



COLLEGE & CAREER PLANNING

6 EASY WAYS TO
START PREPARING FOR
WHAT'S NEXT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Self Discovery.....	4
Chapter 2: Explore Majors	7
Chapter 3: Explore Careers	12
Chapter 4: Explore Schools	16
Chapter 5: Measure Academic Readiness	18
Chapter 6: Estimate Costs	21
What's Next?	23
Resources	24

INTRODUCTION

Planning for what's next can be overwhelming. You might not know where or how to start.

And that's common.

It's important to learn about the options available to you, whether it's going to college, starting work after high school, or choosing a different path.

So, where do you start?



Self
Knowledge



Academic
Information



Informed
Decisions

INTRODUCTION

This eBook will highlight **six key activities** you can complete to start your college and career planning journey. You may do these more than once and out of the order listed below.

1. **Begin Self Discovery**
2. **Explore Majors**
3. **Explore Careers**
4. **Explore Schools**
5. **Measure Academic Readiness**
6. **Estimate Costs**

You can take the knowledge you have about yourself, including what you're interested in, what's important to you, and what you're good at, then pair it with academic information about yourself, like your grades and your ACT® test score, to make more informed decisions about your future.

Let's get started!

01 SELF DISCOVERY



SELF DISCOVERY

It's important to learn more about yourself and how your own characteristics link up to future education and work opportunities. There are a number of ways you can learn more about yourself. In fact, you might have already taken a self-assessment as part of a career component in class or even a career day at your school.

Take a self-assessment

Self-assessments often take the form of a quiz where you answer dozens of questions and get recommendations about majors and/or careers you might want to consider. Each assessment might focus on a different topic, such as your interests, your abilities, or your values.

SELF DISCOVERY

Many self-assessments are based on research, which can help you make a more informed decision. For example, the **ACT Interest Inventory** is a self assessment designed to help you find a major that matches your interests and is a good fit for you.

Other great tools and types of self-assessments are the **PreACT™** and **ACT Engage®**. If offered through your school or district, the PreACT can help you identify career paths of interest, while ACT Engage can help give you other information on your planning and engagement tendencies and skills.

Does your school offer these helpful resources? Ask a school official about them!

Pre **ACT**™

ACT® Engage®

02 EXPLORE MAJORS



EXPLORE MAJORS

As you learn more about major options available to you, you should consider the following:

- Does the major match my interests?
- Does this major prepare me for the career I want to have?
- What college courses will I typically take with the major?
- What will I learn?
- What degree types are available to me?
- What are the typical jobs available with my planned level of education?
- What specialties are within the major?
- What high school courses can help me prepare for the major?
- What type(s) of schools offer the major?
- What are some related majors?

EXPLORE MAJORS

Picking a major that matches your interests matters. There are lots of different factors that go into picking a job, and your major helps you prepare for your career. Perhaps you think you want to study biology and become a doctor. You declare your major and begin to take the necessary courses. But what happens if you discover that you aren't interested in the subject matter you must master to perform the job?

ACT research tells us a lot about the connection between what interests you and your chosen major. We've found that when you choose a major that matches your measured interests, you are more likely to:

- Remain in your major
- Stay in college
- Complete your degree in a timely manner

EXPLORE MAJORS



Remain in
your major



Stay in
college



Complete your
degree in a
timely manner

Remaining in your major means no added stress with your counselor to make sure you get into certain classes for the latest major you've chosen.

