

WHERE DO I START PLANNING MY LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

10TH GRADE CHECKLIST

- Meet with your high school counselor — again. Be sure to meet with your school counselor to ensure that your course schedule is challenging enough to prepare you for college.
- Check into any prerequisites for advanced-level junior and senior-year courses.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT® It provides valuable feedback on your college readiness and a free, personalized plan to help you start getting ready for the SAT — and for college.
- Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy? If so, you should request a pre-candidate questionnaire.
- Along with your family, do some research about how to obtain financial aid. Many students use financial aid to cover college costs. Find out what financial aid is, where it comes from, and how you can apply for it. Read the U.S. Department of Education's Funding Your Education (about federal aid programs).
- Attend college and career fairs. The fairs often take place in the fall at your school or in your area.
- Participate in school activities or volunteer efforts. Extracurricular activities can help you develop time management skills and enrich your high school experience.
- Talk to your counselor about your plans for life after high school. He or she can help you plan your schedule, search for colleges, and navigate the financial aid process. The more your counselor knows about you, the more he or she can help you along the way.
- Tour college campuses. If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges and see what they're like. Even if you have no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.

Resource: <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/CollegePlanning/media/pdf/BigFuture-College-Planning-9th-10th-Graders.pdf>

Students

To Do:

- Meet with your school counselor or mentor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Consider taking a practice [Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test \(PSAT/NMSQT\)](#), or check out the [ACT Aspire exam "sandbox."](#)
- Plan to use your summer wisely: Work, volunteer, or take a summer course (away or at a local college).
- Go to career information events to get a more detailed look at career options.
- Research majors that might be a good fit with your interests and goals based on your results from the U.S. Department of Labor's [career search](#).

To Explore:

- Learn the differences between [grants, loans, work-study, and scholarships](#).

Parents

To Do:

- Find out whether your child's school has college nights or financial aid nights. Plan to attend those events with your child.
- Help your child develop independence by encouraging him or her to take responsibility for balancing homework with any other activities or a part-time job.

To Explore:

- Learn about the [standardized tests](#) your child will be taking during 10th through 12th grades.
- Get a brief overview of financial aid from [Federal Student Aid at a Glance](#).

Resource: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/10th-grade>