

Tips for Success

The **BIG** Idea

- How can I successfully deal with the academic, personal, and social issues I'll face next year in college?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Think About It (5 minutes)
- II. Trouble Zones (5 minutes)
- III. What Do the Pros Say? (15 minutes)
- IV. Group Reports: Tips for Success (15 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 144, Think About It
- Student Handbook page 145, Trouble Zones
- Student Handbook pages 146-149, What Do the Pros Say Research Guide
- Student Handbook page 150, What Do the Pros Say Worksheet
- Student Handbook pages 151-153, Tips for Success

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Identify the main obstacles to freshman success and recognize that many students share their feelings.
- Understand the importance of taking action.
- List tips to address common issues.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students delve more deeply into the transitional issues that freshman face in college. They identify the main areas of conflict – personal, social and academic – and investigate ways to deal with them. They read the advice of experts, and the suggestions of students with first-hand experience. They learn strategies for succeeding in college.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Look at the index cards that students handed in during the last class (**Activity II, What Tops Your List, in Next Steps 1: Freshman Year Survival Guide**). Make sure the students' concerns were either addressed during that lesson, or are represented on **Student Handbook page 145, Trouble Zones**. If they are not, make a note to address them verbally during your introductory remarks to **Activity II, Trouble Zones**.
- Read the articles suggested in **Student Handbook pages 146-149, What Do the Pros Say Research Guide**, so you are familiar with the material and able to update any broken weblinks.
- Arrange to hold class in the computer lab so students will have access to the Internet for **Activity III, What Do the Pros Say?** If Internet access is not possible, download and print out the first article cited for each topic on **Student Handbook pages 146-149, What Do the Pros Say Research Guide**. When printing resources, please include web addresses and all of the identifying information (title, author, etc) provided in the original article so that sources are properly credited and students can locate info on their own if needed. Note that health and safety issues like binge drinking and safe sex are discussed, and alert your administrators if their approval is needed. Note that Firstinthefamily.org information is presented via slideshows that require audio.
- For **Activity III, What Do the Pros Say** and **Activity IV, Group Reports: Tips for Success**, preselect groups of students to work together. You should have a total of 6 groups (with 3-6 students per group). Assign each group a trouble zone to research (Academic, Personal, or Social) and specify which topics to focus on (#1-3 or #4-6).

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

For **Activity III, What Do the Pros Say?**, if your class is small (18 or so), instead of preselecting groups, assign each student one question to research.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Think About It (5 minutes)

1. As students enter the classroom, refer them to **Student Handbook page 144, Think About It**. Give them a few minutes to complete the sheet.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everyone. As you can tell from the handbook page you've just completed, we're going to focus today on some of the bigger issues that occur during the transition from high school to freshman year—issues that tend to lurk in the “fear factor” part of your brain. Last week you wrote down some of your concerns on index cards; today perhaps you even added to the list, by jotting an answer to Question #2 on your sheet. Does anyone have a new concern about next year they'd like to share?
3. [Let students share their answers to #2 on **Student Handbook page 144, Think About It**.]
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I appreciate the honesty you've shown by sharing your thoughts in class, as well as on the index cards. Like most students looking down the road at the end of high school, you have many real concerns about dealing with life next year on your own. Next week we'll talk about making the transition into the work world. Today we'll focus on adjusting to college. And it doesn't matter if you're the first in your family to go, or you're just plain worried about the workload—the transition to college is a big one. Most everyone feels the pressure. In fact, most of the kids you'll meet next year at school are having the same questions and concerns as you are, right now. So let's take a look at the most common worries about freshman year, and then we'll learn how to tackle them.

II. Trouble Zones (5 Minutes)

1. [Tell students to turn to **Student Handbook page 145, Trouble Zones**.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As you can see, I've gone ahead and grouped the questions you had last week, and added some others that are most often cited by freshman. They generally fall into one of three categories, or “trouble zones”: academic, personal and social. In the academic trouble zone, there are questions like “Do I really have to go to class?” and “What should I do about a bad grade?” In the personal zone, there are worries about managing your time and handling emotions. In the social area, you'll find concerns about making new friends and dealing with roommates.

