

Timelines and Checklists for College

11th Grade Year

In the 11th year, the college preparation process accelerates and you need to start paying careful attention to looming deadlines and application requirements. You don't need to choose exactly where to apply yet, but you do need to have a plan mapped out for achieving your broad education goals.

October

1. Take the PSAT. Colleges won't see your PSAT scores, but a good score on the exam can translate into thousands of dollars. The exam will also give you a good sense of your preparedness for the SAT. Even students who don't plan on taking the SAT should take the PSAT because of the scholarship opportunities it creates.

2. Review Progress Toward Graduation: Meet with your academic counselor and make sure your high school academic plan meets the state requirements for graduation and the minimums generally required for college/university applications. Ask your counselor if your projected class list between now and graduation will put you in a competitive posture for your goals. Also ask your counselor if your transcript and experience could be enhanced by taking courses at a local community college or trade school.

3. Take AP and other upper-level course offerings. No piece of your college application carries more weight than your academic record. Your success in upper level and college level courses is a clear indicator that you have the skills to succeed in college.

4. Keep your grades up. A drop in your grades in 11th grade shows a move in the wrong direction and will raise red flags for the college admissions folks.

5. Keep going with a foreign language. Not only will mastery of a language serve you well in life, but it will also impress college admissions folks and open up more options for you in college.

6. Assume a leadership role in extracurricular activity. Colleges are looking for future leaders, not passive bystanders. You can be a leader in your band section, team captain, event organizer, or fundraising events.

January and/or February

7. Take the SAT and/or ACT. Keep track of registration deadlines. If you don't get good scores you can spend the summer building your skills before retaking the exam in the fall. Every time you register for an ACT/SAT you are given the opportunity to list schools you would like to receive your scores. Be prepared with the school identification numbers for those

colleges/universities you would like to receive your scores. The numbers are listed with the registration information.

March

8. Visit colleges and browse the web. Begin hammering out the list of colleges to which you'll apply. Try to figure out if your personality is better suited for a small college or large university. Be sure and note early admission deadlines. The earlier your admission to the college the better your chances are for financial aid and scholarship options.

9. Meet with your counselor and draft a college list. Once you have some junior year grade and your PSAT scores, you'll be able to start predicting which colleges and universities will be reach schools, match schools and safety schools. For now, a list of 15 to 20 schools is a good starting point. Meet with your guidance counselor to get feedback and suggestions on your list. You may also talk with a parent, relative or any adult whom you respect.

10. Take the SAT II and AP exams as appropriate. If you take AP exams in your junior year, they can be a huge plus on your college application. Any 4s and 5s you earn show you are truly ready for college. Also, a lot of the more competitive colleges require a couple SAT II subject tests. Take these soon after your coursework so the material is fresh in your mind.

11. Make the most of your summer. A well spent junior summer can take many forms – employment, volunteer work, travel, summer programs at colleges, sports, music camp.... Do summer college visits with interviews, if possible, to show interest in the college. Start to request application and financial aid information from your top 5 to 8 college choices. Start writing your college application essays. Complete the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearing House Form if you hope to do Division I or II sports.

12. Update your resume of academic work, athletic activities, work activities and achievements. If going into the Arts, put together a portfolio.

Sources:

<http://collegeapps.about.com>

www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/right-school/timeline

www.collegeboard.com/parents/apply/college-applications/21357.html

www.petersons.com

[www.collegeanswer.com/...college/applying...college/...application.../...](http://www.collegeanswer.com/...college/applying...college/...application.../)

www.getreadyforcollege.org

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