

The 16-part "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy" originally appeared in the 2017 Kansas Newspapers in Education. Have fun reading stories, answering questions, and completing activities while learning about Dwight Eisenhower's childhood.



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# "Dreams of a Barefoot Boy"

## Chapter 15: PLANNING FOR COLLEGE



*"Because no man is really a man who has lost out of himself all of the boy, I want to speak first of the dreams of a barefoot boy...Because today that dream of mine of 45 years or more ago has been realized beyond the wildest stretches of my own imagination, I come here, first, to thank you, to say the proudest thing I can claim is that I am from Abilene."*

Dwight D. Eisenhower June 22, 1945

Mr. and Mrs. Eisenhower encouraged each of their six sons to go to college and told them, "Anyone who really wants an education can get it." They were careful not to tell the boys what career they should follow, wanting them to make their own choices. With six boys in the family, however, they did not have any funds to pay for tuition. It was up to each boy to figure out how to finance his college education.

Dwight and his older brother Edgar graduated the same year, in 1909. They both wanted to go to college, but despite working throughout their high school years and during summers, they only had enough money for one to start college in the fall. Together, they agreed that Edgar should start first. Dwight would remain at home, working full time. After two years, Edgar would return to Abilene and work full time and Dwight would take his turn in college. Then, they would switch again after two years until both boys completed their undergraduate degrees.

Edgar left for the University of Michigan in the fall of 1909 and Dwight began working at the Belle Springs Creamery as an iceman. His hard work led to several promotions within the year, so that he became second engineer in the ice plant, working 84 hours a week, from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. every day, making \$90 a

month.

In the summer of 1910, one of Dwight's friends, Everett "Swede" Hazlett, mentioned that he was applying to the U.S. Naval Academy and suggested Dwight should apply as well. Dwight's love of military history, and his awareness that this opportunity for a free education would benefit himself and his brothers, led him to pursue admission. For the next several months, Dwight and Swede studied several hours each day to prepare for the entrance exam. Dwight even went back to his high school and did a review course in several subjects to refresh his memory.

Because he had delayed applying for admission, Dwight was too old to enter the naval academy. Fortunately, Senator Bristol had an open slot in the United States Military Academy. Dwight had to pass an exam given by the Congressman and then he had to go to Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri, to take the entrance exam for the military academy.

After waiting several months, he was excited when the U.S. Military Academy informed him that he had been accepted and was to report with the rest of the new cadets on June 14, 1911. Like all new college students, he was also nervous about leaving home and entering on the next phase of his life.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did Dwight Eisenhower work after he graduated from high school?
2. What influenced Dwight's decision to apply to one of the academies for college?
3. How did he prepare for the exams?
4. Why didn't he go to the naval academy with his friend?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Using the information given, how much did Dwight earn per hour in his job as second engineer?
2. Research what the requirements are for entering the United States Military Academy today. How do they differ from the requirements when Dwight applied for admission?