



Welcome!

The Princeton Review and Hispanic Scholarship Fund welcome you to your college admissions journey. From this website you will find links to helpful resources on both PrincetonReview.com and HSF.net that will make this road to college much easier to navigate. We wish you all the luck in fulfilling your dreams



## ***Freshman Year:***

### EARLY START

College may seem far away, but it's not too early to get on the right track.

Challenge yourself academically and aim for high grades. Build your vocabulary by reading newspapers or getting your hands on The Princeton Review's Word Smart book.



## ***Sophomore Year:***

### PSAT PLAYGROUND

The PSAT contains math, critical reading, and writing questions similar to those on the SAT.

Practice makes perfect, so give the test a try this year. Your scores don't count, but you'll become familiar with the exam.

Go to [PrincetonReview.com/college/testprep](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/testprep) for free tips about how to prep for the PSAT.



## *Junior Year:*

### SATTOWN

Some colleges require you to take one to three SAT Subject Tests (usually including math). These one-hour tests are also offered in other subjects including biology, chemistry, physics, and many foreign languages. It's a good idea to take some of the Subject Tests (for example, the sciences) immediately after you've taken the subject in school. Plus, you'll get the test out of the way. Enhance the skills you need to maintain a high GPA and maximize your SAT or ACT scores by preparing now. To learn more, visit [PrincetonReview.com/college/testprep](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/testprep).

### STATE TESTS SPEEDWAY



You might have to take a state assessment test while you are in high school. Some high schools require that you pass this test in order to graduate or move to the next grade. Ask your guidance counselor if you have to take one. If you're nervous about this test, The Princeton Review will most likely have a book that can help you prepare.

### FINANCE FACTORY

Your family's most recent tax return will form the basis of your financial aid profile. Today, more than 70 percent of students receive some form of financial aid. Start investigating your options for grants and scholarships now by using the online scholarship search at [PrincetonReview.com/college/finance](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/finance).

### NATIONAL MERIT MALL

High PSAT scores in your junior year will qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. To become a finalist, you need great grades, high PSAT scores, and a recommendation from your school.



## COUNSELOR-O-MATIC

Now is the time to use a fun, interactive tool you'll find on PrincetonReview.com, known as Counselor-O-Matic. Enter information about yourself and your preferences in a good school to find your "good match" schools. Then, opt-in to let these schools get in touch with you via e-mail. By using PrincetonReview.com, it's easy to make a connection with the best school for you.

## GOOD GRADE GROVE

Make sure your grades are high this year. When colleges look at your transcripts, they put a heavy emphasis on junior year grades, so put in the extra time. Grades already high? Keep them that way!



### APPLICATION STATION

Searching for a typewriter is not something you should waste your time doing. Fill out your applications online, then print them out and mail them in, or submit them electronically (the way many colleges now prefer). Go to [PrincetonReview.com/college/apply](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/apply) to view and access hundreds of online applications.

## SAT FUEL

Many colleges require the SAT for admissions or to award scholarships. Plan to spend 3-12 weeks preparing for the test. The amount of time needed varies based on your starting scores and the average SAT scores of the colleges you want to attend. Not sure where you're starting? Register for a free practice test at PrincetonReview.com.



### COLLEGE OBSERVATORY

Talk to your counselors, teachers, and mentors who you trust. The better they know you, the more they can help you find the right college and give you good recommendations for getting admitted. Start learning about your school's sources of college information, and start thinking about the various aspects of a college that might be important to you (like location, size, curriculum, campus life, special programs).

## DistSATrict

If you have SAT Subject Tests to take, plan now. You can't take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests on the same day.

## TRAVEL TOWN

Many students take trips (family vacations or something different, like archaeological digs, backpacking, and bicycling tours) during the summer. Our book, *The 500 Best Ways for Teens to Spend the Summer*, is filled with ideas.



## ACT ARCADE

The ACT is an alternative to the SAT for virtually every college in the U.S. Some schools even prefer it to the SAT. The number of students taking the ACT grows by leaps and bounds every year. Even if it's not required for you, consider taking it at least once simply to see how you do. You might find that your ACT score is good enough to get you accepted to your first-choice school.

## SUMMER JOB JETTY

Start looking for a job. Colleges love to see work that involves real thinking, like internships advertising, journalism, law, medicine or government. You might want to pick up a copy of *The Internship Bible* published by The Princeton Review. It's nice to get a job that pays well, but the experience you get through an internship can be invaluable. Be careful of how summer earnings may affect your financial aid status.

