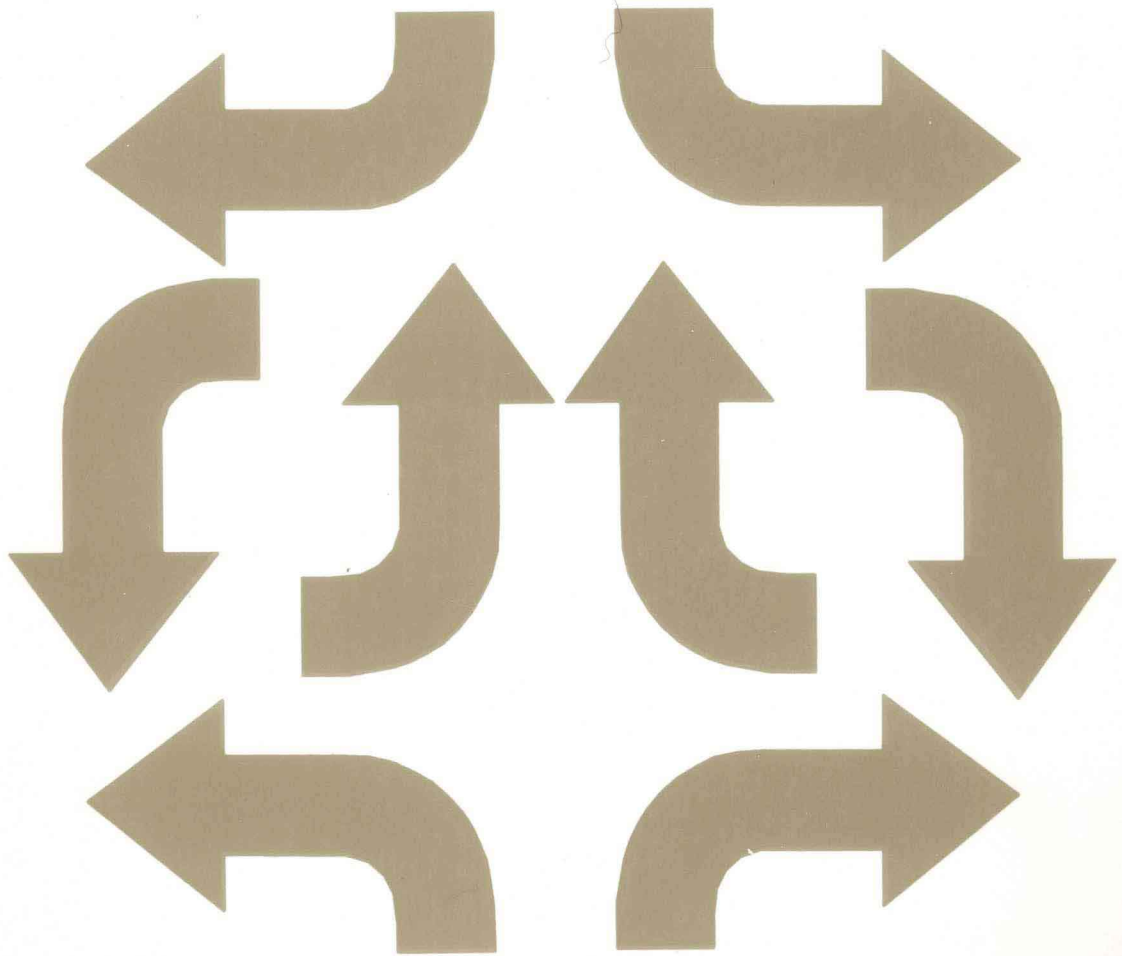


***THE SUCCESSFUL  
STUDENT'S GUIDE  
TO COLLEGE***



***JANET A. AMOS***

# **THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENT'S GUIDE TO COLLEGE**

**JANET A. AMOS**

**WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE  
COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

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## PREFACE TO THE STUDENT

The Successful Student's Guide to College is a student-friendly text and workbook that offers you a wealth of tools and strategies for college, career, and personal success. The text will help you develop your self-discipline to succeed in the first critical weeks and months of college and give you the tools to help you stay motivated until you graduate.

Here are a few quick philosophies from each chapter.

