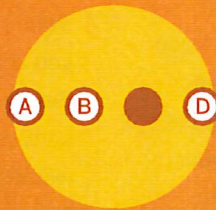


11TH GRADE

# College Prep



RESEARCH SCHOOLS



SAT/ACT



LIST TOP CHOICES

You're done with 10th grade! Now, you can explore college even more. Next fall you will begin applying to schools! Use this checklist to guide you through your junior year as you research dream colleges and discover the options that are available to you.

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## AUGUST

- **Re-evaluate Plans** Meet with your high school counselor to go over your four-year high school plan and adjust as necessary. Discuss new goals or ideas you may have and make sure the classes you take help meet basic prerequisites for college (if applicable).

## SEPTEMBER

- **Remain Involved** Stay involved in the previous clubs/organizations and activities you enjoy. Feel free to join new things, but make sure to do it for the right reasons. It's okay to be involved in just a few activities if those are the ones you like best. Don't feel as though you need to be in numerous activities to make your college application stand out. Continue to log your volunteer information as usual.

## OCTOBER

- **Research Colleges** Seek help from family, friends, teachers/counselors and community members to learn more about what schools may have opportunities to study academic fields that interest you. Visit their websites and make a list of the ones that you want to learn more about. Use [wayfinder.utexas.edu](http://wayfinder.utexas.edu) to explore majors and learn more about the academic fields offered at UT Austin.

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

- **Plan Visits** Start talking to your family and asking your counselor about planning college visits. Visit schools if you will be traveling during the holidays and breaks. College visits are an excused absence, so make sure to get a campus visit note if you're going on a school day!

## JANUARY

- **Join Mailing Lists** Sign-up for college mailing lists of the schools that you are interested in. You may already be receiving emails from universities if you indicated that you would like for schools to access your contact information when you took the PSAT last year. Mailing lists are a great way for schools to let you know when they will be in your area and events or information you should know about.

## FEBRUARY

**Prepare Portfolio or Resume** Creating a portfolio or resume of your work and accomplishments is a good idea. Portfolios/resumes are not always required for college

admissions, but they are helpful to reference as you write essays and keep items organized.

## SPRING

- **Essay Preparation** Review writing prompts of the colleges/universities you are interested in and practice responding to them. Have a teacher or counselor look over your samples and ask for feedback. Essay prompts are not always the same each year, but this will help prepare you for the style of writing you would need to do.

## MARCH

- **Register for SAT/ACT** The SAT and ACT are standardized tests that are required by many schools for their admissions application. Although both may not be required, familiarize yourself with requirements of schools you would like to apply to and the format of each test.

## APRIL

- **Take SAT** Make sure to get a good night's sleep! Bring pencils, your admission ticket, a valid photo ID, a watch and an approved calculator. You may also want to bring snacks to eat during breaks and a jacket or sweater in case it gets cold. Remember, the test covers math, reading and writing over a span of three hours. Pace yourself and do your best.

## MAY

- **Take ACT** The test covers English, math, reading and science and will last about three hours. You'll want to bring pencils, your admission ticket, a valid photo ID, a watch and approved calculator. You may also want to bring snacks to eat during breaks and a jacket or sweater in case it gets cold. Remember to pace yourself during the test and aim to do your best. Get a good night's rest the night before your test!

## JUNE/JULY

- **Rank Colleges** Begin ranking the schools that interest you and make note of their application requirements and deadlines. You may need letters of recommendation for admission, and this is a good time to ask people if they would be willing to write one for you. Depending on how you feel about your SAT/ACT scores, you may want to look into taking the test(s) again. If possible, visit schools outside of your local area if there are any on your list. Continue doing summer activities as you have been throughout high school.
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## Myth or Fact

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As you learn more about college, you may receive different information from a variety of sources. To make sure you know the correct information, let's see if the following statements are facts or myths.

### 1. Every school has different admissions requirements.

**Fact.** Every school requires different application materials, so you'll want to stay organized if applying to multiple institutions. Use the charts at the end of this booklet as a guide to keep up with everything.

### 2. Some universities conduct interviews as part of their admissions process.

**Fact.** Although UT Austin does not conduct interviews, other schools do. If you are contacted for an interview, remember to be honest and be yourself. Interviews are just another way admission committees get to know you better.

