TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 11-15 ▲ POSTSECONDARY APPLICATION

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Students will locate the application form for a postsecondary program of choice.
* Students will log on and begin work on an application (or practice on a sample paper application).

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Applying to Postsecondary Worksheet
* **Family Handouts:**
* Applying to Postsecondary
* **Sample college application(s)**
* **Computer, projector and screen** for teacher to show applications or web sites
* **Computer with internet access** for students

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Review the application process.** Remind students that for most postsecondary programs their applications will be due during the fall or early winter of their senior year in high school. That means that they must take their entrance exams (SAT, ACT, COMPASS, ACCUPLACER or ASVAB), request letters of recommendation and transcripts, and complete the applications no later than the fall of senior year. How far along are your students in the process? Are any students falling behind? Ask how many students have completed an application for a postsecondary program. What information did they need?
2. **Review a sample application.** Tell students that most postsecondary applications are available online only. However, some can be downloaded as a PDF file for students to review. Share a college application of your choice, either by handing out on paper or showing on your screen. Point out the different sections students will need to complete, and review the types of information they will need to have available when they complete an application.
3. **Begin an application.** Make sure each student has access to a computer. Tell them to select their top choice postsecondary program and log onto its web site.
   * [**http://www.sbctc.edu/**](http://www.sbctc.edu/)for Washington State community and technical colleges.
   * [**www.wsac.wa.gov**](http://www.wsac.wa.gov) Established as a new cabinet-level state agency on July 1, 2012, the Washington Student Achievement Council provides strategic planning, oversight, and advocacy to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.
   * [**www.CollegeBoard.org**](http://www.CollegeBoard.org)for information about any college or university in the country (including community colleges and public colleges). (Click on “College Search,” which will take students to an alphabetical list with “At A Glance” information about colleges.)
   * [**www.CommonApp.org**](http://www.CommonApp.org)for the Common Application that is used by more than 400 private colleges and universities.

Students who are interested in pursuing an apprenticeship should visit: [**www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/Become**](http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/Become) for more information on available apprenticeships by occupation and county. There are not standard application forms, so these students will likely need to send a message to a contact person to get more information.

Students who are interested in enlisting in the military should visit [**www.TodaysMilitary.com**](http://www.TodaysMilitary.com).

Have students find the freshman application for their program of choice. It will be on the postsecondary program’s web site or at the Common Application site. Ask them to create a log-in ID so that they can access the application. Then have them complete the *Applying to Postsecondary Worksheet.*

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Applying to Postsecondary Worksheet***

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

* **EXPLORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

**Provide postsecondary counseling*.*** If possible, have a school counselor meet with your students and help them set postsecondary goals and develop a timeline based on those goals. Students should understand the deadlines they must meet to apply.

**Organize a Postsecondary Information Night for families.** If you wish, you might want to welcome families to your school for an evening about the postsecondary admissions process. You can introduce the Minimum College Admission Requirements, share information about Washington State’s two-year and four-year colleges, discuss financial aid, and give parents tips on helping their students prepare to apply to and succeed in postsecondary.

* **WASHINGTON STATE RESOURCES**
* **Check Out A College:** [www.CheckOutACollege.com](http://www.CheckOutACollege.com)Information about Washington State’s community and technical colleges
* **Washington Student Achievement Council:** [www.wsac.wa.gov](http://www.wsac.wa.gov)Information about Washington State’s public colleges and universities, as well as college preparation and financial aid
* **TheWashBoard.org:** [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org)   
  A scholarship matching service for students in Washington State

**ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS**

* **Essential Academic Learning Requirements Grade 9/10 Grade Level Expectations:** This lesson is aligned with Writing 2.4.1 and Educational Technology 1.3.1 and 1.3.2. Students will complete postsecondary research. They will use college web sites to locate and organize information.
* **Common Core State Standards Grade 11-12:** This lesson is aligned with English Language Arts Writing 6, 7, and 8. Students will begin a sample application, gathering information from one or more college web sites or other online information source.
* **American School Counselor Association National Standards:** This lesson is aligned with ASCA Academic C1.6 and Personal & Social A1.2 and B1.9. Students will learn about how school success and academic achievement enhance future opportunities. They will identify values, attitudes, and beliefs, and will identify short- and long-term goals.

TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 11-15 STUDENT HANDOUT

APPLYING TO POSTSECONDARY WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is one of your choices for postsecondary education?

