

**Successful Transition
Planning for Young
Adults With Asperger
Syndrome and
High-Functioning
Autism (AS/HFA)**



Student Workbook
Empowering Young Adults With AS/HFA



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Making Decisions About College Activities

- * Interest Inventory
 - * Write a Mission Statement
 - * Requesting Information Role Play
 - * College Comparison Spreadsheet Activity
- 



Interest Inventory



Figuring out what you want to do after high school is an important task, and you will have plenty of time to make these decisions. This activity is a good first step as it will help you to focus on what you like to do in order to help you set goals for the future.

1. My favorite class(es) in school is/are _____
because _____.
2. My least favorite class(es) is/are _____
because _____.
3. Outside of school assignments, I read books about _____.
4. I watch TV shows or movies about _____.
5. In my spare time I enjoy _____.
6. I like _____ type(s) of music.
7. The Web sites that I like to access include: _____.
8. If I had more time and money, in my free time I would _____.
9. I have always wanted to _____.
10. The person I admire the most is _____ because _____
_____.
11. Activities that I have been involved in include (examples: clubs, community activities, sports) _____
_____.
12. Activities that I do not enjoy participating in include _____
_____.



Interest Inventory



13. I prefer the kind of environment where (examples: it is quiet, there are people that I know) _____

14. When working in groups, I prefer group members who are (examples: nice, helpful, hardworking)

15. After high school, I might like to _____

One Step Further (Optional): You can use magazines, newspapers, catalogs, or drawings to find pictures that represent your answers to the questions above. Then, paste these pictures onto a posterboard. You can use this visualization board to focus on what you like, get ideas for essays, and remind you of your future goals.

Example: If your favorite subject is math, you may look for pictures of numbers or of a calculator and paste them on your posterboard, and label what it represents (i.e., favorite subject). This could help you to talk about your strengths in your essays or to look for certain majors or classes that involve math.

Write a Mission Statement

Use this template to create your own Mission Statement. Please fill in your answers to the statements below.

1. I am interested in:

2. I am good at:

3. I am challenged by:

4. I receive support in the following ways (at home and school):

5. My goals for the next 5 years are:

Optional:

As an optional activity, you could create a visual mission statement. To do this, use magazines, newspapers, or your own drawings to find images that answer the statements above. Then, write the 5 questions above on a posterboard. Paste your images to the posterboard and hang your collage in your bedroom or kitchen to have a visual reminder of your interests, strengths, challenges, and goals.

Write a Mission Statement

Using the information that you wrote on the last page, put it all together into one statement. Please fill in the following information from your answers on the previous page.

My interests are _____

I am good at _____

However, things that challenge me are _____

Because of this, I receive support from _____

_____, and in the form of

Given my interests, strengths, challenges, and support needs, my goals for the upcoming 5 years are _____

Now you have your Mission Statement! You can post this near your desk, on the refrigerator, or with your college application materials. Use it to focus your college search on your interests, strengths, and goals. It can also help you think of topics for your college essay or ideas for your interview.

Example Mission Statement

My interests are science, baseball, gardening, and reading. **I am good at** growing plants, knowing baseball statistics, answering questions in biology class, and getting good grades in school. **However, things that challenge me are** English class, working in groups in class, listening to instructions, and finishing assignments. **Because of this, I receive support from** my parents, a peer buddy, and teachers, **and in the form of** getting help on homework, going to meetings, explaining homework, getting extra time on tests, and print outs of homework instructions. **Given my interests, strengths, challenges, and support needs, my goals for the upcoming 5 years are** to study and get a degree in horticulture in college and to live on my own.

Requesting Information Role Play

The goal of this role play activity is to practice asking for information from college Disabilities Support Services personnel. You will be paired with a partner for this activity. (If you are doing the activity at home, ask an adult to help you.) Remember, you want to receive as much information as possible from Disabilities Support Services personnel in order to know what services they offer and how they may help you. Use the questions and ideas below to begin this role play. Some tips are also included.

First, introduce yourself and explain why you are interested in talking to Disabilities Support Services personnel. You may say something like:

Hi, my name is _____. I am interested in learning more about the services you offer students at your college. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

Then ask the following questions:

1. What types of services and accommodations do you provide for students at your college?
2. What is the general procedure for obtaining these services?
3. What is the best way for students to work with you to receive accommodations?
4. Do you work with many students who have AS/HFA?
5. Do you have any online or printed information that I can have access to?

Thank the person for their time and their answers.

Thank you so much for your time. Your answers were very helpful. Have a good day.

Tips:

- If you would like the person to elaborate on an answer, remember to ask a follow-up question. A follow-up question may be "Please, tell me more" or "Could you explain that further?"
- Remember, Disabilities Support Services personnel are there to help you. They need to provide you with the most accurate information so you can make your college decision.
- Remember to take notes on the answers you are given.
- Ask clear and direct questions.
- When you are talking to a Disabilities Support Services person, you can ask if he or she has any printed materials about services the college provides. If so, request to have a copy mailed to you, or be sure to write down the Web address if the information is posted on the Internet. Include this information in your file on the college.

College Comparison Spreadsheet Activity

Use the information provided below on Drake University to complete the spreadsheet on page 19. This activity gives you an opportunity to practice using the College Comparison Spreadsheet. You may want to use this as you compare different colleges that you are considering.

Drake University

- A private college in Des Moines, Iowa
- Enrollment of 3,500 students
- Offers a range of majors, including business, psychology, biology, mathematics, and chemistry
- Web-based courses are available; however, most undergraduate courses are in a classroom environment
- Offers more than 160 clubs and social organizations
- Most students live on campus in dorms
- Financial aid and scholarships are available
- Yearly tuition is \$25,000
- SAT or ACT is accepted
- Student Disability Support Services center offers accommodations, training, and support to students with need



Making Decisions About College Resources

- * Session Outline
 - * College vs. High School
 - * Preparation Checklist
 - * Types of College Environments
 - * College Living Options
 - * College Comparison Spreadsheet Template
 - * Organizational Process
 - * Visual Organization Systems
 - * Campus Visit Tips
 - * Resources for More Information
- 

Session Outline: Making Decisions About College

This outline will help you follow along with this Session. Please note that all topics are merely suggestions and are subject to change according to the facilitator's discretion.

Introduction

- Session overview
- Introductions
- General guidelines for the session

Making the Decision

- Future goals
- College vs. high school

BREAK

Determining Types of Schools

- Strengths, interests, and abilities

Determining Colleges to Apply To

- Find information

BREAK

- Review and narrow
- Visit
- Re-evaluate and decide

Conclusion

- Summary

College vs. High School

This handout describes some basic differences between college and high school and why college is important.

College	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Professors have classes ranging from 20 to 200 students—less individual attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers have classes of 20–35 students—more individual attention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You will be responsible for most decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Parents and teachers provide direct guidance with decisions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You choose your classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Classes are mostly chosen for you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You may have several hours between classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Classes run on a consecutive schedule—one follows right after another.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You will have to pay for books and other basics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Books and other basics are provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">You are expected to know due dates of assignments and professors will not always collect and check your work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers will remind you when assignments are due, and will check and collect assignments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many classes are based solely on exams, which often cover a lot of material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Classes are based on several aspects besides exams, such as participation, in-class assignments, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disability services will only contact professors if given permission from the student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers know in advance if one of their students has a disability and what they will need.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students with disabilities must self-advocate in order to receive accommodations in class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students with disabilities are entitled to and provided with free and appropriate education according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Reasons why college is important:

- College trains students to think critically, improve knowledge, and acquire skills needed for a career.
- With a college degree, you improve your chances of getting a job with a higher salary.
- You will also learn how to become independent, improve social skills, and gain experience.

Preparation Checklist

Below is a list of activities and tasks that you can start doing during high school to prepare for college. You do not have to do everything on this list, but these are some ideas that may help you make decisions and gain acceptance to college. Keep in mind that you do not need to do all of these activities on your own. You can enlist the help of your parents or your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team or other supportive people for help with any of these tasks.

Note: You may not be a Freshman when you start to prepare for college (you may be a Junior or Senior). That is okay! This checklist is just a guide to help you along the way. You can still follow the recommendations whatever year you are, and get into college successfully.

Freshman Year

___ **Join extracurricular activities.**

- These can be athletics, academics, service-related clubs or organizations, teams like indoor track or debate, and honors societies. Colleges like to see that students' interests are balanced across a variety of areas.

___ **Start thinking about your interests and career goals with your IEP team.**

- This may help narrow what schools you will be applying to based on the programs and majors they have available. Start by asking yourself questions such as: What do I like to do in my free time? What are my strengths in school?

___ **Create a transition plan with your IEP team.**

- This plan will be part of your IEP and will include the steps you need to take toward graduating from high school. It may include classes to take, skills to accomplish, or other goals to help you prepare for leaving high school.

___ **Keep your grades up!**

- A GPA of 3.0 or above throughout your entire high school career can qualify you for Federal, State, and/or school-provided financial aid and help with acceptance to competitive college programs.

Sophomore Year

___ **Begin searching online for schools you would like to learn more about.**

- Ask your IEP team, parents, and/or other adults (teachers, school counselor, or therapists) for their ideas about colleges you might want to consider.

___ **Buy a SAT or ACT preparatory book that includes practice tests.**

- These will help familiarize you with the format and types of questions given on the standardized test(s) you plan on taking.

___ **Consider a prep course, online resources, or a tutor for the SAT/ACT test.**

- Once you have familiarized yourself with the format of the SAT and/or ACT, you will want to determine if a tutor or a prep class will be more helpful than practicing on your own. Talk with parents, teachers, or others to get their input on what format would be best for you.

___ **Shadow a person or search for internships in the career or field of your choice.**

- You can learn more about a topic by following a person who is an expert or who works in the field. Or you can also participate in an internship to gain experience in a particular area.
- Career mentors and/or internships may be found online, through your school counselor, or at a career center.

___ **Continue to maintain good grades and keep up with extracurricular activities.**

Preparation Checklist

Junior Year

___ Register for SAT/ACT test dates that are convenient for you.

- Begin the accommodation request process, if necessary.
- You may want to take the test two or three times and use the highest scores among them (if allowed by the school).
- You will want to know which schools you are applying to by your test date so you can send your SAT/ACT scores directly to those schools through the testing agency. (However, if you take the tests early, you could also wait to send your scores until after you receive them; in this way, you could take the test again if needed.)

___ Make use of any prep courses, tutors, and books for the SAT/ACT.

- Take practice tests and time yourself as you would on the real test day.

___ Research and visit some of the schools to which you are thinking of applying with the help of your parents and other adults.

- Using the Types of College Environments resource (page 17 of this workbook), look at the different aspects of each school to determine which schools you will be applying to in your Senior year.
- Visit colleges that you are interested in.

___ Consider taking some high-level classes such as Advanced Placement (AP) and/or Honors classes.

- Keep in mind that AP or Honors courses may help prepare you for college.
- You may also receive college credit for some high level courses.

___ Begin getting to know and talking to your teachers.

- Many schools will require 1-3 letters of recommendation from your teachers to accompany the application. Talk to your teachers, get to know them, and ask if they would help with letters.

Senior Year

___ Begin the college application process.

- By now you have narrowed your list of schools down by visiting them and researching them.
- Make sure you put in requests for high school transcripts early.
- Give your teachers plenty of time to write any letters of recommendation.
- Give yourself plenty of time to work on those college essays.

___ Take the SATs/ACTs before your last semester (if you haven't already).

___ Look out for scholarships!

- Begin your search early in the year at your high school's career center or with your counselor(s) for scholarships or other financial aid opportunities.
- Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to qualify for any Federal financial aid in the form of scholarships, work-study programs, or loans. You are able to submit the FAFSA January 1 of the year for which you are seeking aid.

