

College Essay Guy's

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIMELINE

9th Grade → 10th Grade → 11th Grade → 12th Grade



**College Essay Guy**  
[www.collegeessayguy.com](http://www.collegeessayguy.com)

By Stacy Hernandez and College Essay Guy

# 9th Grade

- Do the Values Exercise to determine what's important to you.
- Take a personality assessment to learn more about your strengths, challenges, and communication and learning style.
- Explore and engage with extracurricular activities (e.g., clubs, sports, community service, fine and performing arts, work, and other in-or out-of-school activities) that align with your values and strengths
- Create an activity log to track all your extracurricular activities, summer experiences, academic honors, and other achievements.
- Develop your time management and study skills.
- PSAT: Some high schools allow you to take the October PSAT as a freshman.
- Take an interest assessment to explore possible college majors and careers.
- Plan your high school classes using insight from the bullet above.
- Meet with your school counselor to explore clubs, classes, and discuss course selection. Start building a relationship with them by doing this regularly.
- Parents: Start exploring how to pay for college.
- Athletes: Familiarize yourself with the NCAA and NAIA athletic recruiting requirements.
- Plan a summer experience that helps you explore a passion or interest.
- Summer reading: Expand your vocabulary and your world.

# 10th Grade

- Do the Values Exercise to see if your ever-evolving self has new priorities. If they've changed, assess whether you want to change your current activities so they align with your values.
- Continue participating in non-academic extracurricular activities. See if you can deepen your involvement or take on a leadership role in the activities you've already been doing. Or step outside your comfort zone and try something new.
- Update your activity log.
- Stay focused on keeping your grades up--this year's grades are important to college admissions officers.
- If your school offers higher-level (honors or AP) classes, challenge yourself academically by taking one a higher-level (honors or AP) class or two (honors or AP classes), in areas that you're interested in.
- PSAT: Some high schools allow you to take the October PSAT as a sophomore.
- Attend a local college fair.
- Meet with your school counselor at least once a year to discuss course selection. Continue building this relationship by asking lots of questions about new courses and suggestions for ways to develop your interests.
- Parents: Continue researching how to pay for college and set up a college budget.
- Visit a college or two locally or while you're on vacation.
- Read more about possible college majors and careers to better plan out your high school classes.



# 10th Grade Cont.

## If you think you may play Division I or II sports in college:

- Register for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearinghouse.
- Register for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA) Eligibility Center.
- Familiarize yourself with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requirements. Then double-check that all of your courses are NCAA-approved. Not all high school classes count towards their requirements.
- Let your high school counselor know you're considering college athletics.

## Testing

- If you're taking an AP class this year, consider sitting for the AP exam (May) and the correlating SAT Subject Test (May or June).
- If you're taking a Pre-calculus or Calculus class in Sophomore year, consider taking the Math 2 SAT Subject Test in May or June.
- On the fence about which tests to take and when? Check in with your teacher in that subject for some wise counsel.
- At the end of the school year, take a practice ACT and SAT to determine which test may be better for you, then set up a testing timeline.
- Summer reading: Continue expanding your vocabulary and your world.
- Continue exploring your interests during the summer. This could be through a job, internship, volunteer experience, or self-designed project.

# 11th Grade

## FALL SEMESTER

- Check in with the Values Exercise. Has anything changed?
- Stay consistent with your non-academic extracurricular activities if your values and priorities haven't changed. If they have, try something new. Continue to look for ways to explore and deepen your interests in these activities. Try a leadership role if you haven't already.
- Continue to update your activity log.
- Start your college search by attending a local college fair and a few college admission rep presentations at your high school (if they are offered).
- Explore your college interests by sorting the college criteria on [www.Corsava.com](http://www.Corsava.com). Then use those preferences to searches for a few college matches.
- Start a preliminary list of colleges to visit using the results of your college match searches. Have a family meeting to block out dates for college visits throughout junior year.
- Keep your grades up. Junior year grades are the last ones some schools will see before making an admissions decision.
- Take an aptitude or career assessment such as YouScience or Do What You Are to learn more about your interests and strengths, which will change as you grow and learn.
- Continue challenging yourself academically with higher level AP or honors classes.
- Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss the colleges you are interested in. Tell them about your college preferences and ask for their suggestions of colleges that might be a good fit for you. Continue to develop your relationship with your counselor.



# **11th Grade Cont.**

## **Testing**

- Take the PSAT/NSMQT in October. This test qualifies students for the National Merit Scholarship.
- Stay on track with your ACT/SAT testing timeline and study schedule.

## **Athletic Recruitment**

- Double-check that your classes meet the NCAA Clearinghouse requirements
- Complete online athletic recruitment forms for each college you're considering. You'll find these on the college's website under "athletics."
- Once you've completed the online recruitment forms, make your sports resume and recruitment videos.
- Spread out your correspondence with coaches by sending the resumes and video a few weeks after you complete the online forms.

