

Thank you for purchasing college-prep materials from DreamCatcher Curriculum, LLC. We appreciate your business and hope that our products meet your needs for assisting students prepare for college. Although our materials can stand alone as a handout for students, the program guide will offer additional information and activities to share with students in a classroom or workshop setting.

The program guide is intended as a rough outline for the topic and can be adapted as you see fit to meet the needs of your program, school, or situation. The guide also includes copy-permissible pages for use in activities as a supplement to instruction. **Please note that color handouts are copyright-protected and duplication in any form is strictly prohibited.** See our website www.dreamcatchercurriculum.com for additional info, resources, and new curriculum topics.

➤ **BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** This workshop requires minimal prep, however, it is strongly recommended that you read and review the program guide along with the handout before meeting with students.

PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE OBJECTIVE & INCLUDED TOPICS

To increase awareness of what tasks must be completed in high school to be college-ready upon high school graduation; *College Degrees, College Selection, College Application, Campus Visit Checklist, Standardized Testing, High School Course Selection, Academic Advisement, Letters of Recommendation*

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP/SESSION

This session is designed for high school level students to use as a planning guide in completing the necessary steps for college readiness upon high school graduation. The handout has step-by-step lists of tasks to complete or achieve during each year of high school, as well as a campus visit checklist, and criteria to consider for colleges. As a supplement to the handout, you could designate time to research potential colleges (reserving space for access to computers), so participants can view college websites, sign up for mailing lists, request info, and work on the included *Research Round-Up*. Campus visit tips provided on the handout would work great leading up to (and during) a college campus visit, as well.

STEP ONE TIME: 5-10 MINUTES

Introduce the topic of college readiness before distributing the *Planning for Your Future* handout. You could start with an open discussion about what it means to be “college ready” and what tasks need to be completed during high school to be able to attend college after senior year. Some questions to ask:

What must you do in high school in order to get admitted to college? (Take the ACT/SAT, take required courses, apply early for admission, submit immunization records, send a high school transcript, etc.)

How do you know to which colleges you should apply for admission? (Find out if you meet the minimum admission requirements such as grades and test scores; go visit the colleges; find out if your chosen major is offered, request more information, etc.)

To how many college should you apply for admission? (A good number is three, at minimum; colleges may charge a fee for applying which can add up in cost; check if fee can be waived for participating in college prep programs or if eligible for ACT fee waiver)

What happens if you don't get accepted to a college? (That can happen, especially if you don't meet the minimum requirements; apply to more than one college to have a back-up plan; you might be placed on a waitlist)

What are some non-academic things you should do in high school to be college-ready? (Join extra/co-curricular clubs/groups/organizations, take on leadership roles, volunteer your time, find part-time work experience)

How soon should you start prepping for college? (Immediately! The clock starts ticking your freshman year of high school; do not wait until junior year to think about college and planning for your future)

DreamCatcher Tip: If you have time in advance to request college viewbooks or other admission materials (pamphlets, applications, etc.), allow time for students to review materials as part of the workshop. You can request viewbooks and other materials by contacting college admissions offices. Have a variety of materials from different colleges to share with students, illustrating how each college is unique. Or visit college websites to access applications or housing forms (you'll need technology, if available) as part of the workshop.

PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

Program Guide



STEP TWO TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Distribute the *Planning for Your Future* handout. Read through the cover page, briefly reviewing the degree table. Ask that students “vote” for which degree they plan to pursue. It will be likely that bachelor’s degree receives the most votes, which also happens to be the most common degree pursued in college.

Spend a little time discussing what factors might be considered in choosing a college. What are the criteria that students look for in a college? Some common criteria include location, size, type of college, cost, etc. Move to the *College Search* section inside the handout. Allow time for students to check the boxes of interest in their selection, as well as items on the *College Wish List*. There may be questions as to what some of the items mean; feel free to elaborate and explain as needed. Be sure to cover the concept of *Sure Thing/Match/Reach* colleges. If students happen to know colleges already, they can add to the lists, however, encourage more research to determine which colleges make the final cut for application.

STEP THREE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Move on to the *Campus Visits* portion of the handout. Ask how many students have previously visited a college and if they’d like to share any campus experiences they’ve had so far (what it was like, what was the most surprising thing about campus, did they stay overnight or eat in the dining hall/student union?, etc.). Discuss how visiting a college for fun/camp/ etc. is not the same as visiting as a potential student. College visits are basically shopping for the best product. You want to get the perfect size, fit, and style because your money is being invested in an expensive product. Nobody would buy a car without test driving it first, and the same goes for college. Campus visits are like taking the college for a test drive. Review and discuss the *Campus Visits* section of the handout. Brainstorm additional questions they might for the tour.

DreamCatcher Tip: If time permits, and you have access to technology, watch a few videos that show scenes from college campuses. You could use videos on college websites or go to youvisit.com for free virtual tours of a variety of campuses across the country.

STEP FOUR TIME: 15-20 MINUTES

Now that students have considered what they are looking for in a college, it’s time to discuss what colleges look for in applicants. Review the corresponding section of the handout, as well as the *High School-to-College Planner* section on the back of the handout. Spend as much time as needed reviewing the items to complete in high school. Emphasize items that are required for college admission, such as **high school transcript, immunization/shot records, essays (if required), letters of recommendation (if required), and test scores**. Review the protocol for requesting rec letters, since these are an integral part of the application process. Stress that recommenders should know the applicant well and have positive info to share, which is why connecting with teachers, counselors, college prep advisors, principals, employers, club sponsors, etc. is important.

DreamCatcher Tip: Although this handout does not cover aspects of writing quality essays for college and scholarship applications, provide a few general suggestions:

- * Answer question/prompt clearly, keeping focus specific and personal
- * Don’t simply say what you think colleges want to hear—essays that are creative and unique stand out best to Admissions personnel
- * Don’t be too wordy; be concise and to the point, cutting out any unnecessary words
- * Proofread and spell-check; have someone else (parent, friend, counselor, teacher) read over your essay before submitting

DreamCatcher Extra: Provided for you on the following pages are copy-permissible activity sheets to provide students for narrowing down the list of potential college choices, and organizing extra/co-curricular activities. Students can work on the activity pages during the session or take the sheets to work on later.

LAST STEP & ASSESSMENT TIME REMAINING

Conduct assessment (included with guide) by distributing cut slips to participants and collecting before dismissal.

LEARNING OUTCOME

At the end of this session, students will be able to create a short “to-do” list for their high school years to be college-ready. Students will provide at least four criteria they are looking for when considering/selecting the best college, as well as list three things they plan to include on a college campus visit.

COLLEGE RESEARCH ROUND-UP

WHAT COLLEGES MAKE THE FINAL CUT? COMPARE THE BASICS IN THE GRID BELOW.

NAME OF COLLEGE:	COLLEGE 1	COLLEGE 2	COLLEGE 3	COLLEGE 4
Do I meet the minimum requirements for admission? (Is it a Sure Thing/Match/Reach?)				
Fave Thing About This College				
What Majors of Interest Are Offered?				
Other Activities I'm Interested in Here (Clubs, Sports, Greek Life, Other Organizations)				
What You Like LEAST About This College				
How Much Does It Cost? (Tuition/Room & Board/Fees)				
Is Financial Aid Available?				

EXTRA! EXTRA! KEEP TRACK OF YOUR EXTRA/CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

YOU'LL NEED THIS INFO HANDY WHEN COMPLETING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

9TH GRADE

(sports, clubs, membership in programs, honor roll, awards/recognitions, volunteer work with community/church, work experience, or anything above and beyond school)

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

SCHOOL AWARDS:

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

WORK EXPERIENCE:

10TH GRADE

(sports, clubs, membership in programs, honor roll, awards/recognitions, volunteer work with community/church, work experience, or anything above and beyond school)

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

SCHOOL AWARDS:

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

WORK EXPERIENCE:

11TH GRADE

(sports, clubs, membership in programs, honor roll, awards/recognitions, volunteer work with community/church, work experience, or anything above and beyond school)

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

SCHOOL AWARDS:

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

WORK EXPERIENCE:

12TH GRADE

(sports, clubs, membership in programs, honor roll, awards/recognitions, volunteer work with community/church, work experience, or anything above and beyond school)

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

SCHOOL AWARDS:

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Colleges are judging you — deciding if you would be a good fit for their school and if you have what it takes to be successful based upon your high school performance. This is determined not just by your academic record, but also by your abilities and interests outside of class. Colleges desire students who have gone beyond themselves to volunteer and help others. Also, you should demonstrate sustained commitment to particular activities over time (not randomly joining a bunch of clubs), including **leadership** positions. Showing that you are responsible enough to balance academics with extra/co-curricular activities (without burning out) is a true testament to what kind of college student you could be.

PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT



YOUR COLLEGE TO-DO LIST

Make a short list of things you need to do in high school to be ready for college (list at least **5**).

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What top **4** criteria will you consider when selecting a college?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

List **3** things to include on a college campus visit:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



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