

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

ACTIVITIES 26-35

Goal: You will finish the college admissions process, including identifying appropriate college programs, completing admission and financial aid applications.

Objectives -- You will:

- ▶ **Identify** college programs that match your interests in Activities 26 and 27.
- ▶ **Identify** admission requirements in Activities 28 and 29.
- ▶ **Complete** pre-college admission and/or placement tests in Activities 30 - 32.
- ▶ **Complete** and submit college applications in Activity 33.
- ▶ **Complete** an application for financial aid in Activities 34 and 35.

Once you have career and education goals in mind and have made a plan to reach them, it's time to get started. In this section, you research colleges: what it takes to get admitted, pre-college testing, and available disability services. There is a lot to be done to reach the goal of college admission. In school you will have many opportunities to work toward your goal. There are thousands of colleges in the United States and they all are in competition to recruit interested and qualified high school students. Your job is made easier by this competition. Keep your eyes and ears open for college seminars, conferences, representatives wishing to speak with you, and college materials. Get to know your counselor and career center specialist. They know about opportunities.

You will continue to use your *Planning Calendar* in this section. This is more than just another assignment. If you use it, you will know where you are and where you need to be in the planning process.

ACTIVITY 26

Learn about colleges that may offer programs related to your interests and skills.

Prerequisite: Completion of Activity 18 or an interest inventory.



Select two or three colleges from the Post-ITT Website that you are curious about or might want to attend.

Once you are on the Post-ITT home page, select **Colleges** and then link to the colleges of your choice.

Find the addresses for these schools and write for the school catalogs or continue to follow the links to find an on-line catalog (if they have one). A sample letter can be found on the Post-ITT Website (Activity 26 worksheet*).

Upon receiving each college catalog (or after printing the web pages), write down which programs you find interesting. Refer to the interest inventory you completed earlier in Activity 18. Identify some of the jobs/occupations that are related to your interests and skills and then look up the college programs in the catalogs that match those interests.



Discuss the information you found with a parent, teacher, and/or high school counselor. If these schools do not have programs of interest for you, select two or three more colleges. Visit their home pages on the Internet.



Repeat the above activity until you find programs that interest you.

After discussing the colleges and college programs of interest with a parent, teacher, and/or high school counselor, rank the colleges by first, second, and third choice.

*Go to the Post-ITT Website, click **Guidance Activities**, select **Forms** and choose **Activity 26 worksheet**.

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ACTIVITY 27

Visit a college campus.

VOCABULARY

- disability services
- admissions counselor



Identify at least one local college you may want to attend. Plan to make a visit to the school while classes are in session but not during exam week. This will give you an idea of campus activity.

During your visit, you may want to include a tour of the campus, a stop at the campus bookstore to look over textbooks, and lunch in the student center.

Before your visit, arrange with an admissions counselor to sit in on classes in one or two program areas that are of interest to you.

You may also want to arrange to meet the disability services coordinator to get an overview of support services that are available.



After your visit, write a summary of your experience. What did you like and dislike about the school? In what ways can this school help you meet your goals (Activity 22)?



Review your summary with a parent and/or teacher. Make a list of your next action steps in selecting and applying to college. Add important dates to your *Planning Calendar*.

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ACTIVITY 28

Learn about college admission requirements for the colleges in which you have an interest.

VOCABULARY

- SAT or ACT
- ASSET or COMPASS



Select two or three colleges that you might want to attend and learn about their admission requirements.

The following are ideas to get you started:

- Visit the Post-ITT Website to access the web pages of these colleges.
- Use the college catalogs in your counseling office or career center.
- Meet with your high school counselor.
- Meet with a college admission counselor at colleges of interest.

Record the following admissions information for each school.

- Is high school graduation required for admission to the college?
- Is high school graduation required for acceptance into a particular program?
- Does the college require a specified number of credits hours in core high school classes? What are those requirements?
- What grade point average (GPA) is required for admission?
- Is the SAT or ACT required? What minimum scores?
- Is the ASSET, COMPASS, or other placement test required to determine placement in college English and math?
- Does the college consider extracurricular activities?
- Does the application require an essay or letters of recommendation?
- What are the deadlines for submitting all application information?



