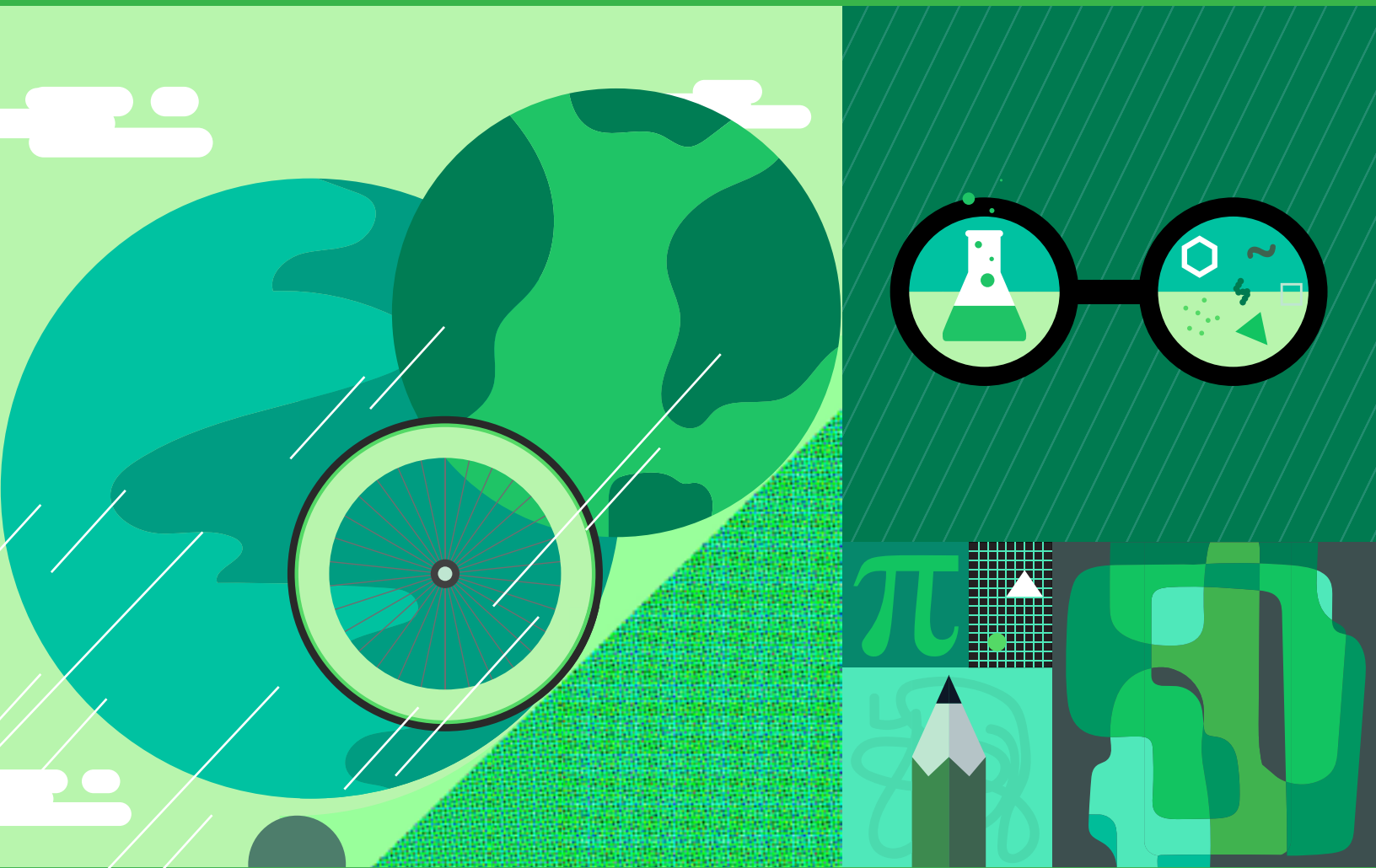


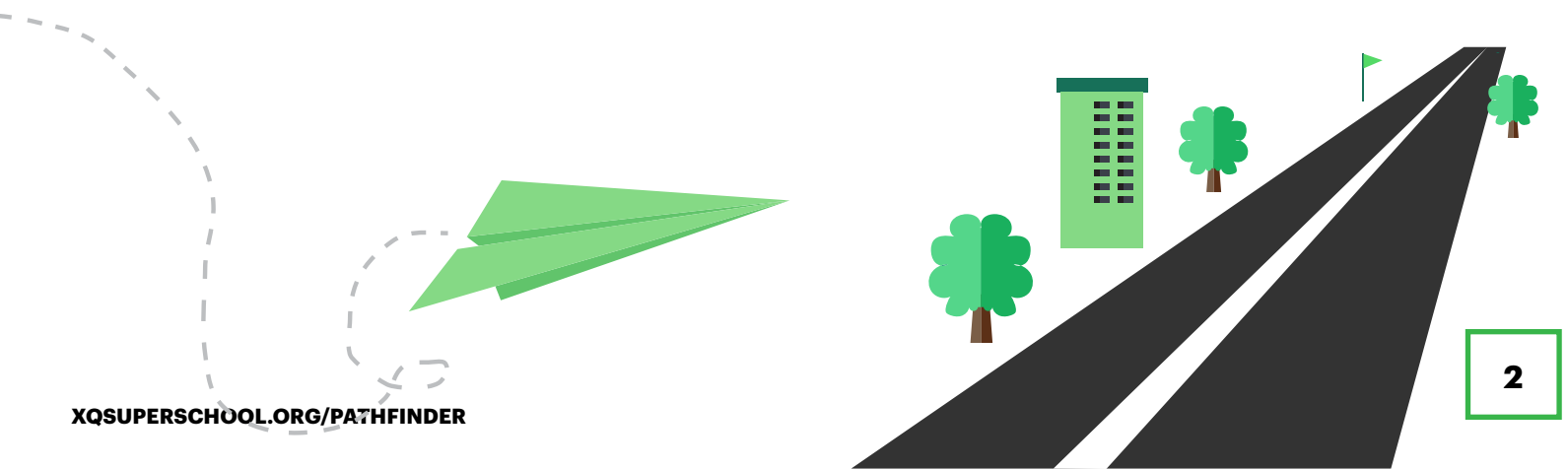
III. NAVIGATING YOUR ACADEMIC JOURNEY



Your high school experiences —————→ are fundamental to understanding yourself and shaping your future.

the courses you take
the people you meet
the books you read
the projects you complete
the jobs you have

As you navigate your path through high school, many of the choices you make will either open doors to your future, or close them. Taking the right classes and doing well in them is the best way to keep as many doors open as possible.