One thing to keep in mind as you look over this list: over a million students graduate from college every year – which means they successfully navigate their way through these trouble zones, and make it through freshman year! To find out how, we’re going to get some advice from the “pros”—experts who specialize in helping first-year students, and students themselves, who have first-hand experience.

III. What Do the Pros Say? (15 minutes)

1. [Organize students into their preselected groups. Assign them their trouble zone and topics #1-3 or #4-6. If there are more than 3 students per group, tell them to double up on the topics, so 2 students will research the same issue by reading different articles.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** During this activity, you’ll go online to research what the pros say about dealing with each of the topics assigned to your group. After 15 minutes of research, we’ll come back together as a class, and each group will report their findings to the others. That way, by the end of class today, you’ll all have tips for success in every trouble zone, and resources to navigate whatever challenges come your way next year.
3. [Tell students to now turn to **Student Handbook pages 146-149, What Do the Pros Say Research Guide**, and **Student Handbook page 150, What Do the Pros Say Worksheet**.]
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As you’ll see, **Student Handbook pages 146-149, What Do the Pros Say Research Guide** provides websites to visit to research each topic. Many of the articles will cover more ground than you need, but the advice is all good, so read the whole article, and then zero in on your topic. If you don’t find exactly what you’re looking for, or if you want a bigger picture, try reading some of the other articles suggested for your zone. Also, please remember that you’ll be reporting your findings to the whole class later in the lesson. So, take notes on **Student Handbook page 150, What Do the Pros Say Worksheet**, and use this sheet as a guide for your report. If you have any questions, raise your hand and I’ll come around. Otherwise, let’s begin.
5. [After 10 minutes, announce that in 5 minutes they will present their findings to the class, so if they haven’t started to fill out the worksheet, they should begin now.]

IV. Group Reports: Tips for Success (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Okay, everyone, let's see what the pros say about dealing with the academic, personal, and social questions you may have next year. In order to keep track of what you're hearing – and so you can go back and refer to it again this year or next – please also take notes on each other's reports on **Student Handbook pages 151-153, Tips for Success.**
2. [Make sure everyone turns to **Student Handbook pages 151-153, Tips for Success.** Then, when everyone's ready, call on each group to give their reports. Go in order so topics #1-3 and then #4-6 are reported for each trouble zone. Give each group 2 minutes to read their tips.]

V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Thank you all for those great reports; you are now chock-full of information, tips, and resources to help you succeed next year, regardless of how topsy-turvy things may feel. So please take a moment to reflect on what you've learned today, and jot down the most valuable advice you heard. Perhaps you found an answer to a question you raised last week; or perhaps you learned how to address an issue you hadn't thought of before, but you're glad to know how to handle now.
2. [Give students a moment to write their answers. Then, call on a few students to read their answers.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** We covered a lot of territory today, but if there's something on your mind we didn't get to, many of the sites we visited have other articles about college life that might address your question. Or, feel free to ask me, or your school counselor, for help finding resources to guide you. Next week, we'll talk about first steps outside of school, and discover some tips for success in the work world. So have a good week, and I'll see you next time.

Think About It

Last week you were asked to write down the concerns that top your list, when you think about living on your own next year. Then, during class we identified some of the people, and resources, available to help you resolve college, and real life, problems.

1. Please reflect on what you learned, and jot down one or two resources you think you might use next year. Examples: “Academic Advisor, to help me choose classes” or “Counseling Center (college or community) to help me with personal issues.”

- Person or resource: _____

Problem they can help me solve: _____

- Person or resource: _____

Problem they can help me solve: _____

2. Please write down any new questions or concerns that have come up during the week that you would like to share with the class.

Trouble Zones

The issues are in **bold**; related questions are in *italics*.

