

Independent Career/College Prep Syllabus

PURPOSE: The purpose of this ¼ credit pass/no pass independent course is to learn how to use resources and learn the steps involved to explore careers and colleges. As a result, you can use these skills throughout your lifetime.

1. Research careers

Using your PLAN interest inventory results (or any other interest inventory) as a guide, choose 3 careers to research. Fill out 3 Career/Occupation Reports (worksheet) using www.iseek.org. Click on "Explore Careers", then click on "Find Careers". You can click on "All Groups" to go to a specific career you want or search by career area.) You may use other career sources listed on the report worksheet as well. List the 3 careers you researched here:

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

2. Develop a list of colleges to consider

Go to www.collegeboard.com. Select "College MatchMaker" (left hand side middle). Do the first 4 categories under "Type of School", then click on "Submit & Continue". Notice that 3853 colleges has now been reduced to a smaller number. Continue selecting criteria you are interested in (you can choose from over 15 categories) until you have a list of approximately 3-10 colleges/post secondary institutions. Click on "See Results". Print out that list and include it with this packet to show your criteria and the colleges.

3. Research colleges

Using your results in #2 as a guide, choose 3 colleges to research. Use www.collegeboard.com or other resources listed on your College/School Report (worksheet). Fill out 3 College/School Reports. List the colleges here:

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

4. Visit a college

Schedule a tour of a college (the most ideal would be one of the 3 you researched in #3 or choose one closer to your home that is similar). Set up the tour on the college's website or by calling them. (You can find the college's phone number on the website or by using Google; for example, "Brown College, MN, admissions phone number".) The admissions office will ask you what day you want to come and if you want a morning or afternoon tour. Bring back a business card of one of the admissions counselors and attach it to your completed College Visit Report (worksheet). (optional: attend 3 college rep visit sessions at your school instead-fill out worksheets) List the name of that college here:

5. Job Shadow a career

Calling 2 weeks ahead, set up a 2-hour time slot to spend at a work site of 1 of the careers you researched. If you don't know someone in a certain career field, here are some people who can usually help you find someone: *your

parents, *your friends' parents, *relatives, *your parents' co-workers, *church members (they love to help), or *neighbors. People who are happy in their careers generally love to help out young people. You can also call a company/organization and say, "I'm a student at _____ High School and I need to do a job shadow as a project for a class. Is there a/an _____ (insert career here) I could job shadow at your company?" Be sure to arrive early, dress neatly, shake hands, and take short notes (or record with their permission.) Fill out the Job Shadow Questions (worksheet) more in depth after the job shadow. List the job you shadowed here:

_____ (Remember it will often take several times of following up and calling back to get this set up. Exchanging e-mail addresses during the first phone call helps this process greatly.) It is very important that you appreciate their efforts in helping you even if in the first 15 minutes you realize that the career may not be for you. To eliminate a career you once thought you would like is good progress towards finding out what you do want. Please send a thank you note or e-mail to let them know you appreciated their time.

NOTE: Job shadowing can save you college tuition money. The more you job shadow, the less likely it is that you will need to change your major during college. Many college students spend money taking courses they end up not needing for their major. Here's another example of how job shadowing can save you money. Winona State has a 4-year guarantee. If you do not change your major during college (plus visit your advisor, pass your courses, etc.) you will not pay tuition past the 4th year if it is a 4 year program.

6. Do the Practice ACT (available in your counseling office)

It is recommended that you time yourself for this, as how fast you move along is a significant factor of success with the ACT. Tear out the answer sheet from p. _____ to fill out. Once you have corrected it, look up your raw score on p. _____ of the booklet to find what the ACT score would be.

Note for the future: Remember that during the school year you take the ACT, you will need to review previously learned math to prepare. For example, if you are currently taking Algebra 2, then review geometry as one of your preparation steps on the weeks leading up to the ACT test. List your ACT scores here:

English: _____

Math: _____

Reading: _____

Science: _____

Composite (add and divide by 4): _____

The Real ACT Prep Guide, (2005 by ACT publications) is available for approximately \$25. It is a book put out by ACT that has 3 practice tests and many tips. You can purchase it at almost any bookstore. At www.act.org you can use practice materials and a tutoring program for approximately the same price. ACT states that reading a lot, of any reading material you enjoy, is the single most important factor in preparing for the ACT.

To receive ½ credit for this class, complete the following activities in addition to #1-6:

7. Find general scholarships (can be used at any college)
One of the best sources is www.fastweb.com. This is a **free** scholarship search that will take approximately 30 minutes to fill out the profile. They will then e-mail you scholarships that fit your criteria on an ongoing basis. Print out the details for 2 scholarships that you could apply for.
8. Find specific scholarships (can only be used at the college you are attending)
Google each of the 3 colleges you researched in #3 for scholarships; for example, "St. John's University, MN scholarships" will give you good results. Many college websites will have some specific criteria listed. Print out 2 scholarships you could possibly be eligible for when you are a senior.
9. Prepare an activity resume (see sample)
The active student needs this for college and scholarship applications. You can then state "see attached activity resume" instead of rewriting the information many times. Attach your activity resume to this packet. (Tip for the future-update this 1-2 times per year and keep it as there may be scholarships that you apply for during your college years that ask for a list of high school activities.)
10. Prepare a work resume for a part-time position (see sample)
Remember that someone you have worked for or volunteered with can make a good reference for you, as well as teachers. Parents or close relatives **do not** make good references. This is not a time to be modest. Real life examples of your work traits are very effective.
11. Do 6 hours of community service/volunteer
This greatly enhances scholarship opportunities for you. Think about what you love to do, then find a way to share it with others. If you like to play cards or chess, go to a nursing home and enjoy that activity with some of the residents. If you like sports, be an assistant coach at the YMCA or for a youth team, or volunteer at a youth sports camp for a week. Keep track of your hours, as scholarship applications that are based on community service will ask for that information. It is especially impressive to colleges or scholarship committees when an individual looks around their world (school, neighborhood, church, city, etc.) notices a need, and then finds a way to help meet that need. After completing the hours, fill out the Community Service/Volunteer Hours form (worksheet) and have a supervisor of the organization where you volunteered sign it.

FINAL NOTE:

Passion (feeling so strongly it helps move you to action) is the key in almost all aspects of the career and college process. Notice when you are doing activities where you lose track of time because you are so interested or focused. See if you can make what you love about that activity a part of your future job. If you can, you will love your career. Passion is the key to having a successful college career as well. Find a club, sport, or volunteer area you love to add a depth of satisfaction and richness to your college experience.

In writing essays for scholarships, writing with an angle concerning something you feel strongly about will bring an effective, moving essay. In studying for the ACT, find a compelling reason for you that you want to do well, whether it's to have a better chance at scholarships, get into the college you want, get the best score among your friends or family, etc. Having a focus as to why you want to do well will help motivate you to study. Writing down a goal will further increase your chances for success.

Obtaining training beyond high school is probably the most expensive thing we will ever do, other than buying a home. Statistics indicate it will be worth it in lifetime earnings. Having work that we look forward to each day is a huge contributor to satisfaction in life. Exploring careers and colleges will be among the most important projects of our lives. When we choose well and from an informed position we greatly increase our chances for satisfaction and happiness in life.