



encourage[®]

Lesson Plans

Preparing Students for Life After High School

For Educators

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“

This is an amazing app! As a matter of fact, I have already recommended it to many of my friends! Thank you for this wonderful app, it has been so helpful!!!

”

-High School Student
NPS Score 10/10, Mar. 2023

What is Encourage?

The myOptions® Encourage® College and Career Planning Program empowers educators to uncover their students' academic interests, future aspirations, and college preferences. We go beyond traditional approaches by generating personalized college matches and scholarship opportunities based on each student's unique preferences and interests, ensuring their lists remain up-to-date.

As an integral part of the program, students gain access to Encourage, a comprehensive college and career planning app offered at no cost. This dynamic tool enables them to explore and save majors and careers, discover tailored college matches and scholarship opportunities, access valuable financial aid information, and efficiently manage tasks to ensure a smooth journey toward graduation and beyond.

Our mission is to connect your students with the necessary resources and educational opportunities that will enable them to flourish in their chosen paths after high school.

1

Where does student data go?

Participating students can expect information to be sent directly to colleges, universities, educational service providers, and career service providers for communication purposes. Additionally, they will receive communications from Encourage.

FAQ

2

Can a student opt out of sharing data?

Students can control their preferences within the Encourage app by adjusting the **Recruiting Preferences** in their **Profile**. Regardless of their choices, all students can access college and career readiness tools through the Encourage web and mobile apps.

3

How is student privacy protected?

We strictly utilize student information for educational purposes and never share student data with commercial marketers. Our compliance team closely monitors all data requests to ensure student information complies with the ESEA guidelines.

4

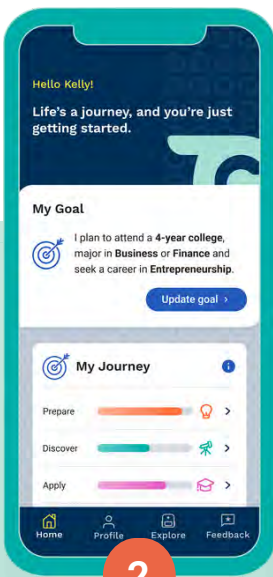
Is participation mandatory?

This optional and free program gives students valuable information from colleges and universities that aligns with their interests and goals.

Quick Start Guide

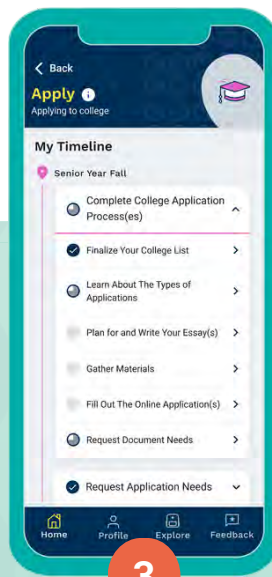
1 Create your Encourage account

Use the QR code to create your **Encourage** account on our mobile or web app. You can also search for “Encourage” in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



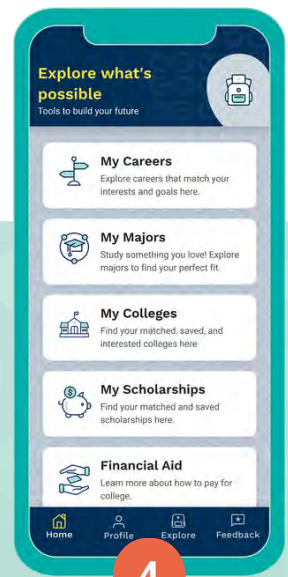
2

Take 10-15 minutes to complete your profile, set your preferences, and identify your goals.



3

Explore milestones and learn how to take control of your journey.



4

Check out **Explore** to discover colleges, majors, careers, and scholarships and start planning for life after high school.

5 Lean on your champions for support

Talk to your champions—parents, guardians, mentors, teachers, or school counselors—and ask for help and support on your college journey. Get more advice and resources at [encourageme.com](https://www.encourageme.com).

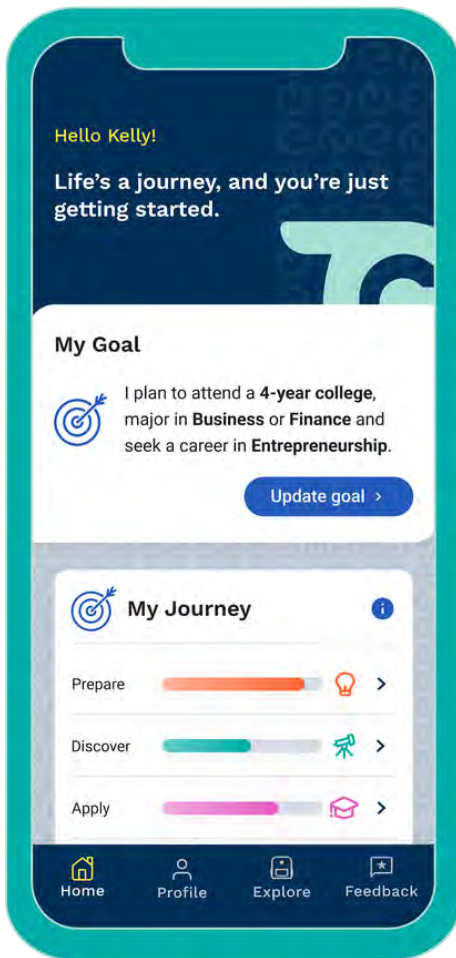


Let's get social:

Lesson 1



My Journey



The Encourage app helps students set achievable milestones so they can reach their goals.

The **My Journey** and **My Milestones** sections of our platform are available on mobile and help students...



- **PREPARE:** Build skills they will carry with them toward graduation and beyond.



- **DISCOVER:** Find opportunities based on the future they want.



- **APPLY:** Stay informed and organized to complete any college applications.



- **DECIDE & TRANSITION:** Stay on track for the next steps after high school.



- **FINANCE:** Learn how to make college affordable.

The lesson plan on the following pages focuses on college aspirations and dreams. While every student may not be college bound, we stand by research that promotes college readiness as an avenue to equity of college access and attainment.

Lesson 1



My Journey

Purpose/Goal:

- All students see college as an option for their future journeys.
- Students set goals to increase college and career readiness.
- Students realize equity of access and attainment of higher education.