### 3. I can use the same essay for each application.

**Myth.** Essay prompts are not the same for every application. That's why it is important to review the prompts early and begin working on them early. You may be writing multiple essays that are completely different from each other.

### 4. I should still do my best in all of my senior year class even though my college applications will be submitted..

**Fact.** You should always try to do your best in school! Additionally, some schools you apply to may ask for a mid-year transcript to track your progress. UT Austin does not review grades from your senior year, but we still want you to do well in your classes.

## Questions to Ask

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### YOURSELF

Some of these questions will help determine what you want in a college/university with or without having done research.

You've finally arrived at your junior year and it's crunch time! There are further resources below that will help you break down the important qualities of each university you're interested in. It is important to remember what you truly want for your future. The questions will help you reflect on your personal goals, interests, and aspirations.

- What would my friends/family say is my one true passion?
- What are some things I would like to accomplish in college?
- What career can I see myself being happy and successful in?
- What activity have I been involved in in high school that I would like to continue to participate in in college?

### OTHERS

Questions that provide guidance on questions to ask while on a campus visit.

Now more than ever is the time to reach out to your support system for guidance. Preparing to apply for college can be stressful, so utilizing the people around you is a great way to alleviate some of that pressure you may be putting on yourself. The following questions are a good way to start reaching out to your teachers, counselors, mentors, and even family/friends for help while taking the next steps to prepare for college.

- How should I prepare for the SAT/ACT?
- How do I begin building a resume?
- Are there any specific scholarships that I would be a good fit to apply for?
- How should I sign up for a campus visit at \*blank\* university?
- What questions should I be asking my admissions counselor?
- What are some good ways to relieve stress while preparing to apply for college?
- Who would be the best person to reach out to for support during this stage of my college preparation?

## Getting Family Involved

### SHADOWING

This time, as you move through the fall of your 11th grade year, ask family and family friends about their careers. Will they let you shadow them? Begin to network! This can be a great opportunity to meet people who can write letters of recommendations for you in the future. Remember to continue to reflect on your experiences. What did you learn about yourself and about this particular career path?

### UNDERSTAND YOUR ACADEMIC AND CAREER INTERESTS

Look back on all of your experiences – shadowing, volunteering, classwork, etc. – and begin to piece together your career

interest. You may also visit [wayfinder.utexas.edu/](http://wayfinder.utexas.edu/) to take the Values, Strengths, Personality, and Skills Assessment to get a better understanding of your interests. You can also explore degree options based on career fields. Share thoughts and results with your family. This is a great opportunity for discussion, guidance, and support. They may know more about a specific career field than you think! You can begin to narrow down a major or majors that you may be interested in.

### **EXPLORE COLLEGE OPTIONS**

Doing the above will help you tremendously in exploring what colleges you are interested in. Include your family in this research by asking for their advice on what to look for in a college. Discuss different ideas such as location, class size, available majors, and resources available at the college. Look at the college or university's facts and figures. You should feel comfortable with the college that you go to, but it's also important that your family feel comfortable sending you there. Finally, when doing research, don't forget to get the facts about the costs of attendance and explore financial aid options.

### **VISIT COLLEGES TOGETHER**

Start visiting colleges that are close by during the school year. During spring break and during the summer, it may be a good idea to visit schools that are farther away. Together you can come up with questions that you should be asking your tour guides and presenters during the visit. Keep a running list and ranking of the colleges that you're interested in once you've visited. Look into their admissions requirements and think about how to best prepare yourself for the application cycle.

### **APPLYING TO COLLEGE**

In the spring you should begin gathering materials for your college applications (resumes, essays, letters of recommendation, test scores, etc.). When you start working on your resume or portfolio, consider asking your parents to look over your resume. They may have a good idea of what a resume should look like and may remember things about your high school career that you might not. When brainstorming for essays topics, they may be able to help you come up with good ideas and organize your thoughts.

### **SAT/ACT TESTING**

Your family can also play a significant role in your SAT/ACT preparations. Sit down together and talk about what the SAT/ACT is and how you need to prepare. Explain to them why the SAT/ACT is important, if they are not as familiar with it or need a refresher. Take a look at your PSAT scores to determine whether you should take a test prep course or if self-studying

will suffice. Together, you can research the most cost-effective ways to study and which materials you will need to invest in for the best outcome. You can also discuss important test taking strategies that may require their support, e.g. good "brain-food" to eat the night before, the morning of, and snacks to pack for the day.

