

Month-by-month timeline for Junior Year of High School

September - October:

- Start Thinking About College Majors & Careers:
 - Reflect on your interests and potential career paths. Research different college majors and career options.
 - Consider using resources like the Matchmaker, Personality Style, and Mission Complete assessments to explore career paths that align with your personality and interests. *These results and categories can be found in the “About Me” portion in Xello.*
 - Students can access [Xello](#) using the single sign in “myKirkwood” app.
- Start Building a College List:
 - Use the College Search and Filter tool in Xello to start finding schools that match your assessments. Use the filter tool to input your interests in terms of location, size, programs, campus culture, and other factors. The “College” section is found under the "Explore" section at the top of the Xello dashboard/homepage.
 - By clicking on the “heart” icon that is next to the name of school, students can begin to make a list of their favorite colleges.
- Join Clubs or Extracurriculars:
 - If you haven't already, get involved in clubs, sports, or volunteer activities that align with your interests or future career goals.
 - Focus on quality involvement over quantity—colleges prefer depth over breadth.

October - December:

- Using Practice Scores:
 - After taking the PSAT and Pre-ACT, review your scores and identify areas where you need improvement for the real SAT/ACT. Use official test prep materials and/or seek out [ACT tutoring or Prep opportunities](#) to get help with targeted practice.
 - KHS offers a semester-long ACT Prep class (speak with your grade level counselor for more information or to register for this class).

- Continue College Research:
 - Continue to refine your list of colleges by researching their admissions requirements, average SAT/ACT scores, and deadlines using the Naviance Family Connection.
 - Continue to think about what you want in a college: size, location, academic programs, social atmosphere, etc.
 - 11th grade families–sign up to join your student for their individual one on one meetings with their college counselor.
 - Update Your Resume:
 - Start keeping track of your academic achievements, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and leadership roles. Make note of how many hours per week and weeks per year you do certain activities, sports, work, etc. This will be helpful when it's time to apply to colleges and universities.
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Winter/Spring Semester of Junior Year

January - February:

- Continue creating and growing your college and university list; think about summer opportunities:
 - Your list should include around 8-12 schools (but could also be smaller or bigger). Try to have a mix of “reach,” “target,” and “safety” schools based on your academic profile and preferences.
 - Some of the best research programs, internships, and pre-college courses have deadlines in January or February. Winter is the time to be strategic about the months ahead ([click here for more information](#)).
- Register for Senior Year Courses
 - Think about what you want to take senior year. Use the [KHS course book](#) to look at the [dual credit options, AP classes](#), any elective specific classes that correlate with your major. Have all classes chosen and locked in by the end of February.

March - April:

- Continue to or take for the first time the SAT/ACT:
 - Kirkwood High School will offer a national ACT exam in March, 2027 during the school day. It is free to take this exam. The [ACT](#) and [SAT](#) are given multiple times throughout the year. Please check their websites for future testing dates and deadlines, cost of exam, and other pertinent information.

Plan to take the test at least once before the end of junior year to leave time for a retake in the summer or fall if needed.

- Spring Break -College Visits:
 - Use your spring break to visit a few colleges on your list. This will help you narrow down what you like or dislike about different campuses and make more informed decisions.
- Begin Preparing for Senior Year:
 - Register to take standardized tests in June, July, or August.
 - Continue or begin visiting college and universities.
 - Plan for Summer Activities, Continued Essay Work:
 - College Essay Writing, begin or revisit any essays started junior year. Click [here](#) for some tips and to read some [essays that worked](#) for students admitted to Johns Hopkins University!
 - Think about how you want to spend your summer. Options include internships, volunteer work, academic programs on college campuses for enrichment, study abroad, research projects, part-time jobs, etc.

May - June:

- Take AP Exams (if applicable):
 - If you're taking any AP classes, make sure you're prepared for the AP exams in May. Good scores on AP exams can earn you college credit.
- Prepare for Summer SAT/ACT Prep:
 - If you're retaking the SAT or ACT, consider doing focused prep over the summer to boost your score.
 - Use the summer to take practice tests, work through prep books, or enroll in a prep course.
- Finalize Your Extracurriculars and Leadership Roles:
 - Evaluate your extracurricular activities and look for leadership opportunities for the following year. Colleges like to see meaningful involvement, not just participation.

Summer (After Junior Year)

- Take SAT/ACT (if needed):
 - If you need to retake the SAT or ACT for a better score, do so in June, July, or August.

- Work on College Essays:
 - Many college applications require a personal statement and some will require additional writing supplements as part of their applications. Continue brainstorming ideas and drafting essays over the summer.
 - Reflect on personal experiences, achievements, challenges, and future goals to craft an authentic and genuine essay.
- Continue College Visits:
 - If you haven't visited all the schools on your list, try to visit a few more over the summer. This will help you finalize your decisions about where to apply.
- Participate in Enrichment Activities, if able:
 - Take part in a summer program, internship, job, or volunteer work. This can help you stand out in certain college application pools.
 - Use this time to also take on personal projects, explore new interests, or gain experience in areas that align with your future goals.
- Prepare Your Senior Year Schedule:
 - Double-check your senior-year schedule to ensure it reflects a strong academic load with challenging courses.
- Stay Organized:
 - Create a calendar for the college application process. Note deadlines for applications, SAT/ACT scores, recommendation letters, and financial aid forms like the FAFSA.