

## SEPTEMBER

- Read: [High School Seniors: Preparing for Your Next Step After High School](#)
- Familiarize yourself with a list of [College Admissions Do's and Don'ts](#).
- If you have not held any leadership positions while in high school, now is the time to step up and assume leadership of one of those organizations.
- Review college materials, college guidebooks, and other resources to narrow your college list. Use a [College Planning Resources](#) to find all the online guides you'll need.
- Begin to finalize list of colleges with your family and guidance counselor.
- Consider visits, overnight stays, and interviews at your top college choices. Visit (personally or virtually) any colleges you have not already seen.
- Register for one last shot at the SAT or ACT if you haven't taken one of them yet -- or if you aren't happy with earlier scores. And be sure to take the SAT Subject Tests, if required.
- Begin thinking about teachers who would be willing to write strong letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- Begin brainstorming ideas for your college essays.
- Request (or download from college's Website) any applications that you do not have. Be sure to review each college's application requirements carefully.
- Attend college fairs for one final review of college choices.
- Be sure your senior year mix of classes still includes challenging, college-prep courses
- Stay focused on grades.

## OCTOBER

- Finalize list of college choices to reasonable number, ideally with one or more "stretch" schools and one "safety" school.
- Create a file for each of your college choices -- and keep all materials organized.
- Consider creating a master schedule of all your application deadlines.
- Begin working on drafts of your college essays.
- Start working on college applications.
- If you have a clear "first choice" college, consider applying for [early decision](#).
- Have standardized testing service send your scores to your list of colleges.
- Stay focused on grades.

## NOVEMBER

- Finalize drafts of your college essays, but only after numerous edits, rewrites, and reviews by people you trust (family, friends, teachers).
- Complete college applications and put packets in the mail.
- Be sure your guidance counselor knows your final list of colleges, as well as your preferences.
- Request key financial aid and scholarship information from your list of colleges.
- Stay focused on grades.

## DECEMBER

- If you applied for early decision to a college, expect notification this month.
- If not completed, finish and mail remainder of college applications.
- Start detailed financial aid search, including outside sources for scholarships and loans.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **JANUARY**

- If applying for financial aid, get started on preparations by obtaining a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **FEBRUARY**

- Complete the FAFSA, if possible. (You'll need your family's/guardian's tax records.)
- Keep track of your college applications; be sure all schools have received all your materials.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **MARCH**

- College decision letters begin arriving.
- Celebrate your acceptances, decide about your wait lists, and deal positively with your rejections.
- Finalize financial aid applications.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **APRIL**

- Make decision about college choice from among the colleges that accepted you.
- Notify all colleges (that accepted you) of your final decision.
- Submit tuition deposit to your college of choice.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **MAY**

- Be sure to submit paperwork for room and board.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

## **JUNE**

- Celebrate your high school success!
- Send thank you notes (if you haven't already) to everyone who helped you this year.
- Start planning for college.
- Watch college's summer deadlines (orientations, housing options, registration, etc.) closely.

## **JULY**

- Register for fall courses at your college.
- Begin preparing for your new adventure.
- Read the article, [Your First Year of College: 25 Tips to Help You Survive and Thrive Your Freshman Year and Beyond](#)