

## College.gov Teacher Toolkit

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### **Supplemental Materials:**

**3-Minute Video (available at <http://ifap.ed.gov/ifap/ifapMedia.jsp>)**

**7-Minute Video (available at <http://ifap.ed.gov/ifap/ifapMedia.jsp>)**

**Scavenger Hunt**

**Scavenger Hunt- Possible Responses**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**College.gov Fact Sheet**

## Letter from the College.gov Team

Greetings! Thanks for taking an interest in the College.gov Web site. We hope you find it as engaging and encouraging as we do.

Many high school students are overcome by the barriers to postsecondary education and do not consider themselves “college material.” So, when students told us they wanted to hear from others just like them about how they overcame obstacles and went to college, we built an entire Web site around their suggestions. At College.gov, you find real students telling real stories about how they achieved their dreams of getting an education. These stories, along with guidance and resources designed to take the intimidation factor out of planning and paying for college, empower students with the knowledge that a future that might seem impossible -- really isn't.

College.gov conveys that postsecondary education is an achievable goal for anyone, regardless of income, ethnicity, age or gender. In addition to guiding users through the steps to get to and pay for college, College.gov provides the hope and inspiration that students need -- through the encouraging faces and voices of other students.

College.gov is being built by the U.S. Department of Education with input from students. Launched in September 2008, College.gov is a unique Web site that changes the way people find information about postsecondary education. College.gov takes a holistic approach to delivering resources and guidance to our target audience of 9th through 12th graders, with a special emphasis on low-income, underrepresented and first-generation students.

We hope you find College.gov and the toolkit helpful. We love feedback! Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions at [College.gov@ed.gov](mailto:College.gov@ed.gov).

Thanks for your help,

The College.gov Team

## Overview of College.gov

- **Student billboards** are prominently displayed on the home page to support the approach of students helping students
- Three main content areas:
  - **Why go** – Information on the benefits of getting more education after high school, including resources to help students investigate educational and career paths.
    - Boost your earnings
    - Find your passion
    - Prove your potential
    - Grow with help and support
    - Lift your family
  - **What to do** – Information to help plan and organize the path to college or other postsecondary education. Provides resources to help students research schools, learn about standardized tests, and apply for admission, including a calendar of tasks for high school seniors and planning advice for juniors and younger students.
    - Find schools
    - Take the tests
    - Apply for admission
    - Start preparing now
    - College roadmap (customizable and downloadable)
  - **How to pay** – Information on money available to help pay for college or other postsecondary education. Provides an overview of financial aid, kinds of aid available, help to find money and use it wisely, and guidelines for applying for aid.
    - Get the basics
    - Learn what's available
    - Be money smart
    - Apply for federal student aid
- **Pages dedicated to parents/family and teachers/counselors** to help them realize their influence and guide them through the entire process
- **Links to valuable online resources**, such as College Navigator (school search site) and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- **Videos of real students** telling their stories on all secondary pages
- **College.gov has a fan page on Facebook** to help students connect with each other

## Sample Lesson Plan

### OBJECTIVES

- Encourage all students to see themselves as college material.
- Have students draft a plan toward achieving postsecondary goals.
- Introduce College.gov; use site to identify resources to help achieve goals.

### MATERIALS

- Computer(s) with internet access, projector
- 3-minute or 7-minute video (available at <http://ifap.ed.gov/ifap/ifapMedia.jsp>)
- Scavenger hunt worksheet (see page 6)
- Optional: College.gov promotional materials
  - Please visit <http://fsapubs.org> to order College.gov materials. If you do not already have an Institution ID (OPE/ML), please call 1-800-394-7084 or email [orders@FSAPubs.org](mailto:orders@FSAPubs.org) for assistance.

### LESSON PLAN

Be creative! Mix and match activities to fit your available time slot and resources.

1. **3-Minute or 7-Minute Video:** Ask students to pay close attention, because they will be discussing the people in the video shortly.
2. **Warm-up Discussion (5-10 mins.):** Start by asking questions about the people in the video, then move to a discussion on overcoming obstacles to achieve goals.
  - What challenges did the people in the video face?
  - How did they overcome those challenges?
  - Do you know anyone who has had a similar obstacle?
  - What are the barriers to continuing education after high school?
  - How might a student overcome those barriers?
3. **Introduce College.gov (10-15 mins.):** Present College.gov as a resource that can help them achieve the goals they have discussed (college, career, etc.). Suggested formats (the more interactive, the better) include:
  - (If using classroom computer and projector) Ask for student volunteers to click through site.
  - (If each student is working at his/her own computer) Allow time for students to explore site. Ask each to report back with something he/she learned, wants to find out more about, thinks classmates should know, etc.
4. **Scavenger Hunt (can be done individually or as a group) (10-15 mins.):** Use the scavenger hunt worksheet included in this toolkit to encourage students to locate specific information within College.gov. Review answers as a group.
5. **Create a Billboard (5-10 mins.):** If computers are available, give students time to create their own billboards.
6. **Wrap-up Discussion (5 mins.):** Suggested questions:



- Do you have any questions about College.gov?
  - Did College.gov address the issues we discussed earlier?
  - What did you learn from this session that you did not know before?
7. **Final Exercise (2 mins.):** Ask students to complete the following sentence with their next steps towards achieving the goal they mentioned earlier: "This week, I'm going..." Distribute College.gov materials (see above for ordering instructions).

