



RIPON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

COLLEGE PREPARATION ORGANIZER

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Grades are important! The grades you earn this year affect your overall GPA. Colleges and employers will use your overall GPA to help determine what kind of student or employee you will be. Colleges use these grades to determine admission and scholarship possibilities. Plus, students with high GPA's receive car insurance breaks (this will make your parents very happy!)
- Be organized. Know when your work is due and set short-term and long-term goals for success.
- Get involved in clubs and activities in and out of school. These activities will enable you to get to know more people, develop you into a more complete person, and will make you more appealing to colleges.
- Take time to consider different career goals. Talk to people who are in these fields of interest. Take classes that correspond with these goals. Read to expand your vocabulary.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

- Consider different fields of interest and connect these with corresponding college majors. This will help you to narrow down colleges that have programs that are of interest.
- Discuss your PLAN test results with your counselor.
- Choose classes that will challenge you intellectually and will benefit you in determining possible college majors.
- Research colleges and majors in which you have an interest.
- Keep reading to develop your vocabulary for next year's PSAT test.
- Consider registering for ACT or SAT in the spring
- Keep seeking God's guidance as you start to consider upper-level class choices, colleges, and career paths.



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JUNIOR YEAR

September

- Get serious about your schoolwork if you have not already done so. It is often believed that the junior year is one of the most difficult in high school. By taking difficult and challenging college prep courses, you will likely score higher on the ACT test in the spring.
- Talk to your parents about financial limitations regarding college funding. The amount they are able to contribute or how they feel about going to school far away may limit the number of colleges you are considering.
- Start researching scholarships. You may find useful information on the website under 'scholarships' or by trying www.finaid.org and www.fastweb.com. Avoid scholarship scams! If anyone asks you to pay to find scholarships, just say NO!
- If you are considering trying out for an athletic team or extra-curricular area in college and you know of colleges you are interested in, make sure the coach or one of the instructors in the department knows who you are. Express interest in their program.

October/November

- After taking the PSAT, talk to your counselor about classes you could take or how to improve your score in a specific area.
- Always ask for God's guidance when making any decision, whether it big as big as a college choice or what classes you should take next year.

January/February

- Find out what type of college entrance test you may need to take. There are some colleges requiring ACT/SAT. You can get into many schools without the test, but it could affect your academic award or scholarship opportunities. See FairTest for test optional/required schools. <https://fairtest.org/>
- Pick up an ACT/SAT test package from your counselor and register for the April or June test date. Register on-line at www.act.org or www.collegeboard.com

March/April

- If you did not register to take the April ACT, register to take it in June.

Summer

- Request college applications from colleges you are interested in attending.
- Begin thinking about which colleges you wish to visit.
- Talk to your parents about financial aid.
- Let God be at the front of your college decision-making process.
- Keep reading to expand your vocabulary.



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SENIOR YEAR

September

- Check your course list and make sure you have met not only RC's graduation requirements, but also those of the colleges you are considering.
- Get the applications for the colleges in which you are interested. Some colleges waive the admission fee if the application is submitted by a certain date.
- Continue to pray for God's guidance as you seek His will regarding college choices.
- Check out scholarship programs at the colleges to which you apply. Also check scholarship sites and local scholarship opportunities. By taking the initiative you may just get the scholarship and even if it is only for one year, it is less money for you to supply.
- Give out recommendation forms and stamped envelopes addressed to the college's admission offices. Take time to consider who is the best person to fill out each recommendation. Give the recommendations out FAR in ADVANCE! Check with the person giving the recommendation about a week before the deadline to make sure they have everything they need and as a gentle reminder. Remember to thank those who wrote the recommendations.
- As you schedule visits with admissions and financial-aid advisors, consider also visiting with faculty and students in the department in which you are interested.
- Register to take the ACT or SAT for the first time, or again if you are unsatisfied with your first result.
- If you are going to a community college, junior college, or technical school, check to find out if there is an entrance exam, and if there is, set up a date to take the test.
- Visit with the college reps you are interested in when they visit your school. Check the counseling web page or the schedule posted outside the counseling office for more information about specific times.

October

- Make sure you fill out a transcript form legibly and completely to the colleges you are interested in so the counselors will be able to process your request as quickly as possible.
- Remember that December is the last ACT test date in order for the results to count toward college scholarships.
- Begin application process
- Remember to check application deadlines for CSU's and UC's
- Get FSA ID
- FAFSA filing open



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SENIOR YEAR CONTINUED

November

- End of application period for CSU's and UC's
- Check college-specific scholarship deadlines

December

- Most applications should be completed by December.
- Mail in your scholarship applications. Do not wait until the last possible minute to fill them out or ask for recommendations.

January

- Attend the Financial Aid Night at school with your parents. Get your FAFSA form there or apply online at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- Fill out the FAFSA with your parents and send it off. Remind them that they need to have their income tax forms completed first before they can accurately fill out the FAFSA.

February

- Check whether all your application/scholarship materials have arrived at the colleges you are considering.
- Local scholarship applications are due

March/April

- Evaluate your financial aid offers. This should help you determine where to go and notify the college you select by their stated deadline.
- Be steadfast in giving your college decisions over to God. Let Him guide your path.
- Fill out housing forms if you are living on campus.
- Contact colleges for acceptance or decline of enrollment for next year
- Stay on top of all deadlines and check your college email for important forms and reminders

Summer

- Notify the financial aid office if there have been any changes in your family's financial circumstances that might make you eligible for additional aid. Perhaps one of your parents was laid off, or there was a major illness in the family.
- Know that God will continue to lead and support you as you leave Ripon Christian and begin the next step in your academic career.