

Preparing for School Checklist: High School

From: <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/preparing-for-school/checklists/high-school.shtml>

Most college decision-making takes place between 10th and 12th grades. It's time to narrow down your educational choices and choose a future path.

[Collapse All](#)

[Continue to do well in school.](#)

There is simply no down side to working hard in school and getting good grades. Good grades open the door at many colleges.

Good grades may also make you eligible for Advanced Placement[®] (AP[®]) classes in high school. These college-level classes may allow you to earn college credit before you even go to college. And getting your college credits in high school will save you time and money in the long run.

[Visiting colleges.](#)

[Visiting schools](#) in your junior year of high school, before you apply, can help you pick the ones you like best.

You will meet a lot of people on a campus visit and have the opportunity to [talk to them](#). Gather as much info as you can about what kind of college experience you can expect, so you are well informed when it's time to make your final decision about where to go.

[Compare colleges.](#)

Are there a couple of colleges you are interested in attending? Can't decide which one you like best?

[Compare the colleges](#) side by side, including the percentage of applicants accepted at each school, the admissions criteria, the cost, and other details. This simple snapshot gives you a good sense of the bigger picture.

[Find out admissions requirements.](#)

Want to learn more about the university you've had your eye on since you were a kid?

The College Board's [College QuickFinder](#) provides details about 2- and 4-year colleges in the United States where you can earn an associate or bachelor's degree. Specifically take a look at the following links in your College QuickFinder results:

- **Am I on Track?** Find out if you meet the school's admissions requirements.
- **How do I Stack Up?** Compare yourself with students who have been accepted and are currently enrolled.

[Take the ACT[®] or SAT[®] test.](#)

The [ACT](#) and the [SAT](#) tests are national college admissions tests for students interested in pursuing education beyond high school.

Most colleges accept both ACT and SAT scores, so it is up to you whether you want to take one or both tests. Consult your guidance counselor if you have questions about which test may be a better choice for you.

[Apply to colleges.](#)

Once you've narrowed down the list of schools you're interested in, complete an application for each. Make sure you know each school's deadline, and follow the instructions on the application.

Set aside time so you can be thorough, and pay attention to detail. It's important that you [complete your college applications accurately](#).

[Wait for your admissions letters.](#)

Schools usually start sharing their admissions decisions in early April (unless you applied for early admission). Your admissions letters will tell you the news you've been waiting to hear in the very first sentence. Prepare for the following possibilities:

- **Accepted**—You're in!
- **Rejected**—There's no room in the class for you this year.
- **Decision deferred**—[You're on the wait list](#).

If you've been accepted, your acceptance letter will detail the next steps in the admissions process.

[Choose a college.](#)

You've been accepted at more than one school, and you've got about 1 month to make a decision. But it's not always an easy decision to make.

- If you didn't [visit the schools](#) before you applied, now may be a good time to go.
- Use this time to be proactive and [prepare for campus life](#).
- Ask your [parents](#) or your guidance counselor to weigh in on your school choices.
- Take a moment to congratulate yourself... you're heading off to college!