

# MAKING CONNECTIONS: WHAT YOU SAY & DO



## Overview

Welcome to the ***College and Career Culture Tool Kit***. This resource is specifically designed for administrators, counselors, and educators who are dedicated to strengthening their school's commitment to college and career readiness. Building this culture requires a unified vision and actionable strategies, and this is why this guide is organized into three powerful, interconnected sections: *Visual Cues*, *Making Connections*, and *High Expectations*.

Success is not built in a silo. This section equips you with tools to deliberately **integrate college and career concepts** into the daily curriculum. It includes strategies for fostering meaningful connections between classroom learning and real-world opportunities through **experiential learning**, such as internships, industry projects, guest speakers, and college visits, ensuring learning is relevant and purposeful.

Pick and choose the resources you want to use from this *Making Connections: What You Say & Do* section of the tool kit to support a college-going and career-focused culture in your school building.

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# WRITING PROMPTS

## Resource Overview

Thinking about life after high school can feel abstract or overwhelming for many students. This series of writing prompts provides a structured roadmap for self-reflection, helping students connect their current interests to future college and career paths. By dividing the year into four thematic quarters, educators can cultivate a consistent, future-ready culture that makes postsecondary planning a natural part of the school day.

## Audience

These prompts are intended for teachers, counselors, or advisory leaders to use in classroom settings to spark students' self-discovery and facilitate meaningful conversations between students and their mentors.

## How to Use

Provide one prompt from the following pages (pages 3–4) per week to encourage students' self-reflection. Expect each journal prompt to warrant a one-paragraph response (6–8 sentences). The following writing prompts can be used as bell ringers (one prompt per week as a warm-up to start class) or as a journal to track growth and goals throughout the school year.

# WRITING PROMPTS

## Quarter 1: Know Yourself

1. What are your top three strengths, and how might they help you in a future career?
2. Describe a job you think would be fun to do for a day. Why does it interest you?
3. What does “success” mean to you, and how does college or career fit into that definition?
4. Describe a job someone in your family or community does. What do you think are the best and hardest parts of it?
5. If you could shadow someone in any profession, who would it be and why?
6. What kind of tasks or activities make you feel confident or excited? What careers might include those?
7. Describe a career that didn’t exist 20 years ago. Would you consider it? Why or why not?
8. What kind of work environment do you think you’d thrive in—office, outdoors, remote, etc.?
9. What’s your biggest college or career-related fear, and how can you overcome it?

## Quarter 2: Think About College

1. What kind of college or training program might fit your goals? Why?
2. Describe what you imagine a college campus to be like? What would you be most excited or nervous about?
3. If you were on a college tour, what would you want to see or ask about?
4. What are the differences between community college, university, and trade school?
5. If you had to choose a college major today, what would it be and why?
6. What do you think makes a strong college application? What can you start doing now to prepare?
7. How can clubs, sports, or hobbies help you get into college or build career skills?
8. What are scholarships, and why are they important? How would receiving a scholarship impact your future?
9. Describe a vision board you would create to represent your college and career dreams. What images or words would you include?

### Quarter 3: Consider Real World Skills

1. What does being “professional” mean to you? How can you show professionalism in school?
2. Write a sample email to a potential mentor or employer asking for advice about a career you’re interested in.
3. What are soft skills, and which ones do you already have or want to develop?
4. Describe your dream job and the steps you’d need to take to get there.
5. Imagine you’re writing a resume. What experiences, skills, or achievements would you include?
6. How can volunteering or part-time jobs help you explore careers?
7. What’s one challenge you might face in the workplace, and how would you handle it?
8. What does financial independence mean, and how does career choice affect it?
9. What goals do you have for next year to move closer to your future plans?

### Quarter 4: Plan your Future

1. Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What steps will help you get there?
2. What motivates you to work hard or pursue goals?
3. Write a letter to your future self about your college and career hopes.
4. What does “networking” mean, and how can you start building a network now?
5. What values are most important to you, and how do they influence your career choices?
6. What’s one career you’ve never considered but want to learn more about?
7. What does work-life balance mean, and why is it important?
8. How can your online presence (like social media) help or hurt your college and career goals?
9. What’s one thing you’ve learned this year that changed how you think about your future?

# CAREER INTEREST SURVEY

## Resource Overview

This survey prompts students to consider their personal interests, skills, and personality traits. Eventually, the results link their interests to real-world careers through career clusters, exposing them to options that they might not otherwise consider. Considering a general career direction may help students make more informed decisions about high school courses, college majors, and career tech options.

