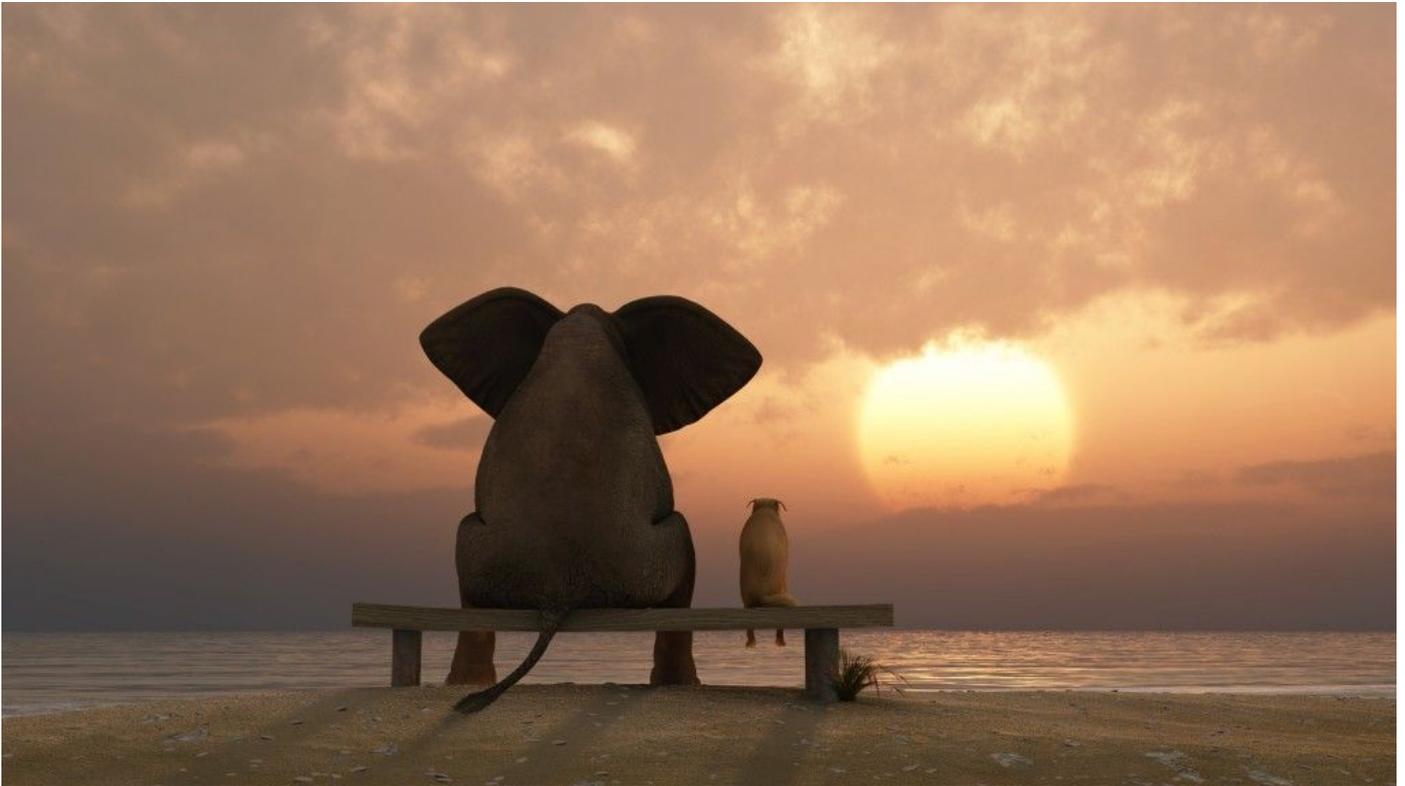


*Planning for after graduation ...
Can't we just enjoy the moment?*



Junior Planning Guide Class of 2020

MT. ABRAM HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE

Ben Milster – School Counselor
Judy McCurdy- School Counseling Secretary



*** We are here to assist you in any way that we can. Please come in, any time, for any reason!*



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I. Plan? What Plan?

