Basic 12 for Middle School — Workshop 9:  
*How do you choose a college?*

**Description:**  
This workshop moves the idea of going to college to the actions necessary for selecting and applying to a college. Students are introduced to eight things they need to consider as they think about which college is right for them.

**Outcome:**  
- Students will be able to describe the general considerations for choosing a college.  
- Students will be able to describe the general admissions process and when they should take college entrance exams such as the PSAT.

**Learning Targets:**  
- Criteria for selecting a college  
- Types of colleges to consider

**KnowHow2Go Connection:** Find the Right Fit  
- KnowHow2Go National site  
  [http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/index.html](http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/index.html)  
  How did I choose the right school for me?  
  Take the quiz:  [http://kh2go.devbox10.com/middle-and-high-school-students/college-quiz.html](http://kh2go.devbox10.com/middle-and-high-school-students/college-quiz.html) or click on Step 3 to learn more about Finding the Right Fit:  
  [http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/four-steps-to-college.html](http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/four-steps-to-college.html)

**Workshop Length:** 75 Minutes

**Assessments/Evaluations:**  
- Number of students who can list the criteria they will use to select a college.

**Materials or Resources Needed:**  
- KnowHow2Go National site  
  [http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/index.html](http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/index.html)  
  How did I choose the right school for me?  
  [http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/middle-and-high-school-students/college-quiz.html](http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/middle-and-high-school-students/college-quiz.html)  
  [http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/four-steps-to-college.html](http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/four-steps-to-college.html)  
- College Selection Criteria Worksheet  
- College recruitment materials

**Follow-Up Lessons:** See Attached
Workshop 9 Agenda

How do you choose a college?

Introduction: ........................................................................................................... 10 minutes
Share with students that finding the right fit for college is one of the most important steps in the entire process. There is a college for everyone – their interests, their major, and their comfort level.

Ask students to name colleges they know about. Ask students to share any visits they may have made to colleges or college activities.

Whole Group Student Engagement: ................................................................. 45 minutes
- Share with students that there are criteria for selecting a college that will help them “Find the Right Fit.” Ask students to list the criteria they already have for selecting a college. Briefly discuss the list.
- Show one or more of the videos to help students expand their list of criteria for finding the right fit.
- Introduce the eight basic criteria for selecting a college (academics/majors, academic help, size, location, living, people, and social opportunities).
- Divide students into teams and give them the opportunity to explore a specific college and be prepared to report out to the rest of the group about the college. If the technology is not available, you can modify this by having recruiting materials available from colleges. Use a selection of local, regional, state, and well-known colleges to spark student interest.
- Have students share the information they have learned about Washington State colleges.

Individual Student Engagement: ................................................................. 5 minutes
- Allow time for students to list their own criteria in their journals.

Closing: .................................................................................................................. 5 minutes
- Ask students to share the most important criteria to them for selecting a college/university.
Assessment of Workshop 9: How do you choose the right college?

Purpose(s):
- To help students clarify what they are looking for in a college and to establish the questions they should be asking themselves over the next several years.

Format: Individual student worksheet used as a concluding part of the workshop

Facilitator Directions:
- Make sure that every student has a copy of the worksheet. You might want to plan on having extras available if you want groups to also answer the questions.
- It may be helpful to give the students the worksheet early in the lesson so that they can keep the questions in front of them as they explore colleges and possibilities.
- Give students time during the Individual Student Engagement to complete the worksheet as an individual.
- After the Closing discussion, ask students to file the worksheet in their portfolio or folder.
Below is a list of the criteria and a set of questions you should consider when choosing a college. Fill in what is important to you in the column on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choosing a College Criteria</th>
<th>Questions You Might Ask Yourself</th>
<th>What is important to you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academics and Programs</strong></td>
<td><em>Does it offer what I’m most interested in? What majors are available? What is the reputation of the college? If this is a two-year college, can I transfer my courses to other programs?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Help</strong></td>
<td><em>Are there academic support programs that will help me if I struggle?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td><em>How many students attend the school? How big are the typical freshman classes? How big is the community around the college?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td><em>How far is the college from my house? Is it in a rural, urban, suburban area? Could I drive if needed and live at home? How would I travel home if it is further away? How often would I be able to come home? Do I want to live in another part of the country?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living</strong></td>
<td><em>Are new students required to live in dorms? Where do most students live? What is the cost of living on/off campus?</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td><em>Will there be students like me at this college – ethnicity, race, culture, beliefs? Will I be able to find groups where I will feel like I fit in? What support is</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Opportunities</td>
<td>What activities are available that fit my interests? Will I have time/support for participating in music, sports or student government for example?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>How much is tuition? What will the total expense look like? Does the college offer help with finding aid and/or scholarships?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment of Workshop 9: How do you choose the right college?

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Follow-Up Lessons for Workshop 9
How do you choose a college?

❖ College Board Website Sign-up
- Sparking the Future. Grades 9-10, Lesson 5
  

- Lesson Goals:
  o Help students learn about the resources available through the College Board website.
  o Complete the registration process so that students can begin saving college information.

- Lesson Description:
  The lesson provides the opportunity for students to begin to investigate colleges and become familiar with the College Board Resources. It allows students to sign-up on the College Board site and save the information from college searches.
LEARNING GOALS:

- Students will identify the major college entrance exams.
- Students will register at the College Board web site and research one college.