## Audience

This survey is intended for counselors or educators to use with students to relate personal interests to careers.

## How to Use

Print the Career Interest Survey on the following pages (pages 6–7) two-sided for each student to complete. Give students at least 10 minutes to independently complete the survey. Once students complete the survey and determine which sections have the highest totals, share the career category that corresponds with that section:

- **Section 1:** Public Service and Safety
- **Section 2:** Agriculture
- **Section 3:** Financial Services
- **Section 4:** Health and Human Services
- **Section 5:** Hospitality and Events
- **Section 6:** Education
- **Section 7:** Management and Entrepreneurship
- **Section 8:** Advanced Manufacturing
- **Section 9:** Construction
- **Section 10:** Energy and Natural Resources
- **Section 11:** Digital Technology
- **Section 12:** Marketing and Sales
- **Section 13:** Supply Chain and Transportation
- **Section 14:** Arts, Entertainment, and Design

Consider having students go to [careertech.org/career-clusters/](https://careertech.org/career-clusters/) to explore their area(s) of interest further.

For more information on how to integrate this resource, check out the companion resource on page 8.

# CAREER INTEREST SURVEY

<p><b>Instructions:</b> In each section, check the boxes that apply to you. Count the number of check marks in each box to get your total. On the back, take note of which three sections have the most check marks.</p>	<p><b>Section 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to protect others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to debate and win arguments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to wear a uniform</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I respect rules</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like solving mysteries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a leader</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I work well under pressure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am service-minded</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Section 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in growing things and keeping them alive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to hunt and/or fish</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be outdoors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to operate machines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy caring for animals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I prefer living in the country</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to farm</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>
<p><b>Section 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in an office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like rules</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in money</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to keep things in order</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I turn my work in on time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am logical</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> People trust me</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I take pride in the way I dress and look</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Section 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to take care of people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a team player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am calm in emergency situations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am patient</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to volunteer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I follow instructions with accuracy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in a hospital</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Section 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in learning about other cultures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to plan special events</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to travel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy cooking or baking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't get angry easily</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like working with people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to help people make memories</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am outgoing</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>
<p><b>Section 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to ask questions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to plan activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a good listener</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can get along with all kinds of people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work with children and/or teens</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to learn new things</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to help people overcome their challenges</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Section 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to be the group leader of projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can complete a job without constant supervision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am willing to take risks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in owning my own business</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to manage people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I make responsible decisions</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Section 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to operate equipment and machinery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in how things are made</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a hands-on learner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like robotics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a step-by-step thinker</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am good at putting things together</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can imagine drawings in 3D</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to fabricate things</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS:</b> _____</p>

<p><b>Section 9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like math</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to work with my hands</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like detailed instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like interesting and historic buildings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am good at following directions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can imagine the final results of a project</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can draw or sketch ideas that I have</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to build things</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>	<p><b>Section 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a nature lover</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to recycle and reuse items</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in protecting the environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in renewable energy (like EVs and wind power)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I would like to work outdoors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in an oil field</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like visiting national and state parks</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>	<p><b>Section 11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work with computers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to play video games and figure out how they work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to solve hard problems</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I get “in the zone” when working</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to use technology to make art</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like math and science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I see details in the big picture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in computer software and applications</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>
<p><b>Section 12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like opportunities to make extra money</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to shop and go to the mall</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can communicate my ideas to other people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in retail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am competitive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I keep up with current trends</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to create and give presentations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can influence people to take action</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>	<p><b>Section 13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I have good vision and great reflexes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like planes, trains, and automobiles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like travel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in machines and engines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in how things travel from where they are Made to where we buy them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I make detailed plans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like math</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work for Amazon</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>	<p><b>Section 14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can design or make clothes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to play musical instruments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to read and write</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I want to work in the arts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am creative and imaginative</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I like to perform in front of others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy making videos and taking pictures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am interested in telling stories</li> </ul> <p><b>TOTAL CHECK MARKS: _____</b></p>

<p><b>Section #</b> <b>With the Top Score:</b></p>	<p><b>Section #</b> <b>With the Second Highest Score:</b></p>	<p><b>Section #</b> <b>With the Third Highest Score:</b></p>
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## COMPANION RESOURCE: LEARNING EXPERIENCE



### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus Visit

Connecting Career Dreams to Postsecondary Education

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3638](https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3638)

#### Summary

This 8th grade campus visit activity will complement a student tour of a college or career tech campus to learn about postsecondary options. Students will participate in a learning activity to explore their interests, career clusters, and postsecondary opportunities to prepare for various careers. The campus visit activity will help students and administrators set expectations for students to meet Oklahoma's Academic Standards of being college-, career-, and citizenship-ready.

