

# Plan Ahead

## Scope and Sequence

The **Plan Ahead** course prepares ninth graders to succeed in high school and to set goals for postsecondary education and careers. It exposes them to a range of potential careers and helps them develop the skills, the attitudes, and the behaviors they will need as they embark upon their lives as young adults.

During the 2010–2011 school year, teachers throughout the San Francisco Unified School District piloted the first version of this course. Their experiences teaching **Plan Ahead** and the feedback they gave the curriculum development team informed extensive revisions to the course. In the fall of 2013 **Plan Ahead** was released in an open source version so interested districts and educational service providers can leverage this work in support of their own goals for college and career readiness and student success.

This course employs an inquiry-based approach, in which students learn by solving real-world problems that are relevant to their lives and that require the development of such key 21st century skills as critical and analytical thinking, collaboration, and the proficient use of technology. A wide range of literacy strategies are used throughout the course. Accommodations for English learners and students in special education are provided at the end of lesson steps, if appropriate; extensions and suggestions for cross-curricular integration are listed at the end of each lesson plan.

The course emphasizes the development of an individual portfolio for each student. The portfolio includes personal reflection and career-oriented documents that can be useful to the student in future years. The portfolio project can be completed even if students have limited access to computers, but ideally it should be created and stored digitally. To accommodate the various circumstances of SFUSD teachers and schools, “enhanced portfolio options” are provided in some lessons. These provide an opportunity for teachers and students with access to technology to incorporate more of it into the course without making it a requirement for those schools and students whose access is more limited.

The total number of 50-minute class periods this course is expected to take is 69.

## Course Goals

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- Describe themselves in terms of their personal characteristics, values, interests, and strengths
- Display understanding of the importance of social responsibility
- Identify career pathways that match their interests, strengths, and values
- Develop a preliminary college and career portfolio, which includes a four-year high school action plan that meets a-g requirements as well as a career options plan
- Set short- and long-term education and career goals
- Apply problem-solving strategies to a variety of relevant career and life scenarios
- Demonstrate proficiency in conducting online research
- Understand the components of successful applications and interviews in preparation for college and career
- Demonstrate financial literacy by analyzing personal spending and creating budgets

- Describe workplace etiquette, responsibilities, and ethical behavior
- Describe the purpose of code-switching and its importance in a wide range of environments and circumstances
- Use technology to research and create projects and presentations

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## UNIT 1: GETTING STARTED

### Lesson 1: Course Objectives

Number of Class Periods: 5

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- Introduction to terms related to college and career planning for the course
- Ground rules, classroom behavior, and expectations; how these correlate to life outside the classroom
- A letter home explaining the main goals of the course and expectations for students and parents/guardians; letter requires student and parent/guardian signatures

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify the characteristics of a productive learning environment
- Identify beliefs and assumptions about his or her future
- Display understanding of ground rules and expectations for the course
- Identify a personal definition of success to be included as the first component of a college and career preparatory portfolio that students will develop throughout the course and through senior year in high school

### Lesson 2: Planning and Prioritizing

Number of Class Periods: 4

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- Initiating the habit of prioritizing and planning using a weekly calendar or planner
- Reflection on key life experiences and milestones; importance of acknowledging where I have been before plotting future course
- Peer interviews on key life experiences/milestones; report to class

#### Learning Objectives

- Monitor personal ability to manage time by initiating the habit of using a weekly planner
- Evaluate his or her ability to prioritize tasks and short-term goals

- Demonstrate the ability to write a summary of an interview
- Demonstrate the ability to conduct an interview of a classmate
- Summarize key life experiences and milestones to this point

### Lesson 3: Effective Communication

Number of Class Periods: 4

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- Understanding effective communication techniques
- Exploring “active listening” as a skill to develop
- Defining *code-switching*; how “codes” for school and professional settings may differ from other codes
- Interpret nonverbal communication cues
- Learn how to make proper introductions depending on the circumstances and people involved

