TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 11-3 ▲ JUNIOR-SENIOR CALENDAR

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Students will identify the time-sensitive tasks they must complete for college applications.
* Students will describe their progress toward graduation and postsecondary.

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Junior-Senior Postsecondary Preparation Checklist
* College Admission Tips

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Discuss students’ plans.** Ask students to work in small groups to discuss: (a) what they plan to do after graduation; and (b) what steps they have taken to prepare. After a few minutes of discussion, ask for a volunteer from each group to summarize their conversation. Make sure students realize that junior and senior year are crucial to prepare for postsecondary education and training. Whether they want to go to four-year college, community or technical college, get an apprenticeship, or get a job, now is their time to prepare.
2. **Review junior and senior year milestones.** Distribute the *Junior-Senior Postsecondary Preparation Checklist*. Note that this calendar applies to all students, no matter what type of postsecondary education they want. The tasks may be slightly different, but all students will need to take entrance or placement exams, decide what they want to do, and then apply. Please remind students this is a starting place, not a finalized “to do” list – encourage them to personalize and add items to the “other” category.
3. **Answer calendar questions.** Distribute the *Junior-Senior Postsecondary Preparation Checklist* and ask students to answer the questions individually or in small groups. Share the *College Admission Tips* and help students incorporate these helpful tips into their discussions. Help students arrange individual meetings to make postsecondary progress.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Junior-Senior Postsecondary Preparation Checklist***

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

* Your school might wish to schedule time for counselors to meet with juniors and seniors to discuss their postsecondary plans and help them develop schedules for applications. A family College Night for students and their families could also be helpful to engage families in the application process. In addition, you may wish to share the following resources to help students and their families learn more about preparing for, applying to, attending, and paying for college.
* **College Board:** [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)   
  College search, career/major search, exam prep and registration, financial aid info
* **ACT:** [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)   
  College search, career planning, exam prep and registration, financial aid info
* **Know How 2 Go:** [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org)
* **First in the Family:** [www.firstinthefamily.org](http://www.firstinthefamily.org)

**ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS**

* **Essential Academic Learning Requirements Grades 9/10 Grade Level Expectations:** This lesson is aligned with Writing 2.2.1 and 3.2.1. Students will analyze detailed information and then complete a writing exercise that incorporates that information and is prepared in a manner appropriate for a college search.
* **Common Core State Standards Grades 11-12:** This lesson is aligned with English Language Arts Writing 2d, 4, and 7. Students will use clear, coherent, and precise language and domain-specific vocabulary. They will use multiple sources of information to write about the college application process.
* **American School Counselor Association National Standards:** This lesson is aligned with ASCA Academic A2.1, A3.2, and B2.7. Students will apply time management skills and demonstrate the ability to work independently. They will identify postsecondary options that are consistent with their interests, achievement, aptitude, and abilities.

TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 11-3 STUDENT HANDOUT

JR-SR POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION CHECKLIST

How can you make the most of junior and senior years? Whether you hope to attend a four-year university or a community or technical college, join the military, begin an apprenticeship, or go into the workforce, you will follow many of the same steps. Note that there are other steps you may need to take (depending on your goals, interests, and requirements) so be sure to personalize with the “other” box.

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| **JUNIOR YEAR** |

**FALL: Begin taking required entrance exams and research colleges and programs**

* If you are planning on attending a four-year college, take the PSAT in fall of junior year.
* Research postsecondary programs by learning more about: the type of program (four-year, two-year, apprenticeship) and the major you are interested in; where you want to live; job opportunities in your field; and financial aid.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**WINTER/SPRING: Register for and take required entrance exams**

For a four-year college:

* Take the SAT and/or ACT in spring of junior year.
* Take AP tests for any AP classes you have taken.
* Consider taking SAT Subject Tests.

For community college:

* Check with your colleges. If desired, take the ASSET, COMPASS or ACCUPLACER tests to check your academic progress.

For the military:

* Take the ASVAB in spring of junior year for practice.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SPRING/SUMMER: Develop a list of colleges and plan your application strategy**

* Develop a list of 10 to 20 colleges or programs that interest you.
* Visit colleges that interest you. Sign up for a tour so they’ll know you were there!
* Finalize your list of colleges and programs. Be sure your list includes “safety” and “reach” schools. Request application and information packets from each program.
* Register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse if you plan on competing in Division I or Division II college sports.
* Register for fall entrance exams.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| **SENIOR YEAR** |

