



All About College Application and Exploration Month

You may have heard that College Application and Exploration Month is an event that encourages high school seniors to apply to college. While high school seniors are applying to college, elementary school students across Tennessee can use this month to explore colleges and careers. The involvement of all your students in College Application and Exploration Month will add to the college-going culture in your community.

College Application and Exploration Month can be one of the most exciting and inspiring months of the school year, and the possibilities for great implementation are nearly endless! With proper planning, event promotion, and creative thinking, your College Application and Exploration Month will inspire all students to prepare for life after high school.

As you begin to plan your College Application and Exploration Month, tailor the events to the needs of your school. From the timing of events to the location, work with your school's administrators and teachers to plan an event that works best for your school and students.

No matter what format your College Application and Exploration Month takes, the following pages will give you ideas and resources that can be tailored to the needs of your school and can help you plan and host a successful College Application and Exploration Month.

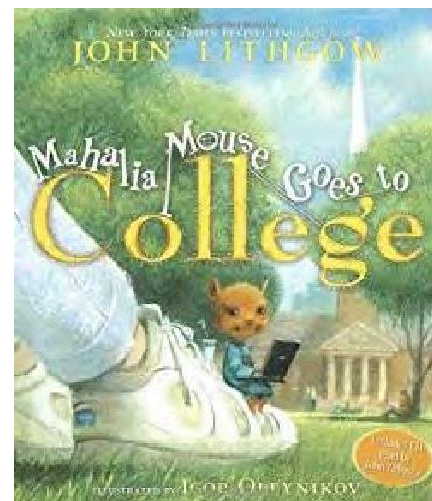
Suggested Reading List

For each Path to College event, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has curated a list of books that align with the event's goals and bring college, career, and financial literacy concepts to life for elementary school students. The books listed for College Application and Exploration Month focus on learning about college, and helping students envision themselves as future college students. The following descriptions are from Amazon.com.

Mahalia Mouse Goes to College

by John Lithgow

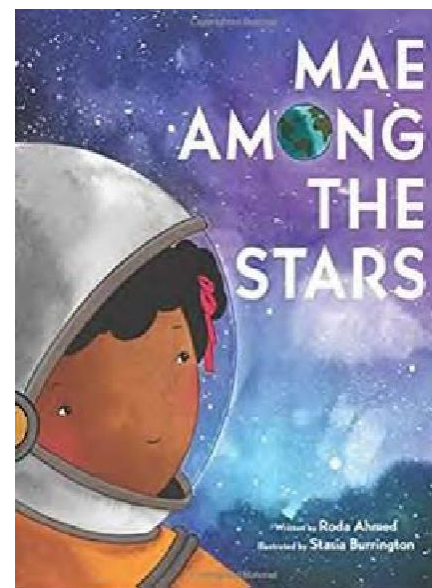
"Mahalia Mouse and her family live underneath Dunster House, an old Harvard dormitory. Foraging for food for her younger brothers and sisters, Mahalia gets trapped in a backpack and then finds herself inside a classroom far from home. Mahalia, intrigued by the lecture, starts attending classes and soon becomes a full-time student -- all the while wondering about the fate of her family. But when graduation day finally arrives, Mahalia has a wonderful surprise waiting for her."



