

CCMR WITH MS. THRASH

COLLEGE CAREER MILITARY READY

FRESHMEN GUIDE

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Freshmen Guide

Build a Solid Foundation Early

As a freshman, it is crucial to establish a solid foundation for both your academic and personal development. Prioritize academics by attending classes, completing assignments, and seeking help when needed. [Extracurricular activities](#) can help you develop essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication, laying a solid foundation for future success.

College admissions officers adopt a [holistic approach](#), considering your academic achievements, personal qualities, experiences, and interests. By pursuing various challenging courses, community service opportunities, work experience, and personal passions, you can demonstrate your potential to thrive in a college environment.

Key Areas to Focus On:

1. Courses

If you're striving for academic excellence, competitive scholarships, and top-class rankings like Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Top 10%, it's not just about taking rigorous courses—understanding how your GPA is calculated is just as important!

- **Enroll in Rigorous Courses**
Taking [AP](#), [Dual Credit \(DC\)](#), or [IB](#) courses strengthens critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills—and boosts your GPA in weighted ranking systems. Competitive colleges and scholarships look for students who challenge themselves academically.
- **Learn Your School District's GPA Policy**
Not all GPAs are calculated the same! Some schools weigh advanced courses more heavily, while others may exclude specific grades from their calculations. Understanding your district's rules can help you make informed decisions about which classes to take. Check your district's course guide or ask your counselor for clarity!
- **Stand Out in College Admissions**
Admissions officers value advanced course students because it demonstrates initiative, discipline, and academic ambition. A strong transcript with challenging coursework can give you a competitive edge.
- **The Path to Top 10% (or Higher!)**
Your class rank is directly tied to your [GPA](#). Since AP, IB, and Dual Credit courses often carry more weight, excelling in them can increase your weighted GPA, helping you rise in rank and earn distinctions like Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Top 10%. These honors can open doors to automatic admissions and merit-based scholarships at many universities.



Final Tip: Balance is key! Challenge yourself, but be strategic—excelling in a few rigorous courses is often more effective than overloading and burning out.

2. Extracurricular Activities

- **Explore Interests:** Join clubs, sports teams, or volunteer opportunities to discover your passions and develop new skills. **Internships** and part-time jobs can also provide valuable experiences.
- **Keep Records:** Maintain a detailed list of activities, leadership roles, and awards you have received. This will be helpful for resumes and letters of recommendation later.

If you're an athlete looking to compete at the next level, make sure you're meeting all NCAA and NAIA recruitment guidelines! This includes maintaining the required GPA, completing the right core courses, registering with the eligibility center, and understanding amateurism rules. Staying on track with these requirements is essential to keeping your college athletic dreams alive! Need help? Check out the Student-Athlete Guide for 9th-12th Graders, covering everything from academics to social media and recruitment tips!



Recruitment 101:
**A HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETE'S
PATH
TO COLLEGE
SPORTS**

THIS GUIDE EQUIPS STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE TO NAVIGATE THE NCAA RECRUITING PROCESS, COVERING KEY TOPICS LIKE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, GPA AND TEST SCORE CRITERIA, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERING WITH THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER. IT PROVIDES INSIGHTS INTO THE RECRUITING TIMELINE FROM 9TH TO 12TH GRADE, HOW TO BUILD A STRONG RECRUITING PROFILE, AND THE ROLE OF COLLEGE VISITS. THE GUIDE ALSO EXPLAINS HOW TO HANDLE SCHOLARSHIPS, AMATEURISM CERTIFICATION, AND HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENHANCE VISIBILITY. STAYING ORGANIZED AND PROACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS IS CRUCIAL FOR SECURING A COLLEGE SPORTS OPPORTUNITY.

[Click HERE for the Guide.](#)

3. Interests and Career Exploration

- **Explore Passions:** Use tools like career **interest profilers** and speak with mentors, family members, or counselors. Discovering your strengths and preferences early can guide your future choices.
- **Set Goals:** Pursue opportunities that align with your interests and take advantage of internships, summer programs, and specialized camps to deepen your understanding of potential careers.

Strategic Planning: The Four-Year Plan

1. Academic Planning

- Collaborate with your counselor to create a comprehensive **four-year plan** that includes all necessary credits and aligns with your post-secondary goals.

- Stay informed about advanced course offerings and their benefits, such as [AP exams](#) for college credit, [DC](#) cost savings, and IB's ([holistic approach](#)).