## Scavenger Hunt

*Instructions:* Read each situation carefully, and answer the questions using information you find on College.gov.

1. Your friend Josh thinks he may want to continue his education, but is not sure what kind of classes he would take or what major might interest him. Where could he find more information on these topics?
2. You know that your friend Bianca would love to go to college, but she does not think that she can afford it. What resources may be available to help her pay for college?
3. Your friend Peter is considering college, but does not want to move far away from home. How can he find out which schools are near his home?
4. Your friend Ashley is concerned about talking with her parents about continuing her education beyond high school. What advice would you give her?
5. After recently receiving several poor grades on his History tests, your friend Jason does not think he is smart enough to go to college. How would you reassure him that he is still college material?
6. Your friend Marie is a junior and has decided she wants to go to college, but does not know what steps to take or how to start preparing. What would you suggest?

## Scavenger Hunt – Possible Responses

Correct responses include, but are not limited to, the ones below.

1. Your friend Josh thinks he may want to continue his education, but is not sure what kind of classes he would take or what major might interest him. Where could he find more information on these topics?

Check out the “Find Your Passion” section of College.gov.

2. You know that your friend Bianca would love to go to college, but she does not think that she would be able to afford it. What resources may be available to help her pay for college?

Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, school scholarships (among others).

3. Your friend Peter is considering college, but does not want to move far away from home. How can he find out which schools are near his home?

Use College Navigator to search for schools near his hometown.

4. Your friend Ashley is concerned about talking with her parents about continuing her education beyond high school. What advice would you give her?

Share the College.gov parents/family page with them.

5. After recently receiving several poor grades on his History tests, your friend Jason does not think he is smart enough to go to college. How would you reassure him that he is still college material?

Everyone is college material! The first step is believing in yourself.

6. Your friend Marie is a junior and has decided she wants to go to college, but does not know what steps to take or how to start preparing. What would you suggest?

Create a college roadmap on College.gov.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### 1. How can I order materials to distribute to my students?

Please visit <http://fsapubs.org> to order College.gov materials. If you do not already have an Institution ID (OPE/ML), please call 1-800-394-7084 or email [orders@FSAPubs.org](mailto:orders@FSAPubs.org) for assistance.

### 2. How can I submit feedback on College.gov or this toolkit resource?

Because you work directly with students, your feedback is important. If you have developed your own lesson plan on incorporating College.gov into classroom conversations about postsecondary education, please share it with us! Submit questions or suggestions to [College.gov@ed.gov](mailto:College.gov@ed.gov) or through the feedback section on [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov).

### 3. Can I link to College.gov on my blog or Web site?

Yes! We encourage you to tell colleagues, friends, and family members about College.gov.

### 4. How can I help spread the word about College.gov?

- Talk to your students about College.gov.
- Post an "I'm going" roadmap in your classroom/office.
- Order College.gov materials for your school.
- Talk to your colleagues about College.gov.
- Join College.gov's fan page on Facebook.

### 5. Is there an extra resource for students with specific financial aid concerns?

For guidance about a student's specific situation, please encourage them to call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). A representative will answer questions about federal student aid programs, funding your education or applying for financial aid using the FAFSA. TTY users can call 1-800-730-8913.

## College.gov Fact Sheet

*The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens—and my fellow Americans, we have everything we need to be that nation.*—President Barack Obama

Everyone is college material. College.gov conveys that postsecondary education is an achievable goal for anyone, regardless of income, ethnicity, age or gender. This unique Web site motivates students with inspirational stories and information about planning, preparing and paying for college. With students' input and participation, College.gov was created for high school students and their families as a comprehensive online resource with the help and tools students need to get started.

### Identifying the Benefits of More Education

Millions of high school graduates are discouraged from pursuing education beyond high school. This has a significant impact on their future—and America's future economic prosperity. About 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs will require some postsecondary education. Without proper information and support, students may not realize the benefits of higher education, and the nation may never realize the benefits of their talents.

### Expanding Accessible Information

The Department of Education is committed to expanding the accessibility, affordability and accountability of higher education for more Americans. The Department listened to students and families from across the country who expressed the need for a single source to deliver accurate and trustworthy information about postsecondary education in a user-friendly way.

### Focusing on Students

The site has three main goals:

1. Create and inspire hope that college is possible;
2. Engage students by building a site to which they can relate; and
3. Inform, guide and activate students by giving them the tools and resources necessary to plan for and get to college.

### Delivering Unique Features

- Inspiring videos of college students sharing their stories and experiences as to how they overcame obstacles to achieve their college dreams
- Fresh design picked by students that boasts a non-government look-and-feel
- A feature that allows students to upload their own "I'm going" billboard to the home page
- An interactive tool for students to create an "I'm going" personalized roadmap that details the steps to take to get to college
- Content organized and presented in a way that students may easily find the answers to their higher education questions: Why Go? What to Do? and How to Pay?
- Links to valuable online resources, such as College Navigator (school search site), *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and FAFSA4caster