Mae Among the Stars

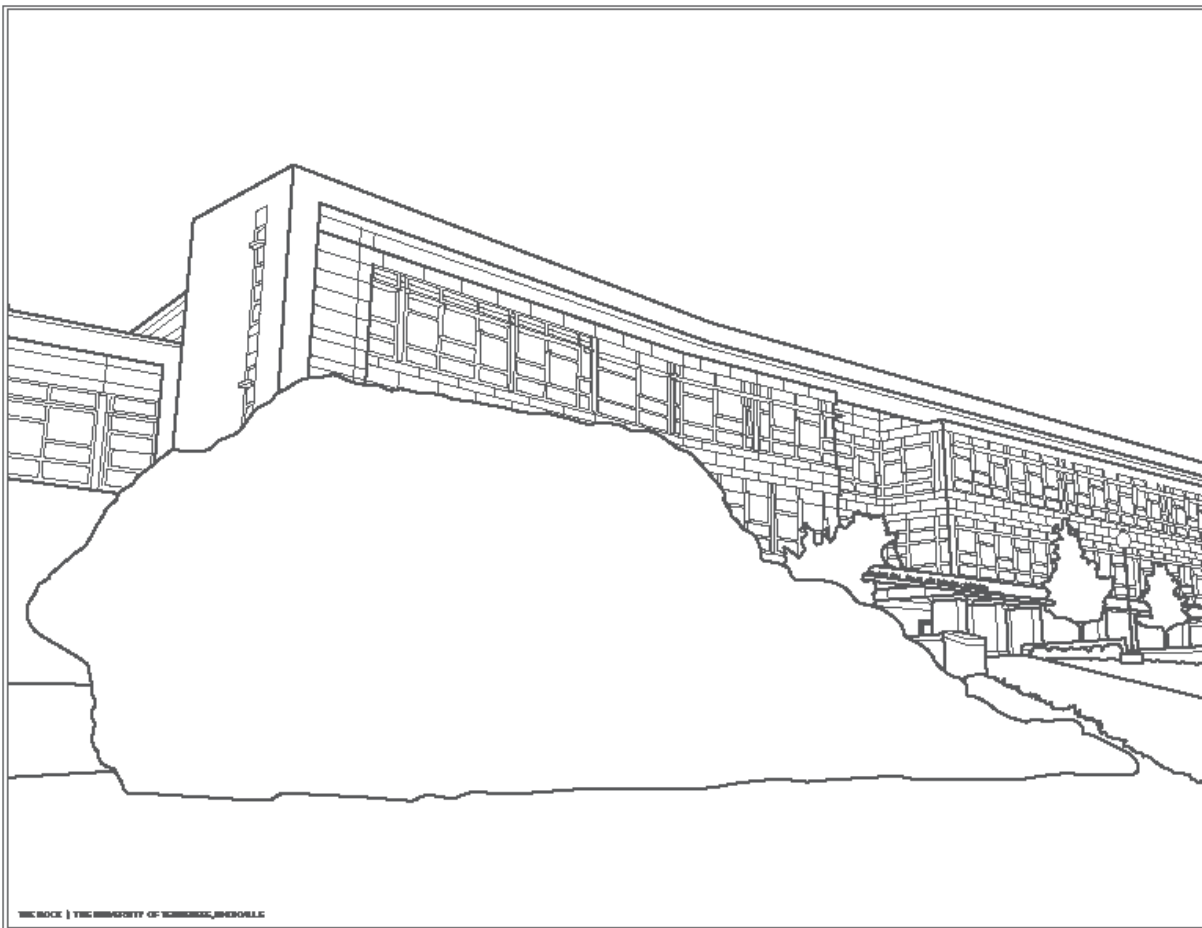
by Roda Ahmed

"A great classroom and bedtime read-aloud, Mae Among the Stars is the perfect book for young readers who have big dreams and even bigger hearts! When Little Mae was a child, she dreamed of dancing in space. She imagined herself surrounded by billions of stars, floating, gliding, and discovering. She wanted to be an astronaut. Her mom told her, "If you believe it, and work hard for it, anything is possible." Little Mae's curiosity, intelligence, and determination, matched with her parents' encouraging words, paved the way for her incredible success at NASA as the first African American woman to travel in space."



Designing Your Own College

This is an activity that can grow with your students and can be extended to include writing if you choose. Below is a coloring page of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and their famous “Rock” which is painted nearly every day with messages from student groups. For the youngest grades, students may color in the campus and draw in themselves, their friends, and more. In older grades, ask students to design their own college on a blank sheet of paper. You can show them pictures of real colleges in Tennessee and out of state that have interesting features, like MTSU’s aerospace labs.



Extend the activity by having students write a paragraph or an essay about the three most important details that they included when they designed their college. Was it the great dorm where they had places to study and have fun with their friends? The cafeteria with 10 kinds of dinner choices to sample? A robotics lab? Ask students to share their responses with their classmates and consider highlighting colleges throughout the year that have some of the features your students dreamed up.

College Spirit Week

Choose one week during your College Application and Exploration Month to be a College Spirit Week to help students identify themselves as future college-goers. Each day of the week can have a college theme and you can encourage your students to dress for the day. An example schedule of days is included below.



