

Entrance Requirements

The **BIG** Idea

- How do colleges decide which students to admit?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: College: The Right Stuff (10 minutes)
- II. CFWV.com: What Schools Want (10 minutes)
- III. Graduation Requirements and College-Bound Courses (10 minutes)
- IV. Revising Your 4-Year Plan (10 min)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

PORTFOLIO PAGES:

- Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan (from Setting Goals 2)

STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:

- Student Handbook page 83, What Schools Want
- Student Handbook page 84, Recommended High School Courses for College
- Student Handbook page 85, Questions for My School Counselor

- Sample packet of local school district's 10th grade course selection forms and information (e.g., background information on course selection process, student data form, listing of 10th grade courses w/syllabus, course selection form, etc.)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- List and discuss criteria colleges use to select candidates.
- Compare the entrance requirements of two four-year schools.
- Understand which courses are required for high school graduation in own state or district.
- Understand which courses are required or recommended by four-year colleges.
- Use the criteria above to select courses for tenth grade.

OVERVIEW

As a class, students list and discuss the general entrance requirements for most four-year colleges and universities. They use the CFWV.com website to research the requirements for two schools in their state. Then, students will review the state or district requirements for graduation. Finally, they will use the criteria to revise the four-year plan they created earlier in the year.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Student Handbook page 83, What Schools Want**
 - **Student Handbook page 84, Recommended High School Courses for College**
 - **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**
- Make arrangements for the class to use the computer lab, and make sure the CFWV.com website is accessible from students' computers.
- For **Activity II, CFWV.com: What Schools Want**, choose two colleges and/or universities in your state for students to research on the CFWV.com website. Choose schools that are accessible to students and have different kinds of profiles (for example, one public and one private). One of the schools should also have stricter entrance requirements.
- Copy **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan** (one per student). Students who make revisions to their Four-Year plan will need an extra handout. (Students may also prefer to make revisions on the original portfolio page, rather than recopying the entire page.)
- Since this lesson is designed to help students prepare for their meetings with the school counselor to select courses for the 10th grade, be sure to coordinate with the counselor to become better acquainted with the processes involved. You will need to identify and assemble necessary information and forms for your district to guide the course selection process for ninth graders choosing courses for the 10th grade. This packet of information should include:
 - district or state requirements for graduation
 - a listing of grade 10 courses
 - the course selection card or form, and

- any other information needed to help students and their parents understand the 10th grade course selection process.

In addition, you may wish to ask the school counselor to serve as a co-facilitator of this lesson. The counselor can bring in official school forms for course selection, explain how to fill them out, and discuss the process involved in enrolling in selected classes.

VOCABULARY

High School Transcript: a record of the classes taken by a student in high school and the grades earned.

Standardized Tests: tests given to students in a similar setting under similar conditions in order to measure knowledge, skills, and abilities compared with other students.

GPA (Grade Point Average): the average grade earned by a student, figured by dividing the grade points earned by the number of credits taken.

Class Ranking: a number that compares students to others in his or her graduating class, usually based on grade point average. (For example, a student is 40th in a class of 250.)

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

For **Activity II, CFWV.com: What Schools Want**, if your class does not have access to computers, you can print out the information about school requirements from the CFWV.com website and/or the official websites of the two colleges you choose. (Create a class set of these documents rather than copies for all students in the program.)

In **Activity IV, Revising Your 4-Year Plan**, if your school has an official course request form for students to complete, you may choose to have students complete it instead of writing their courses on **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**. (A copy should be kept in their RTS portfolio.)

If you think your students will be interested in practicing some SAT or ACT questions, feel free to show some sample questions from either the Collegeboard (www.collegeboard.com) or ACT website (www.actstudent.org).

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: The Right Stuff (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** What do you need to do to get into the college of your choice? Today we'll explore the requirements for different schools. Later in class we're going to look over the four-year plans you made earlier this year to help determine what classes you'll take next year.
2. [In the following activity, write all student answers in a list on the board under the heading "Admission Requirements."]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Some schools have open admissions policies that let most people in as long as they've graduated from high school or have a high school equivalency diploma. But for many colleges and universities, you'll need more. And the better your high school performance, the more choices you'll have.

What kinds of things will colleges be interested in finding out about you when you apply? [Allow students to respond.] What do you think is the most important thing a college wants to look at? (*your high school transcript*)

Who knows what this is? [See **Vocabulary**.]

Transcripts include your grade point average and your class rank. Does anyone know what a grade point average is? Class rank? [See **Vocabulary** when talking about grade point average; students should understand how letter grades correspond to a four-point scale, i.e., A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, and D=1.0. Make sure students understand that GPA is cumulative starting in grade 9.]

