



# Why Not Us?

## Viewing Guide





# Why Not Us?

In a joint partnership, the [College Board](#) and [Roadtrip Nation](#) brought together four first-generation college students from different parts of the country. Jenny, Jasmine, Felipe, and Johnathan explore what it means to be a first-generation college student in the one-hour documentary, *Why Not Us?*

The road-trippers travel throughout the United States chatting with diverse leaders, many of whom were also the first in their families to receive a college degree. These insightful conversations, shared experiences, and life lessons learned make up the First-Gen Roadtrip.

Whether or not you're new to Roadtrip Nation, or have ever explored the many resources available on the College Board's website, this guide is a great way to connect your first-generation students to important college and career themes and resources.

The activities and resources that follow are designed to be completed by students along with their mentors, teachers, or family members in order to spark meaningful conversations about students' future aspirations and how to achieve them.



## How to use the *Why Not Us?* Viewing Guide

The *Why Not Us?* Viewing Guide is designed to be used during and after viewing the *Why Not Us?* documentary. Here are a few ideas on how to use the guide with your youth.



### **WATCH.**

- This Viewing Guide should be filled in after watching the documentary as a whole; however, the documentary may be split into two viewings if needed.
- Total running time: 57 minutes



### **TALK.**

- Provide a Viewing Guide to each student before screening the documentary. After students have watched, or as they watch, have them complete the TALK section for several or all discussion topics. You may want to choose discussion topics that are relevant to your students, allow students to choose one or more topics, or assign all topics.
- Students should write down their thoughts first, then share through conversation. Conversations can take place immediately after viewing or during several small sessions.
- Students can discuss their thoughts in small groups, with adult mentors, or with family members. Encourage students to discuss any insights, ideas, or questions that they have during the viewing of the documentary or during your conversation.



### **CONNECT.**

- Direct students to do some research using the College Board's resource links provided in each discussion. These links will introduce them to many useful academic, college, career, and financial planning resources.
- Encourage students to visit [roadtripnation.com](http://roadtripnation.com) for more leader interviews and interactive tools.
- Students will need access to computers and the Internet to view College Board and Roadtrip Nation resources.
- Students can CONNECT during class time or at home.
- Invite students to share new information they discover as they connect to new resources.



### **AFTERTHOUGHTS.**

- After discussions and their research using the College Board's website links, have students write down or share their AFTERTHOUGHTS.
- AFTERTHOUGHTS should be completed at the end of each discussion section.

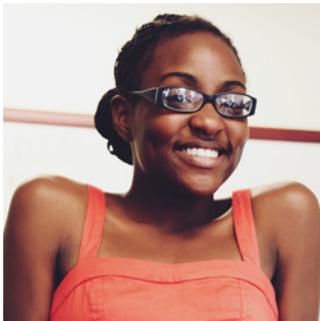
## Meet the Road-Trippers



### **Johnathan, 20**

Sophomore  
University of Central Florida

Johnathan was being pressured to study premed but has decided to pursue marketing instead. He struggles with going against the advice of his family and friends.



### **Jasmine, 20**

Junior  
University of South Carolina

Jasmine has always put others before herself. As she branches outside her comfort zone, she's also learning to make herself a priority. She is excited to pursue her degree in education and one day become a middle school teacher.



### **Felipe, 24**

Recent Graduate  
University of California, Irvine

Felipe is looking for ways to mentor young people and make a difference in his own community. He feels he has a great responsibility to make the most of his education and hopes to inspire other young people to go to college.



### **Jenny, 19**

Freshman  
Mississippi State University

Jenny has weathered family struggles to get to college. Now that she's pursuing her education, she's torn between her love of art and her desire to find a job after she graduates.

## Discussion 1: *Why Not Us?*

 WATCH.



“Being the first in your family, not just going to college but completing college, I absolutely believe you’re changing not just your lives but the lives of your children and your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren. You’re changing generations of lives in a profound way that may be hard for you to comprehend now.”

— Arne Duncan

United States Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education

**TALK.**

As the road-trippers begin their journey, they come to the realization that they are experiencing a great opportunity, and they are beginning to find their own voice. It brings up the question, “Why us?”

1. What inspires you to be the first in your family to go to college?

2. What dream, talent, personal story, or interest moves you forward?

3. As a first-generation college student, what kind of impact can you have on your family now and in the future?



“All of us come to a crossroad ... something will change your perspective.”

— **Travis Simons**  
Pastor

 **CONNECT.**

Use the links below to begin exploring different perspectives and possibilities.

### College Board Resource Links

**Big Future**

Start exploring your future.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

**You Can Go**

Find out why young people thought they couldn't go to college, and how they moved past their doubts.

[youcango.collegeboard.org](http://youcango.collegeboard.org)

**Know Yourself**

Get to know yourself and your dreams for your future.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself)

**Why Go?**

Check out the many reasons you should go to college.

