

College Planning: 9th/10th Grade

There are some steps you can take as a ninth- and a 10th-grader to make sure you're on the right track for college. This list will help you navigate the college planning process:

9TH GRADE

- Create a four-year high school plan.** Think about what you'd like to accomplish in the next four years.
 - Make sure you know which high school courses are required by colleges, and that you're taking the right classes as early as the ninth grade. You can ask your counselor about what those "right" classes are.
 - Get to know the levels of courses offered by your school.
- Start thinking about your life after school,** including the types of jobs that might interest you. Of course, these will change — often — but it's good to start thinking about the possibilities.
 - Identify your interests — likes and dislikes — not just in classes but also in every area. This will help you focus on your goals.
 - Talk to other people, such as your school counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc., about careers you might find interesting.
- Meet with your high school counselor.** Your counselor knows how to help you get the most out of high school. Be sure to take some time during the school year to discuss post-high-school plans with him or her.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.** Academics aren't everything. Explore your interest in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.
 - Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity instead of a loose connection to several.
 - If you're interested in playing sports in college, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find the specifics at ncaaclearinghouse.net.
- Save for college.** It's not too late to put money aside for college. Every little bit helps! Learning about financial aid early on can also help you down the road.
- Explore summer opportunities.** Look for a job, internship, or volunteer position that will help you learn about a field of interest.
- Get familiar with the PSAT-related assessments and SAT®.** Most four-year colleges consider applicants' scores on college admission test. Download the free [Daily Practice for the New SAT](#) app to get a feel for the kinds of questions you might face on test day.
- Take the PSAT™ 8/9.** If your school offers it, sign up to take the first of the College Board assessments to set a baseline. This test will help you build up your skills to take the SAT in 11th or 12th grade.

10TH GRADE

- Meet with your high school counselor — again.** Be sure to meet with your school counselor to ensure that your course schedule is challenging enough to prepare you for college.
 - Check into any prerequisites for advanced-level junior- and senior-year courses.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT® or PSAT™ 10.** Depending on your school, you might have the opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT in October or the PSAT 10 in February or March. It provides valuable feedback on your college readiness and a free, personalized plan to help you start getting ready for the SAT — and for college.
- Ask if the PSAT/NMSQT is offered to 10th-graders.** Although this test is usually given in the 11th grade, it is also often offered in the 10th grade. That's because it provides valuable feedback through the Student Score Report. You can then work on any of your academic weaknesses while there is still plenty of time to make improvements.
- Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy?** If so, you should request a precandidate questionnaire.
- Along with your family, do some research about how to obtain financial aid.** Many students use financial aid to cover college costs. Find out what financial aid is, where it comes from, and how you can apply for it. Read the U.S. Department of Education's *Funding Your Education* (about federal aid programs).
- Attend college and career fairs.** The fairs often take place in the fall at your school or in your area.
- Participate in school activities or volunteer efforts.** Extracurricular activities can help you develop time-management skills and enrich your high school experience.
- Talk to your counselor** about your plans for life after high school. He or she can help you plan your schedule, search for colleges, and navigate the financial aid process. The more your counselor knows about you, the more he or she can help you along the way.
- Tour college campuses.** If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges and see what they're like. Even if you have no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.

Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org for more information.

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Make a College Plan in Five Simple Steps

bigfuture.org/make-a-plan

1 Visit bigfuture.org and choose "Make a Plan."

2 Answer a few simple questions about you.

Start by answering what grade you are in. Answer as few as one or as many as five questions to create your plan. The more you answer, the more customized your plan.