[Display the following information and chart on chart paper, overhead or board. Walk the students through the **Sample Student Transcript** and model how to calculate the sample GPA. NOTE: If needed, check with your school counselor to make sure grades in your school are based on a 4 point system. You may also want to investigate if honors courses are weighted differently.]

- A = 4 grade points
- B = 3 grade points
- C = 2 grade points
- D = 1 grade point
- F = 0 grade points

SAMPLE STUDENT TRANSCRIPT

COURSE	CREDIT HOURS	GRADE	GRADE POINTS
Biology	3	A (4.0)	12
English	3	C (2.0)	6
Math	3	B (3.0)	9
History	3	B (3.0)	9
French	3	C (2.0)	6
Art	3	A (4.0)	12

Total Number of Credits = 18**Total Grade Points = 54**

To calculate the student's GPA, the total grade points are divided by the total number of credits earned.

Total Grade Points/ Total Number of Credits = GPA

$$54/18 = 3.0 \text{ GPA}$$

[NOTE: If you think your students will be overwhelmed by practicing how to calculate GPA, you may choose to skip calculating the GPA.]

Class rank shows how you compare with your classmates. So if a school requires students to be in the top half of their class, what does that mean in a class of 200 kids? (*that you'd have to be ranked in the first 100*)

For example, a student might be first in his class, twenty-fifth in his class, or two hundredth in his class. A student who's first in his class has better grades than the student who's two-hundredth.

Also on your transcript, most 4-year colleges want to see that you've taken at least the following courses: [List these separately on the board.]

English: 4 years

Math: 3–4 years

Science: 3 years

Social Studies: 3 years

Foreign Language: 2–4 years

- SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Besides looking at your transcript, colleges also want to see your standardized test scores. Colleges use tests like the SAT and the ACT so they can compare all students using the same standards. These aren't the kinds of tests you

study for in the sense that you're supposed to know certain facts or formulas. But it helps to be familiar with the kinds of questions they ask and to know some strategies for doing well. Some students actually take prep courses or practice exams to get ready. Next year, you're going to learn some strategies for taking these tests.

The SAT has three parts: verbal, math and writing. There are 800 points possible in each part. (Hardly anyone gets a perfect score.) The ACT has a total of 36 possible points. The ACT has five parts to it: English, Math, Reading, Writing, and Science.

How many points does a school require to get in? *(This varies, and while there are suggested guidelines, an applicant with some other outstanding quality might be admitted with less than ideal scores.)*

[NOTE: CFWV.com lists SAT scores in terms of 1600 points (instead of 2400). Let students know that this score only factors in the math and verbal sections.]

II. CFWV.com: What Schools Want (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Some colleges are very competitive – lots of students applying for the same spots – kind of like trying out for sports. These schools can be very choosy about which students they admit. But not every school is hard to get into. It's important to find a school that's a good match for your skills. If you're a good student, you'll have more choices.

Finding out about a school's specific requirements is a good first step. What are some of the ways you could do that? *(ask a school counselor, go to school website, phone school admissions office, look on the CFWV.com website)*

The CFWV.com website is a great place to start. Let's take a look.

2. [Have the class log on to CFWV.com.]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Today, we'll research the requirements for two schools.
4. [On the board, write the name of the two schools you chose for students to research (see **Preparation**). Have students follow along with the instructions below.]

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: To find out the requirements for these schools or any school, first:

Click on the **College Planning** tab on the top of the page and then click on the **Explore Schools** section.

Next, enter the name of the school at the top and click on the **Go** button.

Click on the school name, which brings you to the **School Profile** page.

Now, click on the **Admissions** button in the left-hand menu.

Using the information on this page, complete the information on **Student Handbook page 83, What Schools Want**.

For example, to find the SAT score, scroll down the page to the section titled “First-Time Freshmen Selection Process”. If the school requires an SAT score, the SAT score will be listed next to the phrase “Average SAT”. You can find the average GPA of an incoming freshman next to the phrase “Average secondary school GPA”. If this information does not appear on the page, you will need to infer GPA by looking at the list of academic criteria. For example, you might see the phrase “GPA is very important”. That would tell you that you need a high GPA. Write down the best information that you can find on the **Student Handbook page 83, What Schools Want**. Remember, you can always go to the school’s website for additional information.

When you’re finished, follow the same procedure to find out the requirements for (*name of second school*), and fill out this information on the worksheet, too.

5. [Give students five or so minutes to fill out their worksheets. Afterwards, lead a discussion with the following questions:
 - What were the requirements for each school?
 - How were the requirements different?
 - Did one ask for more than the other?
 - What did they require in addition to grades and standardized tests?]

III. Graduation Requirements and College-Bound Courses (10 minutes)

1. [Instruct students to turn to **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**. Remind students that they filled this out at the beginning of the year during the Goal Setting Unit. Have the students remove this page from their binder so they can refer to it throughout the rest of the lesson.]

