



# 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE COLLEGE PREP GUIDE

High school is an exciting time, when teens become adults and grow in independence. These four important years will fly by!

The stakes are higher in high school, which is why getting a head start on preparing for the future is so important. From college applications to course selection to scholarships, there is a lot to manage. Make sure you stay on target and are fully prepared for college by following this schedule for your freshman year.

## FALL

- Choose courses wisely!** Make sure you know your state requirements for graduation and lay out a rough plan for all four years of high school. Need help? Work with your homeschooling expert to ensure you are on course.
- Get involved.** Join at least two extra-curricular organizations or groups. Think student council, Online Model United Nations, and community service opportunities.
- Volunteer.** Do one volunteer event per month. Volunteer hours say, "This candidate wants to serve and lead" to college admissions directors.
- Focus on your grades.** Set a goal for your GPA and track your grades. Colleges look at all four years of high school, so make sure to give it your all from the very beginning. If you fall behind, get help right away!
- Begin a financial plan.** Create a college savings worksheet and begin working towards saving now. Researching scholarships gives you an even bigger edge.
- Begin studying for the PSAT.** It's important you know what will be covered on the PSAT and that you're prepared. Find out [more here](#).
- Research PSAT Scholarships.** Start earning scholarships early by researching available scholarships for excellent PSAT scores, like the [National Merit Scholarship](#).

## SPRING SUMMER

- List your achievements.** Begin creating a list of what you've accomplished. It will be much easier to fill out your college applications!
- Look into colleges.** Seek out those that fit your interests. Check out [College Board](#) and the [Princeton Review](#) for a full list of colleges.
- Get a job!** You'll need the money, and a job teaches you important life skills, like responsibility, accountability, and persistence, all of which you'll need after you graduate.
- Read.** Challenge yourself to read 25 books over the summer. The more you read, the more you really do know! Reading will improve your writing and vocabulary skills.



Feeling overwhelmed already? Contact the homeschooling experts at Bridgeway Academy by calling **800.863.1474**.

You'll stay in the driver's seat of your education with the guidance, support and accreditation you need to be prepared for college.





# 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE COLLEGE PREP GUIDE

High school is an exciting time when teens become adults and grow in independence. These next three years will fly by!

The stakes are higher in high school, so getting a head start on preparing for the future is so important. From college applications to course selection to scholarships, there is a lot to manage. Make sure you stay on target and are fully prepared for college by following this schedule for your sophomore year.

## FALL

- Take the PSAT. Find out [more here](#).
- Prepare for the ACT by taking the ASPIRE assessment. [Sign up here](#).
- Check your course plan to ensure you are getting the right graduation credits. Get familiar with the college application process to ensure you are prepared when the time comes.
- Research potential career options. Intern or shadow at job locations that interest you for real-life experience.
- Become a leader in extracurricular activities. Run for Student Council, become team captain, or run a fundraiser. This proves you have what it takes to lead and shows responsibility.
- Learn to write a clear five-paragraph essay. You will need this important skill for standardized tests and college applications.



## SPRING SUMMER

- Take a summer course. Tackle a difficult subject or an art class over the summer.
- Attend college fairs in your area to meet representatives from the schools which interest you.
- Contact colleges of interest to obtain more information about their programs. Make sure you are meeting their admissions requirements. If not, talk to your advisor about what you need to do to change this.
- Consider taking the SAT Subject tests if you recently finished studying a particular area of interest.
- Join a book club. At this point, reading isn't enough; you need to practice discussion and analysis.
- Prepare a resume. You'll impress potential job recruiters and managers. Visit [aie.org](#) for help and sample resumes.
- Get a job (using your resume!). You'll need the money and the skills working gives you.



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# 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE COLLEGE PREP GUIDE

You're halfway there! The stakes are even higher now that you're nearing the finish line.

