

Self-Survey for the College-Bound

Respond carefully to these questions about your educational attitudes, goals, and perspectives. Be absolutely truthful and genuine as you answer each question. Keep in mind, there are no “correct” responses. For each item, check the appropriate answer category—“strongly agree,” “agree,” “lean toward disagree,” or “disagree.” Even if you are unsure of an answer or your response falls between two categories, answer every question but check only one answer per question.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Lean Toward Disagree	Disagree
1. It takes a whole lot of effort to achieve important goals.				
2. My parents don't have to remind me to study or do my homework.				
3. I usually manage to complete everything on my daily "to-do" list.				
4. School is fun.				
5. I want to organize myself so I have time for both homework and for out-of-class activities.				
6. I let others know ahead of time when I have a really busy day and can't be disturbed.				
7. I normally am enthused about the classes I am taking.				
8. I'm excited for my college years to begin.				
9. There is more to college than going to class and doing homework.				
10. Once I set a goal, I rarely choose to pursue a different one.				
11. Hard work will lead me to achieving my goals.				
12. I can truly say I enjoy school.				
13. My friends often tell me I'm an empathetic person.				
14. I like work that I'll learn from even if I make a lot of mistakes.				
15. I usually tackle tasks in order of importance.				
16. Once I have a certain idea or project, I don't lose interest.				
17. I am willing to study hard in college, but I also want time to be involved in activities.				
18. On most days, I look forward to going to school.				
19. I often participate in class discussions.				
20. Even for projects that take a few months to complete, I'm usually able to maintain my focus.				
21. Going to college means growing, learning, changing. In other words, it is not just “the thing to do.”				
22. I often create schedules for all the tasks I need to complete.				
23. If I don't understand something in class, I typically feel comfortable asking my teacher a question.				

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Lean Toward Disagree	Disagree
24. I am often asked to mediate if my friends have had an argument.				
25. I finish whatever I begin.				
26. I can usually estimate how much time it is going to take me to complete a specific task.				
27. I'm the type of person who forgives and forgets.				
28. On most homework assignments, I do everything that needs to be done.				
29. When I'm in college, making friends will be just as important as studying.				
30. I'm usually good at prioritizing my time to get my studying done.				
31. I usually find class discussions stimulating and interesting.				
32. I recognize my emotions as I experience them.				
33. I see many benefits in going to college.				
34. When something is hard, it just makes me want to work more on it, not less.				
35. I want to go to college as much as my parents want me to go.				
36. When I know the answer to a question in class, I usually raise my hand.				
37. My note-taking skills are good.				
38. It is easy for me to identify my favorite class in school.				
39. Setbacks don't discourage me.				
40. Among the aspects that excite me about college are the social connections I'll make.				
41. I use a calendar (paper or electronic) to keep track of the things I need to do.				
42. I appreciate when people, parents, coaches or teachers give me feedback about my performance.				
43. I know my strengths and weaknesses.				
44. I believe I know how to motivate myself to be successful in school.				
45. I can explain why I want to go to college.				
46. When I walk into class, I feel prepared and ready to share what I know.				
47. I am diligent.				
48. I love learning for the sake of learning.				
49. People who are good at a particular skill have spent a lot of time practicing that skill, regardless of natural ability.				
50. I see myself spending lots of time in extracurricular activities while in college.				
51. I am ready to begin thinking about my future and planning for college.				

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Lean Toward Disagree	Disagree
52. When I listen to a class lecture, I often make note of the questions I have.				
53. I seldom struggle to build rapport with others.				
54. I rarely do things at the last minute.				

Worksheet 1—Self-Survey Scoring

Now score your Self-Survey

Scoring your answers is easy if you follow these steps:

- Go back to the first page of your Self-Survey.
Above the words “Strongly Agree” write a 9.
Above the words “Agree” write a 6.
Above the words “Lean Toward Disagree” write a 3.
Above the words “Disagree” write a 0.
- Each of the questions you answered corresponds to one of nine overall categories relating to you as a person or as a potential college student. In the categories listed below, the numbers refer to each numbered survey statement.

