



A2 ACHIEVE COLLEGE & CAREER ALIGNMENT ASSESSMENT

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The Big Picture

Allie, I don't think your real question is, "What should I major in?" I think the better question is:
What kind of work lets you use the parts of yourself that keep showing up everywhere else in your life?

And when I look at everything you gave me, the answer begins to narrow considerably. You are interested in people. You notice people. You think about why people do what they do.

People ask you for advice and help making decisions. You naturally consider multiple sides of an issue. You have mediated disagreements between friends. You notice when someone is quiet or not acting like themselves. You are curious about mental health and anxiety, relationships, different people's experiences, history and culture.

At the same time, you are not describing yourself as someone who wants to sit quietly behind the scenes forever. You say you prefer to lead rather than support. You like taking charge in group projects. You have mentored younger dancers, encouraged teammates and performers, and picture yourself later in life as some type of boss or CEO helping younger employees grow.

That combination:

people + communication + analysis + leadership + influence

is the center of your career profile right now.

That is why law, business, marketing and psychology-related careers all keep making sense even though they sound different on the surface. You are still exploring, but you are not directionless.

Your Academic Profile

You report a 3.8 GPA, 29 ACT and 30 superscore. Your advanced coursework includes AP Literature, AP Language, AP U.S. History and AP Government, along with dual-enrollment coursework through UNA and Northwest Shoals.

The academic pattern I find more interesting than the numbers is the subject pattern. You identify English as your favorite subject and math as your least favorite. Your AP concentration is heavily humanities-based. You independently research history and famous people. You enjoy reading and say *The Great Gatsby* changed the way you thought about the past and the idea of trying to recreate it.

That suggests you may be particularly comfortable with:

- Reading
- Writing

- Discussion
- Interpretation
- Argument
- People and motivation
- Historical or social context
- Communication.

You have also completed Algebra II and Precalculus through dual enrollment, so I am not reading "math is my least favorite" as "I can't do math." There is a difference between something you can do and something that gives you energy. That distinction matters when choosing a major.

Your Intellectual Profile

One of the strongest things about you is that you appear to think in terms of **people and perspective**.

You describe yourself as someone who overthinks and looks at the bigger picture. You like to understand the reasoning behind other people's actions or feelings. When friends ask for advice, you think through multiple perspectives before responding. In a career assessment, that catches my attention.

A good attorney has to understand competing positions.

A good marketer has to understand what motivates an audience.

A good manager has to understand employees.

A good counselor has to listen beyond the words someone says.

A good negotiator has to anticipate what each party values.

A good entrepreneur has to understand what people need and why they would choose one solution over another.

Different careers. Similar underlying strengths.

You also show persistence. You taught yourself a headspring through repetition, practiced daily for tryouts and worked through significant tutoring and practice to improve your ACT.

You do have one learning habit I would pay attention to in college: you say you sometimes function best under pressure and can leave yourself rushing, and you also admit that you get stressed over schoolwork without telling your teachers.

College will require you to learn to ask for help earlier rather than waiting until stress becomes a crisis. That is a skill issue, not a capability issue, and it is very fixable.

Career Direction #1: Law, Advocacy and Negotiation

Law is one of the strongest career directions I would explore with you. Not because you wrote "law" on a questionnaire. Because several parts of your personality support it.

You like ideas and perspectives.

You naturally mediate disagreements.

You are comfortable leading.

You enjoy English and humanities.

You are interested in history and government.

You want work that affects other people.

You want to be successful and have significant responsibility.

Law also gives you many variations to explore. You do not have to picture only courtroom litigation. Possible areas eventually could include business law, employment law, family law, corporate law, advocacy, contracts, negotiation, mediation, public policy or other people- and communication-heavy areas.

The next step is not deciding that you *are* going to be a lawyer. It is finding out whether you like what lawyers actually do.

Career Direction #2: Business, Management and Entrepreneurship

Business may fit you just as strongly, but I would think beyond "business owner." You seem drawn to the idea of leadership itself.

Your ideal future includes being in charge and helping interns grow. You say you love organizing and clearing clutter. Your work experience has put you in customer-facing settings, and you list public speaking, customer service, social media, leadership and creativity among your skills.

That opens several possibilities:

- Business management
- Entrepreneurship
- Marketing
- Human resources
- Talent development
- Sales
- Public relations
- Organizational leadership
- Consulting
- Corporate training or development.