___ Don't give in to senioritis!

- You should still be keeping your grades up and taking a challenging course load. Some colleges will ask for a second transcript even after you have been accepted.

Types of College Environments

The chart below displays the different types of college environments that exist to help you find the one that might meet your needs. This chart also includes a brief description of each type of environment and its benefits and challenges.

Type of College	Description	Benefits	Challenges
Vocational college/ technical institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaches skills necessary for a particular line of work Specializes in a particular area, such as electronics, computers, medical assistant, hair styling, automotive technician, computer design, cooking, construction May be public or private Has some programs that last 1-2 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes focused job training Teaches specific skills Trains "on the job" Grants certifications/licenses Provides comprehensive training for work in a specific field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not allow for versatility in career choice because training is specific
Community college/ junior college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awards associate's degrees Awards certificates in career subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows students to start here and then transfer to a 4-year school Is less expensive Offers less stringent admissions requirements Is a commuter school (students can live at home) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not allow all credits to transfer to a 4-year school Offers few social aspects and networking opportunities, since most students are local and live at home
State university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is public Is generally larger Encompasses many majors Offers comprehensive education (you may take other subjects besides major) Awards bachelor's degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May offer more disability services Offers more opportunities for specialization in major Offers more job opportunities Offers more general education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is more expensive for out-of-state students Tends to have large student bodies (15,000 or more students) May require students to decide whether to live on or off campus Requires students to self-advocate in order to receive services
Private university/ college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be a small liberal arts school Is generally smaller Is more specialized Offers comprehensive education Awards bachelor's degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be more focused on specialization area Offers alternative teaching modalities Located on smaller campus Offers smaller class sizes Offers more one-on-one with professors Offers more job opportunities with degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes more expensive tuition May require students to decide whether to live on or off campus Offers students more rigorous classes

College Living Options

	Dormitory/Residence Hall	Suite	Apartment, Townhouse (Off-Campus Housing)
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rooms are shared with 1-4 roommates. Rooms are usually small and sparsely furnished with a bed and a desk. Bathrooms are shared with the entire floor. Usually on-campus housing comes with a meal plan of some kind. Dormitories usually have washer/dryer in the same building. Most Freshmen live in double- or triple-occupancy rooms. Rooms may come with Ethernet and cable TV. Some colleges have specific types of dorms that may be co-ed, single sex, or have a special interest or theme (e.g., same major, honors students). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suites offer multiple bedroom units. Students share bathroom with suitemates. Suites include a common room. Some may have a kitchen. Suites are on campus and part of a dormitory/residence hall. A meal plan option may be provided if no kitchen is available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students share an apartment, townhouse, or house with roommates to reduce cost. Most apartments have multiple bedrooms. These are usually off-campus and are a longer walk to class. Residents may not have their own bathroom and must share with apartment mates. Apartments include a kitchen or kitchenette. This is mostly an option for upperclassmen, depending on school and student needs.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students interact with others, and thus improve their social skills. Students are more aware of campus activities. There is easy access to class buildings, library, and dining hall. There are no monthly payments (as with apartments). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suites offer more privacy than dorm rooms. Students still enjoy the social aspect of dorm life because they share with 3-5 others. There is easy access to classroom buildings and other on-campus facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-campus housing offers more space. It also offers more privacy. Residents can choose their roommates. Residents learn independent living skills—paying rent, buying groceries, cooking, etc. Residents do not have to abide by university regulations for dorms.
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roommates will be assigned if students do not have a preference. Rooms are small. Living arrangements offer little privacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suites may be offered only to upperclassmen. Residents will have to divide household duties amongst suitemates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apartments are more expensive. Students are removed from campus, which means longer walks or commutes to class. There is less social interactivity with campus. Students may need to have a car, use public transportation, and/or pay for parking.

College Comparison Spreadsheet Template

Below is a spreadsheet that can help you organize information as you learn more about each college you are considering. Place an "X" in the boxes that describe aspects of each school.

School		Example- UMD					
Environment	Vocational college/ technical Institute						
	Community college/junior college						
	State university	X					
Location	Private university/college						
	City						
	Rural						
Campus Size	Suburban	X					
	Small						
	Mid-size						
	Large	X					
Academics	Offers majors that interest me	X					
	Offers courses that interest me	X					
	Different types of courses (online, in class, labs)	X					
	Extracurricular activities	X					
Living	Commute	X					
	Live on campus						

College Comparison Spreadsheet Template

School	Example-UMD						
Expenses (tuition, room, and board)	Inexpensive						
	Reasonable	X					
	Expensive						
	Financial aid						
Application requirements	SAT I required	X					
	ACT required						
	Other test required						
Disability accommodations	Orientation provided	X					
	Requirements for receiving services						
	Clear policies on accommodations						
	Career counseling provided	X					
	Experience working with students with AS/HFA	X					

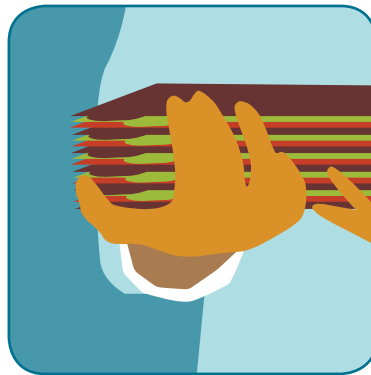
Organizational Process

When you begin gathering information on the colleges that you are interested in, you may find it helpful to have a system to organize all the papers, brochures, and other related items. You can also include any relevant *STRIVE* activities (e.g., Visual Organization Chart) that you have completed for each school along with the other information you have gathered to file. Below are a few suggestions as to how to organize information to reduce stress and feelings of being overwhelmed.

1. One way you can organize your papers is by creating a binder is by creating one binder to all information about the colleges you are interested in. You can make a divider for each college within one binder or you can create a different binder for each school that you are considering. Be sure to label the binder and/or use a different color for each school.



2. Another way of organizing college information is by creating file folders or pocket folders for each school. This method may be easier to store somewhere in your room or in drawers. Be sure to label each folder and/or use a different color for each school.



3. Because you may receive more information than can fit in a folder, an alternative may be to use desk trays or boxes to separate school information.



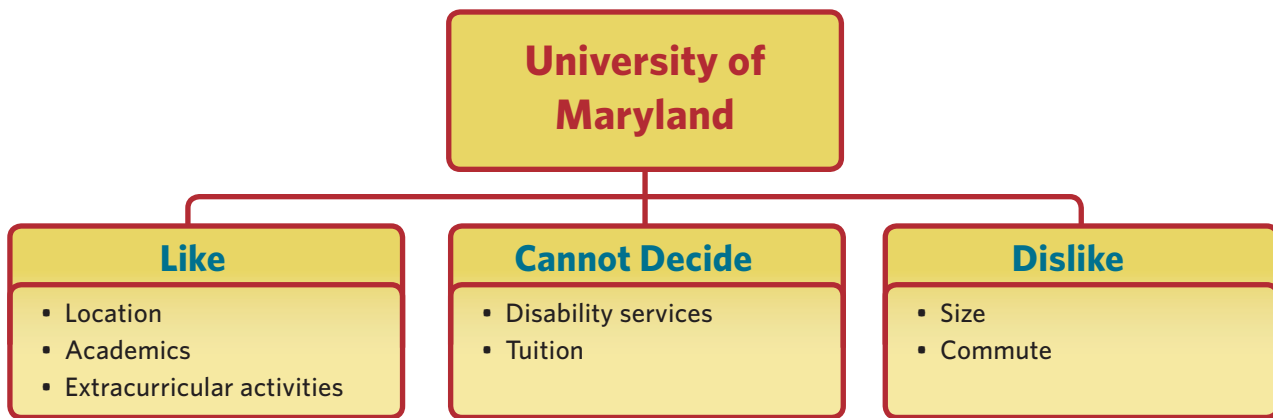
Visual Organization Systems

This resource provides a variety of diagrams for organizing college information. You may pick a system that works best for you to help you narrow your schools.

Likes/Dislikes Chart

Using this method of organizing information, you would place the name of the school in the top box. Use the lower box on the left to list what you like about the school. Use the middle box to list what information you neither like nor dislike about the school but that is important for your final decision. Use the last box on the right to list what you dislike about the school. You would use one diagram for each of the schools you are considering. The example below shows how to use this method.

Example:

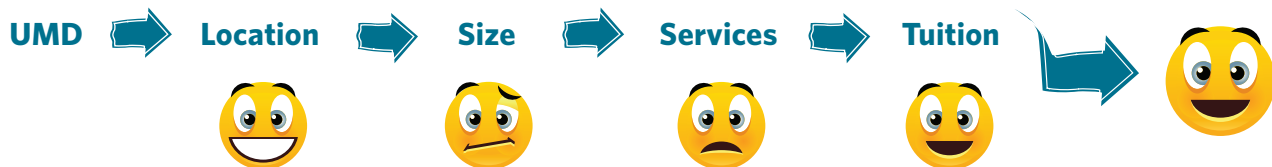


Flow Chart

The flow chart method is another easy way to organize your ideas and the facts about a college.

1. Begin by writing down the name of a school you are considering.
2. Draw an arrow and write down an aspect of the school that influences your decision to apply there.
3. Below this item, put a happy face or sad face to represent if this aspect is something you like or dislike about this particular school.
4. Continue to add as many aspects as are important to you to help you narrow your choices.
5. Once you have created a flow chart for each school, review how many sad and happy faces you have attributed to each school. Are the schools with the most happy faces where you would like to apply to?

Example:



Visual Organization Systems

Another method you could use is completing a Pros/Cons Chart for each potential school. Write the title of the school above the chart and list the aspects of the school that are important to you under “Pros” and list aspects that do not meet your criteria under “Cons.” You can use this method for all of the colleges you are considering.

Pros/Con Chart

Example

University of Maryland

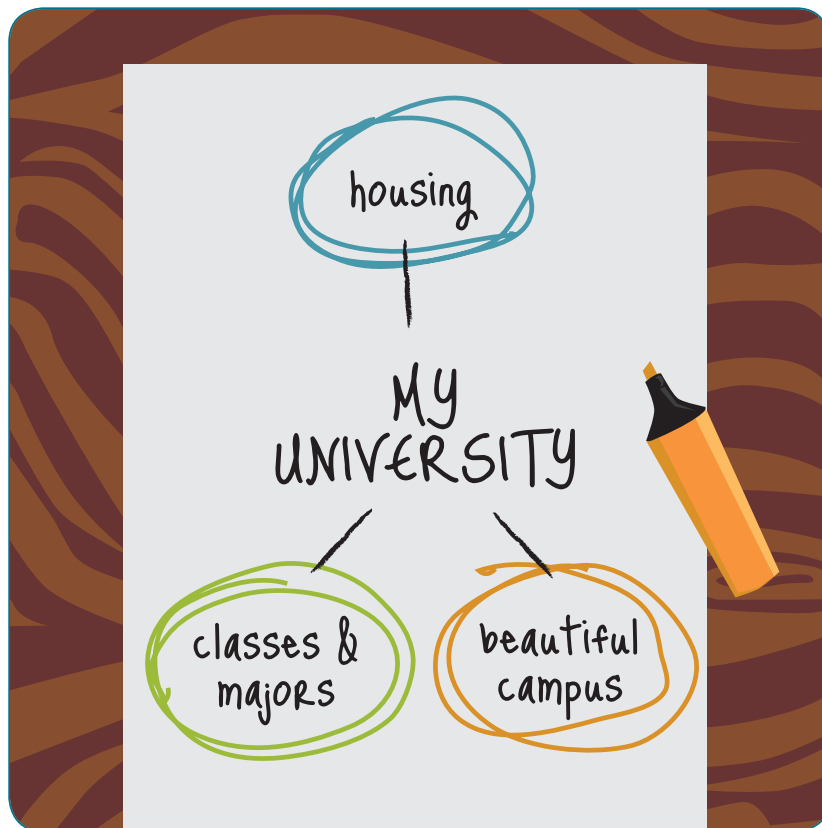
Pros	Cons
Disability services	Size
Location—close to home	Room and board expensive
In-state tuition	Large class sizes
Research is a big focus	Graduate students teach a lot of classes
Lots of clubs	Not many scholarships that I qualify for
Different types of dorm options	

Visual Map

Using a visual map allows you to see the information you have gathered on colleges in a slightly different way.

