



The Foundry Admissions College Guide - Everything You Need To Know From Freshman To Senior Year of High School

Each year the college admissions process becomes more complex, the acceptance rate at top colleges declines, and cost of college increases.

Given these conditions, it's no wonder that so many of our high school students and their families are overwhelmed at the prospect of navigating the college admissions process!

Finding and applying to the right colleges should be exciting and enriching, not incredibly stressful.

This guide will walk you through the steps and actions needed to significantly increase your chances of gaining acceptance to the best colleges in the country.

It'll share tips and strategies that you should be implementing each *year of high school* to impress college admissions counselors and earn acceptance to the college of your dreams.

Important Information:

We have the keys to developing an admissions strategy that will maximize your ability to gain admission to your dream school.

And while the concepts are simple to grasp, mastering them is very difficult.

Want to maximize your SAT/ACT scores?

Want to have a comprehensive and impactful high school resume that college admissions teams will love?

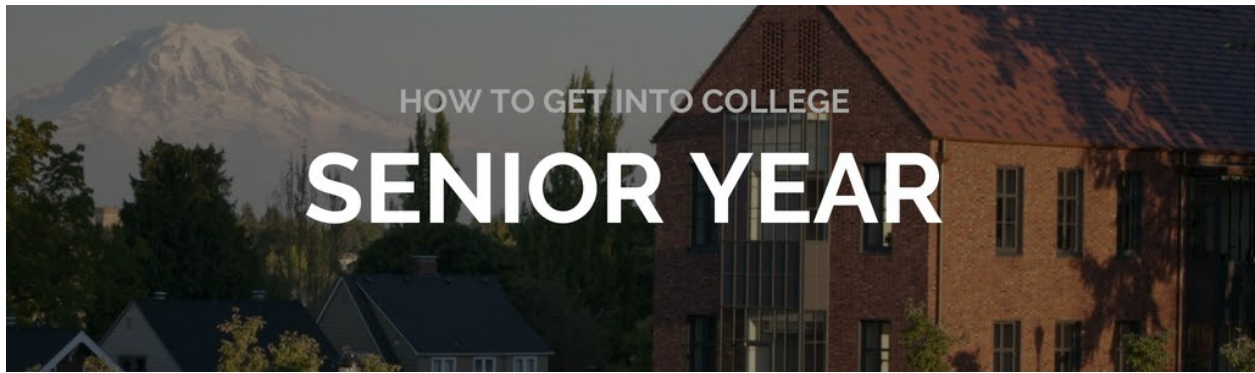
Want to write compelling and engaging college application essays?

To be successful in your quest to attend the school of your dreams, you **must start early, stay on track, and remain organized.**

Before we dive in, we want you to keep two themes in mind while reading this guide and preparing for college:

1. **The key to crafting an impactful college application is the ability to tell your story** in a comprehensive manner through essays, recommendations, extracurriculars, and leadership so that admissions officers are left with a strong sense of your talents, experiences, goals, and values. As early as possible, you should be thinking about what kind of story you'd like to tell and how you plan to tell it.
2. **When refining your college list in order to ultimately choose a college to attend, nothing is more important than fit.** Although it's discussed often, college fit is frequently ignored by students choosing a college. Don't choose a college because it makes others - friends, family, parents - excited, choose the college that makes you excited to attend and meets your fit criteria, regardless of how others feel. Others don't have to attend the college you choose, you do!

Let's get started!



Senior Year: The Final Sprint

"Greatness is a lot of small things done well everyday." - Lewis Howes

Senior year still requires a lot of work, but it should also be fun.

If you've taken advantage of the Summer before Senior year, you should be in great shape!

During your Senior year:

- **Officially decide which colleges you'd like to send an application.** At this point, your list of colleges should be around 10 or less schools. We recommend applying to somewhere between 4 and 8 schools. Make sure the list includes a few schools that are nearly certain to accept you, a few where your credentials are a solid match to previously accepted students, and 1-2 colleges that might be a bit of a stretch for acceptance*.

**It's worth noting that some top colleges, especially Ivy League colleges, should be considered a stretch regardless of your accomplishments given the incredibly high number of applications these colleges receive each year.*



- **Use Early Acceptance or Early Decision applications for the colleges at the top of your list:** If you've already written the essays and taken your SATs and/or ACTs, you should be able to take advantage of the early applications. These applications offer higher odds of acceptance, so be sure to use them at your top choice colleges.

Early Decision (ED) is when you apply to a college early, and if you get accepted, **you are obligated to attend that college (binding). Only use for a college that is your absolute dream school.**

With **Early Acceptance**, on the other hand, **you are not required to attend (non-binding)** that college if you get accepted.

Early Acceptance deadlines are usually somewhere between October 15th and December 15th.

If you choose to apply regular decision, you still have a lot of time (deadlines are typically between January and April) to pull the components of your application together.

- **Identify which teachers you'd like to write recommendations:** As early as possible (preferably the first week of school), identify and talk with the teachers you'd like to write your recommendations. Be clear with the teachers what characteristics, values, and accomplishments you'd like the recommendations to address so that they fit into your larger application narrative (essays, extracurriculars, course work, leadership experiences, etc.)



- **Work with your parents to complete and submit the FAFSA:** You will be able to submit the FAFSA on October 1st. It can be advantageous to your financial aid package to submit the FAFSA as early as possible, so prepare the paperwork ahead of time and submit the form on October 1.
- **If necessary, re-take the SAT and/or ACT in the Fall:** As previously mentioned, determine whether you need to re-take (or take for the first time) one of these tests and complete the test as early into the semester as possible.

- **Submit your application:** This is probably the most important item in this guide. Don't forget this step!
- **Begin hunting for and submitting scholarships:** Every extra bit of money helps. Speak with your career counselor about local scholarships, then use the internet to search for larger scholarships on the state and national level. Deadlines vary, but typically scholarship applications will be due sometime between January and April of your Senior year.

- **Have fun and enjoy yourself:** You front-loaded all of the work - the standardized tests and the completion of the essays over the summer - in order to enjoy your Senior year. Make sure you spend time savoring the experiences with friends and family.



- **Compare and contrast acceptance packages:** You will likely gain acceptance to multiple schools. Congrats! At this point, you need to spend time assessing the colleges and reviewing the financial aid packages offered with each college.

Your Senior Year Checklist:



Officially decide to which colleges you will apply.



Determine the deadlines you plan to follow for each college.



Identify the teacher(s) who you'd like to write recommendation letters.



Complete and submit the FAFSA.



Re-take the SAT and/or ACT if necessary.



Submit your applications.



Begin hunting and applying for scholarships.



Evaluate college acceptances and financial aid packages.