



Your Complete College Application Timeline

The impending stress of college applications can loom large for a lot of students, but you can lay a path to success by preparing early! This timeline of to-do's can help you organize your time and work through application season.

First Semester of 11th Grade

Take your extracurriculars to the next level

- Seek leadership roles rather than simply joining pre-existing clubs

Start studying for the SAT or ACT if you plan on taking it in 11th grade

- Develop a testing plan, set target test dates, and find a tutor if you need one

Second Semester of 11th Grade

Start researching colleges

- Compare your GPA and standardized test scores with the colleges' average numbers as you do school research

Draft a Master Resumé to inform your Activities List

- Represents all educational, extracurricular, and professional experiences
- Unlimited length – this is a draft!
- Include things in and out of school (e.g., part-time job, volunteering, hobbies)
- List these activities in order of significance—personally and academically

Tip: You can fill out your master resumé in the same format as the Common App activities list to ease your workload in the future!

Beginning of 12th Grade

Fill out what you can of the Common App

- Sections include Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Course & Grades, etc.



Narrow down your School List

- Include a mix of “reach,” “target,” and “safety” schools
 - *Reach Schools*: Might be difficult for you to get into because they are extremely selective or because you fall below the average range for enrolled freshmen.
 - *Target Schools*: Those that meet your numbers—this list of schools is entirely subjective, depending on your GPA and test scores. You’d fall into the middle 50% of enrolled freshmen.
 - *Safety Schools*: Also called a “likely” school—somewhere you feel pretty confident that you will be admitted. Typically, your academic credentials would be above the average range for admitted first-year students.
- Write down all of your application deadlines for Early Decision/Early Action and Regular Decision

Decide on an ED/EA strategy

- Opt to apply for your top-choice, perfect-fit school through Early Decision/Early Action to increase your chances of acceptance
- Plan to apply to at least one target or safety school through Early Action

Finalize your Personal Statement

Tip: Aim for the cleanest, most well-balanced, and most compelling Personal Statement you can create—one that will make an impression of your story and character on those who read it!

Finalize your Honors/Awards and Activities Lists

- Ensure that top activities align with your application persona and support your future major interests

Finalize your Supplemental Essays

- Aim to connect your profile and interests to the school you’re applying to

Fall of 12th Grade

Send your essays to your counselors for final reviews

- Make any final tweaks and corrections to your essays

Apply to your Early Decision/Early Action schools!

- Most ED/EA deadlines will be November 1st

Write Supplemental Essays for your Regular Decision schools

- Make sure there are no errors in your essays



December of 12th Grade

Finalize your Supplemental Essays

- Clean up all of your essays and check for mistakes!

Apply to your Regular Decision schools!

- Most RD deadlines will be January 1st
- Aim to apply in Mid-December to avoid the rush of applicants close to the deadlines

March/April of 12th Grade

Check your university portals for your admissions decisions

- Remember to keep track of any extra materials you might need to send to colleges

May/June of 12th Grade

Commit to your university of choice!

- Submit any materials they requested to confirm your attendance

A dark, grayscale photograph of a large, multi-story college building with many windows and a prominent central tower, serving as a background for the bottom section of the page.

Congratulations on completing your College Application Timeline!