

STEP 3

EXPLORE COLLEGE CHOICES

It can be fun exploring all the choices you have for college, but it may also be a little overwhelming. Start early so you can enjoy it as much as possible.

- Ask your high-school counselor to suggest several colleges that fit your interests and achievements.
- Start exploring college Websites. If the school interests you, download, e-mail or call for a comprehensive "college guide" (sometimes called a "viewbook"). These publications offer good, basic information about majors, enrollment, tuition, housing, student life and more.
- Meet the college admission representatives when they visit your high school, or meet them at a college fair or college night event. Bring your parents along to help gather information.
- Visit as many of your favorite colleges as possible to get the best sense of the school's spirit and personality. Besides touring the campus, ask if you can sit in on a class, talk with faculty and students, or even spend the night in a residence hall. You should also plan to meet with representatives from the admission and financial aid offices.



STEP 4

GEAR UP FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Regular study during high school will prepare you to make your best showing on the important national tests, such as the PSAT, PLAN, ACT and SAT.

First take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) and/or the PLAN pre-ACT test to get used to the standardized test format and types of questions. Then try to take the ACT and/or SAT. When you take the ACT or SAT, you can request that your text scores be sent directly to several colleges of your choice.

Cramming at the last minute doesn't help very much. You're better off getting two or three good nights of sleep before the test. Take the tests seriously, but don't put too much pressure on yourself. Colleges do look at test scores in admission consideration, but they also look at your entire academic record and extracurricular activities.

You may also retake the tests to try to improve your score. According to ACT, 55% of students who retake the test improve their scores. You may also prepare for the tests by going through study guides or taking a special class. For more information about preparing for college entrance tests, please talk with your high-school guidance counselor.



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Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

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GET A STEP AHEAD

Plan now for your college future



GET A STEP AHEAD

Did you know you've already started to take some of the most important steps to prepare for college? Because most colleges accept students at the beginning of their senior year in high-school, the record you establish for yourself during your first three years in high-school will play an important part in getting accepted into the college you choose.

A FOUR-STEP PLAN TO SUCCESS—STARTING NOW!

1. Choose the right courses in high-school.
2. Practice smart study techniques.
3. Explore your college choices.
4. Gear up for your college entrance exams.

Let's take a closer look at how you can accomplish each of these important steps.

STEP 1 CHOOSE THE RIGHT COURSES

Colleges like to see applicants who have college preparatory courses on their high-school transcripts. Choose job-related courses only after you've built a college preparatory foundation. A course or two in music or art can round out your choices. Keep working to advance your computer skills. The more software programs you know, the better off you will be. You'll need word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software capabilities more than ever in college.

At many colleges, courses taken during the first two years explore a wide variety of subjects. These courses make up the general requirements or, as they're often called, the Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum gives you a solid educational base for choosing your "major," the area in which you will concentrate as much as a third or more of your studies. Core courses include academic areas like English composition, communication, and history, along with the natural, social, behavioral and mathematical sciences.

Whether or not you've decided on your major, you should review the accompanying chart (below). It outlines the basic categories of college majors and shows you the types and number of high school courses recommended for each category. Note that the chart even includes a category if you are undecided about your major.

COLLEGE MAJORS AND HIGH-SCHOOL COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS

Major Area of Study	ENGLISH	SOCIAL STUDIES	FOREIGN LANGUAGE	BIOLOGY	CHEMISTRY	PHYSICS	ALGEBRA I	GEOMETRY	ALGEBRA II/TRIGONOMETRY	ADVANCED MATH
Biology, Bioinformatics, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Forensic Science, Physics	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Business, Sport Management	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1		1	1	1	1
Computer Science, Mathematics, Software Development†	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nursing, Pre-Health Professions	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Education, Psychology, Social Work	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1		1	1	1	
Criminal Justice, Journalism, Political Science, Pre-Law	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1		1	1	1	
Undecided	4	2-3	2-4*	1	1		1	1	1	

*Many universities have a foreign language requirement; some may waive this requirement if you have had two to four years of one foreign language in high school.

†Note: Loyola University Chicago offers 69 undergraduate majors, including all of the majors listed here.

STEP 2 STUDY SMART

You don't have to be told that studying takes much concentration, organization and hard work. If you study smart, you'll still have plenty of time for a life outside of books. Here are some tips.

- Use time wisely. Plan to get your studying done before other demands take over, such as sports, a part-time job or your social life. Schedule some study time every day rather than cramming it all in during marathon sessions once or twice a week.
- Take full advantage of study time at school in the library or study hall.
- Tackle your most difficult or least favorite subjects first. Save the best for last. And mix them up. For example, break up reading assignments with math or a writing assignment.
- Take good notes in class and review them later.
- Mark the most important points, in textbooks or handouts with a highlighter.
- Use a dictionary or thesaurus whenever you need help understanding a word or phrase.



- Talk about your courses with your fellow students. Get together with a small group of two or three to review before tests. Someone else may have picked up on an important point you missed.
- As you read, stop after each page or section to review what you've just learned. Practice putting the major points into your own words. You'll remember them better.
- Review and repetition will help you connect the major themes and ideas in your courses.
- Give yourself plenty of time, especially for written assignments.
- Start long-range assignments, such as term papers, book reports and research papers, as soon as you get the assignment. Don't wait until the last minute to crunch something out.