First, remember that -

“You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.” ~ Yogi Berra

Your junior year is the time to seriously begin developing a plan for after high school graduation, because:

- ❖ Your senior year is very full, and can be stressful enough without having to create plans late in the year.
- ❖ Planning now will make your senior year much easier to handle.
- ❖ Many options that you may be considering take a fair amount of time, research, and thought. Starting now will provide you with the time needed to create a well-defined and workable plan to implement next year.

II. Options

Upon graduation, you basically have three options to consider:

- A. College**
- B. Military Enlistment**
- C. Employment**

Though there are various combinations of the options listed above, these three will be primarily addressed in this planning guide.

III. College Option

A. Why College?

Because the only guarantee that education can offer is that the more education you have, the more options you have regarding your life choices. **and**

Because our society is demanding more education and training beyond high school, now more than at any time in history, and the demand is increasing.

B. College Defined

We define college as “any institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level”. Most colleges fall within one of the following categories:

1. **University** : An academic institution that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields. It is comprised of a number of “schools” or “colleges”, with each one teaching a specific area of study. i.e., college of education, college of engineering, college of business, etc.

Degrees offered: 4-year Baccalaureate (Bachelor’s Degree) in either arts or sciences (BA, BS), Graduate Degrees at the Master’s (2 years beyond a bachelor’s) and Doctoral (4 years beyond a bachelor’s) level. May additionally offer professional degrees in law or medicine. A university may also sometimes offer 2-year associate degree programs within their 4-year programs.

2. **Liberal Arts College**: Four year institution that emphasizes program of broad skills in thinking and writing, a focus on undergraduate education (no graduate programs) are usually fairly small (1,000 – 2,500 students), and an emphasis on faculty teaching (not research).

Degrees offered: 4-year Baccalaureate in the arts or sciences (BA, BS); some liberal arts colleges may also have 2-year Associate Degree programs available.

3. **Technical College**: A 2-year institution primarily concerned with providing education and training in a variety of skills and technical fields. In Maine, the technical colleges are now called Community Colleges, and offer both technical and liberal arts education in one and two year programs.

Degrees offered: 2-year Associate’s Degree, 2-year and 1-year Diplomas, and sometimes 1-year certificates.

4. **Community College**: Usually a 2-year institution that provides a wide variety of educational opportunities and transfer programs, especially for non-traditional students and adult learners. In Maine, the Technical Colleges are now taking the role of Community Colleges as well, offering a two-year associate degree in liberal arts, with many transfer agreements with the four-year universities in the system.

Degrees offered: 2-year Associate Degree, 2-year and 1-year diplomas, and sometimes 1-year certificates.

5. **Business College:** A 4-year or 2-year institution primarily concerned with a focus on education in business administration, business management, accounting, secretarial science, and other business related fields.

Degrees offered: 4-year Baccalaureate and 2-year Associate Degrees.

6. **Trade Schools:** An institution that offers training in a specific area or field, such as hair design, truck driving, boat building, etc.

Degrees offered: Usually a 1-year certificate or diploma.

C. Types of Degrees

1. **4-Year Baccalaureate (Bachelor's Degree):** Four (or sometimes five or more) college program. Most students earn a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS). Other types of Bachelor's Degrees include Fine Arts (BFA) or Architecture (B.Arch.).
2. **Graduate/Master's Degree:** More advanced degree pursued after earning a Bachelor's degree. Examples are a Master of Arts (MA), Master of Education (M.Ed), or Master of Science (MS). Students generally can earn a Master's degree after one to three years of study.
3. **Doctoral Degree:** Most advanced degree pursued after earning a Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree, usually requiring four or more years of study and research. Examples include Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D), Doctor of Medicine (M.D.), Doctor of Education (Ed.D) and Juris Doctor (J.D.).
4. **Associate's Degree:** Two- year degree. Some students who earn this degree transfer to a four-year program to earn a Bachelor's Degree. Others complete an associate's degree to prepare for direct entry into a specific career or job.
5. **Certificate:** Earned after taking a series of courses in a particular subject. Students often earn certificates for direct entry to the workforce.
6. **Diploma:** Similar to a certificate, often awarded through completion of a program in community or technical schools.

