



Education paths in the U.S.

Section 1: What types of education can I choose from?



Getting Started: Talk About It

What different types of education are there in your birth country?

What jobs interest you?

What are some of your goals?



Objectives

By the end of this section you should be able to explain:

- **Types of education in the US**
What different types of schools can I choose from?
- **Social, Academic, and Financial fit**
How do I decide what type of education is right for me?
- **Applying**
What do I need to apply for each type of school?



Types of Higher Education in the US

There are many different types of education for young adults in the U.S. Choosing the path that is right for you depends on your goals.



U.S. Education

There are three levels of education in the U.S.: Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education. Completing higher education can make it possible to apply for many jobs.

Primary

Elementary school

Grades
Kindergarten-5

Secondary

Middle School

Grades 6-8

High School

Grades 9-12

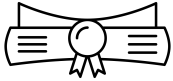
Higher Education

Adult School

Trade School

Community
College

College or
University



When you complete a level of education, or **graduate**, you can earn a **degree**. A degree is a certificate that you need to apply for certain types of jobs.

Adult Schools

Adult schools offer many types of **courses**, or classes. At adult schools, you can

- Learn English
- Take job training classes
- Prepare for U.S. citizenship tests
- Earn your [General Education Development \(GED\)](#) certificate, which is equal to a high school degree

Adult schools are often free or low cost and many offer classes in the evening.



Trade Schools

Trade schools offer job training . Through a trade school, you can earn a certificate to help get a job like:





- Electrician 
- Auto Mechanic 
- Hair Stylist 
- Construction manager 
- Medical assistant 

Most trade school programs last two years.



Community College

At community college, you can earn an **Associates degree**, which takes two years and can help you get jobs like:

- Teacher's assistant 
- Accounting assistant 
- Information Technology support specialist 
- Paralegal 





You can also **transfer**, or take course that help you switch schools and graduate from a college or university.



College or University

You can earn a **Bachelor's degree** at a college or university. Many high paying jobs in the U.S. require a Bachelor's degree.




To graduate, you choose a **major**, or a subject that most of your classes will focus on. Every major opens many jobs you can apply for. For example:

- Engineering: Mechanical engineer,  aerospace engineer, software engineer
- English: Journalist, Teacher 
- Biology: Research, Physician Assistant 
- Business: Accountant, Sales Representative 



Fit

To decide what type of education is the best fit for your goals and interests, you will need to think about:

- Academic fit 
- Social fit 
- Financial fit 





Academic Fit

Think about which option will help you meet your learning and career goals.

- ➔ Research the classes and programs at the school. Are there classes you are interested in?
 - ➔ Think about the jobs this program could open for you. What sort of jobs have people who have graduated the program gotten?
 - ➔ Research support programs. For example, if you need help with a class, is there a tutoring center?
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Social Fit

Education is an important way to build community and explore your interests with new people.

- Think about the community you want at school. For example, would you rather attend a big school, where you meet lots of new people, or a small school, where you recognize everyone?
 - Many schools offer **clubs**, where you can meet with people who share an interest outside of class, and sports. Are there any activities you want to make sure your school has?
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Financial Fit

It is important to choose option you can afford that can help you meet your goals for earning and saving money for the future.

- Research the cost of schools you're interested in.
- Learn about the types of **financial aid** you can get at each school.
 - ◆ You may be able to apply for **scholarships**, money given to you from the government or organizations that you can use to pay for school.
 - ◆ You may also be able to apply for **loans**, money you borrow from banks or the government that has to be paid back.
- Research how much you can earn with a degree or certificate from the school you're interested in.



Applying

Each type of school has different **requirements**, or things you have to complete, in order to attend.

You may need to complete an **application**, or a form that shows your interest and skills to the school

Schools will review your application to decide whether to **admit** you, which means “Congratulations! You are invited to attend our school!”



Application Requirements

Education type	Application requirements	How do schools decide who to admit?
Adult School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Complete an enrollment form, a form with basic information about you.	As long as there is space, just sign up and attend.
Trade School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Earn a high school degree or GED.❑ Complete an application. Each school has a different application. Most do not ask for essays.❑ Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which can help you get financial aid from the government to help you pay for school	Trade schools look for students with a lot of interest in the job they are training for. Some schools want students with work experience.
Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Earn a high school degree or GED.❑ Complete an application. Most do not ask for essays.❑ Complete the FAFSA	Community colleges look for students who live in their community.
Colleges and universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Earn a high school degree or GED❑ Complete an application. Many schools take the Common Application, so you can complete one application and apply to many schools.❑ Applications may ask for essays or letters from your teachers.❑ Some schools require extra tests, like the SAT or ACT❑ Complete the FAFSA	Colleges look for students with good grades, great essays, and letters from teachers that describe them as hard-working.

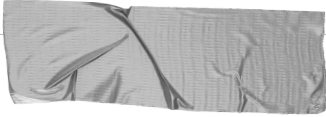
Closing: Reflection Questions

What type of school are you most interested in? Why?

What is most important to you in choosing a school: social, academic, or financial fit?

How are the education options in your birth country different from choices in the US?

Activity



Create a vision board to imagine a higher education option that is a great fit for you by using this [activity guide](#).

