

FALL

JUNIORS

This is the time for juniors to begin laying the groundwork for their college or career plans. Starting off on the right foot with this checklist will help them feel confident from the start to finish.

Map out their junior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in **ACT test dates**, test prep opportunities, campus visits, and college fairs.

Plan a testing schedule:

Juniors who take the ACT test in the fall can **use their score report** to confirm strengths and uncover areas for improvement, which can lead to more confidence and improved performance if they test again.

- **ACT test prep materials**, including free practice tests, are available to practice skills and help students do their best.
- Choose a TIR date: **Test Information Releases** allow students to purchase a copy of their test questions, their answers, and correct answers — which can be a great study tool. TIRs are only available 3 test administrations each year (September, April, and June in 2023-2024).

Collect helpful information:

Students can sign up for the monthly newsletter at act.org/student for helpful articles and important dates sent directly to their inbox. Juniors can also **download the Junior Year eBook** to read helpful tips for the upcoming year.

Think beyond the classroom:

Encourage participation in **extracurricular activities** and taking on leadership roles, or **volunteering** with an organization whose mission is meaningful to them.

Connect with college and career mentors:

Students can talk with their parents about career goals, ask teachers about their college and career experience, and meet with you, their counselor, to learn more about the resources you have to offer.

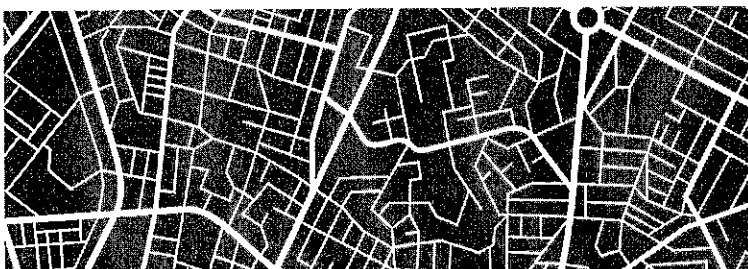
Identify interests:

Free quizzes help students pinpoint their unique skills and better understand how their strengths align with plans after graduation.

- ACT offers a free Interest Inventory in MyACT to help students discover careers related to their interests, abilities, and values.

It's not early to think about financial aid:

Students should discuss **financial aid** and financing their college plans with parents early. Attend events or webinars about financial aid.



WINTER

JUNIORS

Winter months provide a time to reflect and reorganize for the coming year.

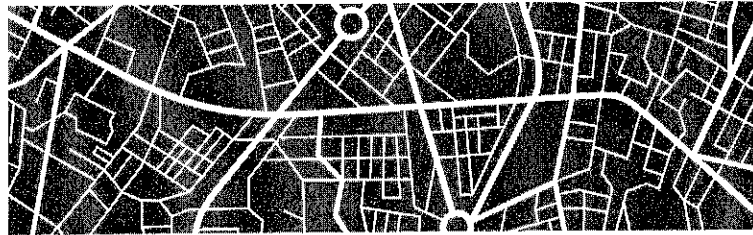
Assembling a college list:

Students can begin honing in on the factors that are important to them in choosing a college, and putting together their **college list** to help compare their options.

- Also consider **alternative paths** like technical school or the military.

College Fairs:

Help students be prepared to make the most of **college fairs** as they begin their college exploration.

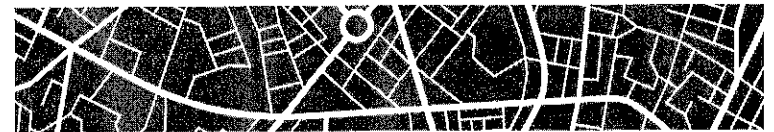


Keep coursework on track:

Students should be **reviewing their coursework with counselors** and planning for the rest of high school, making sure to include core courses as well as any college prerequisites (particularly around foreign language and science) in their schedule.

Create a college email address:

Students are going to start receiving lots of emails from colleges already and they want to be best prepared through the application process in the fall. Remind them to set up a college application email address that is separate from the one they use for school.



SENIORS

Things are starting to fall into place for seniors, as they await admissions decisions

Finalize financial aid plans:

As **financial aid packages** are received, students should determine the net cost of attendance to **estimate the cost** of college and compare their offers. They should also review the SAR from their FAFSA.

Avoiding the senior slide:

Letting grades drop can affect scholarship opportunities and college admission decisions for seniors. Encourage students to **stay on track and finish strong**.

Get serious about scholarships:

Many scholarship deadlines are between February 1 and March 1—help your seniors identify opportunities they may not even know about with our list of scholarships that require an **ACT score** or help them complete a general search online.



SPRING

JUNIORS

Spring of junior year is prime time to take the ACT and continue planning for their final year of high school.

Juniors should consider **taking the ACT in February or April:**

At this point in their high school experience, they should have completed all the coursework covered on the test. Testing now also gives them a baseline score and experience if they choose to retest in fall.

- Remember, ACT offers a **fee waiver program** for students who may be having trouble paying for the ACT test.
- Remind students to opt in to the **ACT Educational Opportunity Services (EOS)**, so they can get discovered by more colleges. EOS is a free service that can broaden college searches and improve financial aid opportunities.

Go on college visits:

As juniors begin assembling their school lists, college visits can help them narrow their choices and find the perfect fit.

- **Virtual College Visits:** Students can learn a lot about colleges **without leaving their homes.**
- **Campus Tours** offer a firsthand view of campus life; students can get the most out of in-person visits with **these quick tips** as well as an in-depth **eBook** from ACT.

Identifying support networks:

Getting help from the right people, including family members, mentors, and school counselors, can help students better navigate the college admission process and reach their future goals. This is also a great time to start **thinking about references and letters of recommendation.**

Plan ahead for college or career:

Whether they are thinking about continuing their education after high school or launching a career, students should consider taking the **ACT WorkKeys® Assessment** and earning their National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

- **Dual Enrollment programs** are also a great opportunity to get a head start on college credits.



SUMMER

JUNIORS

It's their last summer as a high school student. There's time to relax ... but they can also **avoid a summer slump** while they think about life after high school.

Take the ACT in June or July

It's not too late for students to get a baseline score if they didn't test in the spring (plus they can purchase their **Test Information Release** with the June test). Students who have already taken the ACT can consider more **reasons to retest**.

Continue learning about colleges

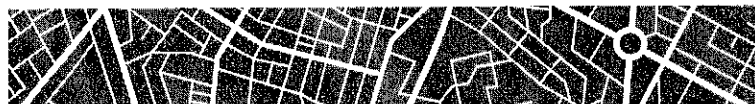
- Students and their families can use summer break to visit their top school choices and research to learn everything they can before application season.
- Current college students who are home for summer break are great resource for networking and getting first-hand information about college life.

Research admissions deadlines

Their senior year is going to go fast. It's important for them to understand **how college admissions deadlines work** so they don't miss an opportunity.

Start the application process

Over summer, students can begin brainstorming essay ideas, contacting potential references, and identifying people to ask for a written recommendation. Use the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** as a guide.



SENIORS

Congratulations! Seniors are on their way to college and career success. Take a bow, counselor!