D. The College Search

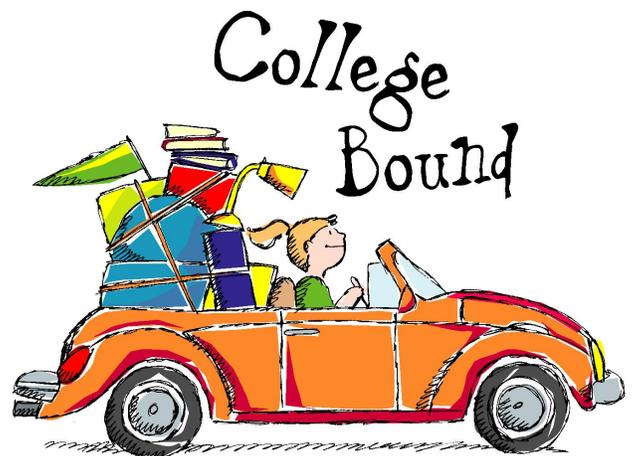
First, please note that:

The College Choice is:

- ★ difficult
- ★ important
- ★ primarily the responsibility of the student
- ★ time-consuming
- ★ frustrating
- ★ apt to have long-term consequences
- ★ important to others besides the student
- ★ something requiring help from others
- ★ resolved through coming to grips with personal priorities and goals
- ★ to be reexamined periodically as changes in the individual and/or college occur
- ★ based on facts and feelings

The College Choice is not:

- ★ final
- ★ irreversible
- ★ a guarantee for future success
- ★ a matter of luck
- ★ static (unchanging)
- ★ the most difficult decision you'll make in your life
- ★ for others to make for you
- ★ the same for any two people
- ★ to be made in isolation



SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

When you are looking to find colleges that will meet your academic and personal needs, please utilize the following as a beginning checklist to guide your research of schools:

- What kind of college do I want to attend? Liberal Arts, University, Technical or Community College, etc.
- What size of college do I want? Colleges range in size from a few hundred or less to 50,000 students plus.
- Where do I want to attend: Close to home? Far away? Maine? New England? Anywhere in the country? International?
- Location. Rural? Urban? In between?
- Program offerings. Does the school have the academic program that I want? And what if I don't know what I want?
- Admissibility/Selectivity. Will I be accepted for admission?
- Reputation of the college or specific program within. Utilize evaluative resources - ratings, placement rates of graduates, alumni, faculty, school counselor, etc.
- Atmosphere. Your own sense or feel for the school. This is where a visit to the college is critical.
- Special programs/athletics. Any that you may be interested in could be very important to your comfort level and academic success.
- Cost. Though not an absolute factor, it is one to be considered when choosing colleges to which you may apply. Cost (with financial aid package) will most likely be a factor when deciding which college to attend.
- Other factors. May be numerous - but paying attention to all of the above will give you a good start in your search.

Website Research:

Though there are several very good printed resources available to you in the school counseling office regarding the college search and application process, the most accurate information will come from the institution's website. College websites vary greatly in their clarity and ease of accessing information, but most will have a "Prospective Students" link on their homepage which will direct you to what you need to know in order to apply to that particular school. The "Admissions" link is often the link you need to access if there is no prospective students link. On these links, almost all colleges will have a "Contact Us" link where you can give them your email and regular mailing address so that they can send you information about their school.

Guidance Resources:

- The College Handbook
- Book of Majors
- Get It Together for College
- The Other College Guide
- Fiske Guide to Colleges
- 100 Successful College Application Essays
- The College Application Essay
- College Catalogs
- Colleges That Create Futures
- The Official Study Guide for all SAT Subject tests
- The Official SAT Study Guide
- Getting Financial Aid
- Campus Visits and College Interviews

Additional resources:

- Parents
- Faculty
- Family friends
- Admissions counselors at colleges and universities

"Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance." ~ Confucius



E. Admissions and Selectivity:

1. Basically three categories, with significant variance within each:
 - a. **Highly Selective** - Institutions that seek students with excellent academic records, test scores, and recommendations.
 - b. **Selective** - Institutions seek students with excellent to very solid college preparatory backgrounds. Most like to see (very generally): college prep curriculum in high school, "B" average or better, ranked in top 1/2 of graduating class, and solid SAT scores.
 - c. **Open Admission** - Institutions will accept students who have attained either a high school diploma or GED. May also have specific academic prerequisites for certain programs within the school.

