

College Prep Checklist



FRESHMEN

Investigate Your Interests

- Make a list of potential careers that intrigue you; think about your favorite subjects in school.
- Visit CollegeRaptor.com to start exploring colleges best suited for you. See which schools offer the programs and majors you're considering.

Create a Plan

- Find out what classes will make you a strong college applicant.
- Push yourself academically; your high school GPA includes all four years.
- Ask about AP / 1B / dual-credit classes, which illustrate your intellect and curiosity to colleges and can potentially earn you college credit while you're still in high school.

Immersed and Involved

- Join a club, sport, or activity that you enjoy.
- Consider a job for experience and earning money for college.
- Volunteer for something you find important.



REMINDER

Being deeply involved in a few activities is usually looked at more favorably than being just slightly involved in many different activities. The best way to get deeply involved is to start early and find your passions!

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College Conquest

- Research majors and careers aligned with your passions and interests.
- Talk with people in your areas of interest to learn more about the field.
- Work with your advisor to fine-tune your schedule so you're taking the right classes.
- Revisit CollegeRaptor.com and update your search. See what's new!
- Think about visiting campuses. It's not too early.

Explore Entrance Exams

- Find out which exam your potential colleges require; talk to your counselor about prepping for the ACT or SAT.
- Consider taking a practice exam like the PSAT or ACT Aspire.

Prepare to Pay for College

- Strategize about how to pay for college.
- Talk to your family about their ability to contribute and how much.
- Start to learn about financial aid and student loans.
- Save up gift money and paychecks.
- Go to school-sponsored college-funding presentations to learn more.

Remember and Retain

- Stay involved in community and school activities.
- Study more than you think you need to; work hard for your GPA.
- Make a record of your achievements, honors, awards, activities, volunteer work, leadership experiences, and other special recognitions you've earned.

SOPHOMORE

College Prep Checklist



JUNIOR

College Conquest Continued

- Visit CollegeRaptor.com to update your options. Start to narrow down and prioritize your list.
- Make sure your college list includes Reaches, Reasonable and Safer choices.
- Attend college fairs in your area.
- Visit the campuses you're interested in.
- Meet college admission representatives at your high school or in your area.
- Talk to current students about college life and their majors.

Take the Test(s)

- Check with your counselor on the standardized test(s) that are right for you.
- Register to take the exam(s).
- Study, study, study, and attend review courses or use online resources.

Ace the Academics

- Consider if AP/18 classes are right for you; if they are, take them.
- Check the requirements for graduation and admission at the colleges you're interested in.
- Continue to strive for a healthy GPA.

Fine-Tune Your Finances

- Continue to explore financial aid.
- Work with your counselor to find appropriate scholarships.
- Continue to save money.

Remember and Retain

- Extracurriculars, jobs, and community service are important elements of your college applications.



REMINDER

Don't be afraid to look at colleges that may be a reach for you! Build a balanced list of potential colleges, and remember to choose at least two "safe" schools where you're confident you'll be accepted.

JUNIOR

College Prep Checklist



SENIOR

College Essay

- Think about what you want your essay to say about you.
- What have you done that conveys a good story of who you are?

Test Time

- If you haven't already, take SAT/ACT tests.
- Consider taking them multiple times to improve your score.
- Study, study, study, and attend review courses or use online resources.

Complete Admission Applications

- Revisit your list of colleges on CollegeRaptor.com.
- Know the application requirements/deadlines; mark them on your calendar
- Submit applications for your preferred colleges.

Complete Financial Aid and College Applications

- Complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form.
- Complete the CSS Profile, if required by colleges to which you're applying.
- Apply for scholarships.

Review Your Requirements

- Make sure you've taken all required classes for your preferred colleges.

Decision Deadline

- Once you've received acceptances, choose the school that's best for you.
- If you've been deferred or waitlisted, provide colleges with any new info to help them make a decision.
- Send in your deposit, final transcript, and any other requirements for your school of choice.
- Celebrate! You made it!



REMINDER

Complete the FAFSA even if you don't think that your family will qualify for financial aid. Institutional grants from colleges often depend on your FAFSA and many families are surprised to find out that they can qualify for more aid than they expect.

SENIOR