Oregon
HS.HECPS Curriculum

Lesson Plans for Educator Use in Career Connected Learning

OR HS.HECPS

Introduction

About This Curriculum

The Higher Education and Career Path Skills (HECPS) standards provide Oregon educators with a framework for helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully navigate education, careers, and life after high school. Through intentional instruction and meaningful learning experiences, students build self-awareness, explore opportunities, prepare for postsecondary education and training, and develop the skills necessary to thrive in an ever-changing workforce.

The high school HECPS standards are organized into four domains:

- **HS.HECPS.A: Seeking Assistance and Self-Advocacy**
- **HS.HECPS.B: Career Exploration and Preparation**
- **HS.HECPS.C: Postsecondary Readiness**
- **HS.HECPS.D: Workforce Readiness**

To support implementation of these standards, this curriculum is organized into four instructional units, one for each HECPS domain.

Each unit includes:

- **a unit overview,**
- **approximately fifteen lesson frameworks,**
- **assessment strategies,**
- **extension opportunities, and**
- **supplemental resources.**

Together, the four units provide more than 60 hours of instructional framework designed to help educators implement the HECPS standards in a variety of educational settings.

Unlike many published curricula, these lessons are not intended to be comprehensive or scripted. During development, educators were intentionally asked to create a flexible instructional framework rather than fully developed lesson plans. Every lesson follows a common template that identifies learning objectives, instructional activities, reflection opportunities, assessment ideas, and extension strategies while leaving room for educators to apply their own expertise, teaching style, and local resources.

This approach recognizes that no single curriculum can fully reflect the diverse schools, communities, industries, cultures, and opportunities found across Oregon. A lesson that works in Portland or Salem may need different examples than one taught in Burns, Astoria, Ontario, Pendleton, Medford, or Coos Bay. Rather than prescribing one way to teach the standards, this curriculum provides a strong foundation that educators can adapt to make learning meaningful for their students and communities.

The curriculum was also designed with the understanding that artificial intelligence is becoming an important planning and instructional tool for educators.

Each lesson includes opportunities for educators to leverage AI to expand activities, differentiate instruction, generate examples, create supporting materials, develop assessments, or adapt lessons for different grade levels and learning needs. Instead of attempting to anticipate every possible classroom scenario, the curriculum encourages educators to use professional judgment alongside AI tools to efficiently customize instruction while maintaining alignment with the HECPS standards.

This curriculum represents Oregon GEAR UP's investment in strengthening the statewide college and career readiness supports. By creating adaptable instructional resources that can be implemented in schools across Oregon, Oregon GEAR UP and Oregon Goes To College seek to increase access to high-quality college and career readiness instruction while empowering educators to build learning experiences that reflect the strengths and opportunities of their own communities.

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Introduction

How This Curriculum Was Developed

This curriculum was developed through a two-day Curriculum Design Sprint hosted by Oregon GEAR UP, to be shared through their statewide initiative, Oregon Goes To College.

Twenty-three educators from across Oregon came together to collaboratively design instructional resources aligned to the four HECPS domains. Participants included classroom teachers, school counselors, college and career professionals, and educational leaders representing schools and communities throughout the state.

Before beginning curriculum development, participants engaged in professional learning focused on instructional design, career-connected learning, and evidence-based teaching practices. Throughout the workshop, educators experienced instructional strategies and learning activities as participants before applying those same approaches to curriculum design. This process helped establish a shared understanding of effective instructional design while allowing teams to draw from their own professional expertise.

Following the learning experience, participants divided into collaborative teams, with each team responsible for developing one HECPS domain. Using a common curriculum template, each team designed a unit overview, lesson frameworks, assessment ideas, extension opportunities, and supporting instructional resources. The shared template helped ensure consistency across all four domains while allowing individual teams to contribute their unique ideas and instructional approaches.

Participants were intentionally asked not to create a fully scripted curriculum. Instead, they were challenged to develop instructional frameworks that any educator in Oregon could build upon. Lessons were designed to identify the essential learning experiences, provide a logical instructional sequence, and offer practical examples while leaving room for educators to incorporate local partnerships, community resources, student interests, regional industries, and school-specific priorities.

The result is a curriculum that combines the collective expertise of Oregon educators with the flexibility needed to serve schools across the state. Whether implemented in a comprehensive high school, a rural district, an alternative education program, a charter school, or another educational setting, these resources are intended to provide a practical starting point rather than a finished product.

This curriculum is Version 1.0. As with any first edition, we know there are opportunities for improvement, and we welcome your feedback. Please use the QR code to share suggestions, ideas, and lessons learned as you implement these resources. Your input will help shape Version 2.0.

We are especially grateful to After Affect for facilitating the Curriculum Design Sprint and to Bolen Design, LLC for bringing these resources to life through thoughtful design.

Oregon Goes to College is a statewide initiative of Oregon GEAR UP. Oregon GEAR UP is funded by the US Department of Education and supported by Oregon State University. We are proud to invest in resources that strengthen Oregon's college and career readiness by supporting educators, encouraging collaboration, and expanding access to meaningful college and career readiness instruction for students throughout Oregon.

OR HS.HECPS C

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Unit Overview 5

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Extension Opportunities 131

Assessment Strategies 135

Supplemental Resources 138

STANDARDS

HS.HECPS.C.1
Explore postsecondary educational and career pathways, and identify necessary training, education, skills, and prerequisites aligned with aspirations.

HS.HECPS.C.2
Research admission processes for postsecondary pathways and practice applying to apprenticeships, military service, higher education, trades, and non-degree programs.

HS.HECPS.C.3
Investigate strategies for making well-informed financial decisions about postsecondary pathways, including how to navigate financial aid options (i.e., FAFSA, ORSAA), application processes, and a variety of credible funding sources and scholarships.

OR HS.HECPS C

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Unit Overview

Students begin this unit by identifying a challenge or problem they see in the world. This can be as serious or as lighthearted as they wish. Rather than beginning with a single career or field of study, students use that challenge as a starting point for exploring the different education, training, and career pathways that could allow them to contribute to addressing it.

Students first explore pathways that require a two- or four-year degree, including programs, admission requirements, graduation readiness, and ways to pay for postsecondary education. They then explore trade and technical pathways and compare the requirements associated with different options. Finally, students investigate a third pathway of their choice, which may include military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce.

Throughout the unit, students complete lesson-specific activities and assessments that build toward a final portfolio. As students deepen their understanding of the options available after high school, they also practice important postsecondary readiness skills, including researching programs, understanding requirements, completing applications, exploring financial aid and funding options, comparing costs, and weighing the advantages and considerations of different pathways. The unit culminates with students reviewing the pathways they explored and identifying a possible next step based on what they have learned about their options, priorities, and goals.

Unit Purpose

High school students are often asked, “What’s next?” but what many hear is, “So, what are you going to do for the rest of your life?” The pressure to pick a career can be intense, not to mention difficult to resolve when many students are familiar with only a narrow range of jobs. The purpose of this unit is to engage students in exploring postsecondary pathways through a challenge they are interested in working on rather than beginning with a single field of study or job title.

Moving through the experiences in this unit, students become familiar with a diverse range of education, training, and career pathways that could contribute to addressing a problem they care about, whether that is a serious global problem like climate change or a more lighthearted, niche gripe such as dismay at all the movie remakes at the theater. Students explore three potential pathways connected to their challenge: one that requires a two- or four-year degree, one that involves trade or technical education and training, and one of their choice, which may include military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce. Along the way, students practice researching requirements, completing applications, comparing costs and funding options, and using decision-making strategies. Students end the unit with a portfolio, or a section of a larger portfolio, that documents their exploration and helps them consider which pathway might serve them best as a next step and why.

OR HS.HECPS C

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Assigned HECPS Standards

- HS.HECPS.**C.1**
- HS.HECPS.**C.2**
- HS.HECPS.**C.3**

Essential Questions

- What is a challenge or problem you care about working to solve?
- What are some different education, training, and career pathways people can take after high school?
- How do people decide which postsecondary pathway may be right for them?
- How do admissions and application processes work for different postsecondary pathways?
- How can cost, financial aid, and other funding options influence postsecondary decisions?

Unit Learning Outcomes

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- I can explore postsecondary pathways and identify necessary training, education, skills, and prerequisites.
- I can research admissions and application processes for different postsecondary pathways and practice completing applications.
- I can make well-informed financial decisions about postsecondary pathways, including comparing costs and navigating financial aid, application processes, and credible funding sources.
- I can compare different postsecondary pathways and consider which option may best align with my priorities, goals, and next steps.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

CareerOneStop

https://www.careeronestop.org/

Oregon Goes To College

https://oregongoestocollege.org/

FAFSA

https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

ORSAA

https://www.oregonstudentaid.gov/fafsa-orsaa/

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Postsecondary **Readiness**

Lesson Sequence

LESSON	TITLE	STANDARD	PAGE
1	Challenge Accepted	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**8**
2	Introduction to Pathways and Choosing 3 Pathways	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**18**
3	Pathway 1: Exploring 2-Year and 4-Year Pathways	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**24**
4	Are You On Track? Understanding Your Transcript and Graduation Progress	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**41**
5	Pay Your Way: How to Afford Your Next Steps	HS.HECPS.**C.3**	**50**
6	Six Steps to Pay for College (FAFSA and ORSAA)	HS.HECPS.**C.3**	**58**
7	Writing Your Story: Crafting Strong OSAC Scholarship Personal Statements	HS.HECPS.**C.2**	**65**
8	Ready – Set – Apply! (12th Grade Only)	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**74**
9	Exploring Trade and Technical Pathways	HS.HECPS.**C.2**	**82**
10	What Does It Actually Take? Mapping Requirements for Your Two Paths	HS.HECPS.**C.3**	**89**
11	Money in Your Pocket	HS.HECPS.**C.3**	**98**
12	Pathway 3: Military, Entrepreneurship, or Direct Work	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**106**
13	Checklist: Next Steps to Success in Uniform, Business, or Workforce	HS.HECPS.**C.2**	**103**
14	Act Your Wage	HS.HECPS.**C.3**	**115**
15	My Next Steps: Bringing Your Pathways Together	HS.HECPS.**C.1**	**122**

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DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR JAYDRA JOHNSON

Lesson 1

Challenge **Accepted**

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to kick off the unit by sparking student interest, activating prior knowledge, and generating the basic framework for the rest of the unit's exploration. Rather than asking students to begin by choosing a career, students identify a challenge or problem they care about and explore the different kinds of work that contribute to addressing it.

Students use their selected challenge to identify three jobs they will explore throughout the unit. One will require a two- or four-year degree, one will require an apprenticeship or technical training, and one will be a free-choice pathway that may include military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce. This challenge-based approach gives students a new way to think about postsecondary options while creating a common thread for the exploration that follows.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explore postsecondary career pathways that align with their interests and values.
- Identify three jobs connected to a challenge they care about that represent different postsecondary requirements.
- Use online career exploration tools to research possible post-high school pathways.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Challenge Accepted Handout
- Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout
- Writing materials

Technology

- Student computers with internet access
- Teacher computer and projector or classroom display
- Access to CareerOneStop
- Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk slideshow

Room Setup

- Arrange the classroom for individual work followed by partner or small-group discussion.

Teacher Preparation

- Print or provide digital access to the Challenge Accepted Handout and Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout.
- Prepare the Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk slideshow using the provided AI prompt. Display the slideshow digitally, or print and post selected images around the classroom.
- Review CareerOneStop and prepare to model how students can search using a challenge-related keyword and identify careers connected to that challenge.
- If students will not have computer access, prepare folders for a limited number of challenges with career information pages printed from CareerOneStop. Include careers representing different postsecondary pathways so students can complete the activity using the printed resources.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Brainstorm a Challenge

Students identify problems or challenges they have encountered recently that irritated, interested, or concerned them. The class creates a shared list of possibilities.

2 STEP

Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk

Students examine images and identify additional challenges or problems they notice, adding ideas to their brainstorm.

3 STEP

Choose a Challenge

Students select one challenge to use throughout the unit and begin completing the Challenge Accepted Handout.

4 STEP

Explore Careers Connected to the Challenge

The teacher models how to search CareerOneStop using a challenge-related keyword. Students then identify three jobs connected to their challenge that represent different postsecondary pathways.

5 STEP

Reflect

Students complete the reflection questions on the Challenge Accepted Handout and may share their responses with a partner or the class.

6 STEP

Introduce the Portfolio

Provide students with the Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout and explain that today's work is their first portfolio item. Students will continue building the portfolio one item at a time throughout the unit.

Introduction Questions

- What is a challenge you care about working to solve?
- What's a problem you've encountered in the last week or so that really irritated you?
- How do people think about what they want to do for their career?

Instructional Activities

Brainstorm a Challenge

Ask students:

What's a problem you've encountered in the last week or so that really irritated you? It can be a big problem or a small one.

Record student responses on the board. Encourage a wide range of ideas and reinforce that the challenge does not need to be serious.

Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk

Post the Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk images around the classroom or display them as a slideshow.

Students examine the images and consider:

- What challenges do you see in the images?
- What problems might people want to help solve?

Students add ideas to the brainstorm section of their ***Challenge Accepted Handout.***

Invite students to share additional ideas and add them to the class list.

Choose a Challenge

- Students review the class brainstorm and select one challenge they are interested in exploring during the unit.
- Students answer the challenge-related questions on the Challenge Accepted Handout.
- Encourage creative choices. Students are not committing to a future career; they are selecting a challenge that will give them a starting point for exploration.

Explore Careers Connected to the Challenge

Model how to search CareerOneStop using a keyword connected to a challenge.

The educator's suggested example is: ***"Too many movie remakes, not enough original new stuff to watch."***

Search a related term such as **movies** and model how to locate careers connected to the challenge.

With student input, identify examples representing the three pathway categories students will explore:

- A job requiring a two- or four-year degree.
- A job requiring apprenticeship or technical training.
- A free-choice pathway, which may include military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce.

Students then use CareerOneStop to locate three jobs connected to their own challenge and record them on the ***Challenge Accepted Handout.***

Reflect

Students complete the reflection questions on the back of the ***Challenge Accepted Handout:***

- What did you learn about the types of challenges that motivate or interest you?
- What did you learn about yourself, your values, interests, or priorities?
- As of now, which job is most interesting to you and why?
- What is something that surprised you?

Students may share their responses with a partner before several examples are discussed as a class.

Introduce the Portfolio

Distribute the Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout. Explain that students have just completed their first portfolio item and will continue adding to the portfolio throughout the unit.

Reflection Questions

Not applicable.

Group Reflection / Discussion

Invite students to discuss:

- What challenge or problem area do you care most about? Why?
- What's something new or surprising that you learned today?
- As of now, which job is most interesting to you and why?

Materials and Supplies

- Challenge Accepted Handout
- Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout
- Challenge Accepted Gallery Walk images (use AI prompt to create)
- Student computers or printed career information
- Writing materials

Recommended Resources

CareerOneStop

https://www.careeronestop.org/

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Students identify a challenge or problem they are interested in exploring.

Students identify three jobs connected to their challenge that represent different postsecondary pathways.

Students complete the ***Challenge Accepted Handout***, including the career exploration and reflection components.

Students add their completed work as the first item in their unit portfolio.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

If students do not have computer access, prepare folders for approximately eight different challenges. Include several printed career information pages from CareerOneStop in each folder. Students choose a challenge group and use the printed resources to identify careers and complete their Challenge Accepted Handout.

Curriculum Resources

Challenge Accepted Handout

See Figure 1.1

Challenge Accepted Portfolio Handout

See Figure 1.2

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Encourage creative thinking. The challenge students choose does not need to be serious, and students are not making a permanent career decision.

For students who respond that they do not care about any of the challenges, keep the choice low stakes. Remind them that they are choosing something to explore for this unit, not deciding what they will do for the rest of their lives. Encourage them to choose the option they find most interesting or least boring and see what they discover.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

AI Assist Prompt for Generating Challenges

I am helping a high school student explore careers connected to a challenge or problem they care about. The student's challenge is: [insert challenge].

Suggest careers that contribute to addressing, improving, or working on this challenge. Include a wide range of possibilities rather than only the most obvious careers.

Organize the suggestions into three categories:

- Careers that typically require a two- or four-year degree
- Careers that may be entered through an apprenticeship, technical education, certificate, or other specialized training
- Other possible pathways, including military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce

For each career, briefly explain how the work connects to the challenge. Do not assume that every career fits neatly into only one education or training pathway.

Encourage the student to verify education and training requirements using CareerOneStop or another reliable career information source.

AI Assist Prompt for Creating Gallery Walk Images/ Slides

Create a Google Slides outline for a high school classroom gallery walk called "What Problems Could You Help Solve?"

Create 15–20 slides, with one large, visually engaging image concept per slide. Each slide should represent a different problem, challenge, frustration, or opportunity that people might build careers around.

Include a wide range of topics, from serious challenges to everyday frustrations and fun problems. Examples may include:

- Wildfires and forest management
- Baldness or hair loss
- Improving athletic performance
- Education and learning
- Mental health and well-being
- Traffic and transportation
- Climate and environmental challenges
- Food waste
- Animal health and welfare
- Housing
- Cybersecurity
- Aging
- Entertainment and movies
- Video games
- Fashion and clothing
- Agriculture and food production
- Space exploration
- Making technology easier to use
- Improving communities
- Recreation and outdoor experiences

Do not name careers or tell students what problem each image represents. The purpose is for students to look at the image and generate their own ideas about problems or challenges they see.

For each slide, provide:

- A short slide title for the teacher that identifies the general challenge area.
- A detailed prompt that could be used with an AI image generator to create an original, classroom-appropriate image representing the challenge.
- An optional student-facing question such as "What problems or opportunities do you see?"

Images should be appropriate for high school students, visually interesting, reflective of diverse community contexts, and broad enough that students could interpret them in multiple ways. Avoid graphic, disturbing, political, or stereotypical imagery.

Do not use copyrighted photographs, logos, celebrities, characters, or other protected images. Images should be newly generated for instructional use.

The goal is not for students to identify a predetermined problem. The images should spark the question: "What is something here that I might care about changing, improving, solving, or understanding?"

Challenge Accepted
Handout

FIGURE 1.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Reflect on different aspects of yourself and see connections among your experiences, strengths, interests, values, support systems, and future goals.

Who I Am

What words describe you?

What is important for someone to know about you?

My Interests

What do you enjoy doing in or outside of school?

What topics, activities, or problems interest you?

My Strengths

What are you good at?

What do other people say you do well?

My Values

What is important to you?

What qualities or beliefs guide your decisions?

Challenge Accepted
Handout

FIGURE 1.1

Important Experiences

What experiences have helped shape who you are?

What accomplishments, challenges, opportunities, classes, activities, or events have influenced you?

Skills I Want to Develop

What do you enjoy doing in or outside of school?

What topics, activities, or problems interest you?

People Who Support Me

What are you good at?

What do other people say you do well?

My Future Goals

What is important to you?

What qualities or beliefs guide your decisions?

One Word That Describes Me

Choose one word that represents who you are right now.

Challenge Accepted

Portfolio Handout

FIGURE 1.2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Identify a challenge you care about, then explore three career paths that would allow you to contribute.

Challenge Brainstorm

What challenge or problem area do you care most about?

Why do you care about this challenge?

	JOB 1 Requires a 2- or 4-year degree	**JOB 2** Requires an apprenticeship or technical training	**JOB 3** Your choice! Includes direct-to-work or military
Job title			
Skills or tasks			
Salary and other details			

Challenge Accepted
Portfolio Handout

FIGURE 1.2

Reflection

What did you learn about the types of challenges that motivate or interest you?

What did you learn about yourself—your values, interests, or priorities?

As of now, which job is most interesting to you and why?

What is something that surprised you?

Why might it be helpful to think about future pathways in terms of a challenge rather than a specific job?

What is a question you have?

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OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 50 MINUTES
Over two class periods.

CONTRIBUTOR ANAYELI HODGSON

Lesson 2

Introduction to Pathways **and Choosing 3 Pathways**

Lesson Purpose

This lesson is designed to be engaging and collaborative as students explore a postsecondary pathway that is either assigned to them or chosen by them, with groups covering different pathways. By having students explore and present different options, the lesson helps challenge stereotypes and build career and postsecondary literacy by introducing students to pathways they may not have previously considered.

