

Research Skills

The **BIG** Idea

- What can I learn by looking at a college website?

AGENDA

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up: Navigating a College Website (10 minutes)
- II. A College Tour (15 minutes)
- III. College Research (15 minutes)
- IV. Wrap Up: Beyond the Web (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

PORTFOLIO PAGES:

- Portfolio page 22, School Finder Results (from previous lesson)
- Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web

FACILITATOR PAGES:

- Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW
- LCD projector
- Overhead projector
- Chart paper to record Questions to Ask About Colleges (SAVE COMPLETED LIST FOR REFERENCE IN THE NEXT LESSON.)

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Determine the kind of information that can be found on a college website.
- Get information about a tech school or college of their choice.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students develop a list of questions for college research. As a class, they practice finding information on a college website. Lastly, students will find information about a tech school or college on the school's official website for the school you selected to research as a group.

PREPARATION

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Write the day's vocabulary words and definitions on the board.
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web**
 - **Portfolio page 22, School Finder Results** (from previous lesson)
- Make arrangements for the class to use the computer lab.
- Arrange for the use of an LCD projector.
- Select a local college to research in **Activity II, A College Tour**, and familiarize yourself with its website.
- Create a sample recruiting poster for the local school you selected in **Activity II, A College Tour**. This poster will serve as a model for students' work. If computer access is a problem at your school, create the following resources:
 - For **Activity II, A College Tour**, make 15 packets for the school you selected to research. Packets should contain the information listed in **Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web**.
 - For **Activity III, College Research**, make 30 packets containing this information.

If computer access is a problem at your school, you should include a mixture of tech/trade schools, community colleges, four-year public schools, and four-year private schools.

VOCABULARY

Undergraduate: A student in a university or college who has not received his or her bachelor's degree.

Admissions: The department at a college or university that oversees the application and acceptance process.

Campus Life/Residence: The department at a college or university that oversees campus housing, dining, and on-campus clubs and activities.

Prospective Students: Potential or future students at a college or university.

Enrollment: The number of students who are currently attending a particular college or university.

Tuition: Fees paid for instruction, especially for post-secondary education.

Financial Aid: Scholarships, grants, loans, and other assistance programs that help pay for tuition and other post-secondary school expenses.

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

(You may choose to present the **Warm Up** activity as a written DO NOW. Present the questions on the board or overhead, and have students write *only* their answers on index cards. You could also choose to give the students a handout by copying **Facilitator Resource 1, DO NOW**.)

Questions:

1. Last week, you completed the **School Finder** on RUPrepareND.com and were given a list of colleges that matched your interests. Pick one school from your **Portfolio Page 22, School Finder Results** that you are interested in learning more about and record it in the space below.
2. List two reasons why you think this school would be a good fit for you.
3. Last week we learned about four-year colleges. List three things that you would want to learn about a school before applying to it.

[Then call on students to read their answers and continue with the Warm Up as written.]

For **Activity II, A College Tour**, you may wish to contact local universities and colleges requesting the college viewbook, pennants, posters, and other branded items. If you are unable to secure computer access, you could have students use the viewbooks for research.

For **Activity III, College Research**, you may have the students research their schools in pairs, groups, or individually. In addition, if you think students will be pressed for time, you may reduce the number of questions students have to answer. Have all students complete sections 2, 3, and another of their choosing.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. Warm Up: Navigating a College Website (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Today, we're going to find out more about one of the tech schools or colleges that's on the list you came up with last week. (School Finder Results) Where would you go for more info? (Student responses will undoubtedly include the web.) Where's the best place to go to find more information on the web about a particular college? (The school's official website.)

What facts will you find on the school's official website? [Allow students to respond and record their answers on chart paper. If the students do not address the topics below, share them with the class and record them on the chart paper.]

- How many students attend the college?
- How many students are typically in a class?
- Is there a minimum GPA (grade point average) required for admission? If so, what is it?
- How much does it cost to attend the school for one year (including tuition, room and board)?
- Where is the school located? Is it in an urban, rural, or suburban setting?
- What sports are available at this school?
- What are some clubs and student organizations this school has to offer?
- List some programs or majors you could study at this school.
- What weekend activities are available for students (such as restaurants, museums, shopping, nightlife)?]