Academic	Personal	Social
1. Attending Class <i>It's up to me. Do I really have to go?</i>	1. Managing your Time <i>So much free time! How do I keep from wasting it all?</i>	1. Making New Friends <i>I don't know anyone. How do I make new friends?</i>
2. Relating to Teachers <i>My class is huge; my teacher doesn't know who I am. How can I relate?</i>	2. First In the Family <i>I'm the first in my family to go to college. I feel lots of pressure. What can I do?</i>	2. Dealing with Roommate <i>What if we don't get along?</i>
3. Types of Assignments <i>There are no homework sheets, just big papers. How do I do this?</i>	3. Homesickness <i>I miss my family and friends. Should I drop out and go home?</i>	3. Partying <i>How will I keep from going overboard?</i>
4. Amount of Study <i>I hardly studied in high school. How come that's not working now?</i>	4. Personal Responsibility <i>I can do what I want, when I want. How can I keep from spinning out of control?</i>	4. Fitting In <i>I'm different from everyone. How can I fit in?</i>
5. Taking it seriously <i>This is just freshman year. Will my grades really matter?</i>	5. Anxiety/Depression <i>I feel scared/sad/panicked/depressed. What should I do?</i>	5. College Activities <i>There's so much to do here, how will I choose? And where will I find time to study?</i>
6. Overcoming Bad Grades <i>Uh-oh. I messed up. How do I fix it now?</i>	6. Staying Healthy <i>Between studying and having fun how can I stay in shape and be healthy?</i>	6. Sports <i>I didn't make the varsity team. Will I have to give up sports?</i>

What Do the Pros Say Research Guide

There are a number of good websites and articles on the internet where you can find advice to help you adjust to college. Many of these articles are written by college students or recent graduates, who have experienced these issues first-hand. Others are written by college professors, psychologists and other experts who specialize in helping young people deal with transitions. Use these pages to research the trouble zones you will report on today; keep them as a reference to use later.

Academic

1. Attending Class

http://www.quintcareers.com/first-year_success.html

(A college and career counselor offers 25 Tips to survive and thrive your freshman year)

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/classroom-etiquette.html>

(Same counselor as above offers tips for classroom success)

2. Relating to Teachers

<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~chopper/mother.html>

(Academic tips and friendly advice from a variety of sources, including college students)

http://www.quintcareers.com/first-year_success.html

(A college and career counselor offers 25 Tips to survive and thrive your freshman year)

3. Types of Assignments

<http://www.helium.com/items/737599-the-benefits-of-using-a-day-planner-in-college>

(A college teacher suggests time management and study skills)

http://www.quintcareers.com/first-year_success.html

(A college and career counselor offers 25 Tips to survive and thrive your freshman year)

4. Amount of Study

<http://frank.mtsu.edu/~studskl/10tips.html>

(Study tips and learning strategies from a college Learning Strategies Coordinator)

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/best-colleges/2008/08/21/advice-on-how-to-study-in-college.html?PageNr=4> (14 great tips on how, and how much, to study)

5. Taking it seriously

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/success-stories/academic-success-tips.html>

(Students offer good advice for freshman on academic success)

http://www.pananole.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=82&Itemid=2

(A student reflects on choosing a major and taking college seriously)

6. Overcoming Bad Grades

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/success-stories/bad-grade.html>

(Study strategies from students -- tips for overcoming an initial bad grade)

<http://www.collegebound.net/content/article/i-have-to-do-what/2274/>

(Professors and successful students give college writing and study tips)

Personal

1. Managing your Time

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/success-stories/time-management.html>

(Students share their best tips for time management)

http://www.quintcareers.com/first-year_success.html

(A college and career counselor offers 25 Tips to survive and thrive your freshman year)

http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/campuslife/overcoming_procrastination.html

(Tips for overcoming procrastination)

2. First In the Family

<http://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/739-unique-concerns-of-first-generation-college-students>

(Article addressing the unique concerns of first-generation college students)

<http://firstinthefamily.org/collegyears/soundslides/PeerSupport/index.html>

(Video: first-generation college students talk about the importance of peer support)

http://firstinthefamily.org/collegyears/soundslides/Becoming_a_Scholar/index.html