Option 1: Create this diagram by writing the name of the college in the middle of a piece of paper. Then write key words/points that you liked about the college around this central image.

Example



Visual Organization Systems

Option 2: You can also make this diagram by pasting a picture of the college in the middle of a piece of paper and drawing key images around it that represent what you liked about the college. You may use magazine pictures to portray those qualities as well.

Example



Campus Visit Tips

This handout offers tips for when you visit a college campus. The tips provide recommendations and things to keep in mind and/or do while you are on the visit. Remember, these are only suggestions to help you make the most of your time during your campus visit.

Tips:

- Pay attention to your comfort level when you are on campus. Do you feel comfortable there? Does the campus overwhelm you? Write down your impressions of how comfortable you feel while you are visiting.
- Sign up to take a tour of the campus. Most likely, you can coordinate a tour through the Admissions office. Call the college or visit its Web site to find out how you can participate in a tour.
- When you schedule your campus visit, ask the Admissions office or Disabilities Support Services personnel if they could schedule a time for you to meet with a couple of current college students. In this way, you can ask these students any questions you may have about the college. You may want to ask what they like about the college, what they don't like, and what they think the benefits of the college are. Take a few notes on what they say, and then thank them for their time.
- Schedule a meeting with someone at the Disabilities Support Services center on the campus. You probably will need to call ahead and make an appointment in order to meet with someone in person. Bring a list of questions. The most important thing is to see what types of services and accommodations they offer to students with AS/HFA, what programs they may have, and what requirements they have to receive services.
- Ask your tour guide if you can visit the dorms. See what a typical dorm room looks like. Ask about the different types of living accommodations the college provides.
- After your tour, visit the community and area around the college. Is the college in a large city? Are the areas surrounding the college welcoming? Are there restaurants or other forms of entertainment? Is the college in a safe area?
- Take pictures on your tour. This will help you to remember different areas of the college. You can then print these pictures out and include them in your file on the college.
- If you are interested, you could sit in on a class during your visit. You will need to coordinate this through the Admissions office. You can then see what a typical Freshman-level class would look and feel like.

Things to Bring on Your Visit

- Campus map
- Schedule of days' activities/goals of visit
- Camera
- Notebook/paper
- Pen
- Comfortable shoes
- Questions
- Contact information for Admissions counselor/Disabilities Support Services person (if you have scheduled meetings)

Campus Visit Tips

Potential Questions to Ask or Think About During the Visit

- Do I feel comfortable on campus?
- What do other students like and dislike about the college?
- What Disabilities Support Services are offered?
- How do I receive these services?
- What types of extracurricular activities are available?
- What are the dorms/living areas like?
- What is the area surrounding campus like?
- What is the average class size?
- Will I need to bring my own computer?
- What is the food like? Where would I eat?
- What are the most well-known programs at the college?
- Are students taught by full-time professors, graduate assistants, or both?



Resources for More Information

Below is a list of resources that you can use to find more information on particular topics discussed in the *STRIVE* session, Making Decisions About College.

Making the Decision About College

Things to Consider Before Deciding About College

This Web site provides information on things to consider before deciding on college, as well as how high school and college differ.

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/students/index.php?page=consider>

The Differences: High School vs. College

This is a helpful chart on how high school differs from college on various topics, such as classes, teachers, studying, and grades.

<http://www.murraystate.edu/secsv/fye/hsvscollege.htm>

The Youthhood

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition created this Web site for youth that is like an online curriculum and community for helping students think about goals, transitioning to college, and planning for the future.

<http://www.youthhood.org>

Determining Types of Schools

Types of Colleges

This Web site provides an overview of different types of college environments.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/where-to-start/2.html>

Types of Colleges in the U.S.

Another Web site with information on the various types of college environments.

<http://www.petersons.com/common/article.asp?id=1517&sponsor=1&path=ug.gs.advice>

College Dorm Rooms: The True Hollywood Story

An overview of types of dormitories in college.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/campus-life/79.html>

Determining Colleges to Apply To

Asperger Syndrome College Resource Guide

This link offers a list of 4-year and 2-year colleges that provide experience with living independently while working or at college for transition-age individuals.

<http://www.aspfi.org/college>

Resources for More Information

Find a College

Find a College

This Web site can help you search for the type of college that fits your needs.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/index.html>

College and University Profiles

This link allows you to look at in-depth profiles of colleges and universities.

<http://www.collegeprofiles.com>

College Navigator

A comprehensive college search tool that can be customized by a variety of fields, including type of college, major, location of college, expenses, and many more options.

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

General Information

Think College

This Web site provides a variety of information and resources for students with disabilities who are considering college. In addition to information on things to consider about college and how to succeed in college, the Web site also offers a discussion board for students.

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/students/index.php>

College Board

The College Board is a nonprofit organization that provides information to high school students about college and how to succeed in college. In addition, it also oversees the SAT. The Web site includes valuable information on deciding on college, finding colleges, the college application process, and many other topics.

<http://www.collegeboard.com>


Succeeding in College With Asperger Syndrome: A Student Guide

John Harpur, Maria Lawlor, and Michael Fitzgerald. New York: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2004).

This book is specifically written for students with Asperger syndrome and includes information on preparing for college, making the decision about college, as well as important skills for succeeding in college.



Applying to College Activities

- * Visualization Activity
 - * College Essays
 - * Interview Role Play
 - * Interview Social Cues
 - * Disclosure Role Play
 - * Common Interview Questions
- 

Visualization Activity

The goal of this activity is to help you relax and visualize doing well on the day of your SAT or ACT. It is best to have an adult help you with this activity so that you can focus on the scenario and feel relaxed. The *STRIVE* facilitator may lead you through this, or you could ask another trusted adult such as a parent for his or her help.

Preparation for the Activity

- Sit in a comfortable position, either on the floor or in a chair.
- Read the scenario below to understand what you will be doing during this activity.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Close your eyes and wait for the facilitator to read the scenario aloud.

Scenario

You are in a room, waiting to take the SAT. You are sitting at a desk. There are many other students in the room. You have plenty of space around you, and you feel comfortable in your chair. You have your pencil and calculator out and are more than ready to take the test. You take some deep breaths.

The test booklets are passed out, and you listen quietly to the instructions. You open the booklet and are ready to get started on the first section. You take another deep breath. You begin to answer each question. You are doing your best. You narrow down your choices and respond in the best way you know. You feel confident and take several deep breaths as you progress through the questions. You read quickly, understanding each question. You have more than enough time to review your answers and know that they are all correct. You sit back, take another deep breath, put your pencil down, and wait for the next section.

Now, see yourself again sitting at the desk, waiting to take the next section of the SAT. Notice how it feels to take a deep breath and to be confident in all of your answers. You feel well prepared, and you are excited to move on to the next section. Sit for a moment, taking several deep breaths, and noticing how it feels to do extremely well on the test.

Now open your eyes.

A Note on Visualization

Practice visualizing yourself in this scenario many times before taking a standardized test. It will help you feel more relaxed and confident on the day of the test. When you visualize, be sure to be in a quiet room in a comfortable seat. Once you have done this activity once or twice, you may not need an adult to lead you through the scenario. However, always be sure to focus on feelings of confidence, accomplishment, relaxation, and comfort.



College Essays



This activity will help you prepare for applying to college. As part of the process, you are often required to write an essay to each college. Some sample essay questions and responses are included below, along with tips on how to write your own essay. Happy writing!

Things to Keep in Mind When Writing any Essay

- Be honest and sincere.
- Be specific but concise.
- Pay attention to the specific essay instructions provided by the college.
- Use examples to support your statements.
- Research your school (what majors they offer, if they are ranked, anything related to your area(s) of interest). When possible, incorporate your knowledge of the school in the essay.
- Most essays have a word limit of 500 words, but this varies. Do not exceed the word limit—but try not to go too far under the word limit, either.
- Do not stray from your main points in the essay.
- Your essay should be fluid and continuous. There should be smooth transitions between paragraphs.
- Have someone read through your essay, such as a parent or teacher. They can provide feedback and ideas for revisions before you turn it in.

Sample Essay Topics and How to Approach Them

1. How would you describe yourself? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - It is probably best to focus on one or two strengths and one or two weaknesses. This way you can avoid writing your entire life's story.
 - If you have trouble thinking of strengths and weaknesses, ask your friends and family.
 - An example of a strength would be:
"I am determined and ambitious. Once I make a goal I almost always achieve it."
 - An example of a weakness would be:
"Although I often achieve the goals I set for myself, sometimes achieving that goal becomes my sole focus and I begin to lose sight of the bigger picture."
2. Tell us about yourself, why you have decided to apply to X college, and how attending our college will help you achieve your goals.
 - Again, focus on one or two things to say about yourself.
 - Explaining why you are applying to this college should not be too difficult because something must have drawn you to the school. Make sure you have researched the school before writing this section, so you can include specific information on the school in your essay.
 - To answer this question, first explain what your goals are. You just need to list 2-3 examples. Then explain how specific aspects of the college enable you to reach these goals.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.
 - Whom do you admire? What is his or her relationship to you? Why is he or she important to you? Do not spend too much time describing this significant person. Focus instead on connecting this person to you and how he or she changed or influenced you.
 - Why do you admire this person or how has he or she made an impact? Focus on at least two ways illustrating how this person has influenced you.

College Essay

Practice Essay

Essay topic: Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, or risk that you have taken and its impact on you.

Introduce the experience, achievement, or risk you have chosen. You can do this by describing a relevant situation. Think of a creative but relevant way to start your essay that makes you stand out.

What is your significant experience/achievement/risk? This does not have to be an especially exciting or earth-shattering experience. It can be a modest, minor experience that had a significant influence on how you think, work, or carry yourself. Choose something new that the school cannot see on your résumé or transcript.

What impact has this experience/achievement/risk had on you? In what ways has it had an impact on the way you act, think, etc.? Why is this impact so important? This should reflect in some way your personality, important values, and something unique about you.

Conclusion. Think of a way to summarize all your key points and end your essay without being abrupt.



Interview Role Play

The goal of this role play activity is to help you practice and prepare for a college admissions interview. You will be paired with a partner for this activity. (If you are doing the activity at home, ask an adult to help you.) Remember, you want to provide a lot of information about yourself and your goals during an interview; simple yes or no answers are not sufficient. Use the questions and ideas below to begin this activity. Some tips are also included. The *STRIVE* Interview Tips handout (page 52) and the Common Interview Questions activity (page 39) may be helpful for this activity.

Note: The examples in the boxes provide sample answers. Read the examples, then answer the Interviewer's questions in your own words

Once someone has indicated that the interviewer is ready for you, introduce yourself and address the interviewer using his or her title and last name. Be sure to give a firm but not crushing handshake, smile, and maintain eye contact. If maintaining eye contact is difficult, try focusing on the interviewer's nose or forehead as an alternative. Wait for the interviewer to offer you a seat before you sit down.