#### Learning Objectives

- Evaluate whether personal verbal and nonverbal communication skills are proficient for college and career
- Interpret nonverbal communication in a range of situations
- Monitor how well he or she uses active listening skills in preparation for college and career
- Compare and contrast ways of behaving and communicating depending upon the situation and people involved
- Decide how best to respond in formal versus informal situations

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## UNIT 2: CREATING A SELF-PORTRAIT

### Lesson 4: My Values and Place in the World

Number of Class Periods: 4

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- Personal characteristics
- What’s important to me; define what *meaningful* means to me
- Example biographical profiles of role models who love what they do and make the most of their values, skills, interests, and talents in their work
- Looking beyond myself; how I fit in the “big picture” of family, group/team, school, community, society, environment

- Teamwork, community service, and volunteerism
- Why colleges and employers look for people who are socially responsible/look beyond themselves

### Learning Objectives

- Describe and define himself or herself in terms of personality and values, or what is personally meaningful
- Display understanding of his or her social responsibility to the greater community (family, school, society, environment, etc.)
- Set a goal to help someone or make another meaningful contribution to the community this semester, and plan to report on it later in the course
- Deduce the relationship between personal values and a satisfying career

## Lesson 5: Matching Careers with My Interests, Skills, and Values

Number of Class Periods: 6

### Main Topics/Concepts

- Self-assessment of interests, skills, and values via questionnaires developed especially for SFUSD ninth graders
- Using results of informal self-assessment questionnaires to point towards appropriate careers to explore
- Introduce Connect.Edu and use several pertinent features

### Learning Objectives

- Describe the six general fields that categorize careers
- Describe the 16 career clusters used by many organizations to classify careers within the six general fields
- Summarize information gleaned from taking informal questionnaires regarding personal interests, skills, and values
- Evaluate ConnectEDU's Connect! website
- Determine which careers to explore based on the self-assessment questionnaires

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## UNIT 3: INVESTIGATING CAREER OPTIONS

### Lesson 6: Conducting Effective Online Research

Number of Class Periods: 2

### Main Topics/Concepts

- Analyzing the qualities of websites that alert the user to their reliability, authenticity, and accuracy
- Learning how to conduct effective online research

### Learning Objectives

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- Summarize how to tell what the goal of a website is
- Explain how to determine whether a website is expressing opinion or fact
- Distinguish between legitimate, reliable online resources and those that are not
- Display understanding of how to conduct online research effectively
- Describe how to cite sources properly

## **Lesson 7: Learning about Careers**

Number of Class Periods: 6

### **Main Topics/Concepts**

- Appropriate behavior for interacting with guest speaker
- Conducting online research about careers

### **Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate the ability to use professional courtesy and etiquette when conversing with a guest speaker
- Display understanding of effective Internet research skills while gathering information about a possible career
- Recall the best way to cite online sources for a research presentation
- Demonstrate the ability to create an effective PowerPoint presentation

## **Lesson 8: Personal Finance**

Number of Class Periods: 6

### **Main Topics/Concepts**

- What a monthly budget looks like; how to project my own budget based on my needs, wants, and lifestyle choices; how these also inform what careers might be best for me
- Basic financial planning: checking accounts, saving accounts, comparing banks
- The importance of planning ahead/saving
- How to plan and save for big purchases
- Sources to learn more about financial responsibility/consumer literacy

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify common types of expenditures in a monthly expense budget
- Create a monthly personal expense budget that illustrates what the student projects his expenses to be at the age of 25, single, and living in San Francisco
- Compare and contrast potential earnings in selected occupational field to identified needs, wants, and

lifestyle choices for monthly budget

- Display understanding of financial planning skills
- Summarize the meaning of basic personal finance terminology
- Display understanding of traditional and online methods of managing checking accounts
- Describe the purposes of and differences among check cashing businesses, banks, and credit unions

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## UNIT 4: SETTING GOALS AND MAKING PLANS

