The graph shows two lines plotted from 1976 to 2000, with the y-axis ranging from 0% to 90%.

Percent of high school seniors expecting to obtain a four-year degree or more. (upper line, rising from about 50% to about 78%)

Percent of 25 to 34 year-old high school graduates with a bachelor's degree or more. (lower line, around 30%)

College Expectations Vs Achievement

Source: Monitoring the future 1976-2000. Current population survey 1976-2000. Graphic: the Washington Post, August 5, 2006.

Do not go to college because it's expected of you. You might end up in the 50% of all students who don't complete their degree. All statistics show that the more education you have, the more choices you have, the more money you are likely to make and the less likely you are to be unemployed.

What does that mean to you? You need to go to college because you believe you want a great education and/or because you want a career that requires it. Most careers do NOT require a 4 year degree: 63% of the jobs in 2010 will require more than a high school diploma but less than a 4-year degree.

What will you do after high school if you are not sure that college is for you?

WORK FULL TIME OR PART TIME

TRAVEL

Transitions Abroad web site http://www.transitionsabroad.com/index.shtml

"Voluntourism" on the rise What is voluntourism? In the broadest sense, **Voluntourism** represents voluntary service experiences that include travel to a destination in order to realize one's service intentions.

In a more refined and balanced approach, **Volun-Tourism** is the integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination with the traditional elements of travel and tourism - arts, culture, geography, history, and recreation - while in the destination.

GAP YEAR
Consider taking a gap year to help you think about what you really want to do. Gap Years are common in Britain and many organizations have developed to help support students with that type of interest. You may decide to go to work (click here to find a job), pursue your passion, travel or do community service (see below). Students who take advantage of a Gap Year frequently find that they mature, define their interests, and pursue their next step with more determination than if they hadn't had the opportunity to explore their options. Students who do decide to go to college after a gap year are more mature and more successful.

Some ideas are listed here:
http://www.collegeplanningsimplified.com/GapYear.html

Interim Programs

http://www.gapyear.com/

http://www.gapadvice.org/index.php/young-people/consider-it/what-is-a-gap-year

http://www.backdoorjobs.com/

CoolWorks.com, for career minded adventurers.

http://leapnow.org/

UnCollege. This company was founded in 2010 by Dale Stephens, who is a Thiel Fellow and elementary school dropout. UnCollege provides resources that assist students with designing their own educational paths and feature forums, workshops and more.

University of the People. Founded in 2009, this is the world's first tuition-free online academic institution. UoPeople offers Associate and Bachelor degree programs in Business Administration and Computer Science. They have already partnered with leading companies (such as HP) and schools (such as Yale). As of today, students from more than 130 countries have been accepted.

LONG TERM COMMUNITY SERVICE

Many organizations are looking for long term volunteers. It's a great opportunity to travel, to discover your interests and to develop skills. Try City Year (some college required), SCA (Student Conservation Association) for environmental work (http://www.sca-inc.org/), and others.

- USA Freedom Corps
- Corporation for National and Community Service
- AmeriCorps
- SERVEnet
- Idealist.org

TECHNICAL TRAINING
Consider taking classes locally to get a technical skill that will allow you to earn more pay and will make you eligible for advancement. Try the following local choices:

International Yacht Restoration School
http://www.iyrs.edu/

New England Institute of Technology
www.neit.edu/

Lincoln Technical Institute
http://www.lincolnedu.com/schools/lincoln-technical-institute