

it's Your Life...
Are You Ready?



WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

School may have just started, and you may still have a year or two to go, but it's not too early to start thinking about life after graduation. You're facing quite a few choices...and the decisions you need to make might seem overwhelming. (Do you go to school or work...or go to school and work?)

It's only the rest of your life we're talking about. But wait a minute! Slow down and take it one step at a time. Remember when you were a little kid? Someone probably asked you, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" By now you should have some sort of idea. But don't worry if you're considering more than one career path – that's normal.



Give it some thought. So...what do you want to be? What will it take to become that? Do you need more education? If so, do you need a four-year degree? Will life experience count towards your goal? Now...onto your choices!

- **Get a job.** Not everyone attends college. Maybe you're ready to enter the workforce full-time. Ask yourself are you really ready?
- **Attend college.** There are many schools from which to choose. What you want is the school that offers classes and programs that can help you achieve your goals. There are some other considerations as well.
- **Where?** Will you commute and live at home with your parents? If not, will you live on campus in a dormitory or near campus in an apartment? Each decision brings its own financial considerations.
- **How long?** You can choose to attend for either two or four years. Some professions require additional schooling after you earn a four-year degree. Research the careers that you're considering, so you'll know how much schooling you'll need.

Top Five Money Decisions for College Students

If college is where you're headed after graduation, now is the time to start thinking about the money decisions you'll be making. Ask your parents for help with these steps – and start practicing them while you're in high school. When it comes to money, the sooner you start doing the right thing, the better off you'll be!

- **Set up an emergency fund.** You'll need savings and reserve funds for unforeseen events, such as emergency trips home or related expenses.
- **Take charge of maintaining your financial aid.** Each year, the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) is due in June. State applications are due earlier. Your parents will be in charge of the financial aid process, but you can help. File the form whether or not you think you may be eligible – and search for scholarships at all times.
- **Budget.** Install personal finance software on your laptop to help you track expenses. (Be sure your laptop has a security password.) Work with your parents to come up with a realistic budget that covers your earnings, spending and savings now. You'll be able to use these skills in college when you need to add in tuition and room and board.
- **Protect yourself from identity theft.** Keep all paper records in a safe place and use strong passwords to keep your digital information safe.
- **Handle mistakes the right way – and right away.** When you make a mistake with your money, tell your parents immediately and ask for help.



Team Varsity Club News:

- » Watch for another FREE Teen Financial Workshop coming late fall/early winter. Some of the past workshops have been Money Hunger Games, American Credit Idol, Be a Star – Know Your Cards and Buck Dynasty.
- » If you are 16, you and a parent can have a checking account together with a debit card. At 17, you no longer need a parent on the account.
- » You can receive \$5 gift cards with a Team Varsity Club Student Account Saver Card by making a deposit into your account. Deposit \$25-\$99 and receive one teller stamp. Deposit \$100-\$199 and receive two stamps. Deposit over \$200 and receive three stamps. Once the card is full, turn it in for a gift card; then get another TVC Student Account Saver Card and do it again!