THE BIG PICTURE

Navigating your academic journey

Attending college is the best way to ensure success in your next stage in life. Taking the right classes, working hard, and tracking your progress are critical parts of getting there.

This section will help you understand what's required for college and how to choose the courses that will best develop your skills and interests.

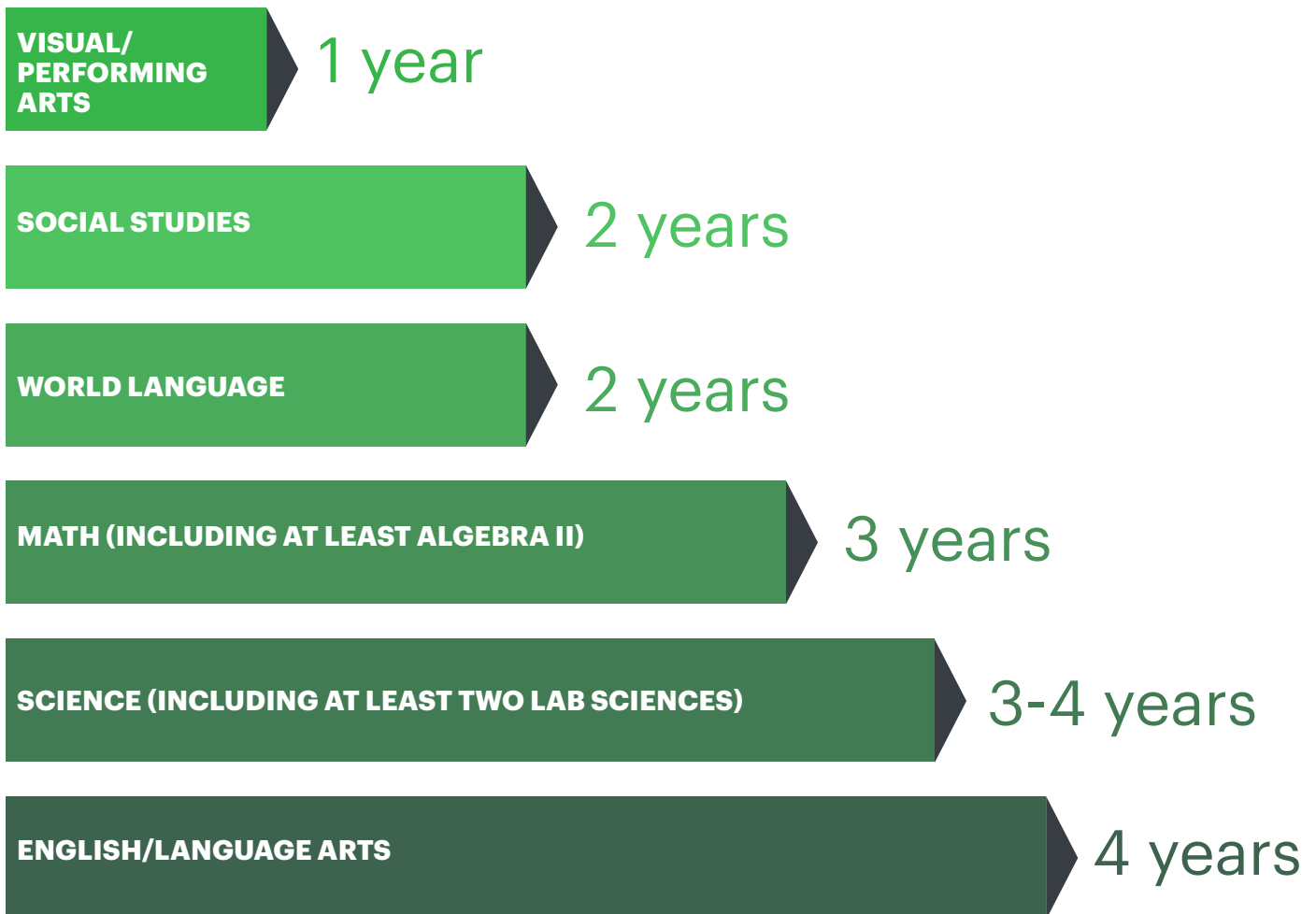
01**TAKING ESSENTIAL CLASSES****02****MAKING CLASSES WORK FOR YOU****03****TRACKING YOUR PERFORMANCE**

