

11TH GRADE TO-DO LIST

THROUGH THE YEAR...

- Research on www.educationplannar.org for all your college planning needs
- Concentrate on your GPA. Keep your grades high and your courses as challenging as possible.
- Get information packets from the colleges you're considering. Request them from college web sites or call the admissions department.
- Intensify your scholarship search. Keep track of deadlines and requirements.
- Attend career days, college fairs and financial aid workshops.
- Start your in-depth college visits this year.

Fall...

- Meet with your advisor. Be sure your classes are on the right track for the colleges you're considering and that you're meeting graduation requirements.
- Register for and take the PSAT. *This year it counts for the National Merit Scholarship.*
- Schedule dates to take the SAT and ACT tests. Arrange to take both tests at least once during your junior year.
- Investigate financial aid programs now before the financial 'base' year begins.
- Contact the US military academies NOW if you want to apply. Find out about the individual schools and their summer programs at:
www.defenselink.mil/faq/pis/20.html
- Research summer workshops and college courses for high school students.

WINTER...

- Review your PSAT results with your advisor. Pump up any weak subjects.
- Register for the SAT, ACT, AND SAT II tests if the colleges you're considering require them. If you're applying Early Decision, and want to take them a second time, be sure to take the SAT and ACT again in June.
- Decide what camps, programs, volunteer work and classes you want to attend or take in summer.

SPRING...

- Compile writing samples, put together portfolios, and work on audition tapes if the colleges or scholarships you're applying to require them.
- Consider taking a summer class. You can start earning college credit by taking 'dual credit courses' or classes at a community college.
- Take the AP exams for the AP classes you've completed.
- See your advisor for an NCAA clearinghouse form if you want to play sports in college.
- Look for a summer job. Try to get one related to a major you're considering.

SUMMER...

- Request applications for scholarships.
- Start work on your essays for college applications and scholarships.
- Zero in on what teachers you want to ask for recommendations.
- Work on your resume.
- Start your application process if you're applying Early Decision or Early Action.

VOLUNTEERING

- List your interests and match them to possible service opportunities.
- Call professional organizations and associations related to your interests to see if they need volunteers or could suggest a volunteer position.
- Check the web.
 - www.idealists.org
 - www.volunteermatch.org
 - www.cares.org/national
 - www.servenet.org
- Check with the schools Academic Advisor or the Chaplain to see what service possibilities exist through your school.
- Ask your friends where they plan to volunteer.
- Check the web sites of local newspapers and television stations for lists of volunteer activities and events. Watch for stories on interesting charity events. Call the sponsoring agency and ask if you can volunteer.
- Check with your church. Can you teach Sunday school? Baby sit? Volunteer at church events. Do they sponsor missionary work?
- Turn your interests into volunteer work. If you take extracurricular classes (i.e. dance, music...), ask if they need help.
- Start your own volunteer group.

THE TEST TO-DO'S

- SAT, ACT, or both? Check with your colleges to see what they require and if you need to take any SAT II tests
- Layout your own calendar for your test dates. Get this year's test dates from the testing organizations' web sites or check with your Academic Advisor.
- Register at least 6 weeks prior to the test date if you want to be assured that you will test at your first choice location. Test packets may be picked up in the Academic Advisor office or you may register directly with the testing organization at their web sites.
 - www.collegeboard.com
 - www.actstudent.org
- Prep for the test. Take the practice tests at the testing web sites
- Find out if prep classes or individual tutoring will be available at or through your school
- Check out the library and bookstores for prep materials and software programs that suit your needs
- Read and keep the test admission information packet you receive. File the information and phone numbers for future use.

THE DAY OF THE TEST

- Take with you
 - Your high school code
 - The code number of colleges to where you want your test scores sent
 - Admission ticket
 - Picture ID or driver license
 - Approved calculator
 - Extra pencils and erasers
 - Tissues
 - Water and a snack (only allowed at break)
 - Wear a watch to monitor your time
- Repeat testing if you need or think you are capable of getting a better score-but do something to increase your chances of improving first.