## SUMMER SCHOOL ISLAND



Several universities have excellent summer programs. These programs are a fun way to meet lots new people, get a taste of college life, and pick up some credits that could be valuable later on. Visit [PrincetonReview.com/AcademicPrograms](http://PrincetonReview.com/AcademicPrograms) to learn about summer opportunities.

## *Senior Year:*

### INTERVIEW INLET

Set up interviews as early in the summer as possible since it will be harder think they're a good idea. Bring your family along on summer visits. Every college is beautiful and easy going in the summer so you won't learn as much about these schools as you will on fall visits. But take this opportunity to visit the campus and discuss what you are looking for.



### WAITING LIST WHARF

What if your first choice places you on its waiting list? In recent years, schools have been accepting some students from their waiting lists, so don't lose hope. Let the college immediately know that you're still psyched and send an update on your activities.

### COLLEGE ESSAY ESTATE

Have a good time with the essay. Avoid the formulas ("We spent the summer in France and it was really interesting!") and don't be afraid to let your individuality stand out. Before you send out your essays, make sure they are perfect!

### EARLY DECISION BYPASS

More than half of the freshmen at many top schools applied Early Decision or Early Action. You should too, if you know where you want to go and you're reasonably happy with your grades and test scores. Apply early to your first-choice school by November 1, and you may be finished with your journey by mid-December. What's the catch? If you go Early Decision, you're committing yourself—if you're accepted, you're going there. Early Action doesn't have such strict rules, but fewer schools offer it.

### COLLEGE VISIT CROSSROADS



Visit your favorite college with a friend and stay the night. (If you don't know anyone at the college, call the school well before you go and ask the admissions office to put you up with a student.) Look beyond the nice classrooms and the big library. Hang out with the students and you'll get a good sense of whether a school is right for you. To learn more about the college visit, check out our book *Visiting College Campuses*.

### RECOMMENDATION RANCH

It's time to ask your teachers for recommendations. Which teachers? The ones who know you well and like your work. By the way, don't just hand these teachers a form; talk to them about the things that you enjoy and at which you excel.



### EXTRACURRICULAR BACKROADS

Don't clutter your year with a lot of useless extracurricular because you think that the colleges want to see them. Colleges would much rather see you focus on a few worthwhile activities than divide your time among lots of them.



### SAT, ACT, SAT SUBJECT TESTS TOWN

If you're happy with your previous SAT or ACT scores, skip the fall test altogether. If you think you can do better, consider taking the SAT or ACT again in October or November of your senior year (prep begins in late August). If you still need to take any SAT Subject Tests, now's the time.

### FAFSA FREEWAY

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available from your guidance counselor or by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID or visiting [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov). Go to the Financial Center at [PrincetonReview.com/college/finance](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/finance) to learn how to complete this form and get the most money in financial aid.

### FOUL-UP FOREST

Want to jeopardize your chances of getting into a school where you'll be happy? Then procrastinate. Shoo-in candidates can ruin their chances for admission by sending things in late. Don't get neurotic, but stay on top of things. Let your recommenders know your deadlines, and make sure you've given your counselor everything he or she needs to send along with your transcripts.

### ROLLING ADMISSIONS AIRPORT

Don't put rolling admissions applications on the back burner. Some colleges admit applicants on a continuous basis. At these schools, the earlier you apply, the more spaces there are available.

### LAKE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Basically, you've been camping out by the mailbox keeping your fingers crossed for fat envelopes or long e-mails. Some colleges are going to accept you. Some won't. Don't take it as a personal insult. Compare college financial aid offers as part of your decision process.

Inquire about grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. If you need help check out [PrincetonReview.com/college/finance](http://PrincetonReview.com/college/finance). If your family's status has changed in any way that might affect your aid package (for instance, a job change by one of your parent), be sure to let the colleges know.



## DECISION DEPOT

After a brief moment of exhilaration, you may panic when called on to choose among the colleges that have accepted you.

Return your signed acceptance letter and student and parent loan applications to your college. You'll also probably need to place a deposit now.

Don't forget to thank your recommenders and to tell them where you'll be going to school. We'll see you in three years (when it's time to think about grad school).

Good luck!