Organize your notes and use this information to complete Activity 29. Record important dates on your planning calendar.

ACTIVITY 29

Develop a strategy to complete the admission requirements for the college that you plan to attend.

Prerequisite: Completion of Activity 28.



Meet with a high school guidance counselor to review your high school transcripts along with the information you recorded in Activity 28.

At this meeting make a list of all the admission requirements for the type of college you plan to attend. After each requirement on the list, make a check by the items you have completed and highlight the ones you have yet to do.



With your school guidance counselor's assistance, develop or update semester schedules that will include all the classes you must take prior to high school graduation.

Record all tasks and deadlines on the *Planning Calendar*. (See Activity 24.)

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ACTIVITY 30

If you are considering or planning to attend a four-year college, complete a preliminary test to prepare you for the SAT or ACT.

VOCABULARY

- PSAT
- PLAN
- academic accommodations



Make an appointment with your high school guidance counselor to discuss the steps you must take to prepare for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) or the PLAN test (for ACT). Request information on:

- Classes to help prepare you for the PSAT or PLAN
- Available testing accommodations
- Procedure to determine your eligibility for accommodations
- Necessary paperwork and application to request accommodations
- Application materials to schedule the PLAN



Record all tasks and deadlines on the *Planning Calendar*. (See Activity 24.)



You will find additional information to help you to prepare for the PSAT at the College Board Website (<http://www.collegeboard.com>). The ACT Website (<http://www.act.org>) will have information on the PLAN test.



Complete and submit your application to take the PSAT or PLAN. If you are eligible for testing accommodations, complete and submit the necessary paperwork. Pay close attention to the application deadline.

Attend a preparation class that may be available.

Take the PSAT or PLAN.



Discuss the test-taking experience and your test results with a teacher or guidance counselor. Questions to consider:

- Does my test score meet the admissions requirements at my colleges of interest?
- In what areas of the test would I like to improve my score?
- What steps do I take to improve my score in those areas?
- Did I use the accommodations I am eligible to receive? Did it help?

ACTIVITY 31

If you are considering or planning to attend a four-year college, complete the SAT or ACT.

Prerequisite: Completion of Activity 30.



Visit the Post-ITT Website and go to each school of interest. (See Activity 28.) Determine whether the school requires the SAT or the ACT as an admission consideration.

Make an appointment with your high school guidance counselor to discuss the steps you must take to prepare for the SAT or ACT. Request information on:

- Classes or instruction to help prepare you for the SAT or ACT
- Available testing accommodations
- Procedure to determine your eligibility for accommodations
- Necessary paperwork and application to request accommodations
- Application materials to schedule the SAT or ACT



Record all tasks and deadlines on the *Planning Calendar*. (See Activity 24.)



You will find additional information to help you prepare for the SAT or ACT at the following web sites:

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

<http://www.act.org/>

In addition, use an Internet search engine such as <http://www.google.com> to find other websites that may be of help.



Complete and submit your application to take the SAT or ACT. If you are eligible for testing accommodations, complete and submit the necessary paperwork. Pay attention to the deadlines.

Attend a preparation class that may be available.

Take the SAT or ACT.

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Discuss the test-taking experience and your test results with a teacher or guidance counselor. Does your test score meet the admissions requirements at your colleges of interest? If your answer is “no,” make plans to re-take the test and discuss the following questions.

- In what areas of the test would I like to improve my score?
- What steps do I take to improve my score in those areas?
- Did I use the accommodations I am eligible to receive?
- What steps in this activity do I repeat to prepare for a re-take?

You may conclude that it is unlikely that your score will increase enough to meet admissions requirements. If this is the case, consider alternatives to that school.

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ACTIVITY 32

If you are planning to attend a community or technical college, complete the ASSET or COMPASS or other required college placement test.

VOCABULARY

- ASSET or COMPASS
- academic accommodations



Visit the Post-ITT Website and go to each school of interest. Click on “Admission and Registration” and then read the information on the ASSET or COMPASS test in the “Admission” section. Some schools will provide you with a link to admission information on their college web site that will provide information on the ASSET/COMPASS.

