



College and Career Awareness

# Advisory Lesson



## Overview

This lesson plan is designed for use in career counseling and advisory courses, in either one-on-one or classroom settings. These lessons will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. They are presented in a recommended order but feel free to rearrange or use a smaller set of them as you see fit.

The lessons utilize the K20 Game-Based Learning program *Get a Life*. If you don't already have access to *Get a Life* or other K20 Games, you can register for a free account at [k20center.ou.edu/getgames](http://k20center.ou.edu/getgames).





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## Your Role in Getting a Life

Your role in this program, as a teacher or counselor, is to help students connect their experiences in *Get a Life* with an awareness of their future postsecondary education and career options. To this end, we highly recommend that you play through several games of *Get a Life* before assigning it to students.

*Get a Life* is a game that promotes awareness, exploration, and experience. It does not “grade” students on their knowledge; instead, it gives them a framework to start asking questions. It’s okay to play the game with your students, have students play together in groups, or allow students to share their thoughts and strategies. It’s not possible to cheat in *Get a Life*. Just have fun.

Most sessions of this lesson plan require the students to play through *Get a Life* once, then do some extension activity outside of the game. Playing through *Get a Life* usually takes 10–15 minutes, but most students get faster after their first couple of playthroughs. *Get a Life* is designed to be played multiple times. Each time a student plays, they guide a new character through their postsecondary education and career, facing unique events and challenges. No two playthroughs of *Get a Life* are exactly alike.

The extension activities presented in each lesson are connected directly with the goals of each playthrough.





## Lessons

### Session One – What Do You Know about Getting a Life?

**Essential Question:** How does career choice affect my life?

For your first session, have students play through *Get a Life* for the first time. The first playthrough usually takes the longest and may take some students the entire period. Don't worry, they'll get a lot faster after their first play.



After the students complete the game, have them fill out the [3-2-1](#) activity sheet. If there is enough time, have students discuss their answers. If not, have them fill it out and discuss the answers in session two.

#### Teacher's Note: 3-2-1 Options, Including Technology Options

The 3-2-1 can be executed using the attached handout, through a group discussion, or by using a technology tool such as [Flipgrid](#). With Flipgrid, students record themselves responding to the questions and then view one another's videos. Explore this free tool to see if it's right for your classroom setting. Follow the link above, or you can find the full URL in the References at the end of this guide.





## Session Two – Challenge Accepted! – Going to College

**Essential Question:** How does postsecondary education benefit me?

Have your student play through *Get a Life*, attaining a 4-year degree for their character. After they play, take some time to discuss the benefits of college.



Here are a few things to keep in mind for this *Get a Life* challenge:

- If the character's ACT score is too low to get into a 4-year program, have them go to community college first.
  - If their grades are high enough (when they graduate community college), they can transfer to a 4-year program after finishing the 2-year degree.
  - If their community college grades are too low to be accepted to a 4-year program, have them restart the game to try again.
- Remember that time management can be an issue in college. Extracurricular activities and relationships provide a lot of comfort points but piling on too many of them can hurt your grades.

### Benefits of a College Education

Here are some examples of the benefits of a college education that your students (and you!) might not be aware of. These can be great talking points for your discussion.

- College graduates earn approximately \$21,000 more annually than those with only a high school diploma.
- College graduates earn on average \$2.3 million over their lifetime, compared to \$1.3 million for those with only a high school degree.
- College graduates have a longer life expectancy.
- College graduates are more likely to vote, run for office, and volunteer.
- College graduates report higher job satisfaction.
- College graduates are more satisfied with their jobs and with their marriages.
- Jobs requiring a college degree are growing faster than those that don't require a college degree. (The K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal, 2018)

### Classroom Variant

Using the [Fiction in the Facts](#) strategy, you can mix the facts listed above with some false statements and have students guess which are true.





## Session Three – How to Get a Job You’ll Love

Essential Question: Can my job make me happy?

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**HOW TO GET A JOB YOU LOVE (WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US)**

**LIFE AT WORK**

“What do you do?” Chances are, you’ll be asked this question a lot.

Adults spend about a third of their lives at work, so how happy they are at work affects how happy they are when they are not at work (Heller, Watson, & Hies, 2004). We all want to have happy lives, so part of planning for a bright future should be planning for a satisfying career.

Did what makes a job satisfying? Is it how much money you make? Are easier jobs more satisfying? If you enjoy the work, you may be happier! Research shows that a job’s value doesn’t affect job satisfaction and happiness very much (Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw, & Rich, 2016). And, it turns out that more difficult jobs—as long as they aren’t too stressful—are actually more satisfying (Fullagar, Knight, & Sowers, 2013). This is because challenging jobs are more interesting.

