

# Junior Year Checklist

## Fall–Winter

### College Planning

- Meet with your counselor about your coursework and college plans
- Check college websites for admission requirements
- Create a professional email address to use when applying for scholarships, registering for college entrance exams and completing college applications
- Meet with college admissions recruiters when they visit your high school
- Attend college information events in your community ([www.collegenights.org](http://www.collegenights.org))

### College Search

- Tour local campuses and visit non-local colleges during winter and spring breaks
- Try online college fairs and virtual campus tours (<https://campustours.com>, [www.appily.com/virtual-college-tours](http://www.appily.com/virtual-college-tours), [www.thecollegetour.com](http://www.thecollegetour.com))
- Use college search sites to explore your college options (<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>)
- Prepare your college list (refer to worksheet on page 5)

### Career Exploration

- Attend a local career fair
- Research career options and their education requirements, median pay and projected growth rates ([www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh))
- Make a list of careers that may interest you and research the education level required for each profession
- Talk with professionals in careers you are curious about and ask about their work
- Enhance skills that would be useful in a career of interest through your extracurricular activities

## Spring

### College Entrance Exams

- Register and take your college entrance exams—check first with your high school to see if they administer them on-site
  - Several colleges are test optional—check <https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list> for the most comprehensive list
  - SAT, with optional essay ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)); free SAT test prep help ([www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat))
  - ACT, with optional writing section ([www.act.org](http://www.act.org)); free ACT test prep help ([www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html](http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html))

### Academics

- Prepare for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams
- Plan your senior year schedule with your counselor
- Review your college preparation coursework and GPA with a college advisor
- Create a list of teachers, coaches and other mentors who will be able to write personalized letters of recommendation

### Summer Preparation

- Apply for summer jobs or internships
- Seek volunteer opportunities in your field of interest
- Register for community college courses and earn college credit while in high school, also referred to as dual/concurrent enrollment
- If you took the SAT or ACT, review your test scores to determine if retesting is necessary
- Plan a test preparation schedule if you plan to retake college entrance exams

## Summer

### College Application Preparation

- Check websites of colleges on your list; review admissions application process and timeline
- Draft your application essays and/or personal statement; work with a college advisor for feedback
- Prepare a scholarship resume and/or a “brag sheet” that includes all your non-academic activities and honors
- Communicate with college admission representatives for questions you may have

### College Finances

- Register for an FSA ID, which will be required to complete the FAFSA online in the fall; your parent(s) must also register for an FSA ID (<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>)
- Learn about the different types of financial aid (<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types>)
- Use the Federal Student Aid Estimator to see how financial aid can help pay for your education (<https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator>)
- Search and apply for scholarships ([www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>)
- Learn how money works; take a financial literacy course ([www.fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/index.html))
- Use the College Scorecard to compare costs, degree programs and outcomes for the colleges you are interested in (<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>)
- Save money for college



The **Junior Year Checklist** is part of the 2024–2025 *Opportunities Preparing for College Guide and Workbook*. This free college planning publication provides students and families with important information and tools to guide their pursuit of postsecondary education. These books are available in English and Spanish. Full PDFs of each *Opportunities* booklet can be downloaded at [www.ecmc.org/opportunities](http://www.ecmc.org/opportunities).