



College Planning Calendar & Checklist

FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS

As you enter your final two years of high school and start thinking about college, don't stress. Along with our handy guide, we have created this detailed checklist to keep your college application process moving along smoothly and on track.

JUNIOR YEAR

Thinking about college starts in your junior year.

FALL

- Take a challenging course load and all of the classes you need to graduate.
- Begin researching colleges. Look at websites, search sites, online campus tours, student reviews.
- Register for the PSAT in October. You can take a practice PSAT online. It is the only way you can qualify for a National Merit Scholarship (NationalMerit.org).
- Talk to your counselor and consider an assessment test to explore potential careers you might like.
- Get involved in your community, school activities, and clubs. Track your volunteer hours and add these experiences to your applications.

WINTER

- Take a free practice test for the ACT and SAT to see on which test you perform better.
- Sign up for a prep class if you are taking the early spring exams.
- Investigate scholarship and financial aid options.
- Continue researching colleges and universities that interest you. Make a list of your Top 10.
- Decide which colleges that you might like to visit and prepare questions for upcoming tours.

SPRING

- Look into summer jobs, internships, summer camps, and other career-inspiring programs that will boost your resume.
- Attend college fairs in your area. It's a great way to collect brochures and meet College Reps one-on-one.
- Register to take the SAT or ACT.
- Take the appropriate Subject Tests (if needed) and AP Tests.
- Visit the schools on your list. Explore the campus, its facilities, and what makes each college unique.

SUMMER

- Request catalogs and admissions information from your top-choice schools, if you haven't already.
- If you took the SAT/ACT for the first time in May/June but need to improve your scores, take a summer prep course.
- If practical, visit and tour the rest of the schools on your list.
- Brainstorm and outline a few essay ideas.
- Schedule an appointment with your counselor or independent consultant to discuss your college plans.
- Create a binder to keep all of your information and application forms organized.
- Start your applications before the stresses of senior year kick into full gear.

SENIOR YEAR

It's your last year of school! Now is the time to complete your college quest.

SEPTEMBER

- Decide which colleges you want to apply to. Include schools that you believe will accept you, as well as some schools that may be a reach.
- Work on completing your college applications.
- Find out if your target colleges accept the Common Application or Universal College Application, which can be submitted online.
- Decide if you will apply for early decision to your top-choice schools.
- Start the framework for your college essays.
- Start asking teachers, counselors, or employers to write recommendations.

OCTOBER

- Last chance to take the SAT/ACT.
- Continue completing your applications. Submit early decisions.
- Fine-tune your college essays. Have them proofread for content and grammar.
- Submit a CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE. Many colleges use this to award financial aid.

NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER

- Submit your completed college applications and essays.
- Check to see if your recommendation letters have been mailed.
- Search for scholarship opportunities.
- Obtain a copy of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at studentaid.edu.gov for your parents to fill out.
- Look for early decision acceptance letters from schools.

JANUARY

- File for the FAFSA as soon as you can after January 1st.
- Make sure that the colleges you applied to in December have received your completed application.
- Ask your counselor to send your mid-year grades to the colleges or universities that require them.
- Be aware of the deadline for your CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE if you haven't submitted it yet.
- Check the policies on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests at the schools you may attend. These tests can earn you college credits.

FEBRUARY

- If you haven't done so already, submit your FAFSA online at studentaid.edu.gov. Deadline is as soon as possible after January 1st.
- If you have submitted a FAFSA and you have not received your Student Aid Report (SAR) within a month, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center directly.
- Confirm that all schools that you applied to have received your mid-year transcripts, exam scores, and financial aid information.

MARCH

- If you are taking any Advanced Placement (AP) courses, prepare for the exams.
- Continue searching for scholarships that will help reduce your tuition.
- Keep an eye out for admission decisions from colleges—and any additional information schools may request.

APRIL

- Check your mail for admission decisions and financial aid letters.
- If you are added to a waiting list, notify the college or university if you are still interested, and ask them if there's anything you can do to better your chances of being accepted.
- If you've made your final school decision, send in your enrollment form and deposit.
- Notify other schools of your final decision, so they can offer enrollment to other students.

MAY

- Take AP exams and make sure your scores are sent to your college.
- Send thank you notes to your counselor, teachers, and those who've written personal recommendations.
- Double-check on any deadlines and last-minute paperwork necessary to attend your college.
- Study for your final exams. Your scores are still important.

JUNE

- Have your counselor send your final transcript.
- Complete any last-minute paperwork required for your school.
- Plan your transition and exciting move to campus.
- Graduate high school!

About TeenLife

TeenLife is the largest online directory of outside-the-classroom enrichment programs for students in grades 7–12, along with regular content to support strong teen enrichment decision making. TeenLife is passionate about teen success.

