

# Top Ten Reasons NOT to Choose a College

Deciding where to attend college is a huge decision because you will probably be spending the next four or more years there. Students often choose a college for all the wrong reasons and end up transferring to a different college or maybe even dropping out of school altogether. Don't become one of those students. Here are the top ten reasons **not** to choose a college:

**1. Your boyfriend/girlfriend is going there.** Think of all the different people you are going to meet in college. You may get to college and realize that you want to focus more on developing new relationships. You may also decide you don't want to be distracted by a relationship and want to focus more on studying and earning your degree. You should give yourself the opportunity to experience college life and enjoy your educational experience so you can reach your maximum potential.

**2. Your best friend is going there.** If you and your best friend want to go to the same college because you both like the courses and extracurricular activities that are offered, then that's great. Just don't choose a college solely because you want to go to school with your best friend. Going away to college means meeting a lot of new, unique people. If you choose a college so you can be with your friend, the two of you may spend every day with each other, and you may not take the opportunity to meet other people and make new friends. Making new friends will help you grow as a person.

**3. It's a party school.** While school should be fun at times, it is more importantly a place for you to learn new ideas and earn a degree. While enjoying your time outside of the classroom is important, you can't spend all your time at school socializing. You need to pick a school that is conducive to your educational needs.

**4. You decided in the 7th grade that you wanted to go there.** While it is important to begin thinking about college early, you shouldn't choose a college solely because you decided when you were young that is where you wanted to go. You need to open yourself up to other possibilities and give yourself other options. If, after you've visited the campus, spoken with college representatives, and found a suitable course of study, you're still convinced it's the right school for you, then you can begin making plans to attend. Just make sure you have considered a variety of possibilities before making your final decision.

**5. Your mom and dad are alumni.** Try to avoid letting your parents persuade you into going to their old alma mater if you're not interested. To be successful in school, you need to pick a college that is right for you based on a number of factors. If you share the same enthusiasm for your parents' school, still be sure to look around at other campuses to broaden your perspective. If you aren't excited by the prospect of becoming a legacy, have an open and honest conversation with your parents and offer reasonable examples of why you might be happier somewhere else. Chances are, when you work together as a family, you'll come up with a choice that makes everyone happy.

**6. It has a good football team.** Unless you want to be *on* the football team, don't choose a college just because you like the team. While school spirit is important to have, you need to base your decision on what the school can offer you in regards to academics, extracurricular activities, and so forth.

**7. Your school counselor told you to pick it.** Your school counselor can be a great resource when you are choosing a college. He or she can help guide you through the process and answer questions you might have about a college, based on valuable experience with former students. It is important for you to let your counselor know all of your interests in order to help you determine which colleges might be a fit, but you must also remember that this is your decision to make. It's best for you to take suggestions, research the schools and then make a decision on your own.

**8. The school is prestigious.** Just because a school has the reputation of being prestigious, it does not mean that you are going to like it. What if the school doesn't offer the major that you want? What if it doesn't offer the extracurricular activity in which you want to be involved? You need to consider aspects that are important to you when choosing a school instead of worrying about how whether or not it is a high-status school.

**9. The tuition is low.** Money is often a big factor when choosing a college, but keep in mind that a school that is more expensive may offer you a larger financial aid package with more gift aid (depending on your financial situation) than a school where the tuition is lower. Apply to the schools you really want to attend, including schools with high and low tuitions, and then compare their financial aid award letters in order to make a decision. Don't forget that you can also get a student loan to help you pay for tuition.

**10. It looks good in the guidebook.** Do not choose a college without visiting the campus first. While guidebooks and virtual tours will help you narrow down your choices, it is important to visit your top two or three schools in person so you can get a feel for what the campus atmosphere is like.

*When it comes to choosing a college, students can give many good and bad reasons why they picked a certain school. Instead of choosing a college for the reasons listed above, take the time to research schools and find out what they have to offer. You want a school that will get you well prepared for the future, as well as one where you feel comfortable.*