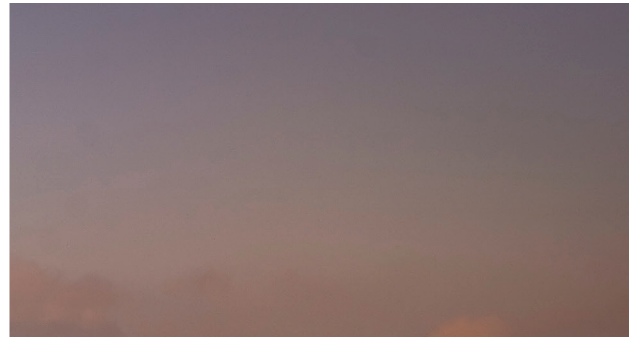
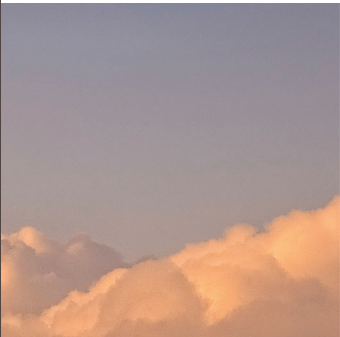


# COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING

*Level 680*

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Stanford University  
Stanford, California

# College and Career Planning

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By Barbara Walsted

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## Getting Started

If you trace the paths of two people running across a field—one who kept his eyes on the ground before him and one who kept his sight fixed on his destination at the other side of the field—whose path would be straighter? The person who runs with his eyes fixed on the destination will follow a straighter path. This principle applies to many aspects of life, including preparation for a career.

Students who are currently in junior high or early senior high school may not view their future career choices as immediate concerns, nor will they see their current studies as preparation for their careers. Yet, these are the ideal years for students to begin to explore their gifts and interests to aim their educations toward preparation for those careers, thereby following straighter paths.

Home school students have the unique opportunity to design their high school studies to best prepare for their future goals, whether that entails college or alternative education. Isaiah 43 says, “Remember not the former things . . . behold, I am doing a new thing.” Many home school families have taken this verse to heart and are willing to step outside the traditional progression of education to prepare their children for adult life in a more direct manner. John Holt, writing in *Teach Your Own*, says, “If you know what kind of work you want to do, move toward it in the most direct way possible.”<sup>1</sup> While this would certainly seem to make the most sense, many students fall into the default mode of standardized high school studies followed by college without first determining how to best use their time and finances to prepare for their career, “in the most direct way possible.”

**Note to Mom or Dad:** Help your students take the lead in setting these goals and identifying the path to follow to ensure that the plans are theirs and not yours. In *The Joyful Home Schooler*, Dr. Mary Hood writes, “if you want a high school student to study and apply himself willingly, you have to connect with that student’s desires and goals. By the time students are in high school, they should be setting goals, working toward these goals, and maintaining their own records. Again, not everyone is created equally in this area, but attaining a degree of independence should always be the ideal and the goal.”<sup>2</sup>

## Goals

We desire in this College and Career Planning program to provide you, the student, with the means to evaluate and determine your goals and, having set those goals, to assess the most direct way possible to pursue and attain them. **We encourage your parents to read the books alongside you, as one of them is written to the parent.** However, you will evaluate your learning style, personality and gifts to provide the framework to assess your career goals. The path you take from that point will vary according to the goals you set. Please don’t abandon this process simply because you may not plan to pursue a paying career. Keep in mind that career means a chosen pursuit, path or course. These assessments will be beneficial in understanding yourself and applying that understanding in establishing goals to prepare you to serve others (1 Peter 4:10), whether in a self-employed business, as a paid employee or a volunteer. Consider this program to be a high school course providing an Occupational Education credit. Whether you count this as a nine week or a one-semester course will depend upon the amount of time that you devote to the process. According to normal Carnegie standards, 30 hours devoted to the assessments and research prescribed in this program qualifies it as a nine-week course; while a 60-hour time investment qualifies as a one semester course.