II. A College Tour (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now we're going to take a look at the information for a college right here in our home state. [Name college.] We'll look at the descriptions and photos they've posted on the web to try and answer some of the questions we brainstormed together. While we're investigating the website, think about your own likes and dislikes, and whether or not it's a place where you'd be comfortable. Later in class, you will be researching one of the colleges you were matched with from Portfolio page 22, School Finder Results.

At first, searching a college website can seem overwhelming. It can be difficult to know where to find the information you are looking for. The trick is to understand the terms that college websites use. Before we start researching our college's website, let's

review some vocabulary words commonly found there.

[Discuss the terms listed in the **Vocabulary** section. Make sure to answer any questions your students may have. While you are walking the students through the sample college website, be sure to point out these terms.]

2. [Display **Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web** using an overhead projector. Using an LCD projector, model for students how to search the college’s website. (See **PREPARATION**.) Walk the students through each question on this page and instruct them to follow along as you record the answers on the overhead projector. Then lead a discussion about the school, discussing the following two questions:
 - Who do you think would be interested in going to this school?
 - What’s the atmosphere of the school? Do you feel like you’d fit in there? Why or why not?]

III. College Research (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Now that we’ve got a handle on how to search a college website, you’re going to research a school of your choice. Remember, the school you research should be one of the schools listed in your School Finder Results. I will be walking around the room as you are researching. If you have any questions, raise your hand. Please turn to **Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web**. In the next class, you will use the research from this sheet to create a poster convincing people to attend this college. You will have 15 minutes to complete this portfolio page.

[Display sample poster here. Remind students that they will be using today’s research to create posters next week. (See **Preparation**.)]

2. [Give the students 15 minutes to investigate one of the schools listed on the board using **Portfolio pages 24–25, College Info from the Web**. Circulate around the room to troubleshoot any computer issues and to assist students who are struggling.]

IV. Wrap Up: Beyond the Web (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** There are a lot of different websites with information about specific technical schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges, and now you have a way of comparing the information you find there.

Where else do you think you can find information about schools that interest you?

Who could you talk to? (*Alumni, students, faculty.*) What else could you read? (*School brochures, college guides.*) What could you learn from a visit to the school?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Keep in mind, colleges try to put their best foot forward in their promotional materials. For example, they'll be sure to show lots of different kinds of people in order to encourage a diverse group of students to enroll. That's why it's always a good idea to visit the college yourself and talk to students who have gone there to make sure you're getting what you expect.

DO NOW

Education After High School 4: Research Skills

Directions: You will have three minutes to read the questions and write your answers.

Questions:

1. Last week, you completed the **School Finder** on RUReadyND.com and were given a list of schools that matched your interests. Pick one school from your **Portfolio Page 22, School Finder Results** that you are interested in learning more about and record it in the space below.

2. List two reasons why you think this school would be a good fit for you.

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3. Last week we learned about four-year colleges. List three things that you would want to learn about your school before applying to it.

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COLLEGE INFO FROM THE WEB



Name of the School You're Investigating: _____

Find the official college website by signing in to RUPrepareND.com. Click on the **College Planning** tab and then click on the **Explore Schools** section. Under the heading "Search for Colleges" type the name of the school into the dialogue box. Click on the school you want. Then click on the school's website which appears in the blue box on the right side of the page. Write down the official website address below.

Official school website: _____

1. Facts and Figures:

- How many students attend this college? _____

- How much does it cost to attend the school for one year (including tuition, room and board)?

2. Location and Campus:

- Where is the school located? Is it in an urban, rural, or suburban setting?

- Describe what the campus looks like based on what you find on the website.

3. Academics:

- List one or two majors that interest you.

4. Student Life:

- List two clubs, student organizations, or sports teams you find interesting at this school.

- Describe what a freshman dorm is like.

5. Community:

- What kinds of activities are available for students on the weekend (such as restaurants, museums, shopping, nightlife)?

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