

Action Plan: Your Sophomore

<http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/>

Now that your sophomore is in the swing of things, it's time to put the pedal to the metal and get serious on building up academics. From taking challenging electives to discovering extracurricular activities, there are many important steps your child should take this year.

Fall

- Your child should review his four-year academic schedule with his [school counselor](#). He may want to ask questions such as:
 - Am I fulfilling my minimum [requirements for college](#) admissions?
 - Are the [electives](#) I'm enrolled in challenging enough?
- Help your child update his four-year [extracurricular and athletic activity](#) schedule. Encourage him to think about new sports, instruments, or other activities he may be interested in exploring.
- Contact the school counselor about whether or not your child should register for the Preliminary SAT®/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test ([PSAT/NMSQT®](#)), given in October. Honors-level students may consider taking the PSAT/NMSQT. Though most students take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall of junior year, Valerie Trautman, a guidance counselor in Rockland County, New York, explains that students who are very academically focused and have excelled in honors programs may want to take the test earlier. She suggests that taking the test can help your child assess strengths and weaknesses, which will help when taking the test in the future.
- Meet with [your child's teachers](#) for a brief chat at the beginning of the school year.

Winter

- Read the latest news on today's [college costs](#) and how [financial aid](#) works.
- Use the [Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\) Calculator](#) to estimate how much your family can reasonably be expected to pay toward college.
- Use the [College Savings Calculator](#) to see how much money your family will need for college, whether you're on track to save enough, and what you need to do to reach your goal.
- Read! Read! Read! Remember, reading helps prepare your child academically for college, while developing his interests, expanding his knowledge, and improving his vocabulary and reading comprehension skills needed for college and for standardized tests, such as the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT®, and SAT Subject Tests™. Get ideas for reading from [101 Great Books](#).

Spring

- Many colleges require or recommend one or more of the [SAT Subject Tests](#) for admission or placement. Your child can take [SAT Subject Tests](#) when he has successfully completed the corresponding course in high school study (B+ average or better). He should talk to his teachers and counselor about which tests to take.
- Encourage your child to keep up the good work in subjects he's strong in, and help him set goals for improvement in weaker areas.
- Your child should meet with a school counselor to discuss possible [AP® courses](#) to take during junior year.

- Encourage your child to start making summer plans. Consider [jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities](#), or athletic programs.
- Your child can check with a school counselor and search online for [summer learning programs](#) offered to high school students at colleges and other institutions.

Summer

- Your child should finalize summer plans.
- Help your child [register online](#) early for fall SAT tests.
- Review your child's [summer reading list](#). Ask teachers for recommendations. Encourage him to read at least four books this summer.