

The **BIG** Idea

- What 9th-grade classes will help me reach my long term educational and career goals?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

II. Planning for Success (15 minutes)

III. A Good Course to Follow
(20 minutes)

IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 16, High School Vocabulary
- Student Handbook page 17, Questions to Ask My School Counselor
- Student Handbook pages 18 and 19, High School Decisions
- Student Handbook page 20, Course List

- Sample packet of local school district's 9th grade course selection forms and information (e.g., background information on course selection process, student data form, listing of 9th grade courses w/syllabus, course selection form, etc.)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Use the 3C's (challenge-choices-consequences) decision-making model to practice choosing courses for their freshman year of high school.
- Understand key high school vocabulary words.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students practice the decision-making skills they learned in the previous RTS class. In a preview of the local district's course selection process, they decide which courses to take in 9th grade. This class will require pre-planning and collaboration with your school counselor to identify and assemble information and forms used in course selection. Some schools may elect to use this class for official course selection by inviting the school school counselor to co-facilitate.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary word and definition on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 16, High School Vocabulary**
 - **Student Handbook pages 18 and 19, High School Decisions**
- You will need to contact local school officials well in advance of this lesson to identify and assemble necessary information and forms to guide the course selection process for 8th graders transitioning into high school in your district. This packet of information should include a listing of 9th grade courses, the course selection card or form, and any other information needed to help students and their parents understand the 9th grade course selection process. If you are unfamiliar with this procedure, you will need to meet with the appropriate school personnel to become better acquainted with the processes involved.
- In addition, you may wish to ask the school counselor to serve as a co-facilitator of this lesson.
- Log onto CollegelInColorado.org and print out the "Recommended Plan of Study" for 30 Careers. This can be found by clicking on the **Career Cluster** link on the **What to Learn** tab of any Career Profile.)

VOCABULARY

Preliminary: introductory; leading up to the main part, or event.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

You may wish to have the school counselor (high school or 8th grade) co-facilitate this lesson. The counselor can bring in official school forms for course selection, explain how to fill them out and the process involved in getting assigned to the classes students select. As the students work on the activity in **Part III**, both you and the school counselor can be available to assist and make recommendations.

In **Activity III, A Good Course to Follow**, you may choose to list the pros and cons for a particular course selection as a class.

In **Activity III**, if your students have most of their 9th grade courses selected for them, have them identify courses they'll want to take as upperclassmen to prepare for careers of interest. Provide a list of suggested courses for 30 popular careers. (See **Preparation**.) In class, have students find courses they can take later in high school that would match CollegelInColorado.org suggestions.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Pop quiz. How many of you can remember all three words that the Cs stand for in the decision making strategy that we learned last week? If you don't remember, you can refresh your memory on **Student Handbook page 13, Decision Making 101**. Once you know what each of the three Cs stand for, hold up three fingers in the air. [Call on students to tell you what they stand for and to summarize each step.]
2. The real-world challenge that each of you is going to be facing later this year is picking your courses for 9th grade. By the end of the class today, you should have a pretty good idea of classes that you'll be interested in taking next year, as well as an understanding of what the pros and cons of certain choices are.

II. Planning for Success (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** There are a few vocabulary words that are essential for selecting high school courses. We need to make sure everyone is familiar with them before we begin researching and selecting courses.

[Refer students to **Student Handbook page 16, High School Vocabulary**. Read and discuss each one aloud. If there are additional vocabulary words that are specific to your local high school, write them on the board and have students add them to their sheets.]

2. As you probably gathered from the word "requirements," you don't get to pick all of your classes in high school. Some of them are picked for you by your school counselor depending on the courses you've taken in middle school and your performance in them. Today you are going to be making a **preliminary** list of courses for next year [refer students to the definition on the board]. Your final course selection will be made with your school counselor in the spring. My goal for you is to become familiar with the material so you can start thinking about what you might like to take next year. This way when it comes time to pick your ninth grade classes for real, you'll already be ahead of the game.
3. What things should you consider when picking your courses? [Write the ideas that they come up with on the board. Encourage them to think of things like: *college; what they're interested in; how challenging a particular course is; what job they hope to even-*

tually have; what they're good at and what they'd like to get better at; what fits into their schedule; what classes they've enjoyed in the past; what the prerequisites are for the class.]

4. If you're not sure, you should take courses that prepare you, just in case. If you have questions about this, talk to your guidance counselor.

[If you have capable students who aren't planning on taking college courses, you may point out that people can decide to enter college at any age, and can take courses to get ready at a local community college if they haven't had them before. But the opportunity cost for postponing these pre-college courses is that 1) these courses will cost money later on, and 2) adult students often have to fit school into a schedule that includes other responsibilities – like a job or family. Now is a great time to take college prep courses – while it costs them nothing and school is their main responsibility.]

III. A Good Course to Follow (20 minutes)

1. [Tell students that they are going to spend the remainder of the class figuring out what courses to take next year.]

[Give each student a copy of your district's 9th grade courses (course syllabus should be included).

Instruct students to turn to **Portfolio page 20, Course List**. Remind students that the chances are extremely high that each and everyone of them will be enrolled in an English, math, science, and social studies course next year. As they can see, there are already spaces marked off for each of these classes. Instruct students to look through the courses for each subject listed on the 9th grade course listing. If they have any choices, they can write the type of English, math or science that they'd prefer to take next to it. **Note:** If you are using the official course selection form from the school, students do not need to write their selections on **Student Handbook page 20, Course List**. Photocopy the official course selection forms and add them to the students' portfolio.]

