

[Menu](#)

[Home](#) » [Prepare for College](#) » [Checklists for Academic and Financial Preparation](#) » 9th Grade Checklists



Ninth grade is an important year in a student's college-preparation journey.

*Learn how a student can have a well-rounded experience in high school and how a parent can support his or her child.*

## Students

### To Do:

- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects. Most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.), three years of mathematics, and three years of science, and many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts.
- Work with one of your parents to estimate your financial aid using [FAFSA4caster](#) and be sure to save for college.
- Get involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you or let you explore career interests. Consider working, volunteering, and/or participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, or science. Remember—it's quality (not quantity) that counts.
- Ask your guidance counselor or teachers what [Advanced Placement](#) courses are available, whether you are eligible, and how to enroll in them.
- Use the U.S. Department of Labor's [career search tool](#) to research your career options.
- Start a list of your awards, honors, paid and volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. Update it throughout high school.

### To Explore:

- Check out [KnowHow2Go: The Four Steps to College](#), which suggests some actions you can take as you start thinking about education beyond high school.
- Learn about [managing your money](#).
- Explore [reasons to consider college](#) and [ways you can get help](#) preparing.

## Parents

### To Do:

- Talk to your child about college plans as if he or she will definitely go to college.
- Keep an eye on your child’s study habits and grades—stay involved.
- Encourage your child to take [Advanced Placement](#) or other challenging classes.
- Add to your child’s college savings account regularly; and make sure you are fully aware of the provisions of the account.




### To Explore:

- Address your concerns about [whether your child can or should go to college](#).
- Get tips from [Help Your Child Improve in Test-Taking](#).
- Read [“Parent Power”](#) to access ideas for remaining involved in your child’s progress.

## Quick Links

- [10th Grade Checklists](#)
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17

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