Learning Outcomes:

- Goal setting
- College planning
- Career planning
- Networking

Materials Needed:

- Writing utensils
- Printouts of the **College Dreaming** activity sheet or the ability to display the sheet so students can create their own graphs

Suggested Time Allotment: 30-40 Minutes

5-10 Minutes: Outline the activity

We designed this exercise using research on college readiness, college acceptance, and closing the achievement gap, concluding that the first step to closing this gap is getting students excited about higher education.

In this activity, students can dream about college, picture themselves in a college setting, and imagine the college life experience.

It can stand alone or with the **My Colleges** lesson, where students hear from someone (ideally like them) who went to college.

Lesson 1



My Journey

Question Prompts for Your Class:

- What careers interest you the most?
- Do you know what type of schooling you need for that job/career?
 - If you, as the instructor, know this answer, feel free to tell the students the requirements.
- How do you feel when someone asks you if you're going to college?
- What do you think life is like for college students?
- What is an internship?

15-20 Minutes: Invite students to imagine college life

- Provide the **College Dreaming** activity sheet to students instructing them to use the space in each grid area to answer the corresponding prompt. Encourage creativity through drawing, writing, poems, or clipped-out art.

5-10 Minutes: Students share their grids

- After giving students time to draw or write in each space, ask them to share their grids with the people next to them or with the class.

5 Minutes: Reflect and set a plan

- Review the second page of the **College Dreaming** activity.
- Review the goals as a class.
- Ask students to check the boxes next to the goals they want to achieve over the next year.
- Remind students that these goals are proven to increase their abilities to be college and career ready by the time they graduate high school.
- Encourage students to read the **Champions** section for ways their supporters can help them set and keep their goals.

Check out the end of this section for four ways your students can use the Encourage app to continue exploring this lesson in My Journey.

College Dreaming



I Will Study...

In this box, write words or draw pictures of what you'd like to learn when you go to college.

I Will Live...

In this box, think about the state, city, and type of room you might live in while you're in college.

In My Free Time...

In this box, write words or draw pictures to discuss: Will you be working? Joining clubs? Finding cool internships?

When I Graduate...

In this box, think about your life after college. What will your career be? Where will you live?

College Dreaming



Goals

Check the boxes of commitments you can make now.

Focus on earning "A" and "B" grades where possible.

Take a challenging class (AP, IB, or college-level).

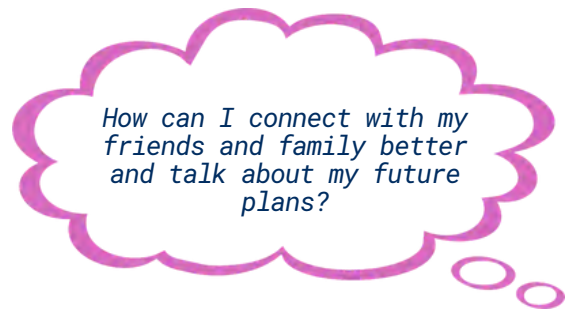
Complete 25 hours of community service.

Hit a 90% school attendance goal.

Prepare for the ACT/SAT.

Take 4 years of high school: English, science, math, social studies, and world language.

Champions



Your champions are the family and friends who will help you reach your dreams and goals. Check out this list of conversation-starters and activities:

- Tell your champions about the activities you did in this lesson and what you think college will be like for you.
- Ask your champions how they can help you meet the goals you committed to on this page.
- Make a list of questions you have about college together. Then connect with your school counselor to find the answers.
- Consider planning and attending a college visit together! These visits help you learn about what the college offers, and you'll get some cool swag, all at no cost to you.

Remember, your champions are here to support you. Building strong connections with them can make a world of difference. Use these conversation starters and activities to strengthen those relationships. You've got this!

In the App



My Journey

GRADES 8-10

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Discover** under **My Journey**.
Click **Learn what college is**.
Read the task and article.
Mark task complete from the drop-down.

Discuss as a class:

What did you learn? Which type of degree would you like to learn more about?

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Discover** under **My Journey**.
Click **Build College Wish List**.
Click **Consider what you want in a college**.
Read the task and article.
Mark task complete from the drop-down.

Discuss as a class:

What are the top 3 things you want from your college experience? What can you ask on a college tour to make sure it is a good fit?

GRADES 8-10

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Discover** under **My Journey**.
Click **Planning for college fairs and visits**.
Read the task and article.
Mark task complete from the drop-down.

Discuss as a class:

When is the next college fair you could attend? Which types of colleges would you want to see? Which tip will you use for the fair?

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Discover** under **My Journey**.
Click **Finalize College Application Lists and Types**.
Click **Narrow and balance your college list**.
Read the task and article.
Mark task complete from the drop-down.

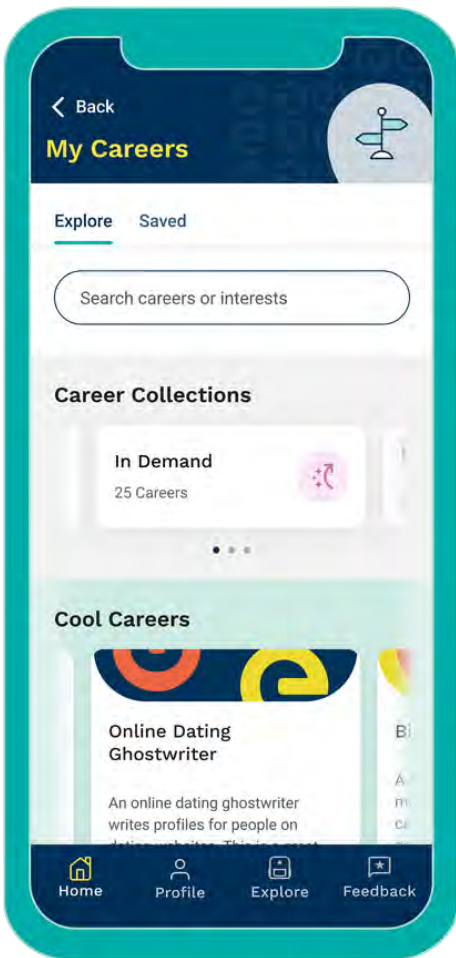
Discuss in class:

What are **likely**, **target**, and **reach** schools? What's your why?

Lesson 2



My Careers



It's never too early for your students to start thinking about what they want to be when they grow up.

The **My Careers** feature (on the web and mobile app) makes exploring career options easy and fun!

In My Careers, students can:

- Search by interests (gaming) or careers (video game designer).
- Get recommendations based on their preferences.
- Learn about careers that interest them.
- Favorite their top careers and visit them later.
- Check out each career's salary range, education requirements, training paths, and more!

The lesson plan on the following pages focuses on career exploration and ways students can use the Encourage platform to define a path that is uniquely them.

Lesson 2



My Careers

Purpose/Goal:

- All students reflect on their personal values and how they might connect to professional occupations.
- Students explore online tools that will guide them through career outcomes.
- Students connect continued education to personalized career pathways.

Learning Outcomes:

- College planning
- Career planning
- Self-reflection

Materials Needed:

- Writing utensils
- A device that can access the internet
- Printouts of the **Work Values** activity sheet or the ability to display the sheet so students can create their own inventories
- Printouts of the **Career Overview** activity sheet or the ability to display the sheet so students can create their own overview answer sheets

Suggested Time Allotment: 45-60 Minutes

5-10 Minutes: Outline the activity

This activity is designed to facilitate the connection between a student's occupational expectations and the educational preparation needed to achieve their goals.

Question Prompts for Your Class:

1. What do you think is linked to job/career satisfaction? What will you need in your work environment to feel fulfilled/happy?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word "value?"
3. What are some of your personal values? Or things that you appreciate in yourself and others?
4. Which careers interest you the most?
5. Do you know what type of schooling you need for that job/career? (If you, as the instructor, know this answer, feel free to tell the students the requirements.)

Lesson 2



My Careers



15-20 Minutes: Work Values activity sheet

Provide the **Work Values** activity sheet to students instructing them to rank the values according to their importance. Students will assign a value to each statement, choosing one value (from 1-6) per statement in each section. One represents the most important value, and 6 represents the least important value.

When students finish ranking the statements, about 10 minutes into the activity, ask them to count their totals in the **Work Values: Rank** section of their activity sheets.

Students find their **totals** by entering each **rank** into the corresponding letter (row) and section (column). The value(s) with the lowest total(s) is their top value(s) and what they will use for their career exploration.

Each student will have one or two of the following values as their top value(s). If a student has three or more, that's okay. Ask them to read the descriptions and pick one for the next activity.

I: Independence: Careers with this value allow employees to take responsibility, work independently, make decisions, and be creative.

S: Support: Careers with this value demonstrate supportive management that stands behind employees. Typically, these jobs involve company policies, supervision, and technical skills.

L: Relationships: Careers with this value focus on service to others, moral values, and working with co-workers in a friendly non-competitive environment.

W: Work Conditions: Careers with this value offer job security and good working conditions such as compensation, independence, and security.

C: Recognition: Careers with this value offer advancement and potential for leadership. They're often considered prestigious.

A: Achievement: Careers with this value are results oriented and allow employees to use their strongest abilities, giving them a feeling of accomplishment.

Lesson 2



My Careers

 **10-15 Minutes: Students do some career exploration**

After giving students time to fill in and identify their work values, ask them to visit **onetonline.org**. Hand out the **Career Overview** activity sheet. Each activity sheet contains the following directions:

Directions:

- Visit **onetonline.org**.
- Scroll to the **Browse by O*Net Data** section and click **Work Values**.
- Click on the list that matches your top work value.
- Browse the list of jobs.
- Select one and fill out the table below for that profession.
- When you're done, follow your teacher for further instructions.

 **5 Minutes: Reflect**

Pair and Share

- Which career did you learn about?
- Was any advanced education required? If so, what type of schooling?
- What was the salary range/pay for this career?
- What are this career's primary responsibilities?

And/Or:

Reflect as a Class

- How many found careers that require education after high school?
- Did anyone find a career they had never considered before?
- How does this activity make you think about your future after graduation?

Students can revisit O*Net and explore those pieces of the career equation to find new and different careers that fit their strengths and interests.

Check out the end of this section for four ways your students can use the Encourage app to continue exploring this lesson in My Careers.

Work Values Activity



Directions:

In each **Work Value Section**, rank the statements from 1-6.

1 = most important 6 = least important

Work Value: Section 1	ID	Rank
I want a job that requires me to be an expert.	A	
I want to be responsible for creating something new.	I	
I would like others to recognize my job as important.	C	
I would like a friendly environment where I'm not competing with co-workers.	L	
I want to work in a place that gives me lots of guidance and direction regarding my objectives and goals.	S	
My pay is extremely important in my career selection.	W	

Work Value: Section 2	ID	Rank
I like to do things myself without a lot of guidance.	I	
I want to be in a role that supports other employees.	S	
Helping others is a top priority for what I end up doing in life.	L	
Having a career that is stable is important to me.	W	
I would like to be considered a leader in what I do.	C	
I'd like to do something where there is a clear end goal in mind.	A	

Name : _____ Date: _____

Work Values Activity



Work Value: Section 3	ID	Rank
Structures within a workplace and clear expectations are important to me.	S	
I would like to be in a job that is well-known and valued in my community.	C	
I would like to determine how I spend my time on a day-to-day basis.	I	
Having a job that plays to my strengths is key.	A	
I want a job that feels like it aligns with my morals and community values.	L	
I would like a place to work that feels comfortable.	W	

Work Values: Rank

For each Work Value Section on this worksheet, enter your rank for each ID below.

ID	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Total
I				
S				
L				
W				
C				
A				

Name : _____ Date: _____

Work Values Activity



What ID(s) had the lowest total? _____

The ID(s) with the lowest total represents your strongest work value(s).

I: Independence: Careers with this value allow employees to take responsibility, work independently, make decisions, and be creative.

S: Support: Careers with this value demonstrate supportive management that stands behind employees. Typically, these jobs involve company policies, supervision, and technical skills.

L: Relationships: Careers with this value focus on service to others, moral values, and working with co-workers in a friendly non-competitive environment.

W: Work Conditions: Careers with this value offer job security and good working conditions such as compensation, independence, and security.

C: Recognition: Careers with this value offer advancement and potential for leadership. They're often considered prestigious.

A: Achievement: Careers with this value are results oriented and allow employees to use their strongest abilities, giving them a feeling of accomplishment.

This activity is inspired by the work values profiles provided by O*Net Online. All work values descriptions are adapted from: onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/1.B.2

Name : _____ Date: _____

Career Overview



Directions:

- Visit **onetonline.org**.
- Scroll to the **Browse by O*Net Data** section.
- Click Work Values.
- Click on the list that matches your top work value(s).
- Browse the list of jobs.
- Select one and fill out the table below for that profession.

Career:	
What is the most interesting task this job requires?	
What is a work activity you would do in this job?	
What is the typical educational level for this job?	
What does this job make hourly? Annually?	
What is the projected growth expected for this job?	

Name : _____ Date: _____

In the App



My Careers

GRADES 8-12

Mobile:

Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Careers**.

Web:

Click **My Careers**.

Type in the name of a career of interest.

Ask students to create a poster with key job information:

- **Salary**
- **Education level**
- **Work environment & responsibilities**

Ask students to host a "job fair" with their poster board information.

GRADES 8-12

Mobile:

Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Careers**.

Web:

Click **My Careers**.

Ask students to explore the career collection **Emerging Industries**.

Pick a career that looks interesting.

Ask students to write a report on the expected responsibilities and how they might relate their strengths to the tasks required of the job.

GRADES 8-12

Mobile:

Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Careers**.

Web:

Click **My Careers**.

Ask students on a weekly basis to present on a **Cool Career** that is highlighted on the main page of **My Careers**.

Have them summarize the career by telling the class what makes the job interesting and which careers are similar to the one highlighted.

GRADES 8-12

Mobile:

Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Careers**.

Web:

Click **My Careers**.

Scroll to Browse by **Career Area**.

Ask students to **View All** and assign students a **Career Area** to explore.

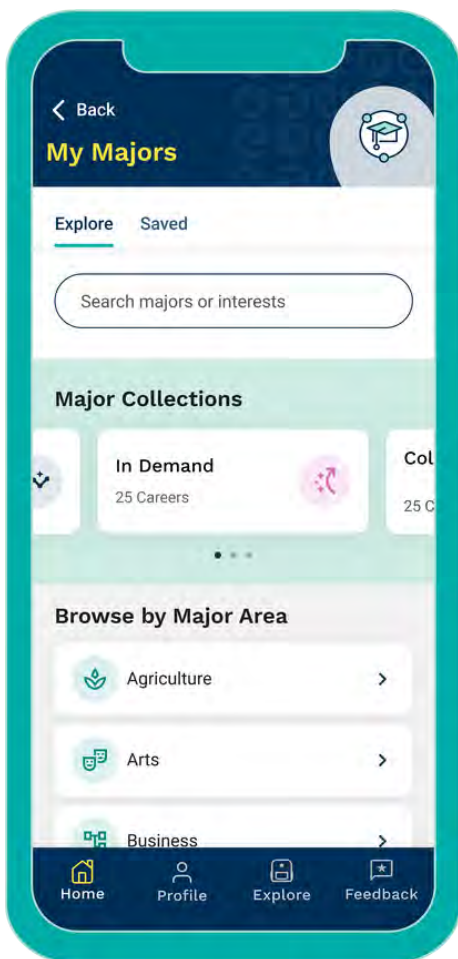
Assign students to read the larger descriptions and discover more about 2-3 jobs that are highlighted in each area.

Expectations for their discovery should include the level of education, level of demand, and work environment.

Lesson 3



My Majors



The **My Majors** feature on the web and mobile **Encourage** app makes exploring, discovering, and choosing a major easy and fun! Students can save and **favorite** their top majors and learn which pathways lead to their dream jobs.

In **My Majors**, students can:

- Browse majors by area (agriculture, arts, business, education, and more).
- Explore common courses taken in each major.
- **Favorite** top majors and visit them later.
- Find majors related to each other.
- Check out the **You might love this major if** section to match their talents to a field of study.
- Discover and connect with colleges that have majors they are interested in studying.
- Match majors with future careers.
- Explore new programs.

This lesson plan will help students relate their talents to a future major and explore how they can use the My Majors feature in the Encourage app to continue their discoveries.

Lesson 3



My Majors

Purpose/Goal:

- Students discover key college terms and opportunities.
- Students reflect on their personal attributes and strengths.
- Students analyze higher education options.

Learning Outcomes:

- College planning
- Career planning
- Self-reflection
- Critical thinking

Materials Needed:

- Major Cards (or) Encourage App
- Access to the internet (or) Encourage App
- Writing utensils

Suggested Time Allotment: 45-60 Minutes

5-10 Minutes: Outline the activity

This activity helps students connect college majors to specific career paths. Before you begin:

- Let students know there are hundreds of majors out there. The Encourage app has over 400 to explore. Remind them not all colleges offer every major.
- Explain how some majors are required for a specific job while others work for many careers.
 - For example, teaching, dental hygiene, cosmetology, medical practice, and law require a specific degree or license. English and political science don't necessarily connect to one specific career path.
 - Students could have some confusion about degrees not tied to a specific career. Here are some examples of liberal arts success stories to support this dialogue: <https://time.com/3964415/ceo-degree-liberal-arts/>

Lesson 3



My Majors

Question Prompts for Your Class:

- What are the subjects you enjoy in school? Outside of school?
- How do you like to spend your free time?
- What are some activities or hobbies you're passionate about?
- What are your strengths and skills?
- What is a college major?
- Have you heard of any college majors? If so, what have you heard of?
- How can a college major relate to your personal or academic strengths?
- How can a college major relate to job opportunities?

 **20-30 Minutes: Explore majors (Option 1: App)**

Instructions:

Allow students to open their **Encourage** apps on their devices.

Phone: Instruct students to go to **Explore** along the bottom menu.

Web: Instruct students to go to encourageme.com and log in.

Then navigate to **My Majors**.

Have students click on **Trending Majors**.

Instruct students to find a major on this screen related to the strengths and passions they reflected on from the class discussion.

Once they have identified a major, ask them to find:

- A description of the major.
- Classes they can take in high school to prepare for that major.
- **You might love this major if...** section description.
- Two careers related to this major.
- Two colleges offering this major.
 - (This will only populate if the student has matched colleges - i.e., a complete profile.)
- Then answer the prompts, "Could you see yourself studying this major? How do your unique talents and interests relate to this area of study?"
- Have them share out their findings in class.

Lesson 3



My Majors

 **20-30 Minutes: Explore majors (Option 2: No App)**

Instructions:

Allow students to select a Major Card (pgs. **25-30** of this booklet) based on the interests, hobbies, and passions they just reflected on in class.

