

Preparing for College: Junior Checklist

Fall:

- You will need to sign up for the PSAT by noon Thursday, August 31st. Sign up with your English 3 teacher. If you are taking English 3 as a dual credit, sign up with the appropriate teacher based on the period you are scheduled for dual credit English 3: Mr. Yantis, Coach Trompler, or Mr. Tumlinson.
- Start developing a résumé—a record of your accomplishments, activities, and work experiences. This will be an important part of your college application.
- If you haven't participated in many activities outside of class, now is the time to sign up. Consider clubs at schools, team sports, leadership roles, or involvement in your religious or civic community group.
- Take the PSAT. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant. When you receive the results (usually in December), review them to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses. Discuss the results with your family and school counselor.
- Begin to prepare for the ACT or SAT. Free test preparation may be available at your school, your local community colleges, and community based programs; in addition, there are many free resources on the Internet. You should plan to take at least one of these tests in the spring and again next fall during your senior year. **If you are on free/reduced lunch, see Mrs. Bearden for a fee waiver!**

January/February:

- Register for a spring offering of the SAT and/or ACT. If you would like to see a comparison of the SAT and ACT, ask your counselor or transition coordinator.
- Begin thinking about what courses you want to take as a senior. Make sure you select the most challenging courses for which you are qualified!

March/April:

- Begin taking a more serious look at colleges and universities. Make a file for each college in which you are interested and gather information about academics, financial aid, and campus life. Go to college fairs and open houses and learn as much as you can about colleges online.
- Begin planning college visits. Spring break is a good time to visit. Try to visit colleges near you and include a large, medium size, and small campus. You are allowed two college visits your junior year and senior year. Please check with the office BEFORE you visit to get the necessary paperwork.
- Develop a preliminary list of colleges that interest you. Write or email to request a viewbook and additional information.

- Think about lining up a summer job, internship or co-op.

May:

- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults whom you might ask to write letters of recommendation for your college applications.

Summer:

- Continue investigating colleges
- Begin thinking about your applications. Generally, colleges will have their applications online by the beginning of August. Work on the essay(s) before you return to school!

For both students and parents, it's crucial to stay on top of college preparation during the 11th-grade year and the following summer.

Resource: <https://www.nacacfacts.org/learn/apply/preparing-for-college-junior-check-list/>

Visit the website below to see what you should be doing—including looking into careers, searching for scholarships, and keeping the savings account on track.

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/checklists/11th-grade>

Here is another timeline with some great information!

11th Grade: College Planning Timeline

Peterson's Staff

Monday, August 22, 2016

Eleventh grade is a key year in the college planning process, with standardized test taking, narrowing your college list, and investigating financial aid. Find out more about college prep in your junior year of high school with this article.

Get the tips you need to succeed

We know you're busy, so we're here to take the guesswork out of financial aid, college applications, and how to survive college life. And best of all, it's free!

This is a key year in the college planning process because you'll be taking standardized tests, narrowing down your college list, and learning more about financial aid. In addition, you'll need to stay involved in your high school courses and activities.

Fall: Take the PSAT and start a list of colleges

Stay on track with your classes and grades. Meet with your counselor to see what you still need to take. Check on your class rank and your GPA. Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.

Take the PSAT. Taking the test qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program, which means you could earn money for college. In addition, it's a good way to practice for the SAT.

Evaluate your education options. Now is the time to follow a more specific path. Decide whether you want to pursue full-time employment, further education or training (such as a vocational-technical school, career college, or two-year or four-year college), or a military career. If you're interested in attending a military academy, talk to your guidance counselor about starting the application process now.

Make a college list. Your list of colleges should include schools that meet your most important criteria (for example, size, location, cost, academic majors, or special programs). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you and develop a preliminary ranking of the schools on your list.

Continue gathering college information. Go to college fairs, attend college nights, and speak with college representatives who visit your high school; use an online college finder and search top college lists. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a school to your list.

Organize a testing plan. Figure out when you'll be taking important tests like the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams, and mark the dates on your calendar. You'll want to have plenty of time to prepare.

Make sure you're meeting any special requirements. If you want to play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process and check with your counselor to make sure you're taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.

Winter: Stay involved, organize college lists, and prepare for standardized tests

Stay involved with extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Taking on leadership roles and making a commitment to the same groups are more important than trying out tons of new activities each year.

Organize your college information. Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials. This will make it easier to locate the specific information you're looking for.

Begin narrowing down your college choices. Make sure you have all the information you need about the colleges you're interested in (entrance requirements, tuition, room and board costs, course offerings, student activities, financial aid, etc.). Then begin comparing the schools by the factors that are most important to you and rank your choices.