[youcango.collegeboard.org/why-go](http://youcango.collegeboard.org/why-go)

**Roadtrip Nation**

Explore the Interview Archive to discover leaders who built lives doing what they love.

[roadtripnation.com](http://roadtripnation.com)

 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: First-Generation Perspective**

How would you complete this phrase?

My personal “perspective” of who I am as a first-generation college student is

## Discussion 2: Finding My Own Voice

 WATCH.



**“What one should get from college is learning how to think and learning how to think independently.”**

— **Randall Stephenson**  
Chairman & CEO  
AT&T

**TALK.**

Stepping out on your own is never easy, but there are small steps you can take to start becoming independent. By beginning the conversation with people you trust, getting informed, and exploring your options, you can begin the journey toward your own future and independence.

1. What obstacles do you face in preparing to go to college?

2. How can you find your independence?

3. How can an extracurricular opportunity help you find your own voice?



“The greatest strength you have is your convictions and your core purpose about what you want to do and how you want to live and define your life. And you shouldn’t allow anyone to tell you your dreams can’t come true.”

— **Howard Schultz**  
Chairman & CEO  
Starbucks

 **CONNECT.**

Use the links below to help you begin gathering information about the different opportunities that are available outside of school.

### College Board Resource Links

**See Your Opportunities Grow**

Click through to find the many options college opens up for your future.

[youcango.collegeboard.org/see-your-opportunities-grow](http://youcango.collegeboard.org/see-your-opportunities-grow)

**Outside the Classroom**

How to explore your interests outside the classroom.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-classroom](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-classroom)

**College: What It's All About and Why It Matters**

College matters to your future. Check out why.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/college-what-its-all-about-and-why-it-matters](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/college-what-its-all-about-and-why-it-matters)

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 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: Challenges, Opportunity, and Independence**

How can being true to yourself help you find your own voice and help you declare your independence?

## Discussion 3: Moving Forward

 WATCH.



**“I think success has a lot to do with finding something you love and putting everything you have into it. If you do that, you’re going to end up being really good at it because you put so much time and energy into it and you’re gonna get joy from doing it.”**

— **John Legend**  
Singer, Songwriter, and Actor

**TALK.**

As the road-trippers interview the different first-generation leaders, they discover that each leader had dreams and aspirations beyond who they were. As you begin to plan for your future, you will begin to explore what makes you happy. When you start to think about what you want to do with the rest of your life, you begin to determine your own aspirations.

1. What do you love to do in your free time?

2. What career aspirations do you have for the future?

3. How can your aspirations help you decide what college you should attend?



“I’m gonna be different, I’m gonna change. It’s not going to happen all at once, but just keep working and keep growing and keep trying and don’t give up.”

— **Jasmine**  
First-Gen Road-Trippler

 **CONNECT.**

Use the links below to help you begin gathering information about the different opportunities that are available outside of school.

### College Board Resource Links

**Your Future**

Answer 10 questions to discover your future.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/answer-10-questions-and-discover-your-future](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/answer-10-questions-and-discover-your-future)

**Exploring Careers Step-by-Step**

Discover how to narrow the career search.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/careers/exploring-careers-step-by-step](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/careers/exploring-careers-step-by-step)

**The College Major: What It Is and How to Choose One**

How to go about making your choice.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/college-majors/the-college-major-what-it-is-and-how-to-choose-one](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/college-majors/the-college-major-what-it-is-and-how-to-choose-one)

**Explore Careers**

Find possible college majors and potential careers.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers)

**College Majors**

All the information you need on college majors.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/college-majors](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/college-majors)

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 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: Aspirations, Careers, and College Majors**

How can having aspirations and dreams of a career help you determine what would be the best college major for you to pursue?

## Discussion 4: Supporting a Dream

 WATCH.



**“I am the rock for everybody, so when people have a problem, they come to me. When you have a situation, you come to me. When you don’t want to talk to somebody else, you come to me, and when you have a bill due, you come to me. But when I have a problem, who do I go to?”**

— Jasmine  
First-Gen Road-Tripper

**TALK.**

Many successful people have had mentors. Having someone who believes in you, who supports your goals and to whom you can turn when you need help, is essential.

1. How can you move out of your comfort zone and accept help from people outside of your circle of family and friends?

2. What makes a good mentor and how do you find one?



“You just push yourself and you listen to people who tell you, ‘You are great. You will be someone someday. You’re gonna make a great leader. You will make a difference in someone’s life.’ Listen to those people.”

— **Nikki Cooley**  
Co-Executive Director  
Fifth World Discoveries

 **CONNECT.**

Use the links below to find out how to build a support system — and get the information that can get you started on your future plans.

