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**When should I start planning for college?**

For high school students, attending college may seem like a far-off dream at the moment. Your time in high school will soon fly by, so the sooner you start preparing for college, the more you’ll increase your chances of getting into the college of your dreams. Many young students put off planning for college, but when it’s left too late, you can find yourself in a very difficult situation. Today we’re going to look at the ideal time to start planning for college and how to create a solid plan for your educational path.

**Sophomore Year in High School**

During your sophomore year, you may feel that college is too far away to take an interest in. But that couldn’t be further from the truth. This is a great time to enjoy visiting college fairs, which your high school will likely put on during the academic year. This is a good year to take a critical look at your classes and extracurriculars, and it’s not too late to start something new if you know you lack in this area. Some students try and take the PSATs this year and also add advanced courses into their schedule.

**Junior Year**

By your junior year, you should be much more invested in the college application process. At this point, you’ll want to have a clear idea about the colleges you are planning to apply to and majors you are interested in taking. When you reach the end of your junior year, try and have your top five colleges selected and have visited each of them. This is a good time to improve your college application by adding extracurriculars, volunteering, and other activities into your life. In your junior year, we also recommend taking the time to look at your finances and consider college funding options. It’s best to prepare for this now than leave yourself in a panic after you’ve been accepted to your dream college.

**Senior Year**

By this point in your high school career, you should be getting very serious about your selections and application. Try to take the ACT or SAT test as early as possible, in case you need to have a second attempt. At this stage, we recommend looking at scholarships and funding options and start filling out the applications as required. Once taxes are filed this year, the FAFSA paperwork also needs to be completed.

While we always recommend getting ahead with college planning, naturally, some people neglect to think about this during the fun and madness of high school. Some students today decide to take a year off if they’ve failed to fully prepare, giving them extra time to get ready for this significant life event. Planning for college is a very individual and personal task and something that you’ll want to do when you are ready. However, it’s never too early to select the best classes for your college application. When choosing your high school classes, keep your college education in mind at all times, and you’ll set yourself up for success further down the road.