



D1.

THE BENEFITS OF COLLEGE

WORD WALL

Benefit: Something that promotes well-being; an advantage

Higher Education: Any education after high school

College/University: An institution of higher learning that offers facilities for teaching and research and is authorized to grant academic degrees

Communal: Of or relating to a community



TARGET AUDIENCE

Students grades 4 through 8, possibly for students grades 9 through 12



45 MINUTES



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Preview Activity Handout: *The Benefits of Higher Education* (and/or web video or guest speaker)
- Lesson Handouts: *Why College?* and *The More You Learn, the More You Earn from Realizing the College Dream*
- Reflection Activity Handout: *I'm Excited about College*

LEARNING GOALS

- ➔ Students will understand the benefits of higher education.
- ➔ Students will understand the messages they are receiving at home and in their community about higher education.
- ➔ Students will hear and understand firsthand accounts of the benefits of an education.

INTRODUCTION

"I believe I can reach my full potential...for myself, for my family, and for my community!"

This lesson will help students and families understand the benefits of higher education for individual students, their families and their communities. Understanding these benefits will increase students' self-esteem.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

There are many ways you can prepare an impactful Preview Activity about the benefits of college. As always, we have included a handout that can be given out a few days before

the in-class lesson. *The Benefits of Higher Education* handout helps students talk to their copilots about the benefits of college. Exercise care with this assignment — not all students will have a close relationship with someone who has attended college. Encourage those students to think broadly about whom they can speak to and include yourself in that list. If the majority of your students cannot find someone who went to college to do the Preview Activity with, you might want to do this as an in-class activity, and either be the person the students interview or bring in guest speakers. Another option is to pair students up with faculty and staff in the school to help them fill out the Preview Activity sheet.

In this lesson students might also encounter people who do not believe that college would benefit them or think that college is an achievable goal. One of your key tasks in

this lesson will be to help give your students the tools to deal with that situation and ensure that they believe in the importance of college.

In lieu of or in addition to the handout, you may wish to show your students a streaming video from the web that addresses this topic (for example, see <https://atlasabe.org/resource/a-walk-in-my-shoes-documentary-series-first-generation-college-students>). Ideally, the video can be shown to the students the same day the handout is given. This will help make students more knowledgeable on issues they may be facing.

Finally, we strongly encourage you to bring in a guest speaker to talk to the students about the importance of college. Guest speakers, particularly those with the same background as the students, can make a tremendous impact. Guest speakers can be an excellent addition at many other points in the curriculum as well; this is a particularly ideal moment for this activity.

PREVIEW ACTIVITY

This activity should be given 1-2 days prior to the in-class lesson. Explain to students that they will start a new lesson that requires them to gather information from their home or community and bring it to the classroom.

- Distribute *The Benefits of Higher Education* and explain instructions to students. (See handout)

- As you begin the in-class lesson, have students share (as individuals or within small groups) what they discussed and learned in their Preview Activity.
- You may wish to add value by collecting ideas generated and distributing them to students as a resource.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1: The Benefits of College

 10 minutes

- Write the following statement on the board: “I believe I can reach my full potential ... for myself, for my family, and for my community!” Ask students to read the statement and share what it means to them and why it is important.
- Discuss and review the Preview Activity.

Part 2: Why College?

 35 minutes

- Give students the *Why College?* handout and go over each section with the students. You can also hand out *The More You Learn, the More You Earn* to further illustrate the financial benefits of college. Share personal experiences you feel comfortable discussing and talk about what you feel are the benefits of higher education. Refer students to additional resources in the Resources section of this lesson if they want to do additional research on their own.
- Split up students into groups to discuss the benefits of college. Have them brainstorm additional benefits that come from higher education. You might want to give them large poster board or butcher paper to record their responses.
- Have the groups report on their discussions. Compile their responses and create a handout that you can distribute to the class. Emphasize the creativity and intelligence of their responses.
- Upon completion, you might want to discuss the following questions:
 - Have you ever had a conversation with your family about the benefits of education? If this was your first time, what did you learn?