#### Essential Questions

- How can looking into personal interests and career groups help someone plan for postsecondary education and get the job they want?
- What types of education are needed for different types of careers?

#### Learning Objectives

- Relate personal interests with careers.
- Discuss postsecondary options that could help people get the job/career that they want.

#### Snapshot

- **Engage:** Students use a Mental Time Travel activity to imagine themselves in 10 years and envision their future self.
- **Explore:** Students take a career interest survey to determine the top three careers they align with. Students will then use the Carousel strategy to visit their top three careers and brainstorm jobs that fall under those specific categories.
- **Explain:** Students use the Card Sort strategy to match careers with the education requirements.
- **Extend:** Students return to the jobs they brainstormed on the career posters and sort them into groups based on education requirements. Students will then select one career that matches their interest and research more about the job.
- **Evaluate:** Students reflect on their learning by answering questions on an Exit Ticket.

## ON THE CLOCK ACTIVITY

### Resource Overview

Have students calculate the number of hours they will potentially work in their lifetime and practice their computational skills. Then help connect this knowledge to the importance of choosing a job or career that they will like.

### Audience

This activity is intended for counselors or educators to use with students to consider the long-term impact of career choices by examining the potential time spent at work over a lifetime.

### How to Use

Print copies of the On the Clock handout on the next page (page 10) for each student to complete.

For more information on how to integrate this resource, check out the companion resource on page 11.

## ON THE CLOCK

Follow each step and record the result in the column on the right.

<b>Step 1)</b>	In one day, how many hours does someone work if they have a <i>nine-to-five</i> job?	
<b>Step 2)</b>	Multiply your answer from Step 1 by the number of workdays in 1 week ( $\times 5$ ).	
<b>Step 3)</b>	Multiply your result from Step 2 by the number of weeks in 1 year ( $\times 52$ ).	
<b>Step 4)</b>	Double your answer from Step 2.	
<b>Step 5)</b>	Many jobs allow 2 weeks of vacation, so find the difference between the results of Steps 4 and 3.	
<b>Step 6)</b>	Multiply your result from Step 1 by 11 for all 11 of the federal holidays that you likely won't have to work.	
<b>Step 7)</b>	Subtract the number in Step 6 from the number in Step 5. This is the number of hours you will likely work each year.	
<b>Step 8)</b>	Many retire at the age of 67. If you start working at the age of 18, how many years will you work?	
<b>Step 9)</b>	Multiply the results from Steps 7 and 8.	

What do you think you just calculated?

## COMPANION RESOURCE: LEARNING EXPERIENCE



### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Pre-Campus Visit

Investing in You

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/4975](https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/4975)

#### Summary

In this activity, students will consider the number of hours they will spend at work over a lifetime. They will also research postsecondary education options that can prepare them for a career, considering average costs and return on investment based on average wages earned. This activity will help prepare students for 9th-grade campus visits and encourage them to consider the value of postsecondary education as an investment in themselves and their future.

#### Essential Question

- Is postsecondary education worth the investment?

#### Learning Objectives

- Consider the long-term impact of career choices by examining the potential time spent at work over a lifetime.
- Compare the costs and potential return on investment of postsecondary education (PSE) pathways.

#### Snapshot

- **Introduction:** Students calculate the number of hours they will potentially work in their lifetime and connect this knowledge to the importance of choosing a job or career that they will enjoy.
- **Knowledge Building:** Students compare the average annual cost, median earnings, and other key factors to evaluate the return on investment of attending a postsecondary education institution.
- **Wrap-Up:** Students reflect on their learning and determine which school could be the best fit for them, explaining their rationale for the selection.

# FAFSA CHECKLIST

## Resource Overview

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can feel overwhelming, especially for first-time applicants. This checklist offers tips to help students and families know what information is required to complete the process. By listing required documents, students and parents can gather the necessary materials in advance, reducing stress and delays.

## Audience

This checklist is intended for counselors or educators to use with students and their families to help them complete the FAFSA. Schools can use the checklist during workshops, counseling sessions, or family nights to foster engagement and build trust.

## How to Use

Print the following page (page 13) and cut it in half to create two FAFSA checklists. Distribute one checklist to each student.