1. Interviewer: Good morning.

Interviewee: *Good morning/afternoon, Mr./Ms./Dr. (Interviewer's name). My name is Adam. It is nice to meet you.*

2. Interviewer: Can you tell me a little about yourself?

Interviewee: *Well, throughout high school, I have been a strong student. I have maintained a 3.5 GPA. I have consistently been on the honor roll for the last 2 years, and I have received our school's Academic Excellence Award. I am also determined and ambitious. Once I make a goal, I usually achieve it. In addition, I am involved with student government, band, and intramural soccer, so I have learned how to manage my time effectively, keep up with schoolwork, and still pursue my own interests.*

3. Interviewer: What was your greatest experience in high school?

Interviewee: *As part of my community service, I volunteered at a hospital where I worked with nurses, doctors, and patients and developed a great respect for their professions. I also made some lasting friendships while volunteering at the hospital. It was a great experience and it taught me to appreciate my good health, my life, and the people around me.*

4. Interviewer: Why do you want to go to this college?

Interviewee: *There are a few reasons why I applied to this college. The most important reason is that the chemistry program I am interested in is highly ranked. I have also talked to a few students who have nothing but good things to say about the faculty, living on campus, and all the different opportunities you provide here. I am confident that by choosing this college, I would take advantage of the several academic opportunities as well as the variety of clubs and organizations you have here.*

Interview Role Play

5. Interviewer: Tell me about an obstacle that you overcame.

Interviewee: *There was a situation where I was partnered with another student in my chemistry class for a group project. This person and I had decided to meet after school for a couple days to work on this project together. This student never showed up to our afterschool meetings, so I stayed after and started working on it myself. When I saw him again in class, he had not done any work toward the project. I talked to our teacher about it and she talked with us after class. I confronted my partner and in the end, the project was completed with equal collaboration from both of us and with both of us earning a high grade.*

6. Interviewer: How do you think college will help you achieve your goals?

Interviewee: *When I graduate, I want to be a chemist. A bachelor's degree is the first step toward achieving that goal. College will provide me with the analytical and problem-solving skills I need for my dream job. In addition, this particular college will open more doors to internships and jobs in my field.*

Tips:

- If asked to describe yourself (as in the first question), try to focus on three main things you would like to get across to this particular school and use examples to support your response.
- Smile and maintain eye contact (without staring) while giving your responses.
- Be honest. Do not risk getting caught in a lie.
- Do not memorize your answers to such a degree that it sounds rehearsed. Have a general idea of what you would say if these questions were asked.
- Make your answers specific but concise. You should not speak off-topic or for too long. It is okay to take a minute and think about your answers, but answer the question and get to the point.
- Remember to show your interest in the school in your responses. Never tell interviewers that theirs is your safety school.
- Ask reasonable questions about the program you are interested in, about teaching, and about what attracts students here. Solicit answers that are not easily found in a brochure. By asking questions, you are showing that you are interested in the school.

Interview Social Cues

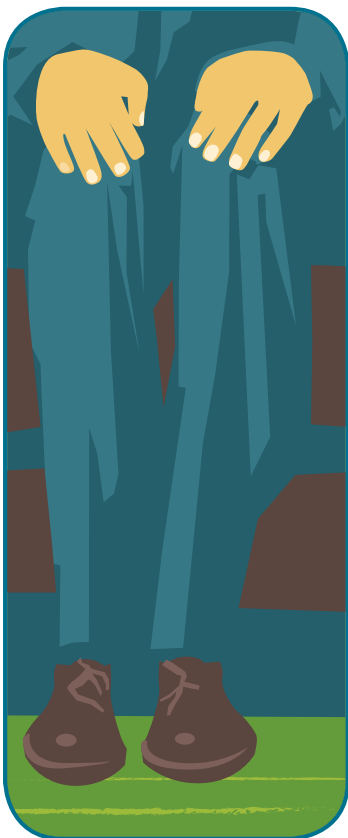
This handout provides some visual aids to show the importance of social cues in an interview setting and how such cues are perceived. Practice the following interview tips with a partner or with a parent to improve your chances of success.

Note how this man is smiling and maintaining eye contact while shaking hands. He appears friendly and confident. Practice shaking hands and greeting an interviewer with a partner.



Wait until you are offered a seat before sitting down for your interview.

Be sure to speak clearly and loudly enough for the other person to hear you but never shout or raise your voice too high.



Notice how the interviewee has good posture and keeps his legs close together. Both men and women should keep their legs close together or crossed at the ankles. Legs crossed higher than the ankles can be perceived as arrogant. Avoid nervous actions such as shaking your legs, tapping your feet, biting your nails, or clearing your throat. Instead, show ease and confidence in your manner.

Boys can wear dress pants with a dress shirt and dress shoes. You do not have to wear a tie or suit jacket.

Girls can wear dress pants or a knee-length skirt with a dress shirt and dress shoes. You do not have to wear a suit jacket. Your makeup and nails should be conservative and neat.

No one should wear jeans or a t-shirt. Your hair should be neat and out of your face.

Interview Social Cues

Below are some examples of what NOT to do during an interview.



Do NOT chew gum.

If you are chewing gum to freshen your breath before the interview, remember to throw it out. Chewing gum is unprofessional and will prevent you from speaking clearly.

Do NOT answer your cell phone.

This is unprofessional and just plain rude. To avoid it ringing at an inopportune time, either turn it off or do not bring it at all.

Do NOT cross your arms.

When you cross your arms, people may perceive you as being defensive, angry, or standoffish. You want interviewers to remember you as friendly and comfortable to talk to.

Disclosure Role Play

Disclosure, or telling other people about your Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism (AS/HFA) diagnosis, is a personal decision. Your decision to tell others about your diagnosis should be made based on the situation, the reasons for wanting someone to know, and the benefits to you when you tell someone. Disclosure does not mean that you tell everyone about your diagnosis. This is not necessary and probably not helpful.

In a college environment, it may be necessary for you to tell a Disability Support Services person, a professor, or a classmate about your diagnosis in order to receive necessary support and help. Disclosure is more than saying, "I have Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism." When you tell someone about your diagnosis, it is very important that you also explain what the diagnosis means to you. For example, you should indicate what areas are challenging to you because of AS/HFA; you could also talk about the strengths you gained because of AS/HFA.

Important note: Remember, in order to receive formal accommodations in class, you will need to disclose and work with the Disability Support Services center on your college campus. This center will guide you through the process of receiving support in class and for exams. While it is sometimes helpful to disclose your diagnosis to a professor in order to get additional help, it is not necessary.

This activity will give you a chance to practice telling others about your AS/HFA diagnosis and how it has had an impact on you. Before doing the activity, please answer the following questions. These will help you as you practice the role play.

What does [Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism] mean to you?

What things are challenging to you? (This may include social challenges, communication challenges, and academic challenges.)

What types of things are you good at? (This may include strengths in school, things you are interested in, and activities that you do.)

What kinds of support would be the most helpful for you from a professor? (It may be helpful to think about the types of support or accommodations you have received in the past.)

Disclosure Role Play

Role Play

Using your answers to the questions on the previous page, you are going to practice telling a “professor” (the facilitator) about your AS/HFA diagnosis and how he or she can help you in class. Here is the scenario:

You are in a large lecture class of about 100 people for Introduction to Biology. You are having a hard time taking notes on all the information that the professor presents because he goes so quickly. It is also difficult to understand what your homework assignments are. You have recently met with personnel at the Disability Support Services center at your school; they are going to help you get more time for tests in this class. You decide that you would also like to tell your professor about your diagnosis in order to get more help in class, so you schedule a meeting with him.

Now, one at a time, you will work with the *STRIVE* facilitator to role play this scenario. The facilitator will be the “professor.” Remember, it may be helpful for you to use your answers to the questions on the previous page as you explain that you have been diagnosed with AS/HFA and what this means for you.

Once you have finished, the facilitator will provide you with some feedback on how you did and what you could practice.

Example Disclosure Role Play

Hi, Professor. Thank you for meeting with me today. I am having some difficulty in biology, and I want to discuss this with you. Specifically, I am having trouble taking notes due to the fast pace of the class. In addition, it is hard for me to understand my homework assignments.

I wanted to let you know that part of the reason these things are difficult for me is because I have Asperger syndrome (or HFA). One impact this has for me is that I have difficulty determining the most important points of your lecture that I need to write down in my notes. In addition, I have trouble hearing you because I am so focused on what I am writing down. I get behind in taking notes, and then feel extremely frustrated because I did not catch the assignment or the rest of the lecture.

Because I have Asperger syndrome, it is also hard for me to interact with my classmates. I do not know how to approach them to ask for their notes or what the assignment was. As you may have noticed, I am getting a good grade in class, but this is due to studying the book for long periods.

It would be helpful to me if I could receive a copy of your PowerPoint slides from class. This way, I could listen to the lecture and not have to take such detailed notes. Furthermore, if I could schedule a weekly appointment with you to discuss the homework assignments, that would be helpful as well.

I really appreciate your time today. Thank you for your help.

Common Interview Questions

This handout provides some common interview questions used in college admission interviews. Please take some time to practice and prepare for your interviews using this worksheet. Remember that this is your chance to show your strengths in person rather than on paper. Take advantage and be prepared!

What was your greatest experience in high school?

Why do you want to go to this college? (List 3 reasons.)

What are your strengths? (List 3-5 strengths.)

What are your challenges? (List 3-5 challenges.)

How have you prepared for college?

How do you think college will help you achieve your goals?

What do you want to do after you graduate?

Common Interview Questions

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Tell me about yourself. (State 3-5 things about yourself.)

Tell me about your interests. (List 2-4 interests.)

Tell me about your extracurricular activities.

What did you do last summer?

What is the achievement about which you are most proud?

Tell me about an obstacle that you overcame.



Applying to College Resources

- * Session Outline
 - * Test Taking Tips
 - * Standardized Tests and Accommodations
 - * Test Preparation Resources
 - * Common Application
 - * Application Checklist
 - * Application Organization Tips
 - * College Interview Tips
 - * Preparation for College Tips
 - * Waiting a Year
 - * Resources for More Information
- 

Session Outline: Applying to College

This outline will help you follow along with this Session. Please note that all activities and times are merely suggestions and are subject to change according to facilitator's discretion.

Introduction

- Session Overview: What are we doing today?
- Introductions

Standardized Tests

- What are standardized tests?
- How can you get accommodations for these tests?
- How do you prepare for the SAT/ACT?

BREAK

College Applications

- What do you need to submit to colleges?
- What are the components of the Common Application?

BREAK

College Interviews

- Why are they important?
- How to prepare for interviews

BREAK

After Submitting Applications

- What do you do now?
- What if you do not get in?

Conclusion

- Summary
- Questions

Test Taking Tips

This resource provides pointers on how to prepare on the day of your standardized test (ACT/SAT). Try not to be nervous. Of course, you want to do well the first time, but remember that you can take the test multiple times. Good luck!



- Make sure you get enough sleep the night before your scheduled test. At least 8 hours of sleep is recommended. Wake up a few hours before you have to leave for the exam rather than sleeping until the last minute. Set your alarm clock to ensure that you wake up on time.



- Prepare your book bag. It is best to do this the night before your test. Be sure to have:
 - Acceptable calculator
 - Admission ticket (sent to you from the test center)
 - Extra no. 2 pencils
 - A bottle of water
 - Proper identification
 - Maybe a small snack, if permitted, in case you get breaks during test taking



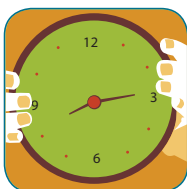
- Eat a good breakfast. You do not want hunger to distract you during the test, and you want your brain to function properly!



- Review your notes. Do not try to cram just before the test—although reviewing vocabulary words or math formulas might be helpful.



- Proper attire. Dress in layers in case the room is too cold or too hot. Although there is no dress code for taking the test, dressing in pajamas or sweats might not be advisable to get you in the proper mindset to excel.



- Arrive early. Plan to get to the test site at least 15–20 minutes before the scheduled time. This will allow you a cushion of time in case you get lost on the way there or if there are any administrative issues at the test site.



