



For Students :

ALL YEAR:

- Explore **careers and earning potential** with the Occupational Outlook Handbook search tool: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>. For an interactive tool, try this career search: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/students/career-search>
- Narrow your college list** to at least 3 (reach, match, safety) and make sure you understand the admission requirements and costs of attendance: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- Go to **college fairs** and presentations hosted by college representatives.

FALL:

- Take the **PSAT/NMSQT**. Take the test in 11th grade to qualify for scholarships and programs associated with the National Merit Scholarship Program. For more info visit: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>.

SPRING:

- Register for and take exams for college admission.** The standardized tests that many colleges require are the SAT, the SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT. Check with colleges of interest to confirm what tests they require. Register for all tests in advance and allot yourself time to prepare appropriately! Talk to your high school counselor about the potential for fee waivers for these tests; you could be eligible to take these exams for free.
 - SAT Website: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
 - ACT Website: <https://www.act.org/>
- Use a **free scholarship search** (<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>). Some deadlines fall as early as the summer between 11th and 12th grades, so prepare now to submit applications soon.

It's getting real. College is right around the corner and now you need to start prepping according to semester and season. Don't fall behind this year, as it's just as important as senior year.

You can do this!

- Find out what **government financial aid** you can apply for, and how, in *Federal Student Aid at a Glance*: <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/aid-glance-2019-20.pdf>
- Learn how to **avoid scholarship scams** and identity theft as you search for financial aid: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/scams>. **NEVER pay for a scholarship search or for help completing the FAFSA.** Don't divulge your personal information to anyone claiming to help complete scholarships or submit the FAFSA.

SUMMER (before Senior Year):

- Create a username and password called an **FSA ID** to confirm your identity when accessing your government financial aid information and electronically signing your federal student aid documents. Learn more about the FSA ID and create yours here: <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/how-to-create-fsa-id-username-password>
 - Note: **You must create your own FSA ID.** If your parent creates it for you, it will cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process. Watch this video about creating your FSA ID: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7ihhGk8mCY&feature=youtu.be>
- Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering.** Visit schools of interest. Ask about financial aid, scholarships, admission requirements, and deadlines.
- Decide whether to apply for admission under a particular college's **early decision, early action, or regular decision program.** Be sure to learn about the program deadlines and requirements.
- Use the **FAFSA4caster financial aid estimator** and compare the results to the actual costs at the colleges to which you will apply: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/estimate>
- Apply for scholarships.** Your goal is to minimize the amount of loan funds so you have less to pay back later. Learn more at: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>