### College Board Resource Links

**Building a Support Network**

Get tips on role models and mentors.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-support-network](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-support-network)

**Working with Your High School Counselor for College Success**

Your counselor is your friend!

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success)

**The Scoop: What's a Mentor and How Do I Get One?**

How to find and secure a mentor.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/the-scoop-whats-a-mentor-and-how-do-i-get-one](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/the-scoop-whats-a-mentor-and-how-do-i-get-one)

**Roadtrip Nation**

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[roadtripnation.com](http://roadtripnation.com)

 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: Creating a Support System**

Make a list of people who you think will be willing to mentor you and can become a part of your support system.

## Discussion 5: Next Step — A College for Me

### WATCH.



**“Your only job in life is to stay on track because you’re destined to do great things. So regardless of what people are throwing at you and what barriers they put in your track, don’t worry about it because nobody can change your track, only you can.”**

— Anna Maria Chávez  
Chief Executive Officer  
Girl Scouts of the USA

**TALK.**

Applying to college, meeting deadlines, and having your high school academic plan in order may seem like impossible tasks. However, there are many support systems and online resources that can help you get it all done on time. With these tools, you can find a college that fits who you are, your future dreams, and your unique aspirations.

1. Who in your school can help you review your academic plan to ensure that you're on track and on target for graduation?

2. What are the graduation requirements at your school?

3. Do you have someone who can help you with your college applications?



“There was no excuse that was worthy of listening to because I never accepted the notion that I was unable to do anything.”

— **William Allen Young**  
Actor

 **CONNECT.**

Go to the College Board’s website, complete the online questions, and get a free “Road to College” review sheet: [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/make-a-plan](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/make-a-plan)

Use the links below to get more information on how to get organized with your high school academic plan and apply to college.

### College Board Resource Links

**Your High School Record**

How to stay on track and make the most of high school.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record)

**5 Things You Need to Know About College Admission**

The key facts about getting into college.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-college-admission](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-college-admission)

**Applying 101**

All your questions about applying to college answered here.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying)

**How to Finalize Your College List**

How to narrow your choices to what fits you best.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/how-to-finalize-your-college-list-admissions-college-application](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/how-to-finalize-your-college-list-admissions-college-application)

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 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: My Plan and College Applications**

How are you preparing to meet your graduation requirements?

## Discussion 6: Where's the \$\$\$?

 WATCH.



**“Regardless of what struggle you’re going through, I can validate that because I’m not the only one — you’re not the only one, I’m not the only one. We’re all connected in this. And actually, I like it, I like the struggle, because I think I’m worthy of that struggle.”**

— Vienna Mbagaya  
Founder  
The Invisible Neighbors

**TALK.**

Many people feel that they can't go to college because it is too expensive. They think they can't afford it. But many others feel that college is an investment in their future that will pay for itself.

Finding the money for college takes financial planning and looking into grants, scholarships, and loans. For many students, it can be a balancing act between school, part-time work, and family obligations.

1. How can a college education be compared to a "good investment"?

2. What can you do if your family cannot afford to help you pay for college?

3. How will all of this be a "balancing act" between work, school, and family?



"I need to stop putting so much pressure on myself and trying to make what I think is everyone's expectations my priority. I need to start thinking about myself."

— **Johnathan**  
First-Gen Road-Tripper

 **CONNECT.**

Use the links below to find out about college financial planning, scholarships, and the many other options available for financing your college education.

## College Board Resource Links

### 7 Things You Need to Know About Financial Aid

An introduction to financial aid and how it can help you.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/7-things-you-need-to-know-about-financial-aid](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/7-things-you-need-to-know-about-financial-aid)

### The Basics on Grants and Scholarships

Learn about the differences between grants and scholarships.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/the-basics-on-grants-and-scholarships](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/the-basics-on-grants-and-scholarships)

### 3 Steps to Getting Financial Aid

Important dates, forms, and advice on getting financial aid.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid/3-steps-to-getting-financial-aid](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid/3-steps-to-getting-financial-aid)

### Understanding College Costs

Learn how your choices affect the cost of college.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs)

### Grants and Scholarships

An overview of grants and scholarships.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-scholarships](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-scholarships)

### Financial Aid Can Help You Afford College

How financial aid can make your college dream come true.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-can-help-you-afford-college](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-can-help-you-afford-college)

### Financial Aid Checklist

Check off each financial aid requirement as you go through the process.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-checklist](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-checklist)

### College Savings Calculator

Do the math on paying for college.

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/college-savings-calculator](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/college-savings-calculator)

### Roadtrip Nation

Explore the Interview Archive to discover leaders who built lives doing what they love.

[roadtripnation.com](https://roadtripnation.com)

 **AFTERTHOUGHTS: Financial Planning, Grants, and Scholarships**

1. What is the difference between a grant, a scholarship, and a loan?

2. Do you have a talent or skill that can get you a college scholarship?