The lesson supports future readiness by shifting students from passive learners to active learners and making them responsible for researching and teaching their pathway to their peers. Through the presentations, students develop a shared understanding of the range of postsecondary pathways available to them. They then use what they learned to help identify the three pathways they want to explore throughout the unit.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Know that there are multiple education, training, and career pathways available after high school.
- Understand the basic prerequisites, expectations, opportunities, and common vocabulary associated with different pathways.
- Be able to explore pathways that connect to the challenge identified in Lesson 1 and select three different pathways for continued exploration throughout the unit.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Large poster paper
- Markers, pens, pencils, or other materials for creating the Human PowerPoint
- Pathway Reflection One-Pager

Technology

- Student computers or Chromebooks with internet access
- Projector, classroom display, or whiteboard

Room Setup

- Arrange students in groups of three to four.
- Provide space for groups to create and present their Human PowerPoints.

Teacher Preparation

- Determine student groups ahead of time or decide whether students may select their own groups.
- Prepare the Bell Ringer question for display.
- Assign or prepare students to select different postsecondary pathways for the Human PowerPoint activity.
- Identify reliable postsecondary and career research resources students can use to investigate their assigned pathway.
- Prepare the Pathway Reflection One-Pager students will use to select their three pathways for continued exploration.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Bell Ringer and Discussion

Students consider what they picture when they hear "life after graduation," discuss their ideas with a partner, and identify planning that may be necessary to reach that future.

2 STEP

Introduce Postsecondary Pathways

Introduce students to the different education, training, and career pathways they will investigate and explain the three pathway categories they will ultimately select from for the unit.

3 STEP

Research and Human PowerPoint

Students work in groups to research an assigned pathway and create a Human PowerPoint that teaches classmates about the pathway.

4 STEP

Human PowerPoint Presentations

Groups present their pathways. Students listen for information, vocabulary, questions, and connections that may help them decide which pathways they want to explore further.

5 STEP

Choose Three Pathways

Students complete the Pathway Reflection One-Pager and select three pathways connected to the challenge they identified in Lesson 1.

Introduction Questions

- When you hear the phrase **"life after graduation,"** what pops into your head?
- What future planning would you need to do to get to that picture?
- What pathways after high school are you already familiar with?

Instructional Activities

Bell Ringer and Discussion

Present the question:

- When you hear the phrase "life after graduation," what pops into your head?
- Give students one to two minutes to think independently and then turn and talk with a partner.

Ask:

- What future planning would you need to do to get to that picture?
- What pathways after high school are you already familiar with?

Invite several students to share their responses with the class.

Introduce Postsecondary Pathways

Introduce the pathways students will investigate, including:

- 2-year college
- 4-year college
- Technical college
- Trade school
- Apprenticeship
- Entrepreneurship
- Military service
- Direct-to-work

Explain that students do not need to understand every pathway yet. Their classmates will help teach them about the different options through the Human PowerPoint activity.

Remind students that they will eventually select three pathways connected to their Lesson 1 challenge:

- One from 2-year/4-year college
- One from technical college/trade school/ apprenticeship
- One from military service/entrepreneurship/direct-to-work

Research and Human PowerPoint

Place students in groups of three to four and assign each group a pathway, or allow groups to select pathways while avoiding duplicates when possible.

Each group researches its pathway and creates a Human PowerPoint on poster paper.

Research and Human PowerPoint (Continued...)

Have groups include:

- What the pathway is
- How someone enters or begins the pathway
- Typical prerequisites or requirements
- Common vocabulary someone should understand
- What education, training, or preparation may be involved
- Examples of careers or opportunities connected to the pathway
- One thing students might be surprised to learn
- Where someone could go to learn more

Explain that each poster serves as one of the the group's "slides." Students themselves provide the explanation during the presentation.

Human PowerPoint Presentations

Groups present their Human PowerPoints to the class.

As students listen, encourage them to consider:

- What is new or surprising?
- What vocabulary is important to understand?
- What questions do I still have?
- Could this pathway connect to the challenge I selected in Lesson 1?

Allow time for questions after each presentation.

Choose Three Pathways

Students complete the Pathway Reflection One-Pager.

Using what they learned from the presentations and their Challenge Accepted work from Lesson 1, students select three pathways they will explore throughout the unit:

- One 2-year or 4-year college pathway
- One technical college, trade school, or apprenticeship pathway
- One military service, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathway

Students briefly explain how each could connect to their challenge or career interests. Explain that they will investigate these choices in greater depth in upcoming lessons.

Reflection Questions

- What are important things you should know when considering a postsecondary pathway?
- What three pathways connect to the challenge or career interests you identified in Lesson 1?
- What next steps would you need to take if you wanted to pursue one of these pathways?
- Which pathway did you learn something new or surprising about?

Group Reflection / Discussion

During research and presentations, have students discuss:

- What vocabulary is important to understand for this pathway?
- What are you curious about?
- What questions has your research answered?
- What questions do you still have?

Encourage students to ask questions following the Human PowerPoint presentations.

Materials and Supplies

- Large poster paper
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Pathway Reflection One-Pager
- Student computers or Chromebooks
- Projector, classroom display, or whiteboard

Recommended Resources

Not applicable.

Curriculum Resources

Pathway Reflection One-Pager

See Figure 2.1

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Students collaboratively research an assigned postsecondary pathway and create a Human PowerPoint explaining its prerequisites, expectations, vocabulary, and opportunities.

Students present their assigned pathway and respond to questions from classmates.

Students complete the Pathway Reflection One-Pager by selecting three pathways connected to their Lesson 1 challenge and explaining their initial connections.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

For Human PowerPoint Research:

I am a high school student researching [pathway] for a class presentation. Help me identify the most important information my classmates should understand about this pathway.

Include:

- What the pathway is
- How someone enters or begins the pathway
- Typical prerequisites or requirements
- Important vocabulary
- Education, training, or preparation involved
- Examples of careers or opportunities connected to the pathway
- One thing high school students might be surprised to learn
- Reliable sources where I can verify the information

Keep the information concise enough to use in a short classroom presentation. Do not invent requirements that vary by institution, employer, program, or branch of military service. Tell me when requirements should be verified locally.

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Use the QR code to contribute to the ongoing improvement of this resource.

Pathway Reflection
One-Pager

FIGURE 2.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Reflect on your challenge and explore how three different pathways connect to your interests/goals.

Reflection

1. What challenge did you choose in Lesson 1?

2. Choose one pathway from a 2-year or 4-year college.

How could this pathway help you address your challenge or build your career?

What's one requirement, consideration, or next step you'd like to learn more about?

3. Choose one pathway from a technical college, trade school, or apprenticeship.

How could this pathway connect to your challenge or interests?

What's one requirement, consideration, or next step you'd like to learn more about?

4. Choose one pathway from military service, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work.

How could this pathway connect to your challenge or interests?

What's one requirement, consideration, or next step you'd like to learn more about?

5. Which of the three pathways interests you most right now? Why?

OR HS.HECPS C.1

DURATION 60 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR CANDACE CHAPMAN

Lesson 3

Pathway 1: Exploring 2-Year and 4-Year Pathways

Lesson Purpose

In this lesson, students will take the career they selected in the previous lesson that requires a 2-year or 4-year degree and research specific programs that could meet that requirement. Students will identify four program options, including at least two in Oregon, and then narrow their choices to two programs for further exploration.

The two programs selected in this lesson will be used as students explore requirements and costs in the lessons that follow. The completed Program Information Graphic Organizer will become part of each student's unit portfolio.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify degree programs that meet the education requirements of a career connected to their challenge of interest.
- Use Oregon Goes To College and other college or program resources to research 2-year and 4-year programs.
- Compare program options and select two programs, including at least one in Oregon, for further research.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Program Information Graphic Organizer
- Student portfolios or portfolio materials from previous lessons

Technology

- Student computers or other internet-enabled devices
- Projector or classroom display
- Access to Oregon Goes To College

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the Oregon Goes To College Explore Oregon Colleges page and be prepared to model how students can locate colleges and programs.
- Ensure students have access to the three careers/pathways they identified in the previous lesson.
- Prepare the Program Information Graphic Organizer for students.
- Be prepared to help students distinguish between an institution and a specific degree or program offered by that institution.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Reconnect to the Three Pathways

Students revisit the three careers they selected in the previous lesson and identify the career that requires a 2-year or 4-year degree.

2 STEP

Find Programs in Oregon

The teacher models how to use Oregon Goes To College to locate programs related to a career. Students identify at least two Oregon programs and record them on their Program Information Graphic Organizer.

3 STEP

Expand the Search

Students identify two additional programs that meet the requirements for their selected career. These programs may be located in Oregon or elsewhere.

4 STEP

Select Two Programs

Students narrow their four options to two programs they want to research further, including at least one program in Oregon.

5 STEP

Compare the Programs

Students compare and contrast their two selected programs using the Venn diagram on their graphic organizer.

6 STEP

Reflect and Add to Portfolio

Students complete the reflection questions and add the completed Program Information Graphic Organizer to their portfolio.

Introduction Questions

- What challenge did you select to explore?
- What three careers related to your challenge did you identify to learn more about?
- Which of those careers requires a 2-year or 4-year degree or program?
- Who has a college they are already considering? What makes you interested in that college?
- What are some reasons people might choose one college or program over another?

Instructional Activities

Reconnect to the Three Pathways

- Have students reference the three careers with different pathways they selected in the previous lesson.
- Direct students to identify the career that requires a 2-year or 4-year degree.
- Ask students what colleges they may already be considering and what makes those institutions interesting to them.
- Discuss some of the reasons people choose one college or program over another.

Find Programs in Oregon

- Pass out the Program Information Graphic Organizer.
- Explain that students will identify four specific programs that could meet the education requirements for their selected career. At least two must be located in Oregon.
- Guide students to the Oregon Goes To College Explore Oregon Colleges page and model how to locate institutions and programs.
- Students identify at least two Oregon programs and complete the first two lines of their graphic organizer.
- After students identify their Oregon programs, have them briefly share what they found with their table groups.

Expand the Search

- Students identify two additional programs that meet the requirements for their selected career.
- These programs may be located anywhere, including Oregon.
- Students record the additional programs on the next two lines of their graphic organizer.

Select Two Programs

- Students review the four programs they identified and narrow their choices to two programs they want to research in greater depth in future lessons.
- At least one of the selected programs must be in Oregon.
- Students highlight their two selected programs on the graphic organizer.
- Have students share which programs they selected and why. If desired, create a class visual showing the institutions and programs students are researching.

Compare the Programs

- Students complete the Venn diagram on their graphic organizer to compare and contrast their two selected programs.
- Students discuss their comparisons with their table groups.

Reflect and Add to Portfolio

- Students complete the reflection questions on the graphic organizer.
- When complete, students add the Program Information Graphic Organizer to their portfolio for use in upcoming lessons.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Students identify four 2-year and/or 4-year programs that could meet the education requirements of their selected challenge-related career, including at least two programs in Oregon.

Students use Oregon Goes To College and other program resources to locate and record information about potential programs.

Students select two programs for further research, including at least one in Oregon, and compare and contrast the two options.

Students complete the Program Information Graphic Organizer and add it to their unit portfolio.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am helping a high school student explore education options for a career they are interested in. The career is **[career].**

Help identify search terms the student could use to find 2-year or 4-year college programs that prepare someone for this career. Include possible names for majors, degree programs, or related fields of study, since different colleges may use different names for similar programs.

Do not choose a college or program for the student. The goal is to help the student improve their own search and research possible programs using reliable college and career resources.

Reflection Questions

- What programs did you find?
- What made you select your two programs for further research?
- After your brief exploration today, which of your two selected programs is most desirable to you and why?

Group Reflection / Discussion

At different points during the lesson, have students share their findings with their table groups:

- Before beginning research, share the career-related programs they are looking for.
- After identifying two Oregon programs, share what they found.
- After narrowing their choices, share the two programs they selected and why.
- Compare and discuss similarities and differences identified in their Venn diagrams.

Materials and Supplies

- Large poster paper
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Pathway Reflection One-Pager
- Student computers or Chromebooks
- Projector, classroom display, or whiteboard

Recommended Resources

Oregon Goes To College: Explore Oregon
https://oregongoestocollege.org/explore/

Curriculum Resources

Program Information Graphic Organizer

See Figure 3.1

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

Students will complete a Pathway Reflection Worksheet connecting evidence from their Journey Map to a selected career pathway. Students will justify their pathway choice using written evidence, participate in partner discussions, and create a personalized Next Steps Action Plan outlining experiences they can pursue during high school to support their goals.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Adapt the Career Pathways Graphic Organizer and pathway explanations for [**student population or learning need**]. Preserve the seven pathways and the key comparison categories. Provide student-friendly vocabulary, sentence starters, and other supports that make the information more accessible without removing the opportunity for students to compare pathways and determine which options may align with different interests, goals, circumstances, and learning preferences.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Students may know the career they want to research but not know the name of the degree or program that prepares someone for that career. Help students distinguish between a **career**, an **institution**, and a **specific program** or **major**. Different institutions may use different names for similar programs, so students may need to try multiple search terms.

The two programs students select in this lesson should be retained for use in the upcoming lessons on requirements and costs.

Program Information

Graphic Organizer

FIGURE 3.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this page to record information about college programs that prepare you for your selected career. You'll identify four programs, highlight two for deeper research, and compare them using the Venn diagram below.

My Challenge and Career

Challenge I'm Exploring: _____

Career Requiring a 2-Year or 4-Year Degree: _____

Program Options

Highlight or mark the two programs you'll research further. (At least one must be in Oregon.)

PROGRAM NAME	INSTITUTION OFFERING IT	IN OREGON? (YES/NO)	NOTES OR HIGHLIGHTS
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Compare Two Programs

Use the Venn diagram below to show similarities and differences between your two selected programs.

Program A Differences	Program A and B Similiaries	Program B Differences

Program Information
Graphic Organizer

FIGURE 3.1

Reflection Questions

What programs did you find?

What made you select your two programs for further research?

After your brief exploration today, which of your two selected programs seems most desirable to you and why?

OR HS.HECPS C.1
OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 50 MINUTES
Over two class periods.
(approximately 100 minutes)

CONTRIBUTORS
TYLER DAVENPORT, REBECCA BARTON

Lesson 4

Are You On Track? **Understanding Your Transcript and Graduation Progress**

Lesson Purpose

Students will learn how to read and interpret a high school transcript while evaluating their progress toward graduation. They will understand graduation requirements, GPA calculations, credit accumulation, and how transcripts may be used by colleges, apprenticeship programs, military branches, employers, and other postsecondary pathways.

Students will then apply this knowledge by acting as admissions reviewers, using anonymized student transcripts and admissions criteria to determine whether applicants meet requirements for different postsecondary pathways. Finally, students will practice professional communication by drafting an email requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher or counselor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interpret the major sections of a high school transcript.
- Determine whether they are on track for graduation.
- Explain the differences between current GPA, cumulative GPA, weighted GPA, and unweighted GPA.
- Evaluate transcripts using admissions or entry criteria for different postsecondary pathways.
- Draft a professional email requesting a letter of recommendation.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Student transcripts or sample transcripts
- Transcript Check worksheet
- School or district graduation requirements
- 4–6 anonymized or fictional transcripts for the Admissions Committee Challenge
- Admissions Criteria Cards
- Recommendation Request Email Template
- Highlighters or colored pencils

Technology

- Projector or classroom display
- Student devices, if transcripts or resources will be accessed digitally

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review school or district graduation requirements and determine which requirements students will use during the Transcript Check.
- Arrange for students to access their own transcripts, if appropriate. If individual student transcripts cannot be used, prepare sample transcripts.
- Prepare 4–6 anonymized or fictional transcripts for the Admissions Committee Challenge.
- Create Admissions Criteria Cards representing several postsecondary options. Use actual verified requirements from selected institutions/programs or clearly label teacher-created criteria as fictional examples for classroom practice.
- Prepare the Recommendation Request Email Template.
- Review transcript terminology students may encounter, including credits, GPA, course requirements, electives, and class rank, if applicable.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Understanding Your Transcript

Students learn the major components of a high school transcript, review graduation requirements, and discuss current, cumulative, weighted, and unweighted GPA.

2 STEP

Transcript Check

Students analyze their own or a sample transcript, identifying requirements that are completed, in progress, and still needed.

3 STEP

Admissions Committee Challenge

Students work in small groups to review anonymized transcripts against admissions or entry criteria for several postsecondary pathways. Groups make and justify admissions decisions using evidence from the transcripts.

4 STEP

Discuss the Decisions

Groups compare their decisions and discuss why GPA is only one piece of information that may be considered when evaluating an applicant.

5 STEP

Professional Recommendation Request

Students use a template to draft a professional email requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher or counselor.

6 STEP

Reflect and Close

Students reflect on what they learned about their graduation progress, transcripts, and preparation for future postsecondary opportunities.

Introduction Questions

- What information do colleges, training programs, or employers learn from your transcript?
- Is GPA the only thing that matters?
- How do you know if you're on track to graduate?
- What questions would you have if you found an error on your transcript?

Instructional Activities

Understanding Your Transcript

Introduce the major components of a high school transcript.

Review:

- Credits earned
- Credits still needed
- Required subjects
- Electives
- Current GPA
- Cumulative GPA
- Weighted vs. unweighted GPA
- Class rank, if applicable

Review school or district graduation requirements and explain how students can use their transcript to monitor their progress.

Transcript Check

Provide students with their own transcript or a sample transcript and the Transcript Check worksheet.

Students compare the transcript with graduation requirements.

Students highlight:

- Green: Requirements completed
- Yellow: In progress
- Red: Still needed/not started

Students determine whether the transcript shows that the student is currently on track for graduation.

If students identify missing requirements or possible errors on their own transcripts, direct them to the appropriate school counselor or staff member.

Admissions Committee Challenge

Place students in small groups.

Give each group:

- 3–4 anonymized or fictional transcripts
- Admissions Criteria Cards
- Highlighters or colored pencils

Admissions Committee Challenge (continued...)

Provide criteria representing several possible pathways, such as:

- Four-year university
- Community college
- Apprenticeship
- Military
- Trade or technical school

Discuss the Decisions

Have groups share and compare their decisions.

Discuss:

- Which decisions were easiest or most difficult?
- Did every group make the same decision?
- What information mattered besides GPA?
- What information would you want to know that was not available on the transcript?

Reinforce that actual admissions and entry requirements vary by institution, program, and pathway.

Professional Recommendation Request

Introduce the Recommendation Request Email Template.

Review the components of a professional request:

- Subject line
- Greeting
- Reason for asking
- Specific program, scholarship, or opportunity
- Deadline
- Why the student selected that teacher or counselor
- Thank you
- Professional closing

Students personalize the template to draft their own recommendation request.

Unless students have an actual need for a recommendation, the email should remain a practice draft rather than being sent.

Reflect and Close

Students complete the lesson reflection and consider what actions, if any, they need to take to remain on track for graduation and prepare for their future pathway.

Reflection Questions

- What surprised you about your transcript?
- Are you currently on track to graduate? If not, what steps could you take?
- Why might admissions officers or programs look beyond GPA?
- How can a strong recommendation letter strengthen an application?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups or as a class, discuss:

- How can you strengthen your transcript before graduation?
- Which admissions decisions were the most difficult? Why?
- Did everyone agree?
- What information mattered besides GPA?

Materials and Supplies

- Student or sample transcripts
- Transcript Check worksheet
- School or district graduation requirements
- Anonymized or fictional transcripts
- Admissions Criteria Cards
- Recommendation Request Email Template
- Highlighters or colored pencils

Recommended Resources

School or district graduation requirements

School transcript guide

Admissions or entry requirements for selected postsecondary institutions and programs

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete a Transcript Check by identifying completed, in-progress, and remaining graduation requirements.
- Students analyze anonymized or fictional transcripts using provided admissions or entry criteria and justify their decisions with evidence.
- Students participate in discussion about how transcripts are used in postsecondary decision-making.
- Students draft a professional email requesting a letter of recommendation.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Create differentiated transcript analysis activities for high school students with varying reading levels. Generate realistic fictional transcripts, postsecondary admissions or entry scenarios, and discussion questions that can be adapted to my school's graduation requirements. Include pathways such as four-year colleges, community colleges, apprenticeships, trade or technical programs, and military service.

Clearly label all fictional admissions criteria as examples rather than actual requirements. Provide scaffolds for students who need additional support and extension questions for students ready for a greater challenge.

Curriculum Resources

Transcript Check

See Figure 4.1

Admissions Committee Challenge

See Figure 4.2

Recommendation Request Email Template

See Figure 4.3

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

If students use their actual transcripts, avoid requiring them to share grades, GPA, credit deficiencies, or other personal academic information with classmates. The individual Transcript Check should remain private.

