

Computer Fun:

Learning Resources

Get the jump on college and career.

College and a career seem far away, but you can start exploring your options now so that when the time comes to make decisions, you will be able to choose what's right for you.

- Talk to your parents, relatives, older siblings and teachers about where they went to college. It may seem awkward at first, but asking even general questions can help you decide what is important to you and it will prompt them to give you the deets that you won't get in the college brochures or web sites.
- Visit college campuses and you'll get a feel for what suits you. Summer camps that are held on college campuses are great ways to get to know the area and the facilities and future students are always welcome for tours. Check online or call the admissions office for schedules and opportunities. You may also find virtual tours to help get you started.
- Location, location, location. Decide where you want to go to college. You'll really want to think about more than just whether your future college is close to the beach or the slopes. If it's far from home, you'll need to budget for travel. If it's in a small town, will you be able to get a part-time job? If it's in a city, will you feel safe or will you be distracted by urban life?
- Review the academics colleges offer: degrees, majors and special programs. Learn the differences between them and what the differences mean.
- Look at the student body including diversity and what states or countries are represented. You can probably find these statistics on the college or university's web site. If not, don't be shy about starting a conversation with an admissions officer. Their job is to match the right students with their school, so they will help you get the information you need to make good choices.
- Decide whether you want to go to a large university with thousands of students or a small college with several hundred students. Large campuses offer lots of opportunities, but it's easy to get lost in the crowd and there's a lot more competition. Smaller schools may have fewer choices for clubs and activities, but you may have a better chance of making the football team or the cheerleading squad. A large part of the education you will receive at college will happen outside the classrooms and study groups.
- Campus life is important, from sports and clubs to housing and job opportunities. Look at everything that affects your daily life as well as your education.
- Find out what you need to do to get into college, including grades and entrance exams. Different majors, or different colleges within larger universities, may have different requirements.
- Research scholarships that are available – your high school guidance office is a great place to start. Be sure to look into local scholarships, as well as scholarships offered through your church or other organizations like professional associations that your parents might be a part of. Many employers and industry or trade associations offer scholarships. And don't overlook any of them. Every little bit helps.
- Ask teachers to recommend you when you apply to college. Their opinion counts. Consider asking for written recommendations that you can copy or scan and use copies as needed as well

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as online recommendations through services like [LinkedIn](#) where you can begin to build a professional profile even while you are still in high school.

- Don't forget that college admissions officers who review your applications will be doing their research, too. Make sure that your online profiles for [Twitter](#), [MySpace](#) and [Facebook](#) don't work against you by showing you to be a very different person from the one you may portray in your app.
- Take time to Google the colleges you are considering and join the discussion groups online. Follow the Tweets. That's where you will find the real scoop on what the students really think about their academic opportunities and campus life as well as the general flavor of the student body.
- If you are really having trouble deciding on a college, you might also want to ask how difficult it is to transfer. Just because you start out at one institution doesn't mean you have to graduate there. But you do want to graduate as quickly and painlessly as possible. Make sure you understand the ins and outs if you think you may want to change schools in a year or two.