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS:

- **Essential Academic Learning Requirements Grades 9/10 Grade Level Expectations:** This lesson is aligned with Writing 1.5.1 and Educational Technology 1.3.2 and 1.3.3. Students will develop materials in an appropriate format for a college search. They will locate, analyze, and use information from the College Board web site.
- **Common Core State Standards Grades 9-10:** This lesson is aligned with English Language Arts Writing 4, 7, and 8. Students will prepare a short writing exercise and conduct a focused research project using the College Board’s web site.
- **American School Counselor Association National Standards:** This lesson is aligned with ASCA Academic A1.2, A2.1, and B1.3. Students will display an interest in learning, demonstrate task management skills, and apply the skills needed for academic success.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- College Research Handout and Answer Key (*included in this lesson plan*)
- Projector – to share College Board web site
- Internet Access – for students to register with the College Board

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:
1. **Introduce the college entrance exams.** Distribute the College Research Handout and review the first page with students. If you wish, divide students into three groups (one each for four-year college, two-year college, and military) and ask them to research one of the exams listed on the handout. Give them 5 minutes and then call the group back to compare notes. At many schools, sophomores are given the opportunity to take the PSAT, which is the precursor to the SAT. If your school will be doing this, let students know how and when they can register. (10-15 minutes)

2. **Introduce the College Board web site and help students register.** The College Board web site ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) is a rich resource for students and their families. Among other things, it allows students to: (1) register for the SAT exam (PSAT and AP registration must be done at school); (2) research colleges and majors and save that information for later use; (3) learn about financial aid; and (4) learn how to apply to college. Tour the site using a projector, if possible. Then help students create their own accounts by following the instructions on the College Research Handout. (15-20 minutes)

3. **Use College Board web site to research opportunities.** Next, have students complete the rest of the handout to learn about colleges that might be interesting to them. (Note: students can complete this step even if they do not register.) Ask them to take notes on one possible college. If you wish, ask them to go to the college’s web site and sign up to receive printed information. (15-20 minutes)

**STUDENT PRODUCTS:**

- College Research Handout. Students should complete the handout.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

Your school might wish to hold a College Night for students and their families, where they could hear from school guidance counselors, graduates of your high school, or admissions officers from local colleges. In addition, you may wish to share the following resources to help students and their families learn more about preparing for, applying to, attending, and paying for college.

- **College Board:** [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
  - College search, career/major search, exam prep and registration, financial aid info
- **GEAR UP for high school:** [www.gearup.wa.gov/high-school](http://www.gearup.wa.gov/high-school)
- **Know How 2 Go:** [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org)
- **First in the Family:** [www.firstinthefamily.org](http://www.firstinthefamily.org)
WHAT EXAMS ARE NEEDED FOR COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE?
BEGIN YOUR COLLEGE RESEARCH

Name _____________________________

No matter what you plan to do after high school, you will probably have to take at least one exam. Here is a list of the main college entrance exams.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

☐ SAT. The SAT measures reading, writing, and math. Each section is scored out of a total of 800 points for a total of 2400. The PSAT is usually taken first to help students prepare for the SAT. Learn more and register at www.collegeboard.org.

☐ ACT. The ACT measures English, math, reading, science, and writing. The top composite score for all subjects is 36. Learn more and register at www.actstudent.org.

☐ SAT Subject Exams. Students can take subject exams in 20 different subjects in English, history, languages, math, and science. Learn more and register at www.collegeboard.org.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

☐ ACCUPLACER. Many community and technical colleges require students to take a placement test before they can register for classes. One such test is the ACCUPLACER, which measures reading, writing, and math. Learn more at www.collegeboard.org.

MILITARY

☐ ASVAB. The ASVAB measures your aptitude in a variety of academic and career areas and determines if you are eligible to enlist in the military. Learn more at www.military.com/ASVAB.

REGISTER AT THE COLLEGE BOARD WEB SITE

Rev. September 2013
To begin your college search, it is important to research colleges and programs. One easy way to do this is by registering at the College Board web site. To do this: (1) Go to www.collegeboard.org. (2) Click on “Students.” (3) Click on “Sign Up” under “My Organizer.” Enter a log-in name and password and then enter information about yourself.
Go to the College Board web site (www.collegeboard.org), then click on “Students.” Then click on “Find a College” and locate a college either by typing in its name or by completing the search process. Then complete this page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMATION TO RESEARCH</th>
<th>FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A college I might like to attend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school (private/public)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees offered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application deadline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid deadline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of applicants admitted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Critical Reading scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Math scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Writing scores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% ACT Composite score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-state tuition and fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-state tuition and fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most popular majors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What interests me about this college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**COLLEGE RESEARCH**

**ANSWER KEY (for one example)**

Go to the College Board web site ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)), then click on “Students.” Then click on “Find a College” and locate a college either by typing in its name or by completing the search process. Then complete this page.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMATION TO RESEARCH</th>
<th>FINDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A college I might like to attend</td>
<td>Washington State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Pullman, WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school (private/public)</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees offered</td>
<td>Certificate, Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application deadline</td>
<td>January 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid deadline</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of applicants admitted</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Critical Reading scores</td>
<td>480-580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Math scores</td>
<td>500-610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% SAT Writing scores</td>
<td>570-570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50% ACT Composite score</td>
<td>21-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-state tuition and fees</td>
<td>$10,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-state tuition and fees</td>
<td>$22,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most popular majors</td>
<td>Business/Marketing, Social Sciences, Communications/Journalism, Health Professions, Engineering, Biology, Family &amp; Consumer Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What interests me about this college</td>
<td>Student’s choice…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>