

Summer Checklist: Things to Do to Prepare for College Applications and Other Post-Grad Plans

1. Complete my resume on Naviance (under "About Me" tab), to help as I fill out applications. ☐
2. Look into career fields...learn more about a related field of interest and/or look into new options. ☐
 - a. Complete or revisit assessments in Naviance under the Self Discovery tab (ie. Career Cluster Finder)
 - b. Use other websites for additional information about career options. Use the resources provided on Slide #8 in the [Junior/Parent Slides](#).
 - c. Talk to family members, relatives, parents of friends to find options to connect to people working in a field of interest.
3. Look into colleges and programs where you can study/build your skills ☐
 - a. Thinking about college? Then work on my list of "Colleges I'm Thinking About" in Naviance.
 - b. Thinking about other post-grad plans? Look into career fields, trade programs, and other opportunities. Use the tools in the Career section of Naviance or other tools shared in the Junior/Parent Slides.
4. Think about at least 2 teachers that I can ask for letters of recommendation ☐
 - You can ask before leaving for the summer if you know who those teachers are; you can ask your counselor for a letter, too. Check your college requirements - some colleges specifically require a counselor letter.)
 - For those of you considering working, pursuing a trade or other opportunities, having a list of references and/or letter(s) of recommendation are good to have on hand.
5. Register for standardized tests (if applicable)
 Hundreds of colleges are remaining test optional for the Class of 2024, however some are moving back to requiring standard test scores. Please check your intended college websites regularly for updates. Keep in mind that if a school doesn't require scores, you do not need to test or submit scores if you chose to test.
 - a. Register for SATs (www.collegeboard.org) ☐
 - i. Register by TBA for August 27th test
 - ii. Register by TBA for October 1st test
 - b. Register for ACTs (if taking them) (www.actstudent.org) ☐
 - i. Register by 6/17 for July 16th test
 - ii. Register by 8/5 for September 10th test
6. Prepare for any standardized test I will be taking this coming fall ☐
 - a. If taking the SAT, use the free tools on Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>) to prepare. Be sure to link your College Board account with your Khan Academy account for personalized recommendations so you spend your time focusing on the areas you need to work on most.
 - b. If taking the ACT, use the free tools on the ACT website – ACT Academy (<https://www.opened.com/act-portal/dashboard>) to prepare. Work on reviewing individual sections of the test or take full practice exams.
7. Visit at least one college either virtually or in person and set plans for in-person visits this coming fall ☐
8. Work on ideas for and/or start a draft of my college essay ☐
 - a. Take a look at the Common Application essay prompts for 2023-2024 on the back of this page. Select the prompt that jumps out to you. Keep in mind this is a personal essay so write in your own voice.
9. Begin looking at applications to see what will need to be completed this fall ☐
 - a) Be sure you are looking at the most up-to-date application! Most colleges do not have their 2022-2023 applications available online until mid/late July-early August.
 - b) For Common App Schools: Create an account at www.commonapp.org. If you make your account prior to August 1st, indicate you are a "First Year Student" when registering. You can start filling out information on the [Common App tab only](#). Leave other fields/pages blank. We will review this in the fall during Senior Seminars.
 - c) For Non-Common App Schools: Visit the Admissions page of the school to find the link for the application.
 - d) For ALL applications, make sure to use your personal email address, NOT your school one, when creating your accounts!
10. Review the [Junior/Parent Slides](#) for additional information about all of the topics listed here. ☐
 - a. Make a list of questions to ask my counselor when school starts in the fall so this process doesn't feel so overwhelming for me or my family.

Common Application Essay Prompts for 2023-2024

Before you begin, consider reviewing the [Junior/Parent Slides](#) for ideas about how to brainstorm and zero in on an engaging topic. Remember this is a 250-650 word essay.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Resources to Access

1. Your counselor's Google Classroom!
 - a. Look at the Classwork tab to find copies of seminar presentations made throughout this year.
 - b. Look at the Stream from the week of March 20th through the end of the year for individual posts with tips and other advice on a range of topics pulled from those aforementioned presentations.
2. Some colleges provide tips and advice about the college exploration and application process. Here are a few:
 - a. Bentley University's Admission 101: <https://www.bentley.edu/undergraduate/school-counselors-resources>
 - b. Notre Dame University's Tips from Counselors: <https://admissions.nd.edu/apply/tips-from-counselors/>
3. For students interested in playing a sport in college, review the NCAA Eligibility Requirements: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
 - a. Note: The NCAA no longer requires standardized test scores for students looking to compete at the Division I, II or III levels.
4. Interested in fine, visual or performing arts, music and/or architecture? Check college websites to see if auditions or portfolios are required. If they are, develop a list as to what is to be included and start the preparation process.
 - a. Be on the lookout for events hosted by the [National Portfolio Day](#)
 - b. To get a sense of what you might need to include, look at the information from these colleges:
 - i. [MassArt](#)
 - ii. [Roger Williams University](#)
 - iii. [UMass Amherst](#)
 - iv. [Savannah College of Art & Design \(SCAD\)](#)
5. Use these tools to help determine your 'financial fit' as you develop your college list:
 - a. MEFA's EFC (Expected Family Contribution) Calculator to estimate your eligibility for financial aid: <https://www.mefa.org/expected-family-contribution-efc-calculator>
 - b. The NetPrice Calculator at each college of interest to get a better sense of what you could be expected to pay. You can find this on the Financial Aid pages of each college's website.
 - c. Use the information in the [College Scorecard](#) to search and compare colleges: their fields of study, costs, admissions, results, and more. BE sure to look at the information re: debt for graduates to determine your potential financial fit.
 - d. Get to know the terminology and different aspects of financial aid:
 - i. MEFA: <https://www.mefa.org/types-of-financial-aid>
 - ii. The US Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website: <https://studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid>
 - iii. College Board's Financial Aid Basics: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics>