

DISCOVER • EXPLORE • SELECT • ACHIEVE

COLLEGE CHECKLIST



FloridaShines.org

If you're thinking about going to college after high school, but aren't quite sure where to begin, here are some important steps you'll want to take each year to help yourself prepare for college success.

	9th Grade — <i>Discover</i> —	10th Grade — <i>Explore</i> —	11th Grade — <i>Select</i> —	12th Grade — <i>Achieve</i> —
FALL	<input type="checkbox"/> Discover your interests. Begin thinking about colleges and careers that fit well with your interests. <input type="checkbox"/> Your high school counselors are great resources. Make an appointment to meet with one of them and seek their advice on college planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Go to FloridaShines.org and use the handy College and Career Planner to choose the right classes to prepare you for college.	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice makes perfect! Take the PSAT to get some practice and to familiarize yourself with the SAT. <input type="checkbox"/> Start preparing for the ACT by completing the Plan Assessment from College. <input type="checkbox"/> Your GPA counts! Stay on track with your courses. If you're struggling, ask your teacher for help. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin exploring careers that might interest you. <input type="checkbox"/> A fun way to learn about Florida's 40 colleges and universities is by visiting FloridaShines.org and using the College and University Profiles tool.	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to stay on track in your classes. Build up that GPA! <input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT to get more practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate educational options. <input type="checkbox"/> Start building a list of your top five colleges. The College and University Profiles tool at FloridaShines.org lists the admission requirements, deadlines, and other important information about each public college and university in Florida. <input type="checkbox"/> Know the dates and locations of the SAT, ACT and other tests you might be planning to take, and put them on your calendar.	<input type="checkbox"/> Check requirements and deadlines for the colleges of your choice. <input type="checkbox"/> Florida students: Complete your Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA). <input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT and/or ACT. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask references for letters of recommendation. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and submit all your college applications by their deadlines. <input type="checkbox"/> Winter: Apply for Financial Aid. Submit your FAFSA (by the end of February) along with any other financial aid forms required by the college.

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SPRING	<input type="checkbox"/> Get involved. Clubs, activities, and community involvement look great on a college application. <input type="checkbox"/> Record and keep track of your credentials (awards, volunteer hours, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Start learning about college. Look at the information available in your counselor's office, at the library, and on the web.	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin your college search. Go to www.FloridaShines.org and check out the College and University Profiles tool. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider taking SAT subject tests. Ask your school's guidance counselor for more information about these valuable prep tools. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin putting together a job resume. Even if you're not ready to get a job, learning how to write and present a resume is a skill that will come in handy throughout your life.	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for scholarships. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete your College Scholarship Service. <input type="checkbox"/> Build community service hours needed for Bright Futures Scholarships. (Florida students) <input type="checkbox"/> Contact individuals who will be writing your letters of recommendations and begin. <input type="checkbox"/> Plan college visits. <input type="checkbox"/> Organize financial aid information. <input type="checkbox"/> Start college application essays.	<input type="checkbox"/> March: Admission letters begin arriving. Watch for them in the mail! <input type="checkbox"/> April: Compare financial aid packages. <input type="checkbox"/> May 1: Make a final choice of the college you will attend. <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate high school!
SUMMER	<input type="checkbox"/> Make your summer count. Continue to build credentials (awards, volunteer hours, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> Find a summer job! A steady summer job can offer valuable work experience, allows you to network, and will help you along your path to college and a successful career.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay involved in extra-curricular activities, and seek out leadership roles in your community that will look good to colleges.	<input type="checkbox"/> Congratulations! You are well on your way to earning your college degree.