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Earlier in the year, you created a four-year plan to help keep you on track for your high school graduation. Before you leave today, you will create a preliminary list of your 10th grade courses. You'll have the opportunity to review these choices with your school counselor before you make your final schedule.

But first we're going to take a look at what's required in our district/state.

3. [Hand out the list of district/state requirements for graduation, and show a copy on a projector. Review the credits for each subject required by your district/state.]
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The next thing you'll want to consider when choosing classes are the requirements and recommendations for college. Now, this is important to everyone, even if you're not planning to go to college. You might decide later on that you want to attend. Now is the best time to take college prep courses – while it costs you nothing and school is your main responsibility.
5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's take a look at the courses that are recommended by most colleges. Please turn to your **Student Handbook page 84, Recommended High School Courses for College**. [Show a copy on a projector and review the recommendations.]

Keep in mind that these are general recommendations. You'll want to check with the colleges you're applying to for their requirements. [See **Implementation Options** for a recommended website on which to find this information.]

6. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** You'll also note that Advanced Placement courses are at the bottom of this list. These are challenging courses that give you an opportunity to earn college credit. These courses are usually taken during senior year. To earn credit, you must successfully complete an AP exam at the end of the course. Keep in mind that AP classes are not required for college admission, but are highly recommended. Not only do they give you a head start in college, they also improve your chances of admission. After all, if you can successfully complete an AP course, you've already proven to a college that you are willing and able to succeed in more challenging courses.

IV. Revising Your 4-Year Plan (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that we've reviewed some of the most important criteria for choosing courses, it's time to take a first pass at making your own choices. You will be choosing courses from this list of course offerings for next year. [Hand out copies of

- this list, obtained from your own school or district, and display a copy on the overhead projector.]
2. You'll share these choices with the school counselor when you make your final schedule.
 3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Please turn to your **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan**. You will have 10 minutes to make any revisions to your four-year plan. The classes in your 10th grade column will be a preliminary list of your 10th grade courses. When you are revising your plan, think about how you are doing in your classes this year. If you know you are in danger of failing a class, you will most likely need to retake it next year. Remember this is not your final schedule.
 4. [Give students about 10 minutes for this step. Pass out one copy of **Portfolio page 3, My Four-Year Plan** to each student. Walk around the classroom to answer questions they may have as they make their selections.]

V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. [Have students turn to their **Student Handbook page 85, 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 question sheets at the end of class; make sure the students write their names on top. After class, give these forms to the school counselor(s). This will help the school counselor plan for the one-on-one course sessions with the students.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Remember, the courses you selected today aren't set in stone. Over the next day or two, think about the ones you chose today. Which ones are you most excited about? Are you still wondering about any courses that aren't on your list? Add these thoughts and questions to the list you just started and share these with your guidance counselor.
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Great job today, everyone. Next week, we're going to talk more about how your high school activities and work experience can help you stand out in your college and job applications.

What Schools Want

Fill in each school's application requirements below.

1) NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY _____

Entrance Exams?

(Circle those required and list the average score(s) of applicants. If either SAT or ACT is required, circle both.)

- SAT _____
- ACT _____
- None required

Grade Point Average? _____

Written essay or personal statement? _____

Letter(s) of recommendation? _____

Additional Requirements _____

2) NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY _____

Entrance Exams?

(Circle those required and list the average score(s) of applicants.)

- SAT _____
- ACT _____
- None required

Grade Point Average? _____

Written essay or personal statement? _____

Letter(s) of recommendation? _____

Additional Requirements _____

RECOMMENDED HIGH SCHOOL COURSES FOR COLLEGE

Subject	Number of Courses	Recommended Courses
Language Arts	Four or more years	Grammar, composition, literature
Math	Three or more years	Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, and/or calculus
Science	Three or more years	Biology, chemistry, physics, earth/space science; include lab classes
Social Studies	Three or more years	U.S. history, U.S. government, economics, world history or geography, civics
Foreign Language	Three or more years	At least two years of the same language
Other/Electives	Varies with colleges	Check with each college; some require courses in computer science or the arts (including visual arts, music, theater, drama, dance.)
Advanced Placement (AP) Courses	Recommended	Courses available in different areas within science, social studies, English, foreign languages, and more. Check with your school to see which AP courses are offered.

QUESTIONS FOR MY SCHOOL COUNSELOR

As you're figuring out your course schedule for next year, you'll probably have a lot of questions for the guidance counselor. Write your questions below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

MY FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Courses Taken/Planned				
SUBJECT	9th	10th	11th	12th
1. Language Arts				
2. Math				
3. Science				
4. Social Studies				
5. Foreign Language				
6. Other/Electives (Arts, Computer Science, etc.)				