If students discover that they may not be on track for graduation or identify a possible transcript error, direct them to a school counselor or other appropriate staff member rather than asking them to develop a solution independently.

Admissions and eligibility requirements vary considerably across colleges, apprenticeships, military pathways, and technical programs. When using real programs, verify current requirements rather than relying on generalized examples.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

After groups make their admissions decisions, provide additional information about each fictional applicant that was not visible on the transcript, such as leadership, work experience, certifications, essays, or extracurricular activities. Have students reconsider whether the additional information changes their thinking.

This can reinforce that a transcript is important, but it may be only one part of a larger admissions or selection process.

Transcript
Check

FIGURE 4.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to review your transcript and identify what you've completed, what's still in progress, and what you still need to graduate.

Credits Earned

List total credits completed so far.

Credits Still Needed

Record how many credits you still need to graduate.

GPA

Write your current and cumulative GPA.

Weighted / Unweighted

Note if your GPA is weighted or unweighted.

Required Subjects and Electives

Identify which subjects are required and which are electives.

Graduation Requirements

Mark each as Completed, In Progress, or Still Needed.

Questions or Possible Errors

List anything you should discuss with your counselor.

On Track for Graduation

Explain whether you're currently on track and what steps you might take next.

Admissions Committee
Challenge

FIGURE 4.2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Review each anonymized transcript and use the Admissions Criteria Cards to decide whether the applicant meets the program's requirements.

Applicant or Transcript Number: _____

Postsecondary Pathway or Program: _____

Criteria Met
List the criteria the applicant already meets.

Criteria Not Yet Met
List the criteria the applicant does not yet meet.

Evidence from Transcript

Note specific courses, grades, or experiences that support your evaluation.

Group Decision
Record your group's admission decision.

Explanation or Justification
Briefly explain your reasoning based on the evidence.

Recommendation Request

FIGURE 4.3

Email Template

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this template to draft a professional email requesting a recommendation for a program, scholarship, or opportunity.

Subject Line: _____

Write a clear, professional subject line (e.g., Recommendation Request for Scholarship Application).

Greeting: _____

Address your recommender respectfully (e.g., Dear Ms. Lopez,).

Reason for Request:

Briefly explain why you're asking for a recommendation.

Opportunity or Program:

Name the specific program, scholarship, or opportunity.

Why You Selected This Person:

Explain why you chose them to write your recommendation.

Thank-You: _____

Express appreciation for their time and support.

Professional Closing: _____

End with a polite sign-off (e.g., Sincerely, or Best regards, followed by your name).

OR HS.HECPS C.3

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR TYLER DAVENPORT

Lesson 5

Pay Your Way: How to Afford Your Next Steps

Lesson Purpose

Understanding how to pay for education and training after high school is an essential part of postsecondary planning. Many students only consider tuition costs without recognizing the impact of scholarships, grants, housing, transportation, books, and other expenses. This lesson helps students understand the difference between the "sticker price" and the actual cost of attending a postsecondary program.

Students will use the Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid resource while participating in an interactive card game that simulates paying for college, trade school, apprenticeship, military training, or certification programs. Seniors may replace the simulation with actual financial aid offers from schools or programs they are considering.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the difference between Cost of Attendance and Net Price.
- Identify trustworthy scholarship and grant resources.
- Compare multiple financial aid options.
- Calculate the remaining cost after financial aid.
- Develop a realistic funding plan for a postsecondary pathway.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet, one per student/ pair
- Pay Your Way Card Game: Card Values Reference Sheet, one per student or pair
- One standard deck of playing cards per group
- Calculators, if needed

Technology

- Projector or classroom display
- Internet access for Oregon Goes To College and scholarship/financial aid resources

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

Review the Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet and determine which sections students will complete during the Pay Your Way Card Game.

Prepare the Pay Your Way Card Game materials. The activity uses three resources that work together:

- The playing cards generate each student's fictional financial scenario.
- The Pay Your Way Card Game: Card Values Reference Sheet tells students what each card represents.
- The Oregon Goes to College Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet is where students record the information generated by their cards and calculate their costs.

Before the activity, separate or organize the playing cards so students can draw one card from each suit. Each suit represents a different part of paying for postsecondary education:

- ♥ Hearts = Cost of Attendance
- ♦ Diamonds = Grants & Scholarships
- ♣ Clubs = Work-Study
- ♠ Spades = Loan/Payment Option

Prepare to model one example for the class: draw a card → find the card on the Card Values Reference Sheet → record the corresponding information on the Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet.

Prepare examples of trustworthy scholarship and financial aid resources, such as Oregon Goes To College, OSAC, and college or program financial aid offices.

For 12th-grade students, consider allowing students to use actual financial aid offers from colleges or programs they are considering in place of the simulated card activity.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Bell Ringer

Students consider whether the option with the lowest tuition is always the least expensive and begin thinking about the difference between tuition and total postsecondary costs.

2 STEP

Paying for Postsecondary Education Mini-Lesson

Introduce Cost of Attendance, Net Price, grants, scholarships, loans, FAFSA/ORSAA, and trustworthy financial aid resources.

3 STEP

Pay Your Way Card Game

Students use the card simulation to generate postsecondary costs and financial aid while completing the Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid resource.

4 STEP

Compare the Results

Students compare their final costs and discuss how different expenses and financial aid sources affected affordability.

5 STEP

Reflection & Exit Ticket

Students reflect on what surprised them about postsecondary costs and identify actions they can take now to make future education or training more affordable.

Introduction Questions

- What do you think is the biggest expense after high school?
- Does everyone pay the same amount to attend college or training?
- What is the difference between a scholarship and a grant?
- Where can students safely search for scholarships?

Instructional Activities

Bell Ringer

Display the statement:

"The college with the lowest tuition is always the least expensive option."

Have students decide whether they agree or disagree and briefly explain their reasoning.

Use several relevant college, community college, trade, or training examples to discuss the difference between tuition and the total cost of attending a program.

Introduce the idea that tuition is only one part of the total Cost of Attendance.

Paying for Postsecondary Education Mini-Lesson

Review the following concepts:

- Cost of Attendance
- Net Price
- Grants
- Scholarships
- Loans
- FAFSA/ORSAA

Discuss expenses students may need to consider beyond tuition, including housing, food, books, transportation, and other costs.

Show students examples of trustworthy scholarship and financial aid resources and discuss basic warning signs of scholarship scams or unreliable websites.

Pay Your Way Card Game

Explain how the three activity materials work together before students begin.

Give each student or pair the Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet and access to the Pay Your Way Card Game: Card Values Reference Sheet.

Explain that the playing cards generate a fictional financial scenario. Students draw a card, find that card on the reference sheet, and transfer the corresponding information to their worksheet.

Students draw one card from each suit:

♥ Hearts = Cost of Attendance

Pay Your Way Card Game (continued...)

♦ Diamonds = Grants & Scholarships
♣ Clubs = Work-Study
♠ Spades = Loan/Payment Option

Students use the values generated by their cards to complete the appropriate sections of the worksheet.

Students calculate their estimated Out-of-Pocket Cost for One Year and consider how grants, scholarships, work-study, and borrowing or other payment options affect affordability.

Students compare their results with classmates and discuss why students with different costs and financial aid may face very different financial decisions.

That is probably enough in the actual lesson. I would not reproduce all of the card values there. That's what the reference sheet is for.

Compare the Results

Have students compare their results with classmates.

Discuss:

- Who had the lowest final cost?
- Did the option with the lowest tuition always have the lowest total cost?
- Which scholarships, grants, or other forms of assistance made the biggest difference?
- Which expenses had the greatest impact on the final cost?
- What strategies could help reduce educational costs before graduation?

Reinforce that affordability depends on both costs and available financial resources, not simply the listed tuition price.

Reflection & Exit Ticket

Students complete a written reflection:

- What surprised you most about the cost of postsecondary education?
- Which financial aid source had the greatest impact on your final cost?
- What expenses are often overlooked when planning for college or career training?
- What is one thing you can do now to make your future education more affordable?

Reflection Questions

Not applicable.

Group Reflection / Discussion

Discuss:

- Who had the lowest final cost?
- Did the school or program with the lowest tuition always have the lowest total cost?
- Which scholarships or grants made the biggest difference?
- What strategies could help reduce educational costs before graduation?

Materials and Supplies

- Pay Your Way Card System
- Card Value Reference Sheet
- One deck of cards per group
- Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid resource
- Calculators

Recommended Resources

Oregon Goes To College: Compare Costs and Financial Aid

https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/compare-costs-and-financial-aid

Curriculum Resources

Pay Your Way Card Game: Card Values Reference Sheet

See Figure 5.1

Pay Your Way Card Game: Source Card Values

See Figure 5.2

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete the Oregon Goes To College Compare Costs and Financial Aid resource by recording postsecondary costs, financial aid, and remaining expenses.
- Students calculate a total Cost of Attendance and determine the remaining Net Price after financial aid is applied.
- Students compare different funding sources and explain how scholarships, grants, and other financial aid can affect affordability.
- Students reflect on overlooked postsecondary expenses and identify one action they can take to make future education or training more affordable.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Dreating financial aid scenarios

Create a fictional financial aid scenario for a high school classroom activity involving a student pursuing [career field or postsecondary pathway].

Include realistic example amounts for:

- Tuition or program costs
- Housing and food, if applicable
- Books and supplies
- Transportation
- Scholarships
- Grants
- Work-study or employment
- Family or personal contribution
- Remaining cost

Clearly label all amounts as **fictional examples for classroom practice**, not actual financial aid estimates.

Then provide 3–5 reflection questions that help students compare Cost of Attendance, financial aid, Net Price, and overall affordability.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Clarify the Simulation
Remind students that the card game is a simulation. Actual Cost of Attendance, financial aid, scholarships, grants, and Net Price vary by student, institution, and program.

Protect Student Privacy
When seniors use real financial aid offers, allow students to keep personal financial information private. They should not be required to disclose award amounts, family contributions, or other financial details to classmates.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Seniors may use actual financial aid award letters or offers instead of the card game.

Students may work in partners to encourage discussion and collaborative calculations.

Students ready for additional challenge may compare two different postsecondary options using the same cost-comparison process.

Provide pre-calculated examples or fewer card variables for students who need additional math support.

Pay Your Way Card Game

Card Values Reference Sheet

FIGURE 5.1

♥ Hearts — Cost of Attendance

CARD	TUITION & FEES	HOUSING & MEALS	BOOKS & SUPPLIES	TRANSPORTATION	OTHER EXPENSES
A	$0.00	$0.00	$200.00	$200.00	$300.00
2	$5,000.00	$3,000.00	$500.00	$500.00	$500.00
3	$7,500.00	$5,000.00	$750.00	$700.00	$700.00
4	$10,000.00	$7,000.00	$900.00	$900.00	$900.00
5	$12,500.00	$9,000.00	$1,000.00	$1,100.00	$1,000.00
6	$15,000.00	$11,000.00	$1,200.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00
7	$17,500.00	$13,000.00	$1,400.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00
8	$20,000.00	$15,000.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,600.00
9	$25,000.00	$16,000.00	$1,800.00	$2,000.00	$1,800.00
10	$30,000.00	$17,000.00	$2,000.00	$2,300.00	$2,000.00
J	$18,000.00	$10,000.00	$1,500.00	$1,000.00	$1,000.00
Q	$38,000.00	$18,000.00	$2,500.00	$3,000.00	$2,500.00
K	$45,000.00	$20,000.00	$3,000.00	$3,500.00	$3,000.00

♦ Diamonds — Grants & Scholarships

CARD	AWARD	AMOUNT
A	Cascade Peaks Scholars Award	$10,000.00
2	Willamette Valley Excellence Scholarship	$8,000.00
3	Pell Grant	$7,500.00
4	Oregon Opportunity Grant	$5,000.00
5	High Desert Futures Scholarship	$5,000.00
6	Mt. Hood Achievement Scholarship	$4,000.00
7	Columbia River Opportunity Scholarship	$3,500.00
8	Crater Lake Promise Award	$3,000.00
9	Oregon Trail Leadership Scholarship	$2,500.00
10	Three Sisters Community Scholarship	$2,000.00
J	Painted Hills Future Fund	$1,500.00
Q	Smith Rock Success Scholarship	$1,000.00
K	Deschutes River Education Scholarship	$500.00

Pay Your Way Card Game

Card Values Reference Sheet

FIGURE 5.1

♠ Spades — Loan / Payment Option

CARD	LOAN
A	No Loan Needed ($0)
2	No Loan Needed ($0)
3	Direct Subsidized Loan ($2,000)
4	No Loan Needed ($0)
5	Direct Unsubsidized Loan ($2,500)
6	Employer Tuition Assistance ($0)
7	Direct Subsidized Loan ($3,500)
8	Direct Unsubsidized Loan ($4,000)
9	Private Loan ($5,000)
10	Direct Subsidized Loan ($5,500)
J	Parent PLUS Loan ($6,000)
Q	Private Loan ($7,000)
K	Parent PLUS Loan ($8,000)

♣ Clubs — Work-Study

CARD	WORK STUDY	AMOUNT
A	No Work-Study	$10,000.00
2-4	5 hours/week	$8,000.00
5-7	10 hours/week	$7,500.00
8-10	15 hours/week	$5,000.00
J	18 hours/week	$5,000.00
Q	20 hours/week	$4,000.00
K	25 hours/week	$3,500.00

Pay Your Way Card Game

Source Card Values

FIGURE 5.2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this reference sheet to match each card you draw to its cost, award, work-study hours, or loan/payment option, then record the information on your worksheet.

How to Play

- Draw one card from each suit.
- Use this sheet to find the value of each card.
- Record the information on your Compare Costs and Financial Aid worksheet.

♥ Hearts
Cost of Attendance
Find the card you drew and record the cost category and amount:

Tuition & Fees
Housing & Meals
Books & Supplies
Transportation
Other Expenses

♦ Diamonds
Grants & Scholarships
Find your card and record:

Award Name
Award Amount

♣ Clubs
Work-Study
Find your card and record:

Weekly Work-Study Hours

♠ Spades
Loan / Payment Option

Find your card and record:

Loan or Payment Option
Amount (if applicable)

CARD DRAWN

_____

SUIT

_____

CATEGORY
(Cost, Grant, Work-Study, Loan)

_____

VALUE FROM REFERENCE SHEET

_____

AMOUNT / HOURS / AWARD NAME

_____

RECORD ON WORKSHEET

_____

OR HS.HECPS C.3

DURATION 50 MINUTES

Grades 9–10: Approximately one class period
Grade 11: Approximately two class periods
Grade 12: Approximately three to five class periods, depending on student readiness and access to required information

CONTRIBUTOR REBECCA BARTON

Lesson 6

Six Steps to Pay for College (FAFSA and ORSAA)

Lesson Purpose

Understanding how to pay for postsecondary education is an essential step in preparing for life after high school. This lesson equips students with the knowledge to identify the appropriate financial aid application (FAFSA or ORSAA), understand the financial aid process, and develop a plan to finance their postsecondary education and training.

As part of the Postsecondary Readiness unit, this lesson builds students' financial literacy by helping them make informed decisions about college affordability, access available financial resources, and confidently prepare for or complete one of the most important steps toward achieving their postsecondary goals.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Determine whether the FAFSA or ORSAA is the appropriate financial aid application for them.
- Identify the information and documents they will need to prepare for the financial aid application process.
- Understand the major steps involved in completing a financial aid application.
- Develop a personal action plan for completing financial aid.
- **12th grade only:** Begin or complete the appropriate financial aid application, including creating required StudentAid.gov accounts as appropriate.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout, one per student
- Financial Aid Action Plan & Exit Ticket, one per student
- Paper or practice FAFSA materials for grades 9–11, if used

Technology

- Student devices with internet access
- Projector or classroom display
- Access to current Federal Student Aid and Oregon Student Aid resources

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review current FAFSA and ORSAA guidance before teaching the lesson. Financial aid processes and requirements may change from year to year.
- Determine the appropriate grade-level version of the lesson: awareness for grades 9–10, preparation and practice for grade 11, or application completion for grade 12.
- Print or provide digital access to the Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout.
- Review the current official Federal Student Aid and Oregon Student Aid resources linked in the lesson.
- For seniors, review current StudentAid.gov account and contributor requirements before students begin the application process.
- If students will complete actual financial aid applications during class, communicate with families in advance about the process, information students may need, and how contributors may be involved.
- Do not ask students to publicly disclose immigration status, family financial information, Social Security numbers, account credentials, or other private information.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Introduce Financial Aid

Students consider how people pay for education and training after high school and discuss common questions, concerns, and misconceptions about financial aid.

2 STEP

Determine FAFSA or ORSAA

Students learn the purpose of FAFSA and ORSAA and use current Oregon Student Aid guidance to determine which application is appropriate for them.

3 STEP

Review Financial Aid in 6 Steps

Provide students with the Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout. Walk through the six major steps so students understand the overall financial aid application process and know where to find current official information.

4 STEP

Prepare or Apply

Students complete the activity appropriate for their grade level: grades 9–10 explore the application process, grade 11 students practice and prepare for future completion, and grade 12 students begin or complete their actual FAFSA or ORSAA.

5 STEP

Create a Financial Aid Action Plan

Students identify what they have completed, what they still need, who can help, and what they need to do next.

6 STEP

Reflect and Close

Students complete the Exit Ticket and identify their next step in the financial aid process.

Introduction Questions

- What concerns do you have about paying for college or other education and training after high school?
- How do you think students typically pay for college or career training?
- Have you heard of FAFSA or ORSAA before?
- Why do you think completing a financial aid application is important?

Instructional Activities

Introduce Financial Aid

- Ask students how they think people pay for education and training after high school.
- Discuss the different costs associated with postsecondary education and training, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, housing, food, and transportation.
- Connect back to Lesson 5 by reminding students that financial aid can change what a student actually pays.
- Use the Financial Aid: What Do You Think? statements to surface common misconceptions about financial aid.

Determine FAFSA or ORSAA

- Briefly introduce FAFSA and ORSAA and explain why there are two applications.
- Direct students to the current Oregon Student Aid FAFSA/ORSAA Filter Tool.
- Students determine which application is appropriate for them and privately record it on their Financial Aid Action Plan.
- Remind students that they should not share personal eligibility information with classmates.

Review Financial Aid in 6 Steps

Give each student the Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout.

Walk through the six steps as a class:

- Choose Your Application
- Create Your Account
- Start Your Application
- Gather What You Need
- Add Schools
- Complete & Submit

Pause at each step to clarify what students will eventually need to do and point out the official resources included on the handout.

Explain that financial aid requirements and processes can change, so students should use the current official resources linked on the handout when they are ready to complete their application.

Prepare or Apply

Grades 9–10

1. Review a paper or practice FAFSA or teacher-selected sample materials.
2. Identify the types of information students may eventually be asked to provide.
3. Have students use the six-step handout to identify what they can begin learning or preparing for now.

Grade 11

1. Use a paper or practice FAFSA or teacher-selected sample materials to explore the application process.
2. Have students identify information and documents they may need when they complete their actual application as seniors.
3. Students use the six-step handout to identify what they can prepare before senior year and where they can go for help.

Grade 12

1. Students use the application identified earlier in the lesson to begin the actual FAFSA or ORSAA process.
2. Students follow current official guidance linked on the Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout.
3. FAFSA students create required StudentAid.gov accounts as appropriate and complete contributor steps.
4. Students gather required information, add colleges or programs, and complete as much of the application as possible.
5. Students submit when all required information and contributor participation are available.
6. Students who submit review what happens next.

Create a Financial Aid Action Plan and Reflect

1. Students complete the Financial Aid Action Plan & Exit Ticket.
2. Students identify what they have already completed, what they still need, who can help them, and their next step.
3. Conclude by reinforcing that students do not have to navigate the financial aid process alone and should use current official resources and trusted adults when they need assistance.

Reflection Questions

- Which financial aid application will you complete?
- What information do you still need before you are ready to complete or submit it?
- What is your next step?
- How can completing financial aid improve your future opportunities?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups, have students discuss:

- What surprised you about financial aid?
- Which part of the process seems easiest?
- Which part seems most challenging?
- Where can you go for trustworthy help if you have questions?

Keep the discussion focused on the financial aid process rather than students' private financial, citizenship, or family circumstances.

Materials and Supplies

- Financial Aid in 6 Steps Teacher Guide
- Financial Aid Action Plan & Exit Ticket
- Paper or practice FAFSA materials, if used
- Student device with internet access
- Writing materials

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students identify whether FAFSA or ORSAA is the appropriate financial aid application for them.
- Students identify the major steps and information needed to prepare for the financial aid application process.
- Students complete a Financial Aid Action Plan identifying what they still need and their next steps.
- Students complete the Exit Ticket demonstrating their understanding of the financial aid process.
- 12th grade only: Students begin or complete the appropriate financial aid application when they have the information and contributor participation required to do so.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Not Applicable.

