

College Admissions Timeline Grades 9 - 12

Colleges and universities provide many chances for juniors to explore colleges without having to travel for an on-campus visit. Taking advantage of these opportunities allows juniors to explore different types of colleges, which will help to illuminate the best fit choices. Additionally, demonstrated interest is an important part of the college admissions decision-making process. Networking with college admissions representatives is a great way to show demonstrated interest. Below are many ways to explore and network with colleges in order to learn more and for you to begin building a relationship with them.

Freshman Year

- ❑ Explore and get involved with extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, community service, fine and performing arts, work, and other in-or out-of-school activities).
- ❑ Colleges like to see students that commit to activities for more than just junior and senior years.
- ❑ Create an activity log to track all of your extracurricular activities, summer experiences, academic honors, and other achievements.
- ❑ Focus on getting good grades – strive for B's or better.
- ❑ Work on developing stronger study and time management skills.
- ❑ Start to read about possible college majors and careers to better plan out your high school classes.
- ❑ Parents - Start to think about how to pay for college.
- ❑ Athletes - Familiarize yourself with the requirements of athletic recruiting, including NCAA and NAIA.
- ❑ See if there are any private scholarships that you can apply to as a freshman.
- ❑ Plan an eventful summer experience where you can explore a passion or interest.
- ❑ Summer Reading - this is a great way to keep up your reading skills and vocabulary.

Sophomore Year

- ❑ Start to commit to your non-academic extracurricular activities.
- ❑ Update your activity log.
- ❑ Continue to improve your grades.
- ❑ See if there are any private scholarships that you can apply to as a sophomore.
- ❑ Start to challenge yourself academically by taking higher level classes like AP or honors classes, if your school offers these options and suits your academic strengths, interests, and you receive approval from your school to do so.
- ❑ PSAT - some high schools will allow you to take the October PSAT as a sophomore
- ❑ Attend a local college fair.
- ❑ Meet with your school counselor to confirm courses for junior year and ask any questions that arise about your college planning process.
- ❑ Parents - Continue to research how to pay for college and set up a college budget.
- ❑ Visit a college or two while you are on vacation or locally.
- ❑ Read more about possible college majors and careers to better plan out your high school classes.
- ❑ Athletes - to familiarize yourself with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requirements if you think you may play Division I or II sports in college.

- ❑ Testing - Take a practice ACT and SAT to determine which test you are stronger at and then set up a testing timeline. Also, take the AP and SAT Subject Test exams. If you are taking an AP class sophomore year, consider taking the AP exam in May and the SAT Subject Test in May or June, if it reflects the same subject. If you are taking a Pre-calculus or Calculus class in Sophomore year, consider taking the Math 2 SAT Subject Test in May or June.
- ❑ Summer Reading - this is a great way to keep up your reading skills and vocabulary.
- ❑ Build on your summer experiences and create depth in your experiences. Continue to follow your interests.

Junior Year

FALL

- ❑ Stay consistent with your non-academic extracurricular activities. Look for leadership roles in clubs and activities. Continue to update your activity log. Explore and get involved with extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, community service, fine and performing arts, work, and other in- or out-of-school activities).
- ❑ Start your college search by attending a local college fair and high school presentations.
- ❑ Take a few college match searches (*check out Unigo and Big Future*).
- ❑ Plan college visits. Have a family meeting to block out dates throughout the junior year to visit colleges.
- ❑ Keep your grades up.
- ❑ Do a self-assessment to get to know your strengths, weaknesses, interests, non-negotiables, and more. Take a personality and career assessments to learn more about your interests, strengths, and more (*check out Do What You Are and YouScience*).
- ❑ Continue to challenge yourself academically by taking higher level classes like AP or honors class in appropriate academic areas for you.
- ❑ Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to find out how you can get ahead and start planning your college admissions process.
- ❑ See if there are any private scholarships that you can apply to as a junior.
- ❑ Testing -
 - ❑ Take the PSAT - your high school will most likely offer the October PSAT for juniors.
 - ❑ Take a practice ACT and SAT to determine which test you are stronger at and then set up a testing timeline.
 - ❑ Once you determine the test that is right for you, then make a testing timeline that includes your testing dates and your test study schedule.
- ❑ Athletes -
 - ❑ Register for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearinghouse, if you plan to play Division I or II sports in college and make sure your classes meet the NCAA Clearinghouse requirements (work with your counselor if you have questions about NCAA course requirements).
 - ❑ Complete online athletic recruitment forms for each college you're considering. You'll find these on the college's website under "athletics."
 - ❑ After you have completed the online recruitment forms, then make your sports resume and videos to be used for recruitment purposes.

