

11th Grade Checklist

Junior year is a key year in the college planning process because you will be taking standardized tests, narrowing down your college list, and learning more about financial aid. In addition, you should stay involved in your high school courses and activities.

Fall	<p>Stay on track with your classes and grades Meet with your counselor to see what you still need to take. Check on your class rank and your GPA. Even if your grades have not been as strong as you hoped, it is never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend on your course grades.</p> <p>Take the PSAT Taking the PSAT qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship Program, which means you could earn money for college. In addition, it is a good way to practice for the ACT and/or SAT. .</p> <p>Evaluate your postsecondary options Now is the time to follow a more specific path. Decide whether you want to pursue full-time employment, further education or training (such as a vocational-technical school, career college, or two-year or four-year college), or a military career. If you are interested in attending a military academy, talk to your school counselor about starting the application process now.</p> <p>Make a college list Your list of colleges should include schools that meet your most important criteria (for example, size, location, cost, academic majors, or special programs). Consider each of these factors according to their importance to you and develop a preliminary ranking of the schools on your list.</p> <p>Continue gathering college information Visit with college and career representatives, schedule college visits. Use the online college finder to search top college lists. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a school to your list.</p> <p>Make sure you are meeting any special NCAA requirements If you want to play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process and check with your counselor to make sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.</p>
Winter	<p>Stay involved with extracurricular activities Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Taking on leadership roles and making a commitment to the same groups are more important than trying out tons of new activities each year.</p> <p>Begin narrowing down your college choices Make sure you have all the information you need about the colleges you are interested in (entrance requirements, tuition, room and board costs, course offerings, student activities, financial aid, etc.). Then, begin comparing the schools by the factors that are most important to you and rank your choices.</p> <p>Take standardized tests Performance on the SAT or ACT is one of the most important criteria for college admission. Register for and take the ACT or SAT. Be sure you have requested (either by mail or online) that your test scores be sent to the colleges of your choice.</p> <p>Prepare a challenging schedule for senior year Meet with your counselor to determine which classes you will take next year and to make sure you are on track for graduation. Colleges do consider your senior year courses and grades, so stick with a schedule that challenges you.</p>
Spring	<p>Apply for a summer job or internship Summer employment and internships, in fields you are interested in, will look appealing on a college application or resume. The money you earn can also be used to help pay application and testing fees in the fall.</p> <p>Set up appointments at your top college choices You will need to plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor or coach if you are interested. You can also begin your application. Juniors can have up to two excused absences for college visits.</p>

Summer

Visit colleges

Visit the campuses of your top five college choices. Take a tour and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff. You may also be able to talk to students if some classes are in session. If you have an interview, be sure to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer once you return home.

Get advice from other college students

If you have friends or relatives in college, talk to them about what college life is like, especially if they attend a school of interest. Although it is important to hear what the admissions staff has to say about a school, it is also important to get the students' perspective.

Start working on your application essays

Compose rough drafts of the essays you will need for your college applications. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you so you can see what to work on. Make any revisions to your application essays and prepare final drafts. Do not forget to proofread your final essays a few times.

Make early decision preparations

If you plan to apply early to any school, take the time to visit the school again and make sure you are willing to commit. If you elect to apply early decision, you should start working on your application as soon as possible because the deadline will be earlier than others.