College Spirit Week Themes

Monday:
Bright Futures Day

Our futures are so bright we need shades! Wear your favorite pair of sunglasses to celebrate your bright future.

Tuesday:
Interview Day

It’s important to know how to dress for success. Wear an outfit that you might wear for a job or college scholarship interview.

Wednesday:
Support Our Seniors!

Wear gear from your local high school to support the seniors applying to college! You can wear a t-shirt from the high school or high school colors.

Thursday:
College Colors Day

College will be here before you know it! Wear your favorite college’s t-shirt or dress in the colors of your favorite school!

Friday:
School Spirit Day

The work you are doing in elementary school is building a foundation for your success in high school and beyond. Let’s celebrate our school and your hard work so far this year! Dress in our school colors and gear—the wackier and tackier the better!

Start Your Day with College and Career:

Use morning announcements to share information about upcoming college events and provide students with information about College Application and Exploration Month. Morning announcements can be fun—you can share college fun facts or even start a college trivia competition between homerooms or advisory groups. The first homeroom/advisory to email the correct trivia answer to the counselor wins! Karns Middle School provided the following trivia questions they use with their students. The winning homeroom receives a doughnut party! Use the following announcements as inspiration for your event.

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Sample College Trivia Morning Announcements

Monday

What is an official report given by a college/school which contains official records of an individual student? It will list the time attended, subjects studied, grades received, and special awards/recognition.

Answer: TRANSCRIPT

Tuesday

What is the cost of your classes called? Some schools charge based on how many units you are taking, while others charge a base rate per semester as long as you stay with a certain range of units.

Answer: TUITION

Wednesday

Some schools offer this program where students complete military training at the same time as their college degree. This program pays for students' education in exchange for a multiyear commitment to join the military after graduation.

What is this program called?

Answer: ROTC- Reserve Officer Training Corps

Thursday

What is a secondary school teaching a skilled trade called?

This type of school is a type of post-secondary education that trains students for a specific line of work, often in healthcare or other hands-on fields. This type of school is different from the typical four-year colleges because the programs are less academic, and more job focused.

Answer: Vocational/Trade School

Friday

What is money awarded to students based on academic or other achievements to help pay for education expenses?

Answer: Scholarship

Getting the Whole School Involved

College Application and Exploration Month is more fun when the entire school pulls together to participate. Encourage all teachers and staff to **wear college gear** on designated days and to share information about their own college experience in a classroom warmup or lesson plan.

For the creatively inclined, encourage **college decoration with a door competition!** Offer a small prize to the teacher whose door decor takes the cake and invite community members or local college admissions representatives to act as judges. Students can join the decorating as well by decorating their lockers or designating a bulletin board for student decorations.

Bulletin boards are also a great way to promote a college-going culture on the walls of your school. Don't forget to use the posters and materials mailed to you in your Path to College box! There are countless great ideas for college-themed bulletin boards. Some include:

- Use a state of TN map and teacher's photos to show where they attended college.
- Post celebrity photos and list where they attended college.

Below are just a few examples of faculty/staff involvement from Karns Middle School's College Application and Exploration Week 2020. Visit our online yearbook at <https://tinyurl.com/yb3zdbgr> for more ideas and remember to share your winning decorations on social media, tagging #TNCollegeAppMonth.

