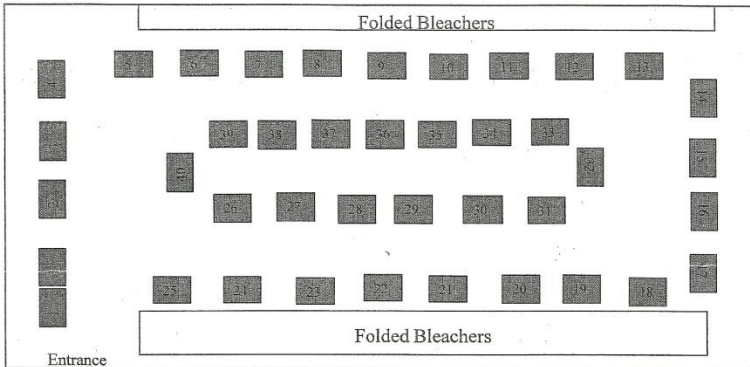


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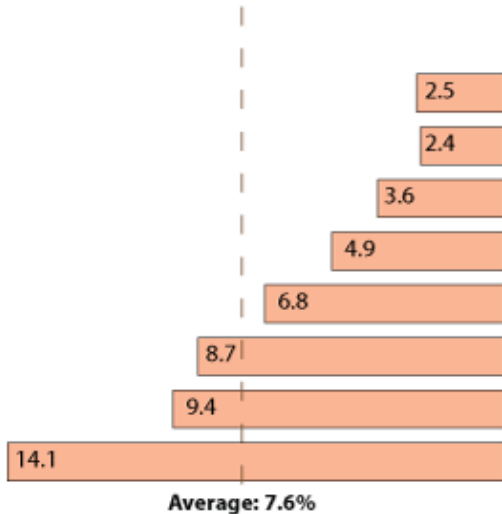
2012 Michigan Tech College Fair



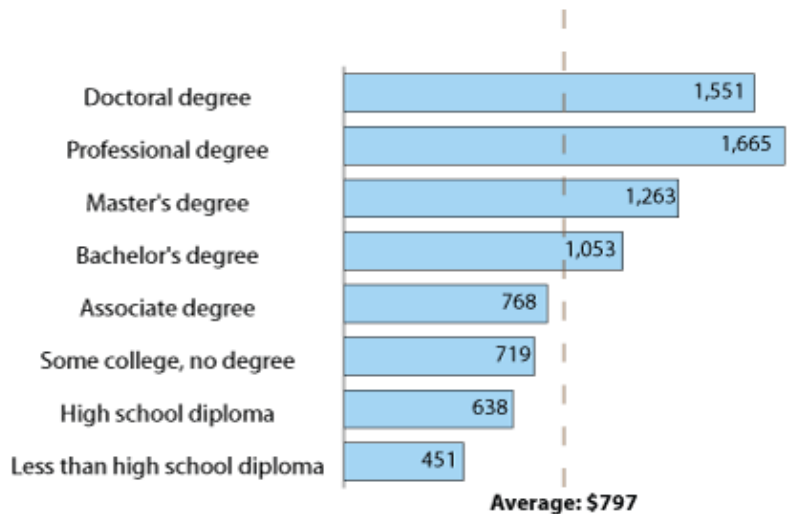
1. Michigan Technological University	26. Oakland University
2. Air Force ROTC	27. Paul Mitchell Cosmetology School
3. Army ROTC	28. Saginaw Valley State University
4. Albion College	29. US Air Force Academy
5. Alma College	30. University of Michigan - Flint
6. Art Institutes	31. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
7. Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts	32. University of Minnesota - Duluth
8. Cardinal Stritch University	33. University of Wisconsin - Green Bay
9. Central Michigan University	34. University of Wisconsin - LaCrosse
10. Concordia University	35. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
11. Ferris State University	36. University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
12. Finlandia University	37. University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
13. Gogebic Community College	38. University of Wisconsin - Superior
14. Grand Valley State University	39. Western Michigan University
15. Great Lakes Christian College	40. WMU-College of Engineering/Applied Sciences
16. Kendall College of Art and Design	
17. Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa C C	
18. Lake Superior State University	
19. Lakeland College	
20. Lawrence Technological University	
21. Marian University	
22. Michigan State University	
23. Northern Michigan University	
24. Northland College	
25. Northwood University	

Education Pays

Unemployment rate in 2011 (in %)



Median weekly earnings in 2011 (in \$)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

College-Bound High School Senior Planning Calendar

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

Some of you have been planning for this year for quite some time, while for others it seems as though it has suddenly appeared from nowhere. Your senior year. Wow. For college-bound seniors, it's a time to savor your accomplishments, narrow down your list of colleges, gather all your necessary test scores and high school transcripts, request letters of recommendation, and begin work on your college admission essays. . . and in reality, for most of you, this process began at least a year ago, if not longer. Don't fret if you're late to the game, however, you still have plenty of time to get your college applications in -- as long as you're willing to put the time in to complete them.