Find an online application for this postsecondary program through one of the following web sites:

* [**www.CheckOutACollege.com**](http://www.CheckOutACollege.com)for links to Washington State community and technical colleges.
* [**www.wsac.wa.gov**](http://www.wsac.wa.gov) for Washington State four-year public colleges and universities.
* [**www.CollegeBoard.org**](http://www.CollegeBoard.org)for information about any college or university in the country (including community colleges and public colleges).
* [**www.CommonApp.org**](http://www.CommonApp.org)for the Common Application used by more than 400 private colleges and universities.

Once you have located the application, you may need to set up a log-in ID and password so that you can access the application form. If you do that, write down your ID and password, as well as the URL for the application so that you can return later and complete the application.

**Log-in, password, and URL information**

Name of postsecondary program: URL:

Log-in: Password:

What is the due date for fall admission?

How many letters of recommendation are required?

What exams are required?

How many and what types of essays are required?

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LESSON 11-15 FAMILY HANDOUT

APPLYING TO POSTSECONDARY

**IS YOUR STUDENT READY TO APPLY?**

If your student wants to enroll in a two-year or four-year college, enlist in the military, or begin an apprenticeship after high school, he or she will need to **apply**. Every postsecondary program has an application process. For most programs, these applications are due during the fall or early winter of the student’s senior year in high school.

**LOG ON & BEGIN A POSTSECONDARY APPLICATION**

Most postsecondary programs require students to complete an application online. To do that, the student must first find the program’s web site, then find the online application, and then register to access the application form. Here’s how to get started:

* [**www.CheckOutACollege.com**](http://www.CheckOutACollege.com)has information about Washington State’s 34 community and technical colleges. This web site includes links to each community and technical college, as well as summary information about the application requirements for each college.
* [**www.wsac.wa.gov**](http://www.wsac.wa.gov) has links to Washington State’s six four-year public colleges and universities. Once at the college’s individual web site, find the section for “prospective student” or “enrollment” and look for the online application.
* [**www.CollegeBoard.org**](http://www.CollegeBoard.org)has information about and links to any college or university in the country.
* [**www.CommonApp.org**](http://www.CommonApp.org) is the home of the Common Application, an online application that is used by more than 400 private colleges and universities.
* [**www.TodaysMilitary.com**](http://www.TodaysMilitary.com) provides information about the service branches, as well as the requirements for enlistment.
* [**www.lni.wa.gov/tradeslicensing/apprenticeship/become/**](http://www.lni.wa.gov/tradeslicensing/apprenticeship/become/) has information about apprenticeship opportunities in Washington State. Students can search for apprenticeships by county or occupation.

**COMPLETING & SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**

Online applications can be very convenient. Just make sure your student follows these five important tips.

* **Complete all sections and follow all instructions.** Carefully review each application to make sure that you complete all sections and do everything that is asked. Follow all instructions carefully: if you are asked to handle recommendation letters in a certain way, for instance, follow the instructions exactly. Make sure you provide all the information that is requested. Programs want to see that you are careful, thorough, and thoughtful. This is your best chance to make a good impression.
* **Do your best work.** Be careful about spelling and punctuation. Count words or characters carefully in essay questions to make sure your answer doesn’t get cut off by the computer. Answer in complete sentences where that is possible. Before submitting your application, ask someone to proofread your work. Then proofread it again on your own. Check and double-check that you have completed each section correctly. Again, your application is your introduction to the college. Make sure you are proud of what you submit!
* **Be honest.** It can be tempting to add a few extra activities or nudge your grades up a bit, but don’t do it! Remember that postsecondary programs will verify all the information you provide. If your application isn’t honest, your chances of being admitted go down. If there is something in your high school career that you are not proud of (low grades or a suspension) it is best to admit it in your application. Explain what you have done to recover or change your ways.
* **Make sure your essay stands out.** Focus your essay on a few key points. Don’t try to make your essay a laundry list of all your accomplishments. Instead, choose an anecdote or quality that describes you and then tell the story of who you are… or who you want to become. Don’t exaggerate or try to be someone you’re not. Instead, carefully tell the college who you are and why they should admit you.
* **Submit on time.** Be sure you meet every deadline. Keep a calendar of all your deadlines and check off each task. If you are submitting an application online, be certain that your submission has been accepted. Make sure you receive a confirmation that your application has been received. This will usually be by e-mail or through your online log-in on the program’s web site. If you don’t hear back from the college within a week, call the program staff and check on the status of your application.
* **Save a copy of each application.** Save a copy of everything you submit. If you are completing applications on paper, make a copy. If you are completing applications on the web, print a copy before clicking the “submit” button. Having an extra copy will save you a lot of work if your application is lost. In addition, you might be able to use information from one application to help you start another (though be absolutely sure you don’t confuse one program with another!).