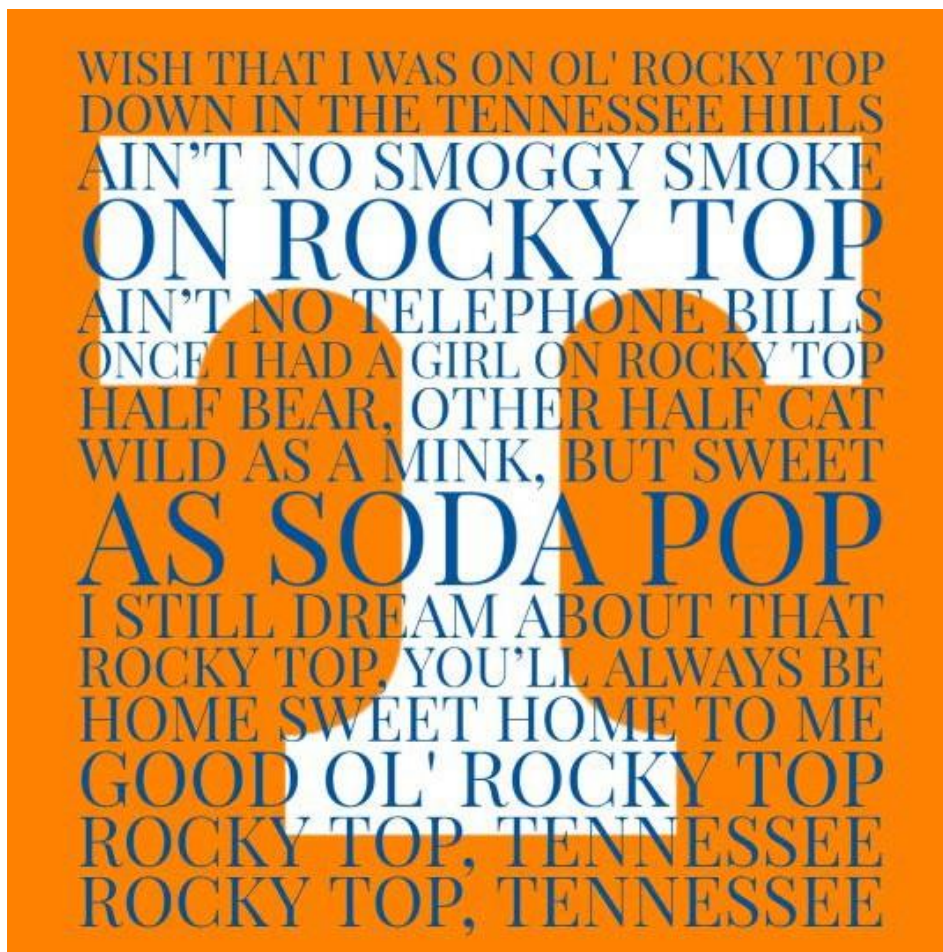


College Fight Songs

During College Application and Exploration Month, play college fight songs during morning announcements or during class changes. Consider creating a competition! Students can guess which school the fight song is from or what teacher attended that school. Students or homerooms who guess each fight song or teacher correctly all five days, get a prize at the end of the Month (such as a jeans day or a pizza party).

There are many playlists on music channels including Spotify that are compilations of fight songs. Before engaging in this activity, be mindful of music or video sites like YouTube that may be blocked at your school and always preview the content of a song before playing it.

Some sites will include fun facts about the history of a school's fight song. Sports news site Bleacher Report ranked their Top 50 fight songs and put links to each song they chose, with the University of Michigan coming in first.



Human Bingo

Play human bingo by creating your own board or using the board provided below. To play, students will need to obtain signatures from school staff who meet the criteria listed on the board to get BINGO. For example, for the square that says, “attended college outside the state of TN,” students will need to find a school staff member to sign that square. Consider offering a prize for all of the students who get BINGO by the end of the day. Ask local colleges if they can donate small prizes like pencils or stickers or give each winner a piece of candy.

Human Bingo Card



B	I	N	G	O
Attended college outside the state of TN	Majored in English	Attended UT Knoxville, Chattanooga, or Martin	Attended a private college/ university	Always knew that he/she wanted to be a teacher
Received a scholarship to attend college	Completed an internship for college credit	Lived on campus during college	Worked a part-time job while they were in college	Played a sport (intramural or on the school team) while in college
Completed AP, IB or Dual Enrollment classes while in high school	Applied to at least 5 colleges	FREE	Participated in an extracurricular activity in college (clubs, fraternities, etc.)	Can sing his/her college's fight song
Had a double major	Had a minor	Lived off campus during college	Went to college in their hometown	Graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 4 years or less
Changed their major in college	Completed a Master's degree or higher	Studied a foreign language in college	Still wears a t-shirt from his/her college	Attended a public college/university

Instructions: Throughout the day, ask your teachers and school staff about their college experiences. Have the teacher/staff member sign one bingo box that applies to them. Each teacher/staff member can only sign your sheet once! To win, obtain signatures for 5 squares in a row (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally).

When possible, offer field trips to tour colleges. Allow students the opportunity to see many different types of schools—TCAT, Community College, University. If you are able to take a field trip, make sure to prepare both your students and the university tour guides in advance.

