

10th GRADE TIMELINE

10TH GRADE

BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Focus on academics, get off to a strong start
- Develop relationships with teachers
- Deepen involvement with or explore new clubs and activities
- Maintain study habits, work and sleep schedules
- Meet with your counselor
- Take PSAT or PACT if offered at your school
- Start planning summer, consider opportunities that include exploration of academic interests and career ideas
- Meet with your counselor
- Make a study plan for any AP exams that will take place in May, starting by meeting with teachers and getting their guidance

MID-YEAR

- Start curriculum planning for 11th grade, look for opportunities for challenge and increased rigor

- Parents: Note that January 1st of your child's sophomore year is the beginning of the base year on which financial aid calculations for the first year of college will be based. The base year runs from January of the student's sophomore year to December of their junior year.

SPRING

- Focus on keeping grades up, finish as strongly as possible
- Study for any AP exams to earn the highest possible scores
- Take mock SAT and mock ACT to begin planning for standardized test prep based on mock test results
- Parents: Explore SAT/ACT test prep options and their costs

SUMMER 10/11

- Productive activity
- Possible start of test prep
- Consider what needs to be added or strengthened for the strong,

challenging, 11th grade year ahead. Consider:

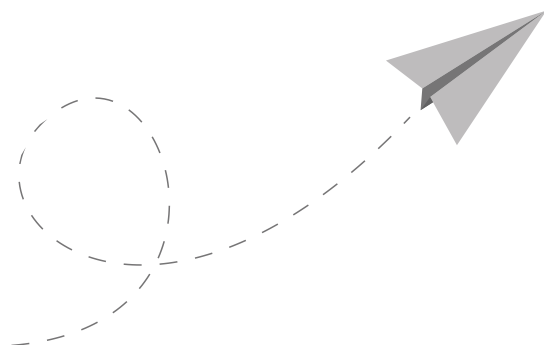
- Early prep for a difficult class
- Strengthen time management and study habits
- Set up structures, boundaries, schedules, planning for the extra work of test prep and college planning during 11th grade
- Consider how to deepen involvement, take on leadership in extracurricular activities during 11th grade
- Consider taking YouScience or a similar career interest assessment, as it may impact course selection. Check with your counselor about whether any assessments are available for free through your high school.

PRO-TIPS FOR PARENT

1. **Ideally, the student should be in the driver's seat for as much of the college process as possible, but your help and support will be needed throughout.** In addition to the items on the timeline that are highlighted as parent responsibilities, here are a few ideas to help you identify where your help will be most beneficial.
2. **You know your kid better than anyone.** Students are all different, both in their development and their engagement with the college process, so it is normal that some will require more parent involvement and some will need less, so the first recommendation is to adapt and adjust as needed based on your child.
3. **Be involved in any part of the process that involves money.** Make it clear to your student which decisions will be driven by finances, and what the ground rules are for parts of the process with associated costs. This includes not only the cost of attending college and how that affects the college list, but also costs for tutoring, test prep and testing fees, application fees, visiting colleges, travel to and from campuses once enrolled, and others.
4. **Be your child's prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that is not fully developed in teens, but that is so crucial in making complex plans and decisions.** As you look through the items on the timeline, you will probably recognize which ones will require you to act as a sounding board or a manager. This could include anything from encouraging them to connect with teachers and counselors and to try new activities, to helping them think out loud about their priorities as they develop their college lists, to planning travel for campus visits, to setting up spreadsheets and schedules or other structures for completing applications over time rather than at the last minute. They are likely to need your support for any high-level reflection or any process that involves careful curation, whether of their own priorities or the college list itself
5. **Nothing has to be perfect.** Not the college list, the essays and applications, the transcript, the grades, the test scores, the activity list--none of it! Colleges are

looking for real students who present themselves as authentically as possible, and no one was ever denied admission for a minor typo. Please resist the temptation to be too hands-on, especially with the essays. Admissions officers can spot a sentence written by someone over forty right away, and that will not help your student's chances. Remember that colleges need kids, so as long as the college list is well-balanced and fits the student, everything just has to be "good enough."

6. **It is still the student's journey.** Do what is truly necessary to support your child, but then stand back as much as you can. Students need to feel that the major decisions are theirs, and that what is being expressed in the applications is theirs. (In fact, they have to sign a statement attesting to the latter.) The more they are empowered in the process, the more likely they are to take ownership of the journey itself, and the more likely they are to be invested in their success, wherever they end up.
7. **Don't forget to enjoy the journey.** This does not have to be terribly stressful. At its best, college planning can be a joyful journey of self-discovery, and include some memorable parent-child moments you will cherish. It is more likely to play out this way if your teen starts the process early enough, and works on it a little bit almost every week starting in the middle of 11th grade. Anything you can do to support a calm, thoughtful, little-bit-at-a-time process will increase the chances that you and your teen can appreciate the growth it can facilitate, and savor the surprising moments of joy you may discover along the way.



Grown and Flown is the #1 site for parents with teens in high school and college.
Contact us at grownandflown@gmail.com | www.grownandflown.com

This timeline is a general guide and will not cover every student or circumstance. As circumstances change some information may become obsolete. By Stephanie Meade from [Collegiate Edge](#)