Here's how your senior year should look, month-by-month.

SEPTEMBER

- Read: High School Seniors: Preparing for Your Next Step After High School
- If you have not held any leadership positions while in high school, now is the time to step up and assume leadership of one of those organizations.
- Review college materials, college guidebooks, and other resources to narrow your college list.
- Begin to finalize list of colleges with your family and guidance counselor.
- Consider visits, overnight stays, and interviews at your top college choices. Visit (personally or virtually) any colleges you have not already seen.
- Register for one last shot at the ACT if you aren't happy with earlier scores.
- Begin thinking about teachers who would be willing to write strong letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- Begin brainstorming ideas for your college essays.
- Request (or download from college's Website) any applications that you do not have. Be sure to review each college's application requirements carefully.
- Attend college fairs for one final review of college choices.
- Be sure your senior year mix of classes still includes challenging, college-prep courses
- Stay focused on grades.

OCTOBER

- Finalize list of college choices to reasonable number, ideally with one or more "stretch" schools and one "safety" school.
- Create a file for each of your college choices -- and keep all materials organized.
- Consider creating a master schedule of all your application deadlines.
- Begin working on drafts of your college essays.
- Start working on college applications.
- If you have a clear "first choice" college, consider applying for early decision.
- Stay focused on grades.

NOVEMBER

- Finalize drafts of your college essays, but only after numerous edits, rewrites, and reviews by people you trust (family, friends, teachers).
- Complete college applications and put packets in the mail.
- Be sure your guidance counselor knows your final list of colleges, as well as your preferences.
- Request key financial aid and scholarship information from your list of colleges.
- Stay focused on grades.

DECEMBER

- If you applied for early decision to a college, expect notification this month.
- If not completed, finish and mail remainder of college applications.
- Start detailed financial aid search, including outside sources for scholarships and loans.
- Stay focused on grades.

JANUARY

- Get started on financial aid preparations by reviewing the information at www.fafsa.gov, and obtaining a PIN so that you can complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Stay focused on grades.

FEBRUARY

- Complete the FAFSA, if possible. (You'll need your family's/guardian's tax records.)
- Keep track of your college applications; be sure all schools have received all your materials.
- Stay focused on grades.

MARCH

- College decision letters begin arriving.
- Celebrate your acceptances, decide about your wait lists, and deal positively with your rejections.
- Finalize financial aid applications.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

APRIL

- Make decision about college choice from among the colleges that accepted you.
- Notify all colleges (that accepted you) of your final decision.
- Submit tuition deposit to your college of choice.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

MAY

- Be sure to submit paperwork for room and board.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- Stay focused on grades.

High School Seniors: Preparing for Your Next Step After High School

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

Your senior year in high school is a wonderful time, with students filled with a wide range of emotions, expectations, and plans. Senior year is a time spent reflecting back on all those years in the classroom while looking ahead to new adventures of work or college. Senior year is also about making plans and decisions, and that's where this article can help you.

This article is about helping you manage and make the transition from high school to college. Taking the advice in this article will make you a better person and a more prepared student -- and will help make all those college plans and dreams come to fruition. Following these seven tips will help lead you to success from high school to college -- and beyond.

Tip 1: Don't Stop at High School

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, slightly more than three in every five high school graduates continue on to college (with young women doing so at a slightly higher rate than young men). If you are unsure that an additional two to four years of schooling will make that much of an impact on your life -- and believe me, they will -- read one of our other articles, [What Good is a College Education Anyway? The Value of a College Education](#).

We are in an information-based society and almost all of the high-growth occupations identified by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics require some training/education beyond the high school level. Research the careers that interest you by following this link to search the [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#).

Tip 2: Finalize College Plans

The fall of your senior year is the time to finalize the list of colleges and universities that seem best suited for your needs. You'll want to spend time with your family, friends, and guidance counselor in paring down (or developing) your list of the best schools for you in terms of the criteria you deem most important.