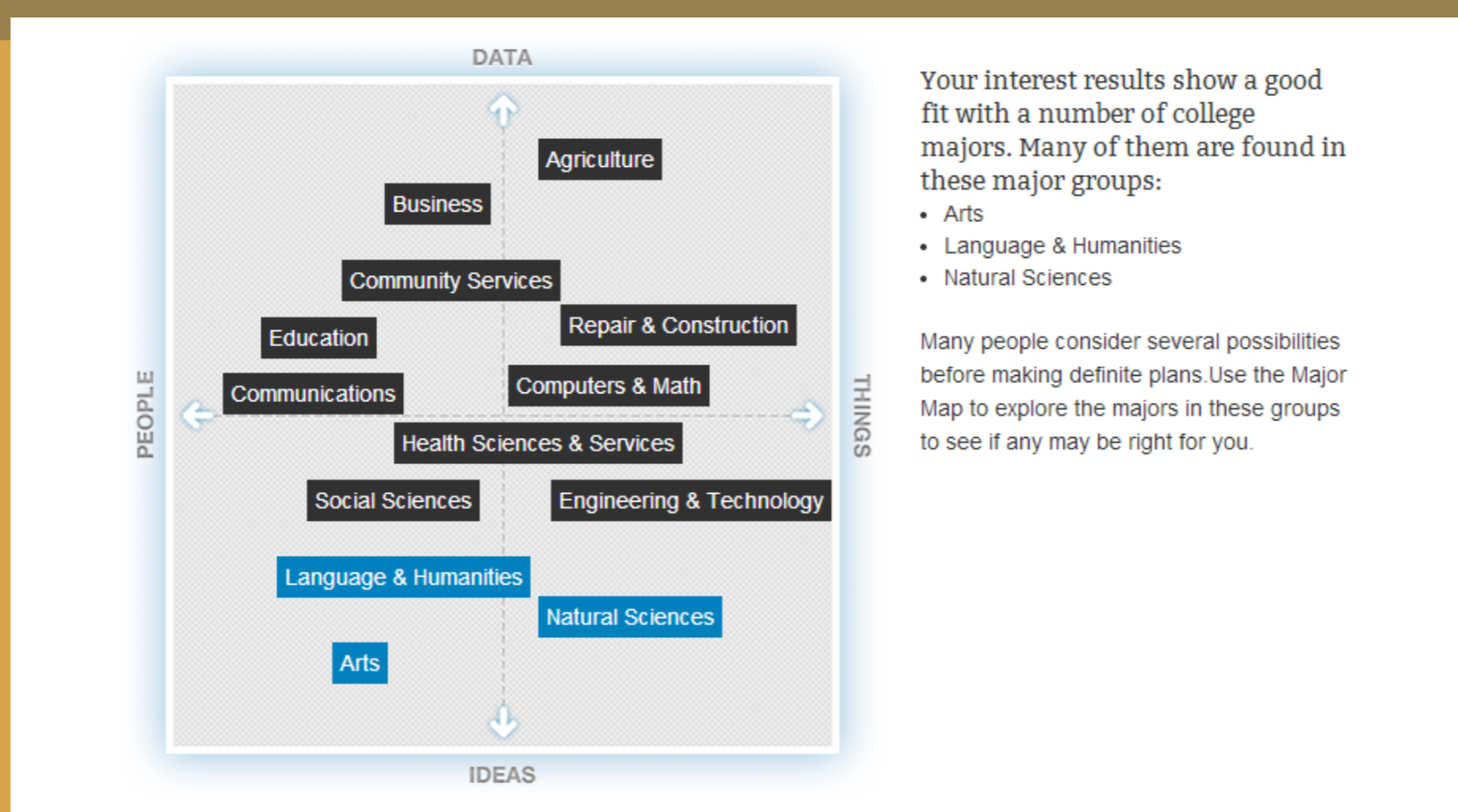
You'll stay in college, keep your focus, and complete your coursework when you're interested in what you're studying.

As a result, it is often easier in the long run to complete your degree on time. That can mean no extra student loans or money spent on that extra class, semester, or year!

EXPLORE MAJORS

"That all sounds great, but how do I know if my career interest matches my major?"

The **ACT Interest Inventory** is one tool you can use to measure your interests. On your new score report, you can learn if your interests are similar to those of students who actually chose the major you're considering. You can also take the interest inventory for free in **ACT Profile**.



Once you've taken the interest inventory, you can see majors that match your measured interests on your personalized major map.

