Start Here: Who Are You?

By Jean Fan

Many of you folks have been actively following UnCollege since it started in 2011, but some of you are relatively new to the site.

There are many great resources and blog pieces here. It can be, however, a hassle to go through all of them, so I've compiled a sort of site map to help you navigate.

In this piece, there are collections of links for different types of readers — a good place to get started if you want to think more critically about your education. Below, I've first given a brief summary of UnCollege and our beliefs.

What's wrong with college?

Today, college is often pushed as the path to success (Read: "[The Reasoning Behind Our College-Centric Culture](#)").

Unfortunately, that's just not true. The New York Times calls the population of recent college graduates "[Generation Limbo](#)," because 44% of them under the age of 25 are [unemployed or hold jobs that don't require a degree](#). They hold, on average, [$27,000](#) in student debt.

Going to university is often expensive and ineffective. College is an option, but that's all it is — just one option.

Further Reading

[Textbook Turmoil: The Hidden Costs of College](#) by Dale Stephens

[The Economics of Student Loans](#) by Jean Fan

What is UnCollege?

UnCollege is an organization challenging the notion that college is the only path to success. We provide resources that help people curate and take control of their education, and we run Gap Year programs that help young people become more self-directed.

Our goal is not to convince everyone to drop out of school. Instead, we want to give people the agency to make good decisions about their education.

Further Reading

[The UnCollege Manifesto](#) by Dale Stephens

[Hacking Your Education](#) by Dale Stephens

Who are we?

We're a kick-ass team of hackademics based in San Francisco, California (Read: "[Are You a Hackademic?](#)"). Each of us has a [very different path and story](#). All of us value education, especially

the self-directed kind.

Further Reading

[Our Core Values](#)

[Our Kick-Ass Housing Team](#)

Who are you?

Our audience of hackademics is very diverse. We have readers of all different ages, interests, and enrollment statuses. Here are some archetypal members of the UnCollege community, and resources for each.

I'm a dropout. How do I succeed without going to university?

Know that dropping out of school does not mean dropping out of learning. Be able to eloquently explain your non-traditional path — in person and on paper. Find a community of people that supports and understands you.

Further Reading

[Create Your Own Curriculum with Better Than College](#) by Katrina Desopo

[How Do I Explain to Others That I'm Not Going to College?](#) by Alex Clifford

[People Told Me I Was Making a Huge Mistake](#) by John Gallagher

[How to Write a Traditional Resume Without Traditional Credentials](#) by Tiffany Mikell

I'm considering dropping out of school. Am I sure I want to do this?

Consider the opportunity cost of school. Learn how to curate your own education. Be honest with yourself about how much you actually learn inside of a classroom. Ask yourself what, why and how you want to learn. Does school fulfill those desires?

Further Reading

[Should You Drop Out of School? A Dropout's Perspective](#) by Alex Berger

[How Dropping Out Can Save Your Life](#) by Ryan Holiday

[Everything I Learned Out of School](#) by Rainesford Alexandra

[Decentralizing Education: How Startups Are Dismantling University](#) by Dale Stephens

I'm on a gap year or am considering one. Why should I do it, and what should I do?

Realize that it is low-risk and high-reward. Understand that [taking time off from school and time on in real life](#) is increasingly socially acceptable. Explore your options. See what others have done before you. Ask yourself, "What would I do with a year of free time?"

Further Reading

[Introducing Our Inaugural Gap Year Fellows](#)

[Traveling the World for 9 Months on Under $10,000](#) by Wilson Cusack

[How Not Getting Into College Changed My Life](#) by Robert Shin

[Reasons Not to Take a Gap Year (And Why You're Wrong)](#) by Jean Fan

[Why I Wish I Took a Gap Year Before Starting College](#) by Ben Kim

I'm in school, and planning on staying there. What should I be aware of?

Understand that the education system is flawed, and read up on the ongoing debate surrounding it. Make the most of your time in school, but consider its opportunity cost. Realize that [you can be a hackademic](#), regardless of your enrollment.

Further Reading

[The Cost of Being a Perfect Student](#) by Alex Clifford

[Don't Let College Keep You From Creating Opportunity](#) by Kathryn Cannon

[Forced to Attend College? Don't Wait Until Graduation to Start Living](#) by Vincent Nguyen

[What Schools Don't Teach: Leadership](#) by Jean Fan

I'm just passionate about education! How can I become a better learner?

Be deliberate about your learning. Discover the science behind it. Improve your meta-learning skills. Realize the difference between learning and being taught. Find opportunities for growth everywhere.

Further Reading

[The Art of Learning, With David Mansaray](#) by Dale Stephens

[How to Be an Effective Learner](#) by Dale Stephens

[Too Much Teaching, Too Little Learning](#) by Jean Fan

[How to Learn Anything](#) by Dale Stephens

I'm feeling lost. Does anyone else feel this way?

Yes. We all do.

Further Reading

[Stop Trying to Figure Out Your Future](#) by Jay Cross

[UnCertainty: As a Hackademic, Get Used to It](#) by Jean Fan

[How to Answer: What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?](#) Vincent Nguyen