For more information on how to integrate this resource, check out the companion resource on page 14.

## FAFSA CHECKLIST

Documents Needed to Fill Out the FAFSA	Tips:
<input type="checkbox"/> FSA ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create an FSA ID prior to filling out the FAFSA. It can take up to 3 days to receive your login information. Go to <a href="https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch">studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch</a> to create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID.</li><li>• FAFSA can access your federal tax information using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool in the application process.</li><li>• Assets represent how much is in your checking and savings accounts, stocks, and bonds.</li><li>• The name of a career technical center, college, or university must be listed on the FAFSA to access your information. You can always add a school after applying.</li><li>• Visit <a href="https://studentaid.gov">studentaid.gov</a> for more information.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security number (parent(s) and student)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license number	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax returns	
<input type="checkbox"/> W-2s	
<input type="checkbox"/> List of assets	
<input type="checkbox"/> A list of all schools you are interested in attending	

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## FAFSA CHECKLIST

Documents Needed to Fill Out the FAFSA	Tips:
<input type="checkbox"/> FSA ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create an FSA ID prior to filling out the FAFSA. It can take up to 3 days to receive your login information. Go to <a href="https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch">studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch</a> to create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID.</li><li>• FAFSA can access your federal tax information using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool in the application process.</li><li>• Assets represent how much is in your checking and savings accounts, stocks, and bonds.</li><li>• The name of a career technical center, college, or university must be listed on the FAFSA to access your information. You can always add a school after applying.</li><li>• Visit <a href="https://studentaid.gov">studentaid.gov</a> for more information.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security number (parent(s) and student)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license number	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax returns	
<input type="checkbox"/> W-2s	
<input type="checkbox"/> List of assets	
<input type="checkbox"/> A list of all schools you are interested in attending	

## COMPANION RESOURCE: LEARNING EXPERIENCE



### College Preparation: FAFSA

What Is the FAFSA?

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3369](https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3369)

#### Summary

In this session, students will learn the importance of the FAFSA and important information about filling out the FAFSA. Students will brainstorm ways to pay for college.

#### Essential Questions

- What is the FAFSA?
- In what ways can the FAFSA benefit students?

#### Learning Objectives

- Explore and evaluate the benefits of the FAFSA.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the FAFSA process.
- Create a FSA ID.

#### Snapshot

- **Engage:** Students will use the Carousel instructional strategy to create lists showing what they know about work, scholarships, grants, loans, and other resources that they can use to pay for college.
- **Explore:** Students will guess whether statements about the FAFSA are true or false. Then working with a partner, they will use the FAFSA Wakelet to find out whether the statements were true or false.
- **Explain:** Students will create an FSA ID. They will need their Social Security numbers and a reliable personal email.
- **Extend:** Students will explore the Scholarship Opportunities Wakelet and find scholarships they are interested in applying for.
- **Evaluate:** Students will re-evaluate the posters from Engage and answer the following question: “How do you avoid a lot of debt when it comes to postsecondary education?”

# STUDENT-CENTERED RESOURCES

## Resource Overview

The following engaging, hands-on activities directly support a career-focused, college-going culture by turning abstract postsecondary concepts into experiences students can see, feel, and connect with. Each contributes and dovetails together to build motivation, confidence, and high expectations. The mock enrollment activity *Future U* demystifies the college process, and the game-based learning activity *Get a Life* connects education to real-world outcomes.

## Audience

These resources are for counselors or educators to share with students as independent learning experiences.

## How to Use

Use the student-centered resources on pages 16–18 to meet your needs. Each page gives details about the resource and the web address to access all of the learning materials needed to facilitate the activity.

- *Future U* on page 16 is a great resource for giving students a feel for what enrollment in a postsecondary institution may look or feel like.
- *Career Talks* on page 17 is a great resource to help students connect what they are learning to their personal interests and future career options, focusing on the profession of a guest speaker. This resource also includes educator support for how to invite a guest speaker.
- *Get a Life* on page 18 is a digital game where students can explore their interests through a virtual character.

## STUDENT-CENTERED RESOURCE: LEARNING EXPERIENCE



### Future U

The Enrollment Adventure

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3839](http://learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/3839)

### Summary

Students will explore and experience a mock postsecondary institution (PSI) enrollment event. They will choose a PSI path: college or career tech. They will then be assigned an award letter that outlines the financial aid estimate they can use at their chosen PSI. Next, students will enroll in school and calculate expenses for tuition and fees, housing, meal plan, books, and extras. Along the way, students will get their school ID, create a semester class schedule, buy a parking and athletic pass, and join a club or Greek life organization.