UNDERSTAND

Taking essential classes

When it comes to taking the right classes for graduation and college, planning ahead matters.

Making a plan starts with understanding which high school courses every student needs to take. Completing your state's high school graduation requirements won't necessarily be enough to get into college. To set yourself up for success, at a minimum, you will need to take the classes listed below—and do your best in every course you take.



Learn more about your state's minimum high school graduation requirements [on this website](#) or by asking a guidance counselor or teacher.

FACT:

Your college application is more than just a record of your grades and test scores—it's the story of your learning journey.

UNDERSTAND

Making classes work for you

When you plan ahead and work hard in class, your high school experience becomes so much more than four years of checking off boxes.

As you pick your classes, think about how each class can develop your strengths and explore your interests.

MOST IMPORTANT

Required Courses

Which classes are required for graduation and college?

Start by working with your school counselor to determine which courses to take during your four years of high school.

For certain subjects, like Math and English, make sure you work hard and complete all of the courses that help prepare for college placement tests, to avoid having to pay to retake these classes in college.

Elective Courses

What subjects interest you?

What skills do you want to develop?

Electives are a great way to explore different subjects and develop new skills.

Your course selection—whether you immerse deeply in one subject or try many—can help college admissions understand your interests beyond required coursework.

Advanced Courses

Do you feel challenged by your classes?

Advanced classes teach the skills—like problem-solving, writing, and time management—that you need to succeed in college and life.

Although you might get a lower grade in an advanced class, colleges want to see that you push yourself and are ready for the demands of college courses.