Ask students to go online and find:

- A description of the major.
- At least two colleges offering that major.
- At least two classes a student would take in that major.
- Have them share their findings in class.

 **10 Minutes: Share and reflect**

Questions for Class Reflection

1. Who wants to share what they learned?
2. How can you choose a college major that fits your strengths?

Check out the end of this section for four more ways your students can use the Encourage app to continue exploring this lesson in My Majors.



Major Cards

Business/Commerce

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Psychology

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Computer Engineering

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Economics

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

International Relations & Affairs

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Urban Studies/Urban Affairs

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Sociology

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Travel/Tourism Management

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Logistics & Materials Management

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Finance

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Statistics

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Gerontology

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Dental Assisting

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Medical Assisting

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Studio Art

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Athletic Training

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Occupational Therapy

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Massage Therapy

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Cinematography

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Video Game Design

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Animal Sciences

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Genetics

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Museology & Museum Studies

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Dance

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Design & Visual Communications

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Speech Pathology

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Physician Assisting

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Human Resource Management

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Early Childhood Education

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

Music, Performance

Find:

- A description of the major
- At least two colleges where this major is offered
- At least two classes a student would take in this major

In the App



My Majors

GRADES 8-10

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Majors**.

Type in the name of an interesting major.

Ask students to create a poster with key major information:

- **Description**
- **Common program courses**
- **Careers that match the major**
- **"You might love this major if..."**

Post their findings around class for others to view and explore.

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Majors**.

Ask students to explore the major collection **Trending**.

Pick a major that appeals to them.

Ask students to write a report on how they might relate their strengths to the classes, study materials, and expectations of this area of study.

GRADES 8-10

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Majors**.

Ask students to explore the career collection **Highest-Paying**.

Pick a major that appeals to them.

Ask students to write a report on how they might relate their personal strengths to the information found under **Overview**, **Careers**, and **Colleges** for this major.

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Majors**.
Scroll to **Browse by Major Area**.

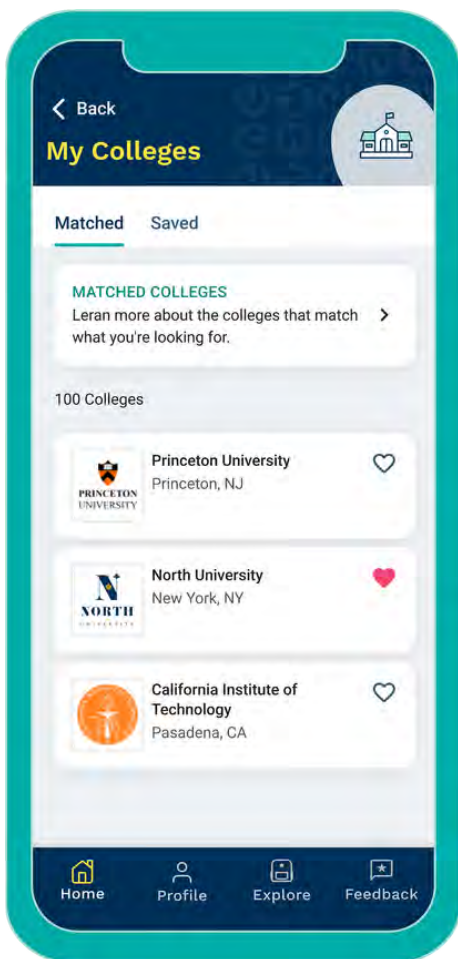
Ask students to **View All** and assign students a **Major Area** to explore. Assign students to read the larger descriptions and discover more about two or three majors highlighted in each area.

Expectations for their discoveries should include the types of classes they would take and descriptions of the majors.

Lesson 4



My Colleges



The **My Colleges** feature on the web and mobile app gives students the resources and freedom to explore college options so they can make the best decisions about their futures.

In **My Colleges**, students can:

- Explore hundreds of colleges.
- Match with colleges that fit their profile.
- **Favorite** their top schools.
- Learn about each school's student body, costs, majors, acceptance rate, and more!
- Connect with schools interested in recruiting them.

Students can choose **not** to share their preferences at any time inside the **Encourage** app in their **Profile** under **Recruiting Preferences**. Regardless of their choices, all students can access college and career readiness tools through the Encourage web and mobile app.

This section will focus on lessons that support the My Colleges feature in Encourage.

Lesson 4



My Colleges

Purpose/Goal:

- Students gain exposure to role models and mentors who have navigated higher education.
- Students engage with peers and discover new information to aid their college and career exploration processes.

Learning Outcomes:

- Goal setting
- College planning
- Career planning
- Networking

Materials Needed:

- Optional prompt questions, guest speaker expectations, and a handout to take notes
- Writing utensils

Suggested Time Allotment: 30-45 Minutes

5 Minutes: Outline the activity

We designed this activity based on research examining how mentors and role models help close college attainment gaps.

It can be challenging for some students to see themselves in college, especially if they're the first in their families to venture into higher education.

In this activity, you'll invite guests, ideally those with similar backgrounds to your students, to talk about their college experiences. Students can see first-hand what college could be like and learn about paths they can take after high school.

Ideas for Guest Speakers to Talk About College

- Your high school's alumni who are currently in college.
- Community members or parents of students connected to the school.
- Paraprofessionals who work at your school and just finished their degrees.
- Other teachers with interesting career paths.
- College partners: professors, academic advisors, or career coaches.

Lesson 4



My Colleges

30 Minutes: Allow students time to ask questions

Provide students with a list of possible questions and/or allow them to write their own ahead of time:

- What does a typical college school day/week look like?
- Why did you pick the college you attend(ed)?
- What do you wish you would have known before going to college?
- What is your major? Did you change majors? What kinds of classes do/did you take?
- What is the homework like in your classes?
- What are tests like in college?
- What kind of rules do you have to follow in college?

10 Minutes: Share and reflect

- What did you learn today?
- How has this helped you think about college and career planning?
- What questions did today spark for you? How do you plan to find the answers?
- How do you feel about college planning? Are your feelings any different now that you've heard from our guest(s)?

Check out the next page for four ways your students can use the Encourage App to continue exploring this lesson in My Colleges.

In the App



My Colleges

GRADES 8-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Profile** along the bottom.
Click **College Preferences**.

Ask students to open each section and click the pencil to update/edit any information that is out of date or missing.

Once complete, they can explore their college matches:

Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Colleges**.
Click **Matched Colleges**.