3 You've got a plan! Choose an activity to complete.

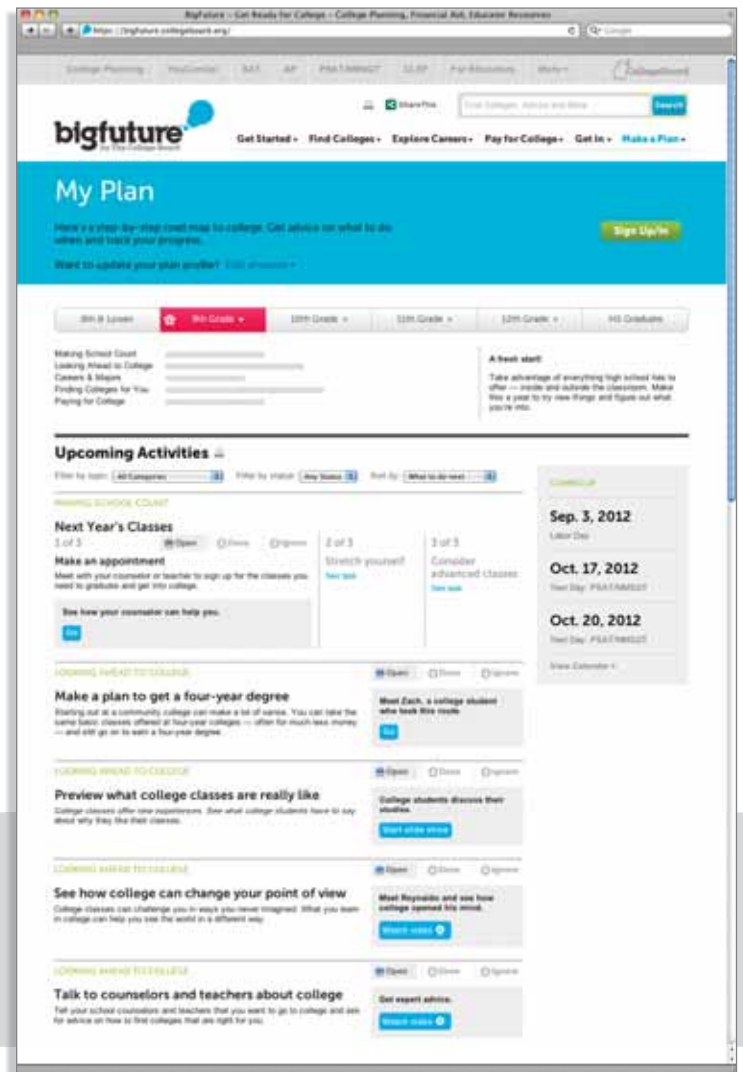
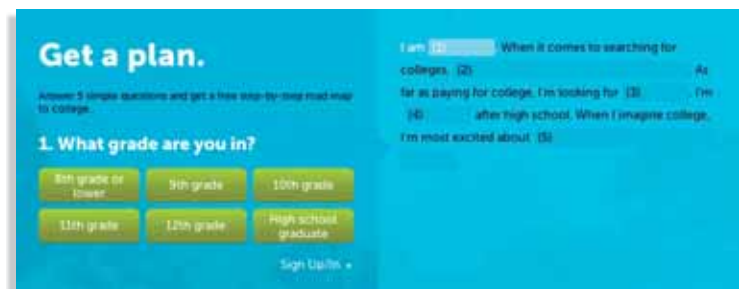
Your plan includes activities and steps to get ready for college—choose one to get started. Want to see more options? Page through your list of activities or sort them by topic. You'll find resources, advice, and student perspectives all along the way to guide you.

4 Track and share your progress.

Click "done" after completing an activity to update your plan and track your progress. Then share with your counselor and family. Want to peek at what's coming up next? Use the top menu to browse through other seasons or grade levels.

5 Save your plan.

Use your College Board login to save your plan and access it—and other saved information like your favorite colleges—at any time from the "My Organizer" taskbar at the bottom of every page.



BigFuture is a FREE comprehensive website that improves the college planning process.

Get a FREE step-by-step road map to college.

- Know what to do and when
- Get tools and advice to help you get it done
- Track your progress

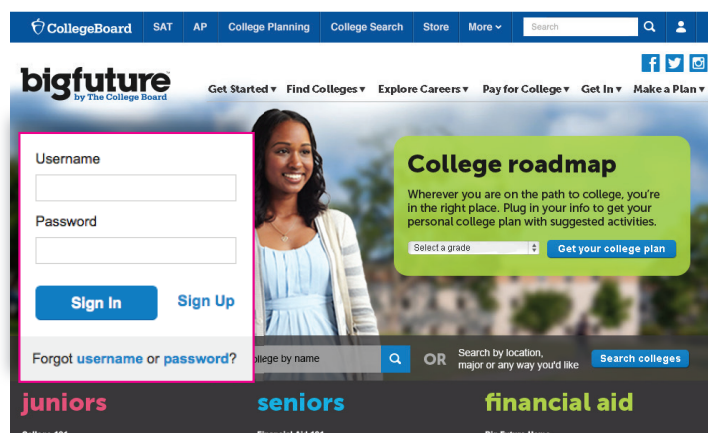
Visit **bigfuture.org** to find your path to college.

How to Build a College List

The next step in your academic career is deciding where to apply to and attend college. By applying to a range of colleges, you can expand your opportunities and increase your likelihood of success. We can help.

