



College Prep: 10 Things High School Juniors Should be Doing

1. **Start Researching Schools and Programs**

Begin exploring colleges, community colleges, or trade schools that match your academic interests, career goals, and personal preferences. Consider program offerings, size, location, and tuition costs.

- Use the Scholarship Tool found on our [Educational Resources page](#)
- Create a free **circled in** profile: [Cirkled In: Free Student Professional Profile | Hub of ALL Opportunities!](#) to manage schools and jobs

2. **Take the PSAT and SAT/ACT Prep**

Take the PSAT to qualify for National Merit Scholarships and begin studying for the SAT or ACT. Research test dates and create a study plan. Free online resources and practice tests can help boost your scores.

- A lot of schools have moved to being test optional, which means they no longer require the ACT or SAT scores; however, check with your desired schools. If you test well and think it will strengthen your application, take the tests and submit the scores with your application.

3. **Strengthen Your Academic Record**

Maintain good grades and challenge yourself with rigorous courses like honors, AP, or vocational programs that align with your future plans. Strong academics can improve college or trade school admissions chances.

- For lowerclassman, consider dual enrollment at a local community college

4. **Participate in Extracurricular Activities**

Get involved in clubs, sports, community service, or work experiences that align with your interests. Colleges and trade schools look for well-rounded students with leadership and teamwork skills.

- Start tracking your activities, hobbies, and service hours
- Create an academic/scholarship resume using the example on our Educational Resources page and keep it updated.

5. **Build Relationships with Teachers and Counselors**

Establish strong connections with teachers and school counselors who can provide valuable advice and write recommendation letters for college or scholarships.

- Make a list of 5-7 teachers who you can ask to write a letter of recommendation for you

- b. Draft a the Letter of Recommendation to provide to your teacher, coach, etc to streamline the process

6. Research Financial Aid Options

Learn about scholarships, grants, and financial aid opportunities. Familiarize yourself with the FAFSA process and begin researching scholarships that align with your background or future studies.

- a. Use the Scholarship Tool on our Educational Resources page for a short list of sites to find scholarships
- b. Use **circled in** to find scholarships
- c. Visti FAFSA ([Home | Federal Student Aid](#)) to learn what documents are needed to apply.

7. Attend College Fairs and Information Sessions

Go to virtual or in-person college fairs and attend information sessions for schools or programs you're interested in. This can help narrow down your list and allow you to ask specific questions.

- a. Visit and bookmark [Events - National Association for College Admission Counseling \(NACAC\) \(nacacnet.org\)](#)
- b. Make a list of fairs you want to attend and put them on your calendar

8. Prepare a Resume or Portfolio

Start building a resume that highlights your academic achievements, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and any job experience. If you're going into a creative or technical field, start a portfolio of your best work.

9. Visit College and Trade School Campuses

If possible, visit the campuses of schools you're considering to get a feel for the environment and resources they offer. Virtual tours are also an option for many schools.

- a. Make a list of schools you want to tour
- b. Visit their site to look at their tour calendar
- c. Our P4GYP hosts a MD college tour annually in April

10. Explore Career Interests

Take career assessments, shadow professionals, or get involved in internships or part-time jobs that align with your potential career interests. This helps you make more informed decisions about the type of school or program that fits your goals.

- a. Use **circled in** to find internship opportunities
- b. Take a free career test at [Free Career Test for Students in High School, College, & Adults \(yourfreecareertest.com\)](#)
- c. Make a list of things that you're naturally good at (like drawing or singing), what courses you do well in school, things that people think you're good at, and research careers that include these attributes