Your junior and senior years fly by, which is why it is so critical to stay on target and focused on your future. Make sure you stay on target and are fully prepared for college by following this schedule for your junior year.



## FALL

- Take the PSAT in October at your local high school. You can practice for the actual test and qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
- Create a post-graduation plan. Work, college, or technical school? Everything depends upon this decision, so make a plan based upon your interests, abilities, and grades.
- Collect information about colleges based on your field of interest. Make a comparison list based on the colleges size, cost, majors, and location.
- Attend local college fairs to obtain information on a large number of schools in a short amount of time. Make sure to talk to admissions representatives.
- Take an ACT or SAT prep class. Having practiced with the PSAT, you need to improve your scores using the knowledge you've gained about them.



## SPRING SUMMER

- Make a calendar of important deadlines. Don't miss out on earning grants and financial aid or on the school of your dreams because you missed the application cut off dates.
- Start registering to take the SAT or ACT in the winter and spring. Be prepared for the SAT by knowing what to expect.
- Apply for scholarships! College is expensive, so apply for as many scholarships as possible to increase your chances of receiving funding.
- Review your senior year course plan. Consider doing it with a counselor or homeschooling advisor, you can't let off the gas now!
- Collect letters of recommendation from several varied sources. You will most likely need them when applying for colleges. It's best to contact former teachers and counselors now so you aren't scrambling for letters in the fall.
- Apply for internships and jobs in fields of interest. Add another dimension to your college applications that can be invaluable. You'll score a great recommendation, too!
- Visit your top college choices. Summer is a great time to visit the colleges you've selected as your top choices. An on-campus tour can help students narrow down their choices more quickly than hours of research.
- Start writing admissions essays. Give yourself enough time to write several drafts of your admissions essays to make sure you get them just right.

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# 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE COLLEGE PREP GUIDE

You're almost to the finish line and your future is within your grasp! This is the year when your future becomes a reality, so the stakes have never been higher.

It's never been more important to meet deadlines and build upon the foundation you've laid the past three years to obtain the prize. To stay on target and reach the goals you've been working toward, be sure to follow this list during your senior year.

## FALL

- Take or retake your choice of standardized tests. Most students don't get the score they want the first time. Plan on taking it once more before applying to college.
- Continue to visit colleges and narrow down your list of potential colleges. Choose your top two, and plan based upon their criteria.
- Create a "College Deadline" calendar. The only way to ensure you don't miss a deadline is to mark it on a calendar that you check frequently or use your phone to set alerts.
- Collect letters of recommendation from several sources. Make sure to provide at least four weeks for your recommender to write a decent recommendation.
- Gather the required documentation. You will need recommendation letters as well as transcripts, GPA, and school profile reports. Follow the guidelines on the application closely.
- Complete your applications with plenty of time to review them for accuracy. Once you submit everything, confirm with the college that they have all the information needed to make a decision.
- Apply for scholarships! College is expensive, but if you are willing to do the work, there are plenty of [scholarships available](#) to help lower your costs.
- Complete the [FAFSA](#) and submit financial aid forms. Know your state and school financial aid deadlines and submit the forms before the deadline. This increases your chances of receiving grants and loans.
- Submit a mid-year grade report. Colleges often make their final decision after receiving your mid-year marks, so remember to keep up the hard work.

## SPRING SUMMER

- Watch your mail for your acceptance letters. Most decisions are made by March or April.
- Make your final decision as to which college you will attend. Schedule a last-minute campus visit if you are still undecided.
- Schedule and take AP exams at your local high school. Exams are held the first two weeks in May.
- Follow up on financial aid information. Make sure your FAFSA application has been submitted on time and that the college you are attending has all the information it requires. Apply for loans to cover any additional costs.
- Finalize college enrollment paperwork. Colleges need to know your plans for housing, scheduling, and other necessary information. Make sure you submit them by the appropriate deadlines.
- Start packing! [Here's a great list](#) of what you'll need to have when you move on campus.

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