### Essential Questions

- What programs or courses align best with your career goals, and how do they differ in terms of curriculum, duration, and potential outcomes?
- What are the enrollment costs, including tuition, fees, and other expenses, and what financial aid or scholarships are available?
- What support services are available, like academic advising, career counseling, and internships, and how can they enhance my education and career readiness?

### Learning Objectives

- Explore the decisions that are involved in the postsecondary institution (PSI) enrollment process.

### Snapshot

- **Engage:** Students explore different career options through the School's Out, Now What? activity.
- **Explore and Explain:** Students participate in an event to simulate enrolling in postsecondary education.
- **Extend:** Students discuss their experience at the event using the Four Corners instructional strategy.
- **Evaluate:** Students reflect on their experience by completing an Exclaim and Question activity.

## STUDENT-CENTERED RESOURCE: LEARNING EXPERIENCE



### Career Talks

Discovering Different Career Options

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/5208](https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/educator-resource/5208)

#### Summary

During a Career Talk learning experience, students will investigate a career, listen to a guest speaker and then reflect on how what they learned may influence their future plans. These Career Talks, which are similar to the K20 Center’s Career Cafe or Zoom Into Your Career events, enable students to make real-world connections between their interests, academic content, and professional career goals. These learning experiences also create opportunities for students to meet professionals in industries they may not otherwise have access to. This resource serves as a guide for a facilitator to plan a Career Talk—including how to invite a guest speaker—and facilitate the talk with students.

#### Essential Question

- What steps can students take to determine their future careers and educational goals?

#### Learning Objectives

- Connect required key skills and education to specific careers.
- Recognize different career paths and industries.

#### Snapshot

- **Engage:** Students use prior knowledge about the guest speaker’s career and make predictions of similar careers.
- **Explore:** Students use an online resource to investigate the career further and then generate thoughtful questions in preparation for the guest speaker.
- **Explain:** Students listen to the guest speaker, taking notes about the shared profession, and then engage in a question and answer session.
- **Extend:** Students use an online resource to explore postsecondary opportunities for the highlighted career.
- **Evaluate:** Students reflect on their learning using the What? So What? Now What? strategy.

## STUDENT-CENTERED RESOURCE: DIGITAL GAME



### Get a Life

College and Career Awareness

[learn.k20center.ou.edu/game/602](http://learn.k20center.ou.edu/game/602)

#### Overview

A lot of anxiety surrounds postsecondary education. Students interested in going to college may not be familiar with application or financial aid processes, the actual cost of education, or the benefits.

Some may think that they are not cut out for college or run into obstacles that make them feel that way. They may also hold the common (and incorrect) belief that one must follow a passion to be successful and happy, which alienates those who don't feel particularly good at any one thing.

To mitigate this, students need to become familiar with college and learn how to explore their interests and strengths over time instead of fixating on finding a passion. *Get a Life* gives students the chance to navigate common college challenges and setbacks in the safety of a simulated space. It promotes the exploration of interests by having students make choices on behalf of a character, not themselves, giving them freedom to explore new subjects and ideas and to question their own preconceptions.

- Navigate education, career, family, and more by making decisions that help your character get a life.
- Run for city council. Steal someone's research. Buy a house. Start a business. Menace the locals from your evil lair. The sky is the limit.

*Get a Life* is intended for use by middle and high school students to teach college and career readiness.

**GET A LIFE A PLAYFUL WAY FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN ABOUT THE COST OF COLLEGE, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS OF CAREERS, HOW EDUCATION CAN AFFECT INCOME, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH DEBT AND OTHER SETBACKS.**

- Survey over 96 careers within 16 different career clusters.
- Understand college fit and how education affects career options.
- Experience how career choice can impact comfort and benefit society.
- Decide if being rich and powerful is worth all the stress it takes to get there.

*Get a Life* can be completed in 10–15 minutes, making it ideal for casual play or classes with limited time. To get the most out of *Get a Life*, students should play multiple times to compare multiple college and career experiences. There will always be something new to see and learn. No two games will be exactly alike.

- To access all K20 educational games at no cost to your school, go to [games.k20center.ou.edu](http://games.k20center.ou.edu).
- For more information about access the games, support, and the guide for the Game Portal, go to [games.k20center.ou.edu/support](http://games.k20center.ou.edu/support).

