

College-Bound Juniors,

Many college-bound Juniors have sent messages asking, “How can I prepare for the transition beyond high school next year?” Here is a helpful list to remind you of those steps:

1. **Grades.** Good grades are not just a number—they are a reflection of your dedication and effort. They count, so put in the extra effort. When colleges review your transcripts, they look closely at your sophomore and junior year grades. If you require assistance, please reach out to your teachers.
2. **Review, Register, and Prepare for the ACT Test.** The ACT is a standardized test used for college admissions in the United States. It measures your readiness for college and is a key component of your college application. A free test will be offered to all juniors in March. Should you wish to retake the test, you can register online [here](#). Those needing financial assistance should contact the Guidance Office. Additionally, the ACT [website](#) offers several (free) study resources.
3. **Research Prospective Colleges.** Although there's no magic formula for choosing a college, you can start by asking yourself some questions that help most students find the right fit. [Here](#) is a step-by-step guide, or you can use this online [college search engine](#). Both tools will help you narrow down your college options.
4. **(Virtually) Visit Prospective Colleges.** The internet has made it easier to get a glimpse into life at college just by using your computer. You can review a college's homepage, follow its social channels, or take a virtual tour. Many colleges and universities offer a photo or video tour of campus on their website. These can help you better feel for the classrooms, dorms, dining halls, and hot spots on campus. Sites like [Niche](#) and [Campus Reel](#) are other helpful online tools for learning more about a college. Or even better, schedule a college visit in person!
5. **Start Working on Your College Essay.** The essay is essential to your college application, as it provides a unique opportunity to showcase your personality, experiences, and aspirations. Give yourself ample time to write, edit, and rewrite it! ACT offers excellent [advice](#) for students wanting to get a head start on the process. Remember, your essay should be a reflection of who you are and why you're a good fit for the college you're applying to.
6. **Understanding the Application Process & Deadlines.** When you have narrowed your college list, appreciate each college's unique application process, deadlines, and admissions tools. Many (not all) schools use the [Common Application](#), and you can create an account as early as August 1st. Between the start of school and the earliest college deadlines (typically November 1st), the Guidance Department will meet with you individually to discuss your academic goals and assist you in the application process.

Students seeking additional advice on various topics should visit [ACT's College Planning Site](#). They've gathered an entire library of articles and resources to help you reach college and career readiness. Remember, you're not alone in this journey. There are resources and people ready to support you every step of the way.