- Spread out your correspondence with coaches by sending the resumes and video a few weeks after you complete the online forms.
- Visual & Performing Arts Students -
 - Sign up for the Performing & Visual Arts College Fairs.
 - Create a spreadsheet with the admissions requirements for fine and performing arts programs.
 - You will most likely need to create a portfolio and audition materials, so you want to be able to spend the junior year building up your art pieces and working on monologues to build up your skills.

WINTER & SPRING

- Investigate summer experiences.
- Testing -
 - Select testing dates - most likely your first ACT or SAT will take place between December - May.
 - Take the AP/IB exams in May.
 - For highly selective colleges, you may have to take two to three SAT Subject Tests in May or June.
- Register for senior year classes. Remember colleges will want to see a strong senior year course load including five academic core classes.
- Continue visiting colleges.
- Build your college list.
- Research private and institutional scholarships and create a scholarship spreadsheet to list deadlines and requirements so you stay on top of the scholarship application process.
- Set up a meeting with your school counselor to ask questions about college choices, your senior year schedule, testing, and whatever questions arise.
- Athletes - Send your sports resume and video to college coaches and fill out the athletic recruitment surveys on the college websites.
- Visual & Performing Arts Students -
 - Explore how the audition and portfolio process works for college admission.
 - Start to build your portfolios and videos to be used for auditions and decision-making.

Senior Year

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- Participate in summer experiences.
- Refine and finalize your college list. Be sure there is a balance in terms of admission probability (likely, possible, and reach schools).
- Research the type of applications required for each school on your list. There are many different types of applications, so it is important to know what applications colleges will accept.
- Write your Common Application essay.
- Complete the Common Application.
- Visit more colleges.

- Confirm your final college list, application deadlines, and requirements. Find out the admission requirements, including if interviews are available, and deadlines for schools on your list and create a spreadsheet to organize information.
- Start to write your college-specific supplemental essays.
- Have someone review your Common Application (CA) and CA essay.
- Set up interviews with colleges, if they are offered.
- Continue to research private and institutional scholarships and add them to your scholarship spreadsheet.
- Start to apply to scholarships as deadlines approach. They will be on-going throughout the year.

FALL

- Request letters of recommendation from two academic teachers from junior year and your school counselor.
- Financial Aid -
 - Parents - Start preparing financial aid paperwork. Deadlines will start to approach in October.
 - Organize all financial aid deadlines and be ready to apply on time.
 - Apply for financial aid.
- Application Deadlines -
 - November - Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED) deadlines are typically around November 1 - complete and send out all EA and ED applications no later than late October.
- Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to review your college list to get his or her feedback and review your application deadlines, and ask any questions you may have.
- Attend high school presentations and programs.
- Do final college visits.
- Testing - Send test scores to your colleges.
- Request letters and transcripts to be sent to colleges by your school counseling office.

WINTER

- December - Regular Decision (RD) deadlines are typically around January 1 - complete and send out all RD applications no later than mid-December.
- Give yourself a relaxing holiday break by getting all your applications done by November 1.
- January - If deferred from your early application schools, send an email to your region/state/country admissions representative stating your interest in the school as well as any new updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- December - April 1 - Wait for application decisions. Colleges have until April 1 to release decisions.

SPRING

- March - April -
 - If needed, plan visits to see your accepted colleges in order to make your final college choice.
 - Evaluate financial aid packages and scholarship offerings to figure out how to pay for college.
- May -
 - Students have until May 1 to enroll at a college.

- Take AP/IB exams.
- Notify your school counselor of your college decisions and scholarship opportunities.
- If you have been waitlisted, this is a good time to send in your "stay on the waitlist form" or an email to your state admissions representative stating your interest in the school as well as any new updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- Sign-up for campus housing.
- June - August -
 - Save for college.
 - Final waitlist notifications will be completed usually by late July/early August.
 - Attend orientation.
 - Sign up for food plans and register for classes.
 - Set up a meeting with an academic advisor at your college to plan your classes.
 - Make travel and move-in arrangements.
 - Find out what you need for your dorm and classes, and go shopping!
 - Contact your roommate(s).
 - Set up bank account close to or on-campus.
 - Apply for more scholarships.