

College Planning for High School Students

Grade by Grade Checklists



9th Grade -- Freshman Year Checklist

- Study – every year counts!
- Talk to guidance counselor or teachers about options after high school
- Create a file of documents and notes to keep track of all you do this year
- Start thinking about careers of interest
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Participate in academic enrichment programs
- Continue community service and document

10th Grade -- Sophomore Year Checklist

- Study – every year counts; good year to build GPA
- Consider dual enrollment course if available to earn college credits as well as high school credit
- Talk to guidance counselor or teachers about options after high school
- Update file of documents and notes
- Continue extracurricular activities
- Continue participation in academic enrichment programs
- Continue community service and document
- Take the PSAT in October

11th Grade -- Junior Year Checklist

- Study – Maintain grades during junior year
- Consider dual enrollment course if available to earn college credits as well as high school credit
- Talk to guidance counselor or teachers about options after high school
- Update file of documents and notes
- Continue extracurricular activities
- Continue participation in academic enrichment programs
- Continue community service and document
- Know the steps for applying to college

August- December

- Obtain schedules and forms for the SAT, ACT, and AP exams.
- Sign up for available test dates.
- Study – use free test prep material on Kuder (al.kuder.com)
- Consider running for an elected position in academic programs or school organizations

January-May

- Narrow list of colleges with your chosen field of study
- Talk to teachers about writing letters of recommendation
- Study for and take entrance exams
- Review your test results with your counselor. Consider retesting for a higher score.
- Add new report cards, test scores, honors, or awards to file

Summer between Junior and Senior Years

- Know the steps for applying to college
- Write Essays for college and scholarship applications
- Prepare Resume
- Receive Letters of Recommendation
- Practice writing online applications
- Review applications, especially the essays
- Decide about applying under early decision or early action programs
- Decide about applying with a test optional application if needed
- Read college mail and send reply cards to schools of interest

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12th Grade -- Senior Year Checklist

September

- Create FSA ID to apply for federal student aid at studentaid.gov
- Check transcripts for credits to get into colleges of choice
- Request transcripts to send to colleges through Parchment
- Register for October/November SAT and ACT tests
- Take another look at list of colleges, and make sure that they still satisfy requirements
- Double-check the requirements and deadlines for colleges, and apply
- Give recommendation forms to the appropriate teachers or counselors
- Consider early decision and early action applications due between October 1 and November 1
- Continue thinking about and begin to write any essays

October

- Complete and submit college financial aid application and the FAFSA (free application for Federal Student Aid) at studentaid.gov
- Make sure parents have completed income tax forms
- Make a final list of schools of interest
- Take SAT or ACT tests and have the official scores sent to colleges and universities
- Submit your college admission applications to four-year institutions during Free College Application Week

November

- Submit your college admission applications to two-year institutions or community colleges
- Follow up with college admissions office to make sure that they received your materials

December

- Watch for early decision replies
- Make sure official test scores are being sent to the colleges
- Schedule any remaining required interviews

January

- Investigate purchasing a computer for college
- Contact the admissions offices to make sure that information has been received

February

- Receive Student Aid Report (SAR) -- make corrections and return it
- Complete scholarship applications
- Contact the financial aid offices to make sure that your information has been received

March/April

- Receive acceptance letters by April 15
- Compare acceptance letters, financial aid and scholarship offers
- Choose an accepting college, pay non-refundable freshman tuition deposit

May

- Take AP exams for any AP subjects studied in high school
- Make decision by May 1, notify the school by mailing commitment deposit check
- Contact waiting list colleges if necessary

June

- Request high school to send final transcripts to college of choice
- Contact college to determine when fees for tuition, room and board are due and how much they will be

Summer After Senior Year

- Participate in summer orientation programs for incoming freshmen
- Get student health insurance if needed

