



# College prep timeline for 11th graders

## AUGUST

- ☐ Get organized for the college search.

*Also this month...*


 **Consider getting help with college prep.** There are low- and no-cost services — online and in person — to help your family navigate the college admissions process.


 **Keep a reading list.** Have your teen start a list — with notes about thoughts, key themes, and takeaways — of all the books they read. It can help with applications and essays.

## SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Sign up for the October PSAT.
- ☐ Make sure you know your child's Social Security number.
- ☐ Register as a student-athlete with the NCAA.

*Also this month...*


 **Talk about grades.** Check your child's regular and weighted GPA and class rank. If they're not so good, discuss strategies to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend, so talk about how to show improvement — with grades, class rank, and challenging classes.

 **Understand college admissions tests.** Look into the differences between the ACT and the SAT to see if one may be a better choice for your teen.

## OCTOBER

- ☐ Work together to make an initial list of colleges that your teen may apply to.
- ☐ Take the PSAT.
- ☐ Meet with a college counselor.
- ☐ Start visiting colleges.

*Also this month...*

 **If your teen is considering one of the 5 U.S. military academies,** talk to your child's guidance counselor and start the admission process sooner rather than later.

## NOVEMBER

- ☐ Keep those grades up.
- ☐ Understand the new SAT.

*Also this month...*



**Prioritize, prioritize.** Talk through your teen's priorities. Skip debate club to babysit? Maybe not. Study for a math test instead of going to preseason track practice? Most likely.

## DECEMBER

- ☐ Decide if your teen will take the SAT or ACT.
- ☐ Make a test prep plan.
- ☐ Visit a college or two.

*Also this month...*



**Encourage involvement.** Kids who participate in extracurriculars have higher self-esteem and get better grades. Participating in the same activity for a year is associated with being more likely to graduate from college; two years of the same activity is associated with getting a job soon after college.

## JANUARY

- ☐ Check out books on college admissions books.
- ☐ Make sure your teen has college-ready reading skills.

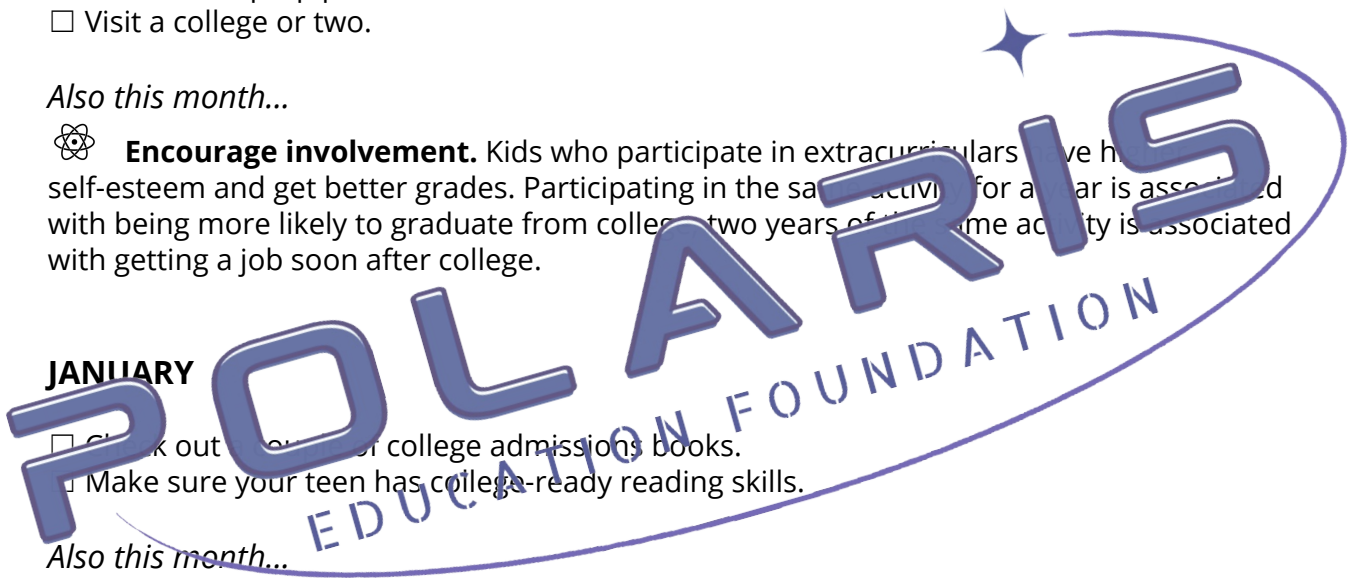
*Also this month...*



**Consider different college options.** Look into vocational programs, community college programs, free colleges, and international schools.



**Clean up social profiles.** Why? Because 40 percent of college admissions professionals report looking up applicants online as part of the application review process.



## FEBRUARY

- ☐ Register for the SAT, ACT, AP exams, and SAT subject tests.
- ☐ Plan next year's class schedule and make sure it includes challenges.
- ☐ Visit (more) colleges on your teen's list.

*Also this month...*



**Make summer plans.** A job, internship, extra courses, volunteering, and selective summer programs all look good on college applications and may be fodder for a college essay.

## MARCH

- ☐ Revisit the college list.
- ☐ Start test prep!
- ☐ Think about who to ask for letters of recommendation.
- ☐ Start searching (and applying) for scholarships.

## APRIL

- ☐ Study for AP exams.
- ☐ Sign up for SAT subject tests.
- ☐ Think about your family's financial plan.

## MAY

- ☐ Learn the pros and cons of applying early decision and early action.
- ☐ Jot down notes about accomplishments and honors.

*Also this month...*



**Help your teen show interest in a few colleges.** Private colleges value signs of interest from applicants — like visiting the campus (in person or virtually), doing an interview, contacting the admissions office to express interest and ask questions.

## JUNE

- ☐ Summer homework: Search and apply for scholarships.
- ☐ Summer homework: Start outlining and writing college essays.
- ☐ Summer homework: Read, read, read!
- ☐ Extra credit: Start college applications.
- ☐ Go visit schools on your teen's college list.

