

College Corner

Summer 2017

Important Dates

June 3	SAT Test Date
June 10	ACT Test Date
August 26	SAT Test Date
September 9	ACT Test Date
October 7	SAT Test Date
October 11	PSAT Test Date (10 th & 11 th graders - test given at Runnels)
October 28	ACT Test Date
November 4	SAT Test Date
December 2	SAT Test Date
December 9	ACT Test Date



Recommendations for Current Juniors (Rising Seniors)

- 1. Register and take the ACT and/or SAT.** Colleges do not have a preference whether you take one or the other, however if you have not yet taken either one now is the time. You will want to have your strongest score available for submitting to colleges in the Fall. Ideally, you will be done with testing by the October or December test date. Also, do not forget about test prep! Preparing for your exam will be a key component to maximizing your scores.
- 2. Plan something meaningful this summer.** This summer is your last opportunity to build meaningful and authentic experiences as you prepare for college essays and applications that will begin in August. Meaningful experience can be anything from a part time job to athletic training to service work or even an academic summer program... whatever is authentic and meaningful for you is what you should be doing!
- 3. Think about letters of recommendation.** Start thinking about which teachers you would like to ask for letters of recommendation. Request a meeting with the teachers you would like to ask for recommendations from so they can talk to you about your plans and get to know a little more about your background outside their classroom. Make sure you ask at least one teacher from an academic area.
- 4. Visit a college.** There is no better way to explore your college options than a personal visit to a college. This will give you the best feel for a campus and if it might be the right place for you to spend the next four years. In addition, some college admissions offices keep track of whether you visited or not, so this is a great way to "demonstrate interest" to some of the more selective schools.
- 5. Start your essays and write your resume.** If you are applying to colleges that use the Common App, the essay prompts are already available at: <http://www.commonapp.org/whats-appening/application-updates/common-application-announces-2017-2018-essay-prompts>. In addition, a resume is a great way for you to summarize your accomplishments and experience. While some colleges will require one, you should also plan to provide a resume to anyone writing your recommendations for them to use as a reference. If you need a template or help, you can email Mrs. Schlotterer for assistance.

Recommendations for Current Sophomores (Rising Juniors)

- 1. Register and take the ACT and/or SAT.** *If you have completed Algebra II, this is a great time for your first “shot” at taking the ACT or SAT. The first test will not likely be your highest score, but will give you a great benchmark to see where you are starting from as you continue to do test prep and refine your score by the end of next year.*
- 2. Prep for the PSAT.** *In October, you will be taking the PSAT/NMSQT for entry in the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Summer is the best time to dig into your test prep for the upcoming test. This prep will also translate well when you later take the ACT and/or SAT. Reviewing your older math skills (pre-algebra, geometry formulas, etc) is a key component here. College Board offers some great test prep resources and practice exams here: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/practice>*
- 3. Think about course selection.** *The classes you take your junior year will be the most important ones to date, as they will be the last grades the colleges see on your academic transcript. This will be your last chance to really impact your GPA and also to demonstrate academic rigor. So, make sure to challenge yourself, but also make sure that you are setting yourself up for success at the same time.*
- 4. Meet with your college counselor.** *Your junior year will be the time to start establishing your relationship with Mrs. Schlotterer to help you manage the college application process and to get a feel for what you are looking for in a college. This is also important, as it will help her get to know you for writing recommendation later as well as to identify your interests as opportunities come across her desk that might be a good fit for you!*
- 5. Keep developing your extra-curriculars.** *Time spent out of the classroom is just as important as a strong transcript and ACT score. Think about your involvement in extra-curriculars, both with school clubs and outside of school. Your junior year will be a big opportunity for you to fine-tune and start developing some authenticity in those activities. Make sure that instead of doing EVERYTHING, consider doing just one or two things that you genuinely love so that you can grow as a leader and possibly make an impact. This could be anything from being president of a school club, to a volunteer or service opportunity, to work at an off campus part-time job. Remember, authenticity is the key so make sure that what you are doing means something to YOU.*

Recommendations for Current Freshman (Rising Sophomores)

- 1. Think about your summer plans.** *As you are just getting started with your high school career, start thinking about your summer activities and where those will lead for future summers. You are setting the groundwork here, but you can keep it simple too. Athletic training, a small part time job, or some volunteer work are all great ways to start developing meaningful experiences to build on for future summers.*
- 2. Think about course selections.** *Just as with the current sophomores (rising juniors) make sure that you are selecting courses that will set you up for success down the road on your college applications. While you should definitely challenge yourself and be thinking about academic rigor, make sure that you’re also taking courses that will allow you to shine and continue to improve your GPA.*

Standardized Testing Recommendations

Summer is a great time to focus on standardized testing. For some students, that may mean test prep for a fall or spring test. For others, that may mean taking the ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject tests in June. Here is a helpful breakdown of recommendations for deciding when and what exams to take.

3 Common Timelines for Testing & Prep

Early

Students on this timeline take maximum advantage of the summer before 11th grade. Goals typically include a peak performance on the PSAT, closing out the SAT or ACT by spring of 11th grade, and banking 3–4 strong Subject Test scores. The goal of these students is to be completely done with testing by June of 11th grade.

Traditional

Prep in the summer before 11th grade is moderately paced and foundational, designed to lighten the intensity of prep during the school year. This steadfast approach to prep culminates in the spring and leaves room for the competing priorities of junior year.

Deferred

This timeline intentionally allows students to defer the testing process in favor of other summer activities and a focus on getting 11th grade classwork off to a great start. Rigorous prep for the SAT or ACT falls in winter/spring of 11th grade and may continue into the following summer prior to final testing in fall of 12th grade.

	May/June of 10th Grade	Summer between 10th and 11th Grades	Fall of 11th Grade		Early Spring of 11th Grade	May/June of 11th Grade	Summer/Fall of 12th Grade
Early	Take Subject Tests as appropriate. Take diagnostic SAT and ACT to plan for preparation.	Begin preparation geared toward the October PSAT and fall ACT or SAT.	Take October PSAT. Take ACT or SAT.		Consider repeating ACT or SAT and having admission testing completed prior to APs, finals, and Subject Tests.	Take Subject Tests as appropriate.	Focus on college applications. Additional preparation and testing only as needed.
Traditional	Take Subject Tests as appropriate.	Begin foundational preparation in the summer with the ultimate goal of a winter or spring ACT or SAT.	Take October PSAT. Foundational work allows additional preparation to fit into a busy junior calendar.		Take the ACT or SAT for the first time.	Take Subject Tests as appropriate. Consider repeating ACT or SAT and having admission testing completed prior to the summer and college applications.	Focus on college applications. Additional preparation and testing only as needed.
Deferred	Take Subject Tests as appropriate.		Take October PSAT. Take diagnostic SAT and ACT to decide on a course of preparation. Junior PSAT results can provide a guideline but are not available until December. Map out a schedule to prepare for the February or April ACT or the March or May SAT. Preparation typically begins in October or November.		Take the ACT or SAT for the first time.	Take Subject Tests as appropriate. Consider repeating ACT or SAT and having admission testing completed prior to the summer and college applications.	Focus on college applications. Additional preparation and testing only as needed.