How do you develop your list -- and what criteria should you use? For help with the mechanics of narrowing down your list of colleges and universities, please read one of our other articles, [Choosing a College that's Right for You](#).

And for help in best organizing and utilizing your time, please take advantage of our [College-Bound High School Senior Planning Calendar](#).

Tip 3: Avoid Senioritis and the Senior Slump

There's a common misconception that once you've made it to your senior year -- and especially once you've been accepted by colleges -- that senior grades don't matter. But colleges do request and review senior grades, especially from the first half of the school year. Be forewarned, though, that if you let your grades slip anytime during the year, colleges have the right to ask you to document and explain why your current grades have dropped below previous years.

Continue to take pride in your grades and continue to attempt your best. Some studies report that high school seniors who lost interest in high school because of a "senior slump" also had problems in college because they had lost interest and devalued the importance of education. And you don't ever want to face the worst-case scenario: not graduating high school because you are short one credit because you failed some elective course.

Tip 4: Keep Challenging Yourself

While senior year might seem the right time to load up on those electives you've been dying to take instead of advanced or honors classes, you might want to hold off on taking too many easy electives. Many colleges recommend that your senior year should be designed to best prepare you for your first year in college, and some of the more selective schools may downgrade your application if you ease up on the challenging courses.

Studies also show that students who continue to take advanced courses in the sciences, math, foreign languages, or English during their senior year are better prepared and perform better in related college courses. Another benefit is that you may be able to earn college credits for some of the courses you take - or through the your scores from the College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP).

Tip 5: Stay Involved

If you've been involved in various social clubs, actively volunteered with local agencies, or have been involved in the community in other ways, don't stop now just because it's your senior year or because you no longer need to do it to impress the colleges and universities. Make a lifelong commitment to give back to your community. You'll be helping others, making an impact on people's lives -- and you'll feel the better for it.

And volunteering also helps you gain important career skills -- and can possibly even help you in discovering a college major or career path.

Tip 6: Strive for Balance

The key for you is to avoid burnout. You have your high school work, college planning, social activities, family obligations, and outside activities (such as jobs, volunteering, etc.) -- all demanding your time. Try and keep your life balanced -- and be sure to schedule time just for yourself. Don't take yourself too seriously. And remember that while you don't want to have a senior slump, it's equally important not to crash and burn.

Tip 7: Set Life and Career Goals

As you reach the precipice of your primary education and are about to make that leap into the journey of the rest of your life, now -- amid the relative calm of senior year -- is a great time to find a quiet spot and reflect on your future career and life goals. Don't worry about specifics and don't let yourself get bogged down in specifics; instead, focus on issues such as what you are searching for out of work and a career, what success means to you, what is important in your life. Consider taking a shot at writing a draft of a personal mission statement or other life-affirming communications.

Choosing a College that's Right for You

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

Choosing where you want to go to college is an extremely personal -- and frequently stressful -- decision that teens and their families have to make. So, how can this article help you? This article's intent is to give you a framework that will help you choose the college that is right for you.

One piece of advice before we begin: It's best to start this process as early as possible, ideally in the junior year of high school (although some experts say to start even earlier).

Step 1: Determine what you might like to study or major in at college. Yes, many students enter college as "undecided," and that's fine, but if you have some idea of a career or a major, that information can help in finding colleges that offer (and even specialize) in that field. You might like to try some of these career assessment tests to help you with this step. You could also read our article, [Choosing a College Major: How to Chart Your Ideal Path](#).

Step 2: Develop a list of criteria you want to use to evaluate and weed out colleges. Do you want to live close to home, or far away? Do you want a large university or a small college? What about costs? Here's a list of common criteria:

- degrees offered
- majors/minors
- location (rural or urban setting)/distance from home
- size of the student population (from small at 1,000 to large at 35,000+)
- public vs. private
- costs (tuition, room and board, etc.)
- financial assistance packages
- campus resources (labs, libraries, computer access, etc.)
- graduation rate/time
- placement success/internship and co-op programs
- accreditation
- class size
- faculty contact/classes taught by full-time doctorally qualified faculty
- quality/reputation/ranking
- degree of pressure to excel
- safety (campus, community)
- student body (diversity, gender, etc.)
- social life (Greek organizations, sports, school spirit, etc.)
- religious affiliation/independent
- housing options (dorms, apartments, living at home)
- realistic entry expectations (based on typical student admitted)

Step 3: Compile a list of possible colleges and universities. With at least some idea of the criteria that are important to you, begin the gathering phase. You can find college information in books, such as [The Fiske Guide to Colleges](#), which you can find among other college books in our [Teen Books](#) section. Another resource are college-

related Websites, such as TheAdmissionsOffice.com. Find that Website, as well as many others, in our College Planning Resources for Teens. You will surely also get suggestions from family, friends, and high school teachers and guidance counselors. You should also consider attending college fairs, where you can actually meet representatives from the schools, as well as gather important literature.