You may have heard the saying, “follow your passion,” meaning that you should do what you have fun doing. It isn’t that simple, though. People’s interests change, it’s better to grow and develop strengths over time and focus on discovering your interests instead of following your current passion (O’Keefe, Dwork, & Walton, 2018). After all, are you interested in the same things now that you were a few years ago?

**JOB FIT**

One group of researchers talked with almost 13,000 people and found that the one thing that mattered most to their job satisfaction was “job fit” (Hies, Yao, Curseau, & Liang, 2018). This means that if someone believes that their skills, abilities, and education fit the job they’re doing, they’ll feel successful and happier overall.

The people who were happiest with their jobs felt that they could do it well, and so they felt satisfied from being successful. Not surprisingly, education was an important part of job fit. Having the skills and training needed to do a job meant the workers were more likely to be successful and, therefore, satisfied.

**DREAM JOB**

Other reasons for increased job happiness include things like that bring others (clergy members, firefighters, and teachers, for example), working with people you like, as well as having good hours, job security, a short commute, and receiving fair pay (Duda, 2016). But, researchers found that the most important factor of job satisfaction is that a job is engaging, meaning you find it challenging, interesting, and enjoyable.

A lot of things contribute to job satisfaction and influence happiness. It is never too early to start exploring your strengths and interests to discover careers that may fit you. Then, you can investigate the kind of training you’ll need and figure out which means the most sense to you. As long as you’re open-minded and willing to explore, you can make having one of those “dream” jobs your reality.

Rather than playing the game in this session, have your students read the Research Brief (located in the Appendix) individually and take notes using a [Why-Lighting](#) strategy, then read their cluster overview. They should highlight at least three ideas in the Research Brief that are the most interesting to them and note in the margins why they highlighted that idea. From here, take some time to discuss what your students highlighted and why.

### Classroom Variant

For larger classroom groups, consider using the [Jigsaw](#) strategy. Assign each group member a different section of the Research Brief to read and explain to their fellow group members. If time permits, lead a whole-class discussion about what makes a job meaningful.





## Session Four – Challenge Accepted! – Speed Run

**Essential Question:** What are the drawbacks of not pursuing postsecondary education?

Have students play through *Get a Life*, skipping college entirely. This will make the game much more difficult. All of the salaries in *Get a Life* are based on their real-world counterparts. As such, the jobs that only require a high school diploma pay less than most of those that require some postsecondary education. It may take your students a couple of tries to successfully complete a playthrough.



### Discussion

Here are some sample discussion questions to help facilitate your conversation:

- “In our last session, you took your character through college before starting their career. How did that compare with skipping college entirely?”
- “Were there any opportunities your college-going character had that this one didn’t?”
- “The character that skipped college made less money; how did this impact their life?”

### Classroom Variant

For a classroom, try using a [Card Sort](#) strategy. Have each student write one card describing their college-going character’s experiences and another describing their non-college-going character’s experiences. Each set of cards is placed on a different board, one for college-going experiences and one for non-college-going experiences. Students should be given time to explore the two boards, looking for similarities in their experiences.







## Session Five – Data Points Discussion

**Essential Question:** Beyond pay, what’s important about my career choice?

After students play through another round of the game (any way they want), use this lesson to help them examine the connections between career choice, happiness, and meaningfulness.

Have students examine [this survey from PayScale](#) and discuss why certain jobs might have been reported as having higher or lower levels of meaning and satisfaction.

### Classroom Variant

For a classroom discussion, use the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy. Give your students the following prompt:

*Picking a good career is about more than just getting a high salary. Most people want to find a career that makes them happy or a career that they find meaningful. By meaningful, we mean a career that does something good for the world. Thinking about the balance between money, happiness, and meaningfulness, what careers do you think best fulfill all three?*

After students have discussed and shared their responses to the prompt, show them the PayScale survey again, then have them find the jobs they chose and compare their thoughts to the survey results.