Can also be categorized as:

- **Most Difficult:** More than 75% of entering freshmen were in the top 10% of their high school class and about 30% or fewer of applicants are accepted.
 - **Very Difficult:** More than 50% of entering freshmen were in the top 10% of their high school class and about 60% or fewer of applicants are accepted.
 - **Moderately Difficult:** More than 75% of entering freshmen were in the top 50% of their high school class and about 85% or fewer of applicants are accepted.
 - **Minimally Difficult:** Most freshmen were not in the top 50% of their high school class and up to 95% of applicants are accepted.
 - **Non-Competitive:** Virtually all applicants are accepted regardless of high school rank or test scores.
2. Assessing your admissibility - What is considered?
 - a. Your transcript - the classes you have taken and grades earned in each. Review it with your counselor.
 - b. Your rank in class.
 - c. Your application, and possibly an interview.
 - d. Evaluation by your teachers and counselor (letters of recommendation)
 - e. Your involvement as a student with your school and community.
 - f. Your standardized test scores. (SAT, Subject Tests, ACT)

F. College Admissions Options and Processes:

Most college admissions timetables call for applications and supporting materials to be submitted in the fall or early winter of the senior year. College admissions decisions are generally sent to applicants anytime from mid-December to mid-April. Accepted applicants to most four-year colleges are required to notify the school to which they intend to enroll by May 1st. The various application options are detailed below.

- ★ **Rolling Admissions** - This is very typical of many four-year and two-year colleges. Colleges review applications once all supporting documents (transcript, test scores, letters of recommendation) are completed and received. Once applications are reviewed, students are notified within a few weeks.
- ★ **Regular Decision** - This is the traditional application process for primarily four-year colleges in which students apply to their institutions of choice by the regular deadline (January 1st or 15th, February 1st and March 1st are common deadlines). Under the Regular Decision process, colleges will typically notify students of admission decisions by mid-March to Mid-April.
- ★ **Early Decision - E.D.** Not available at all schools, and usually at more selective colleges, Early Decision is a plan under which a student applies to their first choice college early in the fall of the senior year (deadlines can be as early as November 1st). With Early Decision, the student agrees, by signed contract, to enter that particular college if offered admission. Decisions are usually rendered to applicants by early to mid-December, and if not admitted, a student may be denied outright or deferred to the regular admission pool of candidates and receive a decision in late March/early April.
 - ❖ A student may not apply to more than one college under an Early Decision Plan since, if accepted, the student agrees to withdraw any applications submitted to other colleges. The advantages to being accepted under an Early Decision plan is that the student will have the college decision made early in the senior year, and by applying early the student will have demonstrated the willingness to commit to the school if accepted. A potential disadvantage of applying with Early decision is that a student makes a binding agreement to attend a college without having the opportunity to compare financial aid packages from other colleges. Early Decision is a decision not to be made lightly, and should be thoroughly discussed with the school counselor, parents and others whose opinion the student trusts and values.
- ★ **Early Action - E.A.** Early Action is similar to Early Decision in that the applicant applies to a college early in the fall of the senior year and receives an admission decision early as well, usually in December or early January. The big difference is that students are not bound by an acceptance to a particular college, and may apply to more than one college under Early Action. Under Early Action, a student may also be denied outright, or deferred to the regular admission pool of candidates and receive a decision later in the year.
- ★ **Waitlist** - Utilized with primarily highly selective colleges, students who are not admitted may be placed on a list of prospective candidates who may be accepted if space becomes available. Students often wait until after May 1st to hear if they have been accepted, and may have to deposit at another school while they wait to hear their status on the list. This is an often difficult and stressful process to go through, and students are advised to thoroughly discuss with their school counselor, parents and others whose opinion they trust and value.
- ★ **Open Admission** - Some colleges do not practice selective admission and offer

acceptance to any student who has a high school or adult education diploma or equivalent. These colleges often have extensive programs to assist students who need remedial or developmental help in order to be successful in a collegiate environment. Maine Community Colleges have a primarily Open Admissions process, though some programs within the colleges are very selective and fill quickly. Students applying to Maine Community Colleges also have to perform at a certain level on the SAT in order to be placed in regular college level courses.

