



11TH GRADE TIMELINE

TASK LIST FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

SUMMER

- Review academic and extracurricular plans for junior year for rigor/challenge and pursuing interests and aptitudes.
- If possible, take a family road trip and include an informal college visit or information session even if not interested in that particular college. Great experience for understanding the process and figuring out roles and comfort levels with parents.
- Start a college list by taking a survey or otherwise deciding what is important-- geography, college type, course of study, size, extracurriculars, etc.
- Review or create a family calendar for the next two years to block off time for college visits, family trips and events, and allocate or estimate vacation time for working parents.
- Start a master college admissions calendar. For junior year this can just be by month or season but ultimately this will be critical for keeping track of weekly or daily tasks and dates.
- Discuss college costs and financial need and options as a family.
- Obtain a debit card if not currently held.
- Evaluate work responsibilities, inside and outside the home. Either seek part time or volunteer work in an area of interest (if possible), or start to plan for the summer before senior year. Establish a reasonable number of chores at home, including own laundry and spaces, especially a bathroom if applicable, and help in some way with meal prep, clean up, and/or grocery shopping on a regular basis.
- Review work, school, and personal habits and establish a few realistic goals in one or more.
- Read regularly, fiction and nonfiction, preferably not always on a device.
- Review PSAT and ACT/SAT calendars and make preliminary plans to register for any applicable.
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FALL

- Meet with a school counselor/dean to review academic plans for the next two years and ensure tracking towards graduation.
 - Check for at least one challenging, typically AP or Honors level, class each semester, as well as pursuing areas of interest.
 - Check on courses or programs which **might** offer college credit- might being the operative word- depends on class, grade achieved, and college, among other things, but it is still beneficial to take college-level classes.
 - Review school resources available for the college admissions process or other post-secondary options.
- Get organized for the college admissions process; the checklist found on the Uncommon College Guide website is a good starting point.
- Register for a local information session or tour at a local college if not done over the summer. Even if that school is not currently in the top 10 it will be great practice and increase knowledge of what to look for and questions to ask.
- Check out virtual tours on individual college websites and check YouTube for a college's channel, if available.
- Check or recheck high school calendar for post-secondary presentations, college rep visits, workshops on financial aid, test and/or essay prep, and add to master calendar.
- If interested in the military (academies or ROTC) or sports or music scholarships, begin researching options by discussing with a school counselor, relevant teacher or coach, or through online research.
- Register for AP exams, normally given in early May, for any fall AP classes if desired.
- Research college fairs in your area, or in an area where you plan to travel. NACAC is one well-known national source.

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WINTER

■ If not previously and desired, register for spring or summer ACT or SAT. Note that a large number of 4-year colleges are test optional or even test blind, a trend that has only grown since the pandemic. Though exercise caution in opting out as some scholarships depend on test scores.

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WINTER/SPRING

Junior year is packed with challenges- it is often the most difficult year academically combined with extracurriculars and social life, then add significant tests (AP/ACT/SAT) and the college admissions process, all creating an environment where self-care and balancing tasks is critical. So the items in this section are not intended to overwhelm or all be complete in a month. With the exception of the first two items, most can be completed anytime in a 6-8 month window, so read through and prioritize, with a goal of working on each one in YOUR order of importance and timeframe.

■ Keep your grades up! Trends matter, and a lower grade in 9th or 10th grade can be easily overlooked by stronger grades as an upperclassman.

■ Register for AP exams for any spring AP classes if desired.

■ If not yet done, develop a strong first college list using online search tools and any visits you have taken. In addition to the usual criteria, e.g., geography, academic program, cost, etc., add the following key data to the search: graduation rate (4/6 year), % financial need met (if relevant), freshman retention, housing options, especially after freshman year, career counseling availability, and hidden costs, e.g., transportation, financial aid while studying abroad, fees, etc.

■ Consider and apply for a summer job, if possible in an area of interest for college major and/or future career.

■ Consider taking a summer class at a community college or elsewhere which will might improve a weak area, provide a better background for a more advanced class in senior year or for a possible area of study in college, or simply to pursue an area of interest.

■ Without becoming consumed by "things to do to get into college", this is a good time to consider test prep (ACT, SAT, AP) and/or essay prep, particularly if either of these areas are weak spots for you.

■ Begin planning with family for senior summer: volunteer and/or paid work, learning opportunities, college visits, family trip, rest, pursuing hobbies, etc.

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LATE SPRING

- Lock down a summer job if applicable.
- If you plan to ask a popular teacher for a LOR, consider asking him/her BEFORE the end of the school year, though check his/her website first to see if relevant information is readily available about the process or timing.
- Prep for any late spring or summer tests.
- Keep reading for your own enjoyment, learning, and/or self-improvement.
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