### Lesson 9: Graduating from High School

Number of Class Periods: 8

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- How education affects future options; relationship between education and income
- Other statistics related to dropout intervention
- Perceived obstacles to graduation and how to surmount them
- SFUSD graduation requirements
- A-g requirements
- Courses, curriculum, and pathways/academies offered at my school
- Programs and support at my school for college and career preparation in tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade
- Reading and interpreting transcripts/GPA
- Standardized tests: STAR and CAHSEE
- Guest speaker (optional): college/guidance counselor
- Keys to high school success (e.g., time management, priorities, self-care, taking responsibility for my own path, even in the face of peer, family, outside pressures/distractions)
- The importance of taking Advanced Placement classes/why passing AP exams is important
- How to make an action plan to reach my goals

#### Learning Objectives

- Explain the most common reasons students give for dropping out of high school
- Summarize common long-term consequences of dropping out
- Explain the relationship between truancy and dropping out
- Summarize SFUSD graduation and a-g requirements
- Interpret a high school transcript

- Decide how best to create a four-year high school action plan (portfolio component)

### Lesson 10: Options After High School

Number of Class Periods: 5

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- Levels of education and acronyms (GED, A.A., B.A., M.D., Ph.D., etc.)
- Post-high school options—two- and four-year colleges/universities, career programs, online programs, gap/public service year, employment, on-the-job training/apprenticeships (and costs), other options
- Standardized tests: PSAT, PLAN, SAT, ACT
- Suggested site visit/field trip to local college or university, and other post-high school educational institutions
- Financing college/postsecondary education: are loans worth it?
- How to use Connect! to prepare for future educational expenses (researching scholarships, loan costs, etc.)

#### Learning Objectives

- Display understanding of postsecondary options
- Define common acronyms and terminology associated with postsecondary academics
- Summarize methods of financing a college education
- Demonstrate the ability to find specific information using the Connect! website

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## UNIT 5: PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD

### Lesson 11: Skills for a Successful Life

Number of Class Periods: 7

#### Main Topics/Concepts

- How to evaluate and forge positive relationships
- How to work and solve problems under pressure
- How to resolve conflicts/respect different points of view (“how to disagree without being disagreeable”)
- “Soft skills” vs. “hard skills”; soft skills employers look for in all fields/occupations; how these skills also make for a successful high school experience, and reflect on how I have been developing these skills throughout the semester:
  - High degree of motivation, strong work ethic, dependability, and a positive attitude
  - The importance of forging positive relationships

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- Developing the ability to think on my feet and solve problems creatively
- The role of personal ethics and personal responsibility
- Handling criticism, acknowledging/learning from mistakes, apologizing when appropriate

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the characteristics of constructive friendships and other relationships
- Display understanding of the importance of taking care of yourself and managing stress effectively
- Create a mission statement for success in school, in a career, and in life
- Propose solutions to hypothetical school and work problems in challenging, authentic scenarios

## **Lesson 12: Job Applications and Interviews**

Number of Class Periods: 6

### **Main Topics/Concepts**

- The legal requirements for working (age, hours, work permit)
- What makes a successful college or job application in terms of co-curricular activities, work experience, community service, grades, etc.
- The experiences and skills necessary to build a resume (volunteer work, co-curricular activities, personal milestones, part-time and summer jobs); how I can start building my own personal profile/resume
- Letters of reference; why it's important to get to know and establish rapport with my teachers
- College resume frame: current and planned activities, experiences, skill building
- The purpose of an interview in college admissions and job seeking
- The importance of making a good impression
- Appropriate and professional dress
- Take part in a mock interview with peers (or, juniors/seniors/third parties); videotape to use as learning tools

### **Learning Objectives**

- Deduce the role of code-switching in presenting oneself in a college-going or career context
- Describe the characteristics of effective cover letters and resumes
- Summarize the purpose and components of applications and letters of reference
- Demonstrate the ability to compose a resume

## **Lesson 13: Portfolio Presentations and Course Closure**

Number of Class Periods: 6

### **Main Topics/Concepts**

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## Plan Ahead Course Overview

- Reflection on the learning and growth that occurred for student during the course

### Learning Objectives

- Develop a written portfolio introduction that summarizes learning throughout the course
- Create a visual component to enrich and augment the audience's understanding of the portfolio presentation
- Evaluate overall personal experience and performance in the course