Recommended Resources

Federal Student Aid

Federal Student Aid / FAFSA Home
https://studentaid.gov/

Steps for Students Filling Out the FAFSA Form
https://studentaid.gov/articles/fafsa-student-steps/

Create a StudentAid.gov Account
https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch

Key Facts About StudentAid.gov Accounts and Contributors
https://studentaid.gov/articles/key-facts-accounts/

What You Need to Complete the FAFSA
https://studentaid.gov/articles/things-you-need-for-fafsa/

7 Things To Do After Submitting the FAFSA
https://studentaid.gov/articles/things-after-fafsa/

Understanding Your FAFSA Submission Summary
https://studentaid.gov/articles/fafsa-submission-summary/

Oregon Student Aid

Oregon Student Aid
https://oregonstudentaid.gov/

FAFSA/ORSAA Information and Filter Tool
https://oregonstudentaid.gov/fafsa-orsaa/

Curriculum Resources

Financial Aid in 6 Steps Handout

See Figure 6.1

Financial Aid Action Plan & Exit Ticket

See Figure 6.2

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

For younger students, focus on awareness and familiarity rather than detailed application completion.

Allow grade 11 students to practice with sample information rather than personal financial information.

For grade 12 students who are not ready to submit during class, use the Financial Aid Action Plan to identify exactly what is missing and what they need to do next.

Students who complete their application early can review what happens after submission and begin learning how to interpret financial aid offers.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Financial aid procedures change over time. Before teaching this lesson, review current information through Federal Student Aid and Oregon Student Aid rather than relying on previously downloaded FAFSA posters, screenshots, checklists, or handouts.

For seniors completing an actual FAFSA, required contributors may need their own StudentAid.gov accounts. Account credentials, Social Security numbers, tax information, and other sensitive information should remain private.

Students may have family, citizenship, financial, or personal circumstances that make the financial aid process more complicated. Avoid asking students to disclose these circumstances publicly. Connect students who need individualized assistance with an appropriate school counselor, college access professional, financial aid office, or current official FAFSA/ORSAA support resource.

Financial Aid in 6 Steps
Handout

FIGURE 6.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Follow these six steps to understand and prepare for your financial aid application process.

STEP 1

Choose Your Application

Determine whether FAFSA or ORSAA is the appropriate application using Oregon's FAFSA/ORSAA Filter Tool.

STEP 2

Create Your Account

FAFSA applicants create required StudentAid.gov accounts as appropriate. ORSAA applicants create an account through Oregon Student Aid.

STEP 3

Start Your Application

Begin the appropriate application and review the types of personal, family, and financial information you may need.

STEP 4

Gather What You Need

Gather the information and documents required to complete your application. Use current official guidance because requirements can change.

STEP 5

Add Schools

Identify the colleges or eligible programs that should receive your financial aid information. You do not need to make your final college decision before completing your financial aid application.

STEP 6

Complete & Submit

Complete all required sections and contributor steps, review your information carefully, and submit your application. Continue monitoring your application after submission and respond to any follow-up requests.

Remember

Financial aid may include grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. Completing FAFSA or ORSAA does not guarantee that all of your costs will be covered. Compare what you will actually need to pay when considering your options.

Need Help?

If you have questions or need support with financial aid, start here:

School Counselor or College/Career Staff –
Ask for help reviewing your transcript or completing your FAFSA/ORSAA.

FAFSA/ORSAA Completion Events – https://oregongoestocollege.org/pay/scholarships
Ask your counselor or college and career staff for upcoming local workshops

College Financial Aid Offices –
Contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend.

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – https://studentaid.gov
Create your StudentAid.gov account
Review the FAFSA Checklist

Oregon Student Aid – https://oregonstudentaid.gov
Learn about the ORSAA Application

Financial Aid Action Plan
& Exit Ticket

FIGURE 6.2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this sheet to plan your next steps for completing your financial aid application and reflect on how financial aid can support your future goals.

Financial Aid Action Plan

Which application will I complete — FAFSA or ORSAA?

List what you've already done or understand about the process.

Record any information or documents you still need.

Name one person or resource that can support you.

Write what you'll do next to move forward.

List any questions you want to ask a counselor or financial aid office.

Exit Ticket

Which financial aid application will you complete?

What information do you still need before you're ready to complete or submit it?

What is your next step?

How can completing financial aid improve your future opportunities?

OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 90 MINUTES
or 2–3 class periods

CONTRIBUTOR TYLER DAVENPORT

Lesson 7

Writing Your Story: **Crafting Strong OSAC Scholarship Personal Statements**

Lesson Purpose

Scholarship essays are often one of the few opportunities students have to speak directly to a scholarship committee beyond their grades, activities, and other application information. This lesson helps students recognize the power of storytelling while developing authentic personal statements for **Oregon Student Aid Commission (OSAC) scholarships.**

This lesson builds students' confidence in communicating their experiences, aspirations, and strengths while preparing them to complete scholarship applications and other postsecondary application materials.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of scholarship personal statements.
- Identify characteristics of effective personal statements.
- Organize experiences, examples, and ideas in preparation for writing.
- Draft at least one OSAC personal statement.
- Use peer or teacher feedback to identify revisions that could strengthen their writing.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Personal Statement Planning Organizer, one per student
- Peer Feedback Checklist, if using peer review
- OSAC personal statement prompts and current application guidance

Technology

- Student computers or other writing devices
- Access to a word-processing program, such as Google Docs or another available platform
- Access to current OSAC scholarship information and application resources

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the current OSAC personal statement prompts, instructions, and application requirements before teaching the lesson.
- Provide students with the Personal Statement Planning Organizer.
- Determine whether students will complete peer review, teacher conferences, or both.
- Remind students to draft and save their writing outside the scholarship application before entering a final response into the application system.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Bell Ringer Reflection

Students consider what they would want a scholarship committee to know about them that may not be visible through grades, transcripts, or a list of activities.

2 STEP

Understand the Purpose of a Personal Statement

Students review the purpose and expectations of scholarship personal statements and discuss how an effective response can help a reviewer understand the person behind the application.

3 STEP

Plan Your Story

Students select a personal statement prompt and use the Personal Statement Planning Organizer to identify an experience or story, why it matters, what it demonstrates about them, what they learned, and how it connects to their future.

4 STEP

Writing Workshop

Students use their planning organizer to draft at least one complete personal statement, focusing on authentic voice, specific examples, organization, and reflection.

5 STEP

Peer Feedback and Revision

Students exchange drafts with a partner or receive teacher feedback and identify specific revisions that could make their personal statement stronger.

6 STEP

Reflect and Close

Students reflect on what their personal statement communicates about them and identify their next step for revising or completing their scholarship writing.

Introduction Questions

Not applicable.

Instructional Activities

Bell Ringer Reflection

Ask students:

Imagine a scholarship committee has already seen your GPA, transcript, and activities. What is one thing they still don't know about you that you hope they remember?

Students complete a brief quick-write and may share their response with a partner.

Understand the Purpose of a Personal Statement

Introduce the purpose of scholarship personal statements and review the current OSAC prompts and application expectations.

Discuss how a strong personal statement can communicate information that may not appear elsewhere in an application.

Discuss characteristics of effective personal statements, including:

- An opening that gives the reader a reason to continue.
- A clear central idea or message.
- Specific experiences and examples rather than general statements.
- Reflection on why an experience mattered or what the student learned.
- An authentic voice that sounds like the student.
- A conclusion that helps the reader understand the significance of the story.

Plan Your Story

Students select one OSAC personal statement prompt.

Students complete the Personal Statement Planning Organizer by identifying:

- The story, experience, or example they could use.
- Why the experience mattered.
- Skills, qualities, or strengths the experience demonstrates.
- What they learned or how they grew.
- How the experience connects to their future goals.

Circulate and conference with students as they develop their ideas.

Peer Feedback and Revision

Students exchange drafts with a partner and use the Peer Feedback Checklist or the following protocol:

- One compliment: "The strongest part of your essay is..."
- One question: "I wanted to know more about..."
- One suggestion: "Consider adding or changing..."

Students review the feedback they receive and identify at least one revision they will make to strengthen their personal statement.

Reflect and Close

Students respond to the reflection questions and identify their next step for completing or revising their personal statement.

Reflection Questions

- What part of your story are you most proud of sharing?
- What did you learn about yourself while writing?
- How does your personal statement help someone understand who you are beyond your grades and activities?
- What revision would most strengthen your personal statement?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups or with partners, discuss:

- What makes a personal statement feel authentic?
- What kinds of openings make you want to keep reading?
- How can specific examples make a personal statement stronger?
- What advice would you give another student beginning a scholarship personal statement?

Materials and Supplies

- Personal Statement Planning Organizer
- Peer Feedback Checklist, if used
- Student writing device
- Writing materials, if completing the activity on paper

Recommended Resources

Oregon Student Aid Scholarship Resources

https://oregonstudentaid.gov/

OSAC Personal Statement Guide

https://oregonstudentaid.gov/media/lugbxelt/section-5-personal-statements.pdf

The source lesson includes an OSAC Personal Statement Guide that should be retained if the link is confirmed as current during final resource review.

Purdue OWL Writing Resources

https://owl.purdue.edu/

Curriculum Resources

Writing Your Story: Crafting Strong OSAC Scholarship Personal Statements

See Figure 7.1

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete the Personal Statement Planning Organizer by identifying a meaningful experience, its significance, and its connection to their strengths or future goals.
- Students draft at least one OSAC personal statement.
- Students provide or receive feedback using the peer feedback protocol or through a teacher conference.
- Students identify specific revisions they can make to strengthen their personal statement.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student working on a scholarship personal statement. I have already written my own draft. Help me strengthen my writing without replacing my ideas, experiences, or voice.

Review my draft and provide feedback on:

- Whether I clearly answer the prompt.
- Whether I use specific examples rather than general statements.
- Whether the organization is easy to follow.
- Where I could add more reflection about what I learned or why the experience mattered.
- Any sentences that are unclear or repetitive.
- Grammar or writing conventions that need attention.

Do not rewrite the personal statement for me. Instead, ask questions and make specific suggestions that will help me revise my own writing. Preserve my voice and do not invent experiences, accomplishments, or details.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Authenticity in Student Writing
Encourage authenticity over overly polished or complicated writing. Students should use specific experiences to help scholarship reviewers understand who they are, what they have learned, and what matters to them.

Ethical Use of AI Feedback
Students should complete their own original draft before using AI for feedback. AI can help students identify unclear passages, ask questions, or suggest areas for revision, but it should not invent experiences or write the personal statement for them.

Verify Current Scholarship Requirements
Because scholarship prompts, application requirements, and character or word limits can change, teachers should verify current OSAC requirements before teaching the lesson rather than relying on requirements reproduced in the curriculum.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Allow students to verbally tell their story to a partner or teacher before beginning to write.

Provide sentence starters or additional planning prompts for students who need writing support.

Allow speech-to-text or other available writing supports.

Use individual or small-group writing conferences in place of peer review when appropriate.

Extend the lesson across additional class periods to allow more time for drafting and revision.

Writing Your Story:
Crafting Strong OSAC Scholarship Personal

FIGURE 6.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this sheet to plan your next steps for completing your financial aid application and reflect on how financial aid can support your future goals.

Before you write...

OSAC Prompt Chosen:

My Story

What happened? _____

Why does this matter? _____

What strengths did I demonstrate?

- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Resilience
- ☐ Curiosity
- ☐ Compassion
- ☐ Determination
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Other: _____

What did I learn? _____

How does this connect to my future? _____

Opening Hook Draft

Thesis (One Sentence) _____

"My experience taught me that..." _____

OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 60 MINUTES

Variable; approximately 60 minutes to introduce the process and begin the Common App. Additional time will be needed for seniors to complete and submit applications.

CONTRIBUTORS
REBECCA BARTON, JAYDRA JOHNSON

Lesson 8

Ready – Set – Apply! (12th Grade Only)

Lesson Purpose

Applying to college is a critical step in students' postsecondary planning. This lesson gives students the knowledge and organizational tools needed to understand the college application process and begin completing an actual application. Students use a College Application Workbook to compare application requirements and deadlines for colleges they are considering, then explore the Common Application (Common App) and begin the application process.

This lesson is designed primarily for high school seniors who are preparing to apply to college. By working through an authentic application process, students build confidence, identify information and materials they still need, and develop a plan for completing their applications. Counselors, college and career coordinators, admissions representatives, and other community partners can be valuable partners in helping students complete the process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify similarities and differences among college application processes and requirements.
- Determine application requirements, deadlines, and materials needed for colleges they are considering.
- Organize application tasks using a personalized college application plan, checklist, and tracker.
- Begin the college application process, including creating an application account and identifying additional steps needed to complete and submit applications.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- College Application Workbook, one per student
- Student devices with internet access
- Teacher device and projector or classroom display
- Access to the Common Application (Common App)
- One or two school-appropriate songs for the Mixtape Mixer

Technology

Not applicable.

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the College Application Workbook and determine which sections students will complete during this lesson.
- Review the Common App before class and be prepared to model account creation and navigation.
- Consider creating a fictional student profile to use while demonstrating the Common App rather than entering real student information on the projected screen.
- Ask students to have access to the colleges they identified in earlier lessons, particularly the two programs they selected for further exploration.
- If possible, invite a school counselor, college and career coordinator, college admissions representative, or other partner to assist students during the application process.
- Determine how additional application work will be supported after this lesson, particularly for seniors who need time to complete essays, request transcripts or recommendations, and submit applications.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Mixtape Mixer #1

Students move around the room while music plays. When the music stops, they form small groups and discuss introductory questions about their previous experiences with applications and what they expect a college application to include.

2 STEP

Explore the College Application Process

Students use the College Application Workbook to review differences between community college and four-year university applications, identify colleges they are considering, and compare application requirements and deadlines.

3 STEP

Begin the Common App

The teacher introduces the Common Application (Common App), models how to navigate the site, and guides students through creating an account and beginning the application.

4 STEP

Plan Next Steps

Students use the College Application Workbook to identify application tasks they have completed, what they still need to do, and questions or information they still need.

5 STEP

Mixtape Mixer #2 and Reflection

Students discuss their experience beginning the application process, how their confidence or understanding has changed, and what questions or next steps remain.

Introduction Questions

- Have you ever filled out an application for something? What did the application ask for? Was it online or on paper?
- What do you think is included in a college application?
- How do you think the application process differs between a community college and a four-year university?
- What materials might you need before submitting a college application?

Instructional Activities

Mixtape Mixer #1

Play music while students move around the room.

When the music stops, students form groups of two, three, or four. Ask:

- ***Have you ever filled out an application for something? What did the application ask for? Was it online or on paper?***

Restart the music and have students form new groups when it stops. Ask:

- ***What do you think is included in a college application?***

Explore the College Application Process

- Distribute the College Application Workbook.
- Use Worksheet 1 to review basic differences between community college and four-year university application processes.
- Students identify colleges they are considering and record whether each accepts the Common App, its application deadline, and any additional requirements.
- Students record questions they still need answered.
- Using Worksheet 2, students compare requirements for up to three colleges, including essays, writing supplements, letters of recommendation, testing, transcripts, application fees, and deadlines.
- Briefly discuss similarities and differences students notice among the colleges and their application requirements.

Begin the Common App

- Introduce the Common Application (Common App) and explain that participating colleges use it as a shared application platform.
- Project the Common App while students access it on their own devices.
- Model account creation and basic navigation. The teacher may use a fictional student profile for the demonstration.
- Students create their accounts and begin completing appropriate sections of the application.
- As students work, have them note information, documents, or other materials they do not yet have and will need to obtain.
- Students should not be expected to submit an application until they have reviewed all requirements and are ready to apply.

Plan Next Steps

- Students use Worksheet 3: College Application Checklist to identify the tasks they have already completed and those that remain.
- Students begin the Application Tracker for the colleges they are considering.
- Students identify additional requirements they may need to complete, such as essays, writing supplements, letters of recommendation, transcripts, testing, or application fees.
- Students record remaining questions and identify their next steps for continuing the application process.

Mixtape Mixer #2 and Reflection

Repeat the Mixtape Mixer with new partners or small groups.

Ask:

- ***How was your experience beginning the Common App?***
- ***How did you feel about applying to college before this activity? How do you feel now?***

Students return to their College Application Workbook and record remaining questions and next steps.

Reflection Questions

- Which colleges best align with my career and education goals?
- What steps do I need to complete next to submit my college application(s)?
- What information or support do I still need to successfully complete my applications?
- How will staying organized and meeting application deadlines help me achieve my postsecondary goals?

Group Reflection / Discussion

During the closing Mixtape Mixer, students discuss:

- How was your experience beginning the Common App?
- How did you feel about applying to college before this activity? How do you feel now?
- What part of the application process seems most manageable now?
- What questions or concerns do you still have?

Materials and Supplies

- College Application Workbook
- Student devices with internet access
- Teacher device and projector or classroom display
- Music and speakers for the Mixtape Mixer

Recommended Resources

Common Application (Common App)

https://www.commonapp.org/

Oregon Goes To College

https://oregongoestocollege.org/

Students should also use the official admissions websites for the colleges they are considering to verify current requirements and deadlines.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete the assigned portions of the College Application Workbook by identifying colleges and researching their application requirements and deadlines.
- Students compare application requirements for colleges they are considering.
- Students create or begin an appropriate college application account and demonstrate that they can navigate the application process.
- Students use the College Application Checklist and Application Tracker to identify completed tasks and remaining next steps.
- Students reflect on their experience and identify questions, information, or support they still need.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am helping high school students understand and navigate the college application process. Create differentiated supports for students who may need additional help understanding application terminology, organizing deadlines, identifying required materials, or breaking the application process into manageable steps. Do not invent application requirements or deadlines. Remind students to verify all requirements and dates using the official website of the college or application platform. Provide student-friendly explanations, checklists, sentence starters, or planning supports as appropriate.

Curriculum Resources

College Application Workbook

Worksheet 1: Choosing Your Colleges

See Figure 8.1

Worksheet 2: College Requirements Comparison

See Figure 8.2

Worksheet 3: College Application Checklist

See Figure 8.3

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Using the College Application Workbook
The College Application Workbook can be used simply to introduce and organize the application process during this lesson or continued throughout the application season as students complete additional steps.

For a digital option, use the Oregon Goes To College Google Docs: College Application Information (**https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-application-information**).

Supporting Seniors and Verifying Requirements
For seniors, consider providing additional work sessions and partnering with counselors, college and career coordinators, admissions representatives, or other partners who can assist students with completing applications. Application requirements and deadlines vary by institution and can change, so students should verify information through official college admissions websites before submitting an application.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

For students in grades 9–11, use the workbook and Common App as an exploration activity rather than asking students to create accounts or begin actual applications. Students can investigate what applications require, compare colleges, and identify information they will eventually need.

Invite counselors, college and career professionals, admissions representatives, or community partners to co-teach or provide individual application assistance.

Follow students' 504 Plan and IEP accommodations and collaborate with case managers as appropriate, particularly where transition and postsecondary planning are included.

College Application Workbook

FIGURE 8.1

Worksheet 1: Choosing Your Colleges

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this workbook to organize your college research and track each step of your application process.

Include a brief comparison of community college and four-year university application processes.

Community College

- Apply through the college website.
- Complete the college's application.
- Applications may be available throughout the year.
- Placement or other enrollment steps required.
- May need to meet with an advisor before registering.
- SAT/ACT scores and letters of recommendation are typically not required — verify requirements with each college.

Reflection

Which parts of the community college process feel most approachable or appealing to you?

Four-Year University

Apply through the college's own website or through the Common App (when the institution participates).

Common application timelines:

- Early Decision
- Early Action
- Regular Decision

Check whether each college requires:

- Essay
- Writing Supplement
- Letters of Recommendation
- ACT/SAT Scores
- Transcript
- Application Fee

Reflection

What steps or requirements might take the most preparation for you?

My College List

COLLEGE	ACCEPTS COMMON APP?	DEADLINE	ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Questions I Need Answered

Write any questions that come up while researching your colleges:

FIGURE 8.2

College Application Workbook

Worksheet 2: College Requirements Comparison

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this workbook to organize your college research and track each step of your application process.

College Requirements Comparison

Use this chart to compare application requirements for up to three colleges side by side.