03 EXPLORE CAREERS



EXPLORE CAREERS

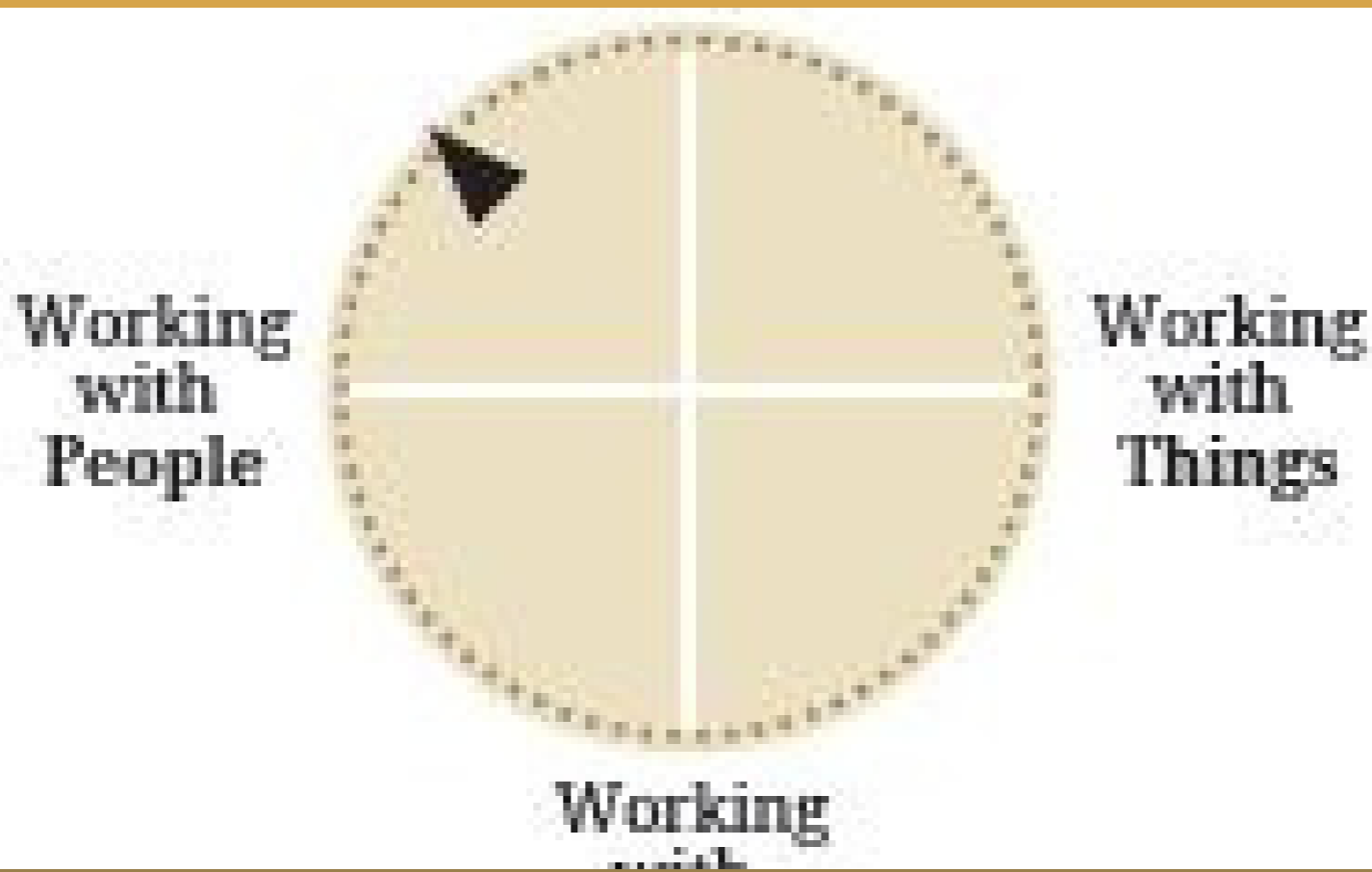
As you learn more about your career options, you should consider the following:

- What are the work tasks I'll do?
- What is the setting of the career?
- What tools will I use?
- Will I travel as a part of the career?
- Will I work with people?
- What will my schedule look like?
- What are the physical demands of the career?
- How much money does the average person with this career make?
- Are there opportunities for growth and advancement?
- What education and/or training is required?
- Do I like to work with data?
- What majors and/or training will help me prepare for this career?
- What are some related careers?

