



Let's Talk About College

As a middle school student, you have a few years before you'll send in your college applications. Although there are a few years that stand between you and a college experience, it is never too early to begin thinking about what college might look like for you. Higher education allows students to explore subjects they love and meet people who share the same interest, while increasing the likelihood of getting a higher paying job.

Part One: Before you can begin the college application process, it is helpful to build your vocabulary of college terms. These keywords will help you to prepare for college applications. Using reputable websites such as nhheaf.org, nhcollegeclub.com, collegeboard.org, or college and university websites, define the following terms:

- 1. Job shadow:** The opportunity to spend a day with someone who has a career that a student might be interested in. Students get to see what a "day in the life" is like in that job, ask questions, and understand what the job might entail.
- 2. Informational interview:** A short meeting with a college admissions counselor to learn more about the college, academics, or student life. Informational interviews do not have any bearing on an admissions decision, but rather help prospective students decide if the college is a good fit for them.
- 3. Transcript:** A report from a high school that shows all the classes a student has taken, the level of the course and the grade the student received.
- 4. SAT:** Abbreviation for **S**cholastic **A**ptitude **T**est offered by The CollegeBoard. Used by some colleges as a tool for making admission decisions. New Hampshire now offers all high school students the ability to take this test for free in the spring of their junior year.
- 5. Major:** Main course of study in college.
- 6. Minor:** A secondary course of study in college.
- 7. Associate degree:** Generally takes two years to earn and is very focused on one course of study. It is typically offered at community colleges.
- 8. Bachelor's degree:** Generally takes four years to earn and includes a broad range of classes as well as courses in a student's major. A Bachelor's degree is offered at colleges and universities.
- 9. Student loan:** Money that the government or another financial institution lends to a student so they can pay for college. This money is paid back, with interest when the student graduates or stops going to school.



10. Grant: Money for college for students who may need financial help to attend college. This money does NOT need to be paid back.

11. Scholarship: Money that a student receives (toward the cost of college tuition) for academic, sports, leadership skills or many other reasons. This money does NOT need to be paid back.

Part two: Using the definitions you found to the keywords, answer these questions in 3-5 sentences:

1. How can doing a job shadow or an informational interview help you when you begin to look at colleges?

Answers vary.

2. What college major(s) are you interested in studying or learning more about? Why?

Answers vary.

3. Many colleges say that a high school transcript is the most important part of a college application. Explain why and then describe what you can do in high school to earn a successful transcript.

Answers vary.