- Manage your time. Do not spend too much time on one question. If you are stuck on a question, either guess wisely and quickly or skip to the next question. Use your watch to keep you on track.



- Think positive! If you get nervous, take a few deep breaths before and during the test to keep calm. Try not to worry. Go into the test believing you will do well.

Standardized Tests and Accommodations

The SAT and the ACT allow for certain types of accommodations that students may need during the tests. These accommodations may help you to perform to the best of your ability during the test. In order to receive them, you need to follow a standard process. The following information highlights the various accommodations you can potentially receive as well as the process for requesting them.

Note: Please work with your school guidance counselor to apply for these accommodations.

SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

The following types of accommodations are available from the College Board:**

- Extended time
- Computer
- Accommodations for students with hearing impairments
- Extra/extended breaks
- Presentation (e.g., large print, reader, fewer items per page, colored paper, oral presentation of instructions, audiocassette, visual magnification)
- Responding (e.g., verbal, tape recorder, computer, record answers in test booklet, large block answer sheet)
- Timing/scheduling (e.g., frequent breaks, multiple day, specified time of day)
- Setting (e.g., small group, private room, screens to block distractions, special lighting, special acoustics, adaptive tools, preferential seating)

**This list is not exhaustive; other accommodations may be available. It is important to work with your school guidance counselor when requesting accommodations.

In order to register for the SAT with accommodations, you must:

- Apply for accommodations before you submit your registration for the test.
- Complete a Student Eligibility Form (available from your guidance counselor).
- Submit the Eligibility Form in the spring before the test to allow enough processing time.

Once you receive approval, you will get an Eligibility Approval Letter, which states the accommodations you will receive. You can then register for the SAT either online or by mail.

ACT

The following types of accommodations are available from the ACT:

- **Center Testing #1:** Standard time testing with accommodations
You should choose this type of accommodation if you can take the test at a test center, under the normal time limits, and using either a standard or large-type test booklet. This option allows for accommodations at the testing center, including wheelchair access, large-type test booklet, marking answers in the test booklet, snacks, and printed copies of spoken instructions.
- **Center Testing #2:** Extended time testing (50 percent more time)
You should choose this option if you can take the test at a regular test center but require 50 percent more time due to a documented disability.

Standardized Tests and Accommodations

- **Special Testing:** Extended time and Alternate Test formats
You should choose this option if you need more than 50 percent more time on tests, require testing over multiple days, or normally use alternative formats for testing, like a reader, aides, or audiocassettes.

To receive Center Testing #1 accommodations, you need to:

- Submit a written request with your paper registration.
- Include your name, address, and phone number.
- Include the test date and test option (ACT or ACT plus writing).
- Indicate name, city, state, and code for the test center choices.
- Explain your disability and the accommodations you are requesting.
- Enclose written documentation from your school describing the accommodations you receive at school.
- Include the name and phone number of a school official who knows your current testing accommodations.
- Postmark your registration and request for accommodations by the registration deadline.

To receive Center Testing #2 accommodations, you need to:

- Complete a copy of the Application for ACT Extended Time National Testing with the assistance of a school official and sign it.
- Return your registration paperwork as well as the above form by the registration deadline.

To receive Special Testing accommodations, you need to:

- Complete a Request for ACT Special Testing form with the help of a school official and sign it.

Test Preparation Resources

Here are some recommendations on potential resources to help you prepare for the SAT or ACT. Remember, there are many more options out there, including books, courses, and Web sites. Determine what method of preparation will work best for you and your family.

Kaplan

<http://www.kaptest.com>

Kaplan provides test preparation for several different kinds of tests. It provides in-home tutoring, classroom courses, useful online programs, and free practice tests.

The Princeton Review

<http://www.princetonreview.com>

The Princeton Review, like Kaplan, specializes in test preparation. It provides tutoring, classroom courses, online options, useful books, and free practice tests.

Huntington Learning Center

<http://www.huntingtonlearning.com>

Huntington Prep specializes in tutoring children to do better in school and on standardized tests.

Sheppard Software

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games_vocab_sat.htm

This site provides free games, lists, and flash cards containing vocabulary words that you may need to know for the SAT and ACT. This site also allows you to hear how words are pronounced.

Algebra.com

<http://www.algebra.com/testing/scripts/st.mpl>

This site provides free practice tests that concentrate on the math sections of the SAT and ACT.

Major Tests.com

<http://www.majortests.com>

This site provides several practice tests for each section of the SAT, including sentence completion, critical reading, math, and essays.

Common Application

This handout shows you what the Common Application looks like and outlines each section.

What is it?

The Common Application is a standard application that students can submit (either online or by mail) to almost 300 institutions in the United States. While not all colleges accept this application, many colleges do, which makes it very convenient for students. If the schools that you are considering accept the Common Application, you only have to fill it out once and make copies. You can also choose one of five personal essay choices or propose an essay topic of your own.

Tips for Using the Common Application

- Even if you are using the Common Application for multiple colleges, you must review each college's application requirements, deadlines, and instructions.
- Each college may require different aspects of the Common Application (e.g., different types of forms). All forms are available online; however, you need to know which forms are required for each college.
- You need to submit your applications either by mail or online. You should not submit some aspects of individual applications online and others by mail.
- In addition to the application form, you may need to submit supplemental forms, standardized test scores, and other school forms. Again, each college may require different things, so be certain to review all application requirements.
- Once you complete one application form, you can either photocopy it and submit copies to all of the colleges you apply to or you can submit it online.
- If needed, you can attach additional pages to the application form. For instance, you may need more room to write than the form allows.

Sections of the Common Application Form

The following are the sections on the Common Application form along with a brief description of each.

Personal Data

- Provide your name, contact information, birth date, and citizenship.

Educational Data

- Provide the name of your high school, as well as any other high school you have attended.
- Provide contact information for your high school.
- List any college courses you have taken.

Test Information

- Include your ACT, SAT, or SAT II scores (these will also be sent to the colleges you apply to from the testing agencies).

Family

- Provide names, contact information, and educational information for your parents/guardians.

Academic Honors

- List any academic achievements or honors you have received (e.g., awards, National Merit).

Common Application

Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities

- List any extracurricular, community, and family activities and hobbies (include the time spent on these activities, positions held, or honors won).

Work Experience

- List any jobs you have had, including summer jobs.

Short Answer

- Provide additional information on one of your activities from the Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities section above (answer in 150 words or less).

Personal Essay

- Choose one of five essay topics and attach your essay to the application, or create and write on a topic of your own (you must write a minimum of 250 words).

Other Required Information

- Provide information about any educational misconduct or criminal history.
- A signature is required.

Personal Essay Example

Here are the six options for the personal essay from the 2007–2008 Common Application. An example of an essay (responding to option 5) follows.

1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.
4. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
6. Topic of your choice.

#5

I cannot think of just one experience that can illustrate how my admission to this college will affect its diversity. In no way am I trying to deflect or get out of answering this question. In reality, my entire life has been a series of experiences—some may say challenges—that have led me to this point. You see, I am diagnosed with Asperger syndrome.

At a young age, I felt different from my classmates. On the playground, they would play games, laugh, run around, and have a great time. They never asked me to join them. Now, this was partly my fault because I was usually on the other side of the playground reading a book about the Chicago World's Fair, which is a topic that I am very interested in. At the time, I could not understand why my classmates did not know about this historic fair or why they did not want to talk to me about it. On an occasion when they said hi to me, I made sure to tell them a new fact that I had learned; unfortunately, they never seemed interested.



Common Application

I was different from my classmates in other ways, too. I was always behind in my homework and had trouble understanding directions from my teachers. I could never keep all of my books and papers organized; they were constantly overflowing from my desk, locker, and backpack. This resulted in frequently lost assignments and books, and in punishment from my teacher. I was happiest when left on my own. I did not even know how to begin a conversation with a classmate, and never saw any of them outside of school.

As you might imagine, I did not have many friends. I did meet a few interesting people in an Internet chat room dedicated to the Chicago World's Fair. It was easy to talk to them online, although I never met them in person. Given my Asperger syndrome, I have difficulty interacting with others socially; as you can tell, this has always been hard for me. I also have challenges staying organized, I learn best visually, and I am most interested in specific topics, like the fair.

Despite (or maybe because of) having Asperger syndrome, I have many strengths as well. I am very punctual, I work hard on my schoolwork, and I often receive high grades. I am treasurer of my school's History Club. Over the years, I have worked closely with therapists to learn the best ways to carry on a conversation with people and how to interact in social situations. While social situations can still be difficult and overwhelming for me, I always persevere and try my best to learn something new from each situation.

Asperger syndrome is one aspect of who I am. It affects how I see others and myself, and it affects my daily life. It also gives me a unique perspective on the world, and has allowed me to experience a variety of things that others my age have not had to face. Given my distinct viewpoint, I feel that I will add to the overall diversity of your college. I will bring new perspectives to the classrooms, activities, and people that I encounter, while continuing to overcome any challenges that I come upon. My experience with Asperger syndrome has gotten me to where I am today: an honor student, with a few friends, a loving family, and the desire to pursue my passion of history. I hope to continue growing and learning at college, sharing my life experience with those I encounter in a way to contribute not only to the diversity, but also to have an impact on their perceptions and knowledge about Asperger syndrome.

Application Checklist

You can use this handout to keep track of all of the parts of the application you have completed. Check the boxes when you have completed each component. If there are additional application components for a school that are not listed here, please add them in. Use this checklist for each college you are applying to.

- School application form (student personal info)
 - Made sure you have signed it

- Departmental application form (you may need to submit a separate application for the program you are interested in)
 - Essay(s)
 - Had two people proofread it before sending it out

- High school transcript and/or midyear grade reports

- Standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, SAT subject tests, AP scores)

- Recommendations
 - Separate envelopes for each recommendation
 - Sent Thank You notes to recommenders

- Attended interview on _____ (date)

- Sent Thank You notes to interviewer(s)

- Application fee

- Make copies of all application materials (for yourself)

- Envelope (that can hold all of the above)

- Stamps

- Sent application on _____ (date)
 - Make sure to track the envelope so you are sure it arrives

- Confirmed receipt of application materials with the school's Admissions office

Application Organization Tips

Here are some tips and ideas to help you stay organized as you prepare and complete your applications for college. Remember, you do not need to use all of these tips; they are just meant to help you find what would be most helpful to you during this process.

- Use the Application Checklist (on page 50 in this workbook) for each application that you are submitting.
- Separate each application into its own binder or file. Put all copies and information for each application in this binder/file.
- Print out the application requirements for each college you are applying to. Keep these requirements as the first page of your binder/file. Before you submit your applications, be sure to review the requirements to make sure you included everything.
- Create a calendar with due dates of all your applications. Post it on the wall in your bedroom or over your desk.
- Set aside a specific time each day or each week to work on your applications. Do not allow anything or anyone to interrupt you.
- Ask for help from your parents or another trusted adult. They will be able to proofread your application materials, help you stay organized, and keep an eye on deadlines.
- Give yourself plenty of time to submit your application materials. Try to mail them a week before the deadline (or more) in order for them to arrive on time.

College Interview Tips

This handout provides some helpful tips to use while preparing for your college admissions interview. Remember that this is your chance to showcase your strengths and accomplishments to the school!