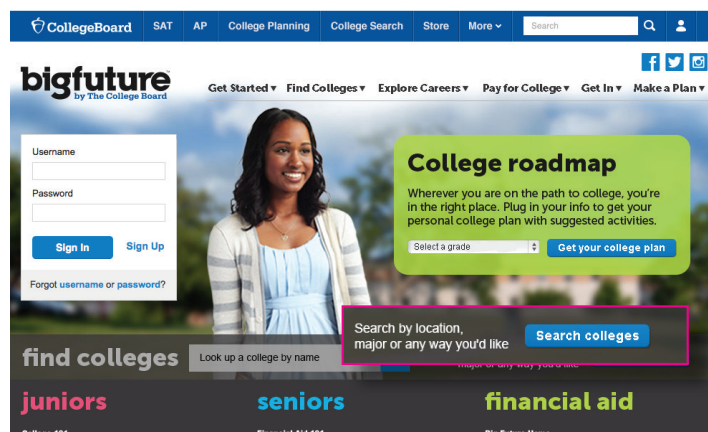
1 CREATE A FREE COLLEGE BOARD ACCOUNT

Visit bigfuture.org and sign up for an account. You can register for exams, get test scores, find colleges, and learn about financial aid and more with this account.



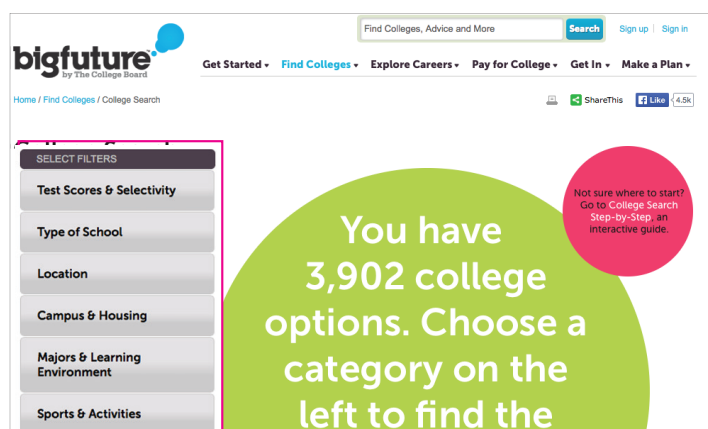
2 CLICK ON SEARCH COLLEGES

There's no magic formula for choosing a college. Use this tool to find the right colleges for you. Search by type, size, location, majors, cost, and more.



3 CHOOSE A FILTER TO GET STARTED

Start with one that's important to you — from type of school, test scores, location, majors, cost/ financial aid, sports, or any other popular category.



4 SELECT YOUR PREFERENCES AND GET GUIDANCE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Review your options and answer the questions. You'll get tips and advice as well as videos from college planning experts and college students to help you understand your choices.

The screenshot shows a 'Type of School' filter window. On the left is a sidebar with 'SELECT FILTERS' and categories: Test Scores & Selectivity, Type of School (selected), Location, Campus & Housing, Majors & Learning Environment, Sports & Activities, Academic Credit, Paying, Support Services, and Diversity. The main area has sections for: 2-Year or 4-Year (radio buttons for 2-year/community college and 4-year college or university), Public or Private (radio buttons for Public, Private, For-Profit), School Size (radio buttons for Small <2,000, Medium 2,000-15,000, Large >15,000), Single-sex or Coed (radio buttons for CO ED, All Women, All Men), and Religious Affiliation (a dropdown menu). A tip box says: 'TIP: Skip any questions that you don't care about.' A 'CLOSE AND SEE RESULTS' button is in the top right.

5 GET INSTANT COLLEGE MATCHES

As you make your selections, the number of matches is updated. The more options you select, the more refined your list of matches, which appears behind the question window, becomes. Your preferences are summarized to the left of your list, so you always know what you're searching.

The screenshot shows a grid of college search results. On the left is the same 'SELECT FILTERS' sidebar as in step 4. The grid contains eight college cards, each with a 100% match badge. The colleges are: Abilene Christian University (Abilene, TX), Academy of Coutu Art (Beverly Hills, CA), Adelphi University (Garden City, NY), Adrian College (Adrian, MI), Adventist University of Health Sciences (Orlando, FL), AIB College of Business (Des Moines, IA), Alaska Bible College (Palmer, AK), and Alaska Pacific University (Anchorage, AK). Each card includes the college logo, name, location, and a note: '* College Application Fee Waiver Available'. A 'Print results' button is in the top right.

