



Play #25

WHAT IS YOUR PATH (WRITTEN PLAN)

What is Your Path?

Have you ever taken a car, plane, train, or boat to travel? If you have, you know this very simple principle: it is very uncommon that you depart from a place without a final destination in mind. The same principle should be taken with your postsecondary path. Let PeerForward and another great partner, RoadTrip Nation help you find your “final destination” on your postsecondary path!

Make it a Virtual Play!

Smaller group:

This is a play that is best served in duos! Pair up with a classmate and meet on a platform that would allow you to screenshare (Zoom, Google Hangouts, etc.). Take turns walking through this play by answering the questions in the survey. Once both individuals have their results, have a conversation about what are the steps you can take now to get to your final destination of a Postsecondary Path.

Larger group:

The “checklist” portion of this play can be done “webinar style” with 4-10 individuals from a specific grade level. via FaceTime, Skype, Houseparty, Google Hangout, Zoom, etc. If you can, share your screen so participants can see and hear your insights about the checklist. Allow space and time for questions and comments!

Social Media:

Consider turning the postsecondary checklist into a fill-in-the-blank template you can promote on your team's instagram accounts. Tag your friends and see how many people complete and share their postsecondary plans online.

Check back each week for more virtual plays and other helpful resources:

[PeerForward Team Assets](#)

PLAY IN MOTION

Play #25: What is Your Path? (Written Plan)

Description: It is never too early to start thinking about plans after high school. In this activity, students in grades 9–11 will begin considering what they hope to achieve after they graduate from high school.

Goal/Outcome: Students will describe their goals and plans for after high school.

Suggested Time/Audience:

- 1 hour
- 9th–11th graders

Materials/Space Needed:

- Classroom or meeting space

To Prep for Event:

- Determine which students you will target for the event.
- Determine a time and location for the event and secure access to computers.
- Review the “Postsecondary Vocab” sheet so you are familiar with postsecondary terminology.
- Review the websites and the “What is Your Path” handout.

PLAY IN MOTION

Play #25: What is Your Path? (Written Plan), cont.

At the Event:

- Have students log on to www.roadtripnation.com/roadmap and click “Define Your Road.” Here they can watch videos related to the career clusters they choose.
- You also can review with students the “Checklists” handout to see if they have any questions.
- Students can then complete the “My Postsecondary Plan” sheet. Even if they do not know what they want to do, encourage them to think about what they think they are most interested in.
- Data to Collect:
 - ✓ “Postsecondary Plan Tracker.” Your PeerForward Coach will want to know how many students participated.

After the Event:

- Debrief with team:
 - ✓ What went well? What could you improve for next time?
- Have students write their names on their paths and feel free to post all the sheets in a hallway or somewhere for the school to see.

Handouts Needed:

- “Checklists” handout
- “My Postsecondary Plan” handout
- “Postsecondary Vocab” handout

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists

9TH GRADE CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Create a plan for high school:** Make sure you know what courses you will take throughout your next four years and be sure to take all the required courses. You can talk with your high school counselor to find out what courses you need to take for college and which classes in high school will prepare you for college.
- ✓ **Set goals:** Think about setting goals that are S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely). You may want to sit down with your Counselor or a teacher after each report card to calculate your GPA and make goals for your GPA (both short-term and long-term). Also, consider questions like “what type of career do I want,” “what skills do I want to use in my profession,” and think about what steps you need to take to reach those goals.
- ✓ **Get involved:** Try to remember that it isn’t all about academics. It is important to explore your interests and get involved with activities at school or outside of school. Colleges want to see extracurricular activities on your resume. Make sure to find out what clubs or programs are offered at your school or talk with a counselor about any activities outside of school that you could get involved in.
- ✓ **Take the PSAT:** Find out if your school offers the PSAT exam and sign up for it in your school’s Counseling Office. The test will help you build skills to take the SAT in 11th or 12th grade, and your scores might even make you eligible for scholarships.
- ✓ **Attend college fairs:** If your school or other schools in your community offer college fairs or visits, it’s not a bad idea to attend to find out more about different colleges. Talk with your Counselor about any opportunities that you can attend.
- ✓ **Explore summer opportunities:** Colleges want to see that you are productive during your summer months. Take time to look for a job, internship, college summer program, or a volunteer experience that you will offer you a new learning experience.
- ✓ **Focus on grades:** Finally, remember that your 9th grade grades do matter. In your first year of high school, it is important to stay focused on your academics and get all your work done.

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists, cont.

