



COLLEGE GUIDANCE CHECKLIST

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



BEFORE 11TH GRADE

- Make a binder, notebook or spreadsheet to gather college-related materials.
- Start a log of your activities, youth group trips, volunteer opportunities, summer jobs, etc.
- Explore your interests and get involved in various activities (especially volunteer opportunities).
- Look at colleges that interest you, and identify why they interest you.
- Are there alternatives to college that fit your interests/calling/career trajectory?
 - ▶ Military
 - ▶ Vocational training
- Use your summers well.
 - ▶ Are there summer work options?
 - ▶ Are there missions trips to go on?
 - ▶ Can you take a class not offered at school?
- Work hard at grades.
 - ▶ If you encounter difficulties, be sure to talk with your teachers to get the help you need.
 - ▶ Poor grades will not keep you from college, but a poor attitude will.
- Take PSAT/CLT 10.
- Analyze the PSAT/CLT 10 to determine areas of strength and weakness.
 - ▶ Do your scores match your understanding of your strengths and weaknesses?
 - ▶ Make a plan to develop an area of weakness.
- Be careful and strategic with social media use.
 - ▶ Negative posts and embarrassing pictures can be seen by college representatives, even years after you've posted.
 - ▶ Share genuine and authentic news, stories and pictures that highlight your involvement in school, activities, church, etc.



11TH GRADE



- Complete **Personal Inventory**. (see page 6)
 - Identify 10-12 colleges that fit your profile (throw away college info that doesn't fit your profile).
 - Whittle down your top colleges to 5-6 by January.
 - Whittle down your top colleges to the 2-3 you will apply to by the end of junior year.
 - ▶ Map out potential AP exams.
 - ▶ Learn what tests and scores are accepted by your top colleges.
 - Keep your binder, notebook or spreadsheet of college-related materials updated.
 - ▶ Trash items that are no longer relevant.
 - ▶ Compile a portfolio of your best and most significant work. (essays, paintings, presentations, performances, etc.)
 - Communicate with campus representatives or admissions counselors at your selected colleges.
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- Take advantage of college fairs to meet with school representatives.
 - ▶ Ask lots of questions!
 - ▶ Get a really good picture of what is distinct about each college.
 - Identify a few colleges to visit.
 - ▶ Most have visitation weekends. (Be sure to visit when classes are in session.)
 - Identify at least one local church within range of campus that you might make your spiritual home away from home.
 - ▶ Try to visit the church when you visit the school.
 - ▶ When visiting colleges, get to know what churches students attend.
 - Get to know students, professors, parents, teachers, pastors, etc. who are at or have been at your top choice schools.
 - ▶ Ask lots of questions!
 - Keep up with your grades.
 - ▶ Junior year is the BIG PUSH.

- Schedule your CLT/SAT/ACT for the Spring of Junior Year.
 - ▶ Take time to work through some study materials and sample questions.
- Use your summer well.
 - ▶ Summer work
 - ▶ Missions trip
 - ▶ Foreign exchange options
 - ▶ Coursework
 - ▶ Summer camp (theatre, basketball, etc.)
- Learn as much as you can about the application process for your top choice school before the summer begins.



12TH GRADE

- Begin the application process as soon as possible.
- Download application forms.
- Start Common App account (most schools use this).
- Pay application fees.
- Send high school transcripts.
- Send CLT/SAT/ACT scores (if not automatically sent).
- Complete FAFSA (OCTOBER 1).
- Identify referees for letters of recommendation.
 - ▶ Counselor
 - ▶ Pastor
 - ▶ 2 teachers (most connected to your desired major)
- Identify a trusted teacher to review application and scholarship essays.
- Prepare a portfolio/resume that demonstrates the breadth of your experiences.
- Practice presentation/interview skills.
- Get your application materials in ahead of the proper deadline. (Be clear on early decision deadlines.)
- Retake the CLT/SAT/ACT in the Fall if you are not satisfied and feel you can do better.
 - ▶ Ask your college rep about super scoring.



