



# College Prep Intensive

A ten-day postsecondary transition program, written so another instructor could run it, and rebuilt in full after the first cohort.

|                 |                                                |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LEVEL</b>    | High school, graduating seniors                |
| <b>DURATION</b> | 10 sessions across two weeks, 90 minutes daily |
| <b>VERSIONS</b> | 2024-25 first cohort; 2025-26 revised          |
| <b>OUTCOME</b>  | 90% college acceptance rate among participants |
| <b>AUTHOR</b>   | Taylor Fox                                     |

*Materials are named rather than linked. The source guide hyperlinks every handout, deck, and template to a school-managed account, and those links are not reachable from outside the institution. One colleague's name has been replaced with their role.*

## DESIGN PREMISE

The program was built backward from a single measurable outcome, admission to a postsecondary institution, rather than forward from a list of topics. Every session therefore ends with a deliverable that feeds the next one, and the two weeks accumulate into a completed application rather than a set of understandings about applications. The guide is written for a facilitator: each block is timed, each material is specified, and student preparation between sessions is stated explicitly so the next day can begin on the assumption that it was done.

## WEEK ONE

### Day 1 · Introduction, major exploration, and university search

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:50 | Welcome and course overview. Icebreaker: Would You Rather, college edition, run as a self-activity to surface what students think they want before any detail is introduced. Overview of objectives and materials, including the self-tracking spreadsheet shared with parents. Four stated goals: decide your major, decide on six schools, develop your application materials, craft your essay. |
| 11:50-12:30 | College selection. Presentation, then a chart handed out for revised Would You Rather thinking after the presentation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 12:30-1:00  | Self-assessment and major exploration. Presentation on majors and career paths with a career paths handout. Interest-profiler self-assessment posted to the class platform.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

Student preparation for Day 2: complete the self-assessment; print the homework; bring the tuition rates handout to parents; hold the discussion handout conversation with parents.

### Day 2 · University search and understanding program requirements

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Recap. Discussion of majors chosen. Names and majors added to the major wall.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 11:40-12:30 | University search and spreadsheet creation. Direct instruction on how to search, worked against a set of five named institutions spanning private, public, and community college. Research recorded in the shared spreadsheet. |

12:30-1:00      Group activity: university matchmaking. Students research and present what they have gathered.

Student preparation for Day 3: complete the research spreadsheet for three schools; continue the parent conversation thread.

### Day 3 · Program requirements and entrance essay, part one

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Recap on prerequisites. Two guiding questions: is this realistic for the grades I have, and does it require anything extra such as auditions or additional testing. Students share findings. Major wall updated. |
| 11:40-12:30 | Activity: major comparison chart across top university choices.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 12:30-1:00  | Evaluating universities in speed dates. Structured peer-to-peer exchange using guiding questions.                                                                                                                |

Student preparation for Day 4: complete the spreadsheet for the remaining three schools; continue the parent conversation thread.

### Day 4 · Application strategies and entrance essay, part two

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Recap on progress and challenges. Major wall updated. Individual teacher check of spreadsheets.                                              |
| 11:40-12:20 | Introduction to entrance essays, delivered by presentation.                                                                                  |
| 12:20-1:00  | Crafting your story. Paper outline handed out and followed against a parallel presentation outline. Drafting begins with individual support. |

Student preparation for Day 5: decide on an essay concept and write a rough introductory paragraph; complete the entire spreadsheet; continue the parent conversation thread.

### Day 5 · Finding your fit and entrance essay, part three

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Class discussion on search progress. Major wall updated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 11:40-12:40 | Building your application. Securing recommendation letters, with three required from distinct categories: a teacher, an employer or someone the student has worked for, and the school counselor. UC application checklist and supplemental questions; Common App checklist and supplemental questions. |
| 12:40-1:00  | Workshop: essay continuation with instructor support.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Student preparation for Day 6: finish a first draft of the full essay; complete the parent discussion handout, due Monday, including a sit-down conversation showing parents the research spreadsheet and discussing options.