REQUIREMENT	COLLEGE 1	COLLEGE 2	COLLEGE 3
Application submitted			
Essay required			
Writing supplement			
Letters of recommendation			
SAT/ACT required			
Transcript required			
Application fee			
Deadline			

Notes

Use this space to record additional requirements, questions, or information you discover while researching:

College Application Workbook

FIGURE 8.3

Worksheet 3: College Application Checklist

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this workbook to organize your college research and track each step of your application process.

Common Application Checklist

- ☐ Create account
- ☐ Complete profile
- ☐ Add colleges
- ☐ Invite recommenders (if required)
- ☐ Complete college-specific requirements
- ☐ Review application
- ☐ Submit application

Community College Checklist

- ☐ Complete application
- ☐ Complete placement or other enrollment requirements (if required)
- ☐ Meet with an advisor (if required)
- ☐ Complete next enrollment steps

Four-Year University Checklist

- ☐ Complete application
- ☐ Complete essay (if required)
- ☐ Complete writing supplements (if required)
- ☐ Request letters of recommendation (if required)
- ☐ Submit ACT/SAT scores (if required)
- ☐ Request or submit transcript (as directed)
- ☐ Check application status

COLLEGE	DATE STARTED	SUBMITTED	PORTAL CHECKED
Application submitted		☐	☐
Essay required		☐	☐
Writing supplement		☐	☐
Letters of recommendation		☐	☐
SAT/ACT required		☐	☐
Transcript required		☐	☐
Application fee		☐	☐
Deadline		☐	☐

My College Application Planner

Use this space to organize each college's deadline, required materials, tasks still to complete, and next action.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Transcript & Dual Credit Checklist

- ☐ Request official high school transcript
- ☐ Verify dual-credit records (if applicable)
- ☐ Submit transcripts to each college as required
- ☐ Confirm receipt of transcripts

OR HS.HECPS C.1

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR HENRY PAPA

Lesson 9

Exploring Trade and Technical Pathways

Lesson Purpose

This lesson introduces trades, technical training, and apprenticeships as a legitimate and distinct postsecondary pathway, not a fallback option. Students connect these pathways directly to the challenge they identified earlier in the unit. The lesson asks students to stretch their thinking and consider how skilled trades and technical fields can address the same challenges as careers requiring two- or four-year degrees, often in ways that are less visible to students.

By researching two different trade or technical paths, students begin building the second of their three required portfolio pathways. Students explore how people enter these careers, what training is required, and what the work actually looks like so they can make informed comparisons with the pathways they have already explored.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify at least two distinct trade or technical paths connected to their challenge.
- Distinguish among general entry routes into trades, including union apprenticeships, technical certificates, and employer-sponsored training.
- Explain how a trade or technical pathway could meaningfully address their challenge and what would be required to enter that pathway.
- Compare two trade or technical pathways using information gathered through career research.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- HCEPS PSL9 Comparison Visual, one per student or available digitally
- Student devices with internet access, one per student or pair
- Paper or digital slide template, depending on the comparison format used

Technology

- Teacher device and projector or classroom display
- Access to selected career and apprenticeship research resources

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Select one or two trade or technical careers to use for the opening Career to Challenge Brainstorm, such as electrician or HVAC technician.
- Select a challenge to use when modeling how to search for a trade or technical pathway.
- Review the career and apprenticeship research resources before class and choose two or three for students to use during research.
- Prepare or provide the Comparison Visual in the approved formats: two-column chart, Venn diagram, or side-by-side slide.
- If device access is limited, prepare printed career pathway information students can use instead.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Career to Challenge Brainstorm

Students examine one or two example trade or technical careers and brainstorm challenges or problems those careers might help address.

2 STEP

Reframe Trade and Technical Pathways

As a whole group, students consider trades, apprenticeships, and technical training as a full postsecondary pathway family rather than a lesser alternative to college.

3 STEP

Live Search Model

The teacher models how to move from a broad challenge to a specific trade or technical career and identify useful information about its training, entry requirements, and work.

4 STEP

Pathway Research and Comparison Visual

Students return to their challenge from earlier in the unit, research two distinct trade or technical pathways connected to it, and compare the pathways using a provided visual format.

5 STEP

Pair Share and Reflection

Students explain their two pathways to a partner, respond to a clarifying question, and reflect on what they learned about trade and technical pathways.

Introduction Questions

- What problem in the world might someone in this career be helping to solve?
- What trade or technical careers do you already know about?
- How might a trade or technical career connect to the challenge you selected earlier in this unit?

Instructional Activities

Career to Challenge Brainstorm

- Present one or two example trade or technical careers, such as electrician or HVAC technician.
- Students individually brainstorm two to three challenges or problems each career might help address.
- Students share their ideas while the teacher creates a working list of challenges on the board.
- Use the examples to emphasize that skilled trades and technical careers can contribute to solving many different kinds of problems.

Live Search Model

- Select one challenge from the class brainstorm.
- Use one of the provided career or apprenticeship resources to identify a trade or technical pathway connected to it.
- Narrate the search process, showing students what information is useful and what they can ignore.
- Identify the pathway's training length, entry point, and typical daily work.
- Model how this information would be recorded on one side of the Comparison Visual.

Pathway Research

- Students return to the challenge they selected earlier in the unit.
- Using the provided research resources, students identify one trade or technical pathway connected to their challenge.
- Students repeat the process to identify a second, distinct pathway.
- Students record the source used for each pathway.
- Students gather the information needed for their Comparison Visual.

Comparison Visual

Students compare their two pathways using one of the provided formats: two-column chart, Venn diagram, or side-by-side slide.

For each pathway, students include:

- Career/pathway name
- How the pathway connects to their challenge
- Type of entry or training
- Training length
- Entry requirements or starting point
- Typical daily work

Students identify similarities and differences between the two pathways.

Students add one thing that surprised them during their research.

Pair Share

- Students explain both pathways to a partner.
- The partner asks one clarifying question about the pathways or their connection to the challenge.
- Students record the question or one new thought generated by the conversation.

Materials and Supplies

- Student device with internet access, individually or shared with a partner
- HCEPS PSL9 Comparison Visual or digital equivalent
- Writing materials

Recommended Resources

Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

https://www.oregon.gov/boli/

QualityInfo

https://www.qualityinfo.org/

O*NET Online

https://www.onetonline.org/

Occupational Outlook Handbook

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/

Curriculum Resources

Trade and Technical Pathways Comparison Visual

See Figure 9.1

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete a Comparison Visual showing training length, entry point, typical daily work, and connection to their challenge for two distinct trade or technical pathways.
- Students use career research to identify and compare requirements for two trade or technical pathways.
- Students explain their pathways to a partner and respond to a clarifying question.
- Students complete a written reflection connecting their trade or technical pathway research to their challenge and previous pathway exploration.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student exploring the challenge of [INSERT CHALLENGE]. Help me brainstorm three trade or technical careers that could contribute to addressing this challenge and that I might not have thought of. For each career, briefly explain how the work connects to the challenge. Include different types of pathways when possible, such as apprenticeships, technical training, certificates, or employer-sponsored training. Do not assume that every career requires a four-year degree. I will use your suggestions as a starting point and verify career and training information using reliable career and apprenticeship resources.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Keep Visual Formats Manageable
Keep visual formats limited enough to protect the 50-minute lesson pacing. If students want to use a format outside the provided options, allow it only if they can reasonably complete the required research and comparison within the available time.

Encourage Broad Career Connections
Some challenges will connect very directly to skilled trades, while others may require students to think more broadly about the systems, infrastructure, technology, or services that contribute to addressing the challenge. The goal is not to force a perfect connection but to help students expand their understanding of the range of careers that can contribute to issues they care about.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

For students without device access, provide printed career pathway information as a research alternative.

For students whose challenge has no obvious trade connection, pair them with the teacher or a peer for the brainstorming step before independent research.

Modify the visual format as needed for individual student needs while keeping the required research information consistent.

Trade and Technical Pathways Comparison

Visual

FIGURE 9.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to research and compare two trade or technical pathways connected to the challenge you selected earlier in the unit.

My Challenge:

Pathway 1:

Pathway 2:

Pathway 1	**Pathway 2**
How does this career/pathway help address my challenge?	How does this career/pathway help address my challenge?
What type of pathway is it? (e.g., apprenticeship, technical certificate, employer-sponsored training, or other)	What type of pathway is it? (e.g., apprenticeship, technical certificate, employer-sponsored training, or other)
What education or training is required?	What education or training is required?
How long does the training typically take?	How long does the training typically take?
What is the entry point or what would I need to do to get started?	What is the entry point or what would I need to do to get started?
What does someone in this career typically do during a workday?	What does someone in this career typically do during a workday?
What source did I use?	What source did I use?

Trade and Technical Pathways Comparison

Visual

FIGURE 9.1

Compare the Two Pathways

One important **similarity** between the pathways: _____

One important **difference** between the pathways: _____

One thing that **surprised me**: _____

Reflection

Which of these two pathways would you be more interested in exploring further? Why?

OR HS.HECPS C.1
OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTORS HENRY PAPA

Lesson 10

What Does It Actually Take? **Mapping Requirements for Your Two Paths**

Lesson Purpose

This lesson moves students from general exploration of their two trade or technical paths into the specific, practical requirements each one demands. Rather than treating requirements as an abstract list, students sort what they find into four categories: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite. This gives students a clearer, more organized picture of what entry actually looks like for each path.

Building directly from the two pathways students explored in Lesson 9, students research and compare what it would actually take to pursue each option. Their completed Requirement Mapping organizer becomes part of their ongoing pathway exploration and helps them consider how entry requirements could affect their plans after high school.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify concrete entry requirements for two trade or technical paths.
- Sort requirements into four categories: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite.
- Compare barriers to entry across two distinct paths.
- Reflect on whether their findings match their prior assumptions about each path.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- What Does It Actually Take? Requirement Mapping organizer, one per student
- Students' completed Trade and Technical Pathways Comparison Visuals from Lesson 9

Technology

- Device access for each student or pair
- Bookmark or share links to two to three free career and apprenticeship directories used in Lesson 9

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the four requirement categories: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite.
- Select a trade or technical pathway to use as an example and identify one real requirement for each of the four categories.
- Review students' Lesson 9 pathways in advance, if possible, so students can move directly into research.
- If students will not have device access, prepare requirement information for several common trade and technical pathways as a research alternative.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Revisit Your Two Paths

Students return to the two trade or technical pathways they researched in Lesson 9 and consider what they already know or assume about entering each pathway.

2 STEP

Understand the Four Requirement Categories

The teacher introduces the four categories students will use to organize their research and provides a real example of each.

3 STEP

Research Requirements

Students research the specific entry requirements for each of their two trade or technical pathways using the provided career and apprenticeship resources.

4 STEP

Complete the Four-Category Sort

Students organize the requirements they discover into academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite categories for each pathway.

5 STEP

Compare Barriers to Entry and Reflect

Students compare what it would take to enter each pathway and reflect on whether the requirements matched their prior assumptions.

Introduction Questions

- What do you already know or think it takes to get into your two paths?
- Which category, academic, physical, credentialing or testing, or experience, do you think will have the most requirements?
- Have you ever looked closely at what a job actually requires before deciding it wasn't for you?

Instructional Activities

Revisit Your Two Paths

- Students retrieve their completed Comparison Visual from Lesson 9.
- Students review the two trade or technical paths they selected.
- Before researching, ask students to consider what they already know or assume about what it takes to enter each path.

Category Framing

- Introduce the four categories students will use to organize requirements: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite.
- Using a trade or technical pathway as an example, provide one real requirement for each category.
- Clarify that not every pathway will necessarily have requirements in every category.
- Explain that some requirements may appear to fit more than one category. Students should place them where they think they fit best and be prepared to explain their reasoning.

Requirements Research

Students revisit their two pathways from Lesson 9.
Using the provided career and apprenticeship resources, students research the entry requirements for Path 1.
Students repeat the process for Path 2.
Students record the source of their information for each pathway.
Encourage students to distinguish between actual entry requirements and characteristics that may simply be helpful or preferred.

Four-Category Sort

- Students record the requirements they find on the What Does It Actually Take? Requirement Mapping organizer.
- For each pathway, students sort requirements into:
- Academic
- Physical
- Credentialing / Testing
- Experience / Prerequisite
- If a requirement could fit in more than one category, students place it where it fits best and should be prepared to explain their choice.
- Students review the completed chart and compare the requirements for their two pathways.

Barrier to Entry Reflection

- Students consider which pathway has fewer requirements or requirements that currently seem easier for them to meet.
- Students respond to the reflection prompt on the organizer.
- Students discuss whether what they discovered matched what they assumed before researching.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete the What Does It Actually Take? Requirement Mapping organizer by identifying and categorizing entry requirements for both trade or technical pathways.
- Students use research to distinguish among academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite requirements.
- Students compare the requirements and barriers to entry for their two pathways.
- Students complete a written reflection explaining whether their research confirmed or changed their prior assumptions.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student researching the entry requirements for [INSERT TRADE OR TECHNICAL PATH]. Help me identify requirements I may be missing in these four categories: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite. For each requirement, explain briefly why it belongs in that category. Do not assume a requirement if you cannot verify that it commonly applies to this pathway. Tell me what information I should verify with an official apprenticeship program, training provider, employer, licensing agency, or other reliable source.

Reflection Questions

- Which of your two paths has a lower barrier to entry, and did that surprise you?
- Was there a requirement you did not expect to find for either path?
- How might these requirements affect your timeline or planning after high school?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups, discuss:

- Was it harder to find requirements for one path than the other? Why might that be?
- Does a lower barrier to entry make a path more appealing to you, or does it not change your interest?

Materials and Supplies

- What Does It Actually Take? Requirement Mapping organizer
- Completed Lesson 9 Trade and Technical Pathways Comparison Visual
- Student device with internet access, individually or with a partner
- Writing materials

Recommended Resources

Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

https://www.oregon.gov/boli/

QualityInfo

https://www.qualityinfo.org/

O*NET Online

https://www.onetonline.org/

Occupational Outlook Handbook

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/

Curriculum Resources

What Does It Actually Take? Mapping Requirements for Your Two Paths

See Figure 10.1

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Keep the Lesson Streamlined
This lesson is intentionally straightforward, with no additional hook or framing activity. The research is directly tied to the challenge and pathways students have already selected and have a personal stake in understanding.

Clarify Program-Specific Requirements
Requirements can vary significantly by employer, apprenticeship program, training provider, location, and specific occupation. Encourage students to distinguish between general career information and requirements for a specific program. When possible, students should verify specific entry requirements through the organization that actually provides the training, credential, apprenticeship, or employment opportunity.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

For students in grades 9–11, use the workbook and Common App as an exploration activity rather than asking students to create accounts or begin actual applications. Students can investigate what applications require, compare colleges, and identify information they will eventually need.

Invite counselors, college and career professionals, admissions representatives, or community partners to co-teach or provide individual application assistance.

Follow students' 504 Plan and IEP accommodations and collaborate with case managers as appropriate, particularly where transition and postsecondary planning are included.

What Does It Actually Take?

FIGURE 10.1

Mapping Requirements for Your Two Paths

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Research the entry requirements for your two paths from Lesson 9. Sort what you find into four categories: academic, physical, credentialing or testing, and experience or prerequisite. Record your findings in the chart below. If a requirement seems to fit more than one category, place it where it fits best and be ready to explain your choice.

Requirements Mapping

REQUIREMENT CATEGORY	PATH 1:	PATH 2:
Academic		
Physical		
Credentialing / Testing		
Experience / Prerequisite		

Sources

Path 1 source(s): _____

Path 2 source(s): _____

Compare Your Paths

Which path has a lower barrier to entry, and did that match what you assumed before researching?

Was there a requirement you did not expect to find?

How might what you learned affect your planning after high school?

OR HS.HECPS C.3

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR HENRY PAPA

Lesson 11

Money in **Your Pocket**

Lesson Purpose

This lesson gives students a concrete way to compare the financial tradeoffs of the two trade or technical pathways they explored in Lessons 9 and 10. Students examine training costs, time spent in training, wages earned during training, and wages after training to estimate how much money they could have earned, minus training costs, by the same age for each pathway.

The goal is not to determine which pathway is "better," but to help students recognize that the financial impact of a postsecondary pathway involves more than the upfront cost of education or training. Some pathways require students to pay for training before earning a full wage, while others allow students to earn money while they train. Where applicable, students also investigate how union and non-union opportunities may change the financial picture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify training costs, training length, wages during training, and starting wages after training for two trade or technical pathways.
- Calculate a simplified estimate of money earned, minus training costs, by the same comparison age for each pathway.
- Compare the financial tradeoffs of two pathways using consistent assumptions.
- Investigate differences between union and non-union opportunities when applicable.
- Reflect on how financial considerations influence their thinking about postsecondary pathways.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Money in Your Pocket: Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths student handout
- Students' completed research from Lessons 9 and 10
- Calculators

Technology

- Student devices with internet access
- Oregon Employment Department / QualityInfo Oregon
- ONET Online*
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries apprenticeship resources

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the two trade or technical pathways students researched in Lessons 9 and 10.
- Review the Money in Your Pocket calculation and select a simple example pathway to model for students.
- Determine a common comparison age students will use, or allow students to select an age within a teacher-defined range. Students must use the same comparison age for both pathways.
- Be prepared to explain that the calculation is a simplified estimate intended to help students compare the financial implications of different pathways. It does not account for taxes, raises, inflation, benefits, unemployment, or every possible expense.
- If appropriate for students' selected pathways, identify resources they can use to compare union and non-union wages, apprenticeship wages, benefits, or training structures.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Revisit Your Two Paths

Students return to the two trade or technical pathways they researched in Lessons 9 and 10 and review what they already know about the training and entry requirements for each.

2 STEP

Introduce "Money in Your Pocket"

Explain that the cost of a pathway includes more than tuition or training expenses. The amount of time spent in training and whether someone earns money while training can also affect the financial picture.

Introduce the simplified calculation students will use: Money in Your Pocket = Money Earned During Training + Money Earned After Training − Training Costs

3 STEP

Model the Calculation

Using a simple example pathway, model how to identify training length, training cost, wages earned during training, and starting wages after training. Select a comparison age and demonstrate how to estimate the total amount earned by that age.

Emphasize that students must use the same comparison age for both pathways so the comparison is meaningful.

4 STEP

Research and Calculate

Students research the financial information needed for each of their two pathways and complete the Money in Your Pocket handout. They calculate an estimated Money in Your Pocket amount for each pathway and compare their results.

5 STEP

Investigate Union Differences, If Applicable

If a pathway has meaningful union and non-union opportunities, students investigate how wages, apprenticeship structures, training costs, benefits, or other factors may differ and consider how those differences could change the financial picture.

6 STEP

Reflect and Discuss

Students reflect on which pathway came out ahead financially, what surprised them, and whether the financial comparison changed how they think about either pathway.

Introduction Questions

- What costs are associated with starting a trade or technical career?
- How might earning money while you train change the financial picture of a pathway?
- Why might two people entering similar careers have different training costs or starting wages?
- Is the pathway with the lowest training cost always the one that leaves you with the most money?

Instructional Activities

Revisit Your Two Paths

- Students retrieve their research from Lessons 9 and 10.
- Students identify the two trade or technical pathways they will compare.
- Students review the training requirements they already identified and determine what additional financial information they need to research.

Model Money in Your Pocket

- Introduce the idea that training cost alone does not tell the whole financial story.
- Explain the simplified formula: Money Earned During Training + Money Earned After Training − Training Costs = Money in Your Pocket.
- Choose a sample pathway and identify its training length, training cost, wages during training, if applicable, and starting wage after training.
- Select a comparison age and calculate how many years the person would spend training and how many years they would be earning a post-training wage.
- Calculate the estimated Money in Your Pocket at the comparison age.
- Remind students that this is a simplified comparison rather than a prediction of actual lifetime earnings.

Research and Compare Your Paths

- Students select or are given a comparison age and use that same age for both pathways.
- For Path 1, students research training length, training cost, wages during training, if applicable, and starting wages after training.
- Students calculate estimated earnings during training and estimated earnings after training through the comparison age.
- Students subtract training costs to calculate Money in Your Pocket for Path 1.
- Students repeat the process for Path 2.
- Students place their final results side by side and compare the financial picture of the two pathways.

Explore Union and Non-Union Differences

- Students determine whether either pathway has relevant union and non-union opportunities.
- If applicable, students research differences in wages and, when information is available, apprenticeship structures, training costs, benefits, or other financial considerations.
- Students record what they discover and explain how union participation might change the financial picture.
- Students whose pathways do not have a meaningful union/non-union comparison skip this portion.