Marketing could be particularly worth exploring because it combines creativity, communication, psychology and business. Human resources or organizational leadership could also be interesting because those fields combine business with the part of you that likes helping people succeed.

Career Direction #3: Psychology, Counseling and Human Behavior

I would not dismiss your interest in therapy. Your curiosity about mental health and anxiety is genuine enough that you say you could talk about it for an hour without preparation. You pay attention to how people are feeling and enjoy hearing other people's experiences.

But we need to define the word **therapy** before building a college plan around it. If you mean mental-health counseling or psychology, that is very different from occupational therapy, physical therapy or speech-language pathology.

If you are drawn to mental health, possible paths include:

- Psychology
- Counseling
- Social work
- School counseling

- Organizational psychology
- Human resources
- Behavioral research
- Graduate-level clinical practice.

Most counseling and psychologist roles require graduate education and, depending on the profession, licensure. There is also a middle ground you may really like: **using psychology without becoming a therapist**. Consumer behavior, marketing, organizational psychology, HR, leadership development and mediation all use an understanding of people.

A Fourth Direction Worth Keeping in the Background: Teaching and Development

When you were asked what you would do if money were not a factor, you said teaching because a good teacher can change someone's life. I would not ignore that answer.

It does not necessarily mean you should major in education. It may mean that **developing other people** is important to you. That can happen as a teacher, attorney mentoring junior staff, business leader developing employees, corporate trainer, HR leader, counselor, coach or entrepreneur.

Your future image of yourself helping interns grow fits this exact pattern.

Majors I Would Explore

I would not choose one yet. I would investigate combinations.

- **Business Management or Entrepreneurship + Psychology or Communication**
This would support business ownership while keeping the people/communication side strong.
- **Marketing + Psychology**
A very natural combination if you enjoy creativity, communication, consumer behavior and business.
- **Psychology + Business**
Useful if your interest in human behavior remains strong but you are not sure whether you want clinical work.
- **Political Science + Business, Communication or English**
Worth considering for pre-law, although political science is not required for law school.
- **English or History + Pre-Law Preparation**
Your actual academic interests may make one of these a better undergraduate experience than forcing yourself into a major you think "sounds more professional."
- **Communication / Public Relations**
Worth exploring if you discover that persuasion, speaking, messaging and relationship building are what you enjoy most.
- **Human Resource Management / Organizational Leadership**
This may be one of the less obvious paths that fits your profile surprisingly well.

What You Need to Know About Law School

There is no required undergraduate "pre-law major." If law becomes the goal, I would rather see you choose an undergraduate major you enjoy, perform well academically, become a strong writer and thinker, and build relevant experiences than select a major simply because you think law schools want it. That means business, English, history, political science, psychology, communication and many other majors remain open.

Career Exploration I Would Have You Do

You need experiences designed to answer questions—not experiences designed to make your resume longer.

- **Talk with an attorney.**
Ask what an ordinary Tuesday actually looks like. How much of the job is writing? Research? Client interaction? Negotiation? Court? Administration?
- **Spend time with a business owner or manager.**
Ask what they enjoy and what they hate. Pay attention to whether you are energized by operations, employees, sales, marketing or strategy.
- **Talk with a counselor or psychologist.**
Ask about the emotional demands, graduate-school requirements, daily client work and what they wish they had understood at 17.
- **When you visit colleges, visit two departments—not just the admissions office.**
For example, visit business and psychology, or business and political science.
- The purpose is to see which conversations make you want to know more.

Your Leadership Profile

You appear to be an **informal, relational leader**. You are not currently relying on a long list of titles. Instead, your leadership shows up when a group actually needs somebody. You lead academic group projects. You encourage teammates. You mentor younger dancers. You help resolve disagreements. You pushed other performers during a student-led show choir practice to try things that scared them. That tells me you are probably at your best when leadership is connected to people rather than position.

Your next growth area is ownership. Can you take one of those existing settings and move from "person who helps lead" to "person who initiated something"? That could strengthen both your application and your understanding of whether management/leadership genuinely fits you.

Activities, Work and Service

Your performing arts involvement is one of the strongest pieces of your extracurricular profile because it has longevity. Show Choir, Muscle Shoals Performing Arts, youth group and FCCLA span all four years of high school.