- **Always accept an interview** if you are seriously considering that college. Refusals will be documented. Try not to reschedule interviews either unless it is unavoidable.
- **Practice handshake.** Practice your handshake with your friends or relatives and get feedback. A nice, firm handshake should do the trick! You should smile and maintain eye contact (or focus on the other person's forehead, if that is easier) as you introduce yourself and shake your interviewer's hand. Greet your interviewer using his or her title and last name.
- **Research the college.** This will help you think about why you want to attend this particular school—a common interview question. It will also help you brainstorm any questions for the interviewer that you might have about the school.
- **Keep up with current events.** As part of the interview, an interviewer might ask you to comment or give your opinion on a current event. You will want to prepare for such a question by watching the news or reading the newspaper and keeping track of important current events. Try to avoid discussing anything too controversial such as religion or politics.
- **Prepare for common interview questions.** You can prepare for interview questions by using the *STRIVE* Common Interview Questions worksheet or by searching online for common interview questions for college admission. Think about and/or write down what you might say to these questions, but do not memorize those answers.
- **Have a conversation.** It is important that the interview occurs much like a conversation, so yes or no answers are not sufficient. Go further and explain why your answer may be yes or no. This allows your interviewer to learn more about you and gives him or her opportunities to ask more questions about you, like in a conversation.
- **Review your essay.** The interviewer may ask you questions based on what you have written in your essay. You may have also answered other potential interview questions within your essay. It may be worthwhile to refresh your memory by going over it before the interview.
- **Do not take a parent into the interview with you.** You can practice your interview skills with your parent and your parent may drive you to the location and wait with you. However, you should go to the interview room alone. Bringing a parent into the actual interview can make it look as though you cannot act, think, or listen independently.
- **Dress to impress.** Do not wear jeans and a t-shirt. Girls should wear a knee-length (or longer) skirt or dress pants with a dress shirt. Boys should wear dress pants and a dress shirt. When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- **Turn cell your phone off or do not bring it at all.**
- **Bring any documents you might need.** You may want to bring copies of your high school transcript, application, and your essay with you in case the interviewer poses questions based on them. Also, bring a pen and paper to take any notes, and write down any questions you plan to ask the interviewer.
- **Be punctual.** Plan to arrive at the location of the interview at least 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview.
- **Maintain eye contact.** It is important to appear confident and to show that you are listening to the person speaking to you.
- **Wait for the interviewer to offer you a seat before sitting down.**
- **Focus on your highest achievements.** This is not considered bragging. You are expected to sell yourself positively in order to gain admission. This is your chance to talk about your achievements and strengths in person. You can talk more about your personal experiences than is possible in an essay.



College Interview Tips

- **Be prepared to ask the interviewer questions.** This shows that you are interested in the college. Ask questions whose answers cannot be easily found in school brochures and Web sites. For example, ask specific questions about the program you are interested in or faculty. Questions to ask might be: What attracts students here? How rigorous is the _____ program (program you are interested in)? What has been your experience here as a former student/faculty member?
- **Close the interview** by confirming your interest in the school and thanking the interviewer for his or her time and consideration.
- **Send a Thank You note.** After the interview, you should send a thank you to the interviewer. Remember to add something specific about the interview to add a personal touch, such as an answer the interviewer gave regarding one of your questions that you found helpful.

Preparation for College

This handout provides ideas on what to do while you are waiting to hear back from colleges about admission.

- After you have sent your applications, **you should contact each Admissions office to confirm that they have been received.** If you applied online, you should expect a confirmation e-mail verifying that the Admissions office has received your application.
- Remember to **send Thank You notes** to the teachers who wrote your recommendations and to your college admissions interviewer.
- **Keep your grades up and focus on your classes.** It is easy to understand wanting to relax after the whole application process and just before graduation. Nevertheless, it is important to stay focused, especially if your college application requires a midyear report.
- You can **begin looking for summer jobs or internships** related to your field of interest and begin saving money for college and gaining real world experience. These opportunities are best if found early since there is competition for these positions.
- **Search for scholarships.** There are several available at the Federal, State, and school level if you qualify. Some are needs-based aid, where your family income must be at a certain level to receive this aid. Other scholarships are achievement-based aid, where your grades and efforts in and out of school can determine your eligibility. Begin your search in your high school career center or with the help of a counselor.
- **Learn how to manage your time efficiently.** This skill will be of use in college when you have many things going on at once.
- **Develop your independent living skills.** You can work with your parents or other adults to learn how to manage money, cook for yourself, do the laundry, or even to use public transportation. These skills are very important for college.

Waiting a Year

Here are some tips and ideas to consider if you decide to wait a year before applying to college or if the colleges you were considering did not accept you. Each of these tips suggests activities and experiences that can help to improve your college applications as well as help you to become more aware of your goals, strengths, and interests.

Note: If you plan to wait a year after high school before continuing on to college, it would be a good idea to apply to schools during your senior year. If your school of choice has accepted you, you should send your deposit to that school and request that the college defer your entry for a year. This will hold your place for the following year.

1. Students can often work and gain **real-world experience**. You can search for an internship in a career area you are interested in, or simply save money so you can attend college later.
2. Student can **travel** and learn more about other cultures, languages, and traditions.
3. **Volunteer** work is another option to consider. You can help the homeless, work with hospitalized children, or help give food to the elderly. Consider volunteering with an organization or cause that interests you and could influence your major in college.
4. **Practice life skills**. Work with your parents or other adults to learn how to manage money, do laundry, cook, clean, etc. These are important and necessary skills to have in college.
5. Get **involved in community activities**. It is important to practice social skills and interacting with new people. Find an activity that interests you and sign up.
6. **Take classes** at a community college, community center, or as part of an adult education program at a local college. Continue studying things that you are interested in. You may also want to take some classes that could transfer to college once you get in.
7. **Work on applications**. Review the schools you want to apply to. Make revisions to your applications to strengthen them. Start early so you have plenty of time to create a high quality application for each school.

Resources for More Information

Below is a list of resources that you can use to find more information on particular topics discussed in the *STRIVE* session, Applying to College.

Standardized Tests

College Board-SAT

The College Board administers the SAT test. On this Web site, you can register for the test, find test dates and locations, and purchase test preparation materials. This Web site also provides information on dealing with test anxiety.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/index.html?student>

Registering with Accommodations

This section of the College Board Web site provides information on applying for accommodations for the SAT test.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg/ssd.html>

The ACT

This Web site is for the ACT test. You can register online, find test dates and locations, view your scores, and find test preparation resources. You can also find information on applying for test accommodations.

<http://www.actstudent.org>

College Applications

The Application

This Web site provides detailed information on how to choose colleges to apply to, how to stay organized while applying, and application requirements and tips. You can also find information to help you write your college essays.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/index.html>

The Common Application

The Common Application is an online and print admissions application that students can use for approximately 300 universities and colleges.

<https://www.commonapp.org>

What Makes a Good College Essay

This site covers information on how to write a unique, quality essay for your applications.

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/essay-questions.aspx?uidbadge=%07>

College Interviews

The Truth About College Interviews

This Web site features a useful article on preparing for college interviews, how to excel during the interview, and what to expect during the interview.

<http://www.nacacnet.org/MemberPortal/News/StepsNewsletter/College+Interviews.htm>

College Interview

A comprehensive list of questions that you could ask at a college interview is included on this Web site.

http://www.petersons.com/education_planner/applying_article.asp?sponsor=2859&articleName=College_Interview

Resources for More Information

Interview Checklist

This Web site features a checklist to help you prepare for a college interview.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/120.html>

After Submitting Applications

Asperger Syndrome: Transition to College and Work Video

Coulter Video created a 57-minute DVD called *Asperger Syndrome: Transition to College and Work*, which provides detailed information on what students with Asperger syndrome can do to prepare for college, find a job, and have successful interviews.

<http://www.coultervideo.com/transitionvideo.htm>

Plan for College

The College Board provides several tips on how to improve certain skills that will be helpful in college such as note taking, time management, and essay writing.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/index.html>

Off to College Steps for First Time Students

OfftoCollege.com provides a college-planning calendar that lists different activities you can do after submitting applications.

http://www.offtocollege.com/first_time/index.html

General Information

Frequently Asked Questions—Applying to College

This site contains some frequently asked questions and answers about the college application process.

<http://www.aie.org/FAQ/?category=Applying>

Student Aid on the Web

Student Aid on the Web provides help with and links to federal financial aid.

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>

Scholarship Help

Scholarship Help informs students about various kinds of scholarships.

<http://www.scholarshiphelp.org>



Preparing for Success in College Activities

- * Assignment Organization
 - * Social Rules in College
 - * Time Management
 - * Organization Class Materials
 - * Balance Management
 - * College Interactions Role Play
 - * Self-Advocacy Role Play
 - * Understanding AS/HFA
- 

Assignment Organization

Homework or assignments in college will be different from those in high school. You will have a lot of reading to do, may need to write big research papers, have to study for midterm exams, and prepare for many other types of tests. This activity offers different tips on how to approach assignments in college so that they do not overwhelm you.

1. Most college professors will provide you with a syllabus for the entire semester. Look ahead and see what assignments will be due over the next several weeks so you can plan and make sure you have enough time to complete them. Write these due dates in your calendar or planner as a reminder. Using different color pens or markers for each class may help you to stay even more organized.
2. Many times, you may have other assignments that are more pressing and require more energy. Make a list of assignments you have due each day or week. Try to prioritize your assignments based on when they are due, how long you think it will take you to complete, and how much each assignment is worth as part of your grade. Post this list somewhere where you will see it as a reminder, such as near your desk, computer, or where you do homework.
3. Where you do your assignments can affect your productivity. Your dorm room may be distracting, whether it is because of your roommate, the TV, the computer, or the room itself. If this is the case, try to find another quiet place to do work, such as in a library, a study hall, or a common room in your dorm.
4. Completing assignments as soon as you receive them is ideal, but it might be unrealistic. One way to approach assignments is by doing them over a couple of days. Break assignments into smaller, more manageable sections, and make a goal to finish a section or two per day.
5. If your work is a reading assignment, take notes or highlight important parts while you read to help keep you engaged and absorbing information. Reread the highlighted portions to refresh your memory before class or for a test.
6. Other ways to help absorb information you read or need to know is by drawing pictures to help you remember important points, making charts to organize the material, making outlines to organize that information, or reading aloud.
7. A study group is another popular way to approach exams and assignments in college. This involves doing assignments or studying for exams with a group of classmates with the same assignment or exam. Together, you can talk through topics, help predict exam questions, and compare notes. Ask two or three classmates if they would like to study with you.

Assignment Organization

Describe how you organized your homework in high school. (How do you plan to do your homework? When do you do it? Where do you keep it?) Does this system work best for you? What are ways you could improve your system?

How do you think you will organize your assignments in college? Why?

What methods will you use to understand information that you are studying or reading?

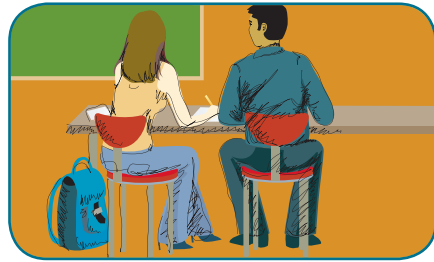
Whom could you ask for help on an assignment? Why?

Social Rules in College

In college, you may encounter new social situations and social rules. In this activity, see if you can match the social rule on the left to the picture that represents it on the right.

1. Your roommate may be an acquaintance but not be a good friend. You might not hang out with him or her socially, but you should be considerate of him or her.
2. In college, students come from different religious, ethnic, social, racial, and cultural backgrounds. It is important to respect all differences.
3. Professors may not know you personally. You may need to introduce yourself.
4. Studying with a classmate is not considered a date.
5. At parties, you will encounter "small talk," which means that people will talk about a variety of short topics but not have in-depth conversations.
6. Because there are so many students at your college, most will not know you. You will need to introduce yourself to people in class in order to meet and get to know them.
7. Joining clubs or organizations in college is a great way to meet people with similar interests.