Reflect

- Students identify which pathway resulted in the greater estimated Money in Your Pocket at their comparison age.
- Students identify something about the comparison that surprised them.
- Students explain whether the financial difference changes how they feel about either pathway and why.

Reflection Questions

- Which pathway came out ahead financially at your comparison age?
- What surprised you most about the comparison?
- How did the amount of time spent in training affect the results?
- How did earning, or not earning, money during training affect the results?
- Does the financial difference change how you feel about either pathway? Why or why not?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups, discuss:

- Which factor seemed to make the biggest difference in your calculations: training cost, training time, wages during training, or wages after training?
- Did the pathway with the lowest training cost always result in the most money in your pocket?
- For pathways with union and non-union opportunities, what differences did you discover?
- What financial information would you want to know before actually choosing a pathway?

Materials and Supplies

- Money in Your Pocket: Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths student handout
- Students' research from Lessons 9 and 10
- Calculators
- Student devices with internet access

Recommended Resources

Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

https://www.oregon.gov/boli/

QualityInfo

https://www.qualityinfo.org/

O*NET Online

https://www.onetonline.org/

Occupational Outlook Handbook

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students identify financial information for both of their trade or technical pathways.
- Students calculate an estimated Money in Your Pocket amount for each pathway using the same comparison age.
- Students compare the financial tradeoffs of their two pathways.
- Where applicable, students investigate union and non-union differences.
- Students complete a written reflection explaining how the financial comparison influenced their thinking.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student comparing two trade or technical pathways: [PATH 1] and [PATH 2]. Help me identify reliable information I should look for to compare the financial side of these pathways, including training length, training costs, wages during training or apprenticeship, and starting wages after training. If union and non-union opportunities exist for either pathway, explain what additional information I should research to compare them. Do not make up wage or cost information. Tell me what information I should verify using official state, apprenticeship, employer, or occupational sources.

Curriculum Resources

Money in Your Pocket: Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths

See Figure 11.1

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Clarify the Simplified Financial Model
This activity intentionally uses a simplified financial model. Its purpose is to help students recognize how training costs, time spent in training, and the ability to earn while training can affect the financial picture of a pathway. It should not be presented as a prediction of actual lifetime earnings.

Use Union Comparisons Only When Relevant
Union and non-union comparisons will not be relevant to every pathway. Do not require students to complete that portion when a meaningful comparison is not available.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Provide students with pre-selected wage, training-length, and training-cost information when independent research would create a barrier to completing the financial comparison.

Allow students to complete calculations with a partner.

Provide a partially completed example for students who need additional mathematical support.

For advanced students, extend the comparison by investigating benefits or changes in earnings over time without changing the core Money in Your Pocket calculation.

Money in Your Pocket:
Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths

FIGURE 11.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Starting Age: _____ **Comparison Age:** _____

Directions: Use this handout to compare how training costs and early earnings affect the total money you could have by the same age for each pathway.

Introduction

The cost of a pathway isn't just what you pay for training — when you begin earning money matters too. Some pathways require you to pay for training before earning a full wage, while others allow you to earn money while you train. You'll estimate how much money you could earn, minus training costs, by the same age.

Formula

Money in Your Pocket = **Money Earned During Training** + **Money Earned After Training** − **Training Costs**
(This is a simplified estimate. Actual earnings and costs will vary.)

Path 1 Calculation

Path Name: _____

Training Length (in years): _____

Total Training Cost: _____

Annual Wage During Training (if any): _____

Estimated Money Earned During Training: _____

Annual Starting Wage After Training: _____

Years Working After Training (through comparison age): _____

Estimated Money Earned After Training: _____

Calculation:

Money Earned During Training _____ + Money Earned After Training _____

− Training Cost _____ = Money in Your Pocket _____

Money in Your Pocket:
Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths

FIGURE 11.1

Path 2 Calculation

Path Name: _____

Training Length (in years): _____

Total Training Cost: _____

Annual Wage During Training (if any): _____

Estimated Money Earned During Training: _____

Annual Starting Wage After Training: _____

Years Working After Training (through comparison age): _____

Estimated Money Earned After Training: _____

Calculation:

Money Earned During Training _____ + Money Earned After Training _____

– Training Cost _____ = Money in Your Pocket _____

Side-by-Side Comparison

CATEGORY	PATH 1	PATH 2
Training Length		
Training Cost		
Money Earned During Training		
Money Earned After Training		

Money in Your Pocket:
Comparing the Real Cost of Two Paths

FIGURE 11.1

What About Unions? (If Applicable)

Union Wage: _____

Non-Union Wage: _____

Other Differences (benefits, training costs, apprenticeship wages, working conditions): _____

How might being in a union change the financial picture for this pathway? _____

Reflection

Which path came out ahead financially at your comparison age? Did the result surprise you?

Does the financial difference change how you feel about either pathway? Why or why not?

OR HS.HECPS C.1
OR HS.HECPS C.2

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR ANAYELI HODGSON

Lesson 12

Pathway 3: Military, Entrepreneurship, or Direct Work

Lesson Purpose

This lesson gives students the opportunity to explore nontraditional routes into career fields. Students consider how the challenge they identified earlier in the unit could connect to military service, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work opportunities. By exploring these pathways through the lens of problem solving, students can begin to see them as intentional options rather than accidental or backup plans.

Students select one of these three pathways and investigate the different avenues available within it, along with the expectations for entering and progressing within that pathway. They use their research to create a one-page overview connecting the pathway to their challenge and career interests. This becomes the third pathway students explore for their unit portfolio.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify different avenues available within military service, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathways.
- Research the entry expectations, opportunities, and potential for growth within one selected pathway.
- Explain how a military, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathway could connect to their selected challenge and career interests.
- Create a one-page overview communicating what they learned about their selected pathway.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Students' portfolio materials from Lessons 1 and 2, including their selected challenge/career and Pathway 3 choice
- Pathway 3 One-Page student activity
- Paper and writing utensils if students are creating the one-page by hand

Technology

- Student devices with internet access
- USA.gov information about U.S. military branches
- U.S. Small Business Administration resources
- CareerOneStop or another career information resource for direct-to-work research
- Optional digital design tool such as Google Slides or Canva

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the three Pathway 3 options: military, entrepreneurship, and direct work.
- Review the student one-page requirements so students receive consistent research expectations regardless of the pathway they select.
- Be prepared to help students identify how a pathway could connect to the challenge they selected earlier in the unit.
- Review the recommended research resources and identify additional local or state resources students may need, particularly for direct-to-work opportunities.
- Determine whether students will create their one-page by hand or digitally.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Reconnect to Your Challenge

Students revisit the challenge and career ideas they identified earlier in the unit and consider how military service, entrepreneurship, or direct work could provide another route for addressing that challenge.

2 STEP

Select and Explore Pathway 3

Students focus on the Pathway 3 option they selected earlier in the unit: military, entrepreneurship, or direct work. They begin by exploring the different avenues available within that pathway before narrowing their research to one specific option.

3 STEP

Research Your Pathway

Students investigate their selected option, including what someone does, what is required to enter, opportunities for advancement or growth, skills or experience that can be developed, and how the option connects to their challenge or career interests.

4 STEP

Create a One-Page

Students organize their research into a one-page overview that communicates the pathway, its requirements and opportunities, and its connection to their challenge.

5 STEP

Share and Reflect

Students share their one-page with a partner, receive verbal feedback, and reflect on what they learned about the pathway.

Introduction Questions

- Think back to the challenge you identified in Lesson 1. How could military service, entrepreneurship, or direct work connect to that challenge?
- What different options might exist within the pathway you selected?
- What would you need to know before deciding whether this pathway was realistic for you?

Instructional Activities

Reconnect to Your Challenge

- Students retrieve their challenge/career and Pathway 3 selection from earlier in the unit.
- Ask students to consider how their selected pathway could connect to their challenge.
- Students turn and talk with a classmate about the pathway they selected and why it could be relevant to their challenge.

Explore Your Pathway

- Students begin by exploring the different avenues available within their selected pathway.
- Students exploring military service review the branches of the U.S. military and identify possible roles or career areas connected to their challenge.
- Students exploring entrepreneurship consider different ways a person could create a business, product, or service that addresses their challenge.
- Students exploring direct work identify at least four entry-level occupations or opportunities connected to their challenge that do not require a two- or four-year degree.
- Students select one specific option within their pathway for deeper research.

Research and Create Your One-Page

- Students research the specific option they selected.
- Students identify what the work involves and how it connects to their challenge or career interest.
- Students identify the basic requirements or steps for entering the pathway.
- Students investigate opportunities for growth, advancement, or additional training.
- Students identify skills or experiences someone could gain through the pathway that could transfer to future opportunities.
- Students organize their findings into the Pathway 3 One-Page.

Share and Discuss

- Students pair with another student and share their completed one-page.
- Partners ask at least one question about the pathway and provide verbal feedback.
- Students identify one new idea, question, or consideration that emerged from the conversation.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students research different avenues within military service, entrepreneurship, or direct work.
- Students create a Pathway 3 One-Page connecting one specific option to their challenge or career interests.
- Students identify entry expectations, opportunities for growth, and transferable skills or experiences.
- Students share their one-page with a peer and participate in discussion and reflection.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student exploring **[MILITARY SERVICE / ENTREPRENEURSHIP / DIRECT WORK]** as a possible pathway connected to this challenge or career interest: **[INSERT CHALLENGE/ CAREER]**. Help me brainstorm possible options within this pathway that could connect to my challenge. For each option, briefly explain the connection and suggest what I should research about entry requirements, typical work, opportunities for growth, and transferable skills. Do not invent specific requirements. Tell me what information I should verify using official military, government, employer, or career information sources.

Reflection Questions

- How does this pathway connect with your challenge or career interests?
- What different avenues or "mini-paths" did you discover within this pathway?
- Is there room for growth or advancement within this pathway?
- What skills or experiences could you gain that would transfer to another career or pathway?
- How does this pathway compare with the other pathways you have explored in this unit?

Group Reflection / Discussion

- Most problems can be addressed in multiple ways. How might people from military, entrepreneurship, direct-work, and other postsecondary pathways contribute differently to solving the same challenge?
- Every pathway has a "price of admission." It might involve time, training, structure, financial risk, starting at an entry-level position, or another expectation. What does your pathway require, and which requirements would be the biggest hurdle for you?
- Imagine spending five years in this pathway and then deciding to change directions. What skills or experiences could you take with you?
- How could people coming from different pathways work together to address the same challenge?

Materials and Supplies

- Students' Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 portfolio materials
- Pathway 3 One-Page student activity
- Student device with internet access
- Paper and writing utensils, if completing the one-page by hand

Recommended Resources

USA.gov: U.S. Military Branches
https://www.usa.gov/us-military

U.S. Small Business Administration: 10 Steps to Start Your Business
https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/10-steps-start-your-business

CareerOneStop
https://www.careeronestop.org/

Curriculum Resources

Pathway 3 One-Page

See Figure 12.1

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Keep the Focus on Learning, Not Design
The purpose of the one-page is to help students organize and communicate what they learn, not to create a polished design project. Keep the focus on researching a pathway students may not have previously considered and understanding what it would actually take to enter and grow within it.

Guide Students Toward Specific Pathways
Military service, entrepreneurship, and direct work are broad pathway families. Encourage students to move from the broad category to a specific role, opportunity, or avenue so their final one-page contains meaningful information rather than general statements about the pathway.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Students may create their one-page using Google Slides, Canva, or another digital format instead of paper.

If a student is strongly committed to one of the earlier pathways explored in the unit, allow them to complete the same research and one-page structure for that pathway.

Provide students with a short list of pre-selected options within each pathway if generating possibilities independently is difficult.

Pathway 3
One-Page

FIGURE 12.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to research and create a one-page overview of one military, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathway connected to your challenge.

Part 1: Reconnect to Your Challenge

My Challenge: _____

My Related Career Interest(s): _____

My Pathway 3 Choice:

- ☐ Military
- ☐ Entrepreneurship
- ☐ Direct Work

Part 2: Explore Your Options

Military

Explore the U.S. military branches and identify at least three roles, career areas, or opportunities that could connect to your challenge.

Entrepreneurship

Identify at least three possible businesses, products, or services someone could create to address your challenge.

Direct Work

Identify at least four entry-level occupations or opportunities connected to your challenge that do not require a two- or four-year degree.

Briefly describe how each option could connect to your challenge.

Pathway 3
One-Page

FIGURE 12.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to research and create a one-page overview of one military, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathway connected to your challenge.

Part 3: Choose One to Investigate

Select one option from Part 2 and research it more deeply.

Specific Role, Business Idea, or Direct-Work Opportunity: _____

How It Connects to My Challenge: _____

What the Work Involves: _____

Basic Entry Requirements or First Steps: _____

Training, Credentials, or Preparation Required (if applicable): _____

Opportunities for Growth or Advancement: _____

Skills or Experiences Someone Could Gain: _____

How Those Skills or Experiences Could Transfer to Another Career or Pathway: _____

Sources Used for Research: _____

Part 4: Create Your One-Page

Your one-page must include:

The name of your pathway and specific option
A brief explanation of how it connects to your challenge
What someone in this pathway actually does
The basic requirements or steps for getting started
Opportunities for growth or advancement
At least two skills or experiences that could transfer to other careers
At least one visual element (icon, diagram, image, or simple illustration)
The sources used for your information

Part 5: Peer Response

One question my partner asked: _____

One new thought or idea I had after sharing: _____

OR HS.HECPS C.2
OR HS.HECPS C.1

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTOR ANAYELI HODGSON

Lesson 13

Checklist: Next Steps to Success in Uniform, Business, or Workforce

Lesson Purpose

This lesson gets students ready to start putting together the next steps for their selected postsecondary route. Students have explored military service, entrepreneurship, or direct work as a pathway connected to their challenge. Now they move from exploration to action by identifying the specific steps, requirements, and milestones needed to enter that pathway.

Students research the process for their selected option, create a checklist of what needs to happen, and then arrange those steps into a visual Journey Map. By the end of the lesson, students have a clearer picture of not just where they might go after high school, but what it would actually take to get there.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify important requirements and next steps for entering their selected military, entrepreneurship, or direct-work pathway.
- Research pathway-specific milestones, requirements, and decisions using credible sources.
- Organize their next steps into a logical sequence.
- Create a Journey Map showing a possible route from high school into their selected pathway.
- Identify potential hurdles and at least one action they could take to begin moving toward the pathway.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Students' portfolio materials from Lessons 1 and 2, including their selected challenge/career and Pathway 3 choice
- Pathway 3 One-Page student activity
- Paper and writing utensils if students are creating the one-page by hand

Technology

- Student devices with internet access
- USA.gov Military Requirements
- Oregon Secretary of State: Starting a Business
- CareerOneStop for researching direct-to-work occupations and requirements
- Google Maps for the opening activity
- Optional: Google Slides, Canva, or another digital tool for creating the Journey Map

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Review the three pathway options and the recommended research resources.
- Review the Pathway Checklist & Journey Map activity and decide whether students will complete it on paper or digitally.
- Prepare one simple example showing how several researched steps can be rearranged into a logical sequence. Do not give students a complete sample pathway that they can simply copy.
- Be prepared to help students distinguish between a requirement ("must be 18") and an action step ("contact a recruiter" or "prepare a resume").
- Remind students that requirements can change and may differ by military branch, employer, occupation, business type, or location. Students should verify specific requirements with official sources.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Bell Ringer

Students use Google Maps to consider why knowing a destination is different from knowing how to get there.

2 STEP

Pathway Revisit

Students return to the military, entrepreneurship, or direct-work pathway they selected in Lesson 12.

3 STEP

Next Steps Research

Students research the major requirements, milestones, and actions involved in entering their selected pathway.

4 STEP

Journey Map

Students organize their researched steps into a logical sequence from where they are now to entering the pathway.

5 STEP

Peer Check

Students compare Journey Maps with someone exploring the same broad pathway and revise as needed.

6 STEP

Reflection

Students identify a potential hurdle and one action they could take to begin moving toward the pathway.

Introduction Questions

- What do you notice when you ask Google Maps for directions somewhere?
- How is beginning a career pathway without knowing the steps like driving somewhere new without directions?
- Once you know where you want to go, what information do you need to figure out how to get there?

Instructional Activities

Bell Ringer: Where Are You Going?

Have students open Google Maps and enter directions to a familiar destination.

- Ask: ***What do you notice about the directions Google Maps gives you?***

Give students 1–2 minutes to think, then turn and talk with a partner.

- Ask: ***How is starting a career pathway without knowing the steps like driving somewhere new without directions?***

Connect the discussion to today's task: in Lesson 12 students selected a possible destination; today they will figure out a route for getting there.

Revisit Your Pathway

- Have students return to their Lesson 12 work.
- Students identify the military, entrepreneurship, or direct-work pathway they selected.
- Have students make their pathway more specific when needed, such as identifying a military branch or career, a particular business idea, or a direct-to-work occupation.

Research Your Next Steps

Students use the provided resources to research what it would actually take to enter their selected pathway.

Students record individual requirements, milestones, decisions, or actions in the checklist boxes provided on their activity sheet.

Depending on the selected pathway, students should investigate:

- **Military:** eligibility, branch/career options, recruiter contact, testing, medical or physical requirements, enlistment/application, training, and role-specific requirements.
- **Entrepreneurship:** business idea, customers, business planning, business structure, registration, licenses or permits, startup costs or funding, and steps toward launch.
- **Direct Work:** job qualifications, employers or openings, resume, references, application, interview, required screenings or credentials, onboarding, and opportunities for advancement.

Research Your Next Steps (Continued...)

Students verify specific requirements using credible sources because requirements may differ by military branch, business type, occupation, employer, or location.

Build Your Journey Map

Students review all of the steps they identified during their research.

Students cut out or digitally move their checklist boxes and arrange them into a logical sequence.

Their Journey Map should move from Where I Am Now to My Destination.

Students identify:

- At least one major milestone
- One potential hurdle
- One point where they may need help or additional information
- One first action they could take

Students finalize their map once they believe the sequence represents a realistic route into their selected pathway.

Peer Check

- Pair students, when possible, with someone researching the same broad pathway.
- Students compare their maps and look for missing steps, differences in sequence, or information that may need to be verified.
- Each student records at least one question, confirmation, or change that resulted from the comparison.
- Students revise their Journey Maps as appropriate.

Reflection

Students respond individually to the lesson reflection questions, including:

- Which step will require the most time or effort?
- What requirement or expectation surprised you?
- What feels like the biggest hurdle?
- Where might you need help?
- **What is one small task you could complete in the next 48 hours if you wanted to start this pathway this year?**

Reflection Questions

Students respond individually to the lesson reflection questions, including:

- Which step will require the most time or effort?
- What requirement or expectation surprised you?
- What feels like the biggest hurdle?
- Where might you need help?
- **What is one small task you could complete in the next 48 hours if you wanted to start this pathway this year?**

Group Reflection / Discussion

In pairs or small groups, discuss:

- Look at your partner's Journey Map. Is there a gap or a step they have that you don't?
- What is the most unpredictable step on your map? If it takes longer than expected, how might that affect the rest of your journey?
- How will you know when each major step is actually complete?
- Which parts of your pathway can you control, and which depend on another person or organization?

Materials and Supplies

- Lesson 12 Pathway 3 materials
- Pathway Checklist & Journey Map activity
- Student device with internet access
- Scissors and glue/tape if completing a physical map
- Writing utensils

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Completed pathway research identifying major requirements and next steps.
- Completed checklist of pathway-specific actions.
- Coherent Journey Map showing a logical sequence from high school to the selected pathway.
- Identification of at least one potential hurdle and one immediate action step.
- Peer comparison and revision of the Journey Map.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Student Research Support
I am a high school student creating a roadmap for entering **[specific military role/branch, business idea, or direct-work occupation]** after high school. Help me identify the major steps I should research, from where I am now through actually entering this pathway. Organize the steps in a possible order and identify any requirements, decisions, applications, tests, credentials, or people I may need to contact. Do not assume the requirements are current. Tell me which information I should verify using an official government, military, employer, or program website.

Check My Roadmap
I am planning to pursue **[pathway]**. Here are the steps I found: **[paste steps]**. Review my list and identify anything important I may have missed, anything that may be in the wrong order, and anything I should verify with an official source. Do not invent requirements.