(Video: first-generation college students talk about the opportunities to become part of an academic community)

3. Homesickness

http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cfm/college_students_and_homesickness

(A writer specializing in college life addresses homesickness)

http://www.essortment.com/all/collegestudent_phu.htm

(10 helpful hints to beat college homesickness)

4. Personal Responsibility

http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cfm/college_freshman_year_101
(Survival tips for your first semester)

http://www.quintcareers.com/first-year_success.html
(A college and career counselor offers 25 Tips to survive and thrive your freshman year)

5. Anxiety/Depression

<http://www.mpoweryouth.org/backtocampus/depression.htm>
(Musicians for Mental Health offer suggestions for dealing with depression in college)

https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/health/education/health_resou/deal_depression
(Symptoms and suggestions from Amherst College)

6. Staying Healthy

<http://www.collegebound.net/content/article/nutrition-101-your-syllabus-to-healthy-eating/1064/>
(Eating healthy in college environment)

http://www.rncentral.com/nursing-library/careplans/101_health_and_wellness_tips_for_college_students (101 health tips on everything from Diet to Studying Abroad)

Social

1. Making New Friends

<http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/campuslife/social-life-in-college.html>
(Ways to Build a Social Life in College)

http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/campuslife/meeting_new_people.html
(Tips on making friends in college from a college RA)

<http://www.fastweb.com/fastweb/resources/articles/index/102680>
(Students give tips for freshman, including advice on social life)

2. Dealing with Roommate

http://www.collegesafe.com/pdf/roommate_guide.pdf (Advice for freshman on dealing with roommates)

http://education-portal.com/articles/Tips_for_Living_with_a_College_Roommate.html (Basic guide to living with a roommate)

3. Partying

http://collegeuniversity.suite101.com/article.cfm/knowing_your_limit (Tips to help you prevent alcohol abuse and learn when to stop)

<http://www.collegeconfidential.com/dean/archives/000241.htm> (A college dean gives tips to balance college work with social life)

4. Fitting In

www.accessandequity.org/.../10_Tips_for_Black_Students.pdf
(Written for African-American students in majority-white colleges, but applies to all who are part of a minority group and concerned about fitting in)

<https://www.ecampustours.com/campuslife/livingonandoffcampus/commuterstudents.htm>
(Tips for commuters but good advice for all)

5. College Activities

<http://www.collegebound.net/content/article/the-advantage-of-activities/2322/>
(Reports on student clubs and how one group of students started their own)

<http://www.collegebound.net/content/article/admissions-office-qa-the-importance-of-campus-activities/2221/>
(Admissions Office Q&A: The Importance of Campus Activities)

6. Sports

<http://www.collegebound.net/content/article/how-to-stay-active-in-high-school-sports-throughout-college/4360/>
(How to stay active in sports in college)

http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/campuslife/leisure_sports.html
(Article on Leisure Sports: A Fun Alternative to Intramurals)

What Do the Pros Say Worksheet

Use this page to take notes while you're researching, and to jot down tips to share with your classmates.

1. Briefly describe the problem you're researching.
(example: being homesick; missing your family and friends)
2. Cite the website (s) where you found advice.
(example: http://www.collegeview.com/articles/CV/campuslife/leisure_sports.html)
3. Suggest two or three problem solving tips that will help you and your classmates deal with this issue next year. (example: set up a schedule to call family and friends so you stay connected while you seek out new friends)

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

Tips for Success

Take notes as your classmates report on coping strategies for each issue. Write down at least one tip that will help you next year.

Academic

Attending Class:

Relating to Teachers:

Types of Assignments:

Amount of Study:

Taking it Seriously:

Overcoming Bad Grades:

Personal

First in the Family:

Homesickness:

Personal Responsibility:

Anxiety/Depression:

Staying Healthy:

Social

Making New Friends:

Dealing With Roommate:

Partying:

Fitting In:

College Activities:

Sports:
