



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!



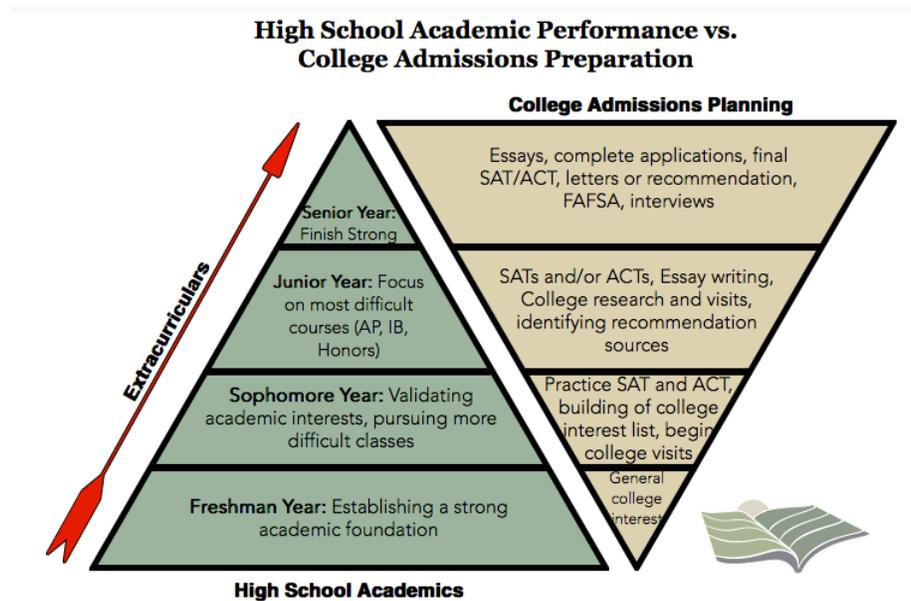
Freshman Year: Establishing the Foundation

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one." - Mark Twain

Your Freshman year is the time to establish a strong academic and extracurricular foundation while building the habits needed to succeed through high school and into college.

This year is centered around establishing the beginning of a strong high school resume and thinking through your future.

As you can see from the graphic, your freshman year is going to be focused on high school academics and extracurriculars. Not much time will be devoted to college admissions planning at this point.



Your Freshman year is about discovery and planning.

It's a time to better understand who you are as a person and a student, refine and build upon interests, plan for a rigorous high school curriculum, and begin extracurricular involvement.

During your freshman year:

- ***Excel in all classes:*** Establishing a base of academic success and the associated habits will be critical to your success throughout high school. Freshman year is the time to establish this foundation!
- ***Research extracurricular activities available at your high school and think about activities or clubs in your local community where you could become involved.***

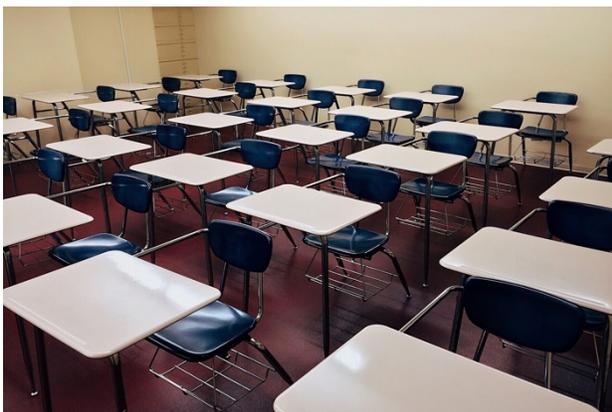
What types of athletics are available for you to participate in? What clubs are offered? What interests outside of the classroom are you curious about pursuing?

Too frequently we talk with high school freshman who feel too intimidated to try out for sport teams or too unsure of their interests to join any clubs.

Freshman year is all about giving things a shot.

Sitting on the sidelines will only instill habits that carry over to later high school years. When we meet high school seniors with compelling leadership experiences and significant extracurricular participation, we almost always find that they began their efforts in Freshman year.

- ***Visit your guidance/career counselor to discuss what types of classes you'd like to take Sophomore year.***



Are you curious about [AP classes](#)? Do you know what classes you'll need to take throughout high school? And when you'll need to take them?

By visiting your guidance/career counselor, you'll be able to sketch out a rough plan for your entire high school curriculum.

One of the most significant factors college admissions offices review when looking at an applicant is their “strength of curriculum.” In other words, did the student challenge themselves and take difficult classes as much as possible or did they load their schedule with lighter classes where they knew they would get better grades.

Remember, not all GPAs are equal! A student with a 3.8 GPA and a rigorous curriculum will fare better in the admissions process than a student with a 4.0 who took underwater basket weaving and 5 gym classes.

- ***Think about where you might gain leadership experience.***

College admissions counselors love students that take on leadership roles. You’re typically not expected to take on leadership roles during your Freshman year, but you should think about extracurriculars with a long-term mindset: In what areas of this activity or team might I play a future leadership role?

It might be through sports. It might be by starting a new club. It might be getting involved in activism and movements that you feel strongly about.

- ***Establish the habit of reading for leisure on a daily basis***

Frequent reading improves vocabulary, enhances writing abilities, improves scores on standardized tests, and builds a habit critical to success in college

While the reading assignments prescribed in high school curriculums are a great start, we believe students should also be reading books of their choosing.



- ***Engage early and frequently with parents***

We frequently find a lot of tension between students and parents about the college admissions process in the Junior and Senior years of high school.

One way to minimize this tension is to begin speaking with parents in the Freshman year about college interests. In doing so, expectations can be established and an agreed upon admissions timeline can be addressed up front.

- **Create your high school resume.**

You'll likely forget a lot of what you accomplished during your Freshman year when you're a Junior focused more heavily on college admissions.

Set a calendar reminder on your phone every 3 months. That calendar reminder is there for you to pull up your high school resume and add everything you did in the last 3 months.



This will allow you, come the time when you're filling out college applications, to have a complete list of all your high school accomplishments.

Summer After Freshman Year:



Summers are a critical time for you as a student. They provide lots of opportunity for you to grow and develop as a person.

- **Continue making your way through the high school leisure reading list.** Read other books that you enjoy.
- **Spend time relaxing** and enjoying your summer.
- **If you have the ability to get a part time job** at a coffee shop, pizza joint, or local business as an administrative helper, we recommend you do it.

College admissions counselors are impressed by real work experience. It's not typically a deciding factor in the admissions calculation, but it shows a willingness to get involved, frequently provides leadership experience, and helps admissions officers better understand your motivations and ability to work with others.

Your Freshman Year Checklist:



Excel in all classes.



Identify interesting extracurriculars that might allow for leadership experience down the road.



Establish a leisure reading habit.



Set expectations with your parents about college.



Create and maintain your high school resume.



Take advantage of the Summer to learn something new.