2. [Once students have completed their required course selection, direct their attention to **Student Handbook pages 18 and 19, High School Decisions.**]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Of course, the “challenge” is finding high school courses that will lead to the kind of work you're interested in. How do you determine what your

“choices” are? You all just decided between courses that will fulfill a particular **requirement**, like advanced or regular English. In other cases, you’ll need to choose among various **electives**.

Let’s have a look at the example. Here, a student is trying to decide whether to take art or chorus. They’ve drawn a line connecting two courses to show that the choice is one or the other. Read through the pros and cons they’ve listed. What do you think they will choose? [Allow students to respond.]

You can use **Student Handbook pages 18 and 19, High-School Decisions**, in the same way. Write down each course you’re undecided about. Then list the pros and cons of taking it under “consequences.” If you’re trying to decide between 2 or 3 courses, write them in boxes that are next to each other and connect them as shown in the example.

3. [Once students have made a decision, they should circle the course they’ve selected and add it to whatever school course selection document you’re using (either the official course selection form from the school or **Student Handbook page 20, Course List**). **NOTE:** students don’t have to use the **High School Decisions** sheet for all of their courses, just those they’re uncertain about; You may want to have them try at least one so they can practice the decision-making strategy. Pass out the high school course material and allow students to work independently, providing assistance as needed. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)]
4. [Have students turn to their **Student Handbook page 17, Questions for My School Counselor**. Give students a few minutes to write down any questions they had as they were making their course selections. Collect these questions sheets at the end of class; make sure the students write their names on top. After class, give these forms to the school school counselor(s). This will help the school counselor(s) plan for course selection sessions with the students.]

IV. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Ask students if/how having a career goal helped their course selection. Remind them that a good high school education is the foundation for keeping their options open to countless future opportunities.]
2. [Suggest options (seeing you during your office hours, visiting the school counselor, talking to their parents) for those who need more assistance or time to complete their course selection.]

High School Vocabulary

- **Prerequisites:** courses you have to take in order to take a harder course, for example, Math I is a prerequisite for Math II.
- **Electives:** courses you choose to take. This could be art, drama, journalism, or a new language.
- **Requirements:** things you must do, courses you must take. For example, in most high schools four years of English is a requirement to graduate. It's important that you know what the graduation requirements are in your school so that you can be sure to meet them by the end of 4 years.
- **Advanced Placement (AP) Classes:** challenging courses that give students the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school. Students must successfully complete final exams to get credit. (Students rarely take AP classes before 11th grade.)
- **Credit:** recognition by a school that a student has successfully passed a course requirement. You can think of credits as the number of points that you need to graduate. For each class that you take and pass, you'll earn a set number of credits toward graduation.

Name: _____

Grade: _____

Section: _____

QUESTIONS TO ASK MY SCHOOL COUNSELOR

As you're figuring out your course schedule for next year, you'll probably have a lot of questions that you'll want answers to. So that you don't forget what you want to ask your guidance counselor when the time comes to select your actual 9th grade courses, write your questions in the space below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Make difficult choices easier by listing the pros and cons of each.



HIGH SCHOOL DECISIONS

CHALLENGE: Find high school courses that match your career goal.

You can use the **CHALLENGE-CHOICE-CONSEQUENCES** strategy to help decide what 9th-grade courses to take.

Use this form to consider the courses you're not sure about. Write the course name in the box, and the **pros** (reasons to take it) and **cons** (reasons not to) next to it. Circle the courses you decide you want to take.

Note: If you're trying to decide between two courses (for example, music and art), write them in boxes next to each other and connect them as shown.)

EXAMPLE:

CHOICE	CONSEQUENCES
Art 101	<p>Pros There weren't any art courses in my elementary school, and I love art! This would be a great chance for me to see how much I can learn and if a career in art is for me.</p> <p>Cons Only got Cs in art in 7th and 8th grade, teacher didn't recommend me for high school art</p>
Chorus	<p>Pros A couple of friends and I got a high mark in a state singing competition, auditioned for chorus and got in</p> <p>Cons Chorus and art meet at same time and I can't take both. I can sing anytime, anywhere, including the church choir. I don't want to miss the chance to take art.</p>

CHOICE

CONSEQUENCES

Course Name	Pros
	Cons

CHOICE

CONSEQUENCES

Course Name	Pros
	Cons

CHOICE

CONSEQUENCES

Course Name	Pros
	Cons

CHOICE

CONSEQUENCES

Course Name	Pros
	Cons

Use this form to list your classes for next year.



COURSE LIST

Once you have decided which classes you are going to take in high school, please list them in the space provided below. Take a look at the example provided below to see how you should list your classes for next year. (**Note:** if your school has an official course request form for you to complete, you can use it instead of this page.)

9th GRADE CLASSES (Example)

CLASS TITLE	REQUIREMENT	SEMESTERS
1. FRESHMAN ENGLISH LITERATURE	YES	2
2. ALGEBRA I	YES	2
3. BIOLOGY	YES	2
4. THEATER	NO	1
5. GLOBAL HISTORY	YES	2
6. FRENCH	NO	1

CLASS TITLE	REQUIREMENT	SEMESTERS
1. MATH: _____	YES	2
2. ENGLISH: _____	YES	2
3. SCIENCE: _____	YES	2
4. SOCIAL STUDIES: _____	YES	2
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____