

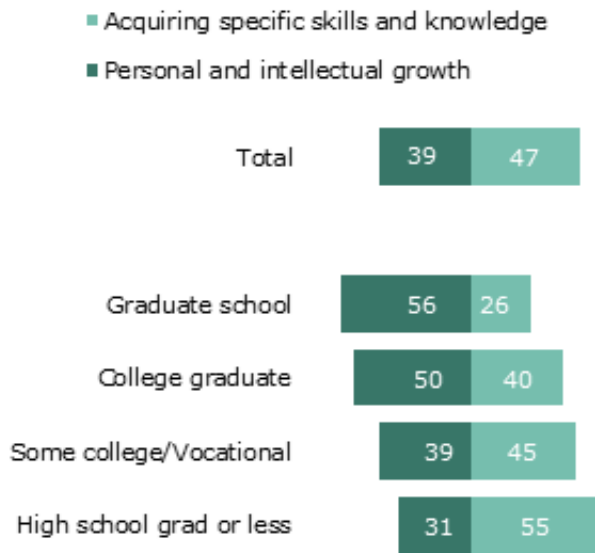
# 47% vs. 39% - Purpose of College Education

Do we send students to college mainly to grow and learn or strictly to prepare for a future career? The American public is somewhat split, but ultimately comes down in favor of the latter on balance. Just under half of the public (47%) says the main purpose of a college education is to teach work-related skills and knowledge. Another 39%, however, says that college is an opportunity for students to grow personally and intellectually. A little more than one-in-ten (12%) say the time spent at college should be dedicated to both pursuits. Americans who did not attend a four-year college are the most likely to say college is best for developing work-related skills -- 55% say this should be the mission of college. Americans who did attend a four-year school, however, lean the other way: 50% say that individual growth is more important; 40% say learning skills for a career. Adults with a post-graduate education, by a 56%-to-26% margin, are the most likely to say the mission of college should be to help an individual grow personally and intellectually rather than to prepare students for a career. [Read more](#)

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## The Purpose of College

*% saying the main purpose of college should be ...*



Notes: "Graduate school" includes those who attended graduate school but did not receive a degree. "Some college/Vocational" includes two-year college graduates. "Both equally" and "Don't know" responses are not shown.

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