1. You won't regret doing your best and getting your college degree. You'll probably regret it if you don't. Ask for help as soon as you need it—no one makes it alone. Learn to be your own best inspiration—waiting for others to inspire you may take too long.
2. Setting goals helps you accomplish your dreams. Develop specific plans to help you accomplish your goals. Forgive yourself if you slip up—then get back on track—again and again. When facing a difficult task, act as though it's impossible to fail. Again, forgive yourself if you do.
3. Balance your life—study, work, exercise, play, laugh, and relax some every day.
4. Capitalize on how you learn best but still expand other ways of learning. If you "can't read," read more. If you "can't write," write more.
5. Use reading strategies that help you learn while you read—to do otherwise will waste your time. If you don't remember what you read, you haven't learned it.
6. Train yourself to take "study-ready" notes and use them regularly; you'll learn more, and you won't have to cram.
7. Critical thinking is essential for your mental health as well as for your future career. It will help you create, implement, and analyze new solutions for work as well as for yourself.
8. The best test taking strategies are: start your preparation early and use smart study strategies. That's how you reduce test anxiety, too.
9. The top four skills employers say they want their employees to have are: writing, making presentations, computer application skills, and human relationship skills—so don't shy away from any of them. Seize the opportunity to practice and improve them whenever you can.
10. Don't take your health for granted. Make healthy choices now. Humor can help you put stressful situations into perspective.
11. Care about your classmates. Caring is contagious. Encourage them. Be inclusive. Appreciate diversity—we all have something to contribute. Battle against discrimination and prejudice wherever you find it.
12. Choose class projects that will help you prepare for your future career. You can list significant class projects on your résumé or put them in a portfolio to market yourself for the job. And keep a notepad handy for your million dollar ideas.

Note 1: Don't cheat yourself, read the book. Put that knowledge in your head and into practice.

Note 2: Remember, overnight success usually takes years!

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# **CHAPTER 1**

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## **Preparing for Success in College**

## ◇ ◇ ◇ WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU ◇ ◇ ◇

The fact that you've opened this book and begun reading this chapter shows that you want to succeed in your education. The purpose of this chapter is to help you learn the ropes of your college and the services offered to help you succeed in your educational goals. You'll clarify the reasons you're in college and the advantages of a college education. You'll examine common obstacles to college success and strategies to conquer them. Many students just like you have used the strategies offered in this book to make the most of their education and move on to successful careers.

This chapter shares the secrets that can give you a solid start in your education.

### **In this chapter you'll explore:**

- The reasons you're in college.
- The advantages of a college education.
- The benefits of getting involved in your college community.
- Your school's resources and services.
- Transportation possibilities and backup plans.
- Ways to finance your education.
- Strategies for balancing school, work, family, and friends.

## REASONS FOR GOING TO COLLEGE

A first step to understanding your own role in your college education is to clarify why you are in college in the first place. Although most students share in common some reasons for attending college—getting a good job, for instance—others have reasons that are unique and often overlooked. Try Exercise 1-1 to make clear your reasons for being in college.

### Exercise 1-1 The reasons I'm in college

Use the following scale and indicate the degree to which each of the following reasons for attending college is important to you.

- 1 = Not at all important
- 2 = Not very important
- 3 = Important
- 4 = Very important
- 5 = Most important

#### I am in college:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. to prepare for a career.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. to improve my employability.                                    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. to learn professional skills.                                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. to get a degree.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. to become an educated person.                                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. to find a spouse/partner.                                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. to have more social opportunities.                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. to develop new friendships.                                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. to make a good salary.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. to improve my standard of living.                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. to learn more about myself.                                    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. to discover if this is the right field for me.                 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. to achieve personal fulfillment and a sense of accomplishment. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. to learn more about people from different backgrounds.         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. for the sake of learning.                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. to learn effective human relationship skills.                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. because my friends are going.                                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |



#### 4 The Successful Student's Guide to College

- |     |                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. | because my parents want me to go. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | to get promoted on my job.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | to better support my family.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Other_____                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Other_____                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Whatever your reasons are for going to college, the important thing is that you find reasons for staying. How can you use your reasons for going to college to motivate yourself to succeed in college? Another key to staying in school is finding ways to enjoy the process of becoming an educated person. This process includes learning to learn, strengthening self-management skills, developing supportive relationships with friends and family, learning about yourself, making good decisions, learning to solve problems effectively, as well as balancing school with work, fun, and relationships. This book will help you learn and apply self-management strategies to make the most of your college education.

Now that you have identified important reasons for going to college, keep focused on them to keep you focused on school and finishing your program. The next section will let you examine more closely the advantages of a college education and how that affects you. As you read about the advantages, consider their importance to both your career success and your personal satisfaction.

### THE ADVANTAGES OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

A college education offers you a multitude of advantages from improved employment opportunities to an increase in self-esteem. You will boost your employability, have more jobs to choose from, earn more money, be more likely to receive promotions, obtain necessary skills for today's workforce, be better able to support your family, and have a higher standard of living. Probably even more important is the sense of personal accomplishment you will gain from achieving your educational goals and the enrichment you will gain from socializing with a diverse population of students who share similar educational goals.

#### Improved Opportunities for Financial Security

Financial security is probably the single greatest reason that students give for attending college. The more education you have, the higher your salary. Look at the average weekly salaries for U.S. workers with various levels of education shown in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1**

<u>Gross Weekly Salaries for U.S. Workers with Various Levels of Education at age 25 and Over</u>	
\$311	—Less than a high school diploma
\$435	—High school graduate
\$512	—Some college and associate's degree
\$701	—Bachelor's degree
\$882	—Master's degree

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1996