

11th Grade Checklist for College Planning



Summer

College Applications Prep

Visit college campuses.

Take a campus tour, and talk to people (students, professors, or admissions staff) to get a real feel for what it'd be like to attend college there. For your top-choice colleges, schedule a personal interview with an admissions officer. (When you apply, you might get a slight advantage for having done this.)

Start your college app spreadsheet.

Get organized! Note application deadlines, questions and essay prompts, costs, and average stats for admitted students (e.g. GPA, test scores) to gauge your chances. Also write down any minimum requirements for merit scholarships (like [this one](#))-- to give yourself clear targets for grades or test scores for your senior year.

Draft your main college essay(s).

Many colleges are on the Common App, meaning you can choose any of their prompts for your main *personal statement*. Aim to have your first draft ready before senior year starts.

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Gather documents, and sign up for the FAFSA (the federal financial aid form).

Although the FAFSA only opens in October, you can get your FSA ID (that is, your username) and password ahead of time. You can also begin gathering other documents you need, like your parents' tax returns.

Learn more about financial aid.

Once senior year rolls around, you'll be focused on college apps. Get up to speed on the financial aid process now, so you don't accidentally miss deadlines! Psst - [This guide](#) might help.

Continue applying for scholarships.

Students sometimes forget about scholarships during the summer, which means there's usually less competition to actually win! [Apply here](#).

Military ROTC scholarships (if applicable)

If you're interested in an ROTC scholarship, begin the process now.

Fall

Take (or retake) standardized tests.

Take SAT subject tests and AP Tests. Retake the SAT/ACT if you're unhappy with your current score.

Decide if you're applying early.

If so, you'll likely need to submit by mid-November.

Complete all your financial aid forms.

Fill out the FAFSA. Some states have separate state aid application form. Some colleges require the CSS Profile or a college-specific form. Most funds are first-come, first-served, so apply early. And don't forget about [external scholarships!](#)

Winter

Apply for colleges Regular Decision,

Popular deadlines are Jan 1, Jan 15, and Mar 1, though some schools have rolling deadlines.

Hear back from any EA/ED applications.

If you applied early action/decision, you'll likely get your admissions decision and financial aid offer.

Spring

Hear back and decide on your college!

Get your RD admissions decisions--and decide which college you'll attend.

Provide additional documentation (if required)

If relevant, submit your final high school transcript and your official test scores.

Evaluate your financial aid offer.

Possibly write an appeals letter to request additional financial aid.

Come up with a plan for any financial gaps.

This may include a summer job, student loans, or scholarships.

Financial Aid