## Session Six – Challenge Accepted! – Know It All

**Essential Question:** Can a master’s or doctoral degree benefit me?

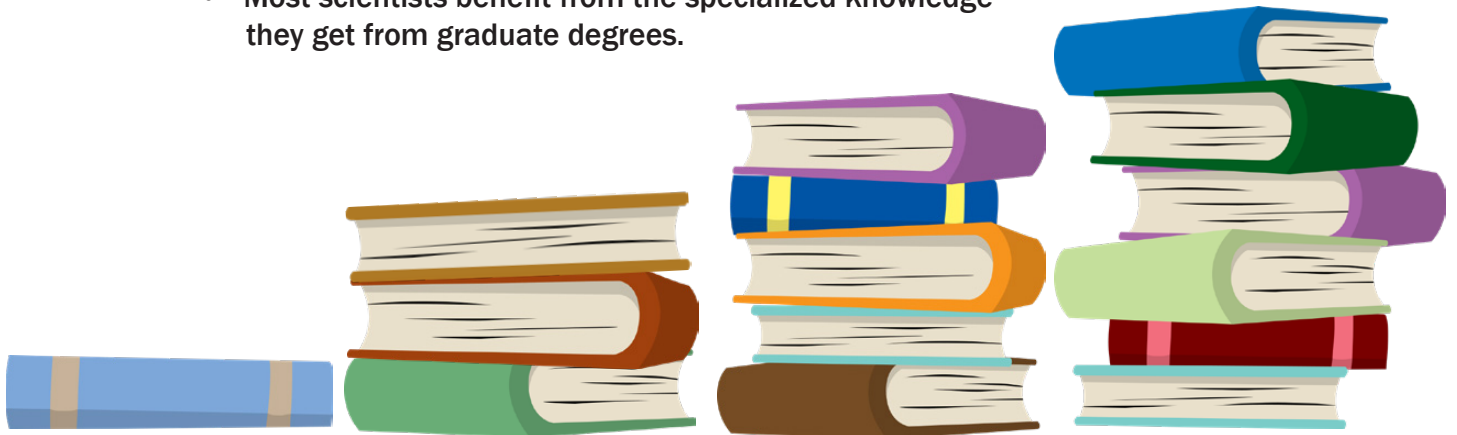
Have your student play through *Get a Life* attempting to earn a doctorate. This isn’t always an easy task. They’ll need to graduate from college with high grades to get into a master’s program, then maintain high grades to be accepted for a doctoral degree. After this playthrough, you can discuss the benefits and tradeoffs of attaining a graduate degree.



### Activity

Using the [Always, Sometimes, or Never True](#) strategy, present your student(s) with the following prompts. Have them decide if they think the statement is always, sometimes, or never true and write a sentence or two about why. When they are finished, you can use their answers to facilitate a discussion on the topic.

- “Jobs that require a master’s or doctoral degree always pay more than those requiring a bachelor’s degree.” (Answer: “Sometimes”)
  - In some fields this is true but not in others.
  - The choice of getting a graduate degree is often more about the type of work you’ll be doing than the amount you get paid.
- “Graduate degrees (master’s or doctorate) are all about getting specialized knowledge in a specific area.” (Answer: “Always”)
  - Bachelor’s degrees emphasize getting general knowledge in your major, but graduate degrees focus on a specific topic.
- “I need a graduate degree to be a scientist or college professor.” (Answer: “Sometimes”)
  - College professors usually need a Ph.D., and most research is done at colleges.
  - Associate and visiting professors and instructors only need a bachelor’s or master’s.
  - Some scientists who work in industry only have a bachelor’s.
  - Most scientists benefit from the specialized knowledge they get from graduate degrees.





## Session Seven – What Could I Be?

Essential Question: What do I really want to be when I grow up?

	HIGH SCHOOL	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S	MASTER'S	DOCTORATE
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES</b>	Movie Theater Projectionist Equipment Operator	Broadcast Technician Sound Engineer		Film Director, Music Director & Composer	
<b>BROADCASTING, FILM, &amp; JOURNALISM</b>	Staffs & Television Announcer	Photographer		News Analyst	
<b>PERFORMING ARTS</b>	Choreographer, Actor, Dancer, Musician	Makeup Artist	Set & Exhibit Designer	Theater Director	
<b>PRINTING TECHNOLOGY</b>	Printing Machine Operator	Desktop Publisher	Editor		
<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>	Equipment Installer & Repairer				
<b>VISUAL ARTS</b>	Craft Artist	Graphic Designer, Film Artist, Fashion Designer	Commercial & Industrial Designer	Art Director, Architect	Art Professor

	HIGH SCHOOL	ASSOCIATE	BACHELOR'S	MASTER'S	DOCTORATE
<b>TEACHING &amp; TRAINING</b>	Child Care Worker, Child Care Center Owner/ Director	Teacher Assistant, Preschool Teacher, Coach, Fitness Trainer	Elementary, Middle, and High School Teacher	School Guidance Counselor	College Professor
<b>PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	Library Technician			Instructional Designer	
<b>ADMINISTRATION &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>	Library Assistant			Librarian	

In this session and the next, we'll be using the [I Used to Think... But Now I Know](#) strategy to get students thinking about their career aspirations and prospects.