## WEEK TWO

### Day 6 · Application enhancement and essay review

| Time        | Segment                                                                                    |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:50 | First drafts collected. Discussion on making an application stand out. Major wall updated. |
| 11:50-12:10 | Building an impressive resume, delivered by presentation with a companion handout.         |

12:10-1:00 Workshop: resume building, hands-on with feedback, using a template gallery and a worked example.

Student preparation for Day 7: proofread and edit the essay for grammar and spelling; continue the major chart; work on the resume; apply the instructor's digital feedback on the first draft.

### Day 7 · One on ones and peer collaboration

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:50 | Discussion on how admissions committees evaluate applications, covering testing, advanced coursework, grades, and activities. Major wall updated. |
| 11:50-1:00  | Essay one-on-ones with the instructor. Students work on all materials until called.                                                               |

Student preparation for Day 8: update the essay from instructor and peer feedback; complete the college resume; finish the major chart; prepare to present the resume to the class.

### Day 8 · Individualized counseling and essay enhancement

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                           |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Recap and open questions. Major wall updated.                                                                                     |
| 11:40-12:30 | Student resume presentations. Students present and market themselves to the room.                                                 |
| 12:30-1:00  | Workshop: peer to peer. One-on-one essay review with the instructor as needed; structured peer review using the review worksheet. |

### Day 9 · Finalizing applications

| Time        | Segment                                                                                    |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:40 | Discussion on finalizing applications, next steps, and open questions. Major wall updated. |
| 11:40-1:00  | Individualized counseling sessions. Peer review during downtime.                           |

Student preparation for Day 10: complete the final draft of the essay; ensure all materials are finished.

### Day 10 · Course review and check out

| Time        | Segment                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11:30-11:50 | Course reflection. Students write a one-paragraph reflection on what the seminar changed and what they discovered, submitted on the class platform. Open discussion on what was learned and how to apply it. |
| 11:50-1:00  | Personal check-outs with the instructor to confirm every student has every resource finished and in hand.                                                                                                    |

## SECOND-COHORT REVISION

The 2025-26 version is a rebuild, not an edit. The first cohort surfaced four problems, and each change below addresses one of them. The daily block also shrank from two and a half hours to ninety minutes, so every addition had to be paid for by a cut.

| What changed            | First version, 2024-25                                                                                                   | Revised version, 2025-26                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Course materials        | Built on a purchased college guide and its companion essay book. Readings assigned from both across Days 1, 3, 4, and 5. | Textbook dependency removed entirely and replaced with materials written in house: presentations, handouts, and outlines for every segment. Removes a cost and access barrier and puts the content under my control. |
| Family engagement       | A single parent conversation, assigned once at the end of Day 5.                                                         | A daily thread. The tuition rates handout and the discussion handout travel home every session, and the research spreadsheet is shared with parents from Day 1 so families track progress alongside the student.     |
| Commitment tracking     | Majors discussed verbally in each recap, with no persistent record.                                                      | The major wall, a visible artifact updated at every recap, so drift in a student's stated direction is public and addressable rather than private.                                                                   |
| Instructor time         | Day 7 ran a simulated admissions review, with peer interviewing for students not in the simulation.                      | Day 7 converted to essay one-on-ones with every student. The simulation was engaging and the conference is what actually moved the drafts.                                                                           |
| Application scaffolding | Recommendation letters and transcripts discussed; a personalized application timeline built from a calendar template.    | Concrete checklists added: UC application checklist and supplemental questions, Common App checklist and supplemental questions, a major comparison chart, and peer-to-peer guiding questions.                       |
| Closing                 | Day 10 ended in open discussion and a final peer feedback round.                                                         | Day 10 ends in a written reflection submitted on the class platform. The closing became measurable instead of conversational.                                                                                        |