

I am the

One

who's going to plan for my future



A COLLEGE PLANNER

[i-am-the-one.com](http://i-am-the-one.com)

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE  
STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA.**

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to start thinking about college

Sure, it might be years away. But the thing is, if you plan to go to college after high school, you'll need the grades, the classes, and the funding to do it. And you can do it – you just need to do some planning along the way, starting now.

There are a lot of people out there to help you. Your school counselor is a huge resource. He or she can give you advice on your future any time. They know all about what classes and tests you'll need to take, and they can help you sort out financing, too.

When it comes to getting to college, every school year is important. The decisions you make and the effort you put into school will have a major impact on your next steps. This planner has been developed to help you and your family find information on how to meet high school requirements, research careers, and investigate colleges and universities. Use it to plan your future. Consider this one of the most important books you own. Take some time to review this guide and keep it visible throughout the school year.

Because when it comes to being the person you want to be, there's one person who can make that happen: You.

# How to take OWNERSHIP



## of your future

You really are in control of your whole future. You can take personal responsibility for your learning by setting goals, checking your progress toward reaching those goals, and sticking to the high standards that you and others set.

You'll want to communicate with your teachers. This means talking, listening, and participating in class. If you have questions, find a way to ask, whether it is during class, before or after class, or by e-mail.

And it's really important to stay organized, now and through your whole high school career. Have a separate notebook or folder for each class. Use your student agenda or other assignment notebook. Keep up with assignments, due dates, and phone numbers of classmates. If you're having trouble figuring out a system for staying organized, ask a student who always seems to have it together.

### Most Common High School Mistakes

- Pretending to be something you are not (or pretending to be the same as everyone else).
- Not getting involved in student activities.
- Missing a day and not making up work.
- Being disorganized.
- Missing deadlines.
- Following the crowd.
- Letting peer pressure get you in trouble.
- Fighting instead of working out your problems.

### Tips for Parents

(from *How to Get the Most Out of High School* by Linda O'Brien)

- Be interested in your child's school experience.
- Discuss your child's classes and set goals.
- Offer help to your child.
- Listen to your child.
- Encourage your child to get involved in school.
- Monitor your child's activities and jobs.

### Advanced Placement Tests

Colleges and universities have varying policies about awarding credit for advanced placement. Scores of 3, 4, or 5 on the 1–5 AP® grading scale may be considered. More than 3,000 U.S. colleges award placement, credit, or both for qualifying scores on an AP Exam.

### What's the difference between credit and placement?

Some colleges award credit for qualifying AP Exam scores. This means that you actually earn points toward your college degree. Other colleges award placement. This means that when you're in college, you can skip introductory courses and move on to higher-level classes.

### Can you earn college credit or placement just by taking the AP course?

Colleges and universities give credit or placement only for qualifying AP scores, not AP course grades. Without a corresponding AP Exam score, they cannot verify that the AP courses you take are true college-level courses.

**IF YOU HAVE  
QUESTIONS, FIND A  
WAY TO ASK, WHETHER IT  
IS DURING CLASS, BEFORE  
OR AFTER CLASS,  
OR BY E-MAIL.**



### What can I do with college credit or placement?

College credit or placement can allow you to move into upper-level courses sooner, pursue a double major or a combined bachelor's/master's degree program, gain time to study and travel abroad, and complete your undergraduate degree in fewer than four years.

You can receive credit for equivalent courses worth thousands of dollars at colleges and universities – you could save as much as \$3,000 per course.

### Why should I take the AP Exam if I'm not looking to earn credit or placement?

- The AP Exams provide colleges and universities with additional information about your ability to succeed in college-level study.
- Some scholarship awards consider AP Exam scores.
- Many colleges use AP Exam scores to place students in honors classes.
- The AP Exam gives you a clear understanding of what you need to succeed on a college exam.

# The courses you need TO TAKE



These are the classes that must be taken in high school to meet the state graduation requirements for the standard diploma or advanced studies diploma. Your school might have additional requirements, so be sure to check with your counselor or teachers.

