

FRESHMAN YEAR: College Planning for Ninth Grade

At this stage in the game, you're laying the foundation for your high school career. This is a time to establish your academic and extracurricular credentials. You should also begin to explore options for your career or further education.

Fall

Meet your school counselor. **JHS** **LHS** **WHS** Your counselor is ready and willing to help you make sense of your college and career options. As soon as you can, set up a meeting to talk about your plans for high school and the future.

Get involved. **JHS** **LHS** **WHS** Extracurricular activities (both school- and non-school-sponsored) are an important part of high school. Make the effort to get involved with groups, clubs, or teams that interest you. These activities are fun and make you a well-rounded student.

Pick the right mix of classes. Make sure you're enrolled in the appropriate college-prep or tech-prep classes and that you're taking key core requirements, such as English, math, science, history, and a foreign language.

Winter

Make the grade. Get off to a good start with your grades because they will impact your GPA and class rank. Although college seems like a long way off right now, grades really do count toward college admission and scholarships.

Explore your interests and possible careers. Discuss your skills and interests with your guidance counselor and take advantage of Career Day opportunities at your school.

Consider a college savings plan. Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. If your family already has a savings plan, continue to add to it. If not, now is a great time to start saving for college.

Spring/Summer

Build your credentials. Keep track of academic and extracurricular awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in, so it'll be easier to remember later. It'll come in handy when you want to highlight your accomplishments—such as when you're filling out college applications or creating a resume.

Start learning about college. Look at the college information available in your counselor's office and school and public libraries. Use the Internet to check out college Web sites and view college profiles. You may even want to start a list of colleges that might interest you.

Make summer count. There are plenty of ways to have fun and build your credentials during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job, or signing up for an enrichment program.

Read, read, read!

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