

10th Grade Timeline

Fall

High school academic records are paramount.

Work with your guidance counselor to make sure you're enrolled in the courses you'll need to prepare for college. Move on to the next level of classes in the core subjects (English, math, science, history and foreign language). Stay focused on doing your best and keeping grades up! Be prepared, be over-prepared, and study!

Practice makes perfect

Sign up to take your PSAT (pre-SAT) test or PLAN (Pre-ACT) test. These tests will give you to an idea of what to expect when you take the actual tests and help you prepare for taking the PSAT your junior year.*

Take these scores and make a study plan (identify your strengths and weaknesses to see what you need to work on for when you take the SAT and ACT).

Talk with your teachers and/or counselors about studying and taking classes that will help prepare for future standardized tests. Check out SAT/ACT practice books – Study, take practice tests, and use vocabulary flash cards in your free time.

***Only the 11th grade scores count towards the National Merit Scholarship Program or National Hispanic Recognition Program.**

Continue learning about college

Get familiar with general college entrance requirements.

Continue exploring potential careers, now in more detail—research the careers you are interested in to learn about the tasks, educations, and training necessary for each occupation. Consider taking a career aptitude test!

Financial Considerations

Start saving, or continue saving money for college! Try to add to a college savings account regularly.

Continue researching scholarships and make a list of upcoming deadlines.

Keep reviewing scholarships throughout high school. Meet with a counselor to go over scholarship requirements.

Winter

Stay on track

Meet with your guidance counselor to make sure you are on course with your education plan and to discuss your PSAT scores.

Extracurricular activities

Start to focus on three or four areas that you really enjoy and stay involved in these activities.

Work towards leadership positions in these activities.

If your school doesn't offer what you're interested in, create it! Or go outside the school and get involved elsewhere.

Keep record of all the activities you participate in (activity, hours, jobs, independent lessons, and projects etc.)

Schools and Scholarships are looking for depth and leadership. They would rather see constant, invested involvement than a long list of activities that were tried for two weeks. Find what you like and dig in!

Start your college search

What do you want your college or university to be like? What do you think you'd like to study?

Do you want to attend a big university or a small liberal arts or community college?

Would you like to take classes at a community college first, and then transfer to a university?

Research online and look through college planning books/guides and college listing books which are available at the library.

Start making a list or excel spreadsheet of colleges which appeal to you.

Add a description of the college, in addition to location, cost, and majors offered, to keep you organized.

Contact the colleges that interest you and ask if the colleges can send you brochures with more information about their academic requirements and any programs or activities that you're interested in. Look over and compare brochures.

It's especially important to start this process now if you think you want to attend a military academy.

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Spring

Keep focusing on your studies and stay involved

Keep studying! Focus on keeping your grades up.
Continue involvement in extracurricular activities.

Meet with your counselor

Review your academic goals again with your advisor to see if you are on track or if your goals have changed.

Summer

Make the Summer Count!

Consider taking the SAT or ACT subject tests for courses you took this year in May or June while the material is fresh in your mind. Some schools require SAT or ACT subject tests, but many others do not. Check out PSAT/PLAN prep books from the library to help you study for the 11th grade PSAT in October. Make sure to take at least 1 or 2 practice PSAT exams to help you decide what to focus studying for! Also look into checking out books for SAT/ACT prep books from the library to help you prepare for any SAT/ACT exams you may take during the 11th grade.

Why does preparing for the PSAT or the PLAN matter?

- Your PSAT score can help qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Program and/or the National Hispanic Recognition Program - both of which can qualify you for scholarships and/or full rides to college!
 - To qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program, students need to score into the top 2% of their state's PSAT scores. The predicted cutoff for the class of 2020 in Arizona is estimated to be between 217 and 221 out of 240.
 - To qualify for the National Hispanic Recognition Program, students must be at least 1/4 Hispanic/Latino, have at least a 3.5 GPA (by mid-junior year), and have above the cutoff score which is predicted to range between 180 and 190.
- The PSAT can give you a good idea of how you may do on the SAT. The same is true of your score for PLAN helping you predict how you will do on the ACT!
- Colleges may give you merit-based aid depending on your SAT or ACT scores, and you'll be more likely to qualify for other scholarships! This is also reason to keep your grades up!

Get a summer job or volunteer position

Finding steady summer work will look good to prospective colleges and employers.

Find a volunteer position relative to your potential career choice.

Research places to volunteer – good places to start are at hospitals, non-profit organizations, homeless shelters, animal shelters, sanctuaries, zoos, museums, local businesses, and libraries.

This will not only help you to see if the career path is a good fit for you, but it will also look good to prospective colleges and employers by showing them you already have some sort of background and/or experience in that field.

Ask your teachers or guidance counselor about summer opportunities for high school students.

Ask family friends or neighborhood or community leaders if you can observe what they do at work.

Start working on making a resume with your academic, volunteer and/or work experience.

Review scholarship opportunities for next year

Review your scholarship list to keep track of deadlines for the upcoming year.

Practice your writing skills

You'll need good writing skills no matter what path you pursue, so work on those skills now to get prepared.

Write stories, articles or poetry during your free time to help you develop voice and hone skills you will need when preparing your college admission essays, filling out scholarship applications, and taking your SAT or ACTs.

Read, read, read!

Developing your reading skills will help prepare you for tests.

Reading about different topics on various levels will help build vocabulary, train your ear to recognize strong vocabulary, and introduce you to new ideas.