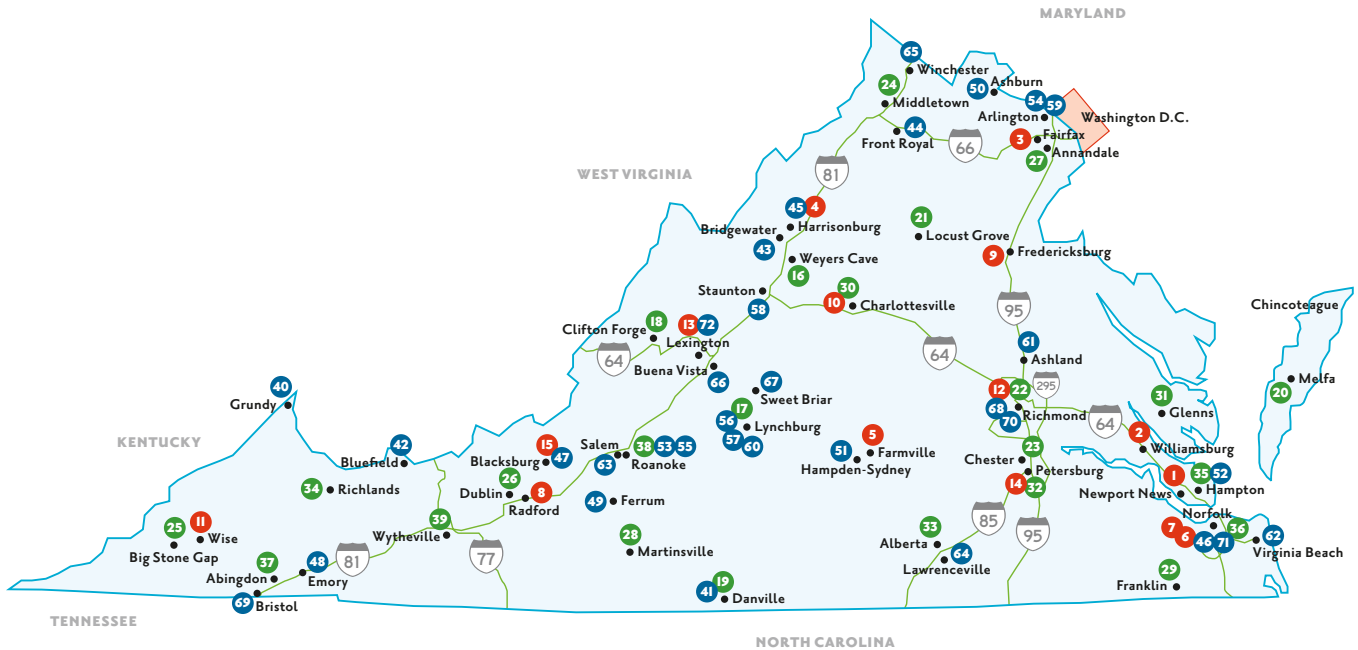
Additional guidelines for these requirements are available from the Virginia Department of Education website [www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov). Look under Graduation Requirements. **Your school counselor or career coach can tell you which courses are offered by your school and any additional requirements needed to obtain your diploma.**

STANDARD DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS (8 VAC 20-131-50.B)				
Discipline Area	Standard Credits Effective with ninth grade classes of 2003 – 04 through 2009 – 10	Standard Credits Revised Standard Diploma Effective with ninth graders in 2010 – 11	Verified Credits Effective for ninth graders:	
			2000 – 01 through 2002 – 03	2003 – 04 and beyond
English	4	4	2	2
Mathematics	3	3		1
Laboratory Science	3	3		1
History & Social Sciences	3	3		1
Health & Physical Education	2	2		
Fine Arts or Career & Tech Education	1			
Foreign Language, Fine Arts, or Career & Technical Education		2		
Economics and Personal Finance		1		
Electives	6	4		
Student-Selected Test			4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA COURSE REQUIREMENTS (8 VAC 20-131-50.C)			
Discipline Area	Standard Credits Effective with ninth grade classes of 2003 – 04 through 2009 – 10	Standard Credits Revised Advanced Studies Diploma Effective with ninth graders in 2010 – 11	Verified Credits Effective for ninth graders in 2000 – 01 and later
English	4	4	2
Mathematics	4	4	2
Laboratory Science	4	4	2
History & Social Sciences	4	4	2
Foreign Languages	3	3	
Health & Physical Education	2	2	
Fine Arts or Career & Tech Education	1	1	
Economics and Personal Finance		1	
Electives	2	3	
Student-Selected Test			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>

A **standard unit of credit** is awarded for a course in which the student successfully completes the objectives of the course and the equivalent of 140 clock hours of instruction. A **verified unit of credit** is awarded for a course in which the student earns a standard unit of credit and achieves a passing score on a corresponding end-of-course SOL test or a substitute assessment approved by the Board of Education.

# Colleges and universities IN VIRGINIA



## Start checking out Virginia's universities

Virginia is a great place to go to college. Our state has a lot of highly ranked schools, tuitions are pretty reasonable, and the campuses are beautiful! Maybe our schools are great because we've had so much practice. The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg was founded in 1693, and it was the alma mater of several presidents, including Thomas Jefferson. Plus, Thomas Jefferson actually designed the University of Virginia. Today, you'll find a whole range of schools in Virginia, from city-based universities to classic college campuses and everything in between. Use the links below to start exploring!

### PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR SCHOOLS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY, NEWPORT NEWS<br/><a href="http://www.cnu.edu">www.cnu.edu</a></p> <p><b>2</b> COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY, WILLIAMSBURG<br/><a href="http://www.wm.edu">www.wm.edu</a></p> <p><b>3</b> GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, FAIRFAX<br/><a href="http://www.gmu.edu">www.gmu.edu</a></p> <p><b>4</b> JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY, HARRISONBURG<br/><a href="http://www.jmu.edu">www.jmu.edu</a></p> <p><b>5</b> LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY, FARMVILLE<br/><a href="http://www.longwood.edu">www.longwood.edu</a></p> <p><b>6</b> NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY, NORFOLK<br/><a href="http://www.nsu.edu">www.nsu.edu</a></p> <p><b>7</b> OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY, NORFOLK<br/><a href="http://www.odu.edu">www.odu.edu</a></p> | <p><b>8</b> RADFORD UNIVERSITY, RADFORD<br/><a href="http://www.radford.edu">www.radford.edu</a></p> <p><b>9</b> UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON, FREDERICKSBURG<br/><a href="http://www.umw.edu">www.umw.edu</a></p> <p><b>10</b> UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, CHARLOTTESVILLE<br/><a href="http://www.virginia.edu">www.virginia.edu</a></p> <p><b>11</b> UVA'S COLLEGE AT WISE, WISE<br/><a href="http://www.wise.virginia.edu">www.wise.virginia.edu</a></p> <p><b>12</b> VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY, RICHMOND<br/><a href="http://www.vcu.edu">www.vcu.edu</a></p> <p><b>13</b> VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE, LEXINGTON<br/><a href="http://www.vmi.edu">www.vmi.edu</a></p> <p><b>14</b> VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY, PETERSBURG<br/><a href="http://www.vsu.edu">www.vsu.edu</a></p> <p><b>15</b> VIRGINIA TECH, BLACKSBURG<br/><a href="http://www.vt.edu">www.vt.edu</a></p> |
|---|---|

Some schools have multiple campuses. Please check school websites for additional listings.

## PUBLIC TWO-YEAR SCHOOLS

- 16 BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WEYERS CAVE  
www.brcc.edu
- 17 CENTRAL VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, LYNCHBURG  
www.cvcc.vccs.edu
- 18 DABNEY S. LANCASTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CLIFTON FORGE  
www.dslcc.vccs.edu
- 19 DANVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, DANVILLE  
www.dcc.vccs.edu
- 20 EASTERN SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MELFA  
www.es.vccs.edu
- 21 GERMANNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, LOCUST GROVE  
www.germannna.edu
- 22 J. SARGEANT REYNOLDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, RICHMOND  
www.jsr.vccs.edu
- 23 JOHN TYLER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CHESTER  
www.jtcc.edu
- 24 LORD FAIRFAX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN  
www.lfcc.edu
- 25 MOUNTAIN EMPIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, BIG STONE GAP  
www.me.vccs.edu
- 26 NEW RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN  
www.nr.vccs.edu
- 27 NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ANNANDALE  
www.nvcc.edu
- 28 PATRICK HENRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MARTINSVILLE  
www.ph.vccs.edu
- 29 PAUL D. CAMP COMMUNITY COLLEGE, FRANKLIN  
www.pdc.edu
- 30 PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE,  
CHARLOTTESVILLE  
www.pvcc.edu
- 31 RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE, GLENNS  
www.rcc.vccs.edu
- 32 RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE, PETERSBURG  
www.rbc.edu
- 33 SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ALBERTA  
www.sv.vccs.edu
- 34 SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, RICHLANDS  
www.sw.vccs.edu
- 35 THOMAS NELSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, HAMPTON  
www.tncc.edu
- 36 TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NORFOLK  
www.tcc.edu
- 37 VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ABINGDON  
www.vhcc.edu
- 38 VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, ROANOKE  
www.virginiawestern.edu
- 39 WYTHEVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WYTHEVILLE  
www.wcc.vccs.edu

