network (ACRN) defines these key terms:

- **Career** is a sequence of occupations and other life roles that express a person's commitment to work and reflects a pattern of self-development. Each person has one lifelong career that may include many occupations and jobs.
- **Occupation** is a grouping of jobs with common tasks that require similar skills.
- **Job** is a paid position with specific duties, tasks and responsibilities in a particular place of work.

For each of the statements below, decide whether it describes a Career (C), Occupation (O), or Job (J) and write the correct letter in the space provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ After 25 years of service, Regina was recognized for her many contributions to state government.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Ricardo works at the local drug store as a pharmacist.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Marcus is a social worker. He has been a school counselor and worked at a homeless shelter.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Anna was just hired for a position at ESPN as a sports commentator.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas is a master carpenter. He has the skills to make furniture, frame walls and build cabinets.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Kara is a college student. She hasn't chosen a major yet, but knows she wants to spend her time helping people.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Dylan is looking for part-time work to help him pay for college.

Answers: 1. C, 2. J, 3. O, 4. J, 5. O, 6. C, 7. J
---

## CAREERS THAT MATCH MY INTERESTS

Copy this chart as many times as necessary to capture all of the careers that match your interests.

Occupation	Description	Key Tasks	What about this occupation interests me?	Learn more?

## EXPLORING OCCUPATIONS IN-DEPTH

Copy and complete this form for each of the 3 – 5 occupations you want to explore in depth.

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

What tasks might be included in a typical day? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of education and/or training is required? \_\_\_\_\_

How much does it pay? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the future for this occupation – is the number of available jobs growing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of my skills will I use in this occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the work environment like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this occupation meet the two most important needs I identified earlier? \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY SKILLS CHECKLIST

(Source: Cook Counseling Center in the Division of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech  
<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdyhelp.html>)

First make a print out of this document. Using your printout, read each statement and consider how it applies to you. If it does apply to you, check Y. If it does not apply to you, check N. The purpose of this inventory is to find out about your own study habits and attitudes.

1. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I spend too much time studying for what I am learning.
2. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
3. Y\_\_ N\_\_ If I spend as much time on my social activities as I want to, I don't have enough time left to study, or when I study enough, I don't have time for a social life.
4. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually try to study with the radio and TV turned on.
5. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.
6. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I go to class, but I usually doodle, daydream, or fall asleep.
7. Y\_\_ N\_\_ My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later.
8. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
9. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I don't review my class notes periodically throughout the semester in preparation for tests.
10. Y\_\_ N\_\_ When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read.
11. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text.
12. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't keep up with my reading assignments, and then I have to cram the night before a test.
13. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I lose a lot of points on essay tests even when I know the material well.
14. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I study enough for my test, but when I get there my mind goes blank.
15. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often study in a haphazard, disorganized way under the threat of the next test.
16. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas.
17. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I rarely change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the selection, or my familiarity with the content.
18. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I often wish that I could read faster.
19. Y\_\_ N\_\_ When my teachers assign papers I feel so overwhelmed that I can't get started.
20. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I usually write my papers the night before they are due.
21. Y\_\_ N\_\_ I can't seem to organize my thoughts into a paper that makes sense.

If you have answered "yes" to two or more questions in any category, look at our Study Skills Self-help Information for those categories. If you have one "yes" or less in a category, you are probably proficient enough in these areas that you don't need Self-help Information. Feel free, however, to get information in areas that you may have special interests, even if you scored well.

Time Scheduling - 1, 2, and 3.

Concentration - 4, 5, and 6.

Listening & Note taking - 7, 8, and 9.

Reading - 10, 11, and 12.

Exams - 13, 14, and 15.

Reading - 16, 17, and 18.

Writing Skills -19, 20, and 21.

# HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING CHART

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

Subject	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade				10 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
	<u>Fall</u>		<u>Spring</u>		<u>Fall</u>		<u>Spring</u>	
	Course	Grade	Course	Grade	Course	Grade	Course	Grade
English – Language Arts								
Mathematics								
Science								
Social Studies								
Foreign Languages								
Arts								
Computers								
Other								

# HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING CHART (continued)

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

Subject	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade				12 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
	<u>Fall</u>		<u>Spring</u>		<u>Fall</u>		<u>Spring</u>	
	Course	Grade	Course	Grade	Course	Grade	Course	Grade
English – Language Arts								
Mathematics								
Science								
Social Studies								
Foreign Languages								
Arts								
Computers								
Other								

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### ABOUT YOUTHHOOD.ORG

[www.youthhood.org](http://www.youthhood.org) is an interactive, curriculum-based website that helps young people plan for life after high school. The site was designed by the staff of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition at the University of Minnesota for young people to use with an adult guide (teacher, parent, mentor, etc.). The site is divided into various “neighborhoods” such as The High School, The Job Center, and The Community Center among others and includes activities, links to resources, and a curriculum guide for the adults. Some of the activities are referred to specifically in this curriculum but there are many others that you may find useful and relevant as you build a relationship with you mentee. We encourage you to register (and help your mentee to do so) in order to have access to the entire site.

