



TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin



9TH GRADE

College Prep



MAKE A PLAN



CHALLENGE YOURSELF



TRY NEW THINGS

You can start preparing for college now! This is the first of three checklists to help you get ready to apply for college once you get to 12th grade. Use this checklist to guide you through your freshman year and learn more about college.

AUGUST

- **Build Relationships** Speak with family members, teachers, friends and/or community members about your interest in college. Ask them about their jobs and college experiences. Start building relationships with these people. Not only can they provide support and guidance, but they may be able to assist with writing letters of recommendation in the future.
- **Get Involved & Create a Log** Learn more about the clubs/organizations at your school and around your community. Begin involvement in the ones that interest you. For volunteer activities, create a log to keep track of the name of the activity, associated organizations, “supervisor”, date, location and hours served.
Pro Tip: Annual activities/events are a great way to regularly volunteer and have the activity on your calendar in advance!

SEPTEMBER

- **Meet with a Counselor** Discuss interest in attending college and develop a 4-year high school plan. If offered, aim to take at least 1-2 honor/pre-AP or AP courses a year. You want to take challenging courses. What are your goals – academic and non-academic?

OCTOBER

- **Utilize Resources** Now that you are in high school, you may find yourself in need of some assistance if things are becoming more challenging. If you need help in classes speak with your teachers about what you may be struggling with. Talk to your parent/guardian, counselor, friends or a trusted adult about anything that might be bothering you.

NOVEMBER

- **High School Field Trips** If your high school has any upcoming trips to colleges or universities planned, get more information about those visits. Sign-up to go on trips if you are able to. High school visits to college campuses are a great way for you to learn more about higher education. If your school or district has any college fairs, try to attend those as well to get information from schools.

- **Join Mailing Lists** Sign-up for college mailing lists of the schools that you are interested in possibly attending. Mailing lists are a great way for schools to let you know about events in your area or information you should know about as a prospective student.

DECEMBER

- **Self-Reflect** Begin writing a physical or digital journal to self-reflect. Write about what’s been going on your life. This can be done daily, weekly, monthly or just for monumental occasions. Your writing can be as frequent as you want it to be. It is important to keep your journal all in one consolidated place. This is a great time to start exploring college majors on wayfinder.utexas.edu!

JANUARY

- **Learn about Scholarships** It’s never too early to start saving for college and exploring scholarship opportunities! Colleges and universities usually have their own scholarships to offer to students, but you can find even more scholarships within your local area, state and nationally. Depending on the requirements, you may be able to apply for some scholarships as a high school freshman. Continue to periodically check for scholarship opportunities throughout high school.

MARCH/APRIL

- **Spring Break Activities** Spring is a great season to try and explore new things. Read a new book, pick up a new hobby, learn a new skill or research activities to get involved in during the summer. If you are traveling, visit historical sites, museums or tour a college campus. Try to have a new experience!

MAY

- **Wrap-Up the Year** You’ve worked hard all year and are probably looking forward to summer vacation! Make sure to continue doing your best through the end of the school year. Continue making plans for the summer and start getting excited about the upcoming school year.

JUNE/JULY

- **Summer Activities** During the summer, consider attending academic/special interest camps, classes or trainings. If volunteering or working a summer job, make sure to update the log you created at the beginning of the school year. Apply for summer research programs that you find interesting. Find healthy ways to keep yourself occupied and have fun!
-

Myth or Fact

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. I have to know what I want to major in when I go to college.

Myth. Though having ideas may be helpful, it is not necessary. Some schools require you to select a major after you've been admitted. Certain universities that require you to apply directly to your major, such as UT Austin, allow students to enter as an undeclared major and change to something else after a few semesters.

2. I need to take AP or honors classes to be accepted to a university.

Myth. Although you are encouraged to take rigorous classes, it is not always a requirement for admission. High schools may not always have these options available or students may not feel comfortable taking those classes.