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE VIRGINIA TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

- 40 APPALACHIAN SCHOOL OF LAW, GRUNDY  
www.asl.edu
- 41 AVERETT UNIVERSITY, DANVILLE  
www.averett.edu
- 42 BLUEFIELD COLLEGE, BLUEFIELD  
www.bluefield.edu
- 43 BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE, BRIDGEWATER  
www.bridgewater.edu

- 44 CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE, FRONT ROYAL  
www.christendom.edu
- 45 EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY, HARRISONBURG  
www.emu.edu
- 46 EASTERN VIRGINIA MEDICAL SCHOOL, NORFOLK  
www.evms.edu
- 47 EDWARD VIA VIRGINIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE,  
BLACKSBURG  
www.vcom.vt.edu
- 48 EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE, EMORY  
www.ehc.edu
- 49 FERRUM COLLEGE, FERRUM  
www.ferrum.edu
- 50 GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (VA CAMPUS ONLY),  
ASHBURN  
www.gwvirginia.gwu.edu
- 51 HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE, HAMPDEN-SYDNEY  
www.hsc.edu
- 52 HAMPTON UNIVERSITY, HAMPTON  
www.hamptonu.edu
- 53 HOLLINS UNIVERSITY, ROANOKE  
www.hollins.edu
- 54 INSTITUTE FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES, ARLINGTON  
www.ipsciences.edu
- 55 JEFFERSON COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES, ROANOKE  
www.jchs.edu
- 56 LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, LYNCHBURG  
www.liberty.edu
- 57 LYNCHBURG COLLEGE, LYNCHBURG  
www.lyncburg.edu
- 58 MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE, STAUNTON  
www.mbc.edu
- 59 MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY, ARLINGTON  
www.marymount.edu
- 60 RANDOLPH COLLEGE, LYNCHBURG  
www.randolphcollege.edu
- 61 RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE, ASHLAND  
www.rmc.edu
- 62 REGENT UNIVERSITY, VIRGINIA BEACH  
www.regent.edu
- 63 ROANOKE COLLEGE, SALEM  
www.roanoke.edu
- 64 SAINT PAUL'S COLLEGE, LAWRENCEVILLE  
www.saintpauls.edu
- 65 SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY, WINCHESTER  
www.su.edu
- 66 SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY, BUENA VISTA  
www.svu.edu
- 67 SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE, SWEET BRIAR  
www.sbc.edu
- 68 UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND, RICHMOND  
www.richmond.edu
- 69 VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, BRISTOL  
www.vic.edu
- 70 VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY, RICHMOND  
www.vuu.edu
- 71 VIRGINIA WESLEYAN COLLEGE, NORFOLK  
www.vwc.edu
- 72 WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY, LEXINGTON  
www.wlu.edu

# A mini-course in FINANCIAL AID

Sure, college can cost a lot of money – but that should never stop you from going. By searching for scholarships and grants and applying for aid, you can minimize the cost of school. Here are a few terms you should become familiar with as you start the financial aid process. To learn more, please review our “Make a Plan” section at [i-am-the-one.com](http://i-am-the-one.com).

## FINANCIAL AID DEFINITIONS

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The calculated cost of attending the institution, which includes transportation, room/board, tuition/fees, supplies, books, and other expenses. COA is then used to determine eligibility for financial aid.

**Dependent Student:** For federal student aid purposes, any student who is not an independent student is considered to be dependent. See the definition of “independent student” for a list of qualifying conditions.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The index used to determine how much a family is expected to contribute toward the cost of attendance. Your EFC is calculated based upon the information you provided when filing the FAFSA.