G. Admissions Testing

1. Most 4-year colleges and universities require that you take some type of admission test. The most common required is the **SAT**. Others, especially more selective schools, may require additional testing, such as the **SAT Subject Tests**. **Be sure to check the admissions testing requirements of all the schools you are researching.**
 - a. Some students find that the **ACT** Assessment Test is a better test for them to take, and most colleges and universities will accept it in lieu of the SAT and/or SAT Subject Tests. Please see your counselor for more information. A good comparison between the SAT and ACT can be found at: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>
2. If you have not yet reviewed your PSAT results from this past fall with your math and English teachers and/or your school counselor, please do so.
3. Please note that though all juniors are required to take the SAT in April, many students will most likely need to take them again next fall if the scores were not satisfactory. Please review your SAT scores with your counselor early in order to evaluate how they align with colleges in which you are interested.
 - a. Registration and practice materials are available in the school counseling office.

Guidance Resources:

- The Official SAT Study Guide
- The Official SAT Subject Tests Study Guide
- Practice test for SAT
- Practice test for SAT Subject Tests
- ACCUPLACER Practice Tests

H. Directions & Deadlines

Much more on this topic in the fall, **but remember the importance of following directions carefully:**

1. **Directions** – Many students find themselves in difficulty with the college application process because they just plain don't carefully read, and follow, the application instructions. Another problematic issue is the failure to follow application directions and protocol of the MTA school counseling office.
2. **Deadlines** – For college admissions and financial aid application, the deadlines are often very strict and unforgiving – if you miss them, you may miss out.

I. Visiting A College

- **Why?** There is absolutely no substitute for the actual experience of being on a college campus. Only when you visit can you see for yourself the physical characteristics of the institution, the students, faculty, and the facilities. Only during an actual visit can you get a personal feel for the school, and an intuitive sense of how you will fit in.
- **When?** Schools you are very seriously considering should be visited this spring, during the summer, or early in the fall of the senior year. Though summer visits are sometimes attractive due to family vacation time, it is preferable to visit a school when it is in session, during the spring or fall, so that you can see how things are with full student enrollment and the complete extent of student activities.
- **How?** Visits can be arranged through the admissions office of the college. Your school counselor can also help with arranging visits if you need assistance. Please keep in mind that most colleges need a fair amount of advance notice in order to accommodate you, and if you do wait until the fall, an even greater (sometimes up to three or four weeks or longer) amount of time may be needed.
- **What?** What type of visit you have at a particular school will depend on their visitation structure. Most schools will provide either an individual or group information/question and answer session, followed by a tour of the campus. If possible, an individual interview with an admissions counselor and a classroom visitation or two in addition to the tour is preferable. Some schools will require you to have an interview, either there on campus during your visit, or with a local alumni representative. For Fine and Performing Arts students, a portfolio presentation or audition may be required. Additionally, some schools offer an overnight visitation program where you can stay with a student in their residence hall, which is a really great opportunity to learn more about the campus environment. It is important to check with the school well in advance regarding what type of visitation opportunities are available and if an interview is required.
- **To Bring.** Primarily – an inquisitive, alert, and positive attitude. Be an informed visitor. Do your homework and have specific questions ready for which you would like answers regarding that specific school. Remember also that your presence on campus contains a duality in that the admissions office may be evaluating you as a potential candidate, but you are also evaluating them as a consumer. You and your parents will more than likely be spending quite a bit of money over the next two to four years at any given college, and you want to be as sure as you can that you make a well informed decision. Additionally, it is a good idea to bring with you an unofficial transcript in case admissions personnel request specific academic information about your high school experience.
- **What to Wear.** Dress nicely, but comfortable. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes that you can

walk in easily.