For each statement, you will refer back to the survey to see which column you checked.

Depending on your response—“Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Lean Toward Disagree,” or “Disagree”—you enter that number—9, 6, 3, or 0, respectively. For example, starting with the category “Academic Ownership,” if you disagreed with the statement “My parents don’t have to remind me to study or do my homework,” you would enter a “0” on the line next to the number “2.”

Go through and fill in all of the blanks for each of the eight categories.

- Total your score in each category.

<u>Academic Ownership</u>	<u>Growth Mindset</u>	<u>School Enthusiasm</u>
2 _____	1 _____	4 _____
28 _____	11 _____	7 _____
30 _____	14 _____	12 _____
37 _____	34 _____	18 _____
44 _____	42 _____	38 _____
54 _____	49 _____	48 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____
<u>Tenacity</u>	<u>Participant Learner</u>	<u>Academic/Social Balance</u>
10 _____	19 _____	5 _____
16 _____	23 _____	9 _____
20 _____	31 _____	17 _____
25 _____	36 _____	29 _____
39 _____	46 _____	40 _____
47 _____	52 _____	50 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____
<u>Emotional Vocabulary</u>	<u>Eagerness for College</u>	<u>Time Management</u>
13 _____	8 _____	3 _____
24 _____	21 _____	6 _____
27 _____	33 _____	15 _____
32 _____	35 _____	22 _____
43 _____	45 _____	26 _____
53 _____	51 _____	41 _____
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____

Interpreting Your Self-Survey Scores

The survey you just completed and the interpretation that follows in the next worksheet are intended to encourage you to think about yourself as a college student. By looking at your scores and seeing what they mean within each category, you should glean insight about yourself—your attitudes, strengths and weaknesses, aspirations, and fears. This information will be essential to your college planning process.

The following section provides a description of each category. There is no definitive answer to what a specific score in a category means for you. You will see words like “scores in the mid 30’s or higher suggest . . .” and “lower scores suggest . . .” This lack of specificity is purposeful because these scores can be evaluated in many ways. It is up to you to read the descriptions and to determine what, if any, meaning a particular score has for you. Your score in one category might give you insight into something important, and your score in another category might be less meaningful.

Finding meaning in high scores is a bit easier than doing so for lower scores, but remember, there is no hard-and-fast interpretation of a lower score. In the category School Enthusiasm, for example, the first paragraph interprets scores “in the mid 30’s or above.” The next paragraph is an analysis of the meaning of “lower scores,” i.e., a score from 0 to the mid 30’s.

Keep in mind that your score—whether higher or lower—is on a continuum. Thus, your interpretation of what your score means in this area will vary if your score was a single digit or in the teens versus the high 20's or low 30's. In other words, the description associated with a low score might be more true of you if your score was a 6 as compared with a 29.

Finally, don't get hung up on the numerical aspects of the interpretation of your scores. The goal here is to provide information that can serve as a springboard in your quest to find colleges that are a good match for you. "High" and "low" numbers are less significant than using the information here to come up with match colleges that correspond with your attributes and beliefs.

Now let's describe each of the categories.

What Do the Categories Mean?

Academic Ownership

If your score in this category is in the mid 30's or higher, you are probably very conscientious when it comes to school. You do your homework without being told, and you make sure you complete your assignments thoroughly. You likely view your learning as your own responsibility, which means you create systems and habits for yourself to succeed academically.

When you receive a grade that's lower than what you hoped for, your first thought is probably not to blame someone else; instead, you may reflect on what you could have done differently and try to learn from your mistakes. In college, you can exercise your natural sense of autonomy by staying organized and trying out new systems and habits that fit your new academic environment.

If your scores are lower, you might find that seeking accountability from others helps keep you focused. When in college, you could try starting study groups with your classmates to make sure you keep track of deadlines and stay on top of everything. Colleges also offer lots of resources—study skills workshops, mentorship programs, and first-year seminars—designed to help new students grow in this area. As you begin to take more ownership over your education, you'll probably notice an increase in self-esteem, too.

