

Freshman Year Checklist

- Enroll in a college preparatory curriculum
- When possible, write papers, do projects, etc. about college
- Enter essay and speech contests for scholarships
- *Get involved in extracurricular activities*
- *Volunteer in your community*
- *Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers*
- *Learn keyboarding and computer skills*
- *Study hard and do well in school - From now on your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record*
- *Start to attend events on college campuses (plays, concerts, sporting events, etc.)*
- *Get to know your high school counselor and let them get to know you and your goals, career aspirations, schools you are considering, etc.*

Sophomore Year Checklist

- Take the PSAT Test (October/November)
- Use the Internet and start looking at colleges through their web sites
- Start attending college fairs
- Get a job (even if your last name is Gates and you don't have to)
- Start a bank account
- Save money for college (you can never have too much)
- *Get involved in extracurricular activities*
- *Volunteer in your community*
- *Explore careers and job opportunities in those careers*
- *Learn keyboarding and computer skills*
- *Study hard and do well in school - From now on your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record*
- *Start to attend events on college campuses (plays, concerts, sporting events, etc.)*
- *Get to know your high school counselor and let them get to know you and your goals, career aspirations, schools you are considering, etc.*
- *"Job shadow" someone who does what you think you'd like to do (that means to follow them around for a day)*

Junior Year Checklist

- This year's academic record will go a long way toward either helping or hurting your chances of gaining admission to your schools of choice. You can make up ground if you've been slacking and you can keep up the hard work you've already exhibited.
- Take the PSAT in October (this one is to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Competition). It can be very important
- Attend an ACT/SAT preparation workshop (if you can't, you should purchase practice books, software, etc. which will help you prepare)
- Take the ACT and/or SAT during the spring semester. That way you'll have at least one score going into your senior year. This also puts you on the mailing list and gives significant information to the schools you are considering.
- Research possible colleges and request information from them
- Visit college campuses (campus tour, visit with advisors/faculty, pick up admission packet)
- Take solid elective courses (extra math, science, foreign language, computers, etc.)
- Talk to friends and family to gather ideas on colleges
- Run for leadership positions in the organizations you are involved in

- Ask your high school counselor for suggestions as to colleges you should consider but might not have thought of on your own (based on major, scholarships, location, etc.)
- Continue to explore careers and job opportunities

Senior Year Checklist

General Stuff

- Visit CollegePrep-101 (<http://collegeprep.okstate.edu>) and read the chapters on "Application Process" and "Choosing a College", among others.
- Continue to challenge yourself and take solid elective courses.
- Attend college fairs.
- Visit college campuses.
- Talk to people whose opinions you respect about the schools you are considering
- Attend events at the colleges you are interested in.
- Go stay with friends who are in college. Find out what they like and dislike.

Early Fall

- Gather applications to the schools you are considering (note deadlines for admission, scholarships, housing, etc.).
- Sit down with everyone who has a stake in your college decision and solicit their input. Listen to what everyone has to say.
- Line up people to write letters of recommendation (choose people who actually know you, not just those with a cool title). Give them plenty of time to write the letter(s).
- Borrow scholarship information (contact names, addresses, applications, etc.) from someone a year ahead of you who received several scholarships.
- Get to know the admission criteria for your top schools. Know where you stand in relation to those requirements and work toward changing what you can (if you fall short).
- Take the ACT/SAT (repeat as necessary or desired).
- Apply for admission (if seeking early admission)

Mid-Fall

- Talk to your high school counselor about local scholarships and get the applications. Keep checking back for information on the latest scholarships, but don't drive them nuts!
- Take AP/CLEP/IB/SAT II tests if applicable.
- Apply for admission (if not seeking early admission)
- Apply for scholarships before Christmas break (verify the arrival of your application, transcripts, etc.)

Early Spring

- Attend a financial aid workshop.
- Apply for financial aid (as soon after Jan. 1 as possible)

As Soon as You Choose a School

- Apply for housing
- Get familiar with your college and what you will need when you get there. Learn about:
 - Housing options (on-campus, off-campus, greek, etc.)
 - Course selection/scheduling
 - Do you need a car?
 - Do you need a bike?
 - Should you buy your own computer? Desktop or laptop?

Summer before college checklist

- Enroll as early as you possibly can.
- Attend a summer orientation program. Also be sure to enroll in a freshman orientation class, even if it isn't required.
- Make a list of what you will need to take to college (coordinate with your roommate so you won't have two of everything).
 - Carpet?
 - Refrigerator?
 - Microwave?
 - Phone?
 - Computer?
 - Etc.
- Work with your parents on a financial plan or budget. Where will your money come from? Who pays for what? How/When to ask for more? What constitutes an emergency? Consider a credit card - really, just for emergencies.
- Make a list of personal care items you use and go price shopping. You won't believe how much a toothbrush costs!
- Get an e-mail address if you don't already have one.
- Convince your parents to get a personal "1-800" phone number, call-me card, calling card or other plan aimed at them paying for you to call home (and only home). You should pay for other calls.
- Make sure to take a tour of YOUR classes before school starts so you won't get lost or look foolish on the first day of class.

Parent Checklist

- Visit CollegePrep-101 (<http://collegeprep.okstate.edu>) and read the "For Parents" chapter.
- Plan ahead for college finances (save for college). Make plans for how your child should determine if an emergency has occurred and how/when they should request financial help. Many states have tax-deferred savings plans (a list is linked from the CollegePrep-101 This 'n That page).
- Consider a credit card for your child (one that HE or SHE is responsible for the payments on). Also discuss how it can be used for emergencies and be clear about exactly what an emergency is.
- Discuss options with your child. Let her/him make the decisions.
- Visit schools with your child, but let them visit again without you.
- Organize a parents support/information group to discuss college-bound students and issues.
- Join the parents' club at your child's college, if applicable.
- Make them (your child) do the work. Help them (particularly with remembering deadlines) but don't do it for them (applications, essays, etc.).
- Do taxes ASAP after January 1 so you can get financial aid applications in early (you don't have to submit your taxes, just fill them out - the FAFSA requires some information from your taxes).
- Buy clothing (shirt, hat, etc...) supporting your child's school.
- Arrange for access to a computer and e-mail so you can keep up with your child by e-mail (that way they can send you an e-mail message when it's convenient for them at 3 a.m. and you can reply to it when it's convenient for you at 8 p.m.)
- Sign up for a personal 1-800 number, calling card, "call me" card or other plan aimed at you paying for your child's calls home.