GRADES 8-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Colleges**.

Ask students to find the following for one of their college matches:

- Retention rate
- Admission rate
- % of students receiving aid

Discuss what each of these mean.

GRADES 8-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** along the bottom.
Click **My Colleges**.

Ask students to explore five of their college matches. Ask them to identify:

- Which was the largest college?
- Which was the smallest?
- Which was the most affordable based on costs?
- Which has the highest financial aid awarded to undergrads?
- Which college was closest?
- Which was farthest away?

GRADES 8-12

Open the web app to the home screen.
Click **My Colleges**.

Ask students to click on a filter or set of filters that interest them most.

Options include:

Least Student Debt
Acceptance Rate

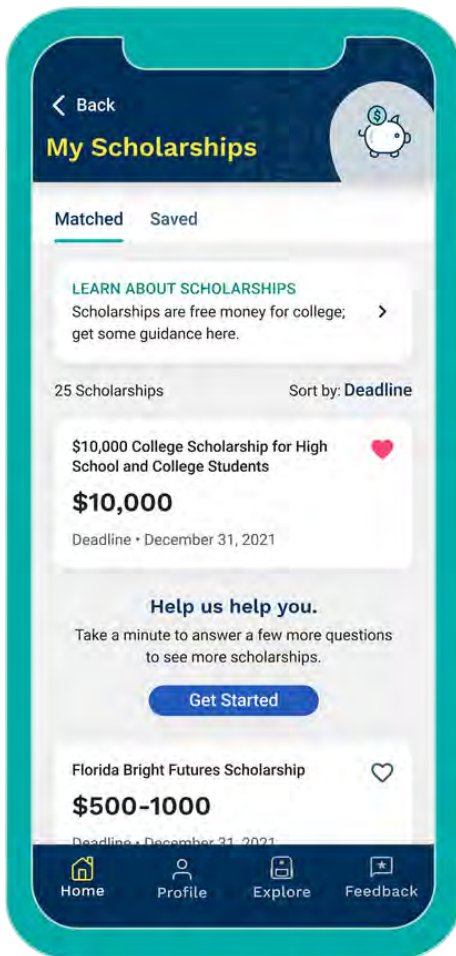
Ask students to click **Browse All Colleges** and **Filters**.

Discuss as a class: What filters needed more explanation? What did you discover?

Lesson 5



My Finances



A big part of the college search process is figuring out how to pay for college and whether or not college supports a student's ideal lifestyle.

Encourage contains several features to aid in students' financial knowledge:

My Scholarships

- Matched scholarship opportunities that you can apply for directly from the app.

Financial Aid

- Provides a knowledge base on how to navigate FAFSA.

My Journey

- Advice on financial conversations with family and applying and paying for school.

The lesson plan in this section encourages students to think about their ideal lifestyles, seek a career that supports their dreams, and decide if an education after high school is a part of that journey.

Lesson 5



My Finances

Purpose/Goal:

- Students reflect on their future financial situations.
- Students connect lifestyle to employment and education.
- Students discover careers that fit their future goals.

Learning Outcomes:

- Self-reflection
- Goal setting
- Career readiness
- Financial literacy

Materials Needed:

- My Lifestyle Costs sheet
- My Lifestyle Budget sheet
- Writing utensils

Suggested Time Allotment: 45 min

5-10 Minutes: Outline the activity

In this activity, students learn financial literacy terms through an exercise where they project their future lifestyle and needs.

Invite students to imagine their ideal future: Where will you live? What will you do in your free time? What will your household look like? In this activity, students will make choices based on their visions for the future and identify their minimum salaries. They will use this minimum salary to search for jobs online or in the Encourage app.

Question Prompts for Your Class:

1. What is a salary?
2. What are some things you'll have to pay for when you are the head of your household?
3. When you think about the future, where are you living? What is your mode of transportation? What does your family look like?
4. How do you connect these dreams to your future career?

Lesson 5



My Finances

15-20 Minutes: Lifestyle costs and budget

Hand out the **My Lifestyle Costs** worksheet and **My Lifestyle Budget** worksheet to students.

Directions for students (present on the worksheet):

- For each box, select the option that best suits your future lifestyle goals. Write your choice and the cost of that choice in the appropriate row on the **My Lifestyle Budget** sheet.

This activity is meant for simulation. You can dig into specific costs if you know where you want to live as an adult.

There are three cells on the budget worksheet that will require students to do a bit of math.

- Subtotal: They will add all the above costs together.
- Savings: They will take the subtotal and multiply it by .1 (10%)
- Taxes: They will take the subtotal and multiply it by .25 (25%)
- Minimum salary: They will add the subtotal, savings, and taxes - then multiply that number by 12 to find their minimum salaries.

A note at the bottom of the sheet informs students they can divide this minimum salary by two if they anticipate having two earners in the household (two adults contributing to their lifestyle choices).

15-20 Minutes: Discover jobs (Option 1: App)

Instruct students to open the Encourage app.

Mobile:

Go to **Explore** along the bottom menu.

Go to **My Careers**.

Web:

Go to **My Careers**.

Type in the name of a career of interest or click a cool career and answer the following:

- Would this career support your ideal lifestyle?
- What level of education is required for this job?

Lesson 5



My Finances

15-20 Minutes: Discover jobs (Option 2: No App)

Instruct students to go to **onetonline.org**. Click the magnifying glass.

Type in the name of a career of interest to answer the following:

- Would this career support your ideal lifestyle?
- What level of education is required for this job?

15-20 Minutes: Discuss as a class or in pairs

- What was your minimum salary?
- Was your minimum salary more or less than you thought it would be?
- Would you have made different choices?
- Were you conservative in your selections?
- Which expenses weren't on the sheet that you think might impact your future salary goals?
- Was the job you looked up above your minimum salary?
- What type of education was required for the job you explored?

Check out the end of this section for four ways your students can use the Encourage app to continue exploring this lesson.

Lifestyle Budget



Directions:

For each box, select the option that best suits your future lifestyle goals, and write your choice and the cost of that choice in the appropriate row on the **My Lifestyle Budget Sheet**.

This activity is meant for simulation. You can dig into specific costs if you know where you want to live when you are employed full-time.