To find general information on the ASSET or COMPASS tests, visit the ACT Website at <http://www.act.org/asset/tests/> or <http://www.act.org/compass/tests/>

You can also make an appointment with your high school guidance counselor. Questions to consider asking include:

- What is the ASSET/COMPASS test?
- How long is the test?
- How are the test scores used in terms of my admission to a community or technical college?
- What testing accommodations are available?
- How do I determine my eligibility for accommodations?
- What steps do I take to apply for test accommodations?
- What steps do I take to sign-up for the test?



Complete and submit your application to take the ASSET or COMPASS test. If you think you are eligible for testing accommodations, complete and submit the necessary paperwork. Pay attention to application deadlines. Record all tasks and deadlines on the *Planning Calendar*. (See Activity 24.)

Take the ASSET or COMPASS test.

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Discuss the test-taking experience and your test results with a teacher or guidance counselor. Are your test scores an accurate reflection of your academic abilities? If your answer is “no,” make plans to re-take the test and discuss the following questions.

- In what areas of the test would I like to improve my score?
- What steps do I take to improve my score in those areas?
- Did I ask for and receive the accommodations I am eligible for?

If you believe that your test scores are an accurate reflection of your current academic skill and they require you to take pre-college classes, meet with your teacher or counselor to discuss. Here are some questions you might consider:

- How long does it usually take for students to complete these classes?
- How will I know if I’m making progress?
- Can I start other classes while I’m taking pre-college level classes?
- Are there alternative ways to reach my career goal?

ACTIVITY 33

Complete and submit the application and supporting materials for the colleges that you have an interest in attending.

Prerequisites: Completion of the activities in Sections 3 and 4 that assist you in determining and qualifying for colleges of interest.



Acquire all application materials for each college you have an interest in attending. These materials can be requested over the phone, by mail, or linking to the college through the Post-ITT Website.

Make a copy of each application form so you will have a practice application for each school.

Complete the practice applications. Write the drafts of any required essays.



Meet with a family member, counselor, or teacher and review your practice applications and essay drafts.



Make changes based on their feedback. Write a final copy of any required essays, complete the original application forms and arrange for all other materials required for application (such as ordering transcripts, teacher recommendations, etc.).

- Submit your applications.
- Meet all application deadlines.
- Enclose any required fees for application.

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ACTIVITY 34

Learn about financial aid resources and the procedures to apply.

VOCABULARY

- financial aid
- grant
- loan
- work-study program
- scholarship
- financial need

Colleges charge tuition and fees. There is a variety of assistance available to help students meet college costs. Financial aid can be found through scholarships, grants, student loans, and work-study programs. In some cases, there is often a relationship between your financial need and getting assistance.



Visit the Post-ITT Website and link to one or two colleges of interest. Search each school site for information on financial aid.

For each school of interest, record your answers to the following questions:

- What is the cost of college tuition? Room and board? Books and fees?
- What types of financial aid are available?
- What are the eligibility requirements to receive each type of financial aid?
- How do I apply for financial aid?

For additional information on financial aid resources and general application procedures, contact:

<http://www.finaid.org>

<http://www.easi.ed.gov/>

Additional website addresses for information on financial aid can be found on the Post-ITT Website by selecting **Resources** and by using search engines such as <http://www.google.com>.



Discuss the financial aid information you have recorded with your parents.

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ACTIVITY 35

If you are applying for financial aid, complete financial aid applications.



Acquire all financial aid information for each college you have an interest in attending. Financial aid applications may be requested at your career center or by contacting the college over the phone, by mail, or through the Post-ITT Website.



Record financial aid deadlines on your planning calendar. (See Activity 24.)



Make a copy of the blank application form(s) and complete at least one practice application. You may need to have the help of your parent to have all the information the application requests.



Review the practice application with your parent. If you need additional assistance in completing the application, you can enlist help from a high school guidance counselor, the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend, or at the following websites:

<http://www.finaid.org> or

<http://www.easi.ed.gov/>



Using the practice application as a guide, complete the final application(s).

Mail all application materials before the specified deadlines.

Note: More students fail to receive financial aid because of missing school deadlines than for any other reason.