**SEPTEMBER: Plan your application strategy**

* Meet with your guidance counselor to talk about your postsecondary plans. Ask about the tests you should take and whether you should apply for Early Decision or Early Action.
* Review your transcript to make sure you are on track to graduate on time. Get help if needed.
* Learn the application process for each college. Get started on the applications now! Start writing your application essays.
* Update your resume with your senior year activities. Your resume will help you with your applications. Plus, you’ll want to share it with people who are writing recommendations for you.
* Ask teachers, counselors, coaches, or employers for letters of recommendation. Give them plenty of time. Make sure you give them a copy of your resume plus the recommendation form and a stamped envelope (if needed).
* Be sure to write a thank you to each person who writes you a letter of recommendation!
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER: Take required entrance exams**

Depending on your plans and the requirements of your college choices, register and take one or more of these tests. Talk with your guidance counselor or contact your postsecondary choices if you need more information. Make sure your scores are sent to each of your colleges:

* SAT and/or ACT
* SAT Subject Tests (select subjects)
* ASSET, ACCUPLACER or COMPASS (for community college)
* ASVAB (for military)
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**NOVEMBER-JANUARY: Complete your applications**

* Complete all required parts of each application, either on the Internet or on paper.
* Submit each application on time. Look at deadlines carefully, especially if you are applying for Early Decision or Early Action. Proofread each application before you send it and print a copy for your files.
* Work with your school counselor to get your transcript to each college.

**NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY: Apply for financial aid**

* Complete your FAFSA form as close as possible to January 1. Complete a CSS PROFILE form if required by your colleges. Check college deadlines carefully, as the PROFILE may be due before January 1.
* Complete other scholarship and financial aid forms and submit.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**JANUARY-FEBRUARY: Close the loop on your applications**

* Confirm your colleges have all necessary materials from you.
* Have your school counselor send your first semester grades if required.
* Don’t get senioritis! Colleges will want to see your second semester grades too.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**MARCH-APRIL: Make your decision**

* You will start receiving admissions decisions and financial aid awards. Read everything you receive carefully and discuss it with your family. Some of it may require action on your part.
* Make a final decision and mail the enrollment form and deposit check to the school you select before the deadline (May 1 for most schools, but may be earlier for Early Decision or Early Action).
* Notify each school to which you were accepted but will not be attending so that your spot can be freed up for another student.
* If you are on a waiting list, contact the Admissions Office and let them know if you are still interested in the spot. If you are, update them on your spring grades and activities.
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**MAY-JUNE: Finish the school year in style!**

* Thank everyone who helped you with your college applications.
* Have your counselor send your final transcript to your college.
* If you plan on competing in Division I or Division II college sports, have your counselor send your final transcript to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
* Make your final financial aid decisions.
* Plan your summer – will you be working or starting an internship?
* Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION QUESTIONS**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*How can you make the most of junior and senior years? Use the Junior-Senior Calendar and this list of questions to see where you are in the postsecondary preparation process.*

Have you registered for, or taken, any college entrance exams? If so, which exams and when?

Have you researched colleges and majors? Which ones sound most interesting to you?

Name 3 people you can ask to write a letter of recommendation for you. How can you ask them?

Have you researched scholarships and financial aid? What have you learned? If not, how can you do this? (Hint: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) or [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org))

TRANSITION SKILLS

LESSON 11-3 HANDOUT

COLLEGE ADMISSION TIPS

College admissions officers use a comprehensive review process to evaluate students’ academic accomplishments, as well as their essays and personal statements, their leadership opportunities, contributions to the community, individual circumstances, and distinctive attributes. Test scores are also evaluated, but admissions officers say that test scores are rarely the decisive factor.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD DO**

Distinguishing factors that have a positive impact on college applications include:

* **Challenging senior year:** Taking a full academic load through senior year.
* **World languages:** Taking 3 or 4 years of the same foreign language.
* **Math & Science:** Taking Math through pre-calculus or calculus and 4 years of science, including chemistry and physics.
* **Rigorous courses:** While advanced classes such as AP, Honors, Running Start, and IB are outstanding options for many students, taking a full schedule of "regular" classes can be equally impressive in the application review.
* **Personal attributes:** Perseverance in the face of significant hardship; personal contributions to the community, including multiculturalism, exceptional talent, leadership, heart, and passion for a subject, activity or cause.
* **Strong application:** Well-written essays or personal statements.
* **Strong extracurriculars:** Sustained involvement and leadership, including risk taking.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO**

Here are some areas where students hurt themselves on college applications.

* **Too little challenge:** Little or no academic coursework beyond the core requirements, even though more challenging options are available.
* **Senioritis.** Students who mistakenly assume that senior year is not important.
* **Too little Math or Science:** Less than 3-4 years of math or missing core requirements for Chemistry or Physics.
* **A grade slide:** Sporadic attendance or negative grade trends, frequently followed by an across the board drop in curricular rigor.
* **Poor presentation:** Not taking the time to put the best foot forward; missing deadlines; failing to follow up on requests for additional information.