Financial Aid 101

Fall Junior Year

- Get your parents involved in the financial aid process now. Check out the web sites and books for information that fits your circumstances
- Make any major financial decisions before the 'base' calendar year begins on January 1
- Take the PSAT to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship
- Write to your college choices and request catalogs and financial aid information.
- Get a copy of the FASFA
 - www.collegeboard.com
 - www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Attend financial aid seminars

Winter Junior Year

- Find out what kind of financial aid is offered by your state
- Get the US Government's publication *Student Guide, Funding Your Education, and Looking for Student Aid*, downloadable at
 - www.ed.gov/index.ihtml or call 1800-4FED-AID

Spring Junior Year

- Start scouting banks, savings and loans, and other lenders for their student loan programs
- Open an account with a bank if it's necessary to secure a student loan at that institution.
- Intensify your scholarship search.
- Write to scholarship organizations and request applications. Keep track of deadlines and requirements.
- Ask teachers/advisor to write any recommendations you'll need senior year.

Summer Junior year

- Make a list of the financial records you'll need to complete your financial forms.
- Do a financial aid campus visit (on-site or by telephone) during the summer when financial aid offices are not busy.
- Contact the colleges' athletic department for athletic scholarships.

FINANCIAL AID 201

August/September Senior Year

- Request any specific financial aid forms your college may use in addition to the CSS Profile and FAFSA.
 - Create a calendar of all financial aid and scholarship deadlines
 - Check with your state's Department of Education for state aid applications and deadlines. Or, access them at: www.students.gov
 - Download or send for scholarship applications. Make note of their deadlines
 - Attend financial aid workshops.
 - Ask for teacher recommendations for scholarships, if you didn't do it last spring
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September/October Senior Year

- Register and complete the CSS/Profile, one month before a school's priority filing date if the school requires it. Call or register on-line www.collegeboard.com
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December Senior Year

- Apply for a FAFSA PIN at: www.pin.ed.gov
 - Get a copy of FAFSA, by calling 1-800-4FEDAID, or download a copy at: www.fafsa.ed.gov
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January Senior Year

- Have your parents complete their income tax form 1040 as soon as possible. Get your tax form completed
- Complete FAFSA and send it in quickly
- Make a copy of all financial aid forms.

February Senior Year

- Call the schools' financial aid offices to confirm your application has been received and is complete
 - Make sure your scholarship applications are complete and requirements met.
 - Go over you SAR(student aid report) for errors. Correct any errors immediately
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March/April Senior Year

- Send copies of your tax forms and SAR to financial officers, **If requested**
 - Compare financial aid packages. Use a tuition calculator to compare offers. (Compare Aid Award at www.collegeboard.com)
 - Determine whether you want to appeal your aid package
 - Make your final decision. Sign and return the required forms promptly.
 - Inform the financial aid officers of the schools you won't be attending. This is necessary to free up money for other students.
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May Senior Year

- Ask the financial aid counselor if the school participates in a direct lending program for student/parent loans. If they do, request applications and return them completed. Also ask if you can file the applications on-line to save time.
 - Contact local banks and lenders if the school does not participate in direct lending. Be specific and request information on federally-backed student loans.
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Summer Senior Year

- Make money! Save Money! – Get a summer job
- Apply now for a job in the fall, particularly if your financial aid package includes work study. The “good” jobs go fast – particularly on campus
- Start looking for scholarships for next year!

SCHOLARSHIPS

YEARLY TO-DO LIST

- First things first – start a file for scholarships, awards, and contests. Keep adding and updating it yearly.
- Search the sites. Register at the following web sites. Update your list yearly or when your GPA and class rank change.
 - www.finaid.org
 - www.fastweb.com
 - www.collegeboard.com
 - www.scholarship.com
 - www.review.com
 - www.srnexpress.com
 - www.xap.com
 - www.wiredscholar.com
 - www.eduprep.com
 - www.allaboutcollege.com
- Check out the scholarship section at the library and bookstores.
- Check out who won. Go to the scholarship's web site. The winning essay or portfolio is usually available. Study it for tips.
- Keep your advisor informed about your interests. She may know of related scholarships.
- Look at your local newspaper for scholarship listings.

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Check volunteer agencies to see which ones give volunteer scholarships. Consider doing your community service hours there.
- Join clubs that give scholarships to members. Do this early. Most clubs require at least a one year membership for eligibility.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Update your internet searches.
- Check with the guidance office for local scholarships that are available and what their requirements are.
- List local businesses, organizations and clubs. Contact them to see if they offer scholarships or contests.
- Check with associations and organizations you, your parents, or extended family members belong to for scholarships and contests.

