

College Preparation Checklist

In High School (“Getting Ready”)

- Start dreaming about what you’ll do after high school and college.
- Learn about jobs you find interesting.
 - Talk to people who have those jobs.
 - Take classes related to those jobs, even if they’re not “cool.”
- Build your analysis skills.
 - Work especially hard in English and math.
 - Dig deeply into the subjects you find interesting (Google is a great tool for this kind of analytical digging).
- Build your people skills.
 - Be friendly to everyone, especially kids with different perspectives than yours.
 - Learn how to learn things from everyone you meet.
- Build your moral sense.
 - Learn to judge how the things you’re doing today will affect your goals for the future.
 - Create your own personal rules of behavior and honor.

Before College (“Choosing a School”)

- Prepare for the ACT/SAT and take it until your score represents your true ability.
- Decide what you want from college; try to answer questions like these:
 - “How much do I want to pay?”
 - “How much do I care about prestige?”
 - “Do I like big schools or smaller ones?”
 - “How much should I care about staying close to home or going to college with friends?”
 - “Do I like competing for grades and recognition?”
 - “Am I likely to go to graduate school or straight to work after college?”
 - “What subjects do I want to study?”
- Build your own college “ranking.”
 - Call a department.
 - Study the web site in advance.
 - Test their friendliness.
 - Ask about graduate placement.
 - Visit the campus.
 - Attend a class.
 - Visit with a professor.
 - Walk the campus.
 - Visit the Institute of Religion.
 - Seek spiritual confirmation.

In College

- Always have a career dream.
 - Try to find a career that aligns with things you enjoying thinking about.
 - Aim high and broad at first.
- Always have a major.
 - Don't wait—act as if you know, and seek confirmation as you go.
 - Learn to think like the successful people in your major do.
- Customize your degree.
 - Modify your major “blueprint” to include courses—maybe a whole minor—that will make the major “work.”
 - Be careful about majors with many required hours; be sure that you need them all to meet your career goals.
 - Try to satisfy the requirements for an associate's degree on the way to the bachelor's.
- Find great teachers.
 - Seek out the teachers who challenge and reward their students the most.
 - Pay the price to be mentored.
- Do your best work.
 - Put your studies ahead of extracurricular activities and part-time jobs.
 - Stay ahead of the game by preparing for class and completing assignments before they're due.
 - Always attend class, participate in the discussion, and take good notes.
 - Seek guidance from the course syllabus and the teacher.
- Connect your degree to what comes next.
 - Participate in out-of-class activities related to your career.
 - Do off-campus internships.
- Get all the HSJ skills you can.
 - Take courses that teach analysis skills, people skills, and moral sense.
 - Engage in fieldwork (courses that take you out of the classroom).
 - Think about analysis skills, people skills, and moral sense in all of your studies and activities.