- Chart progress on your top choice schools.
- Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of schools at which you've been accepted.
- Finish senior year well-- it's another BIG PUSH.
- Acceptance can be conditional based on senior grades.
 - ▶ Many scholarships take into account senior grades & coursework.
- Final decision: most colleges will want a final decision by April or May.
- Consider a gap year.

AFTER GRADUATION

- Have final transcript sent to your college.
- Use your summer well.
- Last summer in your childhood home; make lasting bonds with parents and siblings.
 - ▶ Summer work
 - ▶ Summer trips
 - ▶ Summer classes
 - ▶ Matriculation Camps
 - ▶ Connect with roommate(s) and explore how you might get involved on campus.
- Doctor's appointment
 - ▶ Physical and Vaccines as directed by the college.
- Keep in touch with college representatives.
- Housing plan
 - ▶ Meal plan
 - ▶ Registration for courses
 - ▶ Orientation schedule
 - ▶ Move-in date



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COLLEGE GUIDANCE PERSONAL INVENTORY

A personal inventory enables you to take stock of your values, interests and desires as you think about your ideal college experience. Gaining a greater understanding of yourself will help you narrow your focus on colleges that best fit your unique set of characteristics. You will receive numerous pieces of information from colleges - way too many to make a meaningful choice. So, once you know your key values, interests and desires, you can weed out most colleges and universities because they don't match your characteristics.

Instructions for student: Respond to the prompts below to the best of your ability based on your current state of thinking. Your responses are to stimulate discussion, so don't feel that you are making a final decision. It is likely your thoughts may change on any of these areas between now and when you make your final decision about your college.

Instructions for parents: Once your child has finished filling out the form, read through the responses and talk through each area together with your child. The goal is to help guide your child in understanding their own values, interests and desires.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

List your strengths, abilities, and interests:

List some challenges, difficulties or shortcomings you face:

YOUR GOALS

Identify any callings, dreams, or ambitions about which you have clarity at present:

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Name geographical places where you think you'd like to live. Provide short reasons why.

Name geographical places where you wouldn't like to live. Provide short reasons why.

Do you want to live *near* *far* *not sure* from your family? (check one)

Do you want to live in *a city* *the country* *the suburbs*? (check one)

SIZE OF SCHOOL

Think about your ideal classroom size: (check one)

5-10 students **15-25 students** **50-100 students**

Think about the ideal enrollment: (check one)

500 students **1500 students** **50,000 students**

Think about the number of buildings: (check one)

1 building **2-5 buildings** **a sprawling campus**

Is the aesthetic quality of the campus important to you? **Yes** **No**

Do you want to live in: (check one)

a dorm **a house** **an apartment** **at home**

COLLEGE COSTS & FINANCIAL AID

Is cost a **major** **minor** **negotiable** factor in choosing a college? (check one)

If known, list some sources you plan to apply to college costs (e.g. summer job, investment fund):

Do you plan to work during school terms? **Yes** **No**

Are there fears or concerns related to finances that you currently have?

SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

List your aspirations and goals for your spiritual life during college.

Do you have reasons for attending a Christian college?

Do you have reasons for attending a non-Christian college?

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Are there activities or extracurriculars you want at college?

Describe the characteristics of students you would hope to find in classmates at college.

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Do you have a major in mind? _____ (enter "undecided" if you don't know)

Do you have any career goals for after college?

Do you plan to go on to grad school? _____

List some of your academic aspirations or goals.

Identify your ideal level of academic rigor: (check one)

- It's easy to get a 4.0
- Easy general studies, challenging major classes
- All classes are challenging
- It's a highly competitive environment

Identify your ideal academic environment: (check one)

- Everyone's studying all the time
- Intellectual conversations outside of class
- More academic, but there's a social side
- A good balance of academic and social
- Less academic, and mostly social



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