



A Short Checklist for Sophomore Year

☐ Reaffirm your good habits

By now, you know a little more about what to expect in high school. If you had a rocky freshman year, it's okay! Sophomore year is a fresh start! Focus on keeping an upward trajectory in your grades, your activities, and more! This is the year to further refine how you manage your time, keep up with deadlines, take notes, and figure out a study plan that works for you. **Keep taking advantage of tutoring** and meeting with your teachers to ask questions. If you show your teachers that you are genuinely invested in learning the material, they will be more patient in making sure that you fully understand the concepts. By establishing these good relationships with teachers, you are also providing yourself with a selection of teachers to ask for recommendation letters your senior year.

☐ Challenge yourself & Keep your grades up

Colleges (and some future employers) want to see that you took advantage of the challenging courses offered at our school. This does not mean that you have to take all Pre-AP, AP, IB, or dual-credit classes, but it means that the rigor of your course load should start increasing! If you are in regular classes, consider adding Pre-AP classes. If you are in Pre-AP classes, consider taking the AP counterpart. If there's something that you want to learn but isn't offered through AP, take a dual-credit course! *Colleges will specifically look at course selections and grades in your sophomore and junior years!*

Remember: College is an academic decision. This means that your overall transcript may carry a heavier weight in the admissions process than your SAT or ACT scores, but it certainly will carry more of a weight than your extracurricular resume! Don't assume that a lot of activities will make up for low grades.

☐ Start refining your résumé

Every student should start building a résumé. Sophomores should take the opportunities to join clubs and other activities and work to become a leader in those clubs/activities. If you haven't done so already, join a club, a team, or organization, volunteer consistently for a community organization you believe in, get involved at church or even political events. If you have to work to support your family or take care of family members, that counts, too! Whatever you do with your time, make sure you are passionate about it. You'll want to keep a list of what you are doing, how much time you are investing, and the impact you've had so you can refer to it later on in high school! If you want to make sure you always have it, make sure to store it on your mycoalition.org profile.

☐ Continue your college/career research

You've already got a profile on www.mycoalition.org, so it's a great place to start understanding which schools offer the best financial aid and have high graduation rates! You'll probably want to expand your search though, so make sure you set up an account on www.collegedata.com. This will allow you to search by the percentage of need-met financial aid available. The closer you are to 100%, the better chance you will have to have an affordable college option.

As you think about careers, consider things that you that make you happy and that you are good at. Usually people who perform well in their jobs and who receive personal satisfaction from what they do on a daily basis. Remember, there's always more than one way to get to your chosen career. Don't be afraid to ask college admissions representatives for more information on career advising. Most adults are happy to share what they studied and how they got to where they are. Don't be afraid to ask more about their journey through college and to their career. It may look different than you think!

☐ **Plan a productive summer**

Find a way to fill your time that allows you to make a positive impact on our community (and look good on a résumé). If you want to spend time with your friends, get them involved and do it together! Talk to your ASP College Advisor about summer opportunities and encourage your parents to attend ASP Parent Meetings to learn more about why this is important!

☐ **Study for the SAT, ACT, and PSAT**

As a sophomore, you have another opportunity to take the PSAT! This will help you prepare for the SAT or ACT, and you can link your PSAT score to your Khan Academy account for personalized SAT prep! The ACT also offers free test prep through their website, www.actstudent.org.

Remember: your SAT and/or ACT score will be important for scholarships from the Texas public colleges and universities. A good score might also open up a lot more admissions opportunities. That being said, if you're not a strong test taker, you'll still have opportunities through test-optional admissions. The best news, however, is that the SAT and ACT can absolutely be studied for; putting in the time now will provide more opportunities later on!

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