Preparing both your students and your hosts will ensure a smooth campus visit and will help you to develop a partnership with the college/university you are visiting. Before your visit, review the college visit preparation checklist on the following page and provide your students with an opportunity to research the college they are visiting and create a list of questions. If field trips aren't possible, help students take "virtual" tours. Check college websites to see if they have video tours posted or consider using ecampustours.com.

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College Visit Prep Worksheet



Note: this questionnaire is most appropriate for older students in 4th or 5th grade. For younger students, use these questions to make a class poster about what was learned on the trip.

Dear Student,

I hope that you are looking forward to our college visit to [Name of College] on [Date,Time] It is important that you are as prepared as possible for our visit, that you research the college in advance, and think of some questions that you can ask your tour guide. Visit the college's website and find the answer to the following questions before our visit.

- 1. How many students attend the college?
- 2. Is this school public or private? (circle one) Public Private
- 3. How much is the tuition?
- 4. What type of school is this college? TCAT 2-Year 4- Year
- 5. What type of degrees does this college offer (circle all that apply)
Technical Certificate Associate Bachelor's Master's +
- 6. Name one major at this college that interests you.
- 7. At this college, can you live on campus? Yes No
- 8. What is the name of the college's mascot?

After researching the college, take a few minutes to write 3 questions that you could ask your tour guide during the visit.

Question 1: _____

Question 2: _____

Question 3: _____

Visit a College

College Visit Planning Checklist

1-2 Months in Advance

- Contact the college/university to request a campus visit. Schedule the date and time of the visit.
- Arrange for transportation for students to/from the visit.
- Draft any necessary permission slip forms and obtain required signatures from parents. Make sure to collect an emergency contact number for each student.
- Coordinate with the college visit office to determine how to divide your students up into smaller groups. The smaller the groups, the better experience your students will have!
- Divide your students into groups and determine the number of chaperones needed per group.
- Recruit volunteers (teachers and/or parents) to serve as chaperones during the college tour.
- Clearly define and review expectations with chaperones.
- Discuss lunch arrangements with the college/university. Will your students be able to eat lunch on campus? Will the college/university pay for the students' lunches or will you need to arrange payment with the dining hall?

1 Month in Advance

- Create nametags for all students. Make sure the nametags include the student's name, the name of your school, and the phone number of a chaperone.
- Prepare students for the visit. Allow students the opportunity to research the college they will be visiting and write questions for their tour guides. Adapt the worksheet on the previous page.
- Prepare the campus visit office and tour guides to make sure students will be able to see relevant places on campus. You might want to make sure they will see the library, the financial aid office, a dorm room, the cafeteria, and/or the student services office.
- Send home a reminder to parents including what the students will need to bring, the details of the campus visit, and an emergency contact number.
- Notify the tour coordinator of any students or chaperones who will need special accommodations so they may plan walking routes accordingly.

College Visit Day

- Follow all school procedures around checking students in and taking attendance at every stop.
- Consider bringing a portable speaker to play a playlist of college fight songs for the bus ride.
- Encourage students to ask questions about what they see on the campus.
- Be engaged in the college tour and presentation. Point out to your students things that you see. For example: See a row of huge cereal dispensers in the cafeteria? Ask your student tour guide what they eat for breakfast and watch students' reactions.
- Take pictures that you can display at school and share with other teachers, parents and families.

After Your Visit

- Write thank you notes to anyone you worked with on the campus to arrange the visit.
- Continue the conversation with students about college. What did they like? What else did they wish they'd seen? What do they still want to know more about?

There are many ways to bring college and career information to your students with scavenger hunts. Some ideas include:

- Asking students to find teachers who attended certain colleges
- Placing images of college mascots throughout the school and asking students to try to spot them throughout the day
- Designing a college website scavenger hunt. An example from Joyce Hollins at Summit High School is provided (below) which can be adapted for older students (4th and 5th grade).