- After hearing the benefits of higher education, how many of you are ready to make a pledge to continue your education after high school?
- How did having this conversation with your family help you with your plans to go to college?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- ➔ Thank students for their participation in the lesson and talk about how important it is for them to share their discoveries with significant people in their lives.
- ➔ Explain to students that this activity will allow them to share the information they explored at school with their copilot. In addition, the assignment will allow them to reflect on the topic a bit further.
- ➔ Distribute *I'm Excited about College* and explain the instructions to students. (See *handout*)

RESOURCES

- ➔ First in the Family
 - <http://www.firstinthefamily.org/highschool/index.html>

CURRICULUM AND SKILLS STANDARDS

- ➔ Standards for the English/Language Arts: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
- ➔ National Standards for Social Studies Teachers:
 - Culture
 - Time, Continuity and Change
 - People, Places and Environments
 - Individual Development and Identity
 - Individuals, Groups and Institutions
- ➔ National Educational Technology Standards for Students: 3

See *Appendix A* for complete curriculum standards descriptions.

EXTENSIONS

- ➔ You may wish to have a professor come talk to your students about the opportunities to work with professors in college. Another option is to invite a guest speaker to talk about life as a student or a study-abroad experience. You may also wish to have students do an Internet search for a college or university that interests them.



HANDOUT: THE BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION



NAME	
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Talk to one of your copilots or someone else you trust about the benefits of college. Whoever you choose will be your copilot for this activity. Be sure to thank your copilot for supporting you.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK YOUR COPILOT:

1. If your copilot went to college: How has going to college helped you in your life?

2. If your copilot did not go to college: How do you think going to college would have helped you? Did not going to college make a difference in your life?

3. How do you think going to college will affect my life?

4. What is the most important benefit of going to college?

HANDOUT: WHY COLLEGE?

INTELLECTUAL

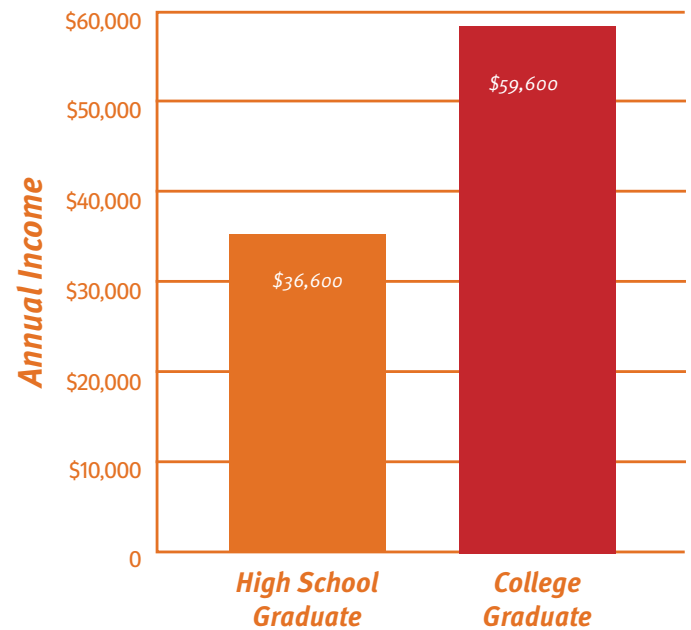
- ➔ You will be exposed to exciting new ideas and areas of study.
- ➔ You will increase your skills in reading, writing, math and analysis.
- ➔ You will have opportunities to work alongside professors doing cutting-edge research.
- ➔ You will have the opportunity to increase your knowledge of the world, of different cultures and your own, and about career options.
- ➔ You will gain the education and skills to pursue a fulfilling profession or career.

DEVELOPMENTAL

- ➔ You will become more mature and independent because you will have complete responsibility for your own academic career.
- ➔ You will get to pick your own classes, including the subjects and the time of day.
- ➔ You can live in a dormitory or an apartment.
- ➔ You can make lots of new friends.
- ➔ You will be exposed to a vast array of cultures, philosophies and ways of life.
- ➔ You will experience a wide variety of student activities, including the opportunity to tutor, mentor and study in another country.
- ➔ You will develop skills for successfully transitioning to adulthood and the world of work.

FINANCIAL

- ➔ You will be exposed to career and life experiences through internships and fellowships.
- ➔ You will increase your earning capacity.
- ➔ A four-year college graduate earns almost \$1 million more than a high school graduate during his/her lifetime.
- ➔ The average annual income of a four-year college graduate is about \$59,600, compared to the average annual income of \$36,600 for a high school graduate.
- ➔ You will benefit from better working conditions, including longer job tenure, more on-the-job training opportunities, and more responsibility and promotion opportunities.



Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cba/annual-earnings>

HANDOUT: THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE YOU EARN

Worried about the cost of college? Sure, college costs money, with cost of attendance ranging anywhere from \$19,000 to \$56,000 per year¹. But going to college pays off in the long run. Plus, there is plenty of financial aid available for eligible students and families.

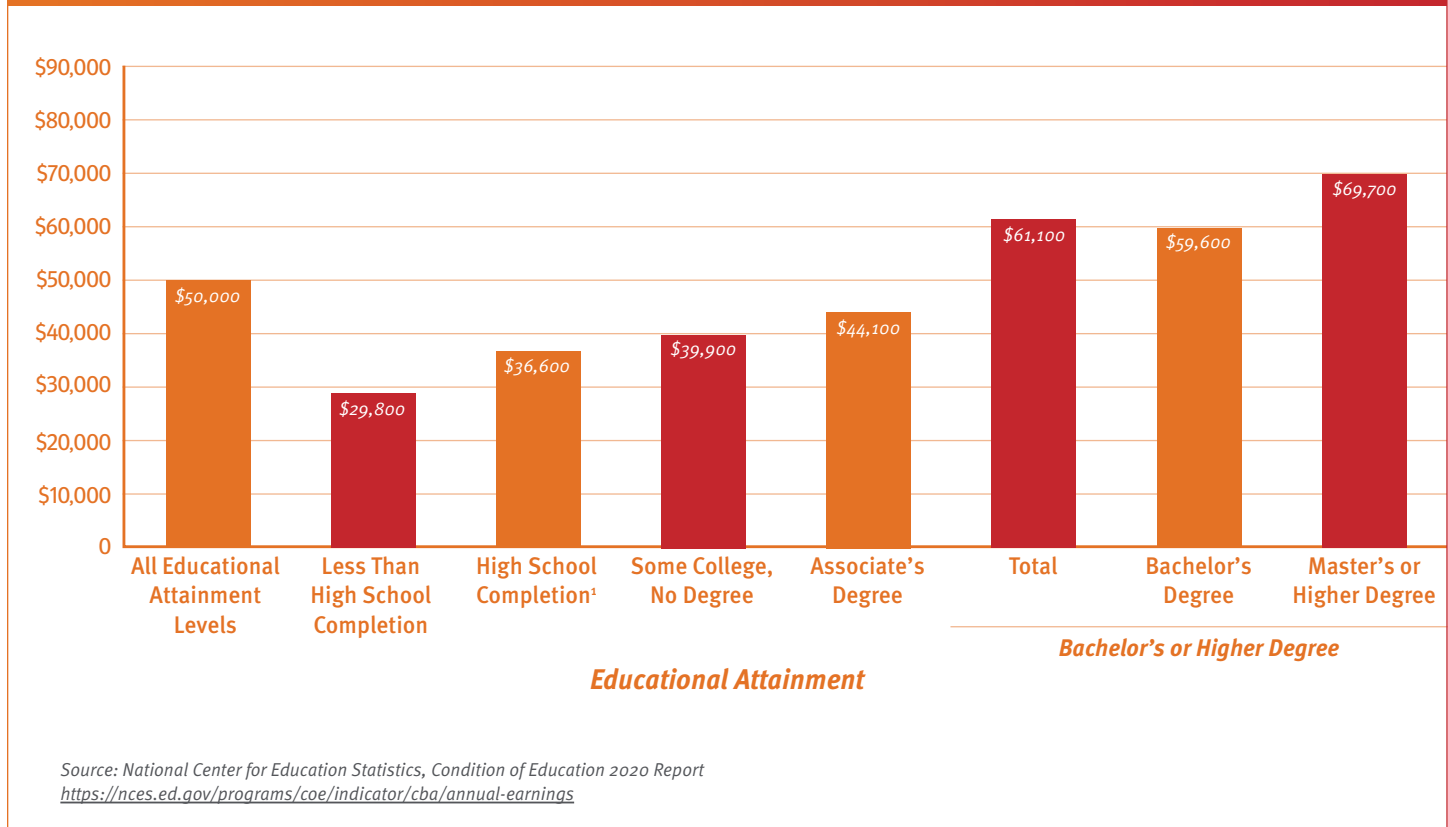
FACTS:

- A four-year college graduate (that is, someone with a bachelor's degree) earns almost \$1 million more over his/her lifetime than a high school graduate.
- The average annual income of a four-year college graduate is about \$59,600, compared to the average annual income of \$36,600 for a high school graduate.

