

# College Preparation Checklist (page 1 of 3)

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## Pre-High School

- Use *FAFSA4caster*<sup>SM</sup> at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) to find out how much federal student aid you might receive if you went to college now. This information will help you and your parents plan ahead.
- Start saving for college if you haven't already. Look into college savings plans that your state may offer.
- Do your best in school. If you are having difficulty, don't give up—get help from a teacher, tutor or mentor.
- Become involved in school- or community-based extracurricular activities that enable you to explore your interests, meet new people, and learn new things.
- Go to career information events. Ask employers what kind of education they expect their employees to have.

## High School

### Every Year

- Update your information in *FAFSA4caster* and continue to save for college.
- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects: most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.), three years of mathematics, and three years of science; and many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts. To increase your chances of receiving an Academic Competitiveness Grant in college, follow a “rigorous high school program.” For more information, visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding).
- Stay involved in school- or community-based extracurricular activities that interest you or enable you to explore career interests. Consider working or volunteering. *Remember—it's quality (not quantity) that counts.*
- Athletes, artists, scholars, and others should start collecting items (such as game tapes, newspaper clippings, stats, awards, artwork, school papers, etc.) for their portfolios.
- Talk to your school counselor and other mentors about education after high school. Your counselor can answer questions about what classes to take in high school, how to sign up for standardized tests, and where to get money for college.

## 9th Grade

- Follow a rigorous program of study. (See above, under “Every Year.”)
- Start planning for college and thinking about your career interests. At [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) you can register with MyFSA and research your career and college options.

## 10th Grade

- Continue to follow a rigorous program of study. (See above, under “Every Year.”)
- Meet with your school counselor or mentor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Talk to adults about what they like and dislike in their jobs and about what kind of education is needed for each kind of job.
- Consider taking a practice Preliminary SAT (PSAT), or the PLAN exam, also known as the “pre-ACT.”\*
- Plan to use your summer wisely: work, volunteer, or take a summer course (away or at a local college).

\* **Remember:** Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, see your school counselor about getting a fee waiver.