3. Some universities consider demonstrated interest in their admission decisions.

Fact. UT Austin does not consider demonstrated interest in our admission decisions, but some other schools do. It's always a good idea to reach out to the schools you're interested in to ask questions and learn more information about their programs and resources.

Questions to Ask

YOURSELF

Starting the process of deciding if college is a good fit for you can be a bit intimidating. The following self-reflection questions can help you begin thinking about your interests, passions, and what you may want to do after graduating high school.

- Which subject in school interests me the most, and why?
- What activities outside of my schoolwork do I enjoy the most, and why?
- Would I like to learn more about and/or pursue my favorite class subject or activity after high school?
- What is my dream career?
- Does my dream job require a college degree?

OTHERS

Speaking to your family, teachers, counselors, and mentors is a great way to get more insight on the college experience. The earlier you begin to ask questions, the more information you'll have when you're ready to make your own decisions about college. You can use the following questions to start picking the brains of the college graduates around you.

- What made you decide to go to college?
- How did you decide what you wanted to study in college?
- Were you nervous about going to college? If so, what helped you overcome those fears?
- What advice would you give me as a freshman student that may be interested in applying to college one day?
- Who would be the best person to reach out to for support during this stage of my college preparation?

Getting Family Involved

At the beginning of high school, keep your family in the loop as it relates to your high school plans. Talk to them about meetings you have with career counselors and any goals that you've set in those meetings. Keep them updated on your four-year plan and how it changes throughout the years. Tell them about activities and organizations that you are involved in and let them know what classes you like and which ones you don't.

It's never too early to start talking to your family about plans of going to college. Even if your family hasn't been to college, they can still help! Use the following questions to get the conversation started:

- Can you help me with the college search and prep processes?
- Can we start visiting colleges soon?
- How do I set goals and what goals should I start setting for college?
- Can we discuss financial planning for college?
- Can we look into college scholarships together?
- How and when did you decide what career to choose?

When thinking about what careers you may be interested in, ask your parents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, etc. to tell you about their careers and professions. They can provide lots of guidance on career paths. They've seen you grow up and can help you brainstorm and keep a list of your strengths and talents. Then you can work together to start matching them to occupations and areas of study over the next few years.

Additional Resources

As you begin your college search, it is a good idea to start thinking about how you'll fund your education.

- Consider getting a part-time or summer job. Set a goal for yourself to put a certain amount of those earnings in a college savings account.
- Start researching scholarships that you can apply for as a high school freshman. Some colleges have micro-scholarship programs where you can earn scholarships for doing certain activities throughout all four years of high school.
 - **UT Austin's Raise Me** micro-scholarship program allows eligible students to earn up to \$2,000 in scholarship funds.
- Begin to have conversations with your parents/guardians about paying for college. Some questions you may want to ask include:
 - What do your parents expect to contribute toward your college expenses?
 - Is there a budget you should keep in mind when researching colleges?
 - Should you expect to take out student loans?
 - Are you able to use any veterans benefits to fund your education (e.g. G.I. Bill, Hazlewood Act, etc.)?

Summer is a great time to relax and explore your college interests. Colleges often host camps during the summer that can be good ways to learn more about your academic interests, explore colleges, and meet new friends. Camps will typically have scholarships to make them more affordable and some may even be free.

- UT Austin offers summer camps for students with a wide range of interests. After your freshman year, you'll be able to apply to the following programs.
 - Interested in computer science? Consider applying to the **First Bytes Summer Camps, Code Longhorn, Cybersecurity Boot Camp, or Virtual Robotics Camp.**
 - Ready to explore the health professions? Check out **Dell Medical School's Health Sciences Summer Camps.**
 - Planning to become the next great director? Explore the **Moody College of Communication's Radio-Television-Film camps.**



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

HIGH SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

To learn more about visit opportunities at UT Austin, please check out admissions.utexas.edu/visit

CAMPUS

To learn more about our academic programs and campus, visit utexas.edu



TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin