

9th Grade - Freshmen

Checklist for College Planning

- ❑ Work to your full academic potential. The grades you earn in ninth grade will be included in your final high school GPA and class rank. This is important for college admissions and scholarships. The better your grades, the more money colleges will give you.



- ❑ Participate in extracurricular activities (school and non-school sponsored). These activities are looked at closely when determining and offering scholarships. Church activities, mission trips, community volunteer service, summer jobs, scouting, etc. are all important. Be involved and keep track of your involvement on your High School Resume, especially areas indicating leadership or personal initiative.

- ❑ Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. Continue or begin a savings plan for college. A few colleges take student work instead of payment for tuition. You can find these by going to the Path to College page on The Nest.



- ❑ Tour a nearby college if possible. Attend college trips offered by GCA. As you travel, or when you visit relatives or friends who live on or near a college campus, stop by for a visit. Check out the campus, the dorms, the library, and the student center, and pick up a school catalog while you are there.

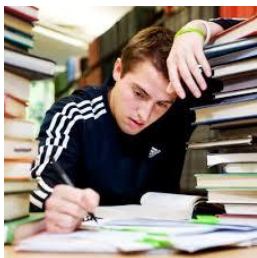
❑ Attend college fairs. This is a great way to receive materials as well as speak to college representatives about their school. Prestonwood Baptist Church generally offers a Christian college fair in September.

- ❑ Look at college information online and start organizing the information you want to keep in folders or a binder. Begin making a preliminary list of colleges that might interest you. Consider making a spreadsheet so you can compare schools.

- ❑ Investigate summer enrichment programs. Do you have an interest in economics? Attend the FEE economics camp! It's practically free and looks great on your college resume. Do you have an interest in art or technology or-- NAME your topic of interest--? Find a camp or a seminar or a volunteer experience that will help you learn more about it. You can search online and you can ask adults that you know in the industry in which you are interested whether they have opportunities for high school students to learn more about their field. Volunteer to work for free. Often, you'll get an experience that will propel you into your career that is worth more than what you might earn in a summer.



- ❑ Read, read, read. Read as many books as possible from comprehensive reading lists and learn about current affairs. **Extensive reading** should be ongoing throughout high school. When you apply to college and for scholarships, you will be expected to know how to use literature and current events to illustrate your points. That means that learning to **analyze literature and current events and apply them to real life** and your own personal life is highly valuable and can earn you money in the form of scholarships.



- ❑ Work continuously on your **writing skills**. Extensive writing should be ongoing throughout high school. Learn to organize your thoughts and practice so that you can write an essay at a moment's notice. Get so **familiar with the essay format** that it becomes as easy as making your bed. You will need this skill when applying for scholarships, when making presentations, and during college. The essay format is the most useful writing format you will learn while in high school.
 - ❑ Begin in ninth grade to maintain and save in an organized manner the important information about yourself that you will later need to meet your college admission requirements, complete college scholarship applications, etc. We suggest that all students begin in their ninth grade year to maintain a personal portfolio for college applications. This would consist of a 6-pocket or tabbed organizer with the following categories:
 1. Transcripts (diploma plan, grades, PSAT scores, ACT & SAT scores, etc.)
 2. Extra-Curricular Activities (student council, athletics, clubs, church activities, music, mission trips, community service, scouting, etc.)
 3. Service Projects and Jobs (volunteer opportunities and paid opportunities)
 4. Awards/Honors (academic, athletic, service, leadership, job recognition, etc.)
 5. Pictures (of activities related to any of the above topics: mission trips, academic banquets, competitions, etc.)
 6. College Related Information (SAT/ACT test dates, essay recommendation tips, yearly task list for college preparation, etc.)
 - ❑ Starting with the summer after your 8th grade year, record your community service (volunteer) hours in FACTS Family Portal. Your total number of volunteer hours per year will print out on your high school transcript.
 - ❑ Be aware of tardies and absences
 - 3 unexcused tardies = 1 unexcused absence
 - 3 unexcused absences = 1 letter grade drop - An "A" will become a "B"
 - 6 absences per class per semester allowed that meets 3 times per week
 - 4 absences per class per semester allowed that meets 2 times per week
 - 1 absence per class per semester allowed that meets 1 time per week
- If you exceed the allowable absences, then you will not receive credit for the course.