

Top 10 Strategies for Juniors

1. **Stay focused on academics**

Admissions officers believe the academic record is an extremely important factor. Most put a challenging curriculum and strong grades at the top of the list. A rigorous class schedule shows intellectual curiosity, a willingness to challenge yourself and that you are comfortable with hard work.

2. **Build your resume**

All competitive colleges seek to build a diversified and interesting student body. These days, there is a growing preference for involved, high achievers and leaders who also possess a special activity (pursued with passion) that sets them apart from other applicants.

3. **Sign up for separate e-mail account**

You'll often be asked for your e-mail address when you attend college presentations and fairs or register to receive scholarship and school information. A professional looking e-mail address (e.g. first initial, last name, graduation year @...) will help show you are a serious candidate.

4. **Prep for SAT/ACT**

Strong scores not only improve your chances of acceptance, they can also lead to significant scholarship money. The SAT and ACT are very different college entrance exams. Most colleges accept either. Most students have increased their scores significantly with preparation.

5. **Start thinking of recommendations**

Recommendations from your teachers are required when you apply to most colleges and universities. Plan ahead. Begin to consider whom to ask, and how they will support your candidacy.

6. **Read, write and build your vocabulary**

Most college students spend numerous hours reading and writing. Those with well-developed skills have a distinct advantage. Consider reading challenging articles and editorials from the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and/or The Economist.

7. **Attend college fairs and information sessions**

College fairs are a quick and low-cost way (most are free) to check out many schools on the same day and meet representatives without traveling far from home.

8. **Research college majors and careers**

Most young people can benefit from self-assessment tools to help define goals, explore college environments, academic majors and potential careers. Many such tools are available online.

9. **Build your team**

Navigating the road to college can be a daunting experience. There is no need to go at it alone. You will benefit from the advice and support of people you know and trust, such as your college counselor, friends, family, coaches, employers, club advisors, volunteer activity leaders and local alumni. Your college counselor is the key team member. Mrs. Ferrell will

meet with you and your family this year to map out a game plan and make sure you are on the right track.

10. Brainstorm on college and scholarship essays

Some students report a brain freeze when they sit down to write college essays. You can ease the stress when you write about what you know; activities, leadership positions, summer jobs, community service, etc. Colleges look for articulate, well-written, thoughtful essays providing insight into your personality, values and goals.