Tenacity

Scores in the mid 30's or higher mean that you probably have a considerable amount of grit. Grit includes two things: maintaining your interest in something over a long time (consistency of interest) and sticking with something even when it gets challenging (perseverance of effort). These attributes show that you are tenacious and won't quit when things get tough or when you get bored. You can see projects through until they're finished, which is a valuable quality in college, given that earning a degree is your long-term goal.

Lower scores point to a few possibilities to consider. Perhaps you can persist through difficult tasks, but you get bored quickly, and you find that your interests change frequently. If you feel this describes you, be sure to choose classes in your first year of college that could count toward many different possible majors; an academic advisor can help you choose the best courses. Additionally, attending a college that offers a

wide variety of options in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences may be a good strategy for keeping you interested.

Lower scores could also indicate that you maintain your interests over long periods but get discouraged when you're faced with an arduous task. You may find it scary to attempt something at which you're not guaranteed success. If you feel this describes you, college is a great time to start practicing mental tenacity by not giving up and by being kind to yourself when you're not good at something the first time you try it. You may find that perseverance through adversity gets easier with practice when you consistently put effort into something.

Emotional Vocabulary

If you scored in the mid 30's or above in this category, you are probably fluent in the language of emotions and feelings. This means two things: you likely have a high level of empathy for others, and you are probably good at recognizing and regulating your own emotions. Having compassion for others means you can put yourself in others' shoes and view the world from multiple perspectives – even perspectives that may differ from your own. College will present you with different viewpoints, and having empathy will allow you to analyze arguments from many different angles. Your empathy and your ability to recognize and regulate your emotions will also serve you well as you adjust to an entirely new environment, which is bound to be stressful at times.

Lower scores may indicate that you struggle to relate to the experiences of others or to your own emotions. Maybe you've lived in the same place and interacted with the same group of people your entire life and find it hard to understand the experiences of others you don't yet know. This is very common; building one's emotional vocabulary is a skill that is developed over time and life experience. Expanding your emotional vocabulary will help you not only connect with others during college as you develop new and meaningful friendships but also take care of yourself during stressful times. One way to grow in your ability to recognize and regulate your emotions is to practice mindfulness, patience, and forgiveness of yourself and others.

Growth Mindset

Scores in the mid 30's and higher show that you believe hard work is necessary to achieve your goals. In other words, you are aware that raw talent is not enough to achieve excellence; mastery of a skill or knowledge also requires dedication and effort. Knowing this, you believe you can get better at things provided you keep trying. If you fail at something the first time you try it, you aren't overly concerned; you see initial failure as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Lower scores in this category could indicate that you have more of a fixed mindset. You may believe that you're either good at something or you're not, which could lead you to give up on activities or projects if you don't experience immediate success.

When you were growing up, you may have shown natural talent in certain areas. Perhaps you came to believe that your natural talent was more important to your success than your practice and dedication. However, this way of approaching life can lead to a tendency to give up too quickly on new endeavors. College will undoubtedly present you with new challenges. Now's the time to start shifting your mindset by permitting yourself to fail and viewing complex academic challenges as conquerable through hard work and dedication.

Participant Learner

If your score in this category is in the mid 30's or higher, you probably take an active rather than passive approach to learning. You are not comfortable merely taking notes and regurgitating the teacher's lectures—you want to get involved! You usually do the homework your teachers assign, not because you have to, but because it helps you learn. You participate in class discussion, enjoy it, and learn from your peers. You study the textbooks and may read additional material on a topic that interests you. Because learning and understanding are so important to you, you are assertive in asking teachers and fellow students questions. You likely will be most comfortable at colleges where professors are readily available, and lecture classes are not huge. In addition, you will want opportunities for discussions and seminars as part of your college experience. High scorers should consider smaller colleges.

Lower scorers in this category have several factors to consider. You may be interested in and committed to learning but prefer to learn quietly and deliberately rather than participate verbally in class. Course lectures, reading, and out-of-class assignments are ordinarily sufficient for you to understand the material. For you, class size probably will not be as significant a factor. Lower scores suggest that you may not mind being in a large class, and a bigger university would meet your needs.

Eagerness for College

Scores in the mid to high 30's or above signal that you anticipate college in a favorable way and are looking forward to the collegiate experience. Your adjustment to college will likely be easy because your enthusiasm will prove a great asset in learning to master collegiate life. Although you may have some concerns about college, your attitude is generally positive. Because you played a primary role in deciding to attend college, you may already have specific goals to make the most of your college years.

Lower scores can be interpreted in several ways. Just because you scored low here doesn't mean that you are not "college material" or are dreading the college experience. Eagerness for college tends to ebb and flow during the high school years. A lower score is worth thinking about, however. Are you motivated to attend college? You will want to give special consideration to how you can make college a satisfying and productive experience. Some fears about college—such as leaving home and being independent—are perfectly normal. If your score was lower in this category, involving yourself in the planning and decision-making processes will help you feel more in control and less like you are being pushed into college. However, if you continue to feel some apathy as college draws near, you may want to think carefully about and seek assistance with the timing and the nature of your college years. You might want to consider options like work, an apprenticeship, trade school, volunteering, military, AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, travel, or learning from home (via online courses).

School Enthusiasm

If you scored in the mid 30's or higher, you probably feel comfortable with the tasks and central qualities of school. In general, you like attending classes and have positive feelings about the academic nature of school.

If your score is lower here, there are several possible interpretations. You may enjoy some of the social features of school more than the actual classes, teachers, and classroom information. You may not have found school to be a successful academic experience, and your struggle with school has affected your attitude toward it. Your school attitude may impact your feelings about planning for college, your

willingness to enter a challenging college environment, the level of competitiveness you prefer, as well as your motivation to stay in school. Do you have the motivation to be successful in college? You may not have enjoyed high school because particular characteristics of your school may not have been suitable for you. If that is the case, you have a chance to choose the college that provides the kind of environment that suits you. Your analysis of the factors that matter to you in a college will be fundamental in finding a college you can be excited about attending. You also may want to consider these questions: Is the time right to enter college? Would you benefit from a year of travel, work, or some other activity before entering college?

Academic/Social Balance

If you scored in the mid to high 30's and above, both academics and extracurricular experiences are priorities for you. You will want to choose a college where you can have a balanced life—where you can pursue your studies, participate in sports or other activities, and still have some time for yourself. Colleges known for a “work hard/play hard” philosophy may appeal to you, but consider your college choices carefully; it's easy to take that philosophy too much to heart and end up burning out or getting in over your head.

You will want to choose a college where you are academically similar to the majority of students, where you are as likely as anyone else to understand the material in your classes, where you can spend about the same amount of time studying and still have a life outside of the classroom. In researching colleges, look carefully at the characteristics of students who enroll. What were their grade point averages? Test scores? Did they take courses in high school fairly similar to the ones you have chosen?

A lower score in this category indicates a lack of balance between academics and social activities. Perhaps you are keenly focused on academics and want college to be all about learning. If academics are your highest or even your only priority, you may be comfortable at a college that is academically intense. Alternatively, your score may indicate you value your social life more than your studies and want college to be all about having fun. If social experiences matter most, you will want to consider colleges where the academics are not so rigorous that you wouldn't have time to get involved in campus activities and socialize with friends.

Time Management

Scores in the mid to high 30's and above indicate that you likely are very good at managing your time to complete all your tasks. You create “to-do” lists and schedules to ensure you stay on top of everything, and because you're able to estimate how long various tasks take you, you probably make sure you have time available before you commit to something new. Given that you will have more autonomy over your time in college, you are likely to continue to hone your time management skills.

Lower scores in this category suggest that managing your time can be challenging for you. Maybe you wait until the last minute to complete assignments or study for exams. Or perhaps you rely on others—your teachers or your parents—to keep you on track or remind you of upcoming deadlines.

Throughout the college application process and when you're in college, managing your time effectively will be an essential skill. Strategies that can help you improve in this area and ensure you accomplish important tasks on time include keeping a calendar, setting deadlines for yourself, and using a daily planner to check off items as you complete them.