A



B



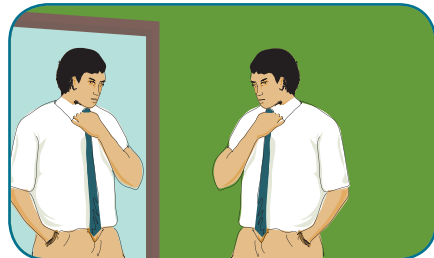
C



D



E



F



Social Rules in College

8. It is important to participate in groups or other activities rather than study all of the time.
9. You may receive assignments that require working with a group of students from class. In order to coordinate a meeting time for everyone, it is necessary to compromise. You will not be able to schedule the group around your own routine.
10. Some college students wear comfortable clothes to class, such as sweats, pajama bottoms, or flip-flops. While being comfortable is okay, it is also important to wear clean clothes and look presentable.
11. When working with a group of classmates on a project, it is helpful to be politely assertive in order to establish your point and role on the project.
12. Sometimes, e-mail may work best to ask a question of a professor. However, it is important to know what method of communication works best for each individual professor.

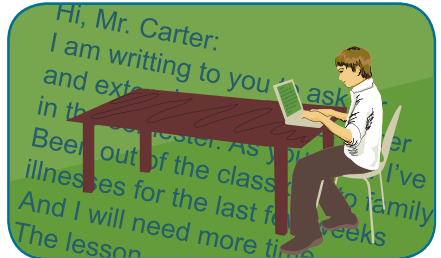
G



H



I



J



K



L



Answer Key

1. D, 2. G, 3. B, 4. A, 5. J, 6. L,
7. C, 8. H, 9. F, 10. E, 11. K, 12. I

Time Management

This activity allows you to manage your time by planning your schedule for 1 day or more in order to make sure you complete all of your responsibilities. Rank the activities in the order of highest priority. Place a number "1" in the blank next to the activity you would do first in the given situation. Then, place a "2" in the blank next to your second highest priority, and so on.

- On this particular Tuesday, you have classes at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and 12 p.m., a Community Service Club meeting at 6 p.m., assignments, and an exam tomorrow to study for, in addition to a meeting with Disability Support Services (DSS). Please plan your day by filling in the hourly calendar below. Remember to factor in the time it will take to get in between places.

- Go to all classes
- Eat lunch
- Eat breakfast
- Eat dinner
- Work on assignments
- Study for exam
- Community Service Club meeting
- Shower
- Meet with DSS representative

6 a.m.	
7 a.m.	
8 a.m.	
9 a.m.	
10 a.m.	
11 a.m.	
12 p.m.	
1 p.m.	
2 p.m.	
3 p.m.	
4 p.m.	
5 p.m.	
6 p.m.	
7 p.m.	
8 p.m.	
9 p.m.	
10 p.m.	
11 p.m.	
12 a.m.	

Time Management

2. Today, there are so many things going on that you do not even know what to do with yourself! It is Friday, and you have classes at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., and 2 p.m. You signed up for intramural soccer on Fridays at 5 p.m., and the team is counting on you. Furthermore, the team is planning to have dinner after today's game. However, there is a seminar that one of your professors wants your class to attend from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for class discussion next week. He is offering extra credit points if you attend and write a one-page paper on the seminar. Plan your day by ranking the order you would do the following activities.

- ___ Class 1
- ___ Class 2
- ___ Class 3
- ___ Breakfast
- ___ Lunch
- ___ Dinner with your friends
- ___ Intramural soccer with your friends
- ___ Extra-credit seminar

Please explain why you ranked the activities the way you did.

3. You have a 10-page final paper due on Friday next week. Because writing this final paper will take a lot of time, you need to break down the assignment into different tasks in order to get it done. Break down your assignment to write a 10-page final paper into at least 5 smaller tasks (e.g., going to the library).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample Answers for Time Management

1.

6 a.m.	Shower
7 a.m.	Eat breakfast
8 a.m.	Study for exam
9 a.m.	Study for exam
10 a.m.	Go to class
11 a.m.	Go to class
12 p.m.	Go to class
1 p.m.	Eat lunch
2 p.m.	
3 p.m.	Meeting with DSS
4 p.m.	Work on assignments
5 p.m.	Work on assignments
6 p.m.	Community Service Club meeting
7 p.m.	Eat dinner
8 p.m.	Study for exam
9 p.m.	Work on assignments

2.

- 2 Class 1
- 3 Class 2
- 5 Class 3
- 1 Breakfast
- 4 Lunch
- 8 Dinner with your friends
- 7 Intramural soccer with your friends
- 6 Extra-credit seminar

Please explain why you ranked the activities the way you did.

Since I would never give up an opportunity for extra credit, I will probably attend the lecture for as long as I can, but I will leave early enough to make it to the game on time. After the game, I will be starving, so I will join my friends for dinner. Once I get back to the dorm, I will shower before beginning to write the extra-credit paper.

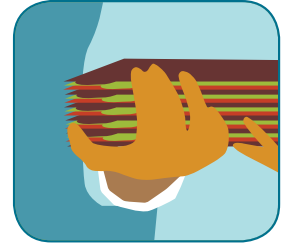
3.

1. Go to the library to do research for the paper
2. Read the materials from the library
3. Write an outline for the paper
4. Write sections 1 and 2 from the outline
5. Finish writing the paper from the outline

Organizing Class Materials

This resource provides ideas on how to organize your class materials and your daily schedule. Keep in mind that these are only suggestions for organizing yourself in college. You can work with your parents, counselors, and/or Disability Support Services personnel if you need help organizing yourself in other ways.

1. There are several ways you can organize class materials. You can start by purchasing a notebook for each class (you may want a different color for each class) or purchasing a multiple-subject notebook (like a 3-subject notebook or a 5-subject notebook). You can take all your notes in this notebook. Many multiple-subject notebooks contain pockets to store loose papers, allowing you to carry homework and take notes all in one place without having too many things to carry across campus.
2. Another way to organize class materials is by having a folder or a 1-inch 3-ring binder for each class (each binder could be a different color). You can use these to hold syllabi, handouts, notes taken on loose-leaf paper, and homework. You can add folders and/or pockets to a binder in order to slide papers in and store materials for class.
3. To help you remember your daily activities (classes, club meetings, social events, etc.) and when assignments are due, you can use a daily planner. You can write anything in it that you need to remember. Some schools may provide a free school planner on your first day.
4. If a daily planner is not for you, an online calendar may be more helpful if you use a computer, palm pilot, or cell phone frequently. Most e-mail systems have an updateable calendar that you can use to remind you when assignments are due.



Of these suggestions, which are you most likely to choose to organize your class materials?

Is there another method you plan to use in order to organize class materials? If so, what is it?

Balance Management

This activity contains scenarios that you might encounter in college that can interfere with your daily routine. Once you have read the scenarios, explain what you would do and why you would take that approach. There are different ways to handle each situation, and your response will depend on your personal preferences. Remember that you can compromise. You do not have to choose between all and nothing.

1. It is finally football season! Your college football team has won all of its games so far, and the homecoming game against their division rivals is this Saturday afternoon. Everybody at your dorm is excited to go to the game and all the other homecoming events held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. However, it is already Friday night and you have a 5-page paper due on Monday that you have not yet started. What do you do? Why?

2. It is the beginning of the semester, and you are just getting to know your roommate. So far, you think he or she is pretty cool and you have agreed to go out to a party together this Thursday night. However, you find out on Tuesday in your 3 p.m. class that you have to take an online quiz on Thursday after class based on Tuesday's and Thursday's class material. You have classes from 12 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Thursdays, and the party starts at 9 p.m. What do you do on Thursday after classes? Why?

3. It is the nearing the end of the semester—finally! Exam week is coming up in 1 week, and you find out that you have your first 2 final exams on the same day. Will you be able to study for all of your final exams during that week? How will you deal with having your first two exams on the same day?

College Interactions Role Play

The purpose of this activity is to provide you with an opportunity to practice a few common situations that you will encounter in college. Before you role play each scenario with a partner, take a moment to think about each situation and how to approach it. Write your ideas down on this paper. Some ideas are provided for you on the next page.

With a partner, take turns role playing each scenario, using the ideas that you have written down.

Scenario #1

In class, your professor gave specific instructions for an assignment, but you had trouble hearing him. You need to approach him after class to ask him what the instructions were.

Scenario #2

You missed class on Tuesday because you were sick. You need to ask a classmate in order to borrow her notes from the class that you missed.

Scenario #3

You think it would be helpful to study with your lab partner for the upcoming biology test. You need to ask your lab partner if he would like to study with you.

How would you word the question for Scenario #1?

How would you word the question for Scenario #2? What would you do if the classmate you asked said you could not borrow her notes?

How would you word the question for Scenario #3? If your lab partner says yes, what would you do?



College Interactions Role Play

Possible Ideas for Responding to the Scenarios

Scenario #1:

Excuse me, Professor. I had a hard time hearing your instructions for our assignment. Could you please repeat the instructions for me?

Scenario #2:

Hi, Audrey. I was sick on Tuesday and missed class. Could I please borrow your notes from that class? I will return them to you as soon as possible.

If she says no:

Okay, thanks anyway. I'll ask someone else.

Scenario #3:

Hey Bill, I think it would be helpful to me if we could study together for this upcoming test. Would you like to study together?

If he says yes:

Great! What evening works for you to get together?

Self-Advocacy Role Play

Using the information and tips provided on the Self-Advocacy Techniques resource (page 79), role play these scenarios with a partner.

In each scenario, remember to:

- Be clear and precise in your wording.
- Actively listen to what your partner says.
- Express your feelings, not judgments.
- Avoid absolutes, such as “never” and “always.”
- Use “I” statements.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Reach a conclusion.

Scenario #1

You have scheduled a meeting with your geology professor for Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m. She canceled the last two meetings that you scheduled with her via e-mail and without giving a reason. You are falling behind in class and really need her help. After class on Monday, she tells you that she cannot meet on Tuesday.

During this role play, you want to reschedule your meeting with this professor while also explaining to her the purpose of your meeting and the importance of getting her help.

Scenario #2

You are getting As in all of your classes except for your American Literature class. You are required to submit a paper on every book that you read; so far, you have received Cs on your papers. You are unsure of what you are doing wrong and how you can improve your writing abilities. You decide to go to the Disability Support Services center to see if you can receive some help.

During this role play, you want to explain the situation to the Disability Support Services counselor. You also will need to explain exactly what type of help you would like to receive (tutoring, review of papers, tips on paper writing, etc.) and when you need to receive this help in order to improve on your next paper.

Understanding AS/HFA

This activity will help you think through how you would tell someone else about having Asperger's syndrome or high-functioning autism (AS/HFA). Please keep your answers simple and easy to understand from the perspective of a classmate or professor who has never heard of AS/HFA.

For someone who has never heard of AS/HFA, explain what it stands for and give some general characteristics of someone with AS/HFA.

What are some strengths that someone with AS/HFA demonstrates? Give some examples.

What are some challenges that someone with AS/HFA faces?

How can someone without AS/HFA be helpful to you?

Sample Answers for Understanding AS/HFA

For someone who has never heard of AS/HFA, explain what it stands for and give some general characteristics of someone with AS/HFA.

AS/HFA stands for Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism, which are developmental disorders. Asperger syndrome and high-functioning autism (AS/HFA) each affect a person's ability to talk and interact with other people. Some general qualities of someone who has AS/HFA include having trouble in social situations and focusing on very specific interests.

What are some strengths that someone with AS/HFA demonstrates? Give some examples.