JUNIOR YEAR

- Study for the PSAT. Taking it makes you eligible for the National Merit Scholarships.
- Talk to seniors to find out what scholarships they're applying for, especially local ones. Ask them about scholarships offered through their colleges.
- Send for applications as soon as possible. Keep an eye on deadlines and requirements.
- Contact the athletics department at your selected colleges to apply for sports scholarships. Do this during the summer. It doesn't matter if you decide NOT to attend a particular college. You can always decline an offer.

SENIOR YEAR

- Contact the financial aid counselors at your selected colleges regarding available scholarships. If you know your major, check with that department to see what scholarships they know are available. Scholarships differ from college to college. This may even be a deciding factor in your final college choice.
- Watch the deadlines. Most applications are due in February but some have deadlines as early as fall.
- Keep applying. Check to see if any essay you've written can be used for more than one award. Be careful not to get carried away with this-you might waste time and lose money.
- Follow the directions of the application to the letter. Omitting information can disqualify you.
- Ask for letters of recommendation early. Allow ample time for your teachers and employers to write and send them. Follow up to make sure they are sent in on time. Also ask for one copy of the letter that doesn't refer to a specific scholarship so that if another scholarship comes up, you may use the same recommendation.
- Notify the college you've decided to attend of scholarships you will be receiving.

CAMPUS VISITS

Before you Visit:

- Call the admissions department one month before you visit. Make appointments with the admissions officer, teachers, or anyone else you need to see
- Ask to sit in on a class in your major and, if possible, sleep overnight in a dorm
- Request a course catalog and campus map. Review them before you go.
- Do a virtual tour before going, making notes of what you'd like to see.
- Make a list of questions to ask at colleges

During your visit:

- Grab brochures. Eat in the cafeteria. Keep your eyes and ears open. Notice student behavior, dress, prominent groups, Do you feel like you fit in?
- Notice the campus layout.
- Check out the conditions of the dorms, bathrooms, showers, and common rooms. Find out what is included and what you will need to supply.
- Read the student paper, local paper, and bulletin boards for activities, clubs, opportunities, on campus and local areas

- Check out the classrooms and labs. Are the facilities up-to-date and will they accommodate what you want to study?
- Check out computer availability. PCs or Macs? What is the student to computer ratio?
- Visit the library. Is it large enough for study groups? Quiet enough for private studying? Comfortable? Enough seating?
- Tour the physical education facilities. What kind of equipment is available? When is it available to you?
- Listen to your gut instinct. Do you feel comfortable? Safe? Is this the school for you?

After your visit:

- Make notes. Set up categories so you can compare colleges.
- Write- don't email - thank you notes to any representative you've met: admissions officer, financial aid officer, and professors

Recommendation Questionnaire

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS AS THOROUGHLY AS POSSIBLE

1. In what activities do you participate outside of school? Indicate any awards or honors won due to your involvement.
2. List and explain any major accomplishments and awards you have received.
3. What did you do last summer?
4. Have you done any extensive or unusual traveling? If so, where?
5. List any work experience you have had.
6. What are your hobbies or special talents?
7. What are some things in which you have a strong interest?
8. What do you consider to be your chief weakness or weaknesses?
9. What do you consider to be your chief strength or strengths?
10. Can you think of any specific experiences that have influenced your development?
11. What are your career goals?

RESUMES

Include:

- **Personal Information**
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
 - E-mail address

- **Scholastic information**
 - Name of high school
 - Class rank, GPA
 - SAT, ACT, and SATII scores

- **Academic achievements**
 - Honor roll
 - Advanced placement classes
 - College credit classes
 - Internet classes
 - Awards, nominations, recognitions, citations or special projects in subject areas
 - Tutoring or mentoring roles

- **Computer skills**
 - Programs you know
 - Skills (web site design, Programming)

- **Workshops**
 - Camps
 - Programs
 - Seminars
 - Competitions

- **Work**
 - Experience, internships

- **Club involvement**
 - School
 - Community
 - Church

- **Special interests**
 - Hobbies, pursuits

- **Volunteer work**
 - On-going and one time events

- **Athletics**
 - Participation and achievements

- **Leadership Roles**
 - Holding office in class, sports, clubs
 - Taking initiative or responsibility for projects
 - Leadership camp participation