

CHECKLIST



HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR COLLEGE PREP CHECKLIST

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While some students have the drive and motivation to make it through the college prep and scholarship process without any parental guidance, most students need a little extra nudge. Still, many parents aren't sure where they can or should step in. This checklist will help you guide your child through their high school junior year so they can stay on track as they prepare for college and help them secure money for a debt-free education.

How to Use This Checklist

While these checklists are strong guidelines for the admission and scholarship process, feel free to adapt them as needed.

If your child is younger than a junior, start working through the items for junior year. It never hurts to start researching and preparing earlier than junior year.

If your child is already in college, they can still focus on getting involved and working on scholarship applications. Follow the steps for these topics and they can work towards a debt-free school year!

JUNIOR YEAR

Should be completed prior to junior year:

NOTES

- Meet your guidance counselor
- Get involved in extracurricular activities
- Consider a college savings plan and add to an existing one if you have already have one started
- Getting involved: Continue to build your credentials- Keep track of your extracurricular awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in
- Create your resume
- Begin getting ready for the ACT
- Stay on track with your courses: Talk with your guidance counselor to make sure you're enrolled in the classes you need to prepare you for college or a career
- Explore your career options in more detail: "Job shadow" someone who does what you think you'd like to do
- Volunteer in your community
- Start your college search

Fall:

- Start studying for the [SAT/ACT, SAT Subject Tests and AP exams](#) as soon **as the school year begins**
- Take the PSAT
- Stay on track with your classes and grades
- Have your child [study for the ACT/SAT](#)
- Make a list of potential colleges you would like to attend
- Make sure your resume is up-to-date and continue updating it throughout the year
- Create a document of any awards and involvements to use in the future
- Evaluate education options: vocational-technical school, career college, or two-year or four-year college, military college

- Discuss careers and which majors can lead there
- Gather college information: Attend college fairs, college nights and speak to representatives from colleges that attend your high school
- Begin planning campus visits
- Mark the dates on a calendar for upcoming tests: SAT, ACT, and AP exams
- Continue involvement in extracurricular and volunteer activities and seek leadership roles
- Continue building relationships with your teachers as 11th grade teachers are the ones that you will most likely ask for letters of recommendation
- Read as much as possible: Expand your outside reading list
- If a [course member](#), begin watching videos, implementing action items as you go
- [Apply for scholarships as many allow juniors to apply](#)

Winter:

- Stay involved with extracurricular activities
- Study for the ACT/SAT
- Getting involved: Holidays and winter break are great times to volunteer
- Organize your college information
- Start narrowing down your college choices: if you haven't already start planning some college visits
- Note merit scholarship requirements for these colleges
- Continue discussing careers and corresponding majors
- Shadow career fields
- Prepare for standardized tests: research the test requirements of the colleges you wish to attend (SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests) and **register for the tests**
- Learn more about financial aid
- Apply for scholarships: find scholarships with little competition but can fund a free ride
- Start planning for a productive summer: Check on internship deadlines
- If a [course member](#), winter break is a great time to implement a large portion of the materials

Spring:

- Getting involved: Some schools allow new members to join after winter break
- Prepare your class schedule for senior year: stick with a schedule that challenges you versus all easy classes/meet with your school counselor to discuss your options
- Consider ways to earn college credit via [Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, CLEP, or Dual Enrollment courses](#)
- Continue your scholarship search and apply: find scholarships with little competition BUT will fund a free ride
- Contact your letter of recommendation writers: employer, coach, activity leader, or adult who knows you well outside of school
- Check for local scholarships in the guidance office before school year ends
- Apply for a summer internship or job
- Set up appointments at your top college choices including a personal interview, tour of the campus and meet with a professor/coach

Summer:

- Visit Colleges: Visit the top 5 campuses on your list
- Work a summer job to gain experience, build a resume, and save money for college
- [Maximize summer](#) to build competitiveness
- Talk to others about their experience in college especially if the student is attending a college on your list
- Organize your [financial aid information](#)
- Start working on your college application essays: Have a teacher read and discuss the essays with you
- Continue to pursue scholarship opportunities and apply!
*Junior year summer is ideal for mastering the scholarship process, slowly working through the [6-step process](#) Doing so over the summer means you can have materials ready to reuse for senior year!
- Letters of Recommendation: Request these letters with at least a 2-week notice

- Develop a strong personal statement for scholarships
- Retake the SAT/ACT to improve score
- Finalize personal statement based on junior year
- Write down all deadlines for FAFSA, admissions applications and scholarships (including state-based and merit-based scholarships)