

What's Next?

A Journal for Life After High School



For the grad who's tired of hearing
"So, what's next?"

Dear Graduate,

Congratulations — you did it!

You crossed the finish line,
flipped the tassel, and maybe tossed
your cap into the air (or maybe you just wanted
to go home and eat snacks — no judgment).

Here you are, holding this journal, wondering:

What's next?

Here's the truth:

You don't need to have all the answers right
now.

You don't need to please everyone who
keeps asking.

You do get to figure things out in your own way,
at your own pace.

This journal is your space —
to dream, plan, laugh, vent, and write it
all down.

Whether you're off to college,
starting a job, taking a gap year, or still deciding,
you can use this to help shape your next chapter.

There's no wrong way to use these pages.

**Write a little, write a lot, doodle, make lists,
scribble out your thoughts — it's all yours.**

**Here's to the road ahead,
adventures waiting for you,
and the person you're becoming.**

You've got this.

**With excitement,
A friend who believes in you**

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Chapter 1

High School Reflections

Before we rush ahead to the future,
let's take a moment to look back.

These questions will help you reflect
on what shaped you, what you learned,
and what you want to carry forward (or leave behind).

What are my three favorite memories
from high school?

Who were the people who made
the biggest impact on me
— and why?

Teachers, parents, friends?

What was the hardest challenge I
year me one piece of advice, what would it be?

What do I not want to bring with me
into the next chapter?

What surprised me most about
myself over the past few years?

Who do I want to thank or appreciate
before I move on?

Will my dog miss me?





Chapter 2

The Big Questions

You've probably been asked a million times:
"So, what are you doing next?"

Take a breath - this section is for you to sort through the big (and small) questions about where you're headed and how you feel about it.

What's my current plan after graduation?
(Even if it's just "figure it out later.")

Am I heading to college, a trade program, a job, the military, a gap year, or something else?

What excites me most about what's ahead?

What scares me the most about this next step?



Am I doing this because I want to,
because others expect it?

What are the biggest unknowns I wish I had answers to?

Who can I talk to if I need advice
or help figuring things out?

What's something I secretly hope for in my future,
even if I'm not sure how to get there?

If I could design my ideal next year,
what would it look like?

What do I need to remind myself when
I start doubting my path?





A large, cream-colored rectangular area with a vertical red line on the left side, serving as a writing space. The area contains 12 horizontal red lines, creating 11 rows for writing. The left edge of the cream area is irregular and torn, suggesting it is a piece of paper pulled from a stack.

Chapter 3

Mapping My Next Steps

No matter where you're headed — school, work, travel, or something unique — this section helps you map it out in your own way.

What's my main plan for the next 6-12 months?

What are my side dreams or projects?

(Garage band, YouTube channel, gaming stream, small business, creative hobby...)



How can I balance what I need to do
with what I want to do?

What's one small step I can take this month
to move toward one of my goals?

