

How to Prepare

Whether you realize it or not, your journey to college has already begun.

What is college prep? To some, it's a specific academic path. To others, it's a tactical set of instructions – a “how to” manual that is not to be opened until senior year. But in actuality, every year of your academic career – from kindergarten to 12th grade – provides you with a different set of skills and experiences that prepare you for college gradually.

Because of this subtle *yet continual* preparation, when the time comes to apply to college, **students are often more prepared than they realize**. This is true for students at all levels – the ones who have planned on attending college since elementary school and the ones who are considering college for the first time as high school seniors.

College preparation is engrained in the essence of education – the ability to learn, the desire to explore, the persistence to grow, the determination to focus, and the motivation to apply.

Each of these fundamentals symbolizes a stepping-stone on the college timeline, and it's important to understand what takes place at each point:



Middle School

Middle School is about **learning**. It's about absorbing knowledge and enriching your mind both academically and socially – all while developing skills and study habits that will prepare you for high school, college and beyond.



9th Grade

9th grade is about meeting your counselor and **exploring** newfound opportunities available to you. Don't be afraid to challenge yourself or try something new. Your exploration will prepare you for college in ways you cannot imagine.



10th Grade

By 10th grade, your strengths are getting ready to blossom – but it's up to you to sustain your **growth** by developing new skills and maintaining involvement in activities.



11th Grade

The defining characteristic of 11th grade is **focus** – focus on your grades, focus on your entrance exams, focus on your college search, and of course...focus on *yourself*: the activities you enjoy and the interests you want to pursue.



12th Grade

12th grade is known as the year of **applying** to college, but it's *so much more* than that. It's also the year of applying your knowledge and interests to solidify your future. Sure, the emphasis is placed on submitting forms to a variety of schools – but what you're really doing is showcasing all that you've accomplished and all that makes you, *you*.

Remember: Preparing for college is not a sprint. The years leading up to college should not be rushed to prevent falling behind because there is no such thing as finishing last. Everyone advances towards college at his or her own pace, and ultimately all that matters is the thoughtfulness of your process – not the speed at which you complete it.