## **Fine & Performing Arts Students**

- Sign up for Performing & Visual Arts College Fairs.
- Create an admissions requirements spreadsheet for fine and performing arts programs.
- You most likely need to create a portfolio and audition materials, so spend junior year working on pieces.

## **WINTER & SPRING**

- Investigate summer experiences.
- Register for senior year classes. Remember colleges will want to see a strong senior year course load including five academic core classes.
- Continue visiting colleges. Use local colleges to sample certain types of schools (single-sex, small liberal arts, larger university, etc.)
- Start building your college list based on your values and your research.
- Start researching scholarship opportunities.
- Complete the Letter of Rec questionnaire and request letters of recommendation from two academic teachers from junior year.

## **Testing**

- Select testing dates. Most likely your first ACT or SAT will take place between December and May.
- Take the AP/IB exams in May.
- For highly selective colleges, you may have to take two to three SAT Subject Tests. May or June is likely the best time to schedule these one-hour tests.

## **Athletes**

- Send your sports resume and video to college coaches and fill out the athletic recruitment surveys on the college websites.

## **Fine & Performing Arts Students**

- Explore how the audition and portfolio process works for college admission.
- Build your portfolios and audition videos.

**Set up a meeting with your school counselor to ask questions about college choices, your senior year schedule, testing, and anything else you're curious about.**



# 11th Grade Cont.

## **SUMMER**

- Participate in summer experiences (research, reading, internships, fun stuff).
- Refine and finalize your college list. Be sure it reflects a balance of admission probabilities (likely, possible, and reach schools).
- Research the type of applications required for each school on your list, as these vary.
- Write your Common Application personal statement.
- Complete the Common Application.
- Visit more colleges.
- Research the admission requirements and deadlines for schools on your list and create a spreadsheet to organize information. Research to see if an interview is offered or required at each school.
- Create a scholarship spreadsheet to list deadlines and requirements.

# 12th Grade

## **AUGUST & SEPTEMBER**

- Confirm your final college list, application deadlines, and requirements.
- Write your college-specific supplemental essays.
- Ask an expert outside reader to review your Common Application and personal statement.
- Continue to research scholarships, adding requirements and deadlines to your list.
- Set up on-campus or local rep interviews with colleges.
- Check in with your recommendation writers. Update your Letter of Rec Questionnaire and ask for a letter of recommendation from your school counselor.
- Apply to scholarships throughout the school year.
- Parents: Start preparing financial aid paperwork and develop a deadlines list.

## **SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER**

- Complete and send out all EA and ED applications no later than late October. (These deadlines are typically around November 1.)
- Many portfolio-based arts programs have December 1st deadlines. And some universities require submission by December 1st to be considered for scholarship opportunities. Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to review your college list to get his or her feedback and review your application deadlines, and ask any questions you may have.
- Attend high school presentations and programs.
- Apply for financial aid using the FAFSA and CSS/PROFILE (if required).
- Completed final college visits.
- Send test scores to your colleges after checking whether they allow self-reported scores.
- Ask your school counseling office to deliver letters and transcripts to colleges.





# **12th Grade Cont.**

## **DECEMBER**

- Regular Decision (RD) deadlines are typically around January 1. Complete and send out all RD applications no later than mid-December. Give yourself a relaxing holiday break by completing your applications before November 15.

## **JANUARY - MARCH**

- January: If deferred, send an email to your region/state/country admissions representative. Reaffirm your interest in the school and offer any updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- Wait for application decisions.

## **MARCH - APRIL**

- Colleges have until April 1 to release decisions.
- Plan visits to accepted colleges, if needed, in order to make your final college choice.
- Attend local admitted student events when possible.
- Evaluate financial aid packages and scholarship offerings to figure out how to pay for college.
- Students need to enroll and submit a deposit by May 1.

## **MAY**

- Take AP/IB exams.
- Notify your school counselor of your college decisions and scholarship opportunities.
- If you've been waitlisted, this is a good time to send a) your "I'd like to stay on the wait list" form and b) the email to your designated admissions rep which states your interest in the school and offers updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- Sign-up for campus housing if you plan to live on campus.

## **JUNE - AUGUST**

- Continue saving for college.
- Check your email for waitlist notifications.
- Attend orientation sessions.
- Sign up for meal plans and register for classes.
- Find out what you need for your dorm and classes, and go shopping.
- Contact your future roommate(s).
- Make travel and move-in arrangements.
- Set up a bank account on or near campus.
- Continue applying for scholarships.
- Set up a meeting with an academic advisor at your college to plan your classes.

**Want to work on the Values Exercise? Click here!**