Step 4: Gather all your resources and information about each school you're considering. If you don't have all the information you need on a particular college, you should consider visiting the college's Website. And most colleges offer some sort of virtual campus tour, so you can get an early taste of the look and feel of a college from your PC.

Step 5: Use the criteria from Step 2 to narrow your list of colleges to a manageable number. This number will vary widely among teens and their families, depending in part on how many you and your family can realistically visit. Most experts suggest narrowing the list to 10 or fewer, but we have known some students who had close to 20 colleges after completing this step.

Step 6: Visit the colleges on your list from Step 5. The best way to really get a feel for a college is by visiting the campus, taking a tour, meeting with students, attending a class, reading the campus newspaper, eating in the cafeteria, and spending the night in a dorm (if possible). You have to feel “at home” at the place where you will spend the next four years of your life, so visiting is important.

For more information and strategies, read our article, [How to Make the Most of Your Campus Visit](#). If some schools on your list are just too far away to make a trip, then at least take a virtual tour of the campus and try to talk to people who have attended the school to get a feel for it. CampusTours.com (listed on our College Planning Resources for Teens) is a great place for links to virtual tours and college Webcams.

Step 7: Apply to the schools that made the cut after the first six steps. How many schools should you apply to? Of course, this decision partly depends on your financial situation (since most colleges have application fees), but most teens generally apply to one or two dream or “reach” schools (where they have a small chance of getting admitted based on a realistic appraisal of admissions criteria), two to four schools where they want to go (and can expect to be accepted), and at least one “safety” school (where they are a shoo-in for admission). But you need to choose the number and type that are right for you; some people don't apply to safety schools, and others apply to only the best schools that have made the cut from the first six steps.

Step 8: While you're waiting to hear back from the colleges you applied to, start hitting the books or the Web to find scholarships (if you need them). We list some of the best of both in our Teen Books section and in our Financial Aid Resources for Teens section.

Step 9: Make a final choice among the schools that accepted you. If you applied for financial aid, take a close look at the offers. If the school you really want to attend gave you a low aid offer, you should consider contacting the school and making a counter offer and see what happens; many schools have become more willing to negotiate in this area.

10 Things Colleges Seek From High School Applicants

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

College-bound? This article provides an overview of the kinds of things admissions offices seek from applicants -- and is especially useful for high school sophomores and juniors as you begin your college planning, but it can also be useful for seniors as you prepare your college applications.

So, what are the 10 things college admissions offices seek from high school students when you apply to college? Admissions officials mention these items as important to their decisions when evaluating applicants.

1. Strong Scores on Standardized Tests. Of those colleges and universities that require the SAT or ACT as part of your application -- and a small (but growing) number of schools do not -- admissions counselors seek scores that match or exceed the scores of their current students. For better or worse, standardized college entrance exam scores are seen as the most objective measure of your college potential. In the process of conducting your research on colleges, you should easily be able to find a profile of the most recently admitted class. (Note: colleges that do not require a standardized test for admission consideration do usually require supplemental materials, such as a graded paper from a core academic course and a portfolio that showcases your strengths, interests, and achievements.)

2. High Grade Point Average. It goes without question that grades are an extremely important element of your college application. Colleges will ask you to submit official transcripts from your high school and possibly recalculate your grade point average based on some internal system they use for weighting different types of courses. Your goal, from the first year of high school forward, is to achieve the best grades you can. If you had a rough freshman year, but have since rebounded with much stronger grades, fear not, because colleges certainly look for trends in academic achievement -- and a record of constant improvement when your GPA is not as strong as you would like is a good sign to most admissions counselors about your growth and potential.

