

HIGH SCHOOL TIMELINE

Use this timeline to help you make sure you are accomplishing everything you need to accomplish on time.

TENTH GRADE

FALL

- As soon as you can, meet with your counselor to begin talking about colleges and careers.
- Explore your interests and possible careers. Take advantage of Career Day opportunities.
- Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. Continue or begin a college savings plan.
- Based on your interests, abilities, personality traits, and aptitude, create a tentative academic/career plan with your counselor. Think about careers and check out mentorship opportunities.
- Look at college information and college entrance requirements on college websites.
- Get off to a good start with your grades, and plan your high school courses to complement your goals and meet college requirements.
- In October, take the PSAT for practice and to get valuable test-taking information for future tests.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities (both school and non-school sponsored).
- Participate in career development activities such as career day, service learning and mentorships.

WINTER

- Discuss your PSAT score with your counselor, and log onto the College Board website utilizing personalized codes to gain valuable information for future test-taking and information to study.
- Become involved in your community and look for leadership positions. People that you meet will be used in your future for networking opportunities and recommendations.
- Read, read, read. Read as many books as possible from a comprehensive reading list.
- Work on your writing skills-you will need them no matter what you do in life.
- Utilize teachers and other adults as writing mentors.
- Tour a nearby college or university. Check out the dorms, college library, student center, and possible classes.
- Investigate summer enrichment programs.

SPRING

- Keep your grades up so that you can have the highest GPA possible.
- Continue to explore interests and career options.
- Think about what type of college or university that you would like to attend: size, location, major, ratings, academic rigor, housing, and cost.
- If you are interested in attending a military academy, such as West Point or Annapolis, now is the time to start planning and getting information.
- Write to colleges and request course catalogs.
- Keep putting money away for college. Apply for a summer job.
- Consider taking the ACT and/or SAT II Subject Tests.

ELEVENTH GRADE

FALL

- Meet with your counselor to review the courses that you have taken and see what you still need to take.
- Even if your grades have not been that good so far, it is never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.
- Sign up to take the PSAT. In addition to the National Merit Scholarships, this is the qualifying test for the National Scholarship Service, Fund for the Negro Students, and National Hispanic Scholar Recognition Program. It also helps you prepare for the ACT and/or SAT tests.

- Memorize your social security number.
- Make a list of colleges that meet the criteria that you are looking for in a college or university (size, location, distance from home, majors, academic rigor, housing and cost).
- Attend college fairs, and speak to college representatives and recruiters.
- If you want to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college, start the certification process. Check with your counselor to make sure you are taking the core curriculum that meets the NCAA requirements.
- If you are interested in one of the military academies, talk to your guidance counselor about starting the application process.

WINTER

- Collect information about college application procedures, entrance requirements, tuition and fees, room and board costs, student activities, course offerings, faculty composition, accreditation, and financial aid.
- Discuss your PSAT scores with your counselor, and log onto the College Board website utilizing personalized codes to gain valuable information for future test taking and information to study.
- Begin narrowing down your college or university choices. Find out if the colleges that you are interested in require the SAT, ACT or SAT II Subject Tests for admission.
- Register to take the ACT and SAT assessments in April or June, and begin preparing for the exams.
- Have a discussion with your parents about the colleges that you are considering, and examine financial resources, scholarships, and financial aid.
- Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.

SPRING

- Meet with your counselor to review your senior year course selection and graduation requirements.
- Discuss your ACT and SAT scores with your counselor.
- Register to take the ACT and/or SAT in October.
- Create a general college and scholarship essay. Have your English teacher critique the essay.
- Create a resume. Do not use a template, and have your counselor critique the resume.
- Stay involved with your extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency and depth in activities.
- Consider whom you will ask to write your recommendation letters. Think about asking teachers, counselors, bosses, and other influential people who know you well to write positive letters of recommendations. Remember to give them a resume and a stamped addressed envelope.
- Inquire about personal interviews at your favorite colleges. Call or write for early summer appointments. Make necessary travel arrangements.
- See your counselor to apply for on-campus summer programs for high school students. Apply for a summer job or internship. Be prepared to pay for college applications and testing fees such as ACT and SAT.
- Request or download college applications from school that you are interested in.

SUMMER BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEAR

- Practice writing online applications, filling out rough drafts of each application without submitting them as you will need to have them proofread. Focus on the essay portions of these applications, deciding how you would like to present yourself. Do not forget to mention your activities outside of school.
- Review your applications, especially the essays. Ask family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.
- Decide if you are going to apply under a particular college's early decision or early action program. This requires you to submit your applications early, typically between October and December of your senior year, but offers the benefit of receiving the college's decision concerning your admission early, usually before January 1st. If you choose to apply early, you should do so for the college or university that you would most like to attend. Many

early decision programs are legally binding, requiring you to attend the college or university to which you are applying, should they accept you.

