College Planning: 9th/10th Grade

CollegeBoard

FOR 9TH/10TH GRADE

There are some steps you can take as a ninth- and a 10th-grader to make sure you're on the right track for college. This list will help you navigate the college planning process:

9TH GRADE

☐ **Create a four-year high school plan.** Think about what you'd like to accomplish in the next four years.

- Make sure you know which high school courses are required by colleges, and that you're taking the right classes as early as the ninth grade.You can ask your counselor about what those "right" classes are.
- Get to know the levels of courses offered by your school.

☐ **Start thinking about your life after school,** including the types of jobs that might interest you. Of course, these will change — often — but it's good to start thinking about the possibilities.

- Identify your interests — likes and dislikes — not just in classes but also in every area. This will help you focus on your goals.
- Talk to other people, such as your school counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc., about careers you might find interesting.

☐ **Meet with your high school counselor.** Your counselor knows how to help you get the most out of high school. Be sure to take some time during the school year to discuss post-high-school plans with him or her.

☐ **Participate in extracurricular activities.** Academics aren't everything. Explore your interest in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.

- Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity instead of a loose connection to several.
- If you're interested in playing sports in college, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find the specifics at ncaaclearinghouse.net.

☐ **Save for college.** It's not too late to put money aside for college. Every little bit helps!

☐ **Explore summer opportunities.** Look for a job, internship, or volunteer position that will help you learn about a field of interest.

10TH GRADE

- ☐ **Meet with your high school counselor — again.** Be sure to meet with your school counselor to ensure that your course schedule is challenging enough to prepare you for college.
  - Check into any prerequisites for advanced-level junior- and senior-year courses.
- ☐ **Ask if the PSAT/NMSQT® is offered to 10th-graders.** Although this test is usually given in the 11th grade, it is also often offered in the 10th grade. That's because it provides valuable feedback through the Student Score Report. You can then work on any of your academic weaknesses while there is still plenty of time to make improvements.
- ☐ **Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy?** If so, you should request a precandidate questionnaire.
- ☐ **Attend college and career fairs.** The fairs often take place in the fall at your school or in your area.
- ☐ **Participate in school activities or volunteer efforts.** Extracurricular activities can help you develop time-management skills and enrich your high school experience.
- ☐ **Work with a counselor** to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.
- ☐ **Tour college campuses.** If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges and see what they're like. Even if you have no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.

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