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Preparing for College

When a 9th grader walks into high school for the first time, the last thing they’d have on their mind would be college. However, it is important to realize just how early one should start to work towards making their college profile look good. The more effort a student puts into high school, the wider their college opportunities will be.

The very first thing a college is going to look at when considering a student for admission is either one’s GPA, or test scores. A total GPA averages the grades a student receives over the course of their entire high school career, so it is important to get good grades earlier on, so that one won’t be playing catch-up with their grades in their upper-class years. This becomes even more important if a student chooses to pursue either IB classes, or the coveted IB diploma. While colleges do like to see the IB diploma, and value IB classes more than normal ones, they are not worth doing if one barely gets through with C’s and D’. All in all, GPA is relevant throughout all of high school, and should not be overlooked.

The other primary factor in college admission is a student’s SAT/ACT score. These tests become important to address later in one’s sophomore year, and should be studied for several months in advance. The tests are much different than the way most normal tests are written, have a very particular way of being worded, and are limited heavily by time. Whichever test is chosen, sophomores and juniors should take a good deal of time just learning the format of the test, as well as spending time running practice problems to better understand the types of questions that will be asked. Fortunately, the current world situation at the very least allows healthy high schoolers a good deal of time to do all this preparation.

*Photo courtesy of Chegg*

As one can see, the primary methods for getting into college are quite shallow frankly. While many colleges can look past GPA and SAT scores if a student’s other qualities and traits are redeeming enough, many important scholarships that can make or break a student being able to afford college are just based off of GPA and SAT numbers. Thus it is much simpler to just play out the grade/score game for college.

Unlike high school, enrolling for college allows students a certain level of freedom, specifically the ability to choose which college a student would like to attend. Applying for colleges usually occurs early during senior year, and most are due around December. Most seniors finalize their college of choice in spring. College choice should be entirely based upon a student’s interests and desires, not their parents, as the student is ultimately the one going to learn and find their own way in the world. Another important college factor is the location and environment of the college. A student should make sure that the college they are interested in is located in a place that they would enjoy living in for the next 4 years of their life. This makes visiting colleges is extremely important in coming to a sound decision.

Therefore, college should be considered throughout all of high school. The more time one spends preparing for college, the more options they will have.



*Photo courtesy of Belmont University*