

Develop a Well-Rounded College List

This lesson is designed to provide students with tools and resources that will help them create an evolving college list.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Learn to define Probable, Target, and Reach Schools
2. Create three different college lists using the College Search tools on MEFA Pathway
3. Finalize a well-rounded college list

ACTIVITIES

PART 1

Content Knowledge

Students should learn about Probable, Target, and Reach schools by reviewing the two resources below:

- [How Does Your College List Measure Up?](#)
- [Probable, Target, and Reach Schools Resource Sheet](#) (bottom page)

After reading both resources, students should be provided with their most current academic progress report and review their academic performance. For this activity it's important for students to know their GPA and highest standardized test score.

PART 2

Applying Information

Part 1: Students should begin to create their college lists by using the *College Search* tool. The objective is to create three college lists: *Probable Schools*, *Target Schools*, and *Reach Schools*.

Instructions

1. Students should log in to their [MEFA Pathway](#) account (or register for one if they don't yet have one).
2. Once logged in, students should click the *Search Colleges* tab and then *College Search*.
3. Students should use the toolbox located on the left side of the page to select and enter their criteria. This tool will allow students to find schools that match their college preferences.
4. After students have selected and entered all of their criteria, a list of schools will be shown that fits their criteria.
5. Students can click the green *SAVE TO LIST* button to save a college to their *My College List*. Students should save schools they identify for themselves as Probable, Target, and Reach schools.

Grade Level: 12

MEFA PATHWAY SECTIONS WITHIN THIS LESSON:

- College Search
- College List

SUBJECT AREAS:

- Creating an Evolving College List

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- [How Does Your College List Measure Up? blog post](#)
- [Probable, Target, and Reach Schools Resource Sheet](#)
- Each student's academic progress report
- Excel/Google Drive Sheet
- Internet connection to work with the MEFA Pathway website

Email any questions to:
info@mefapathway.org

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Part 2: Students should begin narrowing down their college list.

Instructions

1. In MEFA Pathway, students should click on *My College List* under the *Search Colleges* tab.
2. Students should create an Excel Worksheet or Google Sheet using the *My College List* chart below as a template to indicate whether each college is a Probable, Target, or Reach school.

PART 3

Evaluating Information

Students should utilize the college list they've created to do deeper research.

Students should conduct this research by logging in to their MEFA Pathway account, navigating to the *Search Colleges* tab, and then clicking on *My College List*. Here they can open up their list and click on each school's name to look at key details about the college. For each school, students should record the acceptance rate, average GPA and test scores, and application deadline. They should reorganize their college list within their Excel Worksheet or Google Sheet based on the admissions difficulty, which should be measured based on the student's GPA and test scores in comparison to the metrics reported by the school. Students should add an extra column titled *Application Deadline* where they should record each school's deadline.

PART 4

Critical Thinking/Creative Application

At this point students should have a well-rounded college list that they're happy with. Now it's time to brainstorm and analyze other components beyond grades and test scores that can strengthen their change of acceptance. This exercise is important because colleges will look at these factors to learn more about the applicants. Students should do a reflective journal entry (on a notebook or computer) and answer the following questions:

1. What activities have you participated in at school or outside of school?
2. Have you been in any leaderships roles?
3. What awards have you received?
4. How have you been involved in your community?

Feel free to add to this list. Students should be given some time to complete this exercise. After students have completed their journal entry, discuss this exercise to help students better understand that college acceptance goes beyond just academic performance. Discuss any opportunities that students can take advantage of to improve their chances of acceptance at their top choice colleges.

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Probable, Target, and Reach Schools Resource Sheet

Probable (Back-Up)

- Your academics (GPA, standardized testing, etc.) exceed the administrative requirements
- Acceptance rate is high (ex. 84.2%)
- School offers the degree/major you are interested in

Target (Match)

- Your academics (GPA, standardized testing, etc.) are aligned with the administrative requirements
- Acceptance rate is moderate (ex. 66.1%)
- School offers the degree/major you are interested in

Reach (Dream)

- Your academics (GPA, standardized testing, etc.) are below the administrative requirements
- Acceptance rate is low (ex. 4.7%)
- School offers the degree/major you are interested in

Probable, Target, and Reach Schools Resource Sheet

My College List		
Probable (Back-Up)	Target (Match)	Reach (Dream)

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CATEGORY	EXCELLENT 4	GOOD 3	SATISFACTORY 2	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1
Sequencing of Information	The information is organized in a clear, logical way.	Most information is organized in a clear, logical way.	Some information is logically sequenced.	There is no clear plan for the organization of information.
Effectiveness	The reflection includes all material needed to give a good understanding of the topic.	The reflection is lacking one or two key elements.	The reflection is missing more than two key elements.	The reflection is lacking several key elements and has inaccuracies.
Font Choice & Formatting	Font formats (size, bold, italic) have been carefully planned to enhance readability and content.	Font formats have been carefully planned to enhance readability.	Font formats have been carefully planned to complement the content. It may be a little hard to read.	Font formatting makes it very difficult to read the material.
Conventions. Student uses proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.	The reflection has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	The reflection has 1- 2 misspellings, but no grammatical errors.	The reflection has 1- 2 grammatical errors but no misspellings.	The reflection has more than 2 grammatical and/ or spelling errors.

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