# CAMPUS VISIT TOOLS

## Resource Overview

Research shows that introducing students to college and career technical center campuses as early as middle school can significantly boost their interest in pursuing postsecondary education. Moreover, repeated campus visits throughout high school further increase the likelihood of postsecondary enrollment. Campus visits that emphasize career pathways can spark motivation, helping them align their academic choices in high school (and beyond) with future goals. Early exposure to financial aid and scholarship opportunities also gives students knowledge and confidence to pursue resources that make postsecondary education more accessible and attainable.

This Campus Visit Implementation Plan and Checklist will take some of the guesswork out of planning an educational field trip to visit a college or career technology center campus.

## Audience

These tools for campus visits are intended for administrators, counselors, and/or educators to use in preparation to take students on a campus visit.

## How to Use

Print the implementation plan on pages 20–22. Use it as a guide for planning campus visits, from brainstorming through logistics.

Print the checklist on page 23 and use it to ensure you have completed all tasks to make the campus visit successful.

# CAMPUS VISIT TOOLS: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## Step 1: Project Planning and Preparation

(2–3 months prior to the campus visit)

### Identify Postsecondary Institution (PSI)

- 🏠 Type of institution:
- 📄 Reason for selection:
- 📍 Distance from school:

### Decide on Timing of the Campus Visit

- 📅 Preferred season or month:
- 📌 Considerations (state testing dates, PSI availability, sports schedules, etc.):

## Step 2: Logistics and Partnerships

(1.5–2 months prior to the campus visit)

### Contact PSI

- 👤 Institution contact name:
- 🏢 Department/office:
- 📧 Contact info (phone/email):
- 📅 Confirmed tour date(s):
- 🎓 Planned activities (tour, panel, workshops):






### Secure Funding for Transportation and Meals

- 🚌 Transportation cost estimate:
- 🍽️ Meal plan cost estimate:
- 💰 Funding sources (check all that apply):
  - School budget
  - District funds
  - Local sponsor
  - Grant
  - Other:

### Step 3: Safety and Supervision Planning

(1 month prior to the campus visit)





#### Develop Student Safety Plan

-  Number of chaperones needed:
-  Assigned chaperones/staff:
-  Emergency plan and contacts:
-  Medical and accessibility notes:
-  Student Identification Plan:
  - Students will wear school-provided t-shirts  Students will wear matching school colors
  - Other:




### Step 4: Stakeholder Communication Plan

(3–4 weeks prior to the campus visit)

#### Communication Timeline and Channels


 Stakeholder	 Message Details	 Method	 Deadline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sent?
School Admin				<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers				<input type="checkbox"/>
PSI Contacts				<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents				<input type="checkbox"/>
Students				<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Create Materials

-  Parent packet checklist:
  - Permission slip  Itinerary  Contact info  Student expectations
-  Student preparation plan:
-  Staff tour schedule and assignments:

## Step 5: Execute the Plan—Campus Visit Day!






 Checklist for the day:

 Notes:

## Step 6: Post-Visit Follow-Up

(Within 1 week of the campus visit)

### Reflection and Feedback

-  Student reflection activity plan:
-  Teacher/staff debrief notes:
-  “Thank you” sent to PSI:
  - Yes  Date sent:
  - No
-  Additional notes:

# CAMPUS VISIT TOOLS: CHECKLIST

## Scheduling and Planning Your Campus Visit

- Schedule a campus visit
- Schedule buses
- Document accessibility needs and food allergies
- Distribute and collect permission slips (if necessary, in accordance with district policy)
- Communicate expectations of what to wear (official campus visit t-shirts or assign school color t-shirt).  
Let students know that this is for their safety and will help with identifying minors on campus.
- Recruit chaperones (teachers, school staff, parents, volunteers) and an administrator
- Divide the final roster into groups of 15–20 students per chaperone if possible
- Review with volunteers the chaperone instructions, grouping, agenda, expectations, procedures, etc.
- Create a bus list and assign teachers to each bus
- Remind parents and students about the upcoming campus visit
- Give your school cafeteria the total number of students who won't be at lunch on the day of the visit in advance
- Issue final in-school announcement and reminder call to parents about the campus visit
- Print directions for the bus driver
- Remind chaperones of meeting times

## Campus Visit Day

- Hand out official campus-visit t-shirts or confirm students are following attire expectations
- Collect the name and phone number of the bus driver and communicate pick-up time