## **Additional Resources**

### **CREATING A RESUME**

Colleges and scholarships will often ask for a resume during the application process. It is helpful to begin creating your resume now so you can stay organized and reference it as you write essays.

- Create a list of your educational credentials, extracurricular activities, awards/distinctions, community service, jobs/internships, summer activities, and skills from throughout your high school career. These areas will make up parts of your resume.
  - Under your educational credentials, include information about your coursework, like the AP, IB, or dual credit coursework.
  - Note the number of years you have been involved with your activities, the hours per week you are involved in each activity, and any leadership positions.
  - Tally up all of the hours you have volunteered for each cause under your community service.
  - Under skills, include things like languages you can speak or knowledge of software programs/coding languages.
- There are hundreds of ways to format a resume. Look online to see which format will work best for you, and use a template if you find a style that you prefer.
  - Follow formatting guidelines if they have been specified by the college or scholarship you are applying to.
- The list you made above will make up the substance of your resume and should be separated by headings noting each activity (e.g. Activities, Work Experience, Community Service, etc.).
- Make sure that your resume is easy to read. Use a professional font, explain any acronyms (e.g. spell out National Honor Society instead of saying NHS), bold section titles, and proofread for any typos.
- Once you have checked over your resume, have a parent, counselor, or teacher look it over to make sure you have included all of your accomplishments.

### **PREPARING FOR THE SAT AND ACT**

Getting ready to take the SAT and ACT can be stressful, but following the steps below will allow you to develop a study

strategy and feel better prepared.

- Begin by taking a practice test to see where you are at and to get accustomed to the testing format. College Board and ACT both offer free practice tests that you can find online. With your baseline score, set a goal score for yourself.
- Identify what areas of the test that you can improve on. See if there are any commonalities in the type of questions that you have missed. Do they cover similar subject areas? Do they have the same question style?
- Build a study plan to work on these areas of improvement. Be reasonable with your study plan in determining how often and how long you would like to study. Avoid cramming and trying to leave all of your test prep to the last minute!
- Utilize your resources to help you study for the test.
  - Visit your local library and check out test prep books.
  - See if your high school, local library, or community center hosts test prep bootcamps or review sessions.
  - Download the official SAT app to get practice questions at your fingertips.
  - Use Khan Academy's free official SAT Practice website to take practice tests and receive a personalized study plan.
  - Visit the ACT website to access free study resources like ACT Academy, webinars, and study guides.
- Continue to take practice tests to see how your score changes and to get accustomed to the testing format.
- As you are preparing for the test, remember to reward yourself for your hard work! Make time for your favorite activities, practice self-care, and celebrate your score improvements.

## PLANNING CAMPUS VISITS

One of the best ways to research a college is by visiting its campus. Before you visit a campus, try to complete the following steps to make your visit a success.

- When you register for your campus visit, look to see if the college offers any other information sessions. Most colleges will also offer sessions about living on campus, their academic colleges/schools, and specific majors/programs.
  - Try to maximize your time on campus by attending as many sessions that interest you as possible but avoid overloading yourself. Leave time in your schedule for traveling to each session, taking a break for lunch/snacks, asking questions after sessions, and exploring campus on your own.
- Register early (think 1-2 weeks in advance of your visit) to ensure

that you can secure a spot in any information sessions the day you are planning to visit.

- You may want to register several weeks in advance if you are hoping to visit a college around a holiday weekend, spring break, or deadline day.
- In the days before your visit, consistently check your email for any updates about the time, location, and status of your visit.
- Before your visit, write down any questions you may want to ask so you will be prepared to ask a campus representative. Make sure to bring a writing utensil and notebook with you to jot down any important information you learn about during your visit.
- Check the weather before your visit to make sure that you are dressed accordingly, especially if you plan on going on a walking tour.
- If time permits, make time to explore the area around campus as well. This will give you a feel for what being a student at that college is like beyond the campus experience.
- If you plan on traveling a longer distance for a college visit, try doing a practice visit at a nearby college so you know what the experience is like and can learn from any mistakes (e.g. forgetting to ask certain questions, not doing research beforehand, etc.).

## ASKING FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The summer after your junior year can be a good time to connect with folks who you would like a letter of recommendation from. Here are answers to common FAQs about letters of recommendation.