3. Challenging College-Prep Courses. Your challenge is not just to get the best grades you can -- but to get the best grades you can in the most academically challenging courses as you can. You certainly do not need to enroll in an International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at your high school, but where you have the strengths, skills, and aptitude, you should at least strive for Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Most colleges will place greater weight on these "tougher" courses -- and even go so far as to rate a B in an advanced class (IB, Honors, AP) on a higher scale than an A in a comparable mainstream class.

4. Top Percentage of Class Standing. Class rank and class standing are moving a little further to the back of the pack, partly because class rank means almost nothing in high schools that are at the extremes -- horrible or exceptional. In some of the top high school programs, class rank has been found to actually hurt some of the very best students -- because only so many can be in the top 1, 5, or even 10 percent of the class. Grades obviously drive class rank, so you should of course strive for the very best grades -- and then just hope that the ranking works in your favor or that the colleges you apply to don't use rank as a top criteria for admissions.

5. Leadership Positions in a Few Organizations. Most colleges and universities are seeking leaders from within their applicant pool, and you can make your application stand out by having one or two leadership positions over the course of your high school career. Being a leader in one or two organizations means much, much more than simply being a member in 10 clubs and organizations. Not only does leadership show a certain level of maturity and character, but colleges also have an eye to all their student organizations and their need to recruit future leaders. You don't need to be the president of an organization, but you should be an officer of at least one group by the time you're a senior.

6. Active Involvement in Community Service. There's no requirement for community service to gain admittance to college, but just about all college-bound high school students have jumped on the bandwagon, volunteering throughout the local community. It seems to be one of these unwritten rules that applicants who volunteer many, many hours in the service of supporting others will become a key campus activist. Regardless of the importance for admission to college, most experts agree on the value and self-fulfillment people get in helping others.

7. Insightful and Well-Written Essay(s). Of all the 10 items on this list, the essay either gets the most attention or the least respect -- depending on who you ask. Like some of the other 10 elements on this list, not all colleges require an essay as part of the admissions application. The essay -- or essays -- are a tool used by some universities to learn more about you and why you want to attend their school. Definitely take the time to carefully consider the questions and write, edit, rewrite, and proofread your essays -- with an eye to what the essays reveal about you and your personality. Some admissions counselors admit that an amazing essay can push a marginal applicant into the accepted student group. Learn more about college essay writing in our article, [Writing the Successful College Application Essay](#).

8. Quality Recommendations from Teachers and Guidance Counselor. The recommendation letters that you ask your teachers and your guidance counselor to write can play a key role in your college application. Ideally, you have a few favorite teachers -- teachers who not only know the quality of your work and academic acumen, but also can talk about some of your personal qualities. It's best to ask your teachers for letters as early as you can so that they have the time to write a quality letter; obviously the most popular teachers will need even more time if they have requests from many of their students.

9. Relevant Recommendations from Professionals and Others. One other nice touch -- especially for a college you really want to attend -- is to ask a professional such as a former (or current) boss to write a letter of recommendation for you. Even better if that person has some sort of tie to the college as a donor or alumnus. Other possibilities include your supervisor from one or more of your volunteering/community service projects or a coach from one of the teams you have played for. If you have run your own business, you might ask a favorite customer to write a letter. Finally, you can also ask a family friend or religious leader to write a letter -- but personal references are not as strong as academic or professional ones.

10. Work and Entrepreneurial Experiences. While you certainly do not need to have ever held a part-time or summer job or started your own business, if you have some unique experiences, writing about your experiences can be a great essay topic as well as showcasing your professionalism and time-management skills. College admissions folks love self-starters -- applicants with a strong entrepreneurial spirit -- so proudly tell the story of your babysitting, lawn mowing, car detailing, tutoring, painting, or pet-sitting business (or whatever YOUR business is).

15 Quick Tips for Getting Accepted into College

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

More and more, attending college is a necessity to living the life you seek. Yet as you work yourself through your 10th or 11th consecutive year of education, attending at least four more years of college may be a hard concept to get excited about -- but you should! Having made it through your primary education and middle-school years, it's time to look to high school and beyond. How can you improve your chances for getting accepted into your top-choice colleges and universities? Check out our expert tips.

Here's our list of the 15 best how-to tips for getting accepted into college.

Start early. The best time to start thinking about college is in middle school, but don't fret if you are in high school and just thinking about attending college. Starting early allows you to develop a plan for carving out the best courses for college prep, maintaining or increasing your grades and class standing, joining and assisting in leadership of a high-school club/organization/sports team, and preparing for taking one or more standardized college admissions tests. Read more advice in our article, [10 Things Colleges Seek From High School Applicants](#).

