



10 Things High School Juniors Need To Do Now For College

By [Amy Steinhoff](#)

It might feel like there's plenty of time before high school juniors need to start worrying about college. Unfortunately, that's just not true. Junior year is the perfect time to start prepping and planning for college application success. Here are 10 things every high school junior should be doing now.

1) Collect free SAT/ACT study guides

Embrace hand-me-downs--they're back! Not goofy clothes this time, but books. You don't necessarily have to buy an entirely new set of standardized test study guides. Ask around to see who's willing to pass along any used copies, and look for [free test-taking survival guides](#) online.

2) Get an appropriate email address

Let's face it, it may be time to get a new (...cough...more mature...cough...) email address. Still have something you picked in elementary school? Consider a simple, straightforward one. And get in the habit of checking it regularly!

3) Take the tough classes

Challenge yourself both inside and out of the classroom. Admissions offices are looking to see that you took rigorous classes, even if you didn't ace every one. They also want to see that you can balance your time with some activities outside of class. Whether it's sports, work, or taking care of family, it's all important to mention.

4) Visit colleges -- even if they're not your top choice

Try out some college tours. Is there a college or university in your neighborhood? Go on a tour just to get a feel--even if it's not your top choice, it'll help you realize what you're looking for. For further away schools you can't travel to, attend some virtual tours. Exploration is a major part of [finding your dream school](#).

5) Say "hello" to FAFSA

Memorize what the FAFSA stands for and put the due date on your calendar. Start researching and gathering all the information you need to apply for financial aid.

6) Ask seniors about EVERYTHING

Play interviewer: Ask your friends in the senior class what advice they'd give on the college process: what did they do well and what do they wish they did while they had more time?

7) Practice personal essays

Write 500 words about whatever you're most interested in. No topic is too ridiculous, just have fun with it. Once you're done, start over and see if you can do even better. It'll be good practice for the college essay. Here are [8 more tips to help you write](#) an amazing college application essay.

8) Pick your standardized test dates

If you plan to take or re-take any standardized tests, pick the dates! Both the [SAT](#) and the [ACT](#) publish their dates online, and registration deadlines, far in advance. You don't want test dates to sneak up on you, so put them on the calendar ahead of time.

9) Go to every college event you can

Check out listings of college events and college prep activities. Save the date for your local college fair, and keep an eye out for admissions representatives that visit your high school. These kinds of events can help you figure out [how many colleges you should apply to](#).

10) Cultivate your recommenders

Think about who you'll want to write recommendation letters for you. Make sure you're [impressing your teachers in the classroom](#). Use this year to make sure they have lots of good things to say about you.

What are the things you're doing right now to prepare for college? Let us know in the