2. Standardized Tests

- **PSAT:** This practice test offers insights into strengths and weaknesses and can qualify you for scholarships.
- **SAT/ACT:** Familiarize yourself with these tests and plan your preparation timeline.
- **Performance Acknowledgments: Stand Out with Your Achievements!**
 - Looking to make your college application shine? 🌟 Performance acknowledgments highlight your dedication and skills!
 - **How to Earn Them:**
 - ✓ High SAT/ACT scores
 - ✓ Industry certifications
 - ✓ Success in [AP/IB or dual-credit courses](#)
 - ✓ Bilingualism and biliteracy
- **Why They Matter:**
Colleges value mastery and growth. These achievements showcase your readiness to excel and set you apart as a standout applicant!

3. Time Management and Good Habits

- Develop routines for homework, studying, and organization. Effective time management will help balance academics, activities, and personal life.

Build Strong Relationships

- **Teachers:** They can provide personalized attention, academic support, and strong letters of recommendation.
- **With Counselors:** Counselors can provide guidance on academic planning and college readiness.

BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE! IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL. START LEARNING HOW TO MAKE YOUR CASE NOW, WHETHER YOU'RE DEALING WITH TEACHERS, BOSSES, OR PEERS.



Explore Post-Secondary Options

1. College Research

- Research colleges thoroughly, including their admissions requirements, programs, financial aid options, and available scholarships.
- Review the [Common Data Set](#) and student profiles of your target schools.
- Subscribe to mailing lists to stay informed about events and deadlines.

2. Trade Schools and Certificate Programs

- Research cost-effective, specialized [training programs](#) offering hands-on experience in healthcare, technology, and skilled trades.

3. Military Opportunities

- Explore career paths, requirements, and benefits of [military service](#), including education, healthcare, and retirement options.

4. College Fairs and Campus Tours

- Attend events to gather insights, demonstrate interest, and connect with admissions officers.

KEEP TRACK OF COLLEGE INFORMATION ON YOUR PHONE. IF YOU'RE LIKE MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS, YOU PRETTY MUCH ALWAYS HAVE YOUR PHONE ON YOU, SO IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO JOT DOWN SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT THOUGHTS LIKE ESSAY IDEAS, NOTES ABOUT YOURSELF, NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR THE COLLEGE YOU WANT TO GO TO, MAJOR INTERESTS, IMPRESSIONS FROM YOUR COLLEGE VISITS, AND MORE!

Summer Opportunities

- Engage in academic programs, internships, and camps to expand your knowledge and skills. These experiences can strengthen your college application and personal growth.

Effective Communication and Organization

- **Create a Personal Email:** Use a consistent and professional email address for college and scholarship correspondence. Organize emails into folders for easy tracking.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

- Research [financial aid options](#), such as grants, work-study programs, and [scholarships](#). Early
- Planning and saving can significantly reduce the financial burden of higher education.

Finding scholarships can feel overwhelming, but knowing how to identify real opportunities can save you time and protect you from scams.

Here's what to look for:

- ✓ No Application Fees – You should NEVER have to pay to apply for a scholarship. If there's a fee, it's likely a scam!
- ✓ Verified Sources – Stick to scholarships from well-known organizations, schools, or reputable databases. Do your research before applying.
- ✓ No Personal Financial Info Required – A legitimate scholarship will not ask for your Social Security number or banking details.
- ✓ Clear Eligibility & Deadlines – Real scholarships have specific requirements and deadlines—be wary of vague or overly broad offers.

Social Media Responsibility

- Maintain a positive online presence. Use social media to showcase achievements and network responsibly, as it reflects your brand.



HELP

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS GUIDE OR NEED CLARIFICATION ON ANY ASPECT OF THE INFORMATION SHARED, I AM HERE TO HELP. I INVITE YOU TO SCHEDULE A 1:1 SESSION WITH ME TO ADDRESS YOUR QUERIES AND WALK THROUGH THE PROCESS TOGETHER. THESE INDIVIDUALIZED SESSIONS ARE DESIGNED TO OFFER PERSONALIZED GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TAILORED TO YOUR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

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Category		Value		
GPA (Weighted)				
GPA (Unweighted)				
Class Rank				

Test	Section	Score	Date Taken	Passing Score? (Yes/No)
PSAT	Evidence-Based Reading & Writing			
	Math			
SAT	Evidence-Based Reading & Writing			
	Math			
ACT	English			
	Math			
	Reading			
	Science			
	Composite Score			
TSI	ELAR			
	Math			

AP Exam Scores	AP Course	Score	Date Taken	Passing Score? (Yes/No)
	AP _____			
	AP _____			
	AP _____			
	AP _____			
	AP _____			

Dual Credit Classes	Course Name	Final Grade	Semester Taken	Pass (Yes/No)

