

College Selection Guide

Your guide to finding the right school for YOU.

Why College?

By now, you've probably heard the same question over and over:

Where are you going to college?

Before you settle on the “**where,**” there are a few questions to answer .

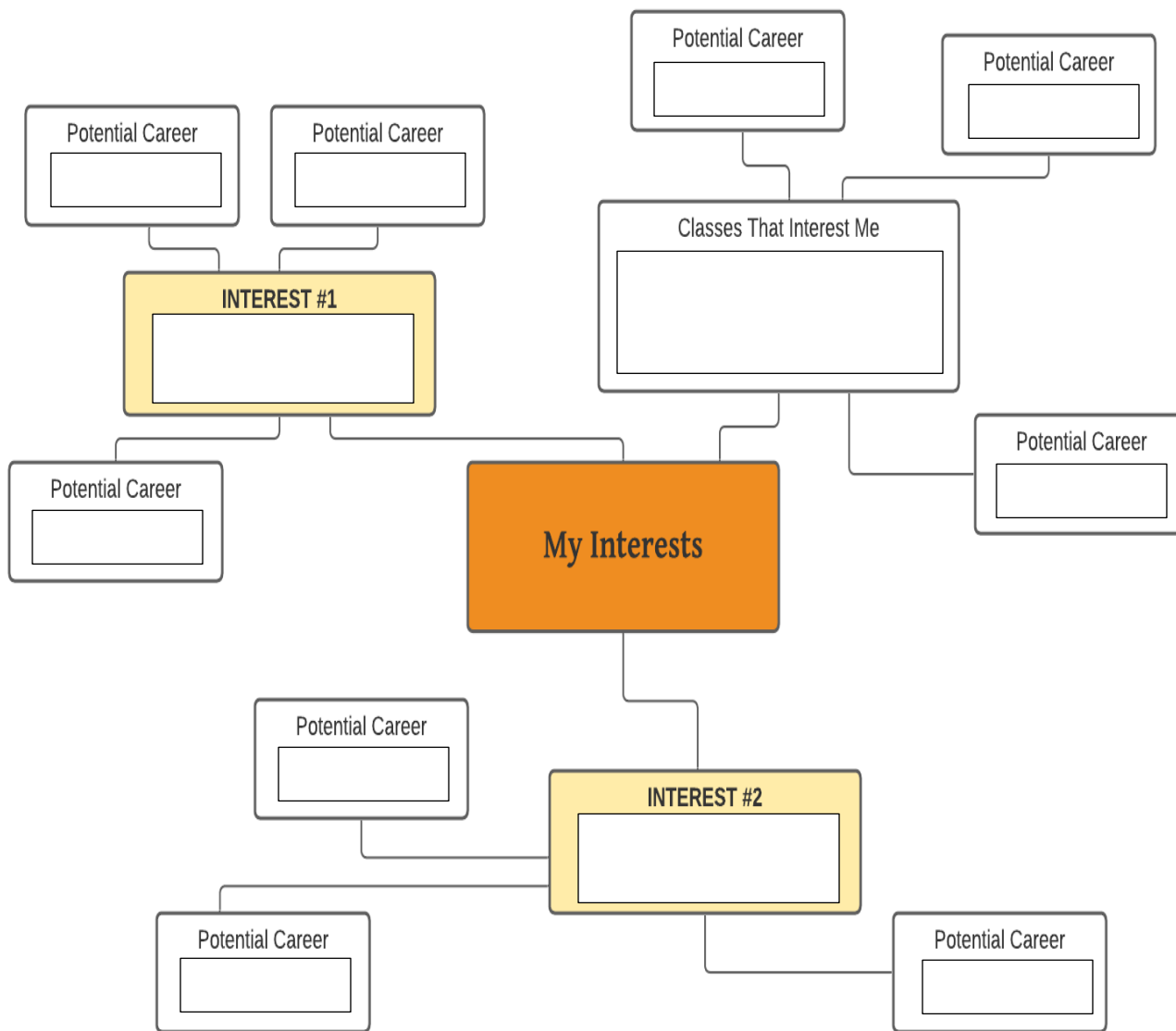
1. Why do you want to go to college?
2. Is there a particular job you want to have? Are there skills you want to learn?
3. Is there an area of the country or the world you want to experience?
4. Think about what your life looks like now.
5. What do you want to keep, and how would you like for it to change?



What Do You Enjoy??

Mind mapping is an exercise to help you take one big idea and break it up into smaller categories. Breaking up ideas in this way helps you to see any larger themes that may appear as you work through the process.

Use the grid shown here to map out your interests and potential careers related to those interests.



There are several great mind mapping software programs and websites online. The basic map above will give you a start, but we **highly recommend** going online and creating your own.

What Do You Really Want To Do??

Take a look back at your mind map and think about **YOUR Interests**.

Some of these interests can one day turn into a career.

What do you want to do after college?

On your mind map, you identified potential careers; jot down below the ones that interest you the most.

Where do you want to be?

Do you want to stay in your town, your state, or your region (Southeast, Midwest, West Coast, etc.)?

Will you be energized by a big city? OR are you looking for a quieter campus life?

Make your location selection choices below.

I would like to go to school in the:

- Northeast** **Southeast** **Southwest** **West** **Midwest** **Doesn't Matter**

I would like to go to school in a college town that is:

- Rural** **City** **Big City** **Doesn't Matter**

I would like to go to school in a location surrounded by:

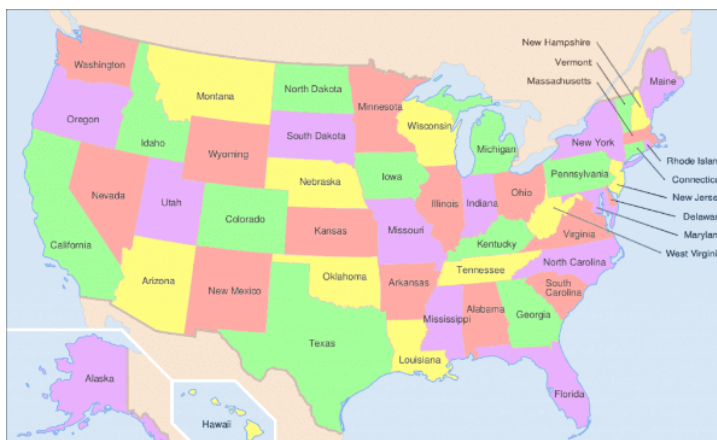
- Beach** **Flat Land** **Mountains** **Doesn't Matter**

I prefer weather that is:

- Dry** **Wet** **Warm** **Cold** **Doesn't Matter**

I want to be this far from home:

- 30-Minute Drive** **2- to 5-Hour Drive** **1-Day Drive** **I Want to Fly to Get Home**
 Doesn't Matter



What Else?

When it comes to college, **there's something for everyone!** Whether you're looking for a vocational program to specialize in a trade or a bachelor's degree to lead you to a doctorate, there are a lot of choices to consider .

Here are a few questions to think about as you start your search.

Select your college type.

I would prefer a college that is:

- Public** **Private** **Doesn't Matter**

I want a college with a student population that is this big:

- Large** (15,000 +) **Medium** (5,000 - 15,000) **Small** (less than 5,000) **Doesn't Matter**

Ultimately, I want to earn a/an :

- Certificate** **Associate's Degree** **Bachelor's Degree** **Master's Degree** **Doctorate**

I'm interested in a college with a focus on:

- Performing Arts** **Liberal Arts** **Religious Studies** **Military Service**
 Specialized School **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)**



Other Interests

There's more to college than just going to classes. To be well-rounded, you need to pursue interests and hobbies that are important to YOU. Start exploring what else makes you tick and will ultimately help you cope with the pressures of college - and live a fulfilling life.

Your activities

I am interested in participating in these activities :

- Campus Radio / Newspaper
- Community Service Organizations
- Greek Life
- International Opportunities
- Intramural Sports
- Music / Band
- Outdoor Recreation
- Political Clubs
- Religious Programs
- ROTC
- Student Government Association
- Theater
- Visual Arts

Include additional interests below.



Make A List

As a high school junior, it's good to have a list of 7-10 potential college options.

Think about the colleges you are considering and what appeals to you at each school.

Write down the colleges you are currently thinking about below.	Add your top 5 interests below. The schools that match your listed criteria are a good place to start your college search. After adding your interests below, research each college you listed to determine if they offer programs related to those topics.				
SCHOOL NAMES	INTEREST #1	INTEREST #2	INTEREST #3	INTEREST #4	INTEREST #5
1	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
2	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
3	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
4	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
5	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
6	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
7	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO

Add up the Total Number of “YES” responses: _____



Consider the Stats

Your ideal college list should include colleges that you hope to get into (your dream school!) as well as schools that you feel more confident about your qualifying ability.

Write down the colleges you are currently thinking about below.	Know the stats. Enter the relevant requirements for each of the colleges you listed on the previous page.				
SCHOOL NAMES	Average GPA	Average ACT/SAT Scores	Admit Rate	Early Deadline Date	Regular Deadline Date
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					



Check the Costs

Check the financial aid websites of the colleges you are interested in to learn more about costs .

When you calculate the total, **don't let it scare you away!**

College is an investment you're making in yourself and your future. And at many schools, you'll pay less than the "sticker price" listed online. Look for **Net Price Calculation**, which can be found on each school's admission and/or financial aid websites.

Write down the colleges you are currently thinking about below.	Estimated Costs					
	SCHOOL NAMES	Tuition	Books/Supplies	Housing	Meals	TOTAL
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						



More about Costs

There are a lot of creative ways to pay your way through college. Some examples include:

Work Study

These are on-campus jobs where your pay applies directly to your bill.

Scholarships

These are often offered by the prospective college but be sure to talk to your high school counselor and search online to find outside scholarships offered by local business and community organizations.

Grants

Similar to scholarships, grants provide money you do NOT have to pay back.

Loans

Offered to both students and parents, these help you delay making payments until after you graduate.

Employment

Consider getting a part-time job, if your schedule allows, to help with daily costs.

Additional financial aid resources:

Federal Student Aid Information (FAFSA)

Studentaid.ed.gov

Budget Calculator

Mappingyourfuture.org/money/budgetcalculator.com

Big Future

Bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college



Next Steps

You have made your list and narrowed it down. **WHAT'S NEXT??**

CONNECT

Visit the school(s) websites and fill out an interest form. Getting on the mailing list will keep you in the loop about important details such as deadlines and upcoming events.

DEVELOP YOUR QUESTIONS

Before you hit the road to visit any campuses or schedule any virtual tours, think about the questions YOU want to ask.

VISIT

Schedule campus visits. You won't really know if a college "fits" until you step on the campus.

Look around: Can you see yourself going to classes and living on campus??