PLAN AHEAD

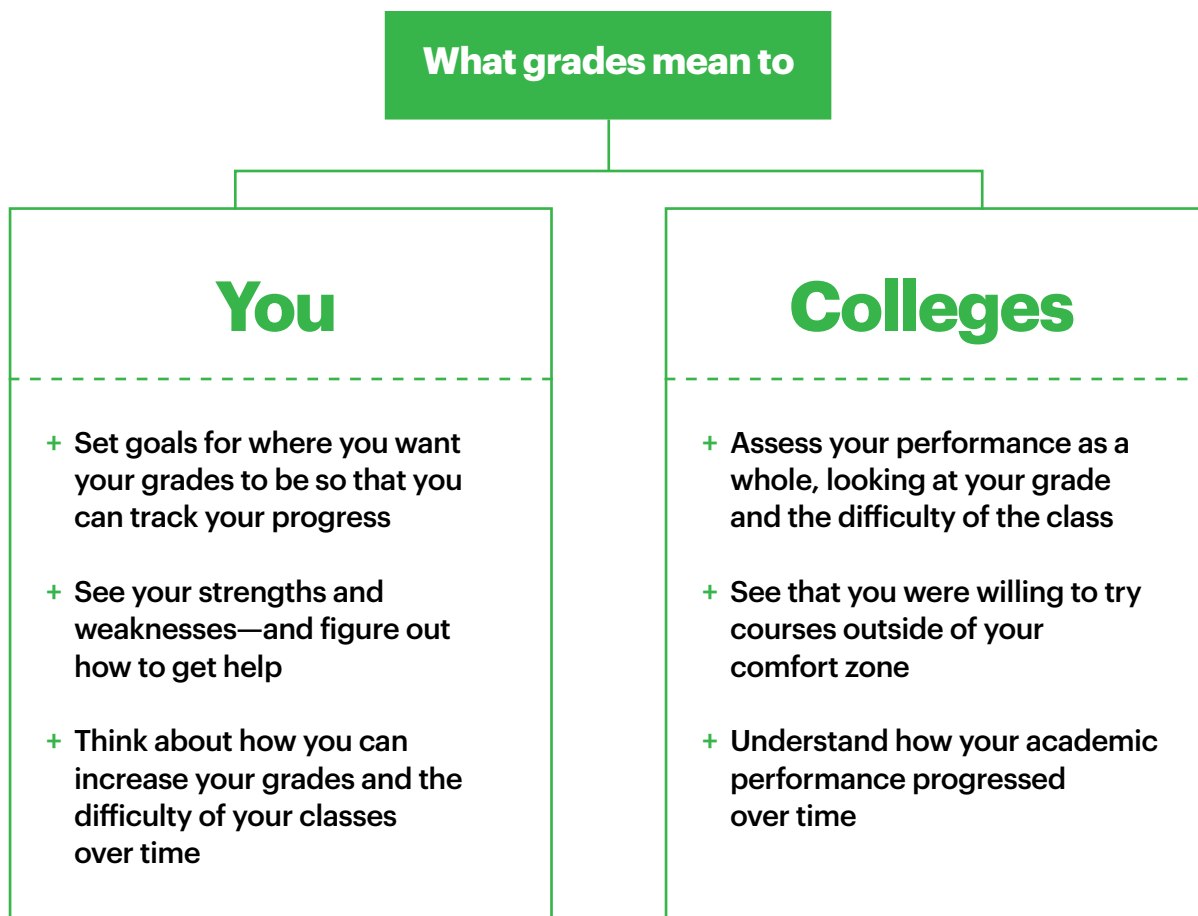
TRY YOUR BEST

UNDERSTAND

Tracking your performance

Grades aren't just a letter on a page, they're a tool for assessing where you are and where you need to improve.

Make sure to do your best in every class, and keep track of your grades. Every assignment, quiz, and test is a chance to improve.



Struggling with course work? Make a plan to get back on track using [this resource](#) and by talking to your guidance counselor and teachers.

THE PLAN

Make the most of my high school learning experience and take courses that prepare me for college

THE STEPS I WILL TAKE

1. Take the essential classes on page 4

2. Explore an interest through an elective course

3. Do my best in every class and track my grades

4. (Write my own)

Want to learn more?

These resources will help you get started.



SELECTING CLASSES AND TRACKING PROGRESS

Graduation requirements

Learn about which courses you should take based on your state's graduation requirements.

[→ Explore](#)

Conversation with your guidance counselor

Use these questions to start a conversation with your school counselor about which classes and activities are best for you.

[→ Explore](#)

Select elective courses

Read this article to get advice on which electives can help you explore your passions.

[→ Explore](#)

Academic tracker

Use Big Future's Tracker to help you determine whether you're taking the right courses for college.

[→ Explore](#)

AP course information

Learn about what it takes to enroll in AP courses and how they can lead to college credits.

[→ Explore](#)

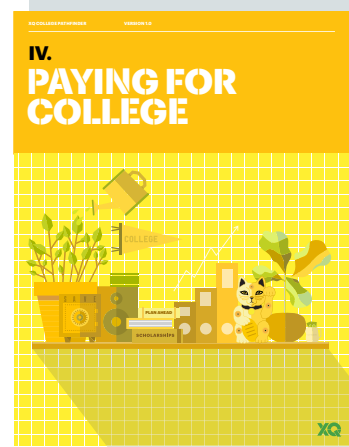
GPA calculator

Calculate your GPA and learn what grades you'll need to get into your target school.

[→ Explore](#)

Continue your journey, grow your knowledge.

Don't forget to check out these other XQ College Pathfinder resources.



There's more to come.

We will keep adding new tools and resources.

We'd love to hear from you!

What do you think of this guide? How can we make it better? Are there other resources you're looking for? Please let us know!

[→ Send Feedback](#)