

LESSON PLAN

BigFuture: Building a College List

OBJECTIVES

Counselors will:

1. Outline the factors students should consider when researching colleges by utilizing the College Search tool on BigFuture™.
2. Provide guidance about building and saving a college list on BigFuture.

Before the Lesson

Materials needed:

- Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone
- Internet access
- Sticky notes
- Share BigFuture College Search Worksheet with students

Overview: How to Build a College List Using BigFuture

- Have students go to the college search tool at BigFuture and log in at <https://collegesearch.collegeboard.org>
- Begin the College Search by choosing a category to start exploring:
 - Location
 - Majors
 - Type
 - Campus Life
- Students will be able to explore other categories after their initial selection. Other categories include:
 - Affordability
 - Credit
 - Admissions
- BigFuture will compile a list of colleges sorted by highest graduation rate and based on the students' preferences.
- Have students review the colleges on their list and add colleges to their list.
- **For juniors only:** When juniors save at least six colleges in BigFuture, they will automatically be entered into two monthly drawings: one for \$500 and one for \$40,000. [Learn more at bigfuturescholarships.org](http://bigfuturescholarships.org).

In-Person Activities

Hand Raiser

Have students raise their hand when you call out their preference.

Sticky Note Share Out

Place signs for the preferences for one of the filters around the room on the walls. For example, for the settings filter, post signs labeled “Urban,” “Suburban,” “Rural,” and “No Preference.” Each student will place their sticky note under their preference. Students may return to their seats or remain in groups to discuss. This activity allows students to see commonalities they share with other students. Students can share the reasons for their preference. Challenge students by asking them to name a college that fits that criterion.

Rep Your College

Have students wear paraphernalia from their favorite college.

Scavenger Hunt

In advance of this lesson plan, have teachers post the names and logos of the colleges that they attended outside their door. On the day of the lesson, they can wear their college gear. During that day, have students find teachers who attended the colleges on their list.

Virtual Activities

Rep Your College

Ask students to locate some college paraphernalia in their home during class. They can display their paraphernalia on their screen.

Screen Time

Have students change their screen background to a picture of their favorite college or its logo.

Discussion Questions

It's important for students to be able to verbalize why a college is on their list or why they have removed a college from their list. Have students share their reasons for adding or removing a college.

Why is the research process important when building a college list?

What are the most important criteria to you as you research colleges and build your college list? And why?

Challenges

Student Challenge

Create a competition between classes to see which one has the largest number of students with six saved colleges by the end of a specified time period. You can also create competition between homerooms, juniors and seniors, and other schools.

Spread the Word

Have students encourage one another to build their college list by saving six colleges in BigFuture.