### WHY COLLEGE?

[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) – site built by the U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with students. The “why go” section discusses five reasons to attend college.

[www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org) – both middle school and mentor sections have sub-sections called “why college” which give additional reasons.

[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) – middle school section. Provides a good overview of the college exploration process using the questions when, why, what, where, who and how. The “what” section has good information about the economic benefits of college.

#### Optional Activity

Visit [www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org) and take the “Ready for the Real World” quiz <http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/careers/exploring/Pages/Home.aspx>. Talk about the results. According to the quiz results can she make enough money to live the life she wants without going to college?

### IS COLLEGE FOR ME?

[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) – the “I’m Going Guide” is a collection of common questions about college with answers from current college students.

[www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com) – in the “getting started” sections of the site look for the Tips for First Generation College Students.

#### Optional Activity

Visit [www.firstinthefamily.org](http://www.firstinthefamily.org) and review the “hard facts” and discuss them with your mentee.

## HOW WILL I PAY FOR COLLEGE?

<http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov> includes basic financial aid information and links in the get started section. It also has a tool—the FAFSA forecaster—which can be used to predict financial aid. While this tool is more helpful with students who are closer to high school graduation, you may want to tell your mentee about it and encourage him to review it with his parents at a later time.

## WHAT IS COLLEGE LIKE?

[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) – the “I’m Going Guide” is a collection of common questions about college with answers from current college students.

### Optional Activity

You and your mentee can create your own “Road to College” board game at [http://www.education.com/magazine/article/College\\_Board\\_Game/](http://www.education.com/magazine/article/College_Board_Game/)

## HOW CAN I GET TO COLLEGE?

### Optional Activities

[www.wiredfor2020.com](http://www.wiredfor2020.com), a project of the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, is designed to help mentors spark the interest and expand the possibilities for their mentees. The site includes an interactive Journey Map to help young people map their future from early childhood through high school.

If your mentee is really interested in working more on goal setting, go to the community tool box at [http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub\\_section\\_main\\_1209.htm](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1209.htm). Chapter 22, section 6 has a good activity on goal setting.

## WHO AM I? SELF AWARENESS AND ASSESSMENT

America’s Career Resource Network – has a simple activity to find your RAISEC code in the Understanding section of the Career Decision Making Toolkit. The assessment can be found and downloaded in pdf or Word format at [http://cte.ed.gov/acrn/cdmt/und/match\\_work.htm](http://cte.ed.gov/acrn/cdmt/und/match_work.htm).

[www.careersmarts.com/dna.htm](http://www.careersmarts.com/dna.htm) – has a section on career DNA with an assessment that covers interests (RIASEC), work activities (people, data or things) and personality type.

[www.learnmoreindiana.org](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org) – in addition to the Career Clickers eXpress described earlier, this site also has an expanded version of the assessment called Career Clicker eXpanded.

### Optional Activity

Go to [www.driveofyourlife.org](http://www.driveofyourlife.org) and help your mentee register as a student in the “Drive of Your Life” game. This will allow her to save her “game” and return at a later time. “Drive of Your Life” is a career exploration game that helps middle and high school students learn more about themselves, higher education, and careers.

Help your mentee complete Step 1: Customize Your Ride where the mentee will answer 48 questions about their preferences and abilities. After every 8 questions they will have the opportunity to customize their car. At the end they will receive a personal style profile (similar to the RAISEC Code) and be able to customize their license plate. (Information on Steps 2 and 3 are included in the relevant modules below.)

## WHAT CAREERS MATCH MY INTERESTS?

[www.acinet.org/acinet](http://www.acinet.org/acinet) - provides links to career resources, including a library of occupational information. Also has a skills profiler - you rate your skills in a variety of categories and it gives you jobs that match those skills.

### Optional Activities

[www.bls.gov/k12](http://www.bls.gov/k12) - has a great activity – “What Do You Like” that matches basic interests (e.g. reading, sports, computers, etc.) to occupations. When your mentee selects a category he’ll get a list of careers. Clicking on a career will provide more information about it –we’ll cover that in the next session.

Drive of Your Life Step 2. Go to [www.driveofyourlife.org](http://www.driveofyourlife.org) and help your mentee login and complete Step 2: Plan Your Trip where the mentee will see careers that match his/her style profile with brief descriptions. They will need to choose at least 5 of these careers to test drive (Step 3 below)

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE? RESEARCHING CAREERS

[www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com) – allows you to see the average salary for an occupation based on years of experience and to customize it by geographic area.