Print out the attached Career Cluster Tables. If you only have one student in your session, you can find out which cluster(s) they are interested in and only print those.

Ask students to highlight at least two careers on the cluster overview that they would like to learn more about and note in the margins why they think that job would be satisfying. If a student has a career in mind that isn't on the table, help them decide which pathway and education level that career would fall into and write it in.

Between now and your next session, have students research the career. If they need help, here are some prompts to get them started:

- How many jobs for this career are there in the U.S.?
- Are the number of jobs in this career growing or shrinking?
- What is the starting pay for this career? How does that compare to the national average? (About \$56,000 in 2017, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.)
- What are some postsecondary schools that offer the education needed for this career?
- What do people in this career do on a daily basis?

If time allows, let your students play through *Get a Life*, pursuing the job that is most similar to the one they highlighted.





## Session Eight – What Will I Be?

**Essential Question:** What do I really want to be when I grow up?

In this session, follow up with students on the careers they researched in the previous session. This is where the [I Used to Think... But Now I Know](#) strategy really comes into play.

Have your students divide a sheet of paper into two columns. On the left, have them write what they “used to think” about the jobs they highlighted. On the right, have them write what they now know based on their research. Use these answers to facilitate a discussion.

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## Session Nine – Challenge Accepted! - Legend

**Essential Question:** Is my job just about me, or can I use my skills to do more for the world?

In this session, students will play through *Get a Life*, trying to maximize their Civic score.



After playing *Get a Life*, have students answer the following [3-2-1](#) questions. Next, have students share their answers and facilitate a discussion.

1. What are three ways that a person can contribute to their community?
2. What are two jobs that directly help their communities and how?
3. What is one way that postsecondary education can make you a better community member?



**3-2-1  
CIVIC SHEET**

1. What are three ways that a person can contribute to their community?  


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2. What are two jobs that directly help their communities and how?  


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3. What is one way that postsecondary education can make you a better community member?  


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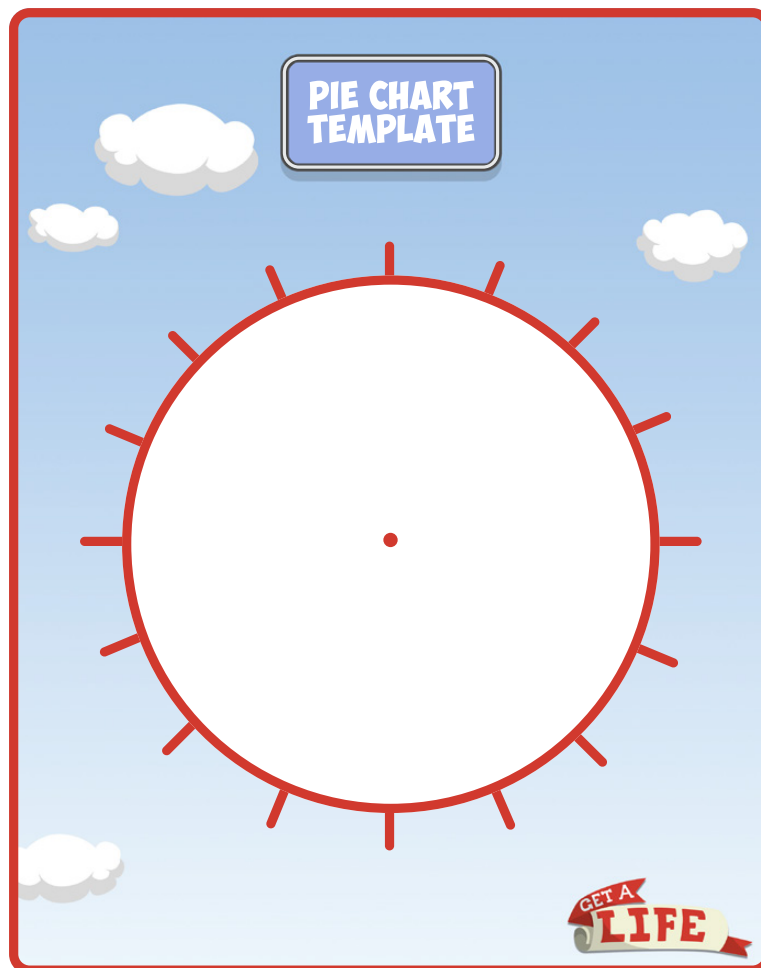
## Session 10 – When I’m a Billionaire

**Essential Question:** How do my expenses affect my future goals?

Students compare the tree household income charts (located in the Appendix) by looking at the average annual income for each income range and calculating the percentage of that income that goes to living expenses.



