

College Countdown Checklist

No matter what year you are in high school, it's never too early to start planning for college. This handy tear-out timeline will help you keep up with significant dates and deadlines.

Grade 9: Fall

- ⇒ Chat with your guidance counselor about what you can do to get the most out of high school.
- ⇒ Get involved with some extracurricular activities. Colleges love well-rounded students

Grade 9: Spring

- ⇒ Meet with your guidance counselor to sketch out your schedule for the rest of high school

Grade 10: Fall

- ⇒ Get used to standardized tests by taking the PLAN (a preliminary version of the ACT), the PSAT (preliminary SAT), or, if you think you're ready, the "real thing" – the ACT or SAT.
- ⇒ Check out some options by going to a college fair. (To find a Christian college fair near you, check out gospelcom.net/naccap/student/fair/)

Grade 10: Spring

- ⇒ If you haven't done it already, discuss your college plans with your guidance counselor.
- ⇒ Take another look at your long-term class schedule. Make sure you're meeting college entrance requirements for math, science, foreign languages, etc.
- ⇒ Look into Advanced Placement courses that could earn you college credit.

Grade 11: Summer

- ⇒ Add to your resume and your savings account with a part-time job.

Grade 11: Fall

- ⇒ Take the PSAT, even if you took it last year. High scores can qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship.
- ⇒ Start a file for mail from colleges that interest you.
- ⇒ Collect more information on specific schools by consulting the Christian College Directory.

Grade 11: Winter

- ⇒ Register for the spring ACT and/or SAT. Decide which schools you want to send your scores to.

Grade 11: Spring

- ⇒ Take the ACT and/or SAT.
- ⇒ When you receive your ACT or SAT scores, meet with your guidance counselor to see which schools and scholarships you may qualify for.
- ⇒ Double-check your senior year course schedule to make sure you're not leaving anything out.
- ⇒ Visit the colleges you like most.
- ⇒ Look into pre-college programs for the summer, where you can earn college credit and get a look at life on campus.

Grade 12: Summer

- ⇒ Get up-to-date catalogs from your top 10 schools.
- ⇒ Look for specific information on financial aid that will help you make your decision.
- ⇒ Put together a list of courses taken, awards received, and activities both in and out of school. This list will help when you fill out applications.
- ⇒ Write down answers to questions like "What do I hope to get out of college?"

These answers will help you fill our application questions and prepare you for admissions interviews.

Grade 12: Fall

- ⇒ Narrow your list of college choices to no more than five, and apply to each of these schools.
- ⇒ Ask selected adults to fill out any recommendation forms required by your chosen schools.
- ⇒ Write drafts of your application essays. Ask your parents and a teacher to edit them. The, revise your work.
- ⇒ Send in early admission applications (Many are due as early as November).
- ⇒ If you are unhappy with your earlier scores, retake the ACT and/or SAT.
- ⇒ Keep asking your guidance counselor about scholarships, and apply for the ones you're eligible for.
- ⇒ If possible, schedule longer visits at your top two or three schools.

Grade 12: Winter

- ⇒ Complete and send in your remaining college applications.
- ⇒ Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible.
- ⇒ Continue to apply for scholarships

Grade 12: Spring

- ⇒ The acceptance letters have arrived and you've chosen your school. As a courtesy, contact those schools you've decided not to attend. This allows them to cross you off their list and pursue other candidates.

Final Step:

- ⇒ Wear a T-shirt with your new college's name on it. Now everybody knows your college plans!