



College Planning: 9th Grade

Lay a Foundation

At this stage in the game, you're laying the foundation for your high school career. This is the time to establish your academic and extracurricular credentials. You should also begin to explore options for your career or further education.

Checklist

Below is a timeline to help provide the best options for your student.

FALL

- ❑ **Meet your Academic Advisor.** Your advisor is ready and willing to help you make sense of your college and career options. Set up a meeting to talk about your plans for high school and the future.
- ❑ **Get involved.** Extracurricular activities (both school- and non-school-sponsored) are an important part of high school. Make the effort to get involved with groups, clubs or teams that interest you.
- ❑ **Pick the right mix of classes.** Make sure you're enrolled in the appropriate college-prep classes. Most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies, at least three years of mathematics, and three years of science. Many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in technology, occupational and the arts.
- ❑ Take the PSAT.

WINTER

- ❑ **Consider a college savings plan.** Get the facts on what colleges cost and begin discussions about planning for college expenses. If your family already has a savings plan, continue to add to it. If not, now is a great time to start saving for college. Visit studentaid.ed.gov/myfsa to determine how much you should be saving to meet college expenses.
- ❑ **Make the grade.** Get off to a good start with your grades because they will impact your GPA and class rank. Although college seems like a long way off, grades really do count toward college admission and scholarships. Ninth grade transcript grades are one-third of what colleges see when you first apply.
- ❑ **Explore your interests and possible careers.** Discuss your skills and interests with your academic or class advisor and take advantage of Career Day and College Fair opportunities at school.

SPRING/SUMMER

- ❑ **Build your credentials.** Keep track of academic and extracurricular awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in, so it's easier to remember later. It will come in handy when you are filling out college applications or creating a resume.
- ❑ **Start learning about college.** Use the Internet to check out college web sites. Use college search sites like petersons.com/college-search.aspx to view college profiles and make lists of potential colleges.
- ❑ **Explore college life.** Visiting relatives or friends who live on or near a college campus is a great way to get a sense of what college is like. Check out the dorms, go to the library, the student center, and walk around the campus—just get a feel for college in general.
- ❑ **Make summer count.** There are plenty of ways to have fun and build your credentials during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job, or signing up for an enrichment program.