

Year-by-Year College Preparation Guide

Because each student is unique, there is no one way to prepare for college. The following recommendations will make students more competitive applicants and better-equipped for the college process.

FRESHMAN:

- Get to know your guidance counselor
Let them know that you would like to take college preparatory classes, and discuss the ones that fit your interests and strengths.
- Strive for A's in all your classes
If you fall behind in a class seek extra help
- Create an activity resume
File report cards, certificates, awards, honors, and a list of community service activities, offices you hold in organizations, and volunteer positions
- Get involved in at least one extracurricular activity
If possible get really involved and strive for future leadership roles
- Sign up for SAT Subject tests
If you have completed a course that prepares you for these tests make sure you sign up early for the spring test dates
- Take part in summer enrichment programs
Explore some of your academic or extracurricular interests through programs, classes, community service, internships, or jobs

KEEP THIS IN MIND:

College seems a long way off in 9th grade, but you need to start seriously thinking about it now.

Your first year academic and extracurricular record will be a part of your college application, so use this time wisely.

Explore your interests, get involved, and set up great habits for your future success!

SOPHOMORE:

- Make sure you are taking all the college-prep courses you need to be taking
This is especially important if you want to go to a very competitive college or specialized program
- Strive for A's in all your classes
If you fall behind in a class seek extra help
- In October, you may take the PSAT
It's a great idea to get a jumpstart on testing
- Evaluate how much work you have to do to prepare for your SAT/ACT testing
Use your PSAT scores as a guide to decide how much studying you need to get the scores you need for your dream colleges. Don't hesitate to reach out for help from teachers or tutors!
- Update your activity resume
- Take on a leadership role in one of your extracurricular activities
- Take part in summer enrichment programs
Get a little more specific this summer and focus on expanding your knowledge or understanding in a specific area of interest
- Think about what you want in college
Start researching colleges and programs you are interested in. Attend college fairs and talk to your guidance counselor to help you get started

JUMPSTART YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH:

Start your college list. This list will grow and change over time, and that's fine. Add and/or subtract as you go along and better establish what you're looking for in a college.

JUNIOR:

- Strive for A's in all your classes
If you fall behind in a class seek extra help
- Register for the PSAT in October
Results will give you an idea of your testing strengths and weaknesses
- Prepare for the SAT and/or ACT early
Register for exams well in advance and seek out classes, tutors, or materials to help you do your best on your test day
- Update your activity resume
- Continue to take on a leadership roles in your extracurricular activities
- Register for relevant spring exams
Taking AP courses? Prepared to take SAT Subject tests? Register early for all the pertinent exams
- Attend college fairs and visit colleges you're interested in
Sign up for tours and meet with staff from admission and academic departments
- Finalize where you want to apply to college
Decide which schools you will apply to early decision, early action, rolling admission, and regular decision. If this changes slightly as you are applying no sweat
- Apply to summer programs, workshops, and internships
Think about applying to pre-college programs at your top choice schools or continue to expand your knowledge in your favorite areas of study
- Continue to prepare for the SAT and/or ACT
Strive for your best scores, so there is no harm in taking the test as many times as you need and studying for as much time as you need
- Begin working on your college applications
The CommonApp opens on August 1st, but you can start working on your personal statement and gathering your materials before the application officially opens

SENIOR:

- Continue to excel academically
The grades you earn in your senior year are still very important to schools
- Register early for the SAT or the ACT if you need to take it again
- Find new ways to show you're uniqueness through your activities
Keep taking on leadership roles and showing yourself through your extracurricular activities
- Work on your college applications and finish your essays
Pay special attention to deadlines for your applications especially if you're applying early
- Ask your teachers and counselors for recommendations
Give your teachers at least two weeks to do an insightful and thorough job on your letter
- Request that your transcript and test scores be sent to all of your schools
Ask your guidance counselor to send your transcript and use College Board or ACT to send your official test reports
- Apply Early and be sure to meet all deadlines
Check every school's specific deadlines especially if you are applying to any school early
- Mail your commitment deposit by the deadline
Once you're in make sure you send your deposit and acceptance by the deadline
- Write or call any colleges you were accepted to, but you are declining their acceptance
- Continue to prepare for the SAT and/or ACT
Strive for your best scores, so there is no harm in taking the test as many times as you need and studying for as much time as you need
- Maintain a strong academic record
AVOID SENIORITIS in the spring!

SENIORITIS:

an intensifying disinterest in maintaining high academic standards during one's senior year