10TH GRADE CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Meet with your Counselor:** Plan to meet with your Counselor a few times during the year to talk you through your plan after high school, including colleges you might be interested in and your career plans. Also, your Counselor will help you map out your academic plan for the remainder of high school so you take all your required courses.
- ✓ **Take the PSAT:** You may be able to take the PSAT in October, February, or March. Check with your Counselor to see if it is offered at your school. The test can help you get ready for the SATs and your scores might even make you eligible for scholarships.
- ✓ **Attend college fairs and tour college campuses:** Now is the time to start researching what you like in colleges and what you don't like. Increase your exposure to different schools by attending fairs or college representative visits at your school, and visiting college campuses. Ask your counselor if they can help you coordinate visits or attend fairs.
- ✓ **Participate in activities:** Continue to get involved in extracurricular activities or participate in volunteer programs. This will only enhance your college application and resume.
- ✓ **Focus on grades:** As always, remember that your grades matter. Colleges you want to see that you either improved since 9th grade or stayed on course. It is important to stay focused on your academics and get all your work done.
- ✓ **Explore summer opportunities:** Colleges want to see that you are productive during your summer months. Take time to look for a job, internship, college summer program, or a volunteer experience that will offer you a new learning experience.
- ✓ **Prepare for next year:** Start considering your schedule for next year and work with your Counselor to determine whether your schedule will include any AP, Honors, or College-prep courses. Make sure to enroll in these courses and complete any summer assignments before the school year begins.

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists, cont.

11TH GRADE CHECKLIST**Fall:**

- ✓ **Take the PSAT:** Make sure to take the PSAT seriously. This test will give you even more practice for the SAT, and your scores can make you eligible for scholarship money.
- ✓ **Learn About Colleges:** Start ramping up your college search. Look at websites, talk with friends, teachers, your Counselor, and begin making a list of colleges that interest you. Also, be sure to attend college rep visits or college fairs at your school or in your community.
- ✓ **Get Involved:** Continue to stay involved in extracurricular activities and volunteer programs.
- ✓ **Financial Aid/Scholarships:** Use the Financial Aid Calculator on www.bigfuture.org to determine your financial aid need for college. If you are interested in scholarships, begin the scholarship search by checking out websites like www.scholarships.com or www.fastweb.com.

Winter:

- ✓ **Sign up to take the SAT in the spring:** You can register for the test online at www.collegeboard.org. Talk with your Counselor to see if you are eligible for a fee waiver.
- ✓ **Make an appointment with your Counselor:** With your family, make an appointment with the Counselor at your school to discuss your plans after high school.
- ✓ **Determine whether you will take SAT Subject tests:** Some colleges require you to take 2–3 Subject tests. If the colleges you are interested in do require these tests, make sure to determine which subjects you will take, and register for the tests in the spring of your junior year (typically offered in May or June).
- ✓ **Explore AP:** If you are enrolled in AP courses, make sure to register for the AP exam in the spring.

Spring:

- ✓ **Take SAT/ACT:** Make sure to show up for the exam in the spring. The SAT test is incredibly important for the college application process, so make sure you prepare and do your best on the exam.
- ✓ **Take AP exams:** If you are in AP classes, remember to show up for your AP exams. Depending on your scores, you could get college credit for those courses.
- ✓ **Ask for recommendations:** Determine which teachers you want to write you recommendations, and ask those teachers about recommendations for college. Make sure to provide any additional materials they might need in order to write the recommendation.
- ✓ **Create a list of 15–20 colleges:** If you haven't already, make a list of 15–20 colleges that interest you. Use resources at your school or look at websites such as www.collegeboard.com to narrow down your search.

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists, cont.

11TH GRADE CHECKLIST, CONT.

Summer:

- ✓ **Get your FSA ID:** As a junior, you can get a username and password (also known as FSA ID) before filling out the FAFSA as a senior. Make sure to get a head-start by creating your FSA ID at fafsa.gov.
- ✓ **Visit colleges:** Use the summer break to visit any colleges you can. While you are there, talk to students and the admissions office about the requirements to get in.
- ✓ **Create a resume:** Begin creating a resume of your achievements, activities, and work experiences so far. You may need these for many of your college applications.
- ✓ **Download college applications:** Begin downloading applications for the colleges you are interested in. You can begin filling out these applications to get a head-start on the process.
- ✓ **Participate in a summer program/job:** Be sure to spend the summer doing something constructive, like attending a summer program or getting a job. This will only enhance your application for college.

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists, cont.

12TH GRADE CHECKLIST

Fall:

- ✓ **Narrow your list:** Work with your Counselor to narrow your list of colleges to 5–10 schools. Begin downloading the applications to get a sense of what is required for your colleges of interest.
- ✓ **Create a calendar:** Create a calendar that includes all upcoming deadlines for applications, test dates, and any other due dates for financial aid or college-related documents.
- ✓ **Take the SAT or ACT:** Most seniors take the SAT or ACT again the fall. Make plans to register for the exams.
- ✓ **Complete FAFSA:** The FAFSA opens in October, so get a head-start by working with your family to complete the application. Talk with your Counselor if you have questions about the application.
- ✓ **Get recommendations:** Check back in with your teachers or mentors to see if they completed your recommendations. If you have not already, give them a deadline of when to complete the letters.
- ✓ **Write personal statement:** Spend some time working on your personal statement and ask teachers, parents, or mentors to edit the essay several times before submitting.
- ✓ **Submit 1–3 college applications:** Try to submit 1–3 college applications before Thanksgiving!

Winter:

- ✓ **Send transcripts:** Make sure your Counselor has sent transcripts to all colleges that you have applied to.
- ✓ **Continue applications:** Continue working on applications and make sure you have sent your applications to any colleges with early deadlines.
- ✓ **Check status of your applications:** Make sure to call the schools where you applied to check on the status of your application.

PLAY IN MOTION

9–12th Grade Checklists, cont.

12TH GRADE CHECKLIST

Spring:

- ✓ **Don't get senioritis!** Remember, colleges are still looking at your grades. If you do not do well in your senior year, colleges can rescind your acceptance. Make sure to stay focused on your classes.
- ✓ **Check the status of remaining applications:** Call your colleges and check on the status of your application.
- ✓ **Review financial aid award letters:** Compare the financial aid award letters from your college and work with a counselor and your family to determine how much you may have to pay out of pocket.
- ✓ **Send your deposit:** Remember to send in a deposit to the college where you plan to enroll. You can only submit a deposit to one college.
- ✓ **Take AP exams:** If you are in AP classes, remember to show up for your AP exams. Depending on your scores, you could get college credit for those courses.

PLAY IN MOTION

Postsecondary Vocab

Below are some terms that may help you as you start talking about postsecondary planning. Familiarize yourself with these terms so you can answer students' questions about life after high school and help them start planning.



Note: Even though the terms below may indicate a number of years to complete a particular program, statistics show that many students take longer than the years indicated to complete a program. For example, for many students, completing an Associate Degree can take more than two years.

Apprenticeship: A postsecondary option that mixes schooling with hands-on experience to train students for a skilled career.

Associate Degree: A degree earned after two years of undergraduate study at a college, university, community college, or trade/technical school.

Bachelor's Degree: A degree earned after four years of undergraduate study at a college or university.

College: A two-year or four-year school where you can earn a degree after high school graduation.

Community College: A two-year college where students can earn a degree or transfer to a four-year college. Sometimes called "Junior College."

Graduate Program: The level of education you pursue after completing your undergraduate degree, including Master's Degrees, JDs, MDs, or Ph.Ds. They are offered at colleges and universities.

Military: Of or relating to soldiers or the armed forces, including the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and Air Force.

PLAY IN MOTION

Postsecondary Vocab, cont.

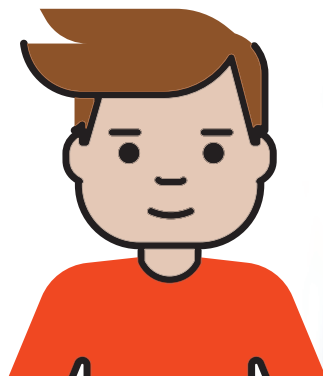
Ph.D.: Abbreviation for Doctor of Philosophy. Refers to a doctorate degree, which is usually based on at least three years of graduate study and a dissertation. A Ph.D. is the highest degree awarded.

Postsecondary: Relating to any plan after high school, including education, employment, or military.

Technical School: A two-year college that prepares students for employment in a specific line of work (for example, culinary arts or cosmetology).

University: A school that includes both college and graduate schools where you can earn many different types of degrees.

Vocational School: A school that offers programs that prepare students for specific careers, trades, or vocations.



Still confused or don't know what a word means? Talk to your Advisor or PeerForward Coach—they can help you understand all your postsecondary options!

PLAY IN MOTION

My Postsecondary Plan

What is your high school GPA? _____ SAT/PSAT Score (if applicable): _____

What is your plan after high school?

- Attend a four-year college Get a job right away Finish a certificate program
 Attend a two-year college Find an apprenticeship Join the military Other

Ultimate Goal (My Personal Mission Statement): 10–15 years from now, I will...

Top 3 careers:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Will I need Graduate School for any of these career choices? If yes, which program?

Top 5 Colleges:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

Preferred Majors:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

What types of opportunities (i.e. internships, study abroad) will I participate in to help me reach my goal?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Credits I need to take in high school:

____ English ____ Social Studies ____ Art ____ Science ____ Other electives
 ____ Math ____ World Languages ____ Music ____ P.E./Health

Steps I can take to reach my ultimate goal:

In High School:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

After High School:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____