Scavenger Hunt



College Scavenger Hunt

Name of TN College/University:
Location: What is the name of the city in which the college is located?
In which region of the state is the college located? Circle one:

East Middle West

1. Size: What is the enrollment of the college/university (how many students attend)?

2. Is the institution Public or Private?
3. What types of Degrees are offered at this College/University? Check all that apply:
 - ☐ Certificate/Degree Program
 - ☐ Associate
 - ☐ Bachelor's
 - ☐ Master's
 - ☐ Doctorate (PhD, EdS, EdD)
4. List 5 college majors/programs of study that are offered at this College/University.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
5. What is the cost of tuition?
6. Does the school have athletic teams you might enjoy watching?
7. Are there intramural sports you might want to play while attending that school?
Which ones?
8. List some of the campus organizations/activities for students at this college/
university:
9. What is the school's mascot?
10. What is this institution known for? What is an interesting fact? OR Why should a
student choose to attend this institution?

Incorporate College Activities into Lessons

There are countless, creative ways to incorporate college concepts into everyday lessons during College Application and Exploration Month. Here are three samples of classroom activities that you can use during a balanced literacy block or in centers.

College Character Traits

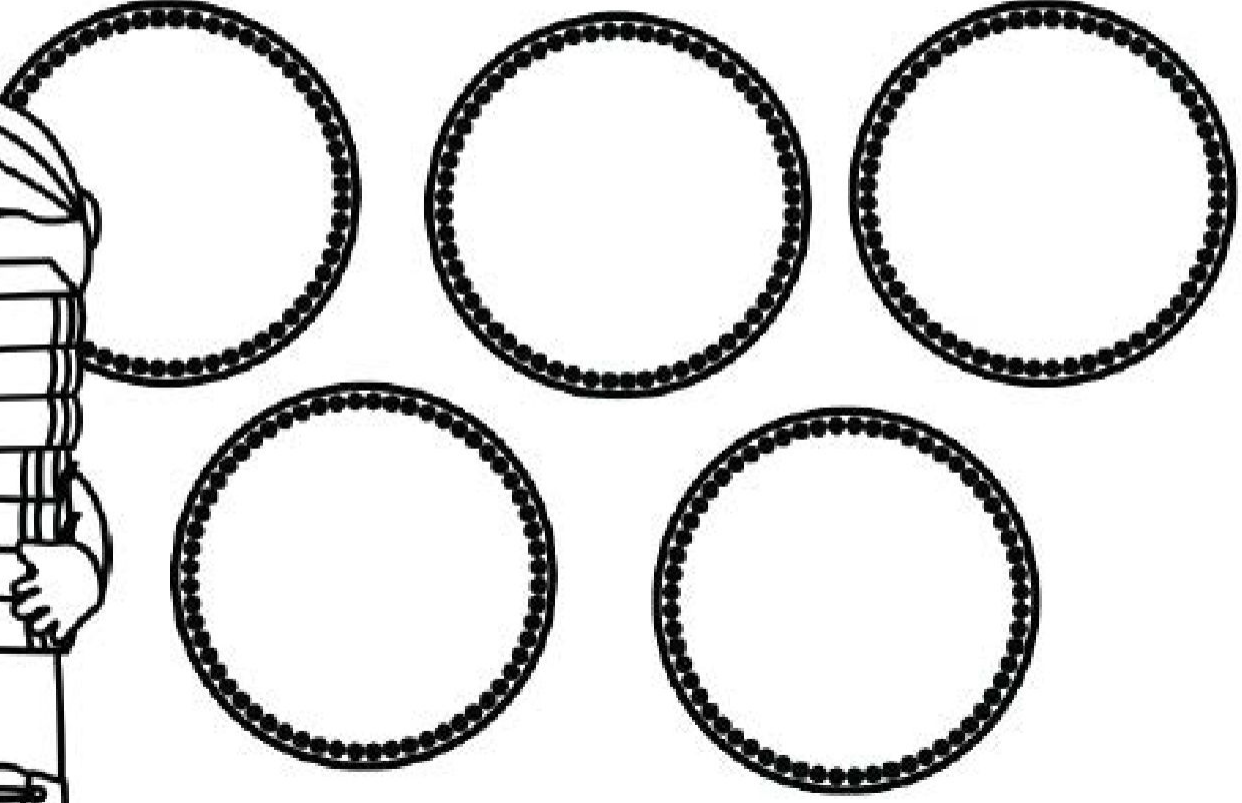
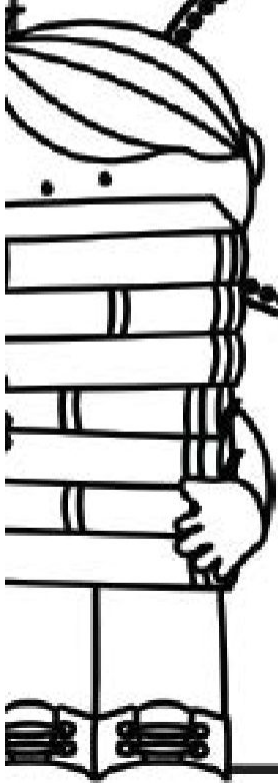


These samples are free printables from the blog Lesson Plan Diva.

