



# College Counseling Timeline

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## Freshman Year

- Start the year strong and keep your grades up! The grades you receive this year will be on the transcript sent to colleges.
- Plan a four-year curriculum (i.e., if you want to get to the highest-level math, what is the path?)
- Begin to get involved in extracurricular activities, both in and out of school. Consider volunteering opportunities, too.
- Make your summer “meaningful.” Summer experiences are invaluable for personal growth and add depth to the experiences and stories you will share with colleges.
  - Consider formal and informal opportunities, such as jobs, community service, etc.
- Keep a list of activities for your future college application resume.

## Sophomore Year

- Continue building a strong, academic foundation. Remember that colleges will see each of your final course grades on your transcript.
- Be a self-advocate—ask for help and meet with your teachers when needed. Do not let yourself fall behind in classes.
- Develop relationships with your teachers. They could serve as your recommenders for college.
- Begin creating a document that will eventually be your college application resume. Use your list from last year.
  - How am I impacting my communities?
  - Are there ways to initiate my peers or lead in any way?
- Continue to be involved at school and in your communities. Remember quality over quantity.
- Some students will choose to prepare over summer between sophomore and junior year for SAT and ACT tests—you want to begin testing by spring of junior year.
- Try to visit local college campuses, especially by scheduling a visit with the Office of Admissions.
- Make your summer “meaningful.” Consider community service, internships, enrichment programs on college campuses, work experiences, etc.
- Consider your academic track for junior and senior years, as these are generally the most important years academically when you apply to college.

## **Junior Year**

- **Focus on your grades!** This is the last snapshot colleges will see of your academics when you apply for college—junior year is crucial.
- You will take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. This exam is used for National Merit qualifications.
- Continue to prep for the SAT/ACT.
- **Sign up to take the SAT and/or the ACT by the spring.**
- Schedule **official** college visits 4-6 weeks in advance through the Office of Admissions.
- Research colleges and universities and begin to form your college list.
- Talk as a family about college expectations, goals, and ideas. This is a family decision. Discuss how you/your family will pay for college.
- Reflect about your identity and how you will tell your story for the college process.
- Continue to be involved in your communities and explore leadership opportunities. Update your working college resume document.
- Make your summer “meaningful.” Consider community service, internships, enrichment programs on college campuses, work experiences, etc.
- Over the summer, begin work on essays and applications.
- Goals for the end of summer include: a completed resume, one to two strong college essays, beginning the Common Application, and starting on supplemental essays if possible. The more work done over the summer, the more productive you can be in the fall!

### **Important Dates**

October – PSAT/NMSQT

May – AP Exams

## **Senior Year**

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT, if necessary. Continue practice tests if appropriate
- Meet with college admissions representatives at college fairs or when they visit school.
- Fill out the Common App and/or ApplyTexas Application.
- Be aware of application deadlines! Meet with your counselor to finalize your college list.
- Research honors programs, merit scholarships, financial aid options, etc. Many will have different deadlines versus college admissions.
- Look at FAFSA, TASFA, or CSS profile if needed by your schools to apply for financial aid.
- Organize your deadlines, scholarships, honors programs, etc.—find a system that works for you.
- Make weekly goals for yourself.
- Be involved and be a leader and role model on campus. What is your impact and legacy?
- Communicate with your parents about the process—they're your biggest fans!
- Keep a positive attitude and approach the college process in small chunks. Too much can be overwhelming.
- BREATHE!!! And don't procrastinate!

### **Important Dates**

August – Applications Open

October – Begin applying for Financial Aid

October to January – Most Application Deadlines

May – AP Exams