

HEY! YOU'RE AN UPPERCLASSMAN!

We'll let you in on a little secret: Junior year is the best year of high school. Why? You have more freedom, but don't have to take on the full responsibilities of applying to college yet. Enjoy this sweet spot in high school! To prepare for college apps, use this year to explore your options and discover your true interests.

FALL KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

CHOOSE A PATH

College isn't the only option after high school. Now is the time to decide if a 4-year college is really the right choice for you. These are your options:

2-year college • 4-year college • Military Vocational technical school • Career college

TAKE THE PSAT

Even if you already decided to take the ACT, you should consider taking the PSAT because it qualifies you for the **National Merit Scholarship** program. Of course, if you're taking the SAT, it'll be great practice!


START MAKING A COLLEGE LIST

With thousands of colleges and universities in the U.S, how are you supposed to choose the best college for you? The above list outlines criteria students typically consider. Checkmark the criteria that's important to you, and then prioritize them (1 to 11) in the second column.


ORGANIZE THE SCHOOLS YOU'RE CONSIDERING

Using Excel or Google Sheets, organize the criteria that's most important to you and colleges you're interested in. Here's an example mini-chart:

SCHOOL NAME	COST	SOCIAL LIFE	WEATHER	LOCATION	INTERNSHIPS	ACADEMICS	SIZE
Georgetown				✓	✓	✓	
UC Santa Barbara	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Pomona College		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓



CRITERIA	IMPORTANT?	PRIORITY #
Location	✓	
Size		
Cost		
Academic majors		
Special programs		
Weather		
Distance from home		
Social life		
Internship options		
Alumni network		
College sports		



WINTER

TIS THE SEASON TO PREPARE



GATHER COLLEGE INFO

Speak with college representatives who visit your high school and go to college fairs to ask specific questions. Fill in the spreadsheet as you go! This will help you narrow your choices and keep your priorities in order. Use our [data insights tool](#) to learn more about specific colleges: common majors, popular extracurriculars etc.

GET RECRUITED

Are you thinking about playing sports in college? Talk to your coach and your counselor about the options of getting recruited and the scholarship opportunities that may be available to you.

Here are some pieces of advice from [college athletes](#) in our database.

STAY ON TRACK

Make sure your GPA is steady and stay involved with your extracurricular activities. Going above and beyond really pays off!

START NARROWING DOWN

Based on your priority list, start removing colleges that don't meet your criteria. You should still have about 15 schools on your list.

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY

Bring your tentative list of schools to your parents or trusted mentors and talk through it with them. They may have suggestions and concerns you weren't previously aware of!

PREP FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

Do your research and find out what the 75th percentile is of average SAT/ACT scores at each school. That's the goal you're trying to hit. Here's an [ACT/SAT study plan](#) to follow.

LEARN ABOUT FAFSA

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Nearly every student is eligible for some form of financial aid. Create a checklist of the things you need to have ready in advance! The form is typically due mid-February.

MAKE A TEST PLAN

All the test dates available for the 2017-2018 application season:

ANTICIPATED TEST DATES

SAT*	ACT
March 11 (SAT II not offered)	February 11 (none in NY)
May 6	April 8
June 3	June 10
August 26	September 9
October 7	October 28
November 4	December 9
December 2	

*You may not take the SAT I and SAT II in one sitting

International students must take the TOEFL. [Learn more](#) about the exam.



SPRING

VISIT SCHOOLS AND START APPLYING!

SEARCH FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

It's never too early to look for scholarships. Create accounts on scholarship aggregates like FastWeb, Unigo and Scholarships.com! Input your information and their platform will be able to match you with scholarships you're eligible for. Find other [resources](#) here!

GET ADVICE FROM COLLEGE STUDENTS

If you don't know any current college students, there are resources for you to use online. Discover [student insights](#) regarding college tours, recommendation letters, school culture, application regrets, college interviews, and more.

GO ON COLLEGE TOURS

With your tentative list, plan which colleges you'd like to visit to find out if they truly fit your needs and personality. College tours can be pricey. If you can only afford to see a few schools on your list, we suggest seeing schools with very different criteria.

For example - not sure if you like big school or small schools better? Visit both UCLA and Pomona College. This will help you find out what type of school you might prefer. At each college tour, you should consider:

- Registering for information sessions and campus tour sessions
- Planning a meeting with a professor or coach!
- Scheduling a customized tour with a resource like [Campus Sherpa](#)



OPEN YOUR COMMON APP OR COALITION FOR ACCESS ACCOUNTS

These are 2 main application platforms, but not all schools are available on both of them. Some schools have their own application platform and you'll have to apply directly on their website. Check out the [Common App](#), [UC Schools](#), and [Coalition for Access](#) Essay Prompts for 2017-2018. Download our [free e-book](#) to get a glimpse of what essays you should expect to write.

EARLY ACTION

- Applications must be submitted by November 1st.
- You can apply to more than one school EA
- Applicants will receive their decision by December 15th
- The acceptance is **not** binding. You can still apply to other colleges.



SINGLE CHOICE EA

- Applications must be submitted by November 1st.
- You can only apply to **one school** under SCEA
- Applicants will receive their decision by December 15th
- The acceptance is **not** binding. You can still apply to other colleges during the regular application.

EARLY DECISION

- Applications must be submitted by November 1st or the 15th.
- You can only apply to **one school** Early Decision
- Applicants will receive their decision by December 15th
- The acceptance is **binding**.
- If accepted, you must attend and withdraw the rest of your college apps, or lose a sizable deposit