You can easily modify the actual pace at which you cover the material due to the layout of the program steps. To help determine how much course credit to award, we provide a separate checklist in **Appendix 4 in this guide** with space to note each assignment’s completion time and date. We suggest that you begin with a goal of completing two steps per week, and modify that pace according to your needs.

This program utilizes two books, and we also reference websites as potentially beneficial in your journey to graduation. You will begin by completing assessments in *Finding the Career That Fits You* by Burkett and Ellis to help pinpoint the type of career best suited for you. Once you have identified the career(s) of interest, you will need to research the education requirements and then use *The HomeScholar Guide to College Admission and Scholarships* to help you plan an appropriate path.

There is no greater satisfaction and joy than in doing a job which utilizes your gifting, and conversely, there is no greater frustration than working in a job that is contrary to your gifting.

(Anonymous)

1. Holt, John. *Teach Your Own: A Hopeful Path for Education*. Delacorte, 1981.

2. Hood, Mary. *The Joyful Home Schooler*. Cartersville: Ambleside Educational Press, 1997.

# Finding the Career That Fits You

## Step 1 (Do two steps per week to start)

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

Read chapter 1, "Facing Career and Workplace Issues," in the workbook, *Finding the Career that Fits You*.

Take some time now to consider your learning style. No doubt, in the process of your education so far, you have encountered subjects or study methods that seem to click for you and some that present challenges. Scientists have determined that we have three different approaches to learning, called learning styles.<sup>3</sup>

Mark the statements below that best describe you:

1. I retain information when I hear it better than when I read it myself. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I find it difficult to sit still at a desk when doing my work. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I learn well from graphics or pictures. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I frequently take notes when listening to someone teach. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I work well with my hands. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I convey information well verbally and enjoy discussion. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I prefer to participate in an activity or manipulate parts as I learn. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I often talk to myself when I am reading or trying to learn. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I enjoy putting puzzles together. \_\_\_\_\_

Please read these brief descriptions of the three learning styles:

### \* Auditory learners learn through hearing.

They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners listen for the speaker's tone of voice, pitch, speed and other nuances to interpret the underlying meanings. Written information may have little meaning for auditory learners, so they often benefit from reading the text aloud or listening to recorded books, CDs, online workshops or podcasts. If you marked numbers 1, 6 and 8, you are likely an auditory learner.

### \* Visual learners learn through seeing.

They learn best through sight. They absorb information through reading or reviewing charts and graphs. During a presentation, they often take detailed notes to help them absorb the information. Visual learners may think in pictures and learn best from visual displays such as text, illustrations, overhead transparencies, DVDs, diagrams and graphs or online videos.

If you noted numbers 3, 4 and 9 as applying to you, you are likely a visual learner.

### \* Tactile/Kinesthetic learners learn through moving, doing and touching.

They learn best through a hands-on approach and active exploration of the physical world. Kinesthetic learners often say, "I have to do it to remember it." They may find it hard to sit still during long oral or visual presentations because of their need for active learning and application of concepts.

If you noted numbers 2, 5 and 7 in the questionnaire as applying to you, you are likely a tactile/kinesthetic learner.

If you find that results of the questionnaire above were not clear and you would prefer to take a longer survey, and have it evaluated independently, you will find a free survey available at: <http://quizzes.familyeducation.com>.

## Step 2

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

Read chapter 2 and complete the Bible study.

As you move into the rest of this book and begin to complete the self-assessments, remember that there are no "wrong" answers; answer in the way that most reflects you. You then have an accurate assessment to use to establish your goals.

## Step 3

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

Read chapter 3, complete survey A (page P-3, P-13 to P-31) and complete questionnaires on pages 31-36. Fill in the results on the *Action Plan Summary* found on page A-2 in chapter 7. Note that this workbook's design accommodates people from four different perspectives. Since the first two categories do not apply to you, omit the secondary survey on *Expected Work Behavior* (Survey B in this chapter).

3. Bogod, Liz. "Learning Styles Explained," [www.ldpride.net](http://www.ldpride.net), Viewed Jan. 2006.



## Step 40

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Chapter 16: “Paint Portraits with Application Essays”

Once you have narrowed your selection of colleges to which you wish to apply, direct your attention to the application process. Many colleges require prospective students to submit an essay with their application packet. If any of the colleges on your “hot list” require an essay, read chapter 16, “Paint Portraits with Application Essays.” Begin to collect essay ideas pertaining to significant experiences in your life or answers for specific essay topics provided by the college.

