

Activity #3 I: Freshman/Sophomore Course Planner

Help your student complete the Course Planner worksheet and show it to a guidance counselor for review.

	FRESHMAN YEAR		SOPHOMORE YEAR	
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
ENGLISH				
Course Title				
MATHEMATICS				
Course Title				
HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES				
Course Title				
SCIENCE				
Course Title				
ART				
Course Title				
LANGUAGE				
Course Title				
Electives				

Activity #32: Junior/Senior Course Planner

Help your student complete the Course Planner worksheet and show it to a guidance counselor for review.

	JUNIOR YEAR		Senior Year	
	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
ENGLISH				
Course Title				
MATHEMATICS				
Course Title				
HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES				
Course Title				
SCIENCE				
Course Title				
ART				
Course Title				
LANGUAGE				
Course Title				
ELECTIVE				
Course Title				

Activity #33: Freshman Year Task List

1. This task list contains a number of valuable activities for your student's freshman year.
2. Spend some time discussing each of these activities with your student and encourage him/her to do as many as possible.
3. As your student completes each one of the activities, have him/her put an "X" on the line next to the item.

Identify registration dates for standardized tests.

(Students should record these dates as far into the future as possible.)

Compile a four-year course schedule.

(Make certain your four-year schedule has been examined by a guidance counselor.)

Learn about preparation resources for the SAT offered at school.

Find out more about college preparation resources available through the school.

Learn as much as possible about financial aid resources available through the school and in the community. (This is very important. There are many scholarships available to students in their communities; students should ask school officials and guidance personnel to direct them toward these resources.)

Attend any college fairs held at your school.

Start thinking about what colleges you might want to attend.

Try to visit a campus in the summer.

Use the internet to visit college web sites.

Begin saving for college (books, room and board, living expenses).

Keep an academic portfolio and/or student resume.

Create a study schedule to improve your performance.

Start preparing for the PSAT.

Activity #34: Sophomore Task List

1. This task list contains a number of valuable activities for your student's sophomore year.
2. Spend some time discussing each of these activities with your student and encourage him/her to do as many as possible.
3. As your student completes each one of the activities, have him/her put an "X" on the line next to the item.
4. Ask your student to have a counselor review the list and make recommendations.

September

- Consult your guidance counselor about taking the PSAT in October.
- If you plan to take the ACT, talk to your guidance counselor about taking the PLAN this fall. The PLAN is a preliminary standardized test that will give students some preparation for the ACT. (PLAN does not have national testing dates, so ask your guidance counselor about test dates offered by your school.)
- You need to register several weeks in advance for the PLAN and the PSAT, so consult your guidance counselor early in September.
- Prepare for the SAT/ACT. See if your school offers prep classes. If not, go to the SAT, ACT, and College Board web sites; these sites offer free preparation resources.
- Start narrowing down your career and college searches.

October

- Take the PSAT for practice. The results will not be used for college admission.
- Keep a record of community involvement and participation activities. Colleges often want to know about "leadership activities." (Volunteer activities can be a very big plus on your student record.)

November

- Start saving your best work for your portfolio.
(Refer to the Career Development Program in this Guide to learn more about portfolios.)

December

- Look at the results of your PLAN and/or PSAT.
- Read the materials sent with your test results.
- Consult your guidance counselor to explore ways to improve on future tests.

February

- Visit your guidance office and browse through the college literature.
- Surf the web for more information on colleges.

Activity #35: Junior Year Task List

1. This task list contains a number of valuable activities for your student's junior year.
2. Spend some time discussing each of these activities with your student and encourage him/her to do as many as possible.
3. As your student completes each one of the activities, have him/her put an "X" on the line next to the item.
4. Ask your student to have a counselor review it and make recommendations.

September

- Meet with your counselor to review your courses for this year and plan your schedule for the next year.
- Evaluate your transcript with your counselor.
- Check number of credits earned, distribution of courses successfully completed, examinations passed, and cumulative GPA.
- Keep saving samples of your work, especially projects you have completed.
(This demonstrates creativity as well as leadership.)
- Register for the October PSAT.

October

- Take the PSAT exam. Even though these scores will not be used for college admission, it is still a good idea to take this test.
- Compare personal academic achievements with academic admission requirements for colleges you have selected.
- Obtain dates and locations of college fairs and parent nights in your area.

November

- Fee waivers for standardized tests are available for students whose families are low-income. Check with your guidance counselor.

December

- Find out what standardized tests your college prefers and accepts!
- This is the time to determine your registration deadlines for the Sat I, Sat II, ACT.
- Make a timeline of deadlines and hang it on the wall to remind yourself when things need to be sent in.

January

- If you were never issued a Social Security number, contact the closest Social Security office as soon as possible to obtain a number.
- When you get your Social Security card, keep it in a secure spot in your wallet.
- Research summer programs for high school juniors and apply.
- Students whose native language is not English should check with colleges as to whether or not they should take the TOEFL test.

Activity #35: Junior Year Task List (continued)**February**

- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss your preliminary list of colleges.
- Discuss whether your initial list of colleges meets your needs and interests.
- Register for the March SAT I if you have completed the math courses covered on the SAT I. If not, plan to take the SAT I in May or June.

March

- Start preparing a college budget to determine what your expenses will be. Identify what is covered and not covered by your scholarship(s).

