

Choosing a College

Step One: Assess your interests



What are your dreams? What would you like to study?
What are your favorite subjects? Explore many options. Why do you want to attend college?

Step Two: What type of college are you looking for?

Location: California, out of state, urban, rural, suburban? Do you want to explore another part of the country? Is weather a concern?

Size: Small school with lots of personalized attention?
Large university with big classes, lots of resources?



Type: Public or private, liberal arts, arts college, technical

Student Life: Varsity sports, diversity, % commuter students, clubs and activities, social consciousness, guaranteed housing? Are dorms, facilities and campus well-kept and clean? Greek system?

Cost: % of students with financial aid, internships and jobs available?

Services: Learning center, tutoring, counseling and health center?

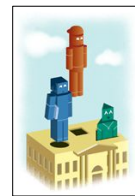
Step Three: Make a list of colleges

Now determine what type of college is the *best fit* for you.

- Do a college search on Naviance, College Board or Peterson's *StudentEdge*
- Consult with your counselor or college advisor
- Look at college guides in the College & Career Center; visit university websites and take virtual campus tours online
- Put your preliminary list of schools on "My Colleges" on Naviance
- Plan to take college campus tours during vacations with your parents and friends – this is probably the most important factor in choosing your college!
- E-mail colleges that interest you and ask for brochures and information on majors, and keep all your college materials together in a box or file
- Attend the spring national college fair



Step Four: Narrow down your list



- Review all your college viewbooks and information you have accumulated.
- Which schools have majors or programs you are interested in?
- Do you meet the academic requirements (GPA and SAT or ACT test scores)? If not, and if you have the potential for doing college-level work, do they have special programs that might accommodate you?
- Using the priorities you came up with, create a table with all the pros and cons of each school – which schools have more pros? Rank the schools based on how well your academic credentials line up with their requirements.
- Rank the schools based on your perceptions from your campus tours – which colleges were most inviting and comfortable, where you would be a good fit?

Step Five: Select the universities to which you will apply

Based on all the above factors, decide which schools you will apply to and indicate them on “My Colleges” – which will help you keep on track with deadlines, etc.

Discuss your choices with your counselor or college advisor, but especially with your parents.



Include on your list one or two “reach” schools, some where you might be accepted, and at least one where you are certain you will be admitted and – this is important - where you will be happy attending.

If you will be applying for financial aid, don’t eliminate schools that seem too expensive at this point. Wait until you receive your financial aid package after acceptance.

Other Things Juniors Should Do

- Take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring (March, April, May, June). If you have to take Subject Tests (UC’s, some private colleges), take them in June. **Do not wait until senior year to take these tests!** If you want to improve your scores, you can take them again in the fall.
- Take practice tests and improve your test-taking skills on *StudentEdge* – it’s free!
- Apply for summer internships, summer jobs, take enrichment classes or other programs...make this summer count by broadening your interests and accomplishments. And have fun!