Recommended Resources

Military

USA.gov: Requirements to Join the U.S. Military

https://www.usa.gov/military-requirements

Entrepreneurship

Oregon Secretary of State: Starting a Business

https://sos.oregon.gov/business/information-center/pages/starting-business.aspx

Direct Work

CareerOneStop

https://www.careeronestop.org/

Curriculum Resources

Pathway Checklist & Journey Map

See Figure 13.1

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Help Students Build Logical Checklists
Students sometimes struggle to make a checklist, determine which steps matter, and then follow those steps in a logical order. The purpose of this lesson is to let them initially capture what they find and then sequence that information into an actionable route.

Emphasize Individual Pathway Differences
Students' Journey Maps will not necessarily look alike, even when they select the same broad pathway. Military requirements differ by branch and role, businesses have different licensing and startup requirements, and direct-to-work expectations vary by occupation and employer. The goal is not for students to discover one universal pathway but to learn how to find, organize, verify, and act on the steps required for their own next move.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Students may create the Journey Map in Google Slides, Canva, or another digital format.

Provide pre-identified official research sources for students who need additional research support.

Allow students to work with a partner researching the same pathway while requiring each student to create an individual Journey Map.

Extend the lesson to two days if students need more time to research pathway-specific requirements.

VERSION 1.0 — SCHOOL YEAR 26/27

Use the QR code to contribute to the ongoing improvement of this resource.

Pathway Checklist
& Journey Map

FIGURE 13.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to turn your pathway research into a step-by-step journey map. You'll identify your destination, research what it takes to get there, organize your steps, and plan your next move.

Part 1: My Destination

My Challenge: _____

My Selected Pathway:
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Entrepreneurship
- ☐ Direct Work

My Specific Destination: _____

(Examples: specific military career/branch, business idea, or occupation/employer type.)

Part 2: Build My Checklist

Research what it would actually take to enter your selected pathway. Write one requirement, milestone, or action in each box. You may not need every box — add another if your pathway requires more steps.

Military	Entrepreneurship	Direct Work
Eligibility	Business idea	Job qualifications
Recruiter/contact	Customers/market	Employers/openings
Testing	Business plan	Resume
Medical/physical requirements	Business structure	References
Application or enlistment	Registration	Application
Training	Licenses/permits	Interview
Career-specific requirements	Startup costs/funding	Screening/credentials
	Launch	Onboarding

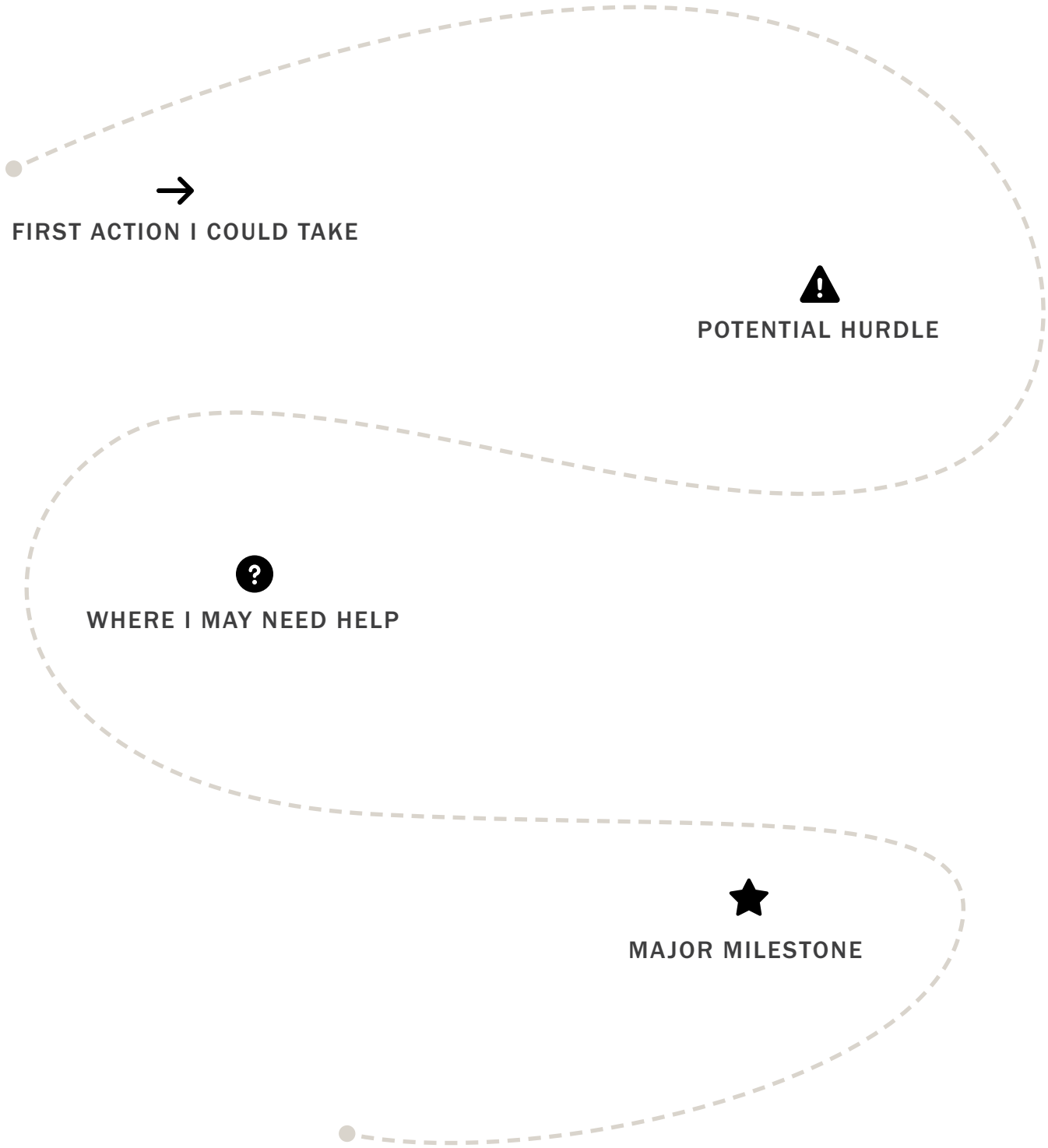
Reminder These are research starting points, not a universal checklist.
Your actual steps depend on your specific pathway. Verify requirements using credible sources.

Pathway Checklist
& Journey Map

FIGURE 13.1

Part 3: Map Your Journey

Students should be able to cut out the boxes from Part 2 and physically arrange them on the map, OR number their boxes and place those numbers along the route.



Pathway Checklist
& Journey Map

FIGURE 13.1

Part 4: Compare Before You Finalize

Work with a partner researching the same broad pathway.

- ☐ Is there a step they found that I missed?
- ☐ Is there a step I found that they missed?
- ☐ Does my order make sense?
- ☐ Is there anything I still need to verify?

One change I made after comparing: _____

Part 5: My Next Move

Which step will require the most time or effort? Why?

What is the biggest potential hurdle on your journey?

What is one small action you could take in the next 48 hours if you wanted to begin this pathway?

OR HS.HECPS C.3

DURATION 50 MINUTES

CONTRIBUTORS
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Lesson 14

Act Your Wage

Lesson Purpose

In this lesson, students make connections between different career options and potential earnings. Through a career and wage matching activity, students test their assumptions about what different occupations earn and discuss careers that pay more or less than they expected.

Students then connect what they learn back to the pathways they have explored throughout the unit. The goal is not to identify the highest-paying or "best" career, but to help students consider earnings as one factor among many when evaluating postsecondary and career options.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Connect careers with potential earnings using current occupational wage data.
- Understand that median wage is different from starting wage or an individual worker's earnings.
- Identify careers whose earnings challenge their prior assumptions.
- Consider how earnings information affects their thinking about the pathways they have explored.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- AI-generated Career Cards
- AI-generated Wage Cards
- AI-generated Teacher Answer Key
- Act Your Wage Reflection sheet, one per student
- Students' pathway materials from previous lessons
- Scissors

Technology

- AI tool of the educator's choice
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics
- Projector or classroom display
- Student devices for individual pathway wage research

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Use the provided AI prompt to generate a current set of 18 Career Cards, 18 Wage Cards, and a Teacher Answer Key.
- Review the AI-generated activity and verify the wage information using the BLS sources identified in the answer key.
- Print and cut one set of Career Cards and Wage Cards for each pair or small group.
- Keep the Teacher Answer Key separate for the class reveal.
- Print or provide digital access to the Act Your Wage Reflection sheet.
- Have students' previous pathway work available so they can connect wage information back to the options they have explored.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Career & Wage Predictions

Students consider what they already believe about the earnings associated with different careers.

2 STEP

Career & Wage Matching

Students work in pairs or small groups to match Career Cards with Wage Cards.

3 STEP

Answer Reveal

The teacher reveals the correct matches and students compare the results with their predictions.

4 STEP

Discuss the Surprises

Students discuss careers that paid more or less than expected and consider why their assumptions may have differed from the wage information.

5 STEP

Connect to Your Pathways

Students research current wage information for a career connected to one of the pathways they have explored during the unit.

6 STEP

Reflect and Close

Students complete the Act Your Wage Reflection and consider how earnings information fits into their larger career and postsecondary decision-making.

Introduction Questions

- Which careers do you think tend to earn the most? What makes you think that?
- What clues do people use when guessing how much someone earns?
- Does the amount of education or training required always predict how much a career pays?
- Besides salary, what other factors might matter when deciding whether a career is a good fit?

Instructional Activities

Career & Wage Predictions

- Tell students they are going to test how accurately they can estimate the earnings associated with different careers.
- Ask students to make a few predictions about which careers they expect to have higher or lower wages.
- Explain that the goal is not to get every answer correct. The goal is to notice where their assumptions match or differ from actual occupational wage data.

Career & Wage Matching

Divide students into pairs or small groups.

Give each group one set of ***Career Cards*** and one set of ***Wage Cards.***

Have students spread out the ***Career Cards*** so all occupations are visible.

Students work together to match one ***Wage Card*** with each ***Career Card.***

Encourage students to discuss their reasoning as they work.

Before the reveal, have groups identify:

- One match they feel confident about.
- One match they mostly guessed.
- One career they found especially difficult to estimate.

Answer Reveal

1. Use the AI-generated Teacher Answer Key to reveal the correct matches.
2. Students check and correct their matches as answers are revealed.
3. Pause periodically to ask which results surprised students.
4. Explain that the activity uses **median annual wage**, not starting salary. Median wage represents the midpoint of earnings for workers in an occupation.
5. Discuss why actual earnings can vary based on location, experience, employer, industry, hours worked, specialization, credentials, and other factors.

Discuss the Surprises

Facilitate a brief discussion:

- Which career paid more than you expected?
- Which career paid less than you expected?
- Which careers were easiest to estimate?
- Where do you think our ideas about what different careers pay come from?
- Does a higher wage automatically make one career a better choice than another?

Reinforce that wage is important information, but it is only one factor in evaluating a career.

Connect to Your Pathways

- Students return to the career and pathway options they have explored throughout the unit.
- Each student selects at least one career connected to a pathway they are seriously considering.
- Students locate its current median wage using the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook or another reliable occupational source.
- Students record the career, median wage, and source on their Act Your Wage Reflection sheet.
- Students consider whether the wage was higher, lower, or about what they expected.

Reflect and Close

Students complete the Act Your Wage Reflection and consider how potential earnings fit alongside other factors they have investigated throughout the unit.

Reflection Questions

- Which career surprised you by having a higher wage than you expected?
- Which career surprised you by having a lower wage than you expected?
- How, if at all, does this information affect how you feel about the options you have explored?
- What information besides salary matters to you when considering a career?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In small groups or as a class, discuss:

- Which matches were hardest to make? Why?
- What assumptions did we make about careers based on their titles or the education or training we thought they required?
- Did any careers requiring less formal education earn more than you expected?
- Why might two people working in the same occupation earn different amounts?
- How should salary factor into a career decision without becoming the only factor?

Materials and Supplies

- AI-generated Career & Wage Matching Cards
- Act Your Wage Reflection sheet
- Students' previous pathway materials
- Scissors
- Student devices

Recommended Resources

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics

https://www.bls.gov/oes/

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Students complete the Career & Wage Matching activity.
- Students compare their predictions with current occupational wage information.
- Students research and record current wage information for at least one career connected to their own pathway exploration.
- Students complete the Act Your Wage Reflection connecting earnings information to their future options.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Reduce the number of Career/Wage pairs for students who would benefit from a shorter matching activity. Allow students to work in pairs throughout the matching and research portions.

Instead of a teacher-led answer reveal, have students research the correct matches themselves. Compare Oregon wage information with national wage information as an extension.

Use the AI prompt to generate a career set reflecting industries that are particularly relevant to the local community or region.

The matching information may also be formatted as a projected matamoscas/flyswatter-style game rather than physical cards.

Curriculum Resources

Act Your Wage Reflection

See Figure 14.1

AI ASSIST PROMPT

Teacher Activity Generator Create a complete Career & Wage Matching Game for high school students.

Select 18 careers representing a wide range of industries, wage levels, and education/training pathways. Include a strong representation of careers that do not require a four-year degree. Choose careers with enough variation in wages to make the matching activity interesting and somewhat surprising.
Use current U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook data as the source for wages. Do not invent wage information. Do not use careers such as influencer or gig-worker categories unless you can identify a clear, credible occupational wage source.

Create three sections:

1. **Career Cards** Create 18 individual cards. Each card should contain only the career title. Format them in a simple 3-column table so they can be printed and cut apart.
2. **Wage Cards** Create 18 individual cards containing only the median annual wage. Do not include the career name. Shuffle the order so the Wage Cards do not correspond to the order of the Career Cards. Format them in a simple 3-column table so they can be printed and cut apart.
3. **Teacher Answer Key** Create a table matching each career with:

    - Median annual wage
    - Exact BLS occupational title
    - Typical entry-level education
    - Direct BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook source

Before presenting the final activity, verify that every career has exactly one matching Wage Card and that all 18 wages appear once and only once.

Add this note to the Teacher Answer Key:
Median wage represents the midpoint of earnings for workers in an occupation and is not an entry-level salary. Actual earnings vary by location, experience, employer, industry, hours worked, and other factors.

Do not rank careers or imply that careers with higher wages are better choices.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Generate Wage Data Close to Teaching
The Career & Wage Matching Game is intentionally generated using current occupational data rather than relying on a permanent set of salary cards. Wage information changes over time, so educators should generate and verify the activity shortly before teaching the lesson.

Avoid Value Judgments About Pay
Avoid framing higher-paying careers as inherently better. The purpose is to help students challenge assumptions and add potential earnings to the information they have already gathered about training requirements, costs, interests, opportunities, working conditions, and fit.

Clarify Median vs. Starting Wage
Be explicit that median wage is not starting wage. Individual earnings may vary considerably even within the same occupation.

VERSION 1.0 — SCHOOL YEAR 26/27

Use the QR code to contribute to the ongoing improvement of this resource.

Act Your Wage
Reflection

FIGURE 14.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this reflection to think about what you learned from comparing career wages and how that information connects to your pathway research.

Matching Activity Reflection

Which career surprised you by having a higher wage than you expected? Why?

Which career surprised you by having a lower wage than you expected? Why?

Why do you think some of your expectations were different from the wage information?

How, if at all, does this information affect how you feel about the career and pathway options you have been researching?

My Pathway Connection

One career I am considering: _____ Current median annual wage: _____

Source: _____

This wage was: ☐ Higher than I expected ☐ Lower than I expected ☐ About what I expected

Does knowing this information change how I think about this career? Why or why not?

Looking Beyond the Wage

Salary is only one part of choosing a career. What else would you want to know before deciding whether this career fits the future you want? (Examples: interest, work environment, location, schedule, education or training required, stability, opportunities for advancement, benefits, flexibility, purpose, or something else.)

OR HS.HECPS C.1
OR HS.HECPS C.2
OR HS.HECPS C.3

DURATION 50 MINUTES

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Lesson 15

My Next Steps: Bringing Your Pathways Together

Lesson Purpose

Throughout this unit, students have explored three different postsecondary pathways connected to a real-world challenge they care about. They have investigated education and training requirements, application and entry processes, costs, financial aid, wages, and the steps required to pursue different options. This final lesson gives students an opportunity to bring that work together, review what they have learned, and consider what it means for their own future.

Students will organize and review their Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio, compare the three pathways they explored, and identify the pathway they would most seriously consider pursuing right now. They will then create a personal next-steps plan that moves the unit from exploration to action. Students are not being asked to make a permanent career decision. Instead, they practice using information to make an informed choice and identify what they could do next.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Review and organize evidence from their exploration of three postsecondary pathways.
- Compare pathways using information about requirements, entry processes, costs, financial aid, and potential earnings.
- Identify a pathway they would most seriously consider pursuing and explain their reasoning.
- Identify questions, resources, and people who could help them continue planning.
- Develop a timeline of realistic next steps between now and graduation.

Teacher Preparation

Materials / Handouts

- Students' completed Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio materials from Lessons 1–14.
- Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist and Assessment Cover Page.
- My Next Steps Reflection, one per student.
- Writing utensils.

Technology

- Student devices with internet access, if students need to revisit research or verify information from earlier lessons.
- Access to previous digital work completed throughout the unit.

Room Setup

Not applicable.

Teacher Preparation

- Prepare copies of the Portfolio Checklist and Assessment Cover Page and My Next Steps Reflection.
- Determine how students will assemble or submit their final portfolios: paper, digital, or a combination.
- Review the portfolio checklist so students know which items are expected and which are grade-specific.
- Decide whether students will have an opportunity to complete missing work during this lesson or simply identify missing pieces that need to be completed later.
- Be prepared to reinforce that students are choosing the pathway that makes the most sense **right now.** The purpose is informed planning, not asking students to commit to a permanent career or postsecondary decision.

Instructional Sequence

1 STEP

Reconnect

Students revisit the challenge they identified at the beginning of the unit and the three pathways they explored.

2 STEP

Portfolio Review

Students organize their Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio and use the checklist to identify completed or missing evidence.

3 STEP

Pathway Comparison

Students review what they learned across all three pathways and consider which option currently stands out to them.

4 STEP

Next Steps Planning

Students complete the My Next Steps Reflection for the pathway they would most seriously consider pursuing right now.

5 STEP

Peer Reflection

Students share their selected pathway, reasoning, and next step with a partner or small group.

6 STEP

Final Portfolio

Students add their reflection to the portfolio and complete a final check before submission.

Introduction Questions

- Think back to the challenge you identified at the beginning of this unit. How has your thinking about who can help address that challenge changed?
- Of the three pathways you explored, which one surprised you the most?
- What information you learned during this unit had the biggest impact on how you thought about a pathway?
- If you had to choose one of your three pathways today, which would you choose? What would influence that decision?

Instructional Activities

Look Back: From One Challenge to Three Pathways

- Ask students to locate their original challenge from Lesson 1 and their three pathway selections.
- Give students a few minutes to look through the work they have completed since then.
- Ask students to consider how their understanding of the challenge, careers, and postsecondary options has changed.
- Briefly discuss the idea that very different education and career pathways can contribute to solving the same challenge.

Build Your Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio

Distribute the ***Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist*** and ***Assessment Cover Page.***

Students record their challenge and the three pathways they explored.

Students use the checklist to organize the work they completed throughout the unit.

Students check off each completed portfolio item and identify anything that is missing or incomplete.

Review the three assessment standards with students:

- C.1 Explore Pathways
- C.2 Admissions & Application
- C.3 Financial Decision-Making

Explain that the portfolio is evidence of how their understanding developed across the unit, rather than simply a collection of assignments.

Compare Your Three Pathways

Have students review the evidence in their portfolios for all three pathways.

Ask them to consider what they now know about:

- Education or training required
- Admission or entry requirements
- Time required
- Costs and financial aid
- Potential wages
- Opportunities for advancement
- Connection to their original challenge
- Personal fit

Compare Your Three Pathways (Continued...)

Students identify the pathway they would most seriously consider pursuing **right now.**

Reinforce that they are not committing to this pathway. Their job is to make the best decision they can using what they currently know.

My Next Steps

- Distribute the ***My Next Steps Reflection.***
- Students identify the pathway they would most seriously consider pursuing.
- Students reflect on what they have already done that could help them move toward the pathway.
- They identify classes, experiences, skills, requirements, or preparation they still need.
- Students identify questions they still have and specific people or resources that could help them find answers.
- Students develop a timeline of actions they could take between now and graduation.
- Students explain why this pathway currently feels like the strongest fit after comparing all three options.

Share and Commit to One Next Step

Place students with a partner or in small groups. Each student briefly shares:

- The pathway they selected.
- One reason they selected it.
- One question they still have.
- One realistic next step.

