

PAY IT FORWARD

Your how-to guide
for inspiring students
to become CPAs



First things first: Thank you!

Your help in increasing students' awareness of—and interest in—accounting careers is invaluable. Not only to the AICPA and state CPA societies, but to the very future of the profession itself.

To assist you in this important work, we've created this go-to guide to help you give more engaging and impactful presentations that inspire future CPAs.

Here's what you'll find in this guide:



Pg. 01 TIPS FOR PRESENTING TO STUDENTS

Pg. 05 UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

Pg. 10 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION





BEFORE

Meet your audience where they are.

Find out in advance about your audience's education level, experience with and interest in accounting, as well as whether or not it includes non-traditional students.

Share your agenda.

It can be as simple as a document with your information followed by bullets highlighting your discussion topics.

Mick Cozart, CPA, CGMA

SVP of Finance at World of Popcorn

✓ Introductions

✓ Accountants vs. CPAs—the difference

✓ What do accountants really do?

✓ What skills do they need?

✓ Examples of accounting jobs

✓ Class discussion

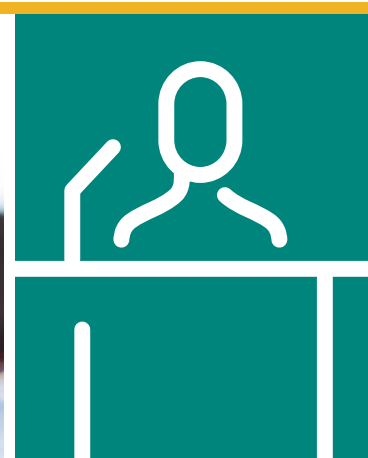
✓ Q&A

Consider stepping outside the classroom.

Meet college students and Exam candidates where they're most comfortable, like in the union or at an on-campus coffee shop.

Understand students have different learning styles.

Try to incorporate different elements into your presentation, such as videos, websites, handouts and group discussions, to engage more students.



Get there early and be human.

Greet students as they arrive and casually converse before getting started. Be sure to make your presentation personal and have fun with it!

Don't get too in the weeds.

Remember, these are students, not colleagues. Avoid too many details about your specific role—your work should be just one example.

Illustrate your points with current events or stories.

It's easier for students to connect with things that are relatable to what's happening in the world or relevant to them.

Help students find meaning in accounting.

Many see the purpose of their future job as important as its salary or title. So be sure to talk about the ways accounting has a positive impact.



Introduce students to the AICPA and your state CPA society.

Be sure to tell students about what they do and encourage them to join both.

- *The AICPA offers free Student Affiliate membership for community college/university students, and a low-cost membership for Exam takers.*
- *Find out in advance if your state CPA society offers student memberships so you can share its details.*

Be genuine,
forthright and tell
the whole story.

Don't be afraid to talk about challenges of your job or a time when you failed. Your candidness can help high school and college students make better-informed decisions about their futures.

AFTER

Ask for
feedback.

Reach out to the presentation coordinator for insight into how things went. It will only make you better.

We have tons of audience-specific resources and materials. You have **three ways** to access them.

The AICPA currently has two initiatives focused on attracting students to the profession. Both offer a variety of free materials, perfect for enhancing your presentation. Here are several ways to share them with your audience:



Order student resources
for yourself.

Browse and order* free materials from [StartHereGoPlaces.com/resources](https://www.aicpa.org/StartHereGoPlaces.com/resources) or [ThisWayToCPA.com/resources](https://www.aicpa.org/ThisWayToCPA.com/resources).



Ask your state CPA
society.

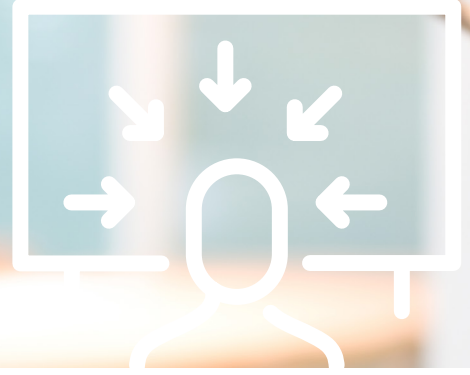
Many state CPA societies have resources available, both their own and ones in partnership with the AICPA.



Let educators know where
to get them.

