

Standards *Alignment*

The College Project: One Hour is a single-period, paper-based lesson in which students research the real cost and outcomes of colleges using the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard. This sheet maps each activity in the student handout to the California Common Core State Standards (CA CCSS) for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics, grades 9–12. Use it in course proposals, lesson-plan documentation, sub plans, and curriculum adoption reviews.

Companion materials: the student handout (PDF and editable Word) and the classroom slide deck, free at thefinancelab.co/college-project.

Activity-by-activity alignment

HANDOUT SECTION	WHAT STUDENTS DO	CA CCSS
Common Thoughts (p. 1)	Write down prior beliefs about public, private, and community colleges, then pair up to compare and discuss.	SL.9-10.1 / SL.11-12.1 W.9-10.10 / W.11-12.10
Part 1: Build a Student, Then Guess	Define a student profile (family income band, interests, campus priorities) and estimate the annual net price of three or four schools of different types.	N-Q.2 MP.2, MP.4
Part 2: How Do You Put a Value on a College?	Build working definitions of six technical terms: net price, graduation rate, median debt, loan default rate, transfer rate, and median earnings. Read the measurement notes on how each statistic is counted.	RI.9-10.4 / RI.11-12.4 L.9-10.6 / L.11-12.6 N-Q.3
Part 3: Ana, One Student, Five Real Costs	Rank five real California schools by predicted cost, then research actual net price, graduation rate, median debt, monthly payment, and earnings on the College Scorecard and reconcile predictions with the data.	W.9-10.7 / W.11-12.7 W.9-10.8 / W.11-12.8 RI.11-12.7, RH.9-10.7 S-IC.6, MP.3
Sidebar: Read the Definition, Not Just the Number	Compare how two federal sources (College Scorecard, College Navigator) count graduation rates over different time windows, and weigh what a longer time-to-degree really costs.	N-Q.3 S-IC.6
Part 4: Your Turn	Repeat the research on self-selected schools using the College Scorecard: locate each statistic in a federal database and interpret rates, medians, and dollar amounts for a chosen major.	W.9-10.7 / W.11-12.7 W.9-10.8 / W.11-12.8 N-Q.1, S-IC.6, MP.5
Check Your Common Thoughts + Reflect	Revise initial beliefs against the evidence, then write a supported claim: which school offers the best value, argued from both the data and stated personal criteria.	W.9-10.1 / W.11-12.1 W.9-10.4 / W.11-12.4 MP.3
Part 5 + Tonight's Two Power Moves	Extend the research at home: run one school's net price calculator for a family-specific estimate and look up 4-year graduation rates on College Navigator.	W.9-10.7 / W.11-12.7 MP.5

Codes pair the grades 9–10 and 11–12 bands; the lesson is most commonly taught in grades 11–12. RH.9-10.7 applies when the lesson runs inside a history/social science or economics course.

The standards, in full

Full text of the grades 9–10 ELA standards cited above; each has a parallel grades 11–12 standard with the same focus. Math standards are the high school conceptual-category standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice.

ELA/Literacy

SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.9-10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; synthesize multiple sources on the subject.

W.9-10.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question.

W.9-10.10: Write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

RI.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including technical meanings.

RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

L.9-10.6: Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

RH.9-10.7: Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. (Literacy in History/Social Studies)

Mathematics

N-Q.1: Use units as a way to understand problems and to guide the solution of multi-step problems; choose and interpret units consistently; choose and interpret the scale in data displays.

N-Q.2: Define appropriate quantities for the purpose of descriptive modeling.

N-Q.3: Choose a level of accuracy appropriate to limitations on measurement when reporting quantities.

S-IC.6: Evaluate reports based on data.

MP.2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP.3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP.4: Model with mathematics.

MP.5: Use appropriate tools strategically.

Teaching this inside a personal finance course? Under AB 2927, California requires a standalone personal finance course by 2027–28. This lesson addresses the postsecondary education costs and student loan topics in Ed Code §51284.5; the full topic-by-topic crosswalk for The College Project is at thefinancelab.co/ab-2927.