EXPLORE CAREERS

We already highlighted the importance of interest-major fit, and the same guidelines apply. It's important to pick a career that aligns with your personal characteristics.

The "College and Career Planning" section of the ACT score report visually summarizes your work-relevant interests. It shows the work activities of occupations across the work world and where you may best fit, by working with people, data, things, and ideas.

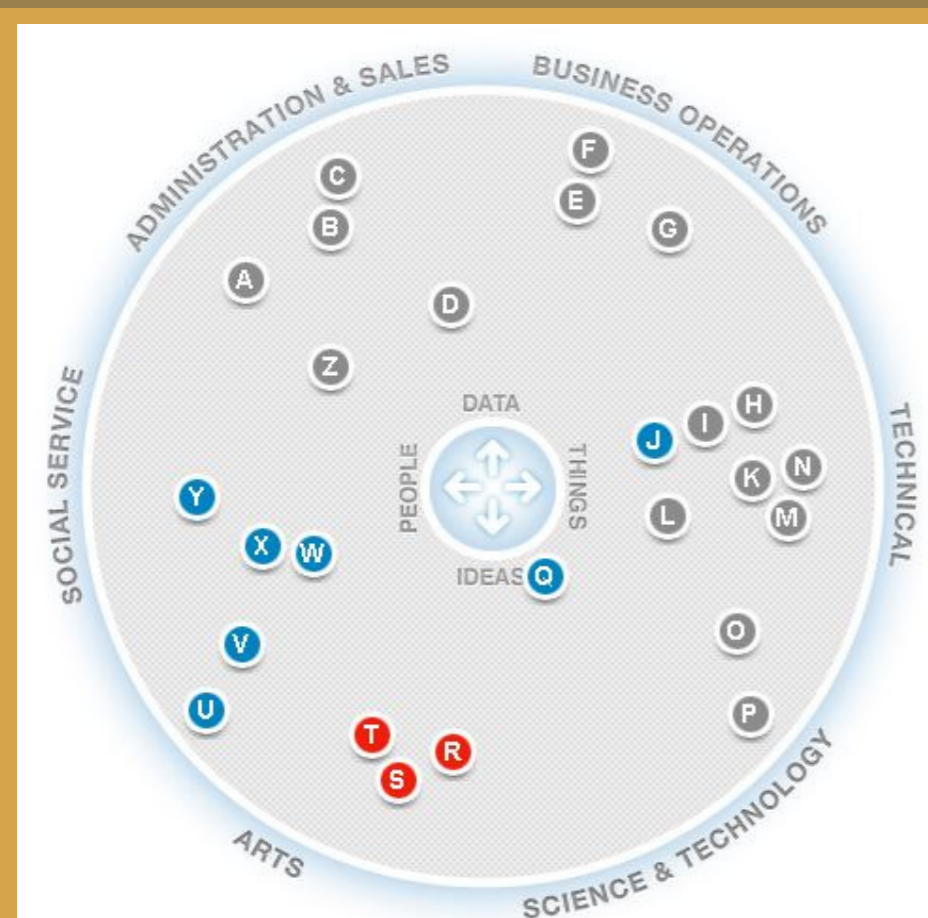


EXPLORE CAREERS

The **ACT Career Map** uses your **ACT interest inventory** results to offer you personalized information about how your interests, abilities, and values align with careers.

You will see career areas that match none of the inventories, at least one, and at least two inventories, all on one map. You can click on each career area to see what occupations fall under that category.

Remember, the more a career area aligns with your personal characteristics, the more likely it might be a better fit.



Use the Career Map to explore occupations that may be right for you.




[Take a tour of Career Map](#)

Take your inventories to see the results on the Career Map.

Roll over and explore!

There are 26 Career Areas to discover and research.

Career Map Key

-  Career Area
-  Matches at least one Inventory
-  Matches two or more Inventories

04 EXPLORE SCHOOLS



EXPLORE SCHOOLS

Now it's time to start narrowing down your list of school options.