If you don't have time to order or pick up materials, suggest educators order their own.

*It takes two weeks from the time a resource request is made for it to be filled and shipped.



Middle Schoolers ▼

Most middle schoolers have little understanding of accounting and see the profession as narrow, uncreative, monotonous and boring—which obviously isn't the case. This presents a great opportunity to influence these students' perceptions and understanding of accounting.

More than 1/2 of middle schoolers will take career aptitude tests, in which accounting is a common result. With accounting being presented as a good fit for a lot of students, it is especially important they learn more about the profession and all it has to offer.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Don't underestimate how influential your presentation can be with this group



Use this audiences' existing perceptions to shape your presentation

- Explain that accounting is about much more than math—detail other skills used
- Emphasize accounting's importance and role(s) within business
- Frame accounting as a prestigious yet attainable career path

RESOURCES FOR THIS AUDIENCE



WEBSITE

[StartHereGoPlaces.com](https://www.startheregoplaces.com)

While originally created for a high school audience, this AICPA initiative website includes some information and materials that are relevant to middle schoolers too.



PRINTED MATERIAL

[Bursting with Opportunity: Accounting Careers Intro Card](#)

High Schoolers

While high schoolers typically have a better understanding of accounting than middle schoolers, they often don't understand the difference between accountants and CPAs. Their perception is often that, while accounting is a good-paying career, it's all about math or taxes.

Some high schoolers struggle with a clear vision of their career path and just the idea of college can be overwhelming. Even those who have taken an accounting class—which many may not have—probably aren't familiar with the wide variety of career paths accounting offers.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Encourage them to research career options based on school subjects in which they excel and enjoy



Explain the difference between accountants and CPAs, and give examples of the different roles CPAs can have

RESOURCES FOR THIS AUDIENCE



WEBSITE

[StartHereGoPlaces.com](https://www.startheregoplaces.com)

The AICPA's online destination for high school students and educators provides info about the profession, the path to CPA and activities for students, as well as resources for educators.



VIDEO

[Fall 2017 Virtual Field Trip
with Louis Griego, CPA](#)



GAME

[Bank On It](#)



PDF/PRINTED MATERIAL

[Accounting Careers: A handy guide to the good,
the better and the best one for you](#)

Community College Students

While community college students have many similarities to four-year college students, they have some distinct differences—including a more diverse and nontraditional student population.

Community colleges typically have more students who already have jobs and/or families, are looking to start a second career, are high schoolers getting dual credit or are looking for a stepping stone before embarking on a traditional university experience.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Ask your audience questions to help you better understand where they are on their educational journeys



Recommend this often budget-conscious student group explore the AICPA Foundation Two-Year Transfer Scholarship Award (at [ThisWayToCPA.com/scholarships](https://www.thiswaytopcpa.com/scholarships))

RESOURCES FOR THIS AUDIENCE



WEBSITE

[ThisWayToCPA.com](https://www.thiswaytopcpa.com)



The AICPA's online destination to educate, inform and inspire college students (both two- and four-year) and CPA Exam candidates at every step in becoming a CPA.



PDF/PRINTED MATERIAL

[Transfer Your Way To CPA](#)

4-Year College/University

Most college-level audiences attending a presentation like yours will have studied some accounting. While they may not understand all of the differences or benefits of being one, these students will likely know a CPA has taken an exam to become a certified professional.

However, depending on whether you're talking to freshman or seniors, students' knowledge and experience will vary. Underclassmen are often just starting to choose a major or getting into related classes, whereas many upperclassmen will have already had an internship and are thinking about life post-graduation.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Underclassmen will likely get more from a general profession overview and information about internships



Understand upperclassmen will benefit more from CPA Exam and licensure information



Talk about specializations and designations to give these students a better idea of opportunities beyond CPA licensure

RESOURCES FOR THIS AUDIENCE



WEBSITE

[ThisWayToCPA.com](https://www.thiswaytopcpa.com)



VIDEOS

[Accounting in Extraordinary Times](#)

[CPA Profiles](#)



PDF/PRINTED PIECE

[Potential, Prestige & Purpose:
A Primer to the Accounting Profession](#)

CPA Exam Candidates ▼

Lots of students choose to start studying for the CPA Exam as soon as they graduate from college. Some even take time off before starting their jobs to complete the Exam while the information is still fresh in their minds.

