

Name: _____

Starting to Think About College

Hello! If you have been handed this packet, it likely means that you are thinking of **applying to college** soon. This packet is intended to be a small first step in the college process to help you **start thinking** about your preferences and what is important to you in a college/university.

This packet contains activities on:

- Location
- Size
- What's Important to You

This is to help provide you with a **general sense** of what types of schools you may be interested in. Once you are done considering the above categories, you might also want to consider what your grades and test scores are, what major you may like to pursue, financial aid colleges offer, and much more.

It is important to remember that the information in this packet is general and is not intended to replace reflecting on your own personal situation.

If you would like any further information or have any questions, **please feel free to ask the librarian**. Your school's **guidance counselors** or teachers may also be able to help!

After completing the following worksheets, take a look at books and websites to **help you reflect further**, and even **create a list of colleges!**

Books: Books on **colleges, majors, financial aid, SAT/ACT prep, and more** can be found in the Young Adult section found on the first floor! The College and Career Pathways section is located all the way near the windows.

Websites:

- The College Board: <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
- Common Application: <https://www.commonapp.org/>
- Finding Your College Fit:
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-find-your-college-fit>
- Choosing a College:
<https://www.myfuture.com/college/applying/choosing-a-college>

Location

When it comes to thinking about college, a good place to start is with **location**. Generally, there are three options: staying **local** (NYU), going somewhere a **short(er) distance** away (SUNY Albany), or going somewhere **far away** (UCLA). You can even go abroad!

Directions: There are pros and cons to all of these options. **Take a look** at the following examples of benefits and drawbacks for each option, and **then add 2-3 of your own** based on your personal preferences. Then, **answer the reflection question**.

	Staying Home	In the Middle	Going Far Away
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Money saver - Can possibly live at home with family - Know the resources around you (libraries, study spots, grocery stores, etc.) - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Larger sense of independence - Can travel home to visit family with ease - Can go to a state school and save money on tuition - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great sense of independence - Can explore brand new surroundings - Meet new people with different backgrounds - - -
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less independence - May go to school with many people from high school - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May go to school with many people from high school - May get homesick - - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May get homesick - May not like your new surroundings - - -

Reflection: After completing this exercise, I might want to go to a school that is _____ to/from home.

Size

Directions: The following chart describes the **different sizes of schools**, and how that may influence your experience at the school. As you read, **circle what sounds best to you** when it comes to student body size, academic offerings, class size, activities, and social climate. Then, **answer the reflection question**.

	Small College	Medium College	Large College
Student Body Size	<5,000 Undergrads	5-15,000 Undergrads	>15,000 Undergrads
Academic Offerings	Smaller colleges might have limited academic offerings, with more focus on liberal arts or a specialty, like STEM	More academic options than at a smaller college, but not as many as at a large university	Wide range of academic majors and research opportunities
Class Size	There might be some large classes, but on the whole class sizes tend to be smaller	A mix of large and small classes, with smaller classes as students get into higher-level, major-specific courses	More large, auditorium-style classes in general education classes, with small classes in major-specific courses
Activities	With fewer students there might be fewer clubs and activities, but a smaller student body can give students more influence to start their own clubs or activities.	Medium-size colleges tend to have a wide range of clubs and activities that meet students' interests. There's room to grow, but also plenty of established options to choose from.	Large colleges tend to have hundreds of clubs and activities to meet any student's interests. Plenty to choose from but too many options can be overwhelming for some.
Social Climate	Students on smaller campuses can usually get to know each other better and a smaller student body can help you stand out. Students can feel like a big fish in a small pond. Good option for students who want a more intimate college experience with a smaller group of students.	A medium-size student body can be small enough to create an intimate experience, but also big enough to keep meeting new people. This is a good option for students who want the experience of a smaller campus but more opportunities to branch out like in a larger university.	Large student bodies are sometimes not as intimate. Students can feel like a little fish in a big pond. But on a large campus you're always meeting someone new. Good option for students who want an experience that's different every day. Students on large campuses who want an more intimate experience tend to find it within their major, or a club, group, or activity they're passionate about.

Source - Ivy Wise (2016): The Best Fit College Size for You: Small vs. Medium. Vs. Large Colleges

Reflection: After completing this exercise, I think I might want to go to a school that is _____-sized, but I'd also consider a _____-sized school.

What is important to you?

Directions: Please **rate the importance** of each statement on a scale of 1-5 from **Not Important to Very Important**. Then, **answer the reflection question**.

1. It is important to me to attend a private college/university.

1 2 3 4 5

2. It is important to me to attend a public college/university.

1 2 3 4 5

3. It is important to me to attend a college/university with lower tuition.

1 2 3 4 5

4. It is important to me to feel like a big fish in a small pond.

1 2 3 4 5

5. It is important to me that my college/university has a vast array of clubs/activities to join.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The location type (city, suburban, rural) of my college is important to me.

1 2 3 4 5

7. It is important to me that I do not graduate college with debt.

1 2 3 4 5

Reflection: This list can go on and on! **What else is important to you?**