Financial Aid

When you visit a school, it is a good idea to also schedule a stop by the financial aid office. Though you will certainly need more specific information if you eventually decide to attend a particular school, here are some basic questions that are good to ask when you are there:

1. What is the comprehensive fee (also called the Cost of Attendance) at your college/university? The comprehensive fee includes the total cost of the school, including tuition, room and board, books and fees.
2. What percentage of your student population receives financial aid, and more importantly, what is the percentage of grants (monetary gift aid) vs. loans?
3. Does your institution meet the full financial need of the student/family? And if not, what is the average “unmet need” of students receiving financial aid?
4. What financial aid application forms do you require?
5. Does your institution offer merit aid? And if so, what is the application process.
6. What is your policy on handling local scholarships? If you receive local scholarship money at graduation, most schools will allow the use of that money to replace unmet need first, followed by loan money, followed by work study. However, some schools have been known to take local scholarship money to replace their own institutional grant money, which makes your local scholarship not count for anything at all. It is good to ask.
7. What is the average indebtedness of your graduates?
8. Are financial aid packages consistent from year to year?

Merit Aid Many schools offer financial aid based on academic, artistic, athletic, or some other type of talent or unique characteristic. The website information on the following page lists a link to MeritAid, which is a site that provides a comprehensive list of colleges and the merit aid programs they have available.

New England Board of Higher Education’s Tuition Break program

This program, called the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), provides a discount to New England residents when they enroll in approved degree programs at out-of-state public colleges and universities in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. New England’s 82 public colleges and universities participate in the RSP Tuition Break program. Residents of a particular New England state are eligible for an approved major at one or more specific out-of-state New England public colleges or universities – when that major is not offered by any home-state public institution. For more information visit the website at www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak to download portions of the annual catalogue and for state-specific and institution-specific information. Information is also available in the guidance office.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

There are numerous and varied websites on the Internet pertaining to assorted post-secondary information. Listed below are some sites that we have found to be useful.

COLLEGE HOMEPAGE WEBSITES

Colleges have a websites, and they can be accessed by just using the college's name with the Internet address (i.e. www.husson.edu, <http://www.umf.maine.edu>). And, more easily, just Google the name of the school.

Also:

COLLEGE SEARCH/EXPLORATION

- <http://www.univcan.ca/> Directory of Canadian universities
- www.cappex.com
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- www.educationplanner.org
- www.petersons.com
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.nacacnet.com National Association of College Admissions Counselors home page
- www.zinch.com

TEST PREPARATION

- www.collegeboard.org
- www.actstudent.org/sampletest/index.html
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.number2.com Very good free site for ACT prep
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat>

FINANCIAL AID

- www.fastweb.com (Free scholarship search)
- www.scholarships.com (Free scholarship search)
- www.finaid.org/sitemap/
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.studentaid.ed.gov/
- www.fafsa.ed.gov (Federal aid application website)
- <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/fsaid> Create your Federal Student Aid ID
- www.famemaine.com (Finance Authority of Maine-State financial aid programs)
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html?src=mr> (Federal financial aid site)

- <https://www.nasfaa.org/> (National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators home site- go to the Parents & Students section)
- www.meritaid.com
- www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak

IV. Military Enlistment

1. **Decision Making**

- a. Entering a branch of the US Military can be a very rewarding and positive experience. The military offers a wide variety of training and skill development, as well as many opportunities for continued education. The decision to enlist is one that should be considered very carefully, however, because a career or job in the armed services is certainly not for everyone. Please discuss your thoughts about enlistment with your parents, your counselor, and anyone else whose opinion you value.
- b. There is a substantial amount of information regarding the different opportunities available in the military in the school counseling office.

2. **Meeting with Recruiters**

- a. Military recruiters schedule visits to Mt. Abram HS throughout the year. If you would like to be in contact with a recruiter, please see your counselor.

3. **Taking the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)**

- a. The ASVAB is the entrance exam for each branch of the military. You must attain a certain score on the test in order to enlist, and your scores are also utilized to determine your qualification for various jobs within the service.
- b. The ASVAB is offered to juniors every year at MTA. You can also arrange to take the test through any of the military recruiters.