6 PRIORITIZE YOUR PREFERENCES

Start with the preferences that are important to you — from type of school, test scores, location, majors, cost/financial aid, sports, or any other popular category.

This screenshot is similar to the previous one, but with a 'Type of School' filter overlay on the left. The overlay shows '4-year school' selected with a slider set to 'Must have'. Other options like 'Private' and 'Coed' are also visible with sliders. The grid of college results remains the same.

7 CHOOSE A COLLEGE TO EXPLORE

Click on a college to learn more about the school. On the "At a Glance" page, you'll get an overview of the school and a map showing its location. The box to the right shows you whether the college matches your college preferences. If there's a check mark, the college matches.

The screenshot shows the 'Adelphi University' 'At a Glance' page. The header includes the college name and location (Garden City, NY), along with buttons for 'Add to My College List', 'See if you're on track', 'Compare colleges', and 'Print complete college profile'. A large image of a campus building is featured. On the left is a sidebar with categories: At a Glance, Deadlines, Majors & Learning Environment, Campus Life, Applying, Paying, For Transfer Students, and For International Students. On the right, a 'Are you on track?' section shows a checkmark and a 'Go to Academic Tracker' button. Below that, a 'Does this college have what you want and need?' section lists 'MY MUST-HAVES' (4-year school, Private, Coed) with checkmarks, and 'MY WANTS' (empty). A descriptive paragraph states: 'A medium-sized, 4-year, private university. This coed college is located in a large town in a suburban setting and is primarily a commuter campus. It offers associate, bachelor's, master's'.

8 GET MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Browse the topics on the left menu — such as “Majors & Learning Environment,” “Paying,” or “Campus Life.” Tabs within each section offer even more specific information.

At a Glance Medium-sized school

- Total undergraduates: 5,040
- First-time degree-seeking freshmen: 918
- Degree-seeking undergrads: 5,000
- Graduate enrollment: 2,605

Deadlines

Majors & Learning Environment

Campus Life

Applying

Paying

For Transfer Students

For International Students

MORE TO EXPLORE

Students who viewed this college also viewed these:

[See similar colleges](#)

Geographic Location

20 miles from New York City.

Unique Facilities

speech and hearing center, science library, observatory, arboretum, Center for Health Innovation

Commuter Campus
Suburban Setting
Large Town

Student Body | Housing | Activities | Sports | Support Service

Visiting a college can give you a feel for life on campus.

Many students say that a college's size, location and campus "personality" were major factors in their final choice. A college's student body is an important part of that equation. Ask yourself these questions: Are you interested in being part of a diverse community with people from many different backgrounds? Do you want to be around students who are interested in sports, studying, politics or something else?

Average Age

23
All students

Race/Ethnicity

53% White
4% Non-Resident Alien
2% Two or more races

9 SEE IF YOU'RE ACADEMICALLY ON TRACK FOR THE COLLEGE

Click on the “Applying” section and the “Academics” tab there. It shows the high school course work required by this college. Enter how many years of each subject you’ve taken, and the chart will instantly update to show if you’re academically on track or need to adjust your plan. Also in the “Applying” section, you can see how your grades, class rank, and test scores stack up to those of students accepted at this school.

Campus Life

Applying

Paying

For Transfer Students

For International Students

MORE TO EXPLORE

Students who viewed this college also viewed these:

[See similar colleges](#)

Decision & Early Action

Plans available

Admitted early decision: --

Applied early action: 2,554

Admitted early action: 2,084

Admission stats are based on first-time, degree seeking freshmen from Fall 2013.

Somewhat selective 68% of applicants admitted

What's Important? | Application Requirement | **Academics & GPA** | SAT & ACT Scores | AP | CLEP

Years of High School Classes

A note from the college:
3.0 cumulative GPA, and combined critical reading, math and writing SAT score of 1500 or higher very important. Rank in top third of class, school and community activities, references also important.

ARE YOU ON TRACK?

How many years of these high school classes have

Years	1	2	3	4
Years				

\$340*

Paper/Online

* Paper and online application fee may be waived for applicants with financial need

[Go to Online Application](#)

[Request Information](#)

[Fee Waiver Information](#)

10 ADD THE COLLEGE TO YOUR FAVORITES LIST

Click the “Add to My College List” button located next to the college name.

Adelphi University

Garden City, NY

[+ Add to My College List](#) [See if you're on track](#) [Compare colleges](#) [Print complete college profile](#)

At a Glance

Deadlines

Majors & Learning Environment

Campus Life

Applying

Paying

For Transfer Students

For International Students

MORE TO EXPLORE

Students who viewed this college also viewed these:

[See similar colleges](#)

Are you on track?