Others study for the Exam while working—soon after starting their first post-college job, or even years after being on the job. Many CPA firms will provide assistance to employees working to get their CPA, either in the form of financial assistance, time off to study or both.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



**Share your own experience with the Exam—
be honest, but also try to be positive too**



**Suggest Exam candidates seek out other Exam
takers for ongoing support and study help**



**As you know, the Exam is arduous—your
encouragement will go a long way**

RESOURCES FOR THIS AUDIENCE



WEBSITE

ThisWayToCPA.com



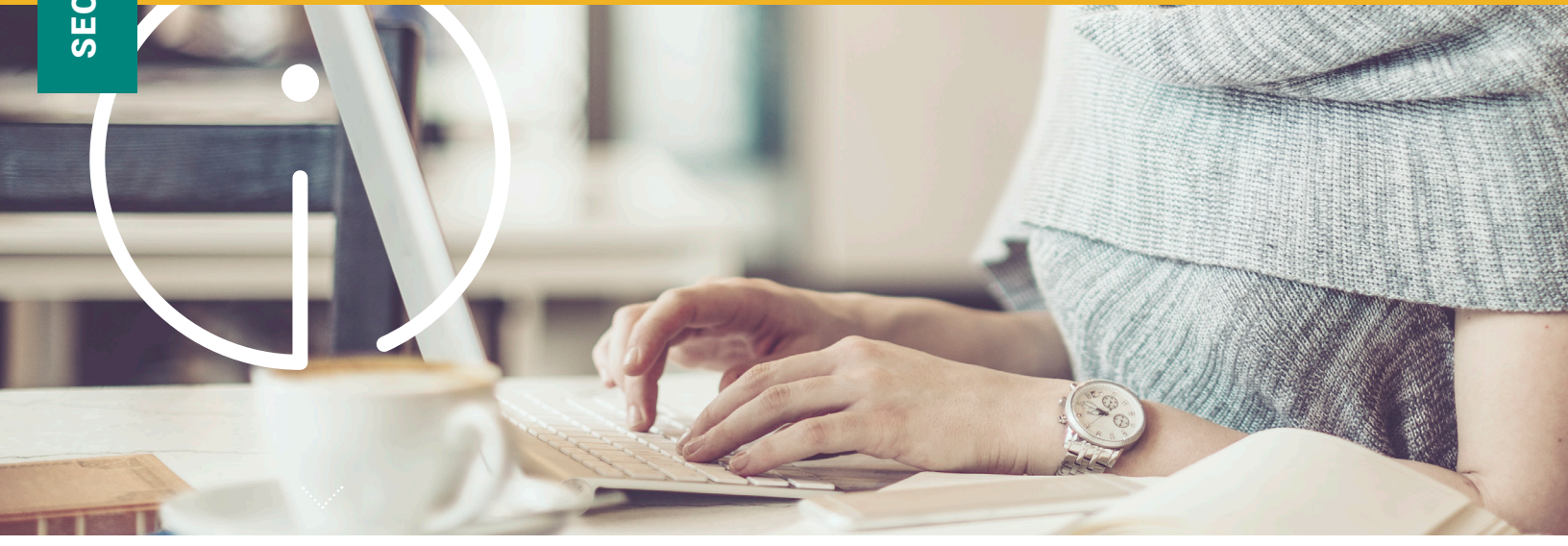
VIDEO

[Next CPA Exam at a Glance](#)



PDF/PRINTED MATERIAL

[The Uniform CPA Examination: An overview of the
Uniform CPA Examination and resources to help
you prepare](#)



Looking for FAQs? ▼

Check out the most common questions students ask, along with potential responses to them.

Need presentation decks to use? ▼

We have PowerPoint presentation templates you can use for your presentation, based on audience.

Find it all at: aicpa.org/studentengagementtoolkit

Want printed materials for your presentation? ▼

- Order directly from either StartHereGoPlaces.com/resources or ThisWayToCPA.com/resources at least two weeks in advance.
- Check with your state CPA society to see if they have any available resources.
- Or recommend the educator or presentation coordinator explore and request materials themselves.

Still have questions?

We're more than happy to help. Let us know what you need and how we can assist you by emailing Cortney Sanders at cortney.sanders@aicpa-cima.com



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