

Family Checklist for Freshman & Sophomore Years

A checklist to help every freshman or sophomore become a four-year college graduate, a two-year college graduate, or a certified tradesman or woman.

For all students

- Build a relationship with your high school counselor:** Counselors are invaluable resources and mentors for academic and career goals, and they can help you create that four-year academic plan that will lead to your post-high school goal. Include challenging classes to build grit and rigor.
- Make homework a daily priority:** Have a designated study area and remove all distractions (including your phone, Netflix, YouTube, Instagram, games, etc.) Use an academic planner to write down assignments and test dates. Your goal is zero late or missing assignments! High school grades count. Your GPA begins on the first day of freshman year!
- Get the most you can out of class time:** Sit in the front row each class. Seek help from teachers. Attend review sessions.
- Participate in extracurriculars:** Join clubs, sports, debate, speech, theater, FBLA, etc. to foster engagement, friendships, and self-growth.
- Attend all parent-teacher conferences:** [Consider asking these questions.](#)
- Discuss your interests and career opportunities with family members:** Think about what interests you and then learn more about it. Locate job-shadowing opportunities. A day with an electrician or accountant can change your life path.
- Read for pleasure:** Grow your grades, scores, and mind by reading good books. [Check out John Baylor's book recommendations.](#)

- Build skills each summer:** Research summer camps or programs that align with your interests-- mission trips, academic camps, or internships. And...keep reading!

For the four-year and two-year college bound student

- Attend college planning events:** Watch your school communications for college nights, NCAA compliance events, workshops about financial aid, and college fairs.
- Develop and add to your [Activities Resume](#) each year:** Include academic successes and awards, club/athletic awards, leadership positions, and struggles (which often serve as solid application essay material). Track community service hours for future scholarship and college applications.
- Take [Advanced Placement](#) classes if available:** AP classes help with college admissions and financial aid. Take the May AP test for each of your AP classes.
- Take the [ACT and/or SAT](#):** Just after sophomore year, take a June or July ACT or June or August SAT. Sign up a month prior. This can be the first of four tries at either test. Prepare hard each time. Jumping that score is the best-paying job a student can have. If you score a 27 or higher on the ACT or a 1300 or higher on the SAT, tell your school counselor that you want to take the October Junior Year PSAT, which wins [National Merit Scholarships](#).
- Schedule a [College Visit](#):** If you are taking a trip, visit a nearby college campus and take a tour. Many colleges also offer summer academic and athletic programs. Just being on a campus can strengthen expectations.
- Get a summer job:** Build skills, add to your resume, and save some of the earnings in your college savings account.