Prepare for standardized tests. Find out if the colleges you are interested in require the SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests. Register to take the tests you need; most juniors take them in the winter or spring. You can take them again in the fall of your senior year if you're unhappy with your scores.

Talk to your family. Have a discussion about the colleges you're interested in. Your family can learn about what you want to pursue and you can hear any concerns or suggestions they might have.

Learn more about financial aid. Examine your family's financial resources and gather information about financial aid from the schools you're interested in. High-school sponsored financial aid nights, college financial aid counselors, and advice articles are also good sources of information.

Spring: Search for scholarships and gather recommendations

Prepare a challenging schedule for senior year. Meet with your counselor to determine what classes you'll take next year and to make sure you're on track for graduation. When you pick your classes, don't load up on easy electives. Colleges do consider your senior year courses and grades, so stick with a schedule that challenges you.

Start a scholarship search. There are lots of scholarships out there; you just need to spend a little bit of time and effort to find them. Check with your guidance office for scholarships from local organizations and use online scholarship search tools to find a wider range of options. The sooner you start looking for scholarships, the easier it will be to select some to apply to during your senior year.

Contact your recommendation writers. Teachers and guidance counselors are often asked to write recommendations for lots of students. Consider whom you want to ask now and let them know so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall. Ask teachers who know you well and who will have positive things to say. Letters of recommendation from a coach, activity leader, or adult who knows you well outside of school are also valuable.

Apply for a summer job or internship. Summer employment and internships in fields you're interested in will look appealing on a college application or resume. The money you earn can also be used to help pay application and testing fees in the fall.

Set up appointments at your top college choices. You'll often have to plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor or coach if you're interested. You can also ask them to send you an application.

Summer: Visit colleges and work on application essays

Visit colleges. Visit the campuses of your top five college choices. Take a tour and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff. You may also be able to

talk to students if some classes are in session. If you have an interview, be sure to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer once you return home.

Get advice from other college students. If you have friends or relatives in college, talk to them about what college life is like, especially if they attend a school you're interested in. Although it's important to hear what the admissions staff has to say about a school, it's also important to get the students' perspective.

Organize your financial aid information. Develop a plan that includes a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines. Getting organized will make the process of applying a lot easier because you'll know where to find important information.

Start working on your application essays. Compose rough drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you so you can see what to work on. Make any revisions to your application essays and prepare final drafts. Don't forget to proofread your final essays a few times.

Make early decision preparations. If you plan to apply early decision to any school, take the time to visit the school again and make sure you're willing to commit. If you elect to apply early decision, you should start working on your application as soon as possible because its deadline will be earlier than others.

Resource:

<https://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-eleventh-students.aspx#/sweeps-modal>

IMPORTANT REMINDER

THESE ARE EXCELLENT RESOURCES BUT IT'S IMPORTANT YOU DO YOUR OWN HOMEWORK ON COLLEGES YOU'RE INTERESTED IN AS THEY MAY HAVE DIFFERENT DEADLINES AND REQUIREMENTS FROM THOSE MENTIONED IN THE CHECKLIST!

[Home](#) » [Prepare for College](#) » [Checklists for Academic and Financial Preparation](#) » 11th Grade Checklists



For both students and parents, it's crucial to stay on top of college preparation during the 11th-grade year and the following summer.

Here's what you should be doing—including looking into careers, searching for scholarships, and keeping the savings account on track.

Students

- To Do
 - All Year
 - Fall
 - Spring
 - Summer Before 12th Grade
- To Explore

Parents

- To Do
- To Explore

Students

To Do:

All Year

- [Explore careers and their earning potential with the Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) search tool. Or, for a fun interactive tool, [try this career search](#).
- [Learn about choosing a college](#) and find a link to our free college search tool.
- Go to college fairs and college-preparation presentations hosted by college representatives.

Fall

- Take the [PSAT/NMSQT](#). You must take the test in 11th grade to qualify for scholarships and programs associated with the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Spring

- Register for and take exams for college admission. The [standardized tests](#) that many colleges require are the SAT, the SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require.
- [Use a free scholarship search](#) to find scholarships for which you might want to apply. Some deadlines fall as early as the summer between 11th and 12th grades, so prepare now to submit applications soon.

Summer Before 12th Grade

- Create a username and password called an FSA ID that you'll use to confirm your identity when accessing your government financial aid information and electronically signing your federal student aid documents. [Learn about the FSA ID, and create yours](#). Note: You must create your own FSA ID; if your parent creates it for you, that'll cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process. (By the way, you can [watch a video about creating your FSA ID](#) below.)
- Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering attending. If you can, visit the schools that interest you.
- Contact colleges to request information and applications for admission. Ask about financial aid, admission requirements, and deadlines.
- Decide whether you are going to apply for admission under a particular college's early decision, early action, or regular decision program. Be sure to learn about the program deadlines and requirements.
- [Use the FAFSA4caster financial aid estimator](#), and compare the results to the actual costs at the colleges to which you will apply. To supplement any aid FAFSA4caster estimates you might receive, be sure to [apply for scholarships](#). Your goal is to minimize the amount of loan funds you borrow so you have less to pay back later.