As you learn more about your college options, you should consider the following:

- Does it offer the major(s) I'm considering?
- Where is it located?
- What is the student body size?
- Is it a public or private school?
- What college entrance exam score ranges do the school typically accept?
- What extracurricular activities are offered by the school?
- What is the admission rate?
- What is the annual cost of tuition?
- Do they offer any scholarships that I qualify for?

05 MEASURE ACADEMIC READINESS



MEASURE ACADEMIC READINESS

If you're considering applying to a four-year college, you likely will take a college entrance exam as a requirement for your application or to complement your application.

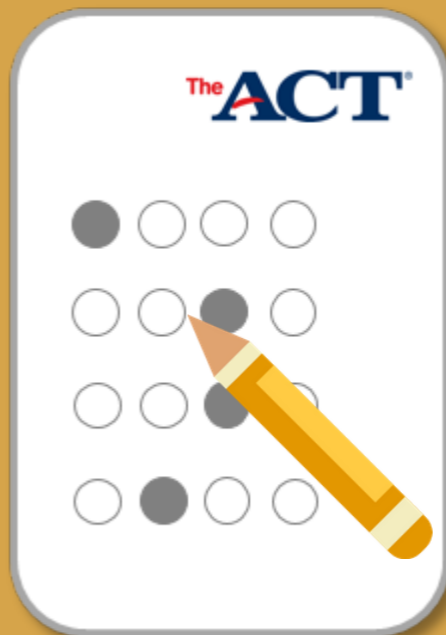
The ACT test measures what you learn in high school. This means that your score can help you understand how prepared you are for college and what you can work on before you start.

You can use your score to highlight your strengths in your college application. For example, students with interests in science can take the ACT and use their score to demonstrate their mastery of the topic. The ACT is the only college entrance exam with a science section.

