**Why College? Benefits of a College Education - 6th Grade**

**Summary**

Students will complete an e-Learning activity as a whole class. They will watch a series of video clips about the benefits of going to college. Students will respond to discussion questions for each video. The class will explore the different living expenses that adults face and the financial benefits of a college degree. They will explore the average salaries and unemployment rates for individuals with different levels of education.

**Grades**

* 6

**Content Modules**

* College & Life Vision

**Objectives**

Students will:

* Explain how a college education offers a broad range of opportunities that can positively influence a person’s life path socially, economically, and professionally.
* Reflect on whether they plan on earning a college degree and why.

**Length**

1 Session

**Additional Resources**

* [Why College.Benefits of a College Education.pdf](https://www.6to16.org/files/attachments/9b1ceb9e8c70c02ae16bd05cb483bdfc.pdf)

**Related Lessons**

**Related E-Learning**

* [Why College](https://www.6to16.org/elearning/activities/171)

**Materials and Resources**

**Offline:**

* Why College? Discussion Questions
* 6to16 Notebook

**Online:**

* Why College? e-Learning Activity
* Life With a College Degree: Explore activity

**Higher-Level Thinking Skills**

Reflection, Summarization

**Assessment(s)**

Students’ responses to the following prompts will reveal whether they have grasped the benefits of a college education:

* In your own words, what are the benefits of going to college?
* Do you plan on going to college? Why or why not?
* Think of an adult you know who did not go to college. In two paragraphs, please answer the following questions:

i.  How could she or he have benefitted from going to college?

               ii. How might her or his life be different with a college degree?

               iii. Do you think it would have been a good choice for that person to go to college if she or he had had the opportunity?

**Do Now (10 minutes)**

1)  Instruct students to answer the following question in their **6to16 Notebooks**:

* Why should I go to college?

2)  Ask students to share their responses.

3)  Share with students your own reasons for going to college. Explain how going to college has impacted your life, expanded your employment opportunities, and professionally benefited you.

**Class Activity (35 minutes)**

**Teacher’s Note***: The* ***Why College?******e-Learning activity*** *is comprised of three parts:*

*College graduates’ testimonials of the importance of a college.*

*An interactive tool that allows students to explore the difference in the annual income of high school and college graduates. Students will also be asked to make financial decisions for the fictional characters based on their income. The activity will provide students with feedback regarding their choices.*

*A section that addresses fears about going to college.*

1)  Pass out the **Why College? Discussion Questions** worksheet.

2)  Give students a few minutes to read through the questions on the worksheet.

3)  Tell students to keep these questions in mind as they attentively watch the videos in the **Why College? e-Learning Activity**.

4)  Project the videos in the **Why College?** **e-Learning Activity**.

5)  After watching each video, ask students to answer the corresponding questions on the **Why College**? **Discussion Questions** handout. Use the questionsto guide a class discussion about each video.

6)  After the class has finished viewing and discussing the videos, start the **Life With a College Degree: Explore** activity. Read, or ask a student to read, the directions for the activity aloud:

* For the “Cost of Living Section,” first ask students what expenses adults have. Add each expense that students name in to the activity. When Ivan runs out of money, ask students which things are really necessary. Keep only the items that students identify as necessary. Point out that having a college degree makes it more likely that students will be able to afford more of these different items.
* For the “Education Pays” section, place the cursor over each degree to see a description and then click the “Show Me” icon to see the unemployment rate and average salary.

**Teacher’s Note:** The figures are from 2005. The unemployment rates and average salaries have changed since then. Note that unemployment rates are much lower for college graduates as compared to non-college graduates.

7)  After the class has finished the e-Learning exercises, use the following questions to lead a discussion:

* Is college just about classes?
* How has a college education impacted the lives of the people in the videos?
* What are some of the benefits of going to college?
* Is there anyone that does not believe that earning a college degree is worthwhile?
* Why might someone disagree with the idea that everyone should go to college?

8)  To close out the discussion, emphasize that each student’s goal should be to create as many options in life as possible. Earning a college degree opens up a multitude of life options.  The future job market and economy that they will enter as adults may not look like it does today. Students should arm themselves to be able to adapt and take advantage of what opportunities will exist in their future by obtaining a college degree.

**Assessment:**

1)  Ask students to answer the following prompt in their **6to16 Notebooks**:

* In your own words, summarize the benefits of going to college.
* Do you plan on going to college? Why or why not?

**Teacher’s Note:** *Collect students’* ***6to16 Notebooks*** *and make a record of which students don’t plan on going to college and why. This information will help you understand how you can convince these students of the benefit of earning a college degree throughout the remainder of the* ***6to16*** *classes.*

**Homework**

Instruct students to respond to the following prompt in their **6to16 Notebooks**: Write at least three reasons that a person would want to go to college. Write at least three reasons that a person might not want to go to college.

* Think of an adult you know who did not go to college. In two paragraphs, please answer the following questions:

1. How could she or he have benefitted from going to college?
2. How might her or his life be different with a college degree?
3. Do you think it would have been a good choice for that person to go to college if she or he had had the opportunity?
4. Ask students to speak with their parents or family members about benefits of going to college.  What does your family think about your going to college?