

Seven Excuses Not to Go to College...And Why They're Lame

Think college is for other kids, and not for you? Wrong. Don't give up on applying to college before you take a good look at it.

1. I can't go to college—nobody in my family has ever gone.

In every family, someone has to be first. Why not you? True, being first can be hard. For instance, you may have to explain to the family why college is important to you. On the other hand, being first is likely to be a source of pride, for you and for your family.

2. I've been in school for 12 years. That's enough! I just want a good job.

Give college a chance. It's not like high school or junior high. For one thing, in college you pick a major—a subject area that you want to learn about. As for that good job—the best jobs and the best salaries go to college grads.

3. I can't go to college because I can't afford it.

Most students get financial aid to help pay for college, and most aid is based on need. This means that the less money you have, the more aid you might get.

4. I can't go because I don't know how to apply or where I want to go.

Tell your high school counselors you want to go to college fairs, where colleges introduce themselves to students. Ask them how to write to schools for information. Try to visit colleges that interest you. Keep at it. After a while, you'll get a feel for differences among colleges, and start to know what you want.

5. I can't go to college—I don't know what I want to do with my life.

Join the crowd. Thousands of college freshmen haven't decided on a major or on a career. That's how college helps. It exposes you to all sorts of subjects you've never heard of before. College is a great place to learn more about careers you'll love for life.

6. I can't go to college, because I just won't fit in.

Not so. Most colleges have students from many backgrounds. Homesick? Need a hand? Look for people with your interests or your background in the African-American club, on the soccer field, or in a Korean study group. Remember, college is a great place to meet new kinds of people with different lifestyles. And the more people you understand and feel comfortable with, the better prepared you'll be for the world after college.

7. College is too hard for me.

Not you, too! Most students worry about being good enough for college, so you're not alone. One idea: In high school, don't just study—learn how to study. Most good students have strategies for studying. Once you learn how to study, chances are you'll do fine. Still need help? Professors are really helpful, and so are tutors.