A college education can help you take control of your future and reach your dreams. It is the key that opens the door to a wide world of opportunities and possibilities. With a college degree you will have more choices and options in your life and career and come in contact with a broad range of people and ideas.

College graduates can earn almost twice as much as adults who have only a high school education. Additionally, a college education gives you the opportunity to develop personal and professional skills and places you in a better position to help your family and community.

This booklet gives you some basic information on how to get from here to there. We encourage you to get as much information as you can—tell your teachers, counselors, and parents you want to go to college. Make an appointment with your school counselor, ask for help, make a plan.

YOU CAN do it!
WHAT CLASSES DO I NEED TO TAKE?

California State University and the University of California schools require the following college preparatory classes (referred to as the A-G courses) in grades 9-12. These are also the requirements for many other colleges and universities.

2 years required.
Including 1 year of U.S. history (or 1 semester U.S. history and 1 semester civics or American government), and 1 year world history.

IN 6TH & 7TH GRADES

- Talk to your counselor about courses that will prepare you for college.
- Strive to maintain “A” and “B” grades in all your classes, especially in math, English and foreign language.
- Read as much as possible to build your vocabulary and grammar skills.

IN 8TH GRADE

- Take Pre-Algebra or Algebra I
- Take a language other than English
- September: Take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test). This exam helps you prepare for the SAT Exam in high school, required by colleges and universities for admissions selection. The more times you take the PSAT, the better prepared you will be to take the SAT in high school.

DID YOU KNOW?

IN COLLEGE YOU CAN TAKE CLASSES IN

- PSYCHOLOGY
- THEATER, FILM & TELEVISION
- WORLD CULTURES
- MUSIC
- BUSINESS
- ART
- BRAIN SCIENCE
- COMPUTERS
- ARCHITECTURE
- THE OCEAN & THE ENVIRONMENT
- DANCE
**ENGLISH:**
4 years required.
Including composition and literature. No more than one year of an ESL-type course.

**MATH:**
3 years required, 4 years recommended.
Including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, or higher math.

**LABORATORY SCIENCE:**
2 years with a Lab class required, a 3rd year of Science is recommended.

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**IN 9TH GRADE**
- Enroll in classes required for college admission: Algebra I or Geometry, college prep English, and a foreign language class such as Spanish, or French.
- Choose elective courses that meet college admission standards, like science, history, art, music, or drama.

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**IN 10TH GRADE**
- Take the PSAT in October to give you practice for the SAT. Check with your counselor for test dates and registration deadlines.
- Review your class schedule with your counselor to make sure that you are taking the courses required for admission to a selective university. These will include Geometry or Algebra II and college prep English.
- Visit local colleges and universities with your family and friends. Start a personal file or portfolio of college materials and information.
- Participate in academic enrichment programs. Colleges and universities organize excellent summer programs for high school students in subjects like music, science, filmmaking, engineering or writing. Ask your college counselor about these programs.
**IN 11th GRADE**

- Take the PSAT in October of junior year. Your score may qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Fund.
- Continue to review your class schedules with your school counselor.
- Decide which colleges and universities you are most interested in and meet with representatives of their admissions offices.
- Review requirements for the colleges or universities you are interested in. Make sure you are on track to complete them.
- Continue to participate in academic enrichment programs.
- If you are eligible, enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and register to take the AP exams in the spring. If you score well, you can earn college credit for these classes.
- Prepare for the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) or ACT (American College Testing) exam by reading books and manuals with testing tips and sample questions. You should also consider attending workshops or classes on how to prepare for the exam.
- Take the SAT or ACT in the spring. Check with your counselor for test dates and registration deadlines.

**IN 12th GRADE**

- Make a final list of schools to which you will definitely apply for admission.
- Submit applications. Most deadlines are in October or November.
- Continue to review your class schedules with your school counselor.
- Maintain your good grades.
- Check with your school’s college center frequently for information about scholarships awarded by local companies and community groups. Apply for as many as you are eligible for.
- Take the SAT or ACT exam in the fall, if you haven’t already. Most colleges require that you take the test no later than December of your senior year.
- Apply for Financial Aid in January or February (See the Paying for College section).

**NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE ON THE ROAD TO COLLEGE, YOU SHOULD:**

- Read! Reading helps you prepare for the college entrance exams, like the SAT. Get a library card and check out books often, free of charge.
- Enroll in Math and English every year.
- Sign up for field trips to colleges, if your school offers them. Don’t miss these great opportunities to explore your options.
- Attend College Information Day at your school. This is your opportunity to find out more about college and university requirements. Make sure that you attend with your parents or share the information with them.
- Check in with your school counselor regularly.
- Maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA.
PAYING FOR COLLEGE

If you think you can’t afford to go to college, you are probably eligible for financial aid.

What is Financial Aid?
Financial aid is money that is given, paid or loaned to you to help pay for college. Aid is distributed in several ways:

- **Scholarship:** free money awarded to students for academic achievement or many other special talents.
- **Work-study:** salary for students to work part-time during the school year adding money to their financial aid package to help pay for their schooling.
- **Loan:** money that is borrowed and must be repaid with interest.
- **Grant:** free money that does not have to be paid back.

If you earn good grades in high school, meet financial need requirements, and are a resident of California attending a California college, you are eligible for a Cal Grant—up to $9,700 that does not need to be paid back.

How do I apply for this money?
To apply for any type of financial aid, you must complete and mail a Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA). Application must be postmarked between January 1st and March 2nd of your senior year in high school. You can get an application from your high school college counselor, local college, or public library. You can also call 1- (800) 433-3243 to request an application.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN SUCCEED?

- Talk about college and university opportunities with your child.
- Encourage your child to read. Reading enhances comprehension, vocabulary and writing skills.
- Talk to your children about careers that interest them.
- Attend College Information Day or other informational meetings with your child and discuss the information afterward.
- Encourage your student to participate in academic enrichment programs offered at your school or through local colleges and universities.
- Call or visit your school’s counselor periodically to inquire about your child’s academic progress.
- Research financial aid, scholarships and Cal Grants.
HELPFUL RESOURCES

FAFSA on the Web
www.fafsa.ed.gov
See this site before you wait in line at the financial aid office. It will answer most of your questions and allow you to apply for financial aid on-line.

Scholarships.com
www.scholarships.com
This is a free college scholarship search and financial aid resource. It provides links to contests that offer scholarship awards up to $10,000.

Calgrants.org
www.calgrants.org
Other Important College-Related Web Sites
Community Colleges
Community Colleges
www.cccco.edu
This is your connection to all community colleges in California, including links to all of their websites.

California State Universities
www.csumentor.edu
With links to all Cal-States it provides numerous amount of information regarding the 23 campuses and it allows you to apply online for the different campuses.

University of California
www.universityofcalifornia.edu
This site allows you to apply online to all 10 campuses using one application. Use the campus links to find information about admissions, majors and much more.

Private Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities
www.aiccu.edu
www.aiccumentor.org
Website offers resources regarding all Private colleges in California including links and information to all the campuses. This website also allows you to apply online.

California Colleges
www.californiacolleges.edu
Not sure where to start or what to do? This website gives all the information regarding higher education. It includes great resources and links to colleges and universities.

College Board
www.collegeboard.com
Log on to register for the SAT and to find out test dates. Also check out other online SAT test prep courses, check scores, plan for college, and apply to many private colleges.

ACT
www.actstudent.org
Allows you to register online for ACT tests, find out test dates and check scores. Obtain information about application fee waivers from your school college counselor, if fees would be a burden to you and your family.

California Colleges
www.californiacolleges.edu
Not sure where to start or what to do? This website gives all the information regarding higher education. It includes great resources and links to colleges and universities.

Private Colleges
Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities
www.aiccu.edu
www.aiccumentor.org
Website offers resources regarding all Private colleges in California including links and information to all the campuses. This website also allows you to apply online.

California Colleges
www.californiacolleges.edu
Not sure where to start or what to do? This website gives all the information regarding higher education. It includes great resources and links to colleges and universities.

College Board
www.collegeboard.com
Log on to register for the SAT and to find out test dates. Also check out other online SAT test prep courses, check scores, plan for college, and apply to many private colleges.

ACT
www.actstudent.org
Allows you to register online for ACT tests, find out test dates and check scores. Obtain information about application fee waivers from your school college counselor, if fees would be a burden to you and your family.

UCLA DESIGN FOR SHARING

Design for Sharing is the K-12 education and outreach program of UCLA Live. For further information about Design for Sharing, please call (310) 825-7681 or e-mail dfs@uclalive.org.

Design For Sharing
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