Your work experiences add another dimension. At Crazy Cone, you dealt with customers, transactions and time management. At summer camp, you were responsible for children and learned patience and preparedness. Through babysitting, you learned to multitask and care for younger children. Those experiences matter because your proposed careers are all people-facing.

Your service also has breadth, but the nursing home is the piece I would remember. You did not say it mattered because you accumulated hours. You said you loved hearing people's stories and being there for them to talk to. That is much more personal.

Honors and Recognition

National Honor Society is currently the primary formal honor you reported. That portion of your application will probably not be what differentiates you, and that is okay.

Your strongest application is going to be built around the combination of:

- Academic readiness
- People-centered leadership
- Arts involvement
- Service
- Work responsibility
- Resilience.

We should verify that no legitimate recognition has been left out, but we do not need to manufacture honors.

Your Strongest Differentiators

If I had to identify the things that currently make you most interesting, I would choose these:

1. You read people.

You notice behavior, feelings and perspectives. That shows up in friendships, mediation, nursing-home service and your mental-health curiosity.

2. You lead through encouragement.

Your strongest leadership examples involve helping other people attempt something, improve or feel supported.

3. You combine arts, athletics, work and service.

You are not one-dimensional, which is something you explicitly want adults to understand about you.

4. You have a real resilience story.

Not making dance team, teaching yourself difficult skills, working for your ACT score and continuing through social conflict give us evidence rather than just the word "resilient."

5. Being the oldest matters to you.

You are the oldest sibling and oldest cousin on both sides of your family. You are very conscious of being watched by younger people and of being the first one through new experiences.

That helps explain why leadership and mentoring may matter so much to you.

The Story Behind Your Application

I would not build your application around the statement:

"Allie wants to study business."

That is too small.

I would rather the reader come away thinking:

Allie is a determined, perceptive young woman who pays close attention to people, naturally takes responsibility when others need direction, and is beginning to figure out how to turn communication, leadership and empathy into a career.

That story leaves room for law, business, marketing or psychology without making you seem indecisive.

College Environment

Your current list tells me you are at least comfortable considering large, traditional Southern universities with strong campus identity. That may fit you very well.

You say you are excited about moving away, being on your own and meeting new people, even though you know that unfamiliar social settings can initially make you quieter than people expect. I actually think a university with a lot of organizations and social entry points could help you. You seem to thrive once you develop relationships.

Things I want you to evaluate on visits are:

- Whether the campus feels socially welcoming
- Whether you can imagine joining organizations quickly
- How easy it is to change majors or explore multiple fields
- Business and pre-law opportunities
- Psychology offerings
- Internships
- Study abroad
- Greek life if that interests you
- Academic support
- Whether you can picture yourself asking for help when a class becomes difficult.

That last point matters because you specifically say your greatest college fear is failing a class and having to come home. A college's tutoring, advising and faculty-access culture matters for you—not because I expect you to fail, but because learning to use support early will help you thrive.

College List Assessment

University of Alabama

A strong match for your broad interests because you can explore business, communications, psychology, political science and other pre-law-friendly majors without needing your entire future figured out on day one. It is also strategically important because your current academic profile may make Alabama one of the strongest financial opportunities on your list, particularly if you improve your single-date ACT composite.

Auburn University

A believable fit, but academically the most uncertain admission on the four-school list. That makes it worth pursuing seriously rather than treating casually. Auburn also has enough breadth to support your business/pre-law/psychology exploration.

Mississippi State

A strong option to keep. Academically it appears accessible for you, and its current out-of-state merit structure makes it especially worth evaluating financially.

Ole Miss

Another logical fit for the kind of broad, traditional campus experience your list suggests. It offers room to explore business, liberal arts and pre-law directions without prematurely narrowing yourself.

I would not add colleges simply to make the list longer. I would only add a school if it gives you something these four do not. For example, a significantly better financial opportunity, a smaller academic setting, a specialized program or a different campus experience you discover that you prefer.

Financial Fit

This is the biggest college-fit question that remains unanswered. Your four schools may have very different final prices after scholarships. That means our final comparison should include:

- Direct cost
- Automatic merit
- Competitive scholarships
- Need-based aid if applicable
- Housing
- Travel
- Amount your family is actually willing to contribute

Sticker price alone will not tell us which college is least expensive. Your ACT also matters financially enough that another test attempt is worth serious consideration.

