

# Arkansas NEXT

a guide to life after high school

## ARKANSAS NEXT: PROS

FOR THOSE WANTING  
TO FAST-TRACK THEIR  
FUTURE AND ENTER THE  
WORKFORCE QUICKLY  
IN ARKANSAS TRADES

## ARKANSAS' NEXT INFLUENCE

MEET THE **12 YOUNG  
ENTREPRENEURS AND  
CREATIVES** IN ARKANSAS  
MAKING THEIR MARK IN  
THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

## NOAH WASHINGTON

CHANGING THE GAME OF  
SPORTS MEDIA WITH HIS  
YOUTUBE CHANNEL

## THE COLLEGE COUNTDOWN CHECKLIST

FOLLOW ALONG DURING  
YOUR HIGH SCHOOL  
JOURNEY AND CHECK OFF  
YOUR TO-DOS LEADING UP  
TO GRADUATION AS YOU GO!

2025-2026 | FREE

**ABPG**  
ARKANSAS BUSINESS  
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2025—2026

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

*Created for Teachers & Counselors*

## Countdown to GRADUATION

On **pages 22-23**, there is a guide for middle and high school students to learn what needs to be checked off their “to-do” list by the end of every school year, leading up to high school graduation.

### WHAT YOU’LL NEED:

Arkansas Next magazine  
1 piece of paper per student  
1 pencil per student

Students will spend 10 minutes reading through the list and answering the following questions on a separate piece of paper. After the 10 minutes are up, turn to your neighbor(s) or break up into groups and discuss their answers to the following questions for another 10 minutes.

1. Based on this list, what have you already completed?
2. If you haven’t completed anything yet, what is something you think needs to be done soon?
3. Does anything on this list surprise you?
4. Do you plan on going to college? If so, where? If not, what do you want to do after graduation?

Once the discussion wraps up, the teacher may ask a few students to share what they discussed with their neighbor(s). Give an opportunity for other students to pitch in by raising their hands if they want to share something, as well.



Life After High School:

## KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

\*In-class activity **OR** homework

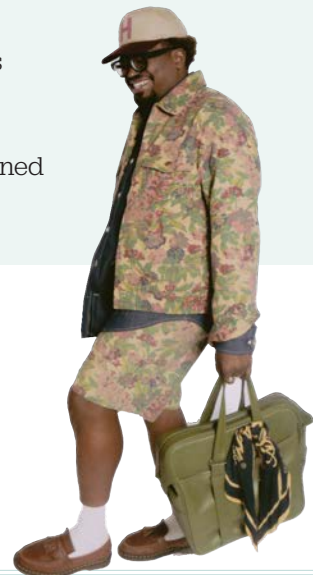
*Did you know that there are multiple options out there for you? Whether you can’t wait to enter the workforce after high school graduation, you plan on going to a four-year university or decide to pursue medical school – there are options out there for everyone! Check out **pages 28-29** to discover what pathway best suits you!*

### This is an individual student assignment.

Students will put together a 5-part slideshow using Canva, Google Slides or PowerPoint based on the future they want to invest in. **Answer the following questions when creating the slideshow:**

1. What pathway do you want to follow?
2. Why did you choose this option?
3. What kind of careers do you see yourself pursuing with this option in mind? How much do these jobs make on average in Arkansas?
4. Why should others consider this pathway, as well?
5. What is something new you learned about this option/pathway?

Spend 20 minutes creating this slideshow. Once the 20 minutes are complete, students will present to their peers.



## Let's Discuss!

### The **SCARY** Truth About **STUDENT LOANS**

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

Arkansas Next magazine

Students will be standing



Go to **page 41** and analyze the data laid out. Have the students stand up and move to the center of the room. **Once there, ask them to choose a side based on the following topic:**

**RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM: AGAINST STUDENT LOANS**

**LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM: FOR STUDENT LOANS**

Have volunteers on each side discuss why they chose their side of the room. This is not a debate, simply ask them to share their opinions.

Once done, ask the students to write a 150-word (half-page) paper on whether they are for or against student loans. **Turn in for a grade or extra credit.**

### WORKING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL **VS.** GOING TO COLLEGE

#### PROS & CONS

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

Arkansas Next magazine

Students will be standing

Go to **page 28** and read about the quickest ways to enter the workforce, and the longest ways to enter the workforce. Have the students stand up and move to the center of the room. **Once there, ask them to choose a side based on the following topic:**

**RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM: NOT INTERESTED IN ENTERING THE WORKFORCE RIGHT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

**LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM: INTERESTED IN ENTERING THE WORKFORCE RIGHT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Have volunteers on each side discuss why they chose their side of the room. This is not a debate, simply ask them to share their opinions on why they are eager to enter the workforce and why others are not.

Once done, ask the students to write a 150-word (half-page) paper on whether they are for or against student loans. **Turn in for a grade or extra credit.**



## Let's Discuss!

### WANNA GO PRO?

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

Arkansas Next magazine  
Students will be standing



Go to **page 36** and read about the statistics of high school athletes going pro. After, have the students stand up and move to the center of the room. **Once there, ask them to choose a side based on the following topic:**

**RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM:**

**GOING "PRO" IS REALISTIC**

**LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM:**

**GOING "PRO" IS NOT REALISTIC**



Have volunteers on each side discuss why they chose their side of the room. This is not a debate, simply ask them to share their opinions on why they feel going pro IS or IS NOT realistic.