- Who should write my letter of recommendation? The best person to write you a letter of recommendation is someone who knows you well and can speak to your character. A teacher, coach, counselor, community leader, or employer are all suitable people to ask.
  - The only people you should not ask are family members—for obvious reasons!
- When should I ask my recommender? You will want to ask your recommender well in advance of the application deadline. If you are asking someone from your school, it is a good idea to connect with them over the summer when they have a more relaxed schedule.
- How should I ask my recommender? It is always nice to ask for a letter of recommendation in person. You can also send an email request. When you are asking, specify why you are asking that person in particular and make sure to be polite. Do not automatically assume that the person you are asking is willing and able to write you a letter.

- What information should I provide to my recommender? Understand how the college wants letters of recommendation to be submitted (online through a portal, via mail, on official letterhead, etc.) and send that information to your recommender. It can also be helpful to provide your recommender with a resume/summary of activities and information about why you are applying to that specific college. Provide your recommender with a date/time window that you would like the letter of recommendation.
- What do I need to do after I/my recommender has submitted the letter? Make sure that the college you are applying to has received the letter of recommendation by checking your application portal. Thank your recommender with an email, a handwritten card, or in person. They took the time to write you a letter so take the time to show them that you appreciate their effort!

## RESEARCHING COLLEGES

Now that you are closer to senior year, you will want to go in-depth as you look at different colleges. When researching colleges, go to that college's website (it should end in .edu) and consider connecting with an admissions representative directly by sending them an email. Consider using the chart below to guide your research.

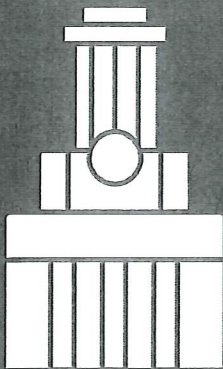
QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH	COLLEGE NAME
<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>In-state or out-of-state?</p> <p>Urban, rural or suburban?</p>	
<p><b>Academics</b></p> <p>Do they offer your desired area of study? Is that program ranked?</p> <p>Can students double major? Add a minor?</p> <p>Are there opportunities to participate in honors programs or colleges?</p> <p>How can students become involved in research?</p>	
<p><b>Affordability</b></p> <p>What is the cost of tuition?</p> <p>What is the cost of attendance?</p> <p>How can students apply for scholarships?</p>	
<p><b>Student Life</b></p> <p>How large is the campus? What is the student body size?</p> <p>How many residence halls are on campus? Are first-year students required to live on campus? How do you apply for housing?</p> <p>How many student organizations are there?</p> <p>Is there an athletics program? How can students get tickets?</p>	
<p><b>Campus Resources</b></p> <p>How many education abroad programs are offered? Are scholarships available?</p> <p>What kind of academic support is available to students?</p> <p>Are there career services resources available for students to find internships and post-grad jobs?</p> <p>How safe is the campus? Are there any safety resources for students?</p> <p>How safe is the campus?</p>	



## MY COLLEGE RANKINGS

Rank each light orange section on a scale of 1-5. Use the white sections as a way to make notes and organize your thoughts to rank the light orange sections. Then, add up the total of the 5 sections and put that amount as your "Ranking Total". Do this for each school on your list to help you determine which schools are your top choices. The closer a school's total is to 25, the more ideal the college/university is for you! 1 = Least Ideal Match; 2 = Less Ideal Match; 3 = Okay Match; 4 = Good Match; 5 = Most Ideal Match

COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY	RANK
<b>Location</b>	
Rural, Suburban, Urban	
<b>Demographics</b>	
Student Body Size	
Diversity	
<b>Academic Fields</b>	
Preferred Choice #1	
Preferred Choice #2	
<b>Student Support Resources</b>	
Freshman Support	
General Student Support	
<b>Cost of Attendance</b>	
Tuition and Fees	
Room and Board	
Books, supplies, other	
<b>Ranking Total</b>	



## Thinking about The University of Texas at Austin?



### JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

At UT Austin you can join our mailing list by submitting your information at [utx.as/sign-up](http://utx.as/sign-up)

### PLAN YOUR VISIT

To learn more about visit opportunities at UT Austin, check out [admissions.utexas.edu/visit](http://admissions.utexas.edu/visit)

### ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

To learn more about the admissions requirements for UT, visit [admissions.utexas.edu/apply/freshman-admission](http://admissions.utexas.edu/apply/freshman-admission)