¹The College Board, "Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid,"

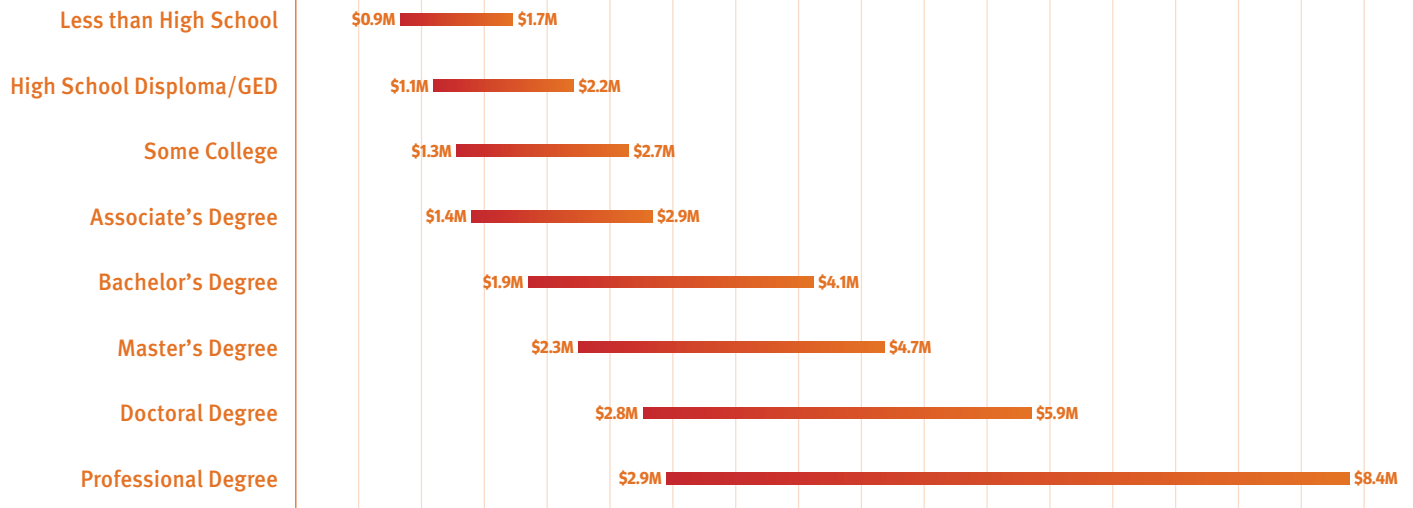
<https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/trends-college-pricing-student-aid-2021.pdf>

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS AGES 25-34, BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: 2020



HANDOUT: THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE YOU EARN

LIFETIME EARNINGS BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2009-2019.
<https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/collegepayoff2021>

We're not saying that money is everything, or even the most important thing. But your investment in a college education will pay off in higher earnings over time. With a college education, you also can expect:

- ➔ Better working conditions
- ➔ Longer job tenure
- ➔ Opportunities for community involvement
- ➔ More on-the-job training opportunities
- ➔ More promotion opportunities
- ➔ More societal engagement
- ➔ Better health outcomes²

Most importantly, with a college education you gain the knowledge and skills that will help you throughout your life. So, before you say, "I can't afford to go to college," ask yourself, how can you afford NOT to go to college?

²"The Costs and Benefits of Higher Education"
<https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/USHE-DataBook-Nov2021.pdf>

HANDOUT: I'M EXCITED ABOUT COLLEGE



NAME

Talk to one of your copilots or someone else you trust. Whoever you choose will be your copilot for this activity. Be sure to thank your copilot for supporting you.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK YOUR COPILOT:

1. What are you most excited about after learning about the many benefits of going to college?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU AND YOUR COPILOT TO DISCUSS AND ANSWER TOGETHER:

2. What are some of the activities you might want to participate in when you are in college?

3. What do you think you might want to study in college?
