

Navigating High School

25 October 2025





Grades

When you check your grades and the only "A" you have is in your name.



What:

- Focus on your grades
- Learn how to study

Why:

- Makes the rest of high school (& college, tbh) easier
- Scholarships & financial aid

How:

- Go to class
- Try to complete assignments independently
- Ask teachers for help (they want you to succeed!)
- After-school tutoring
- Planners & to-do lists to schedule tasks
- Get rest!

What other strategies do you use to study and keep your grades up?



Extracurriculars



What:

- Get involved!

Why:

- Builds your résumé
- Helps you discover your interests and learn new skills
- Build community & make friends
- It's fun!

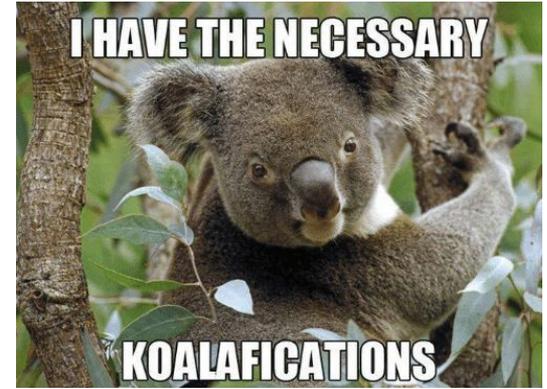
How:

- Community service (with clubs or on your own!)
- Attend student organization fairs
- Go to club meetings
- Run for leadership positions
- Don't overdo it! Dedication to a few clubs >>> kinda involved in many

What extracurriculars are you currently involved in?



Résumé



What:

- Start your résumé

Why:

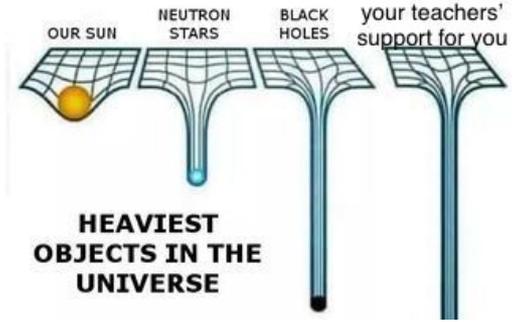
- Gives you a head start
- Helps you keep track of awards/honors you would otherwise forget
- You won't start from scratch when applying for college
- Also handy for jobs/internships!

How:

- Ask counselors for template
- Ask mentors, teachers, parents, professionals for help editing & revising
- Keep track of most important info
 - GPA
 - Academic awards/honors
 - Extracurriculars
 - Community service
 - Work experience



Teachers



What:

- Form relationships with your teachers & counselors

Why:

- They'll help you figure out high school, college, career interests, etc.
- They can vouch for you when you need recommendation letters

How:

- Meet with counselors regularly
 - Once a semester AT LEAST to talk about classes
- Seek extra help for classes in which you struggle
- Interact with club sponsors (usually teachers)
- Be active and engaged in class



Timeline: 9th grade

- Create a 4-year study plan that includes all your required courses
- Research potential career paths (more on next slide!)
- Make a list of potential areas of study in college
- Meet with your guidance counselor
 - They will have the most accurate information
- Get involved in extracurricular activities!

Exploring potential careers

- A lot of great online resources!
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers>



EXPLORE OVER 900 CAREERS

Career Search

Find out what they pay, if they're hiring, what the work is like, and the education and skills you need to succeed.

Start Your Career Search



Timeline: 10th grade

- Stay focused on academics
- Commit to some extracurricular activities
- Optional: Take the PSAT in the fall
 - Good practice for PSAT in 11th grade for National Merit Scholarship
 - Good practice for other standardized tests (SAT/ACT)
 - Many colleges have de-emphasized SAT/ACT – check school-specific requirements on the college website



Timeline: 11th grade

- Take the PSAT in the fall
 - Qualifies you for National Merit Scholarship
- Prep for and take the SAT if needed
- Finalize a list of top colleges you will apply to
 - Do virtual/campus tours if you are able to and haven't already!
- Take AP exams



Timeline: 12th grade

- Retake the SAT if needed
- Prepare your college applications and apply to your top choices in the fall
 - Ex: UC/CSU deadline 11/30
- Fill out FAFSA to receive financial aid
- Take AP/IB exams

Okay but... summer is my time to relax

Why should I do a summer internship?

Hello
my name is

INTERN

- Learn what it's like to be in a lab
- Discover career interests
- Build your network
 - Make connections with students and professors
 - Make friends!
- (Maybe) make some money! 💰



Some internships at Stanford

- Raising Interest in Science and Engineering (RISE) program
- Science, Technology, and Reconstructive Surgery (STaRS) program
- Stanford Institute of Medicine Research (SIMR) program
- Stanford Earth Young Investigators
- Find more [here!](#)

Applications typically open around February, due in March



Group 3: Thinking About Financial Aid for College



FREE COLLEGE ADVISING

matriculate.org/college

“FREE virtual college advising program that connects high-achieving low-income students with a near-peer college mentor who works one-on-one with students throughout the college and financial aid processes.”

Requirements to apply for an advisor:

- GPA of 3.5 or higher
- Annual family income of less than \$80,000
- Attends high school in the US
- Current junior, or rising senior
- Taking a rigorous course load

Types of schools to consider

- **University of California System (UC System)**

- UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, etc.
- Known for more research focused education

- **California State University System (CSU System)**

- San Jose State, Cal State Fullerton, etc.
- Known for being more career/profession focused

- **California Community Colleges (CCCs)**

- Cheaper option
- UC and CSU schools accept a lot of CCC transfer students!

- **Other awesome options!!**

- Private universities (Santa Clara, Pomona, etc.)
 - Smaller, more expensive (but often have good financial aid!)
- Out of state universities
- Trade Schools (Electrician, Plumber, etc.)



3 Types of Federal Student Aid

1



Free
money.

Grants are usually based on financial need and don't have to be repaid.

2



Borrowed
money.

Loans are an investment in your future. But remember, they must be repaid with interest.

3



Earned
money.

A **work-study** job lets you earn money while you're in school.



Where to get \$\$\$

- Federal government - **FAFSA**
- State government
- Colleges and universities - **CSS PROFILE, SCHOOL-SPECIFIC**
- Private foundations - **FIND YOUR OWN SCHOLARSHIPS**
- Employers and private companies
- Professional and service organizations