Admissions Positioning

Your application should emphasize:

- Your strongest advanced coursework
- Long-term involvement in performing arts
- Leadership through mentoring and encouragement
- Approximately 150 hours of service
- Paid work
- Your ability to work with people
- Your resilience
- Your intellectual interest in human behavior, communication and perspectives

I would avoid trying to turn you into a "future attorney" in every section. You have not done legal internships or spent years building a law-specific résumé, and we do not need to pretend otherwise. Your stronger story is about the qualities that could eventually make law, or several other careers, a good fit.

Essay Direction

My strongest areas to explore are:

The pressure of being first.

What has being the oldest sibling and oldest cousin actually required from you?

Learning from not making the dance team.

What changed afterward beyond "I worked harder"?

The person who notices who's quiet.

Where did that instinct come from? What has it caused you to do?

Being quiet and extroverted at the same time.

What happens inside your head when you walk into a room where you know nobody?

Listening.

There may be a story connecting nursing-home residents, friendships, advice and your fascination with people.

Recommendation Strategy

I would try to pair two different perspectives if the application permits it. An English/history/government teacher can speak to how you think, write, discuss and lead academically. A performing-arts teacher, coach, camp supervisor or other adult can speak to how you behave when people depend on you. The best letters will add dimension rather than repeat the resume.

Scholarship Positioning

Your strongest scholarship themes are likely to be:

- Academics and rigor
- Service
- Performing arts involvement
- Leadership without relying on titles
- Employment
- Resilience
- Your desire to help other people succeed.

For outside scholarships, your paid work and community involvement may be especially useful because they make you more than a transcript.

Biggest Risks and Biggest Opportunities

Your biggest risk is **not** that you have too little to offer. It is that your application could become generic if we do not pull enough specificity out of what you have already done.

"Show choir member."

"Volunteer."

"Worked at an ice cream shop."

"Interested in business."

Those descriptions make you sound like thousands of other applicants. The details underneath them are where your application becomes yours.

Your biggest opportunity is the combination of stronger presentation, one more strategic ACT effort and deliberate career exploration.

What I Would Do Next If You Were Sitting Across From Me

First, I would schedule another ACT attempt and work specifically toward a 30+ single composite.

Second, I would get your transcript so we can finish the academic analysis.

Third, I would have you interview one attorney and one business professional. If psychology remains high on your list, add a counselor or psychologist.

Fourth, I would turn your activities into actual stories of responsibility and impact rather than membership descriptions.

Fifth, I would begin your applications now rather than waiting for your career decision to become perfect.

Sixth, I would visit colleges with academic questions—not just dorm and campus-tour questions.

Seventh, I would price all four colleges after likely merit aid.

And eighth, I would start essay work around who you are rather than what job you think you may want ten years from now.

Follow-Up Questions

1. What is your weighted GPA and what is your unweighted GPA?
2. What courses are you taking during senior year?
3. Does Muscle Shoals report class rank, percentile or decile?
4. Are AP Literature, AP Language and APUSH simultaneously AP and dual-enrollment courses, or are these different courses taken at different times?
5. Do you plan to take the ACT again?
6. What is your highest ACT composite from one test date, and what were the section scores?
7. When you say "therapy," what kind of therapist do you picture?
8. What part of becoming a lawyer sounds most appealing to you?
9. When you picture owning a business, what kind of business do you imagine?
10. Would you rather spend most of your workday writing and analyzing, speaking and persuading, managing people, creating ideas, or sitting one-on-one helping people?
11. How important is sorority life to you?
12. How important are football and school spirit?
13. Do you prefer a huge university, or is your current list simply made up of schools you already know?
14. How far from home do you want to be?

15. What does your family consider an affordable annual college cost?
16. Will merit scholarship money materially affect which school you choose?
17. Have you visited Alabama, Auburn, Mississippi State or Ole Miss? If so, what did you love or dislike about each?
18. What exact responsibilities do you have as the oldest sibling? Is it mainly emotional pressure and example-setting, or are you also regularly responsible for childcare, transportation or household responsibilities?
19. What happened after you did not make dance team? What did you do differently, and how did that experience change you?
20. Tell me about one specific person at the nursing home whose story stayed with you.
21. When was a time you noticed somebody was struggling before anyone else did—and what happened because you noticed?

Those answers will help us move from a good preliminary direction to a much more targeted college, career and application strategy.