



Build a Balanced College List

(When You Don't Have Tons of Time)

Apply to colleges that are right for you! You'll thrive in a college that matches your goals. Meet with your school counselor or other trusted adult or mentor. They can help you work through these five steps:

1

Figure Out What You Actually Like

You don't need a life plan. Just think about:

- What classes or activities don't bore you?
- What problem do you want to solve?
- What kind of place do you want to spend the next few years?

When you make an Encourage account, it asks quick questions that help you sort this out without overthinking.

2

Do Some Quick Research

There are 4,000+ colleges out there. Obviously you're not looking at all of them.

Encourage does the heavy lifting by giving you a list of colleges that match your interests, grades, and what you say you care about. You just scroll, skim, and see what fits.

3

Sort Your College List

Once you have found some options, sort them into three groups:

- **Likely:** Your grades/scores are above what they usually accept.
- **Target:** You're right in their typical range.
- **Reach:** They usually take students with higher grades/scores.

Knowing your GPA, class rank, and test scores (if you have them) makes this super quick.

4

Narrow It Down (For Real)

A solid list has:

- **At least 2 likely**
- **At least 2 targets**
- **At least 2 reaches**

Try to keep your total under 10. More than that = unnecessary stress.

5

Get Ready to Apply

Before you start applying, check:

- Deadlines
- Requirements
- Fees

Whether the school uses Common App (saves a ton of time).

Where to Start

Kickoff your college list in Encourage. It matches you with colleges and lets you save your favorites.

Download the app or sign up for an account at [encourageme.com](https://www.encourageme.com).