Name _____ Date _____

College Character Traits

Describe a good college student using describing words.

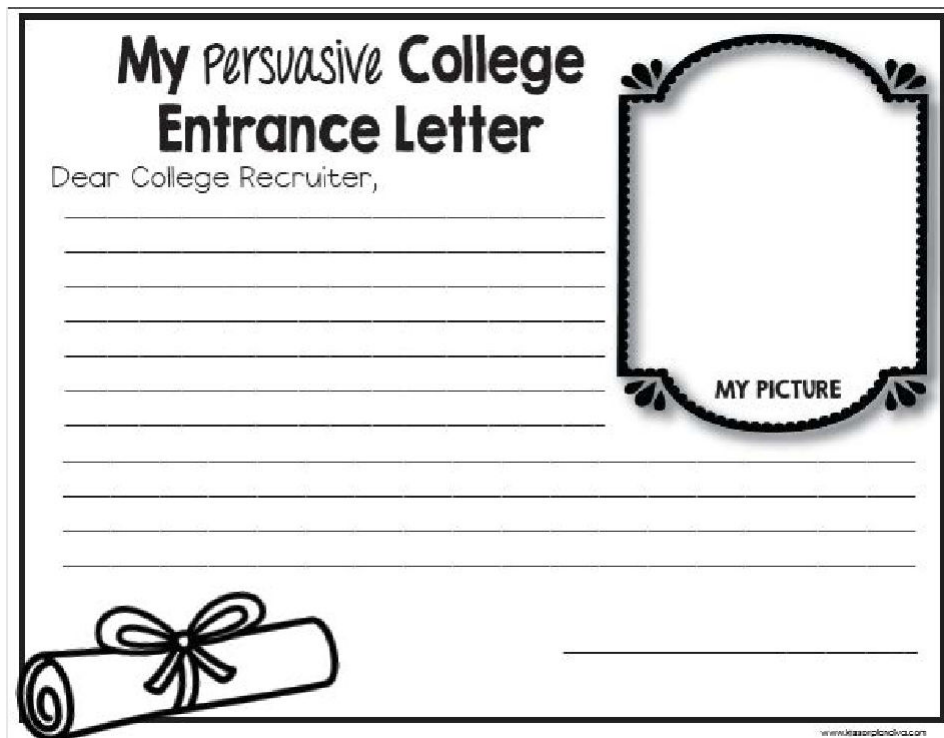
Five empty circles arranged in two rows (three in the top row, two in the bottom row) for writing descriptions. Each circle has a dotted border.A black and white line drawing of a student's head and shoulders on the left side of the worksheet. The student is wearing a graduation cap and holding a stack of books.

My College Application



A worksheet titled "My College Application" featuring a rolled-up diploma icon at the top left. The form includes fields for "name", "address", "phone number", and "birthday". Below these are checkboxes for "male" and "female". Further down are lines for "parents names", "major", and "college". A large rectangular box with a decorative border is labeled "my picture" at the bottom right. At the bottom left, there is a section titled "What do you want to be when you grow up? why?" followed by several horizontal lines for writing. A small URL "www.k12worksheets.com © 2014" is visible at the bottom right corner.

My Persuasive College Entrance Letter



A worksheet titled "My Persuasive College Entrance Letter" featuring a rolled-up diploma icon at the bottom left. The form begins with the title, followed by the salutation "Dear College Recruiter," and several horizontal lines for writing the letter. On the right side, there is a large rectangular box with a decorative border, labeled "MY PICTURE" at the bottom. At the bottom right, there is a horizontal line for a signature. A small URL "www.k12worksheets.com" is visible at the bottom right corner.