Know yourself. You can't successfully tell colleges and universities how great you are unless you know exactly who you are, what your goals and ambitions are, how you are distinctive (and better) from other applicants, and why you want to attend college. In examining yourself, focus on your strengths (and areas in which you can improve) -- and use these strengths as the core of your application. Creating a resume showcasing your accomplishments, activities, and experience is a great way starting point.

Gain the support of your parents and family. Having the support of your family goes a long way in this somewhat grueling process. Seek their input and recommendations on types of colleges best for you. Regardless of your family's financial situation, don't let finances stop you from applying to college; multiple sources of financial aid are available for attending college.

Meet with your guidance counselor and key teachers. You may or may not love your high-school guidance counselor, but s/he can provide you with good information about course selection, standardized tests, college fairs, and the like. It's also a good idea to talk with your favorite teachers about possible majors and college choices -- and remember to request that they write college recommendation letters for you to help bolster your applications.

Focus on key elements of courses, grades, standardized tests. You want to have a mix of college-prep courses - including some that challenge you. Grades and class standing also play a role, so if your grades are not where they should be, increase your studying, enhance your study skills, and/or find a tutor. Finally, you will ideally nail your PSAT and ACT exams the first time around, but if not, consider studying or taking a prep course so that you can improve your scores.

Join a small number of clubs or organizations. Colleges and universities are looking for certain profiles from prospective students -- looking at applicants for campus leadership potential. If you have not done so already, find a couple of student organizations (including sports teams) in which you can not only participate, but eventually help lead as well.

Research colleges and universities. Conducting research on colleges and universities is important for many reasons. First, you'll want to narrow down the list of potential schools from thousands to a number more

reasonable. Second, the more you know about a potential school, the better you can demonstrate to admissions counselors that you are an excellent fit. For more information about how to find the right school for you, read our article, [Choosing a College that's Right for You](#).

Attend college fairs. While you can research and compile a list of potential colleges and universities from any number of Websites and books, nothing beats going to a college fair -- where you can meet with admissions counselors and get unique insights, as well as make good first impressions.

Reduce your list of colleges and universities. Once you've discussed colleges and universities with your teachers, guidance counselor, and family; completed your research; and attended at least one college fair -- the last step is compiling a list of your final choices. There are any number of ways and criteria to help narrow your list -- from choice of majors to size to location.

Visit (virtually or in person) final list of colleges and universities. Whenever possible, you should physically visit each campus -- even stay overnight. The college you choose to attend is going to be your "home" for the next four years, and it's important that the campus gives you the right vibe. An added plus of visiting is a chance to meet with an admission counselor -- perhaps even wowing him/her if you decide to partake in an official interview. For more information and tips, read our article, [How to Make the Most of Your Campus Visit](#).

Get organized. As you begin the application process, you'll want to have some sort of organization scheme -- to keep track of application deadlines, transcript requests, standardized test score orders, teacher recommendations, and all the information you have on each college and university. A simple spreadsheet might help you keep track of all your applications.

Apply early. Many students wait too long to get started on applications -- and then rush to complete them in December of their senior year. Consider starting as early as possible -- and if you have a clear favorite, consider applying for early decision (which usually has a deadline in November).

Write killer application essays. Every school uses the application essays differently in the decision process -- from being a major factor to a minor one -- but regardless, just about all schools (certainly all using the common application) require at least one personal essay. The essays are your chance to shine -- to open a window into your personality and showcase your fit with each school. It's important that your essays tell an engaging story while also being well-written. Write, edit, write, revise, proofread -- and solicit critiques from a favorite teacher and from a family member.

Send right amount of materials with applications. Admissions professionals tell sad stories of applicants who send way too many materials with their applications (most of which never gets reviewed) and those who do not send enough. It's probably more critical to not short-change yourself. Remember that your application is literally selling your fit with the school -- and if you don't show that fit, the admissions staff may not see it.

Use social media and Web to your advantage. Follow the colleges and universities of your choice on Facebook and Twitter. Hone your Facebook profile to match your application persona and remove digital dirt, as more and more schools are using social media to snoop on applicants. You can also friend current students at the schools to learn more realistic views of life on campus. Follow faculty members on Twitter. Record and publish a short video about yourself on YouTube. Read (and respond to when appropriate) blogs written by faculty/staff of your top colleges and universities.