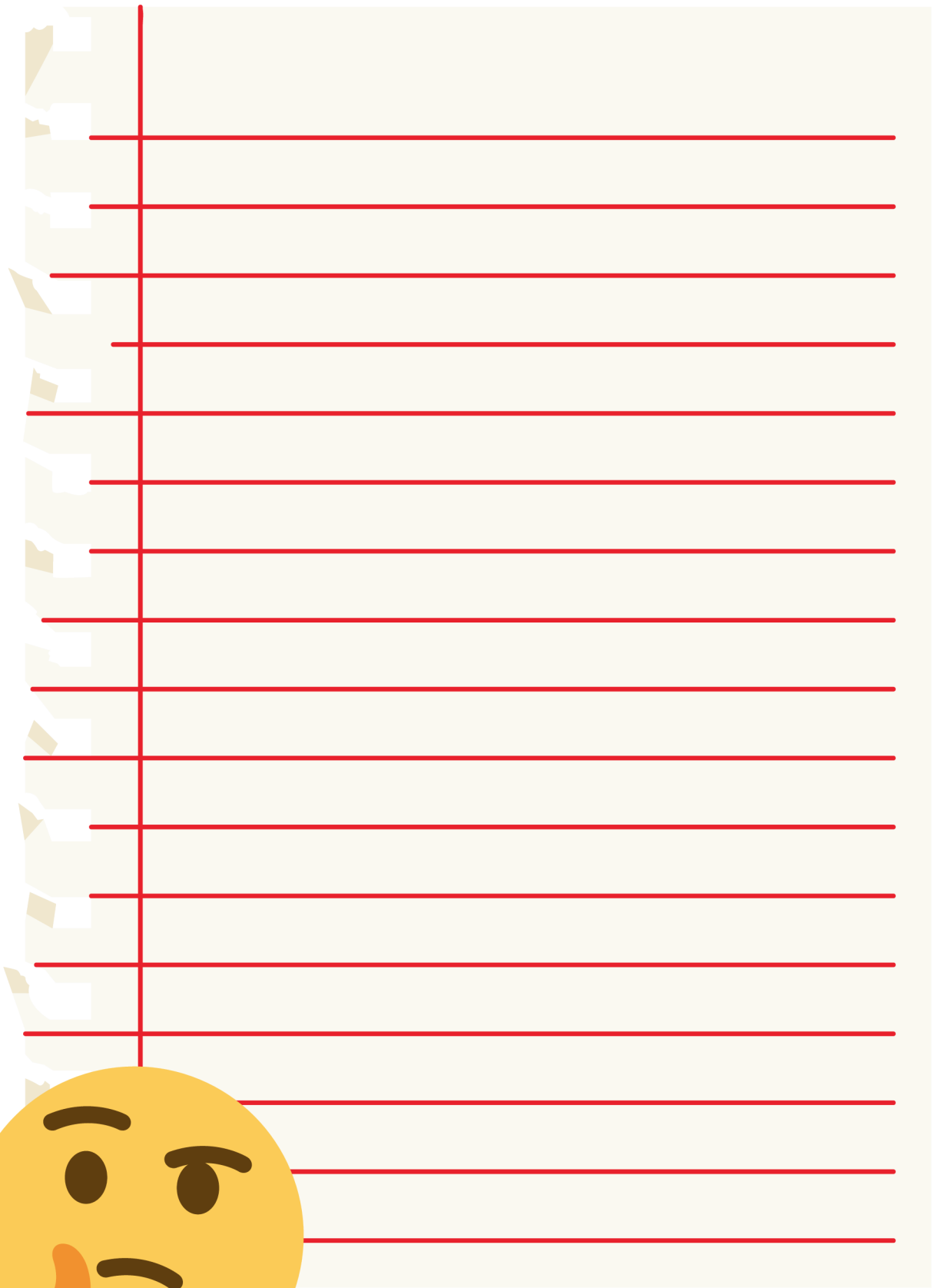
What resources or tools do I need to explore
my creative or online dreams?

What backup plan would I be okay with
if my first idea doesn't work out?

Who's in my corner cheering me on?
Who do I need to stay motivated?

What's one risk I'm willing to take on myself this year?





Chapter 4

Life Skills Cheat Sheet

This chapter is all about the practical stuff — the “adulting” tools no one really teaches you but you definitely need.

Am I really going to be a football or volleyball
 star
at college — or is that dream shifting? 

Would a gap year give me space to figure things out,
or would it make me feel stuck?

What are my top realistic goals right now,
and what's just fantasy (for now)?

What's my monthly budget
(expected expenses vs. income)?

Do I know how to handle things like
banking, bills, or insurance?

Where can I go for help if I hit a wall
(financial, emotional, academic)?

What's one adulting "win" I've already
had that I'm proud of?



A large sheet of cream-colored paper with a vertical red margin line on the left and horizontal red lines for writing. The paper has a torn left edge. The writing area is divided into 15 horizontal rows by red lines.



Chapter 5

Staying Grounded

Leaving home (or moving into a new phase)
shakes things up
— for you and your family.

Am I wanting to leave, or are my parents more
eager for an empty nest?

Will my room still be here when I visit...
or will it turn into an Airbnb or craft room?

What will I miss most about home?

What do I not want to bring with me
into this next phase?

How can I stay connected to my family
without feeling tied down?

Who do I want to make an effort to
stay in touch with from high school?

What's one tradition or habit from home
I want to keep doing?

When I feel homesick or overwhelmed,
who can I turn to?

What do I hope my family knows about
how much they mean to me?





A large, cream-colored rectangular area with a vertical red line on the left and horizontal red lines, resembling a notepad or a form for writing.



Chapter 6

Dream Big

This chapter is about letting yourself dream —
no limits, no judgment.

If I'm staying home and going to a local college or job,
do I believe I can still succeed?

What are the hidden advantages
of staying close to home?

What are the hidden challenges
(same friends, same stores, same parties, not growing
professionally)?

How can I push myself to grow,
even if my surroundings stay the same?

Where do I want to be in one year?
In five years?

What's on my personal bucket list?

What's something I want to do
that I've never
told anyone?

Who inspires me to dream bigger?

If I could write a letter
to my future
self,
what would I want them
to know or remember?

Hello future me....



Dear You,

You've made it through the last page of
the guided
part of this journal —
But the real story is just beginning.

Whether you feel ready or not,
A chapter of your life is
waiting for you to shape it.
Some days you'll feel confident,
Some days you'll question everything,
And that's okay.

Come back to this journal whenever you need
as a reminder.

You're allowed to change your mind,
to start over, to dream bigger,
and to be proud of every small step you take.

You've got this.

I'm rooting for you.