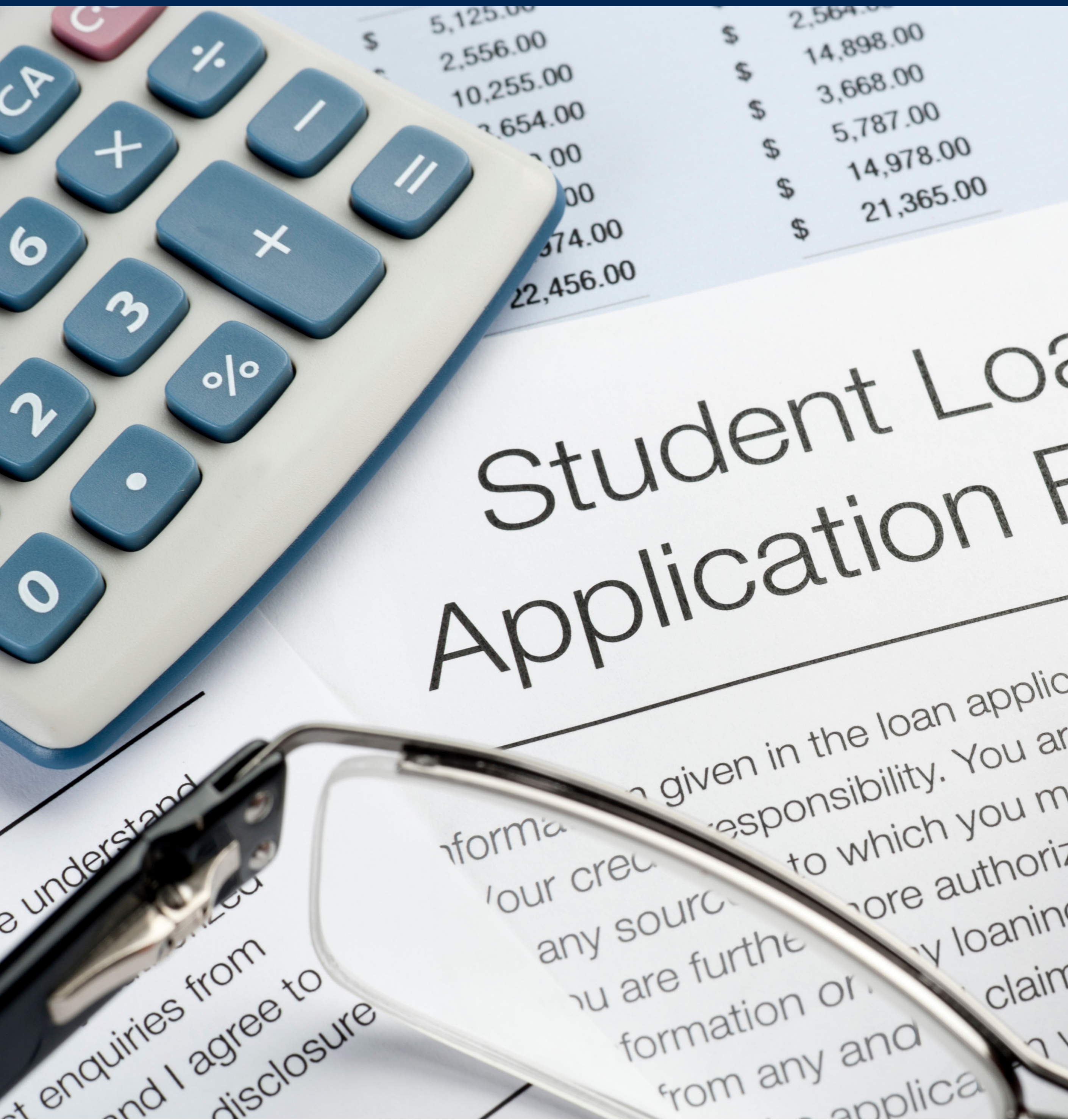
MEASURE ACADEMIC READINESS

You might also be wondering if your score is “good enough” to get into college. It's important to remember your goals. You can find specific recommendations and requirements for scores on individual school websites. Many disclose the range of scores typically accepted into the school. You can use this range to help you decide whether you'd like to take the test again.

Click here for ACT® Test Information



06 ESTIMATE COSTS



ESTIMATE COSTS

"Can I afford college?" This is an important question for you and your family. As you're considering your options, it's important to remember the difference between the sticker price and the net price of a college.

Sticker price is the price a school lists without considering any personal circumstances.

Net price is the price it will cost you given your personal circumstances (like any scholarships and/or financial aid you're eligible to receive). You should focus on the net price when you are ready to make a decision.

There are a number of college cost calculators available online. Colleges are required to offer this tool on their websites. You can also compare up to three schools' net and sticker prices in ACT Profile.

WHAT'S NEXT?

It's important to remember that while everyone's journey to college and career looks different, there are key things you can do to prepare yourself to make smarter decisions about your future. You may complete the previously listed activities in this order or in a different one. You might also complete the activities more than once!

Remember to keep an open, curious mind and that you have a number of resources to help you along the way.

Happy planning!

RESOURCES

[ACT Profile](#)

[College Scorecard](#)

[Counselors](#)

[Teachers](#)

[Parents](#)

[College Planning Worksheets](#)

EXPLORE MAJORS

Consider the following questions as you learn more about majors:

- What will I learn?
- What degree types are available to me?
- What are the typical jobs available with that level of education?
- What specialties are within the major?
- What high school courses can help me prepare for the major?
- What college courses would I typically take for the major?
- What type(s) of schools offer the major?
- What are some related majors?
- Does the major match my interests?
- Does this major prepare me for the career I want to have?

EXPLORE CAREERS

Consider the following questions as you learn more about careers:

- What are the work tasks I'll do?
- What is the setting of the career?
- What tools will I use?
- Will I travel as a part of the career?
- Will I work with people?
- What will my schedule look like?
- What are the physical demands?
- How much money does the average person with this career make?
- Are there opportunities for growth and advancement?
- What education/training is required?
- What majors and/or training will help me prepare for this career?
- What are some related careers?

EXPLORE SCHOOLS

Consider the following questions as you learn more about careers:

- Does it offer the major(s) I'm considering?
- Where is it located?
- What is the student body size?
- Is it a public or private school?
- What ACT or SAT score ranges does the school typically accept?
- What extracurricular activities does the school offer?
- What is the admission rate?
- What is the annual cost of tuition?