If you will be pursuing scholarships from private sources, you will likely be asked to write about your experiences, both academic and extracurricular. Do not overlook the article provided in **Appendix 5 in this guide**, “On Presenting Yourself in Resumes and Applications . . .” as you consider how you will complete these essays. Once you have selected the topic for your actual admission essay, follow Lee Binz’s suggestion and devote time to writing and revising your essay. Be sure to submit a concise piece and do not exceed the word count restrictions set forth by the college.

It’s important to seek perfection in writing these essays and tailor each one you submit. This chapter includes four examples to help get you started. Plan and keep your essays true to who you are. Rewrite the essay to incorporate suggestions from this chapter until you are satisfied with it. College applications and essays should reflect who you are. In other words, it should be a true picture of yourself and should show the admission counselors how well you are able to communicate on paper.

**NOTE: It’s wise to start writing your practice essays in your junior year.**

## Step 41

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Chapter 17: “Review Admission Policies Carefully”

This chapter will help you navigate the sometimes complex and arduous college application process. The requirements can be daunting, especially for homeschoolers. The terminology on the applications can be confusing and intimidating. This chapter helps break the process down into easy to understand processes and requirements. A College Application Lexicon is included in **Appendix 6 in the book** on p. 251 to help you understand the terminology. Be certain to read the fine print on the application and follow all instructions thoroughly – paying very close attention to detail. Please review the college application often as requirements can change. Complete records of your student’s “resume” is essential to success in the application process.

## Step 42

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Chapter 18: “Cross the Application Finish Line”

It’s time to cross the finish line and complete the college application process. To avoid surprises, Lee Binz highly recommends parents staying involved in the process. Parental involvement will help both the students and the parents brainstorm ideas. They can act like a project manager or counselor and help guide the students. This chapter helps explain how parents can come alongside their students and help them finish the race!

## Step 43

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Chapter 24: “College Opposition and the GED”

GED stands for General Educational Development and is an exam that would result in the equivalence of a high school diploma. This chapter includes valuable information regarding the GED to help you determine if your student should take the test. It’s important to note that your student does not need to take the GED for him/her to qualify for financial aid. Read the college admission requirements carefully to determine if the college your student is attending requires a GED. This chapter includes a sample letter Lee Binz wrote to a university, asking them to change homeschool admission GED requirements. If your college includes a GED requirement, and you don’t want your student taking it, you may email them and voice your opinion.

## Step 44

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Chapter 22: “Scholarship Competition and Interview Tips”

This chapter explains how to be prepared for scholarship competitions and interviews. It includes helpful “do’s and don’ts” as well as sample interview questions.

Ask a knowledgeable adult to conduct a mock interview with you. Try to choose someone other than a family member. Have that person interview you as an admissions representative might. After the interview, ask the person to write up his/her impression of your performance. Make sure to request honesty from them; explain that it is better to hear “your fidgeting makes you look nervous and unprepared” from them rather than from an actual admissions representative. Make note of the areas in which you display strength and the areas you must improve.

## Step 45

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Chapter 25:** “Gap Year: Time Off for Good Behavior”

A gap year takes place between high school graduation and entering college. Many colleges, including Ivy League schools, are recommending students take a one-year gap before attending their school. Gap years take many forms. One option is taking a year off and enrolling in program that specializes in gap years. Other options include finding a job, interning, travelling, or pursuing a special project. Some students participate in wilderness discipleship programs to unplug for a year, while others volunteer their time in mission trips or as youth camp counselors. Before pursuing this option, I recommend checking your college’s gap year policy. Universities may have unique guidelines in gap year programs which could affect admissions or scholarships. CHECK all scholarship and college admission requirements carefully before deciding if taking a gap year is a good option for your student. Many valuable and insightful articles on gap year programs can be found doing an internet search.

