

# **12th Grade College Planning Checklist**

## Summer

- Visit colleges. If you haven't already, make plans to check out the campuses of colleges you're interested in. Use the [Campus Visit Checklist](#) to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
- Finalize a college list. Choose which colleges to apply to by weighing how well each college meets your needs, for example. Find out more about [how to finalize a college list](#).
- Find out a college's actual cost. Once you have a list of a few colleges you're interested in, use the [Net Price Calculator](#) together to find out the potential for financial aid and the true out-of-pocket cost — or net price — of each college.
- Get started on applications. Get the easy stuff out of the way now by filling in as much required information on college applications as possible. Read about [how to get started on applications](#).
- Decide about applying early. If you are set on going to a certain college, you should think about whether applying early is a good option. Now is the time to decide because early applications are usually due in November. Read about the pros and cons of [applying early](#).

## Fall

- Meet with the school counselor. This year, you will work with the counselor to complete and submit college applications. Learn more about [the counselor's role in applying to college](#).
- Create a calendar. This should include application deadlines and other important dates. You can find specific colleges' deadlines in [College Search](#). If you save colleges to a list there, you can get a custom online calendar that shows those colleges' deadlines.
- Prepare for college admission tests. Many seniors retake college admission tests, such as the SAT and the ACT, in the fall. Learn more about how to [prepare for admission tests](#).
- Find and apply for scholarships. You can find out about scholarship opportunities from the school counselor. You will need to request and complete scholarship applications and submit them on time. Learn more about [scholarships](#).
- Set up college interviews. An interview is a great way for you to learn more about a college and for a college to learn more about you. Get an overview of the [interview process](#).

## Winter

- Apply for financial aid. Contact the financial aid offices at the colleges you're interested in to find out what forms students must submit to apply for aid. Make sure you apply for aid by or before any stated deadlines. Funds are limited, so the earlier you apply, the better.
- Fill out the FAFSA to apply for aid. The government and many colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to award aid. Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA. Read [How to Complete the FAFSA](#) to learn more.

- Learn about college loan options. Borrowing money for college can be a smart choice — especially if you get a low-interest federal loan.
- Take SAT Subject Tests. These tests can showcase your interests and achievements — and many colleges require or recommend that applicants take one or more Subject Tests. Read more about [SAT Subject Tests](#).
- Take AP Exams. If you take AP or other advanced classes, talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the [AP Program](#).

#### Spring

- Process college responses. Read about [how to choose a college](#).
- Review financial aid offers. Be sure to pay attention to and meet any deadlines for acceptance. Get more information on [financial aid awards](#).
- Complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance. Once you have decided which college to attend, you will need to accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit and submit other required paperwork. Learn more about your [next steps](#).

\*Source: The College Board

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/make-a-plan>