- Read your college mail and send reply cards to your schools of interest.

SUMMER

- Visit the campuses of your top-five college or university choices.
- After each college interview, send a thank you letter to the interviewer.
- Seek out and talk to people you know who have attended the colleges in which you are interested.
- Continue to read books, magazines, and newspapers.
- Practice filling out college applications, and then complete the final application forms or apply online through the college or university website that you are interested.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Compose rough drafts of your college essays. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you. Proofread them at least three times and prepare final drafts.
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of the aid resources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.
- If you are an athlete, you should contact college coaches and join summer camps where college coaches will be.

TWELFTH GRADE

FALL

- Practice writing online applications, filling out rough drafts of each application, without submitting them. Focus on the essay portions of these applications, deciding how you would like to present yourself. Do not forget to mention your activities outside of school.
- Review your applications, especially the essays. Ask family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.
- Decide if you are going to apply under a particular college's early decision or early action program. This requires you to submit your applications early, typically between October and December of your senior year, but offers the benefit of receiving the college's decision concerning your admission early, usually before January 1st. If you choose to apply early, you should do so for the college or university that you would most like to attend. Many early decision programs are legally binding, requiring you to attend the college or university to which you are applying, should they accept you.
- Read your college mail and send reply cards to your schools of interest.
- Think about and/or arrange for your senior pictures to be taken.
- Visit the campuses of your top-five college or university choices.
- After each college interview, send a thank you letter to the interviewer.
- Seek out and talk to people you know who have attended the colleges in which you are interested.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Compose rough drafts of your college essays. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you. Proofread them at least three times and prepare final drafts.
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of the aid resources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.
- If you are an athlete, you should contact college coaches and join summer camps where college coaches will be. In order to be eligible to play college sports, you will also need to register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association <https://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net/NCAA/common/index.html>.
- Continue to take a full course load of college-prep or dual credit courses.
- Keep working on your grades. Make sure you have taken the courses necessary to graduate in the spring.
- Continue to participate in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Demonstrate initiative, creativity, commitment, and leadership.

- To male students: you must register for selective service on your eighteenth birthday to be eligible for federal and state financial aid, student loans and government jobs.
- Discuss your college or university choices with your counselor, teachers, friends and family.
- Make a calendar showing application deadlines for admission, financial aid, and scholarships.
- Check resource books, computer programs, websites, and your guidance office for information on scholarships and grants. Ask colleges about scholarships for which you may qualify.
- Give recommendation forms and requests to the teachers, counselors, bosses, and other influential people who know you well to write positive letters of recommendations. Remember to give them a resume and a stamped addressed envelope. Talk to your recommendation writers about your goals and ambitions.
- Register for and take the ACT or the SAT tests if you were not satisfied with your October or December scores. College entrance and some scholarships are based on these tests. Be sure that you have requested that your ACT or SAT scores are sent to the colleges that you are considering.
- If you plan to apply for an ROTC scholarship, remember that your application is due by December 1st.
- Print and make extra copies of every application that you send.

WINTER

- Apply for FAFSA before March 1st.
- Attend whatever college-preparatory nights are held at your school and community.
- Send midyear transcripts to colleges. Continue to focus on your schoolwork!
- Mail or send electronic remaining applications and financial aid forms before winter break. Make sure that you apply to at least one college or university that you know that you will be accepted.
- Follow up to make sure that colleges have received all application information, including recommendations and test scores.
- Meet with your counselor to verify that all applicable forms are in order and have been sent out to colleges.
- Order cap, gown, graduation announcements and accessories.

SPRING

- Watch your mail between March 1st and April 1st for acceptance notifications from colleges.
- Watch your mail for notification of financial aid awards between April 1st and May 1st.
- Compare the financial aid packages from the colleges and universities that have accepted you.
- Make your final choice, and notify all school of your intent by May 1st. If possible, do not decide without making at least one campus visit. Send your nonrefundable deposit to your chosen school by May 1st as well. Request that your guidance counselor send a final transcript to the college or university that you will be attending in June.
- Be sure that you have received a FAFSA acknowledgement.
- If you applied for a Pell Grant (on the FAFSA), you will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) statement. Review this Pell notice, and forward it to the college or university that you plan to attend. Make a copy for your record.
- Complete follow-up paperwork for the college or university of your choice (scheduling, orientation session, housing arrangements, and other necessary forms).

SUMMER

- If applicable, apply for a Stafford Loan through a lender. Allow eight weeks for processing.
- Receive the orientation schedule, residence hall assignments, and course scheduling from your college or university.