**Federal Gift Aid:** The Pell Grant, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant, and other federal aid, such as grants and scholarships, that need not be repaid to the government.

**Financial Aid Package:** The total amount of financial aid a student is to receive. It may include grant, work-study, and loan funds from a variety of sources, and is assembled by the school’s financial aid office.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** A free application that must be completed by all students and parents who apply for federal student aid.

**Full-Time Student:** Students enrolled for at least 12 credit hours per semester or its equivalent at the undergraduate level and enrolled for at least 9 credit hours per semester or its equivalent at the graduate level.

**Grant:** A type of financial aid based on financial need that the student does not have to repay.

**Independent Student:** A student is considered independent for federal student aid if the student meets one of the following criteria: is age 24 or older, is working toward a master’s or doctorate degree, is married, has legal dependents other than a spouse, is an orphan or ward of the court or is in foster care at any time after they are age 13 or older, is an emancipated minor or is in legal guardianship, is an unaccompanied youth who is homeless, is an unaccompanied self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness, is on active duty, or is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

**Pell Grant:** Federal grant that provides funds based on the student’s financial need. This does not need to be repaid.

**Perkins Loan:** The Perkins Loan allows students to borrow up to \$5,500 per year for undergraduate school and \$8,000 per year for graduate school. The Perkins Loan has one of the lowest interest rates and is awarded by the school’s financial aid office to students with exceptional financial need. The student must have applied for a Pell Grant to be eligible. The interest on the Perkins Loan is subsidized while the student is in school.

**Private Loans:** Education loan programs established by private lenders to supplement the student and parent education loan programs available from federal and state governments.

**Remaining Need:** The amount of need remaining after the estimated family contribution and gift aid is subtracted from cost of attendance.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** The SAR summarizes the information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The SAR provides the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is used to determine whether a student is eligible for a federal Pell Grant and other federal aid.

**Subsidized Loan:** A loan for which the government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school, during the six-month grace period, and during any deferment periods. Subsidized loans are awarded based on financial need.

**Tuition/Fees:** Amount of money charged to students for instructional or other services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

**Unsubsidized Loan:** A loan for which the government does not pay the interest. The borrower is responsible for the interest on an unsubsidized loan from the date the loan is disbursed, even while the student is still in school.

**Work-Study:** A federal program providing undergraduate and graduate students with part-time employment during the school year.

# Your FRESHMAN checklist



- Create your personal résumé file to include:
  - Copies of report cards
  - Diplomas and certificates
  - A list of awards and honors you receive
  - A list of school and community organizations and clubs you join, including dates of participation and any offices you held
  - A list of jobs you have held (volunteer and/or paid)
- Choose courses on the standard or advanced graduation plan. Talk to your counselor for help in choosing those classes.
- Start exploring your interests and possible careers. Talk to adults in a variety of professions to determine what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed for each.
- Understand that grade point average (GPA) counts in ALL subjects, starting NOW.
- Become involved in school- and community-based extracurricular activities and enrichment programs – they look good on college applications.
- Check to see if and when you can take courses that will earn you college credit.

**UPDATE YOUR PERSONAL RÉSUMÉ FILE EACH SEMESTER.**



## NOTES



# Your SOPHOMORE checklist



☐ Take the Preliminary SAT®/National Merit® Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®). You must register early. If you have trouble paying the registration fee, see your school counselor about getting a fee waiver. (The 11th grade PSAT counts toward National Merit Scholar and other honors.)

**MEET WITH  
YOUR SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR.**



- ☐ Meet with your school counselor to make sure you're still on track with your required classes.
- ☐ Talk with older kids about their plans for college. Ask them if they wish they had done anything differently – and learn from them.
- ☐ Keep getting the best grades possible in every class, and join clubs, teams, and organizations.
- ☐ Volunteer in your community. A lot of colleges consider that when you're applying. (Plus, it's a good thing to do!)

**NOTES**



# Your JUNIOR checklist



it's time to get serious about your future

## SEPTEMBER

- Sign up to take the PSAT, even if you already took it last year. Your scores could make a difference when you apply for scholarships.
- Check in with your school counselor to review your class schedule.

## OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT.
- Start researching colleges online.
- Talk to your counselor about different majors and what schools have the best programs in those majors.
- If you're an athlete, visit the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) website at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) and download a free copy of the *NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*. If you don't have Internet access, ask your school counselor to help you get a copy of the guide.
- Meet with college recruiters who come to your school. Go to college fairs and, if you can, start visiting campuses.

## JANUARY

- Sign up for the SAT I and II and/or ACT®.
- See if your school has any resources for studying for the SATs. Some schools offer free prep classes.

## FEBRUARY

- Start researching scholarships and grants.
- Make a schedule of application deadlines.

## MARCH, APRIL, MAY

- Take the SAT I and II and/or ACT. You can take them several times.

## SUMMER

- If possible, visit your target schools, or take their online tours.

## NOTES



# Your SENIOR checklist



it's time to get serious about your future

## SEPTEMBER

- ❑ Keep looking for scholarships and grants!!!
- ❑ Meet with recruiters who are visiting from your target schools.
- ❑ Make a list of your top target schools, including one “reach” school and one safety school. Schedule campus visits by calling the admissions offices of your target schools, and find out about early admission.
- ❑ Meet with your school counselor to review admissions requirements for your college choices and compare to where you are on grades and test scores. If you're not happy with your SAT or ACT scores, register to take the tests again.

## OCTOBER

- ❑ Start applying to colleges!
- ❑ Take your SATs or ACT again if you want to try to get a higher score.
- ❑ Go to college fairs and financial aid information meetings to learn all you can.
- ❑ Have at least two teachers and two extracurricular advisors write recommendations for you.

## NOVEMBER

- ❑ Be sure your references are working on your letters of recommendation.
- ❑ If you want to try for early decision, send your applications in this month.
- ❑ Finish all of your enrollment and scholarship applications.

## DECEMBER

- ❑ Get a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from your school counselor, college financial aid office, or on the web at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Ask your parents to review the application with you and start pulling their financial information together. **DON'T SUBMIT YOUR FAFSA UNTIL AFTER JANUARY 1st!**

## JANUARY

- ❑ Submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st. Don't forget to keep a copy for your records.

## FEBRUARY

- ❑ Submit your FAFSA no later than February 15th! Be sure to keep a copy for your records.
- ❑ Check your college application deadlines – they're getting close!
- ❑ Start applying to schools BEFORE the deadlines.
- ❑ Ask your counselor to send your first-term transcripts to your target schools.

## MARCH

- ❑ Ask your counselor if you should sign up to take Advanced Placement® tests.
- ❑ If you completed the FAFSA, you should be getting your Student Aid Report (SAR). Review it carefully and make any necessary changes. Sign it, make a copy for your records, and send it in to your target schools.
- ❑ Respond ASAP to any requests from colleges and financial aid offices.

## APRIL

- ❑ Make your final decision on a college! Notify the admissions office of your decision. If you've been wait-listed, contact the admissions office to see if there's anything else you can do.
- ❑ If you applied to other schools, contact them to tell them you're going to school elsewhere.
- ❑ Review the financial aid package from your selected college.

## MAY

- ❑ If you don't have all the financial aid you need, consider private loans.
- ❑ Pay required deposit(s) for enrollment and room and board.
- ❑ Take any Advanced Placement exams your college recommends.

## JUNE

- ❑ Ask the admissions and/or financial aid offices if they have everything they need.
- ❑ Ask your school counselor to send your final transcript to your college.

## SUMMER

- ❑ Pre-register for classes if your college offers pre-registration.
- ❑ If possible, attend an orientation session on your new campus.
- ❑ Go to the financial aid office when you arrive on campus to make sure everything is okay.

**GET READY FOR A  
GREAT FUTURE!**

## NOTES





### About the PSAT

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) is also referred to as the PSAT/NMSQT, which stands for Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and National Merit® Scholarship Qualifying Test. Taking the PSAT/NMSQT is an important step in preparing to apply to college. This test can help you in three ways:

- It can be considered a rehearsal for taking the SAT.
- It is used to select students seeking National Merit Scholarships, which are awarded in the spring term of the senior year, and to choose students for the National Achievement® Scholarship Program for outstanding black students.
- You can have your scores reported to colleges interested in students scoring in your range, and you will receive many pamphlets, catalogs, and brochures telling you about those schools.

For more information about the PSAT, including test dates and scoring information, visit the [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), or talk to your counselor.

