

Start Planning for College

It's not too early to start thinking about your future. If you're in middle school or just starting high school, there's plenty you can do now to help yourself get ready for college.

1. Take challenging courses.

Colleges do look at your grades, but they also pay attention to how tough your courses are. They want to see that you've challenged yourself. Also, if you take advanced courses, such as AP[®] courses, you may be able to get college credit.

2. Read regularly.

Read at least 30 minutes every day, in addition to studying and doing homework. This habit will pay off when you take standardized tests. Also, people who read more know more.

3. Take standardized tests.

Keep your options open by planning to take a college admission test like the SAT[®]. Some colleges require these tests because they're helpful in comparing students from different high schools. Remember, though, test scores are just one admission factor among many and are not as important as your grades and how much you've challenged yourself in academic subjects.

The PSAT/NMSQT[®] is not an admission test, but it's good practice for the SAT and, if you take it in your junior year, it can help you qualify for a scholarship. Ask your counselor if it's given at your school.

4. Ask for help if you need it.

If you're having trouble in a class, talk with a teacher or counselor to find out what type of tutoring or other assistance is available. Let them know you want extra help.

5. Get the facts.

Find out about college admission, academics and campus life by asking someone who's experienced it, such as students from your high school who are now in college. Get to know your counselors. Talk to a career planner at a local college, or a high school teacher or college professor. Do research online or in your library.

6. Find ways to get involved.

Getting ready for college isn't all work. Find something you really like doing, then dive into it. Maybe you're drawn to sports, student council, music or art. Join a school group or club, or find other ways to follow your passion. You'll develop skills and show colleges you can make a commitment and stick with it.

7. Involve your family.

If your family members haven't been to college themselves, they may think they can't help you with your college planning. That's not true. They know you well and can help you make good choices. Have your family members work with your teachers and counselors to help you on the path to college.

8. Look for a mentor.

Look for adults who can lend their enthusiasm and help you succeed at your goals. If you're interested in a particular subject or activity, talk to a teacher or counselor who knows about it. Find someone you trust to talk to about your goals.

9. Confront personal roadblocks.

If you have a problem that's getting in the way of schoolwork, don't ignore it. Talk to someone

The following Information was taken from Collegeboard.com

you trust and respect — whether friend, family member, teacher, coach, nurse, counselor — anyone who might be able to offer advice or help.

10. Work hard.

If you expect to go to college later, expect to study now. No one can do it for you.