



# Freshman Year: Your Guide to Life Beyond High School

## Get prepared for life after high school

Some people know from an early age exactly what they want to be when they are adults – and how they can get there. Others aren't sure of their plans, and that's okay too.

Regardless of what you want to be, you most likely will be heading toward higher education of some kind. This guide can help you prepare.

### Think about your future

School is not just about careers and getting a high-paying job after graduation – it's a place for learning about yourself and the world.

#### Careers

As you think about what you “want to be when you grow up,” ask yourself these questions:

- What do I love doing?
- What subjects are easy for me?
- What are my hobbies?



It's a great idea to match your future career plans to areas that matter to you. If you love soccer, maybe you could be a coach someday. If math is your best subject, and things having to do with money make sense to you, think about becoming an accountant.

You can find help with career planning:

- Take different kinds of classes and read different books to find a subject that fascinates you.
- Ask your school counselor or CCR Advisor about taking a career assessment test.
- “Shadow,” or observe, someone who works in that field to get an idea of what the work might be like.
- Visit Mapping Your Future ([mappingyourfuture.org/PlanYourCareer/](http://mappingyourfuture.org/PlanYourCareer/)) and use their CareerShip® tool
- Visit [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco), the federal government's Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, which tells you which fields are growing.

#### Education

Choosing to further your education is choosing to invest in yourself and your future. In addition to increasing your knowledge and bettering your skills, higher education can help you:

- Get the job you want with better job security.
- Make more money. According to Postsecondary Education Opportunity ([www.postsecondary.org](http://www.postsecondary.org)), college graduates earn about \$19,000 more per year than high school graduates.
- Advance your career.
- Take care of your family.
- Have a higher life expectancy.

*And that's not all!!* You'll also meet new and interesting people and become a wiser consumer and citizen.

## Take the right Classes

What can you do right now to put yourself on the right track for getting into college and achieving the career of your dreams? Take the right classes!

### Meet Requirements

- Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are taking the right classes to meet graduation requirements.
- If you already have college in mind that interest you, check what classes they require for admission. These may differ from your high school or district required for graduation. (see the FBISD Course Selection Guide at [www.fortbendisd.com](http://www.fortbendisd.com)).

### Challenge Yourself

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements when you are choosing what classes to take in high school, be sure to challenge yourself.

- Take more challenging courses like upper-level math, and you will prove that you can work hard to succeed academically.
- Ask your school counselor about enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and how you can earn college credit by doing so.

### Get Good Grades

The grades you get now are included in the record college admissions office will see when you start applying to colleges. By doing the best that you can, you will have:

- an impressive grade point average (GPA) when you get to college and
- developed the study habits and skills needed to succeed when you get to college.

## Learn about paying for college

Many students worry that tuition and other educational costs will be out of reach. But don't let that stop you. It's only part of the picture. Most students receive some kind of financial aid to help pay for the cost of their education. With determination and financial aid assistance, you can make your educational dream come true.

### Start saving now

An important thing to continue doing, or to start if you haven't already, is to save everything you can for your educational expenses. If you work part-time or during the summer, if you receive money for your birthdays, or if you sell some of your things at a garage sale, put some of that money aside for your college costs. Every dollar you can save will help!



### Types of financial aid

Also be aware that financial aid may be available to you, and there are several types.

- Scholarships – money you do not have to pay back
- Grants – money you do not have to pay back
- Loans – money you have to repay
- Work-study – money you earn that does not have to be paid back