

Junior Year College Search Tips

Familiarize yourself with the process. Khan Academy has a free resource on the [College Admission Process](#) which has good information. Remember it's a long process and won't be done in one sitting. To do a little at a time is awesome, doing more research closer and into the spring/summer.

Do a college search to start creating a list of schools that fit your interests. Use [Big Future college search](#). (Big Future is run by the College Board, and they also have a [College Search Step - by - Step Guide](#)). Log in to save your search. Spend some time looking at the schools on the list and make a running list of those that interest you.

Check out the websites/visit campuses for the schools you are considering. Specific sections of websites to pay attention to are the academic departments you're interested in, "Fast Facts" or "About", and the admission page. Do a virtual or in-person event (tour, info session, current student panel, interview, etc.). If you cannot visit a school on your list, see if there is a similar one that makes it easier to visit (i.e. it's closer/allows in-person visits). The more schools you interact with the more information you will have to make decisions for yourself.

Get organized! If you have a list of schools to consider/apply to, [open a Google Sheet](#) or some other way of keeping track of deadlines, account usernames and passwords, requirements, contacts, etc. for each school.

Take the PSAT (Fall) and SAT (Spring) in school. Connect your results to [Khan Academy](#) through your College Board Account for FREE individualized practice. Check out [Test-Optional colleges](#).

Consider any junior year teachers that you might ask for letters of recommendation. You can start filling out the [Teacher Recommendation Request form](#) and [Counselor Recommendation Request form](#) to prepare for the fall.

Create your [Common Application account](#) and aim to do as much as you can before school starts (you don't have to finish the entire application, just create the basic account info to get familiar with Common App and start the Common App tab). Check out their [First-Time Applicant Guide](#). Not all schools accept the Common Application, but many (1000+) do!

Write a first draft of your essay before school starts next fall - the [Common App essay prompts are online](#) (already updated for 23-24). As always, the College Essay Guy has [essay examples](#) and essay guides.

Talk about college costs with those who are supporting you. The [FAFSA](#) isn't available until December 1, 2023 for the 2024-25 school year, but you will want to have an open and honest conversation with family who might financially support you in college. Use [Net Price Calculators](#) to research college costs, and check out [Tuition Break for CT Residents](#).