To Explore:

- Find out what government financial aid you can apply for, and how, in [Federal Student Aid at a Glance](#).
- Learn how to [avoid scholarship scams and identity theft](#) as you look for financial aid and then attend college.

REMEMBER: Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, see your school counselor about getting the fee waived.



[View accessible version \(wmv\).](#)

top ↕

Parents

To Do:

- Create your own FSA ID** if you don't have one yet. (The FSA ID is a username and password that you'll use for such purposes as signing your child's *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*.) **Note: You must create your own FSA ID. If your child creates it for you, or if you create your child's, that'll cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process.** (Need help? You and your child should watch the ["How to Create Your FSA ID" video](#) above.)
- Take a look at your financial situation, and be sure you're on the right track to pay for college.
- Talk to your child about the schools he or she is considering. Ask why those schools appeal to your child, and help him or her clarify goals and priorities.
- Attend college fairs with your child, but don't take over the conversation with the college representatives. Just listen, and let your child do the talking.
- Take your child to visit college campuses, preferably when classes are in session.
- Make sure your child is looking into or already has applied for scholarships.
- Ask your employer whether scholarships are available for employees' children.

To Explore:

- Get in-depth information on the [federal student aid programs](#).
- Find out [how the federal student aid application process works](#).
- Learn about student and parent loans in [Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students](#) and [Federal Student Loans: Direct PLUS Loan Basics for Parents](#).

top ↕

Quick Links

- [12th Grade Checklists](#)
- [The FSA ID](#)
- [Who Gets Aid](#)
- [Understanding College Costs](#)

Glossary

[FSA ID](#)

The FSA ID is a username and password combination that serves as a student's or parent's identifier to allow access to personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems and a...

Federal Student Aid

Financial aid from the federal government to help you pay for education expenses at an eligible college or career school. Grants, loans and work-study are types of federal student aid. You must com...

Early Decision

A college admission policy that allows applicants, who commit to attend that school, to apply and receive notice of their admission early. If the applicant is accepted, he or she agrees to attend t...

Early Action

A college admission policy that allows applicants to apply and receive notice of their admission early. Applicants accepted under early action are not under a binding agreement to attend that schoo...

ACT NATIONAL TEST DATES (Resource: act.org)

National test dates are for the United States, United States territories, Puerto Rico, and Canada. If you have missed the late registration deadline for a test date, you may be able to request [standby testing](#).

ACT 2017-2018 Test Dates (National)

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 9, 2017	August 4, 2017	August 5-18, 2017
October 28, 2017	September 22, 2017	September 23-October 6, 2017
December 9, 2017	November 3, 2017	November 4-17, 2017
February 10, 2018*	January 12, 2018	January 13-19, 2018
April 14, 2018	March 9, 2018	March 10-23, 2018
June 9, 2018	May 4, 2018	May 5-18, 2018
July 14, 2018*	June 15, 2018	June 16-22, 2018

*No test centers are scheduled in New York for the February and July test dates.

If you are on free/reduced lunch, see Mrs. Bearden for a Fee Waiver!

2017-18 SAT Dates (Resource: collegeboard.org)

Deadlines expire at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, U.S.

2017-18 SAT Administration Dates and Deadlines				
SAT Date	SAT Subject Tests Available	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes
August 26, 2017 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	July 28, 2017	August 8, 2017 (for mailed registrations) August 15, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	August 15, 2017
October 7, 2017 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	September 8, 2017	September 19, 2017 (for mailed registrations) September 27, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	September 27, 2017
November 4, 2017 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	October 5, 2017	October 17, 2017 (for mailed registrations) October 25, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	October 25, 2017
December 2, 2017 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	November 2, 2017	November 14, 2017 (for mailed registrations) November 21, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	November 21, 2017
March 10, 2018 <u>Register</u>	SAT Subject Tests not offered on this date	February 9, 2018	February 20, 2018 (for mailed registrations) February 28, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)	February 28, 2018

2017-18 SAT Administration Dates and Deadlines

SAT Date	SAT Subject Tests Available	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes
May 5, 2018 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	April 6, 2018	April 17, 2018 (for mailed registrations) April 25, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)	April 25, 2018
June 2, 2018 <u>Register</u>	<u>See SAT Subject Tests available on this date</u>	May 3, 2018	May 15, 2018 (for mailed registrations) May 23, 2018 (for registrations made online or by phone)	May 23, 2018

If you are on free/reduced lunch, see Mrs. Bearden for a Fee Waiver!