



Junior Achievement *Save, USA*

Map Your Financial Future

High School Lesson

The suitcases are packed, the camping equipment is in the van, and the gas tank is filled to the brim. Your family is about to take off for a week in the Colorado Rockies. There's just one problem—no one checked a map. Oops. This can make for a pretty rough journey.

Going on a trip requires planning: Which are the best routes? Where will you camp each night? Do you need reservations? Without a plan, you might run into unforeseen problems throughout your vacation.

In the same way, you need a road map, or plan, to take the trip to your financial future. Which route will you take—big company, small company, or your own company? Where will you stop along the way—college, technical school, trade school, or the military? Do you need reservations—savings, credit, or investments?

Making a plan can spell the difference between success and failure on a vacation and as you set your sights on your life goals. One of your goals is probably a college degree.

Looking at College Costs

Type of Institution	Tuition	Room and Board	Total Cost
Four-year, private	\$ 25,143	\$ 8,989	\$ 34,132
Four-year, public (in-state)	\$ 6,585	\$ 7,748	\$ 14,333
Four-year, public (out of state)	\$ 17,452	\$ 7,748	\$ 25,200

Cost breakdowns for 2008, Source: <http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/29/pl/college/college/index.htm>

Thinking Ahead

What's the difference between an expense and an investment?

- An expense brings some satisfaction without any expectation of financial reward. Buying a burger for lunch is an expense. You like the taste of the burger, but you don't expect any long-term economic benefit.
- An investment includes the expectation of receiving economic benefit in the future. Paying college tuition is an investment. You expect to earn a higher income in the future in return for the time, money, and effort you put into your education now.

College graduates can expect to earn 70 percent more during a lifetime, on average, than those with only a high school diploma. That means that over the course of a 40-year working career, the difference in earnings between a college graduate and high school graduate is about \$1 million. Even with escalating tuition costs, education is a good investment. See the JA Financial Aid Center at <http://studentcenter.ja.org/asp/PayCollege> for more information.

With a price tag of over \$30,000, a private university may be out of reach for many high school graduates. However, hundreds of less expensive schools provide an excellent education. Check out the college issues of major magazines. They generally provide annual rankings of schools by region and size. Online resources can help you calculate your expenses and ability to pay at various levels. Don't forget about grants, scholarships, and loans.

Scholarships

When you investigate financial aid, beware of scams. Some companies promise a scholarship but ask you to pay an eligibility fee up front. Others charge a processing or application fee. Generally, if a company asks for money just to start the process, it's probably not a reputable organization. Visit the JA Financial Aid Center at studentcenter.ja.org/asp/PayCollege for a scholarship search tool and more information.

Part-Time Job

Another way to help finance your education is to work part time while going to school. Work experience while you're in college looks good

on a résumé, especially if it's related to your field of study. For example, if your major is finance, you might take a part-time job as a bank teller; if your choice is pre-med, perhaps the student health center needs a part-time receptionist.

Getting Started

To begin the planning process, try to estimate what you and your family can afford to pay for college. Then check some of the college-cost calculators on the Internet to find out what additional funds may be available.

Internet Resources

1. Calculators you can use to estimate your college costs and what you can afford. (<http://studentcenter.ja.org/asp/PayCollege/>)
2. Junior Achievement's comprehensive college site, containing valuable information about how to save for college, apply for aid, and calculate college costs. (<http://studentcenter.ja.org/asp/FindCollege/>)

Amount you have already saved:	\$ _____
Amount you'll be able to save before college:	\$ _____
Amount your family will be able to contribute:	\$ _____
	Total \$ _____
Now find out about:	
Possible scholarships _____	_____
Possible grants _____	_____
Student loans _____	_____



About JA Worldwide® (Junior Achievement)

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, Junior Achievement provides in-school and after-school programs for students which focus on three key content areas: work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Today, 137 individual area operations reach more than four million students in the United States, with an additional five million students served by operations in 123 other countries worldwide. For more information, visit www.ja.org.