

**STARTING THE COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE!**  
Checklist for 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

| <b>General Time Frame</b>      | <b>College Admissions &amp; Career Planning</b>  | <b>Testing</b>   | <b>Financial Planning</b>   |
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| <b>JULY—OCTOBER</b>            | <p>*Work hard in all of your classes—it’s difficult to pull up a low GPA (grade point average)!</p> <p>*As you enter high school, set educational goals that include four years of high school and at least two years of postsecondary education and training.</p> <p>Tip—Most careers require some kind of education after high school.</p> <p>*Begin career research now—talk with your parents, teachers, and school counselors about your interests and career goals.</p> <p>Tip—Use GCIS, <a href="http://www.gcis.peachnet.edu">www.gcis.peachnet.edu</a>, at school. You should also use <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org">http://www.gacollege411.org</a> to start a college and career planning account.</p> <p>*Identify school and outside interests and begin participating.</p> <p>*Begin exploring college websites in order to find schools that interest you. Familiarize yourself with institutional programs, requirements, deadlines, and scholarships.</p> | <p>*Your college admissions test scores will determine where you get accepted to college—prepare to do well!</p> <p>Tip—Writing has become more important to college admissions tests. Work on your writing skills now!</p> <p>Tip—obtain the college bound reading list from your school’s website and focus on reading as many of the selections as possible (remember, you have four years).</p> <p>*Work on vocabulary skills—obtain a list of often used words on the SAT and ACT and study them.</p> | <p>*Begin planning now for financing your college education—it’s never too soon to start!</p> <p>*Locate the list of scholarships for underclassmen on your school’s website. Many of these are essay contests which provide writing practice, as well as a potential financial reward.</p> <p>Tip—check out the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators website: <a href="http://www.nasfaa.org">www.nasfaa.org</a></p> <p>*Check the HOPE website, <a href="http://www.gsfc.org/HOPE/Index.cfm">http://www.gsfc.org/HOPE/Index.cfm</a>, for requirements that will apply to your graduating class. Make sure you stay on track!</p> <p>*Begin looking for senior year scholarships. GCIS, FastWeb.com, and <a href="http://www.collegeanswer.com">http://www.collegeanswer.com</a> are good resources.</p> <p>Tip—avoid scholarship scams. If you are asked for money, or if something seems too good to be true, it may be questionable. Check <a href="http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/">http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/</a> for answers to your questions.</p> <p>*Discover how the military can help pay for college through ROTC scholarships, academy appointments, or educational benefits for enlisting. Check <a href="http://www.myfuture.com">www.myfuture.com</a> for information.</p> <p>*Research cooperative education at colleges you are interested in attending. This is a great way to pay for your college education while gaining relevant work experience at the same time.</p> |
| <b>NOVEMBER &amp; DECEMBER</b> | <p>*During holiday trips, make plans to stop and briefly tour any colleges of interest that are nearby.</p>  | <p>*Continue working on improving writing, reading, mathematical, and vocabulary skills over the holidays.</p>   | <p>*Explore college costs. Check GCIS, <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org">http://www.gacollege411.org</a>, and individual college websites. Also, check out your school’s career center for college catalogs and other resources.</p>  |

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JANUARY—MARCH</b></p> | <p>*Always establish positive relationships with teachers, coaches, and counselors. They will be a great resource to you later when you need letters of recommendation.</p> <p>*Make sure you are familiar with guidance and college advisement resources that are available at your school.</p> <p>*Ask about opportunities to experience different work situations firsthand, including job shadowing, Youth Apprenticeship, and part-time employment.</p>   | <p>*Work with a friend on improving skills—quiz each other on SAT/ACT vocabulary words, math skills, etc.</p>  | <p>*Talk with your parents about coming up with a plan to meet college expenses without going into debt.</p> <p>*Research different ways to save for college. Establish a savings plan and set aside money regularly.</p> <p>Tip—Check out the products offered from Octameron Press, especially the book <i>Don't Miss Out</i><br/> <a href="http://www.octameron.com/productsframe.html">www.octameron.com/productsframe.html</a></p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>APRIL—JUNE</b></p>    | <p>*Ask about college admissions standards in Georgia.</p> <p>Tip—With the implementation of the HOPE scholarship, admissions standards at Georgia colleges have become much stricter.</p> <p>Example:<br/> <u><a href="#">UGA 2007 Admitted Student Profile</a></u><br/> Middle 50% Core GPA: 3.63—4.0<br/> Middle 50% SAT: 1150—1310<br/> Middle 50% ACT: 25—29</p> <p>*Make sure you are in a course of study which will prepare you for the type of postsecondary education you want. Also, take the most challenging courses you can handle in order to get prepared for college.</p> | <p>*Keep reading and expanding your vocabulary.</p> <p>*Never miss an opportunity to practice writing skills. Keep applying for essay contests and scholarships.</p> | <p>*Plan for a productive summer—participate in a college summer program, summer school, work, volunteer work, travel, camp, or recreational interests.</p> <p>Tip—Your counselor may have some suggestions about work or summer programs.</p> <p>*If you work, put part of every paycheck into your college savings account.</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUMMER</b></p>        | <p>*Be sure to begin planning college tours to schools that interest you.</p> <p>Tip—Call the college's office of admissions to set up a tour before you arrive on campus.</p>   | <p>*Work on mastering skills necessary for SAT/ACT success</p> <p>*Put aside time to continue reading selections from the college bound reading list.</p>            | <p>*Collect information for your high school resume.</p> <p>Tip—Keep names, numbers, and addresses from volunteer or part-time work. You will need them for future use.</p> <p>Tip—Locate the sample resume form on your school's website.</p>  |