

High School Student & Parent To-Do List for Students in 9th Grade

Summary

Need information about going to school? Here is a checklist and areas to explore for both students and parents to help prepare academically and financially for an education after high school. Find out what you should be doing each year in high school and which publications or websites will be useful for you.

Students

To Do:

- College saving account.** Open a savings account and save money for college.
- Take classes in core subjects.** Take challenging classes in core academic subjects. Most colleges require:
 - 4 years of English
 - 3 years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.)
 - 3 years of math
 - 3 years of science
 - Many colleges require 2 years of a foreign language
 - Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts.
- Advanced Placement courses.** Talk to your school counselor or teachers about Advanced Placement courses. Find out what courses are available and how to enroll in them.
- Study hard—do well in school.** From now on your grades will count toward college and will show up on your permanent record.
- School/Community-based activities.** Stay involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you or let you explore career interests. Consider working or volunteering. Remember that it's quality—not quantity—that counts.
- Keep a list of your activities.** Make a list of your awards, honors, extracurricular activities, and paid/volunteer work. Consider participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, or science.
- Research education after high school.** Talk to your school counselor about education after high school. Your counselor can answer questions about what classes to take in high school, how to sign up for standardized tests, and where to get money for college.
- Research careers.** Use the career search at [StudentAid.gov/careersearch](https://www.studentaid.gov/careersearch) to research your career options.

SouthHills

School of Business & Technology

To Explore:

- Check out *KnowHow2Go: The Four Steps to College*, at www.knowhow2go.org for more advice on actions you can take as you start thinking about education beyond high school.
- Get answers to common questions about college by watching videos on the “Prepare for College” playlist at www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid.
- Learn about managing your money in the “High School Youth” section of www.mymoney.gov/Pages/for-youth.aspx.
- Visit StudentAid.gov/whycollege for a quick rundown on why deciding to attend college is a no-brainer.
- Find ways to get help preparing for college at StudentAid.gov/prepare-for-college/help.

Parents

To Do:

- Talk about college plans.** Talk to your child about college plans as if he/she will definitely go to college.
- Stay involved.** Keep an eye on your child’s study habits and grades.
- Advanced Placement courses.** Encourage your child to take Advanced Placement courses or other challenging classes.
- College savings account.** Add to your child’s college savings account regularly.

To Explore:

- Explore StudentAid.gov/parent for information on saving for:
 - College
 - Borrowing money for college
 - Applying for financial aid
 - Getting tax benefits to help make college affordable
- Learn about the tax benefits of cashing in savings bonds to pay for your child’s education—search for “Publication 970” at www.irs.gov.