Resources:

- ❑ <http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab>
- ❑ <https://uniontestprep.com/asvab>
- ❑ <http://www.asvabpracticetests.com/>

4. **Military Academies and ROTC.**

- a. The United States Military Academies for the Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard are extremely competitive institutions with rigorous application procedures. Students attending these academies commit to enlistment in the armed services after graduation. High school students intending to apply to one of these academies need to start the process in the spring of their junior year.
- b. ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) is offered at many four-year colleges and universities. This program gives students the needed training to enlist as an officer after graduating from college, and does offer scholarship opportunities. High school students who want to apply for an ROTC scholarship for their freshman year at college need to start the application process in the spring of their junior year.



V. Choosing to Work

1. **What's "Out There"?** ~ Unfortunately, we have experienced a severe decline over the past few years in jobs that offer good pay and security but require unskilled labor. Though there are jobs to be found for high school graduates, most offer little opportunity for advancement, security, or decent benefits.
2. **Assess Your Marketability**
 - a. If you do plan on seeking employment right after graduation, take some time to assess exactly what skills you have attained over the past few years. Specific skills, such as mechanical, graphic arts production, word processing/clerical, are very important. Additionally, remember that employers are seeking individuals who have a strong work ethic, communicate clearly (writing and speaking), and are able to get along well with others.
 - b. It is also important to write a clear and concise resume outlining your skills and work experience. You should also be able to write a very articulate letter of inquiry, as well as letters of application. Please see your English teacher, Career Development teacher, or your counselor for assistance.
3. **BE Prepared**
 - a. Once you have assessed your marketability and have written your resume, you should consider exploring the local job market by job shadowing. Please see your counselor to set up a job shadow. It is an excellent way to see exactly what a particular job is all about.
 - b. You may also want to compare your skills to the "Employability Skills Profile" listed after this section. Employers are looking for potential employees who are in possession of the following:

SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Employability skills are critical in obtaining and holding a good job. The *Building Bridges Project*, a business-education cooperative planning group in Maryland, (sponsored by the **21st Century Education Foundation**), has created an Employability Skills Profile that outlines the desirable skills needed in employees.

Employability Skills Profile

Academic Skills: Those skills which provide the basic foundation to get, keep, and progress on a job and to achieve the best results.



Employers need a person who can:

1. Communicate effectively

- a. Listen to understand and learn.
- b. Read, comprehend, and use written materials; including graphs, charts, and displays.
- c. Communicate and write effectively with other employees and customers.

2. Think

- a. Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems, and make decisions.
- b. Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results.
- c. Use technology, instruments, tools, and information systems effectively.
- d. Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g., skilled trades technology, physical sciences, arts, and social sciences).

3. Learn

- a. Continue to learn from life.

Personal Management Skills:

The combination of skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to get, keep, and progress on a job and to achieve the best results.

Employers need a person who can demonstrate:

1. Positive Attitudes and Behaviors

- a. Self-esteem and confidence.
- b. Honesty, integrity, and personal ethics.
- c. A positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health.
- d. Initiative, energy, and persistence to get the job done.

2. Responsibility

- a. The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life.
- b. The ability to plan and manage time, money, and other resources to achieve goals.
- c. Accountability for actions taken.

3. Adaptability

- a. A positive attitude toward change.
- b. Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences.
- c. The ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get the job done – creativity.

Teamwork Skills:

Those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results.

Employers need a person who can:

1. Work with others

- a. Understand and contribute to the organization's goals.
- b. Understand and work within the culture of the group.
- c. Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes.
- d. Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group.
- e. Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results.
- f. Seek a team approach as appropriate.
- g. Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance.

RESOURCES:

- ❑ www.collegeboard.com
- ❑ www.princetonreview.com
- ❑ www.educationplanner.org
- ❑ www.acinet.org
- ❑ www.careeronestop.org
- ❑ www.onetonline.org
- ❑ www.bls.gov/oco

"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I intended to be." ~ Douglas Adams

CLASS OF 2020