See if you're set to meet this college's requirements — and how you can get there.

[Go to Academic Tracker](#)

Does this college have what you want and need?

MY MUST-HAVES

- ✓ 4-year school
- ✓ Private
- ✓ Coed

MY WANTS

A medium-sized, 4-year, private university. This coed college is located in a large town in a suburban setting and is primarily a commuter campus. It offers associate, bachelor's, master's

Be sure to apply to at least four colleges.

Why Apply to 4 or More™?

1

It can save you money

Every college offers different scholarships and financial aid packages that can help you pay for college. Apply to at least four colleges so that you can compare and determine which is the best option for you.

2

It increases your odds of getting in

If you apply to only one or two colleges, you risk not getting into either school. If you apply to at least four, you have a much better chance of being admitted.

3

A good fit makes a difference

Students who apply to at least four colleges increase their chances of finding a good academic, social, and financial fit. And a good fit matters because it will influence your overall college experience.

**Don't forget that the FAFSA opens Oct. 1.
You'll need to complete this form to apply for financial aid.**

Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org for more information.

 [MyBigFuture](#)  [@MyBigFuture](#)  [@CollegeBoard](#)

Financial Aid Checklist

College is usually more affordable than many families think, thanks to financial aid. The checklists below offer a step-by-step guide to help you navigate the financial aid process and get the most money possible for college.

FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Find out how financial aid can help you afford college.** You might be surprised by how affordable a college education can be. Check out [7 Things You Need to Know About Financial Aid](#).
- Learn the basics of college costs.** Besides tuition, what expenses do college students have to cover? Find out by reading [Quick Guide: College Costs](#).
- Get an idea of what college might really cost you.** Check out [9 Things You Need to Know About Net Price](#) to learn why you may not have to pay the full published price of a college. Then pick a college you're interested in and go to [College Search](#) to find its profile. Click the Calculate Your Net Price button to see that college's estimated net price for you — the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you might receive. Save the data you enter, when possible, so you can recompute the net price as college gets closer.
- Talk to your family about ways to pay for college.** Discuss the options and share ideas about how your family might pay for it.
- Save money for college.** Bank part of your birthday money, your allowance, or your earnings from chores or an after-school job for future college expenses. Even a small amount can be a big help when you're buying textbooks and school supplies later on.
- Challenge yourself inside the classroom.** Good grades not only expand your college opportunities but also can help you pay for college. Some grants and scholarships — money you don't have to pay back — are awarded based on academic performance.
- Get involved in activities you like.** Your activities outside the classroom — like playing sports, volunteering, and participating in clubs — can lead to scholarships that will help you afford college.

Notes:

Create a Solid Academic Portfolio

Your course schedule may seem like a random selection of classes to you, but college admission officers see it as the blueprint of your high school education. They're looking for a solid foundation of learning that you can build on in college.

Take at least five solid academic classes every semester. The following subjects and classes are standard fare for success in high school and beyond, whether you plan to attend a four-year, two-year or technical school.

English (Language Arts)

Take English every year. Traditional courses such as American and English literature help you improve your writing skills, reading comprehension and vocabulary.

- Literature
- Writing/composition and/or speech

Math

In college math classes and in most careers, you need algebra and geometry. Take them early on, and you'll be able to enroll in advanced science and math in high school — and you'll show colleges you're ready for higher-level work.

- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Trigonometry and/or calculus

Science

Science teaches you to think analytically and apply theories to observations of the natural world. Laboratory classes let you test what you've learned through hands-on work. Six semesters are recommended.

- Biology
- Chemistry and/or physics
- Earth/space sciences, advanced biology, advanced chemistry or physics

Social Studies

Understand local and world events that are happening now by studying the culture and history that have shaped them. Social sciences round out your core curriculum.

- Two semesters of U.S. history
- One semester of U.S. government
- One semester of economics
- One semester of world history or geography
- One additional semester of these or other areas

Foreign Languages

Solid foreign language study shows colleges you're willing to stretch beyond the basics. Many colleges require at least two years of foreign language study, and some prefer more.

The Arts

Research indicates that students who participate in the arts often do better in school and on standardized tests. The arts help you recognize patterns, discern differences and similarities, and exercise your mind in unique ways, often outside of a traditional classroom setting.

Computer Courses

More and more college courses and jobs require at least a basic knowledge of computers. Computer skills also can help you do research and schoolwork better and faster.

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit BigFuture.org.

Source: The College Board.

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