

POWERED BY



# FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

## College Prep for Juniors & Seniors

Follow these steps to find colleges that fit your interests.

### 1 RESEARCH COLLEGES.

Start by asking your school counselor for college-search advice and resources. Here are other things you can do:

- Talk to admissions representatives when they visit your high school.
- Use resources to match colleges to your interests like [BigFuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges](http://BigFuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges).
- Attend a college fair or educational planning program where you can talk to college representatives.
- Explore the websites of colleges that interest you.



## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COLLEGE?

College can mean any type of education beyond high school. This handout focuses on steps you should take to gain admission to a postsecondary school like those described below.

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES (2-year)

These schools offer certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. They also have programs for those planning to transfer to a four-year school.

### COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (4-year)

These institutions offer bachelor's degrees. Many also award master's and doctorate degrees.

### CAREER SCHOOLS (Trade Schools)

These schools award diplomas and certificates for specific trades. A few offer associate and bachelor's degrees.

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## 2 GO ON CAMPUS VISITS.

This is the most important step you can take to determine if a school is the right fit for you!

- Start your visits in the spring of your junior year and revisit your top choices in the fall of your senior year.
- Contact the admissions office at least two weeks in advance to schedule a campus visit.
- Visit while school is in session. You won't get the full campus experience during school breaks, finals week, or summer.
- Meet with an admissions representative and financial aid counselor to discuss how to apply and pay for college.
- Ask to meet with faculty in your areas of interest.
- Ask a lot of questions!

## 3 NARROW YOUR COLLEGE CHOICES.

After you've done your research and gone on campus visits, it's time to compare notes and pick your top college choices. Compare schools based on academic programs, size, location, cost, career preparation, internships, and social climate.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A CAMPUS VISIT



### ASK THE ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE...

1. What are admission requirements?
2. What is the deadline to apply for admission?
3. Does the college offer academic programs that fit my career interests? Can I study abroad?
4. What housing options are available?
5. Is the campus diverse? Where are the majority of students from?
6. What percentage of students graduate?  
Are most students getting jobs or going to grad school?

### ASK THE FINANCIAL AID COUNSELOR...

1. What applications are required for scholarships and financial aid, and what are the deadlines?
2. When and how can I expect a financial aid award letter?

### ASK CURRENT STUDENTS...

1. How easy is it to register for classes?
2. Are campus jobs available?
3. What student activities are offered?

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## 4 TAKE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS.

You'll take the ACT in the spring of your junior year, and you may want to take the SAT as well. Retake the exam(s) in the summer and fall – colleges will use your best score for scholarship and admission decisions.

- Visit [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org) and [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org) for sample questions, test dates, registration, and fees.

If you attend a community college, you may be required to take the Accuplacer or Companion placement tests.

## 5 APPLY FOR ADMISSION.

Be aware of deadlines and apply to your top 3-4 colleges in the fall of your senior year. Most will require:

- An application and fee
- Official high school transcripts which will show:
  - Your grade point average and class rank
  - Completed high school coursework
- ACT/SAT test scores



[www.suny.edu/smarttrack](http://www.suny.edu/smarttrack) | [@MoneyKnowl](https://twitter.com/MoneyKnowl)

## RECOMMENDED COURSES FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

These courses reflect the most rigorous college admission requirements in the state. By taking them, you'll be better prepared college.

### ENGLISH

**4 years** of intensive reading and writing

### MATH

**4 years** including algebra, algebra II, and geometry – and one additional course that builds on knowledge of algebra II

### SOCIAL SCIENCES

**3 years** including American and/or world history; one additional course in history, American government, and/or geography; and a third course from any social science discipline

### NATURAL SCIENCES

**3 years** including biology, chemistry, physics, or earth sciences. One course must include laboratory instruction.

### WORLD LANGUAGE

**2 - 4 years** of the same language

## DUAL CREDIT & ADVANCED PLACEMENT

If you take Dual Credit courses in high school, you could earn college credit at a lower tuition cost. Advanced Placement courses are another option for earning college credit. Ask your counselor if these courses are available at your school and how to use these opportunities to get an early start on college.