To do that, students will need to calculate each household’s total expenses (found at the bottom of the graphic on each page) as a percentage of the total household income. Ask students to consider the total income on each chart and the total expenses. What do they notice immediately? They should notice that the low-income household is spending more on average than they earn.



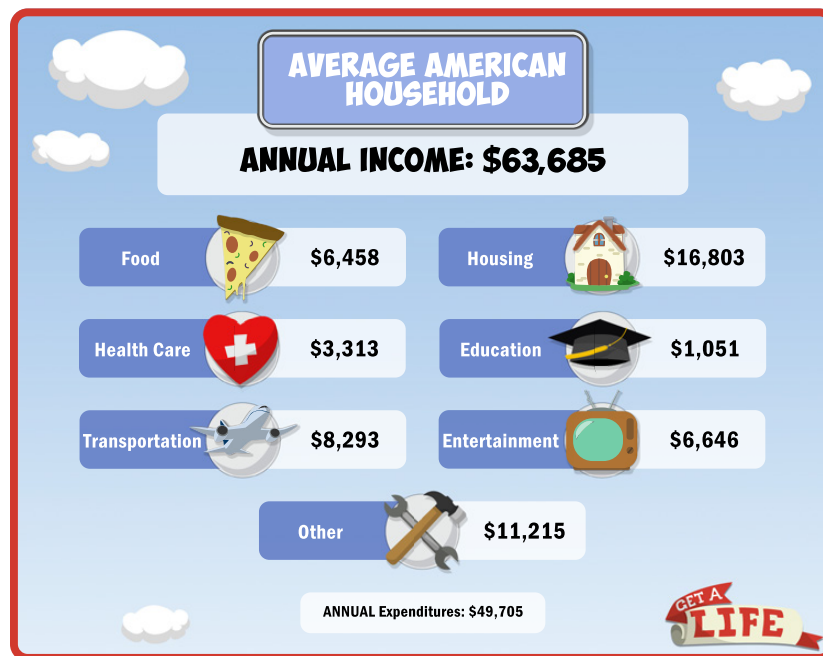


## Teacher's Note: Calculating Percentages

Students should be able to calculate percentages using a calculator. There are also online tools and videos to help. If Internet access is available, students can use [this percentage calculator](#). YouTube also has a simple video about [how to calculate percentages](#).

Have students convert the current household charts depicting low, average, and high-income families' living expenses into pie charts to compare them more easily. After the pie charts are completed, students should answer or discuss the following questions.

1. Which American household is over their budget?
2. For the low-income American household, where is the largest percentage of their money spent?
3. Which household is spending the lowest percentage of what they earn? Why do you think they have so much extra money?
4. What might be the reason for the larger amount of food costs for the wealthy American household as compared to the others?
5. For the average American household, where is the largest percentage of their money spent?
6. What other conclusions can you determine from the three household charts?
7. In your opinion, what should be most important category in a budget? Least important?





## Session 11 – What I Got from *Get a Life*

**Essential Question:** How can I pay for college?

Have students play through *Get a Life*, trying to rack up as much student loan debt as they possibly can. After they finish the game, use the [KWHL Graphic Organizer](#) strategy to see what students have learned so far, now that they've nearly completed these lessons.

Using the provided KWHL graphic organizer, have students respond to the following prompts:

- What are some ways that people pay for postsecondary education?
- Is postsecondary education worth it?
- Pick at least two careers that you find interesting and tell me about those.

For each prompt, in the first column of the organizer, have students write what they know about the prompt.

In the second column, have them write something they want to know more about.

In the third column, they should write how they'll learn more about the topic.

And in the final column, they can write what they've learned.

## Session 12 – Goals

**Essential Question:** What can I do now to prepare for my future career?

In this session, students will complete any characters of *Get a Life* that they have not yet completed. If they've followed this lesson plan, they'll likely only have one character left out of ten.

After finishing the game, work with students to create some goals. Give students the following prompts:

*Reaching your career goals is a big task. It's helpful to break big tasks like that down into smaller goals. So, list some things you can do to reach your goals for postsecondary education and career.*

- Five things you can do in the next 5 years
- Four things you can do in the next 4 months
- Three things you can do in the next 3 weeks
- Two things you can do in the next 2 days
- One thing you can do in the next hour







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