Once done, ask the students to write a 150-word (half-page) paper on what future students can do to make their dreams of playing professional sports a dream come true. **Turn in for a grade or extra credit.**

### INFLUENCERS

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

Arkansas Next magazine  
Students will be standing



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIERRA ROBINSON

Go to **page 46** and read about the Arkansas young adults turning their dreams into reality with influencing online or in their community. After, have the students stand up and move to the center of the room. **Once there, ask them to choose a side based on the following topic:**

**RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROOM:**

**INFLUENCING IS A STABLE CAREER**

**LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM:**

**INFLUENCING IS NOT A STABLE CAREER**

Have volunteers on each side discuss why they chose their side of the room. This is not a debate; simply ask them to share why they feel influencing IS or IS NOT realistic.

Once done, ask the students to write a 150-word (half-page) paper on who their favorite influencers are and why. **Challenge them to think of people making a difference in the world, not people just selling merchandise online. Turn in for a grade or extra credit.**



Cover Story Project!

# ARKANSAS **NEXT** INFLUENCE

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Arkansas Next magazine  
Canva, Google Slides or other  
presentation template



Starting on **page 46**, have the students look through the real-life Arkansas young professionals who are using social media to kick-start their careers.

Ask students to research their dream job. Have them create a 5-slide presentation on their dream job, and if this is something they could make an online presence out of. Whether it's making videos of what they do, taking pictures and posting about it or showing others how to do what they want to do. **Have them answer the following questions:**



1. What would creating an online presence do for your future career?
2. Why is influencing important to you? Why not?
3. Who else is doing this in a similar career?
4. How much would you make in this career?  
(Use [careeronestop.com](https://www.careeronestop.com) or [bls.gov](https://www.bls.gov) to find salaries)
5. Why do you want to pursue this career?



# ENVISION YOUR FUTURE

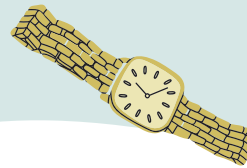
## WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Arkansas Next Magazine  
1 pen per student  
1 piece of paper per student  
A desktop, laptop or cell phone that can access Google Slides/Canva

Discover our quiz in the magazine on **pages 62-63**. Students should take out a pen and take the quiz to figure out how much they need to earn in their career to live the life they've always dreamed of!

Once students are done with the quiz, they will put together a short presentation on how much they need to earn, and showcase three different careers they should consider that make enough money to make this dream a reality.

**Students can create a slideshow or simply write out their presentation and share it with the class.**



### Real-Life Arkansas

Don't know how much money you will need to earn in the future? Don't know which occupation to choose? No problem! Below are three options to help you select the right career for your spending needs.

#### 1 Reality Check

Get a Reality Check. You will buy "stuff" for a sample month. We total it up for a year. Then we help you find careers that pay what you need. Let's start.

#### 2 Future Salary

Already know how much money you want to earn? Great! Enter the amount below and get information on which occupations pay that much.

#### 3 Occupation Direct

Already know which occupation you want to pursue? Click here to find how much you can buy with your chosen occupation.

## Extra Credit

Scan the QR code on page 45 that takes you to the state's in-depth **"Real Life Arkansas"** lifestyle calculator. Follow the steps to complete this activity. You'll choose the kind of home you want to live in, the type of car you want to drive and the experiences you want to have monthly as an adult living in the real world. Compare your results with those above.

Add one to two paragraphs at the end of your previous notes explaining your reaction to the preview of expenses it predicts for you.



# Countdown *to* GRADUATION

**WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

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1 pencil per student



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Once the discussion wraps up, the teacher may ask a few students to share what they discussed with their neighbor(s). Give an opportunity for other students to pitch in by raising their hands if they want to share something, as well.



# Arkansas Next PROS

**CLASSROOM COMPANION**  
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES & HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PRESENTATION

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Arkansas Next magazine
- 2 pieces of paper
- 1 pencil/pen per student

Starting on page 77, students will discover 12 profiles of real young professionals in Arkansas who are actively living their dream jobs in trade careers.

Split students into groups of two or three, and assign each group one profile story to read. Based on what they read, have each group present to the class what they learned about this career.

During their presentation, students should answer the following questions:



1. What is this young professional's job?

4. What kind of person would be good at this job?

2. What responsibilities does this person have at their job?

5. What did they learn from this story?

3. How much does this career make on average?

After the groups have presented their profiles, students should write down a 150-word (half-page) paper on what career interested them the most that was presented in class. Now, let them vote...

## COOLEST JOB AWARD

*LET YOUR STUDENTS VOTE!*

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Arkansas Next magazine

Allow the students to vote on which career presented from the profile presentations sounds the most interesting. Allow discussion amongst the class, but only one person speaks at a time. For the students who presented on the career that wins, give a 5-point extra credit (or any reward you'd like!)



# Arkansas Next PROS

**CLASSROOM COMPANION**  
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES & HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

## 50 JOBS THAT PAY \$100K (OR MORE!)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Arkansas Next magazine  
Computer

Give your students time to read **pages 98-99**. When they're done, ask them to answer these questions:

1. Which career sticks out to you the most?
2. Which one surprised you the most?

Now, have the students split into groups of 3 and research a career that sticks out to them the most. After 20 minutes, have them share what they learned about the career and why they would be interested in pursuing it after high school.



## COOL THINGS MANUFACTURED IN ARKANSAS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

Arkansas Next magazine

Give your students time to read **pages 106-107**. When they're done, ask them to answer these questions:

1. What did you not know what manufactured in Arkansas?
2. What did you already know what made here?

Now, have the students split into groups of 3 and research a product that sticks out to them the most. After 20 minutes, have them share what they learned about the product, how it's made and why it's made in Arkansas.

