



College Month Lesson 1: What is College Like?



Lesson Description

The purpose of this lesson is to give your student a sense of what college life is like.



Introduction Questions

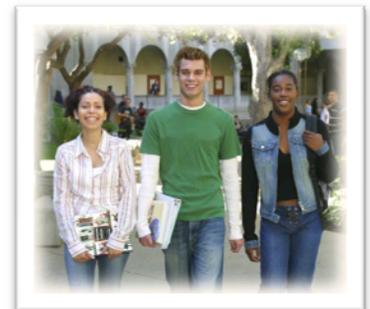
- ☺ Have you thought about where you want to go to college?
- ☺ Would you want to live on campus?
- ☺ Do you know anyone (friend, sibling) who is in college?
- ☺ What is it like for that person?
- ☺ What are you most looking forward to?
- ☺ What is your biggest fear? / What are you most worried about?

Activities

1. Read together *"A Day in the Life of a College Student"* (next page)
2. After reading article, talk about the questions below with your student.
3. Talk about your own experiences if you went to college.

Questions

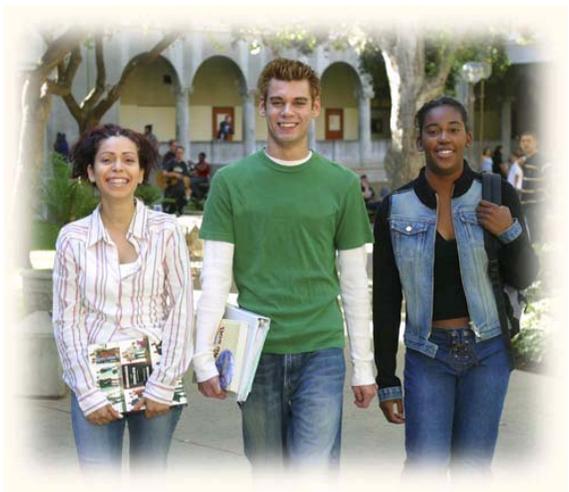
- ☺ What did you think of the article?
- ☺ What surprised you the most?
- ☺ What is something you will look forward to if you get the opportunity to attend college?



A Day in the Life of a College Student

By Katie McKoon

You've probably already wondered what college will be like. Will it be like home? Will it be like your high school experience? Will you be able to handle it? Will it be fun and exciting? Will it be scary and nerve wracking? Well, hopefully a glimpse at a day in the life of a college student will help sort some things out!



The college schedule is very different than the traditional high school schedule. Typically, there is a lot more flexibility with your college classes. In high school, you were probably told that you had to take U.S. History, which was offered every day at 10:00 a.m. In college, you'll probably need to take a history class, but you could have 10 choices, which would be offered on different days, at different times, and for different durations.

The other cool thing about the college schedule is that you usually have more opportunities to explore your interests and passions. For example, you will be picking a major that will determine the types of classes you will specialize in. In high school, you have a set curriculum of classes you have to take across all subject areas. In college, think about your schedule as a pyramid. Your freshman and sophomore year, you'll take more general education classes (a mixture of everything so you walk away well rounded) and a few classes in your major. But during your junior and senior year, you'll take fewer general education classes and more classes in your major.

Another big difference you should be aware of is the time structure. Right now, you're probably in school from about 9 a.m.–3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. This will not be the case in college, where you usually take four or five classes at different times throughout the week. You might have a science class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:10–11:00 a.m. Perhaps you'll have a Spanish class on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:15–3:00 p.m. Then, you might have your Introduction to Education class on Wednesday evenings from 6:30–9:00 p.m. Maybe on Mondays you'll have three classes, and on Tuesdays you'll have two classes. There will always be some courses that are only offered on certain days at certain times, but for the most part, there are a lot of options to think about! If you're a morning person, you might want to schedule your classes to be done by noon. If you're more of a night owl, having that first class start at 1:15 in the afternoon might be the best thing to ever happen to you. And you definitely won't be in class for seven hours straight!

However, college is like high school in that you will have the opportunity to get involved by joining different clubs, organizations, and maybe even by getting a part-time job. Most schools have hundreds of extracurricular activities, and it is pretty easy to start one as well! So, as you can imagine, your schedule can get crazy with meetings, band practice, sport practice, play rehearsal, work hours, etc.!

Of course, the best way to see what a true day in the life of a college student is like is to actually get the schedules of some college students! Here are two undergraduates and their real-life experiences.

Cy Serrano

University of Southern California

Los Angeles, California

Major: Business Administration, Junior

Cooler thing about college in 10 words or less: The opportunity to be yourself and discover your potential!

9:15 a.m. I woke up early this time! Let's get some breakfast! On second thought . . . snooze button.

9:45 a.m. Finally up and ready for 10:00 a.m. class. Don't need to worry about being late with my trusty Beach Cruiser bike.

10:00–11:50 a.m. Entrepreneurship class, listening to fellow classmates give their business elevator pitches. Awesome!

12:00–1:50 p.m. Break for lunch at Commons and head back to the dorm to watch that episode of The Office I missed last night.

2:00–4:50 p.m. Ugh, three-hour class; it's a design class though, so I get to use my laptop.

5:00–7:00 p.m. Hang out at the dorm and get dinner with my residents. It's a lot of fun being a resident adviser!

8:00–10:00 p.m. Rehearsal with my a cappella group. I'm president this year, so I need to make sure I'm there on time!

10:15 p.m.–1:00 a.m. Homework, reading, and dorm hall shenanigans. Did someone say Halo 3? Sweet .

Michelle Hattan

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - Urbana, Illinois

Major: Biomedical Engineering, Junior

Cooler thing about college in 10 words or less: Midnight ice cream runs, random adventures, and great education!

7:10 a.m. First alarm goes off. Prepare to ignore it for the next 20–30 minutes.

7:20–7:50 a.m. Slowly convince myself to get up after pushing the snooze button for too long.

8:40–9:00 a.m. Make the long walk to class on the opposite side of campus.

9:00–10:00 a.m. Intro to Fiction, my only non-technical class; I love having a legitimate excuse to read good books!

10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Head to my professor's office hours. I would not be able to complete this homework without help!

12:00–1:00 p.m. Dynamics lecture (a crazy mechanical engineering class), where I eat my lunch of stale chips and PB&J, trying not to crunch too loudly. Normally, I get angry looks from the professor.

1:00–2:00 p.m. Modeling Human Physiology, an interesting class; I just wish there were fewer equations!

3:00–6:00 p.m. Research! I analyze musculoskeletal motion data to better understand the balance and gait of people.

6:00–7:00 p.m. Dinner with my friends at whichever campus restaurant has the best deal.

7:00–8:00 p.m. Go to Engineering Council meeting.

8:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Work on homework at the library!

The college schedule can seem crazy at times. Doing homework until midnight is not exceptionally glamorous or easy, but I love what I do and all that I learn. The best and worst part of college is the flexibility it offers. You are able to choose everything: your classes, extracurricular activities, friends, etc. A great deal of responsibility and time management is needed, but with a bit of planning and coffee you can be very successful. Surviving college takes hard work! However, at the end of all this, you will have your degree, and no one can take that away from you. How cooler is that?" — Michelle Hattan