April

- Register for the May/June SAT I and /or the May/June Sat II: Subject Tests.
- Not all Sat II Subject Tests are given on every test date.
- Check the calendar carefully to determine when the Subject Tests you want are offered.
- Eliminate colleges from your original list and add others you have found.

May

- Attend college fairs.
- Sign up for summer school courses that might help you.
- Ask your counselor about college interviews and the college essay.

June

- This is a good time to visit colleges.

July/August

- Begin preparing for the actual application process.
- Research the college essay requirement: Will you have to write a college essay?
- Assemble your portfolio. What things have you accomplished in high school?

Activity #36: Senior Year Task List

1. This task list contains a number of valuable activities for your student's senior year.
2. Spend some time discussing each of these activities with your student and encourage him/her to do as many as possible.
3. As your student completes each one of the activities, have him/her put an "X" on the line next to the item.
4. Ask your student to have a counselor review it and make recommendations.

September

- Meet with admissions representatives who are visiting your school.
- Make a list of test names, dates, fees and registration deadlines, and of deadlines for college admissions and financial aid application.
- Remember that you must take tests like the SAT and ACT at least six weeks before the deadline in order for scores to be submitted to colleges.
- Begin asking teachers, guidance counselors, and employers for letters of recommendation to include in your admission packet.
- Provide recommendation forms, any special instructions, and a stamped, addressed business envelope to the people writing your recommendation.
- Be thoughtful. Write thank-you notes to those who write recommendations for you and keep them informed about your decisions.

October

- Take the SAT or ACT exam, if necessary.
- Work on admissions application essays.
- Narrow your college choices down to a final list.
- Find out which financial aid applications your college choices require and when they are due.

November

- Take the SAT or ACT if appropriate.
- Obtain financial aid applications from your guidance office or college.
- Read them carefully to determine what information is required and when the applications are due and how long it takes them to be processed.
- Begin preparing your college applications.
- Check colleges for deadlines.
- Obtain FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) from your guidance office.
- Do not submit it before January 1st.
- Keep all records, test score reports, and copies of applications for admission and financial aid.

December

- Send official test scores to colleges on your list if you have not done so.

Activity #36: Senior Year Task List (continued)

- ___ Ask your parents to save their year-end payroll stubs if these show their earnings for the year. You may need them for financial aid eligibility reviews by schools.

January

- ___ Submit your completed FAFSA form as soon as possible after January 1st.
- ___ Make copies of forms you submit!
- ___ January is Financial Aid Awareness Month. Look for special programs in your area.
- ___ Have your parents prepare their taxes early. Schools may request this information as proof of income.
- ___ Request that your counselor send the transcript of your first semester grades to the colleges to which you have applied.

February

- ___ If you completed a FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks after submitting the FAFSA.
- ___ Review the SAR carefully and check for any mistakes.
- ___ If necessary, correct any items on the SAR and return it to the FAFSA processor.
- ___ If a college received your data directly, notify the college of any change.

March

- ___ If you submitted a FAFSA in January and have not received your SAR, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 337-5665.

April

- ___ Make your final decision about a college.
 - ___ Create a timetable for payment of college fees.
 - ___ Notify the other schools that you will not be attending.
 - ___ Send tuition deposit and follow all other admissions instructions.
- You must decide which offer of admission to accept by May 1st.***

May

- ___ Request that your counselor send your final transcript to the college you will attend.
- ___ Keep a copy of your final transcript in your personal file.

July

- ___ Look for information in the mail from the college about housing, roommates, orientation, course selection, etc.
- ___ Respond promptly to all requests from the college.
- ___ Prepare for independent living.
- ___ Prepare an expense sheet for college.

MODULE 2: PREPARING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

Activity #37: Preparing for the FCAT

What is the FCAT?

Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is given to all students in Florida public schools between grades 3 and 10. The primary purpose of the test is to assess student achievement of the high-order cognitive skills represented by the Sunshine State Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. A secondary purpose is to compare the performance of Florida students to the performance of students across the nation. The FCAT is important because it measures student performance with reference to accepted, grade-specific standards. Students must pass the 10th Grade FCAT to be eligible for graduation from high school.

How Can Mentors Help Students Prepare for the FCAT?

PLEASE NOTE: Teachers have the primary responsibility for helping students prepare for the FCAT, but there are several things mentors can do to make teachers' jobs easier.

1. Many schools provide resources that can assist students with the FCAT. Ask a guidance counselor if there are any resources you can use to help your student.
2. Mentors of fourth and fifth grade students can use a computer in the school media center to access the Florida Department of Education web site: www.fldoe.org. On the home page, they can click "FCAT," then click on "Understanding FCAT," then click on "FCAT Explorer." (This site contains a great deal of information about FCAT.)
3. The FCAT Explorer is a comprehensive, interactive, instructional support tool that helps fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth grade reading and fifth, eight and tenth grade math.
4. The FCAT Explorer practice programs do not replace the classroom teacher's initial instruction and skill development activities; these programs reinforce this instruction via instructional games, skill practice exercises, and performance feedback.
5. Mentors can check with guidance personnel to determine if the school has The FCAT Simulation. This computer-based training software allows students in all grades the opportunity to take diagnostic tests, learn about benchmarks and test-taking tips, complete practice tests, and utilize many other valuable resources.