

Sophomore year checklist

Fall–Winter

Time management

- Learn how to make the most efficient use of your time
- Use SMART goals to keep you on task (www.studyright.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/SMART-Goals-Tracker.pdf)
- Include down time in your schedule

College entrance exams

- Several colleges are test optional—check www.fairtest.org/university/optional for the most comprehensive list
- College placement test preparation
- Take the PSAT (Pre-SAT) 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)

Spring

Academics

- Keep up your grades—colleges look at your grade point average (GPA)
- Plan rigorous academic courses for your junior year
- Review your four-year academic plan with your counselor
 - 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/edu/careerfinder>)
- Have conversations with counselors, teachers, family and community members about their career paths and what they studied in college

College search

- Visit campuses—think about size, location and academic programs
- Attend local college fairs in your area (www.nacacfairs.org/attend/national-college-fairs)
- Try online college fairs and virtual campus tours (<https://campustours.com>, www.youvisit.com, www.ecampustours.com/)
- Use an online search engine to find colleges (<http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>)

Summer

Prepare for summer

- 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)

Money management

- Learn about types of scholarships and grants (www.finaid.org, www.studentaid.gov)
- Take a financial education course (www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/young.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 2021-2022 *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.