

Sophomore Year Checklist

Fall–Winter

Time Management

- Research and implement ways on how to make the most efficient use of your time
- Use SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) goals to keep you on task
- Include down time in your schedule

College Entrance Exams

- Several colleges are test optional—check <https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list> for the most comprehensive list
- Take the PSAT to help prepare you for the SAT (www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat)
- Take the PreACT to help prepare you for the ACT (www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html)

College Planning

- Attend college information events in your community (www.collegenights.org)

Spring

Academics

- Keep up your grades—colleges look at your grade point average (GPA)
- Review your four-year academic plan with your counselor
- Plan rigorous academic courses for your junior year
 - Enroll in honors, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, which may earn college credit
 - Take college courses while in high school and earn both high school and college credit (known as dual/concurrent enrollment)

Extracurricular Activities

- Join a club or try out for a sports team
- Volunteer for something you find important
- Explore summer opportunities—be mindful of application deadlines

Career Exploration

- Seek summer opportunities to work or volunteer in your field of interest
- Take an interest inventory—it expands your ideas for careers you may enjoy (<https://roadtripnation.com/roadmap>)
- Have conversations with counselors, teachers, family and community members about their career paths and what they studied in college

College Search

- Use an online search engine to find colleges that may be right for you (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>)
- Visit campuses—think about size, location and academic programs
- Attend local college fairs in your area (www.nacacnet.org/nacac-college-fairs)
- Try online college fairs and virtual campus tours (<https://campustours.com>, www.appily.com/virtual-college-tours, www.thecollegetour.com)

Summer

Summer Enrichment

- Create a summer reading list from teacher recommendations
- Confirm your summer plans (e.g., work, academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, service learning, travel, camps, internship, campus tours)

College Finances

- Learn about the different types of financial aid (<https://finaid.org>, <https://studentaid.gov>)
- Take a financial education course (www.fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/index.html)
- Use the tools found on the College Affordability and Transparency Center website (<https://collegecost.ed.gov>) to compare and estimate your college costs
- Research net price calculators on the website of colleges that appeal to you—type “net price calculator” in the college’s website search field



The **Sophomore Year Checklist** is part of the 2024-2025 *Opportunities Preparing for College Guide and Workbook*. This free college planning publication provides students and families with important information and tools to guide their pursuit of postsecondary education. These books are available in English and Spanish. Full PDFs of each *Opportunities* booklet can be downloaded at www.ecmc.org/opportunities.