## Step 46

Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_ Time Devoted \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Chapter 31:** “The End of Homeschooling”

**Note to Parents:** Grab a cup of tea, maybe even a box of tissues or chocolate, and soak up this last chapter. It’s filled with wisdom, and words of advice as you face dropping your child off at the university campus. The transition can be a bit bumpy, but it’s a time to reflect and look back on your homeschooling journey and savor the last months/days/moments of your adventure. It’s also a time to think about the bond you’ve built with your child, and look forward to the new relationship you’ll have with them as young adults. If this is your last child to leave the nest, it’s time to look for new beginnings in the next stage of your own life. But always be available to help guide and counsel them in their transition into adulthood. This is a new adventure for them as well, and you can continue to be their cheerleader on the sidelines.

**Students:** Finally, draw together the information you have gleaned and focus on completing your college and scholarship applications. We don’t provide estimates of time that you will spend on each step because each student needs to tailor the program to his/her goals as determined through the surveys in Finding a Career that Fits You. You may have a clear direction at this point or you may still be considering your options. That is fine.

Are you now equipped to run with your eyes fixed on the goal? If so, you should find your path is straighter and your motivation fueled by having the goal in sight. Now, “run in such a way as to obtain [the prize]” (I Corinthians 9:24b).

Please keep in touch and let us know where your post high school/college/career adventures have taken you as you’ve reaching your goals and moving into adulthood. We are always interested in hearing from Sonlight graduates and would love to hear about your journey as well! <https://www.sonlight.com/contact/advisors/> ■

## Appendix 1—College Information Worksheet

College: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting:   City   Suburban   Small Town   Country

Admissions Difficulty Level:   Highly selective   Selective   Open

High School Academic Requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Point Requirement: \_\_\_\_\_ GED Required? \_\_\_\_\_

Test Scores: (SAT) \_\_\_\_\_ (ACT) \_\_\_\_\_ (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Homeschooler Accessibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Application requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational philosophy: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus life: \_\_\_\_\_

Majors & programs of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Ratio of major to general study courses: \_\_\_\_\_

Special programs: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial:

Tuition: \_\_\_\_\_ Fees: \_\_\_\_\_

Room & Board: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Fees: \_\_\_\_\_

Books: \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL COST** \_\_\_\_\_

Median financial aid award for incoming freshmen: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus visit scheduled: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall impression: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Unofficial Contacts:

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Response: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### On Presenting Yourself in Resumes and Applications . . .

Whether you are pursuing scholarship opportunities or future employment, you will need to outline your skills and gifts for consideration by others. An application or resume is usually a company's first glimpse of you, and can be equated to marketing yourself to sell your abilities or accomplishments to a company. Such a task may occasionally raise questions regarding the appropriateness of noting activities done for ministry or in obedience to God's calling. You may question, for example, whether recording such activities is unduly promoting yourself or even negating your future reward from the Lord.

Such a question may stem from what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, "beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 6:1, NASB) Reading this verse on its own may initially lead you to assume that you should not report your ministry activities to men (or companies) on a resume or application. Yet, on second reading, I think you'll notice the focus of this verse is on the motivation for the activity—whether it is done just to be seen by others, or as an expression of your devotion or obedience to the Lord—not on keeping the activity or its results to yourself. Another verse in the Bible exhorts us to not think more

highly of ourselves than we ought. Yet, most websites that provide guidance in preparing a resume encourage you to "toot your own horn." Clearly, there is a balance to be found in presenting yourself in an application or resume. You can demonstrate your ability to meet the requirements of a job or the prerequisites of a scholarship award by noting the skills and gifts you have employed in educational endeavors and outside activities, whether directly related to ministry or not. These can be presented in the context of "what the Lord has accomplished through me, using the gifts He has given me," or simply outlined as skills and abilities, provided you are not unduly puffing yourself up or seeking the glory personally.

There is no need to reinvent the wide variety of resume preparation assistance that is already available on the internet. A variety of resources can be accessed by searching under the general phrase "resume preparation." Specific, beneficial articles may be found by searching for "Resume Preparation Do's and Don'ts," "Five Steps for Resume Preparation," and "Tips for Preparing Applications and Resumes." ■