Partners may suggest an additional resource, person, or question the student should consider.

Students add any useful ideas to their My Next Steps Reflection before placing it in their portfolio.

Reflection Questions

- Which of your three pathways would you most seriously consider pursuing right now? Why?
- What did you learn during this unit that most influenced your thinking?
- What do you still need to learn before making a future decision?
- Who could help you take your next step?
- What is one action you could realistically take next?

Group Reflection / Discussion

In pairs or small groups, discuss:

- What made one pathway rise above the others for you?
- Did anything you learned cause you to reconsider a pathway you previously thought you wanted or did not want?
- What is one next step that is within your control?
- What could you do if your interests, circumstances, or plans change?

Materials and Supplies

- ***Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio*** materials from Lessons 1–14
- ***Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist*** and ***Assessment Cover Page***
- ***My Next Steps Reflection***
- Writing utensils
- Student device, if needed to revisit previous research

Recommended Resources

Not applicable.

Curriculum Resources

Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist and Assessment Cover Page

See Figure 15.1

My Next Steps Reflection

See Figure 15.2

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING

- Completed and organized Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio.
- Completed Portfolio Checklist and Assessment Cover Page.
- Completed My Next Steps Reflection identifying a selected pathway, remaining preparation, unanswered questions, sources of support, and a timeline.
- Written reasoning explaining why one pathway currently stands out after comparing all three.
- Participation in final peer discussion.

AI ASSIST PROMPT

I am a high school student who explored three possible pathways connected to the challenge of **[insert challenge]**. My three pathways are **[Pathway 1]**, **[Pathway 2]**, and **[Pathway 3]**. I am currently most interested in **[pathway]**. Help me think through realistic next steps I could take between now and graduation. Ask me questions rather than choosing a pathway for me. Help me identify information I may still need, people I could talk to, and small actions I could take to learn whether this pathway is a good fit.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

The goal of this lesson is **not to make students choose a career.** Students' interests, opportunities, and circumstances will continue to change. The goal is for students to demonstrate that they can explore options, evaluate information, make an informed decision based on what they currently know, and identify reasonable next steps.

Students should leave the unit understanding that future planning is an ongoing process. A strong plan is not one that never changes. It is one that gives students enough information, direction, and agency to know what they can do next.

OPTIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Allow students to complete the portfolio digitally rather than assembling a paper portfolio.
Allow students who remain undecided to identify two pathways they want to continue exploring rather than forcing a single choice.

Provide sentence starters or allow verbal responses for students who need additional writing support.
For younger students, adjust the My Next Steps timeline so it reflects their actual grade level and time remaining before graduation.

Allow students to meet briefly with a counselor, career coordinator, teacher, or other trusted adult to discuss questions identified during the reflection.

Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist
& Assessment Cover Page

FIGURE 15.1

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to turn your pathway research into a step-by-step journey map. You'll identify your destination, research what it takes to get there, organize your steps, and plan your next move.

My Challenge: _____

My Selected Pathway:
- ☐ Military
- ☐ Entrepreneurship
- ☐ Direct Work

Portfolio Checklist

Check off each deliverable as you add it to your portfolio. Items marked 12th grade only should only be included if they apply to you.

#	LESSON	DELIVERABLE TO INCLUDE	INCLUDED
1	What's My Challenge?	Written challenge statement identifying a real-world problem	☐
2	Introduction to Pathways	Selection of 3 pathways to explore (post-secondary, trade, choice)	☐
3	Pathway 1 2/4-Year Colleges	Comparison of 2 college or university programs	☐
4	Pathway 1 Requirements	Transcript review notes and professional email	☐
5	Pathway 1 Cost & Scholarships	Financial aid and cost comparison for Pathway 1	☐
6	FAFSA / ORSAA (12th grade only)	Financial aid application progress documentation	☐
7	College Essay / OSAC Questions	Draft essay or OSAC scholarship response	☐
8	College Application (12th grade only)	Application progress documentation	☐
9	Pathway 2 Trade / Technical / Apprenticeship	Comparison visual of 2 trade or technical paths	☐
10	Pathway 2 Requirements	Four-category requirements organizer	☐
11	Pathway 2 Cost & Wages	Money in your pocket cost-benefit projection	☐
12	Pathway 3 Student Choice	Exploration summary for chosen third pathway	☐
13	Pathway 3 Requirements & Demand	Requirements and demand notes for Pathway 3	☐
14	Salary Guessing Game	Completed activity sheet and reflection	☐
15	Portfolio Preparation	Final reflection and My Next Steps plan	☐
R	Portfolio Reflection	Written reflection connecting all three pathways to your challenge and your next steps	☐

Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio Checklist
& Assessment Cover Page

FIGURE 15.1

Assessment Rubric

Your portfolio will be assessed on the following three standards.

STANDARD	HIGH PERFORMING	PROFICIENT	CLOSE TO MEETING	DOES NOT MEET
C.1Explore Pathways	Clearly explores all 3 pathways with specific, well-researched training, education, and prerequisite details for each	Explores all 3 pathways with accurate training, education, and prerequisite details	Explores pathways with limited or incomplete detail on training, education, or prerequisites	Pathways are missing, unclear, or lack meaningful research
C.2Admissions & Application	Demonstrates thorough understanding of admission or entry processes with completed practice materials for multiple pathways	Demonstrates understanding of admission or entry processes with completed practice materials	Shows partial understanding of admission or entry processes; practice materials are incomplete	Admission or entry process work is missing or shows little understanding
C.3Financial Decision-Making	Makes well-informed financial comparisons across pathways, including cost, aid, and wage data, with clear reasoning	Makes informed financial comparisons across pathways using cost, aid, or wage data	Financial comparisons are incomplete or show limited use of cost, aid, or wage data	Financial comparison work is missing or shows little understanding

My Next
Steps

FIGURE 15.2

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Directions: Use this activity to turn your pathway research into a step-by-step journey map. You'll identify your destination, research what it takes to get there, organize your steps, and plan your next move.

My Challenge: _____

My Three Pathways: ☐ Military ☐ Entrepreneurship ☐ Direct Work

The pathway I would most seriously consider right now: _____

What have you already done that could help you move toward this pathway?

_____

_____

What classes, experiences, skills, or requirements do you still need to complete to be ready for this pathway?

_____

_____

What questions do you still have about this pathway? Who could you contact to help answer those questions?

_____

_____

What are your next steps?

This school year _____

Next school year _____

Before 12th grade _____

During 12th grade _____

After graduation _____

After exploring three different pathways connected to your challenge, why does this pathway currently feel like the best fit for you?

_____

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Extension Opportunities

Purpose

These strategies extend the Postsecondary Readiness unit by helping students connect their three-pathway exploration to real people, places, experiences, and decisions. Educators can select strategies that fit their community, student needs, available partners, and time. These activities are intended as optional extensions and can be used before, during, or after the unit to deepen students' understanding of postsecondary pathways and help them test what they learned through authentic experiences.

Community Partnership

LOCAL PATHWAY EXPOSURE

Instructional Activity

Invite or virtually connect students with people representing the three broad pathway types explored in the unit: two- or four-year education, trade/technical/apprenticeship, and military/entrepreneurship/direct-to-work. Ask guests to connect their experiences to the questions students have investigated throughout the unit, including entry requirements, cost, wages, and what the pathway actually looks like.

Learning Objective

Students connect their pathway research to real people and recognize multiple viable routes after high school.

Implementation Notes

Use local partners whenever possible. One panel representing several pathways may be easier to coordinate than multiple individual visits.

Professional Engagement

ASK-A-PROFESSIONAL Q&A

Instructional Activity

Instead of a general career presentation, have students prepare questions based on their own challenge and pathway research. Professionals respond to questions such as: How does your work help address this challenge? What did it take to enter your field? What do you wish you had understood in high school?

Learning Objective
Students connect abstract pathway research to a professional's lived experience with education, training, entry requirements, cost, and work.

Implementation Notes
Share student questions with the professional in advance so the conversation can focus on the unit rather than becoming a general career talk.

Experiential Learning

Job Shadow or Site Visit

Instructional Activity
Students participate in a job shadow, workplace visit, campus visit, apprenticeship tour, military career exploration experience, or other setting related to one of their three pathways. Students compare what they observe with what they previously researched.

Learning Objective
Students test their assumptions about a pathway against an authentic environment and actual work or training conditions.

Implementation Notes
This can be offered as an optional or extra-credit portfolio artifact. Students might submit a photo, observation notes, or short reflection rather than completing another formal assignment.

Observation & Investigation

Pathway Reality Check

Instructional Activity
During a campus, workplace, training center, career fair, or other visit, give students a simple investigation task tied to their portfolio. Ask them to identify one thing that confirms their research, one thing that surprises them, and one question they still have about the pathway.

Learning Objective
Students intentionally gather evidence from authentic environments and compare it with their prior pathway research.

Implementation Notes
This can be added to experiences the school already offers rather than requiring a separate field trip.

Future Pathway Exploration

Ask an Alum

Connect students with recent graduates from their own school who are now attending a two- or four-year institution, completing a trade or apprenticeship, serving in the military, running a business, or working directly after high school. Have students ask about what the transition actually required and what they wish they had known before graduating.

Learning Objective
Students see near-peer examples demonstrating that multiple postsecondary pathways are realistic and accessible.

Implementation Notes
Consider a live panel, recorded interviews, video call, or short alumni profiles.

Service Learning

SOLVE THE CHALLENGE LOCALLY

Instructional Activity
Students identify a local organization, business, agency, or community effort addressing the challenge they selected in Lesson 1. Individually or as a class, students identify a small way they could contribute to that work through service, awareness, research, or problem solving.

Learning Objective
Students recognize that the challenges driving career interests also exist in their own communities and can be addressed through multiple roles and pathways.

Implementation Notes
The emphasis should be on connecting service to the student's challenge, not simply completing volunteer hours.

Authentic Presentation

POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS FAIR

Instructional Activity

Students use their completed portfolios to teach younger students about postsecondary options. This could take the form of a pathways fair, classroom visits, small-group rotations, "speed dating" conversations, or another peer-teaching format. Students share what they learned about requirements, costs, wages, and next steps across their pathways.

Learning Objective

Students synthesize and articulate what they learned while helping younger students expand their awareness of postsecondary options.

Implementation Notes

Middle school students or younger high school students make a particularly useful authentic audience.

Community Showcase

"ASK ME, I FILED MY FAFSA/ORSAA"

Instructional Activity

Create a schoolwide campaign celebrating seniors who complete the appropriate financial aid application. Students who choose to participate can receive a sticker, button, certificate, entry into a school incentive drawing, or other visible recognition.

Learning Objective

Students see financial aid completion as a normal and visible postsecondary milestone and help build a school culture around completing important next steps.

Implementation Notes

Participation should not require students to disclose personal financial information or which application they completed. Follow school and district rules for any incentives or drawings.

Community Showcase

VIRTUAL POSTSECONDARY EXPLORATION

Instructional Activity

Use virtual speakers, college and training-program tours, professional interviews, or platforms such as PeerLearning.net when in-person access is difficult. Students select virtual experiences connected to one of their three pathways and capture one new piece of information to add to their portfolio.

Learning Objective

Students gain access to people and postsecondary environments that may not be available locally.

Implementation Notes

This is especially useful for rural schools or for pathways that are not represented in the local community.

Alternative Implementation

BRING THE PATHWAY TO THE CLASSROOM

Instructional Activity

When field trips, speakers, or community partnerships are unavailable, recreate the investigation using publicly available videos, virtual tours, program websites, alumni interviews, job postings, admissions materials, or employer information. Have students investigate the same questions they would ask during an authentic experience.

Learning Objective

Students continue to investigate real pathway expectations even when direct community access is limited.

Implementation Notes

Whenever possible, use materials from actual Oregon institutions, employers, apprenticeship programs, or agencies rather than fictional examples.

Parent Engagement

FAFSA/ORSAA COMPLETION NIGHT

Instructional Activity

Host an evening or drop-in event where students and families can learn about FAFSA/ORSAA, determine which application is appropriate, understand what information they will need, and receive support with the completion process.

Learning Objective

Students and families understand the financial aid process and are better prepared to complete required next steps.

Implementation Notes

Partner with counselors, college-access staff, financial aid professionals, or local colleges when available. Provide families with information before the event so they know what to bring.

FAMILY FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Instructional Activity

Provide families with a brief explanation of the FAFSA/ORSAA process before students begin the financial aid portion of the unit. Supplement the information with short family-facing videos or other resources as appropriate.

Learning Objective

Families understand their role in supporting students through the financial aid process.

Implementation Notes

Include information appropriate for families with different citizenship and documentation circumstances and provide translated materials when available.

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

Instructional Activity

Students interview a parent, caregiver, family member, or trusted adult about their postsecondary pathway. Questions explore what the person did after high school, how their plans changed, what influenced their decisions, what they learned along the way, and what they would do differently knowing what they know now.

Learning Objective

Students recognize that postsecondary pathways are rarely perfectly linear and use an adult's lived experience to think more intentionally about their own next steps.

Implementation Notes

Allow students to interview any trusted adult so the activity does not depend on a particular family structure or educational background.

Instructional Activity

After any speaker, visit, interview, job shadow, or virtual experience, students return to their portfolio research and identify: What did this experience confirm? What challenged an assumption? What new question do I have? Does this change how I rank or think about my three pathways?

Learning Objective

Students integrate new experiences with previous research rather than treating career-connected learning as a stand-alone event.

Implementation Notes

Use the same reflection protocol across different experiences so teachers do not need to create a new worksheet for every extension.

OR HS.HECPS C

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Assessment Strategies

Purpose

These strategies break a unit-long portfolio into manageable, application-based tasks that allow students to demonstrate competency through authentic postsecondary planning rather than recall. Students apply research, application, communication, and financial decision-making skills to pathways they have personally selected. Individual lesson products provide formative evidence throughout the unit, while the cumulative portfolio allows educators to assess student understanding across the three Postsecondary Readiness standards.

C.1
HS.HECPS

Multi-Pathway Exploration and Comparison

Assessment Strategy
Multi-Pathway Comparison

Student Assignment
Students research specific options within each of their three pathways: two- or four-year education, trade/technical/apprenticeship, and a student-selected third pathway such as military, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work. Students use lesson organizers and comparison activities to document education or training, entry points, requirements, and other characteristics of each option.

What Mastery Looks Like
Mastery is demonstrated when students identify specific and accurate education, training, and entry information for all three pathways and can explain meaningful differences among their options rather than simply naming careers or programs.

Implementation Notes
Evidence can come from multiple portfolio artifacts rather than requiring students to create an additional assessment product.

Requirements Mapping

Assessment Strategy
Pathway Requirements Analysis

Student Assignment
Students investigate what it actually takes to enter specific options within their pathways, including relevant academic preparation, training, credentials or testing, physical requirements when applicable, experience, and other prerequisites.

What Mastery Looks Like
Mastery is demonstrated when students accurately identify requirements and use those findings to explain what entering a pathway would require of them.

Implementation Notes
Requirements will look different across pathways. Assess the student's ability to locate, understand, and apply relevant requirements rather than expecting identical information for every pathway.

C.2
HS.HECPS

Application and Professional Communication

Assessment Strategy
Postsecondary Application Practice

Student Assignment
Students complete authentic or practice components of postsecondary application processes encountered throughout the unit. Evidence may include a professional request for a recommendation, scholarship response, college application planning materials, application progress, or entry-planning work for a trade, military, entrepreneurship, or direct-to-work pathway.

What Mastery Looks Like
Mastery is demonstrated when students can identify and appropriately complete the steps and materials required to pursue a postsecondary opportunity, using clear and professional communication when applicable.

Implementation Notes
The evidence does not need to be identical for every student. Evaluate whether students understand and can navigate the application or entry process appropriate to their selected pathway.

Application Planning

Assessment Strategy
Next-Steps Planning

Student Assignment
Students identify important deadlines, documents, requirements, contacts, and actions needed to pursue their selected postsecondary options and organize those steps into an actionable plan.

What Mastery Looks Like
Mastery is demonstrated when students identify accurate, pathway-specific next steps and can explain what they would need to do to move from exploration toward actual entry or application.

Implementation Notes
For younger students, this may remain a planning exercise. Seniors may use actual applications, financial aid forms, or other real postsecondary processes when appropriate.

C.3
HS.HECPS

Cost and Wage Comparison

Assessment Strategy
Financial Pathway Analysis

Student Assignment
Students use cost, financial aid, training expense, wage, and salary information gathered during the unit to examine the financial implications of their postsecondary

options. This may include college net-price comparisons, financial aid scenarios, trade training costs, apprenticeship wages, and longer-term earnings.

What Mastery Looks Like

Mastery is demonstrated when students use credible financial information, make accurate comparisons, and explain what the numbers mean for their own postsecondary decision-making rather than simply completing calculations.

Implementation Notes

Financial information differs substantially by pathway. Focus assessment on the student's ability to interpret and use relevant financial information rather than requiring identical calculations for every pathway.

Financial Resources and Affordability

Assessment Strategy

Paying for a Pathway

Student Assignment

Students identify credible resources that could help finance education or training, such as grants, scholarships, financial aid, paid apprenticeships, employer-supported training, military education benefits, or other pathway-appropriate resources. Students consider how these resources affect the actual affordability of a pathway.

What Mastery Looks Like

Mastery is demonstrated when students distinguish credible financial resources, identify how they apply to a pathway, and explain how funding options can change the actual cost of pursuing that option.

Implementation Notes

Do not limit "financial aid" to traditional college aid. The available funding structures will differ substantially across college, training, apprenticeship, military, entrepreneurship, and direct-to-work pathways.

Cumulative Assessment

POSTSECONDARY READINESS PORTFOLIO

Assessment Strategy

Portfolio Checklist + Standards-Based Rubric

Student Assignment

Students assemble the products developed throughout the unit into a Postsecondary Readiness Portfolio. The portfolio documents exploration of three pathways and includes evidence related to pathway requirements, application or entry processes, financial considerations, and a final reflection identifying what students learned and the next steps they would take.

What Mastery Looks Like

The portfolio is assessed separately against:

- **HS.HECPS.C.1:** Exploration of postsecondary pathways, education/training, and requirements
- **HS.HECPS.C.2:** Understanding and application of admissions, entry, and application processes
- **HS.HECPS.C.3:** Financial decision-making using cost, aid, wage, and other relevant financial information

Each standard is scored at four levels: ***High Performing, Proficient, Close to Meeting, or Does Not Meet.***

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Supplemental Resources

Activities

College Admissions Sorting Game
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-admissions-sorting-game

College Comparison Scorecard
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-comparison-scorecard

College Door Wars
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-door-wars

College Fit Game
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-fit-game

College Human BINGO
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-fit-game

College Personality Quiz
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-personality-quiz

College Terms Swat! Game
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-terms-swat-game

Financial Aid Offer Challenge
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/financial-aid-offer-challenge

Financial Aid Swat! Game
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/financial-aid-swat-game

Scholarship Challenge
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/scholarship-challenge

Singled Out: Oregon Colleges
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/singled-out-oregon-colleges

Types of Colleges
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/types-colleges

Checklists

College Readiness Checklists for 9th-12th Grade and their Families
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources

Google Doc Worksheets

Tools for College and Scholarship Planning
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources

Handouts

6 Ways to Pay for College
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/6-ways-pay-college

Applying for Financial Aid
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/applying-financial-aid

I Applied ... Now What?
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/i-appliednow-what

Parent Info & Financial Aid Forms
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/parent-information-and-financial-aid-forms

Postsecondary **Readiness**

Supplemental Resources

Posters

ABCs of Careers
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/abcs-careers-posters

ABCs of College
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/abcs-college-posters

FAFSA/ORSAA Tracker
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/fafsaorsaa-tracker-poster

Financial Aid Timeline
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/financial-aid-timeline-poster

Teacher Door Poster
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/teacher-door-poster

Presentations

6 Ways to Pay for College
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/6-ways-pay-college-presentation

What is college fit?
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/what-college-fit-presentation

Why go to college?
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/why-go-college-presentation

Toolkits

Career and College Day
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/career-day

College Fit
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/college-fit

College Knowledge Games
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/college-games

College Visits
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/college-visits

College Visits for Younger Students
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/younger-visits

Financial Aid
https://oregongoestocollege.org/toolkits/financial-aid

Other

101 Careers
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/101-careers

101 College Terms
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/101-college-terms

101 College Trivia Questions
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/101-college-trivia

College Visit Surveys
https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-visit-pre-survey

https://oregongoestocollege.org/resources/college-visit-post-survey