### Optional Activities

Use the Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm> for an in-depth look at an occupation. You can search for the occupation by industry or by name. Be prepared – the Occupational Outlook Handbook includes a lot of information and the results will require a lot of reading. You may want to take turns with your mentee reading aloud or, if possible, print the listing ahead of time so you have them available for her. If you choose to print the listing, you should still go through the steps to find the listing so she will know how to do it by herself in the future.

Drive of Your Life Step 3. Go to [www.driveofyourlife.org](http://www.driveofyourlife.org) and help your mentee login and complete Step 3: Jump In & Drive. The mentee can explore each of the careers he/she chose earlier and learn about a typical day and “fast facts”.

## HOW CAN I STUDY SMARTER AND STAY ORGANIZED?

<http://www.how-to-study.com/> - contains articles on a variety of studying-related topics including content specific suggestions for math and language arts as well as general subjects such as procrastination and note-taking.

[http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial\\_center/download/pdfs/tentraps.pdf](http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/download/pdfs/tentraps.pdf) - ten traps of studying and how to avoid them. Although written for college students, most of the suggestions are relevant for middle school students.

<http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl.html> - online study skills library designed for college students but has information on a number of topics that are relevant for this age group.

<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/> - variety of homework resources and activities.

[http://school.discoveryeducation.com/homeworkhelp/homework\\_help\\_home.html](http://school.discoveryeducation.com/homeworkhelp/homework_help_home.html) - homework help on a wide variety of subjects.

<http://sf.factmonster.com/homework/studyskills1.html> - collection of resources on various subjects including taking notes, reading textbooks, and studying for tests.

<http://www.testtakingtips.com/> - lists of tips on a variety of topics (e.g. test anxiety, note taking, study skills & tips).

## **HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF MY TIME?**

<http://www.how-to-study.com/> - articles on procrastination and time management.

<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/homework/> - in addition to the time management quiz discussed above, the organization section has a number of useful articles and activities including a “to do” list maker.

<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdyhlp.html> - includes an online study skills workshop “Time Management Strategies for Improving Academic Performance” with a quiz and activities for creating daily, weekly and semester schedules. It is designed for college students but many of the activities and tips are appropriate for younger students.

## **WHAT CAN I DO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL? GETTING INVOLVED**

[www.youthgiveback.org](http://www.youthgiveback.org) – sponsored by the Youth Philanthropy Project in Richmond, VA the Community Service section has good information, geared to young people, on topics including the importance of community service, how to get involved, and tips for volunteers.

[www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org) – Youth Service America sponsors of National Youth Service Day. 100 Ways You Can Change the World gives concrete examples for how youth can get involved (e.g. give blood or start a community garden) with links to other sites for more information.

## **HOW CAN I MAKE THE MOST OF HIGH SCHOOL?**

[http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=307&1534-D83A\\_1933715A=48b35689442ce4564bf87e13cd043856e48f8031](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gPg.cfm?pageID=307&1534-D83A_1933715A=48b35689442ce4564bf87e13cd043856e48f8031) – contains a list of what classes to take.

<http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/collegeprep/mhscstudents.htm> – The “Make High School Count” program has good information including a glossary of terms, tips for making classes count, and a course planning chart.

<http://www.ribghe.org/courseshs.htm#middle> – has a list of courses to take in middle and high school.



Use this Chart to Collect Your **Tickets to Success** and Track Your Progress

### I “C” MY FUTURE

*Ticket to Success*



What are MY Dreams? \_\_\_\_\_



Who am I? Self Awareness and Assessment \_\_\_\_\_



What Careers Match My Interests? \_\_\_\_\_



How Can I Find Out More?  
(Researching Careers) \_\_\_\_\_

**After finishing a section, make a plan to celebrate your achievement.**

### I “C” MY OPTIONS

*Ticket to Success*



Is College for Me? \_\_\_\_\_



What is College Like? \_\_\_\_\_



How Can I Get to College?  
(Making a Plan) \_\_\_\_\_



How Will I Pay for College? \_\_\_\_\_

**How will you mark your milestones?**

### I “C” MYSELF

*Ticket to Success*



How Can I Study Smarter and Stay Organized? \_\_\_\_\_



How Can I Make the Most of My Time? \_\_\_\_\_



What Can I Do Outside of School?  
(Getting Involved) \_\_\_\_\_



How Can I Make the Most of High School? \_\_\_\_\_

**Refer back to the vision board – can it be changed, added to, enhanced?**

**Go to [www.mentorkids.org](http://www.mentorkids.org) to print out your Tickets to Success.**

TICKETS TO SUCCESS

