



2026-2027 COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST & TIMELINE



TO HELP YOU STAY ON TRACK, WE HAVE COMPILED THE ESSENTIAL MILESTONES FOR THE UPCOMING CYCLE BASED ON COMMON APP (2025) AND COLLEGE BOARD (2025) DATA.

JUNIOR YEAR (WINTER & SPRING 2026)

- **Academic Audit:** Confirm your Senior year schedule includes "college-prep" rigor (AP/IB/Honors), a factor 77% of colleges rank as high priority (NACAC, 2024).
- **First SAT/ACT Attempt:** Aim for March or May 2026. 85% of successful applicants test twice to benefit from "super-scoring" (Kaplan, 2026).
- **Build Your "Hub":** Start a digital folder for resumes, awards, and potential essay topics (St. John's University, 2025).



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SUMMER 2026

- **August 1: Common App opens for the 2026–2027 cycle.**
- **Draft the Personal Statement: Focus on the "Challenges and circumstances" prompt, which has been updated for 2026 to capture broader student experiences (Common App, 2025).**
- **Finalize the College List: Create a balanced list of 8–12 "Reach," "Match," and "Likely" schools (BigFuture, 2025).**



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SENIOR YEAR (FALL 2026 – SPRING 2027)

- **October 1: Submit the 2026–2027 FAFSA and CSS Profile (SUNY New Paltz, 2025).**
- **Nov 1/15: Early Action/Decision deadlines. Schools are filling up to 50% of classes in these rounds (Expert Admissions, 2025).**
- **Jan 1: Regular Decision deadline for most universities.**
- **May 1, 2027: National Decision Day**