



AIKENHEAD PAINTER
COLLEGE CONSULTING

FOCUS ON THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Grades, Leadership, Extracurriculars, and Social Media

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FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES: START THE ACADEMIC YEAR RIGHT

While Summer is still with us, take a moment to organize and assess yourself in the following areas- all of which can affect future college options. Best to start strong.

Rigorous Transcript:

- "Strength of Curriculum" and "Grades in academic courses" top the list of college admission considerations.
- Build a strong transcript by leveraging your interests.
- Consider pre-requisites for the advanced classes you might want to take later.

NOTE: Colleges review transcripts within the context of the high school via the High School Profile; these profiles include a list of courses offered. If your school provides AP, IB, and Honors courses, consider challenging yourself with these. But caution! Getting a "C" in an AP class is NOT better than getting an A in the college-prep equivalent.

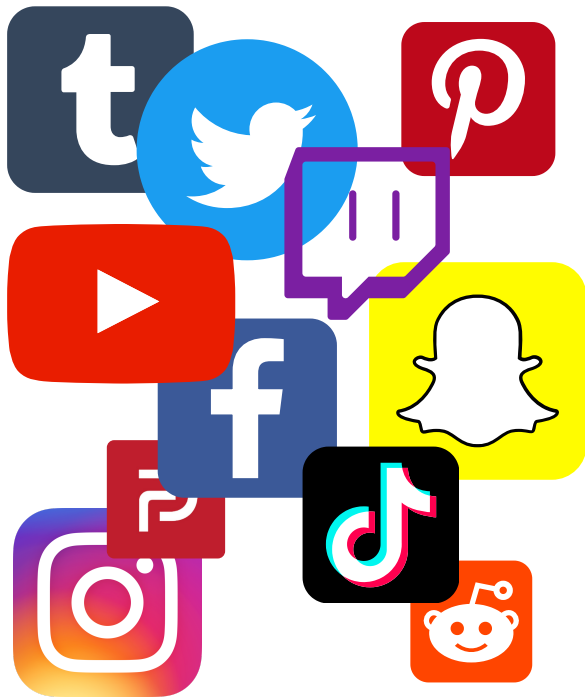
Generally, we suggest taking AP classes primarily in subjects that truly interest you. You may not need to take AP Physics if you plan to study foreign languages and hate math.

Extracurriculars/Leadership:

Nearly done with your meaningful summer activities? Or perhaps the time was spent honing video game skills. If the latter, consider broadening your extracurricular activities.

How you spend your time outside of class tells colleges a lot about your interests and commitments. Many colleges value understanding you beyond your transcript.

- Freshman year is a great time to explore different activities.
- Start to engage more deeply with an organization or activity during Sophomore and Junior years.



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Colleges are interested in these kinds of activities and more:

- Causes (social justice, political, animal rights, environmental, local issues, etc.)
- Sports - school or other
- Arts: fine or performing
- Community service
- Paid employment
- Family Obligations - care for younger siblings, ailing relatives, consistent family chores, or family business



Social Media: Make sure your social media is appropriate for all eyes. Some colleges will review applicants' social media to assess campus fit. If your media reflects poorly or contains controversial posts, consider editing, adjusting, or deleting accordingly.



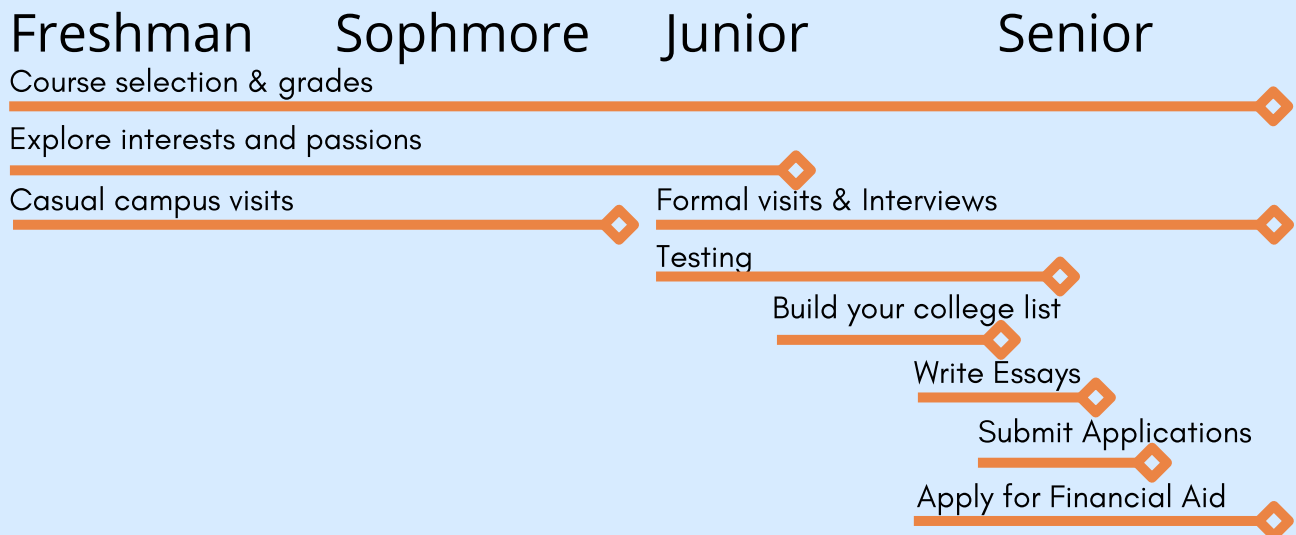
Leadership opportunities may not always be available, but consider striving for them when they are. Colleges value students who can commit and are effective leaders. Freshman and Sophomore students, start identifying areas in which you hope to lead as a Junior or Senior.

STARTING SENIOR YEAR STRONG

Use your time wisely and stay focused:

- Your fall AND spring grades are important!
- Set up your accounts with the [Common App](#) & [UC app](#) (both open August 1).
- Create a timeline for college applications and financial aid forms. ([FAFSA](#) opens Oct 1.)
- Follow up with recommenders, making sure they have received the invitation, know if you are applying early, and can write a strong recommendation for you.

College Journey Timeline





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