<p style="text-align: center;">Housing choose 1</p> <p>Live with parents: \$0 1 Bedroom rental: \$1400 2 Bedroom rental: \$1800 Own a home: \$2000 Own a large home: \$3000</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Utilities pick what you want</p> <p>Water/Electric: \$ 100 Cell Phone: \$80 House Phone: \$45 Internet: \$70 Cable: \$100</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Transportation choose 1</p> <p>Bicycle: \$0 Public Transport: \$80 Buy a used car: \$300 Buy a new car: \$600</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Childcare multiply by # of kids</p> <p>No children: \$0 Per child: \$1000</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medical choose 1</p> <p>Single insurance: \$200 Family insurance: \$400</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clothing choose 1</p> <p>I don't shop often: \$30 I buy occasionally: \$80 Only brand names: \$250</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Food multiply by # of people. \$400</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Entertainment choose 1</p> <p>I don't need much: \$30 I love to go out: \$200 I am never at home: \$500</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Personal choose 1</p> <p>I don't need much: \$30 I like the finer things: \$150</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Travel choose 1</p> <p>I'm a homebody: \$0 I like to vacation: \$250 Show me the world: \$500</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pets choose 1</p> <p>No pets: \$0 Cat: \$50 Dog: \$100</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Education choose 1</p> <p>No student loans: \$0 Student loans: \$300</p>

Lifestyle Budget



Category	Choice	Cost
Housing		
Utilities		
Transportation		
Childcare		
Medical		
Clothing		
Food		
Entertainment		
Personal		
Travel		
Pets		
Education		
Subtotal		
Savings	subtotal X 10%	
Taxes	subtotal X 25%	
Minimum Salary*	(subtotal + savings + taxes) X 12	

***You can choose to divide the minimum salary by two if you anticipate having two household earners**

In the App



My Finances

GRADES 9-12

Open **Encourageme.com** and log in.
Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Scholarships**.
Click **Get Started** and **answer prompts** to get matched with personalized scholarship opportunities.

Find a scholarship and answer the prompts below.

Find and discuss as a class:

- Who is eligible to apply?
- When was the deadline?
- What kind of goal could you set around applying for scholarships?

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click the **Finance** under **My Journey**.
Select **Talk to Your Family about Finances**.
Then **Talk to your family about college finances**.

Read the task and article
Mark task complete from the drop-down.

Ask students:

- What did you take away from this article?
- What are the options for paying for college?

GRADES 9-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **My Scholarships**.

Explore five scholarships.

Select one you can apply for.

Complete the application process as an assignment.

GRADES 11-12

Open the app to the home screen.
Click **Explore** from the bottom menu.
Click **Financial Aid**.

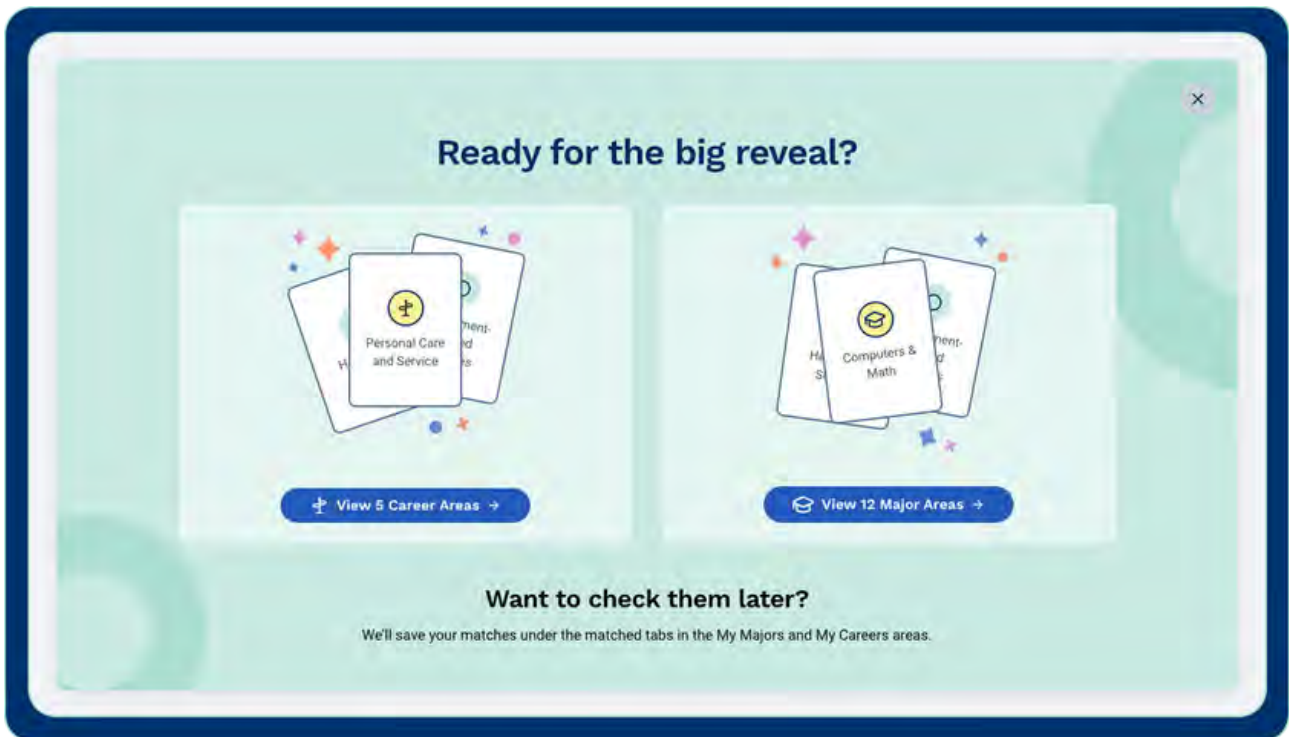
Read the corresponding prompt.

Assignment: Save the date FAFSA opens in your calendar.

Lesson 6



Majors and Careers Quiz



With thousands of topics to study and new careers emerging daily, we all need help sorting through options to find the right fit.

Introducing the **Majors and Careers Quiz**, now available on the Encourage web platform.

Students will be able to:

- Connect with majors and careers that suit their interests and passions.
- Focus on finding a future path.
- Explore exciting new programs and job opportunities.
- Check out colleges that offer majors that match their interests.
- Dive deeper into future career paths and see what they need to succeed in each career.

The lesson plan in this section encourages students to think about their interests and how those interests can fit into educational and career pathways that match their talents.