### The SAT Reasoning Test

Many colleges require the SAT I for admission because it is a standard way of measuring a student's ability to do college-level work. It is used to compare your academic achievements with those of students from different schools. However, you should keep in mind that colleges look at other things when making admission decisions, such as your high school record, essays, recommendations, interviews, and extracurricular activities.

The SAT II Subject Tests measure your skills in specific subjects such as math, history, science, etc. For more information about the SAT, including practice exams and registration guidelines, please visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

### The American College Test (ACT)

The ACT is a national college admission examination with tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Like the SAT, many colleges use the ACT to measure your ability to do college-level work. It also measures how well you apply knowledge. Some students take both the SAT and ACT, but you usually have to take only one or the other.

It is best to check with the colleges you are considering to see if they have a preference or requirement about which test you should take. Most colleges in Virginia will take either or both scores, but it is best to check to be sure.

The ACT is different from the SAT in that you can “prepare” more for the test, meaning you can actually study for the content of the test. For more information about the ACT, including test preparation links, visit the ACT student website at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

Remember to always contact the schools you are interested in to figure out which tests they prefer.

### The COMPASS® Test

The COMPASS placement test is an untimed, computerized test that helps college personnel evaluate your skill levels so they can place you in appropriate college courses. Unlike other tests, you will generally be asked to take this test after you decide to go to a specific school, including most community colleges in Virginia.

COMPASS scores indicate whether you are strong in certain subject areas or if you might need additional help, allowing your advisor to place you in a class suited to your needs. College advisors might ask you to take the COMPASS test in one or more major subject areas, including reading, writing, math, writing essay, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

For more information about the COMPASS, including test-taking tips and sample test questions, go to [www.act.org/compass/student/index.html](http://www.act.org/compass/student/index.html).

## SO WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO COLLEGE?



- 1.** Ka-ching! As a college graduate, you'll earn an average of \$368 more a week than a high school graduate – that's \$20,000 more a year!
- 2.** It pays to stay in school. Over a lifetime, a high school dropout working full-time will earn \$300,000 less than a high school graduate, and more than \$1 million less than a college graduate!
- 3.** You'll have better odds for a better job: A college degree increases your chances of employment by nearly 50%.
- 4.** You'll be getting ahead of the game – it's estimated that by 2014, 90% of the fastest-growing careers will require some level of education beyond high school.
- 5.** Your college degree will continue to grow in value. By the time you're in your 30s, there'll be an estimated 19 million more jobs for educated workers than there are qualified people to fill them.
- 6.** It will benefit you in lots of other ways, such as health insurance and generous retirement plans. Jobs for college graduates typically offer more and better benefits than lower-skill jobs requiring just a high school diploma.
- 7.** You'll be more likely to live the way you've always dreamed. Families with higher levels of education tend to enjoy a better standard of living. With more earning potential, you can also give back to your parents and be in a position to help other members of your family.
- 8.** Pay it forward – if you go to college, statistics show your children and even their children are more likely to go.

### Source:

[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) and [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org)

i-am-the-one.com

# LEARN MORE

## PLANNING AND TESTING

**I am the One**  
[www.i-am-the-one.com](http://www.i-am-the-one.com)

**College Board**  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

**KnowHow2Go**  
[www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org)

**SAT**  
[www.collegeboard.com/testing](http://www.collegeboard.com/testing)

**ACT**  
[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**State Council of Higher Education for Virginia**  
[www.schev.edu](http://www.schev.edu)

Listings of public and private 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, financial aid resources, and more.

**Virginia Department of Education**  
[www.doe.virginia.gov](http://www.doe.virginia.gov)

**U.S. Department of Education**  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

**American Council on Education**  
[www.collegeispossible.org](http://www.collegeispossible.org)

## FINANCIAL AID

**FAFSA**  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

To receive any kind of financial aid you must complete a FAFSA each year.

**FastWeb**  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

**FinAid**  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

## CAREERS

**Virginia Wizard**  
[www.vawizard.org](http://www.vawizard.org)

**i-am-the-one.com**

YOU CAN USE THE  
WEB TO PLAN YOUR  
FUTURE, CHOOSE A  
COLLEGE, AND FIND  
OUT HOW TO PAY  
FOR SCHOOL, TOO.

CHECK OUT THESE  
SITES FOR MORE  
INFORMATION.