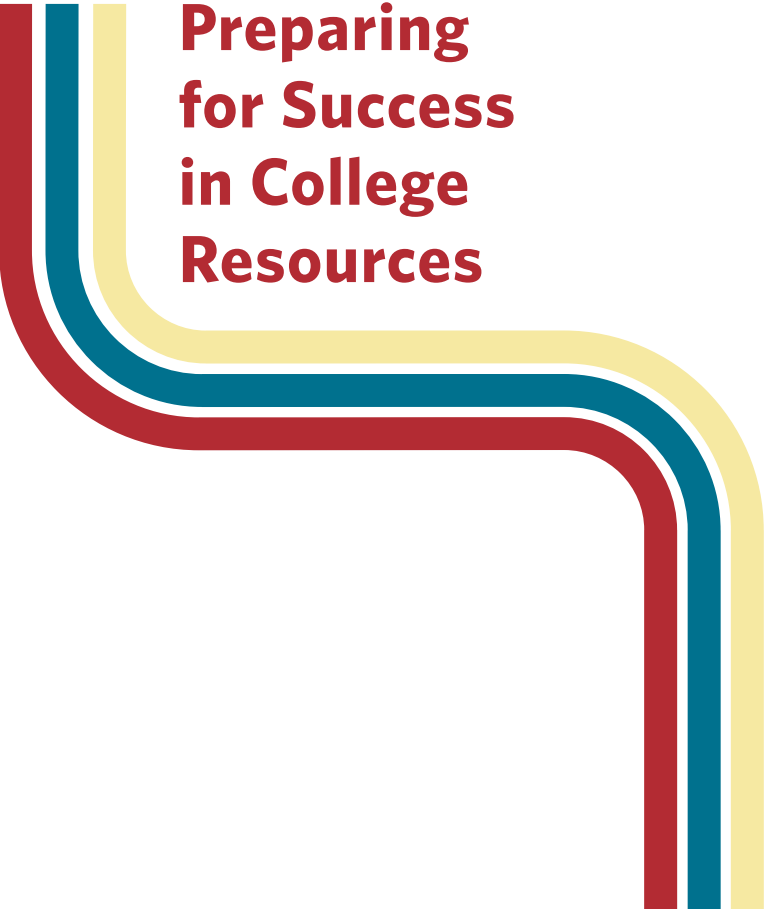
Individuals with AS/HFA may learn well by hearing or seeing the materials. They also use rules and structures to make them feel comfortable and secure. Individuals with AS/HFA are very smart and do well in areas of particular interest to them.

What are some challenges that someone with AS/HFA faces?


Someone with AS/HFA has trouble understanding how to act in social situations. It is hard for someone with AS/HFA to grasp facial expressions and body language. Individuals with AS/HFA can also be carried away with a subject that really interests them which makes it hard to have a conversation.

How can someone without AS/HFA be helpful to you?

Being understanding helps a lot. While it may seem that individuals with AS/HFA may not want friends, they do. Sometimes, it may seem that an individual with AS/HFA is being mean or rude during a conversation. The fact is, however, they have a different way of communicating. They also have trouble understanding typical social rules. Treat someone with AS/HFA just as you would want to be treated.



Preparing for Success in College Resources

- * Session Outline
 - * Benefits of College
 - * Understanding AS/HFA Resource
 - * ADA and Section 504 Resource
 - * Self-Advocacy Techniques
 - * Resources for More Information
- 

Session Outline: Preparing For Success in College

This outline will help you follow along with this Session. Please note that the topics are merely suggestions and are subject to change according to the facilitator's discretion.

Introduction

Session Overview: What are we doing today?

- Introduction of the Facilitator (and Peer Mentor)
- Introduction of the Group: What do you want to learn about applying to college?
- Structure of the Group: What rules should we have to create a safe and effective environment?
- General guidelines for the session

College Environment

- What are the benefits of going college?
- How should you interact in social situations?
- How will you stay organized?

BREAK

Self-Advocacy

- What does self-advocacy mean?
- How should you ask for help?
- When do you ask for help?
- Whom do you ask for help?

Conclusion

- Summary
- Questions

Benefits of College

This resource lists things you can do and opportunities you can take advantage of while attending college. College is not just about studying and learning; it is also about making friends and learning about yourself.

As a student in college, you can:

- Make new, sometimes lifelong friends
- Meet more people with similar interests
- Take new and exciting classes you could never take in high school, such as dance or entomology (study of insects)
- Have the opportunity to study in another country and learn a new language
- Join clubs and organizations that reflect your interests
- Have a chance to research something you are interested in with faculty and graduate students
- Attend parties: Fraternities, sororities, campus organizations, and students in their dorms throw them in their rooms, at clubs, and both on- and off-campus—parties are a great way to socialize with other students
- Join official or intramural sports teams
- Participate in résumé-building internships and job opportunities on- and off-campus
- Attend athletic games and tailgate parties (football, basketball, soccer, baseball, rugby, volleyball, softball, etc.)—these are a lot of fun
- Learn to be independent by living on your own and taking care of yourself
- Take advantage of off-campus offerings in nearby towns and cities, such as museums, historical sites, restaurants, tours, amusement parks, and anything else the area is known for

Understanding AS/HFA Resource

This resource lists different characteristics of AS/HFA and how they have an impact on individuals with AS/HFA. You could use this resource if you want to explain AS/HFA to a classmate or professor. *Remember, you do not need to disclose your diagnosis unless you feel comfortable doing so or want to.*

General Characteristics of AS/HFA

- It is a developmental disorder.
- Scientists are still researching the causes.
- An individual with AS/HFA has difficulties talking and interacting with other people.
- Individuals with AS/HFA may have very specific, intense interests that they focus on.
- Individuals have trouble using and understanding body language, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures.

Impact on Everyday Life

- Individuals with AS/HFA may have a hard time developing friendships.
- An individual with AS/HFA may speak about his or her own specific interests without paying attention to another person's feelings or opinions.
- Individuals with AS/HFA may be good visual learners.
- Individuals may have a particular routine or way of doing things, and they may have trouble interrupting this routine.
- An individual with AS/HFA may perceive slang terms literally and may not understand abstract language.

Tips on Telling Others About AS/HFA

Disclosure, or telling other people about your AS/HFA diagnosis, is a personal decision that should be seriously thought about. The decision to disclose should be made based on:

- *The situation.* For example, you may need to tell someone in order to receive accommodations in class.
- *The benefits.* Prior to telling others about your diagnosis, you should consider the benefits to you. Will it help you in class during group projects? Will classmates be more understanding?

Whom to tell and when

Here are some examples of people you may consider telling about your AS/HFA diagnosis. Remember, you do not have to tell anyone about your diagnosis; it is your choice.

- Disability Support Services (DSS). You need to disclose your diagnosis to a DSS representative in order to receive support and accommodations through this center at your college.
- Professors. While you will receive accommodations in class through the DSS process, it may be helpful to talk to professors about your diagnosis so they understand the areas that are challenging for you.
- Roommates. You may consider disclosing to your roommates in order to ease social interactions with them and potentially make your living environment more supportive.



ADA and Section 504 Resource

As your own best advocate in college, you should be aware of certain laws that provide you with accommodations and services. The following chart gives a general overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).

	What it is	How you qualify	What it provides
ADA	A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on a disability by State and local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need a documented diagnosis of AS/HFA. You are in college, have a job, or are in a service activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable accommodations to perform essential functions at school, your job, or in a service activity Additional protection in combination with Section 504 Administrative requirements, complaint procedures, and consequences for noncompliance Reasonable accommodations for eligible students across educational activities and settings
Section 504	A civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on a disability by programs or activities that receive Federal funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need a documented diagnosis of AS/HFA. You are in college, have a job, or are in a service activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A free and appropriate public education Equal access to activities and services All programs should be accessible, including extracurricular activities Appropriate accommodations and services that provide an equal opportunity to participate in programs Protections in education and employment

Self-Advocacy Techniques

A variety of communication techniques can help you to advocate for yourself effectively. When self-advocating, it is very important to be clear and use precise language. Below is a list of some helpful techniques, along with examples.

Be Clear and Precise

When you need help or support, it is useful to state exactly what the problem is and what you need. Speak loud enough for a person to hear you, enunciate your words, and be specific.

Example

I am having trouble finishing my tests in biology class. I need help finding out what I can do to receive more time for these tests.

Listen Actively

After you ask a question or state a problem, listen actively to what the other person has to say. Active listening means that you do not interrupt the person. If you do not understand what the person says, you ask him or her to clarify the point. When the person is finished speaking, restate or paraphrase what he or she has said in order to make sure you understand.

Example

Disability Support Services counselor: Well, there is an option available to you so that you can receive more time for your biology tests. We can complete some paperwork so that you can receive this accommodation in all of your classes.

You: So, you are saying that I can start some disability support paperwork?

Express Feelings, Not Judgments

When you are communicating about a problem, it is more helpful to express how you feel rather than judging or expressing negative statements. In this way, you tell the person how you feel specifically, which will be more helpful in finding a solution.

Example

Expressing feelings: It is really frustrating to me when I cannot finish the test and I get all of the questions wrong that I did not finish.

Judgment: I hate that professor. He never listens to me and the tests are too long.

Avoid Using Absolute Words

Absolutes are statements that rule out any other options or ideas. "Never" and "always" are absolute words.

Example

The professor never listens to me. He always ignores me.

Instead, say: Sometimes, I feel like my professor does not listen to me.

Self-Advocacy Techniques

Use “I” Statements

“I” statements are sentences that you use to express specifically how you feel. The purpose of “I” statements is to be clear about your needs and wants. Use “I” statements rather than expressing a statement with “You.”

Example

“I” statement: I need to receive more time on my biology tests.

“You” statement: You need to give me more time on my biology tests.

Ask Questions

It is important to ask questions in order to accurately understand what another person says. If you do not understand a point or if you would like more information, you need to ask the other person a question.

Example

I did not understand what you said about the process for receiving this accommodation. Could you explain it again?

Reach a Conclusion

At the end of a conversation, it is important to summarize what you learned during the conversation. This way, you will make sure you understood the main points. This will also help to highlight what you need to do and what the other person needs to do in order to take action.

Example

Based on our conversation, it seems like I need to fill out a few forms and meet with another counselor in order to start this process. You will set up a meeting for me with this counselor for next week.

Resources for More Information

Below is a list of resources that you can use to find more information on particular topics discussed in the *STRIVE* session, Preparing for Success in College.

College Environment

Aquamarine Blue 5: Personal Stories of College Students With Autism

Dawn Prince-Hughes. Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press (2002). This book recounts personal stories about students on the autism spectrum who have been accepted to college and their experiences.

Realizing the College Dream With Autism and Asperger Syndrome

Ann Palmer. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2006). The author is the mother of a student with AS/HFA who successfully transitioned from high school and home to college and dorm life. While this book is written for parents, it has many helpful tips and ideas to prepare for college.

[Think College Early Massachusetts](http://www.thinkcollegeearly.org/benefits/benefit.htm)

This Web site presents several reasons why college is a good choice.

<http://www.thinkcollegeearly.org/benefits/benefit.htm>

Self-Advocacy

[ASDs and Choosing College Courses](http://coultervideo.com/collegecourses.htm)

This article is about choosing college courses and how to approach others about autism spectrum disorders.

<http://coultervideo.com/collegecourses.htm>

[Succeeding in College on the Autism Spectrum](http://www.autisticadvocacy.org/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=10)

This article provides several tips on how to succeed in college including how to self-advocate.

<http://www.autisticadvocacy.org/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=10>

Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum

Stephen M. Shore. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Asperger Publication Co. (2004).

This book provides help on how to be a self-advocate for individuals with AS/HFA.

General Information

[University Students With Autism and Asperger's Syndrome](http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~cns/)

This Web site leads you to several tips, resources, and first person accounts for college students with autism and Asperger syndrome. Although it is a Web site from the United Kingdom, several of the links are helpful and relevant to the college experience in the United States.

<http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~cns/>

Succeeding in College With Asperger Syndrome

John Harpur. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2004).

This book provides guidelines on how to excel in college with AS/HFA.

[88 Surefire Tips for Succeeding in College](http://oedb.org/library/college-basics/88-surefire-tips)

This article at the Online Education Database provides 88 comprehensive tips on how to succeed in college.

<http://oedb.org/library/college-basics/88-surefire-tips>