

9th Grade

Fall semester

Explore various extracurricular activities to find what you enjoy.

Challenge yourself academically by taking difficult courses.

Spring semester

Plan the next three years of your academics by identifying which AP, IB, or honors courses you want to take. Know what prerequisites you'll need, if any.

Meet your counselor to discuss your goals and ask what resources you're your school has to prepare for college.

Summer vacation

Find a summer job, do volunteer work or attend a summer program.

Instead of TV, Try reading for pleasure to build your vocabulary.

10th Grade

September – November

Take challenging courses including AP, IB or honors classes. Keep up with your grades.

Start narrowing your activities. Begin to dedicate yourself to a few extracurricular activities, and work toward leadership activities that you are passion about, think about starting a club or a special project. Don't forget to look outside of school for community activities.

Compete in matches, contests, and competitions to rack up awards.

Think about taking the PSAT in October. Your score won't count, but it will help you get familiar with the test.

December – February

Start attending college fairs, browsing college guidebooks, attending visits by college reps and checking out college websites.

Meet with your counselor to discuss colleges that may be a good fit and ask what you should be doing to prepare.

March – May

Take the AP tests in May in subjects that you have completed.

If you feel prepared enough, take SAT subject exams (usually in May or June) for courses that have completed.

Summer Vacation

Find a job, do volunteer work or attend a summer program.

If you go on a family vacation, visit colleges in the area.

Study for the PSAT that you must take next year.

Read books for pleasure (and vocabulary building).

11th Grade

September – November

Take the PSAT in October to practice for the SAT and to be eligible for National Merit Scholarship awards.

Continue to take challenging AP, IB or honors courses.

Take the SAT, especially if you are applying for early admission or early decision.

Discuss with your parents how you will finance your education. Learn about federal financial aid, and ask your counselor about local scholarships.

Get to know your favorite teachers well. Start thinking about whom you might ask to write evaluations.

Focus on becoming a leader in a few extracurricular activities- run for an office, lead a team or start your own club, business or service project.

Get a copy of some college applications to preview.

Continue to complete in matches, contests, and competitions.

If you think you will play Division I athletics in college, register at the NCAA Eligibility Center at naccstudent.org.

Get a preview of how much financial aid you'll be likely to receive by completing the FASA4caster at fafsa4caster.ed.gov.

Attend college fairs and college representative visits to your school, and visit colleges. Ask questions!

December – February

Continue to research colleges.

Register and prepare for the SAT or ACT and SAT subject exams. Think about review classes or set up your own preparation schedule.

March – May

Take the SAT (usually in March or June) or the

ACT (usually in April or June)

Take AP exams in May and the SAT subject exams in May or June.

Visit your counselor to discuss your preliminary plans for applying to college and sources of financial aid.

Write to your U.S. senator or representative if you would like to attend a U.S. military academy or participate in an ROTC program.

Summer

Find a summer job, do volunteer work or attend a summer program.

Plan family vacations so that you can also visit some of the colleges where you might want to apply for admission.

Get applications from colleges by writing letters, requesting them online or downloading them from college websites.

Register for the SAT or ACT and SAT subject tests. Set up a study schedule or take a test preparation class.

Read books for pleasure (and vocabulary building).

12th Grade

September – November

Continue to take challenging courses and keep up grades.

Decide which schools you will apply to, and list the deadlines.

Take the SAT (usually in October or November) or the ACT (usually in September or October).

Take the SAT subject exams in October, November or December.

Submit early action or early decision applications.

Ask teachers and counselors to complete your Evaluation Forms and School Report.

Request transcripts and test scores be sent to colleges.

Brainstorm and write your essays, and enlist editors to help you perfect them. (Start this as early as possible!)

Arrange college interviews and practice for them.

Attend college fairs and college representative visits to your school, and visit colleges. Ask questions!

December-February

Send off your applications—deadlines are typically in January, but check with each school.

Complete the necessary financial aid forms, including the FASFA and CSS/PROFILE.

Continue to apply for scholarships.

Ask your counselor to complete any necessary Mid-Year School Reports. They are typically due in February.

March-May

Now it's time to wait it out. You will typically receive notification letters at the beginning of April. (Remember, good news usually—but not always—comes in thick envelopes.)

If you are placed on the wait list, write a letter

reiterating your interest in being admitted.

With the help from your parents, teachers and counselors, decide where you'd like to spend the next four years.

Notify the schools of your decision.

Summer

Enjoy your summer of freedom!

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