Lesson 6



Majors and Careers Quiz

Purpose/Goal:

- Students will reflect on their interests through a series of questions.
- Students will connect their interests to majors, careers, and next steps.
- Students will set a goal based on their major and career matches.

Learning Outcomes:

- College planning
- Career planning
- Self-reflection
- Critical thinking
- Goal setting

Materials Needed:

- Encourage account
- Device that can access app.encourageme.com
- Writing utensil
- **Quiz Reflection** worksheet

Suggested Time Allotment: 50-60 min

5-10 Minutes: Outline the activity

Setting goals is a life-long skill students will practice in this activity. Students will take the **Majors and Careers Quiz**, a series of 36 reflection questions on the **Encourage** web platform.

Once students have logged in to **Encourage** via a web browser, they will go to **My Majors** and click the **Start Quiz** button available in the notification banner. The quiz helps students narrow the field from hundreds of possible majors and careers to a smaller, more manageable amount to explore.

Each question has a scale from **strongly dislike** to **strongly like**. The more indifferent answers a student picks, the better their matches.

Students can take this quiz multiple times if their interests change or they aren't happy with their matches. To retake the quiz, they can click the **Matched** tab and click **Retake the Quiz** at the bottom of the screen.

Lesson 6



Majors and Careers Quiz

Question Prompts for Your Class:

1. What is a college major?
2. What are different degrees you can earn after high school?
3. What is a salary?
4. What does it mean if a job outlook has high or low demand?

20 Minutes: Complete the Quiz

- Log in to Encourage through your web browser.
- Click **My Majors** from the left menu.
- The quiz will be available via a button marked **Start Quiz**.
- If your students don't see the quiz, it might be because they've already taken it. If they'd like to retake it, they can toggle to the **Matched** tab at the top of the screen and click **Retake the Quiz**.
- For best results, students should read the quiz instructions before answering the questions.

20 Minutes: Dig Deeper

When students finish the quiz, they will see a **reveal** page highlighting careers and majors aligning with their quiz answers. When they click the **Majors** results screen, the list of majors is alphabetical.

Students can either:

- Select one major that sounds interesting.
- Select the first, last, or middle major to explore.

Once they select a major, have them respond to the prompts on the **Quiz Reflection** worksheet.

5-10 Minutes: Share Out

Option 1: Pair and Share

- What major did you learn about?
- What high school classes could prepare you for that major?
- What career did you explore related to that major?
- What are this career's expected responsibilities?

Option 2: Reflect as a class

- Did anyone find a major and/or career they had never considered before?
- How does this activity make you think about your future after graduation?

Quiz Reflection



Directions:

- Use your results from the **Majors and Careers Quiz**, select a major, then answer the questions below using the Encourage website **My Majors** tab.

Major:	
What high school classes could you take to prepare you for taking this subject in college?	
What statement under “you might love this major if” might apply to you and your interests?	
Do any of the related majors sound interesting?	
Do any of your matched colleges offer this major? If so, which ones?	
Name one career that matches with this major.	
What are some expected responsibilities for that career?	

Name : _____ Date: _____

Quiz Reflection



Directions:

- Take a moment to think about your results and the majors and careers you discovered.
- Fill in the blanks below with your thoughts about your future.
- Check the boxes next to goals you can commit to completing in the next year.

After completing this activity, I want to learn more about:

I think completing the following education after high school fits my future goals:

One thing I will commit to doing in the next year to help me choose my future career is:



Ask to do a job shadow in a career that interests me.



Use My Majors in the Encourage app to learn more.



Take high school classes that help me on my college and career path.



Use My Careers in the Encourage app to learn more.

Write your own commitment:

Name : _____ Date: _____

On the Web



Majors and Careers Quiz

GRADES 8-12

Open **app.encourageme.com** and log in.
Click **My Careers**.
Toggle to **Matched**.
Click a **Career Area** that sounds interesting.

Ask students to answer the following:

- What kinds of jobs are in this career area?
- What job can you find in this area that requires no additional education after high school?
- What is the salary listed for the job you found?
- What are the responsibilities of the job you found?

GRADES 8-12

Open **app.encourageme.com** and log in.
Click **My Careers**.
Toggle to **Matched**.
Click a **Career Area** that sounds interesting.

Ask students to answer the following:

- What kinds of jobs are in this career area?
- What job can you find in this area that requires a bachelor's degree?
- What is the salary range of the job you found?
- What is the job outlook for the job you found?
- What are some similar careers?

GRADES 8-12

Open **app.encourageme.com** and log in.
Click **My Careers**.
Toggle to **Matched**.
Click a **Career Area** that sounds interesting.

Ask students to answer the following:

- What kinds of jobs are in this career area?
- What job can you find in this area that requires an associate's degree?
- What is the salary range of the job you found?
- What is the job outlook for the job you found?
- What are some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities someone with this job would have?

GRADES 8-12

Open **app.encourageme.com** and log in.
Click **My Majors**.
Toggle to **Matched**.
Select a major of interest.

Ask students to create a poster with key major information:

- Description
- Common program courses
- Careers that match the major
- "You might love this major if..."

Post their findings around the class for others to view and explore.

Share Your Feedback!

Student Feedback

We'd love your students' feedback on the lesson!

This QR code will take them to a brief survey.



Educator Feedback

We value your opinion. Scan this QR code to

access a brief educator feedback survey.



Our Learning Outcomes

We map our in-app and communications content to the following learning outcomes developed from a national audit on best practices related to college, career, and life readiness.

Critical Thinking

Grit/Resilience & Perseverance

Discovery

Get Ready

Social-emotional Learning

Self-reflection

Citizenship

DEI/Cultural Competence

Transition

Academic Content Knowledge

Test Preparation

Goal Setting

Career Planning

Professional Skills

Time Management

Study Skills

College Planning

Network(ing)

Financial Literacy



Research & Resources



Research

The following resources guided our work:

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National Career Development Association. (2004). National career development guidelines framework. https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/asset_manager/get_file/3384?ver=7802067.

NACE. (2022). Career readiness: Development and validation of the NACE career readiness competencies. <https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2022/resources/2022-nace-career-readiness-development-and-validation.pdf>.

Perna, L. W. (2015). Improving college access and completion for low-income and first-generation students: The role of college access and success programs. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/301.

Swail, W., & Perna, L. (2002). Pre-College Outreach Programs: A National Perspective. In *Increasing Access to College* (pp. 15–34). State University of New York.

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Research & Resources

