

# COMPLETING THE COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE!

## Checklist for 12<sup>th</sup> Graders

General Time Frame	College Admissions & Career Planning	Testing	Financial Planning
<b>AUGUST—SEPTEMBER</b>	<p>*Think about what you want out of college and use GCIS, <a href="http://www.gcis.peachnet.edu">www.gcis.peachnet.edu</a>, and <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org/">http://www.gacollege411.org/</a> for research. Ask your counselor for the GCIS password so that you can use it at home.</p> <p>*Review your graduation status with your counselor by the end of August.</p> <p>*Check with the colleges you are considering for their admissions procedures and deadlines. Be sure to ask which admissions tests are required.</p> <p>Tip—Never limit your college choices to just one school. You should always do research on at least two or three schools in case your first choice doesn't work out.</p> <p>*Most colleges prefer that you apply online through their website or <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org">www.gacollege411.org</a></p> <p>Tip—Applications and catalogs are available in your college/career center, online on the college web site, and at PROBE fairs.</p> <p>Tip—Be sure to request transcripts, recommendations, etc. at least two weeks before application deadlines.</p> <p>*Select two teachers and another adult not related to you and request general letters of recommendation to use now and later. Letter guidelines are available from your college advisor.</p> <p>*Arrange campus visits and interviews if recommended.</p> <p>*Assume a leadership role in the extracurricular activities in which you participate.</p>	<p>*Check with all colleges you are considering and ask what their testing preferences are.</p> <p>*Register for ACT or SAT online courses as needed. A list of other test preparation sources is on your school's website.</p> <p>Tip—Check the college admission test schedule for all registration deadlines for ACT and SAT tests.</p> <p>Tip—Consider purchasing various test preparation software. <a href="http://www.kaplan.com">http://www.kaplan.com</a></p> <p>*Be sure to keep up your grades. Your GPA will play a strong role in whether or not you are accepted into a competitive college.</p> <p>*Now that college admissions tests have required or optional writing elements, be sure to practice your writing skills. If you struggle in this area, ask a teacher for extra help.</p>	<p>*Update your high school resume.</p> <p>Tip—check out the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators website: <a href="http://www.nasfaa.org">www.nasfaa.org</a></p> <p>*Check the HOPE website, <a href="http://www.gsfc.org/HOPE/Index.cfm">http://www.gsfc.org/HOPE/Index.cfm</a>, for requirements that will apply to your graduating class. Make sure you stay on track!</p> <p>*Good sources on scholarships and financial aid are: GCIS, <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org">http://www.gacollege411.org</a>, FastWeb.com, <a href="http://www.collegeanswer.com">http://www.collegeanswer.com</a>, and <a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">http://www.fafsa.ed.gov</a></p> <p>Tip—avoid scholarship scams. If you are asked for money, or if something seems too good to be true, it may be questionable. Check <a href="http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/">http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/</a> for answers to your questions.</p> <p>*Discover how the military can help pay for college through ROTC scholarships, academy appointments, or educational benefits for enlisting. Check <a href="http://www.myfuture.com">www.myfuture.com</a> for information.</p> <p>*Research cooperative education at colleges you are interested in attending. This is a great way to pay for your college education while gaining relevant work experience at the same time.</p> <p>*Athletes—complete and mail the NCAA student release form. Check with your student records office or your coach for this form. <a href="http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net">http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net</a> is also a good resource.</p>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<p>*Continue your college research and/or application process.</p> <p>*Be aware first round early decision/early action deadlines can be as early as mid-October, many college-specific scholarships have October deadlines, and some ROTC scholarships have application due dates before November 1.</p> <p>*Give your counselor any school reports that must be filled out.</p> <p>*Attend Newton County's PROBE fair at Alcovy High School</p>	<p>*Continue studying for the ACT and SAT, and sign up for any online courses you might need.</p>	<p>*Write or email college financial aid offices for financial aid information from the specific colleges in which you are interested.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Always let your counselor know about any scholarship offers you have received.</p> <p>*Register for the CSS PROFILE if you are interested in private schools which require it.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOVEMBER—DECEMBER</b></p>	<p>*Finalize the personal essay you will need for many college applications. Have a teacher proofread the essay when you are finished.</p> <p>*Keep records of all correspondence.</p> <p>*Attend sessions with college representatives who visit your school.</p> <p>Tip—with the implementation of the HOPE scholarship, admission standards at Georgia colleges have become much stricter.</p> <p>Example:          UGA 2007 Admitted Student Profile          Middle 50% Core GPA: 3.63—4.0          Middle 50% SAT: 1150—1310          Middle 50% ACT: 25—29</p>	<p>*Take the ASVAB. This exam provides helpful vocational aptitude feedback.</p> <p>*Take SAT II subject tests if they are required by your college.</p>	<p>*Continue working on a college financial plan with your parents. Avoid loans <b>if possible</b>.</p> <p>*Check with scholarship websites for updated scholarship reports.</p> <p>*Some ROTC applications and some military academy applications are due in December. Check dates for accuracy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JANUARY—MARCH</b></p>	<p>*Observe college deadlines for admissions, financial aid, testing, and housing.</p> <p>Tip—January 1 is the usual deadline for applying to many selective colleges.</p> <p>*Maintain good grades and continue to sign up for rigorous courses. Final acceptance depends on your final transcript.</p>	<p>*Read! Review the college bound reading list available on your school’s website.</p> <p>*Continue working to improve writing skills.</p>	<p>*Remember that most local scholarship applications are due in February – contact the local scholarship donor directly.</p> <p>*Attend the Newton County FAFSA seminar</p> <p>*Complete FAFSA, CSS PROFILE, and any other institutional financial aid forms. Each school in the state of Georgia sets their own financial aid deadline—check carefully!</p> <p>*Check your selective service status—this affects federal aid eligibility for males.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>APRIL—JUNE</b></p>	<p>*Most selective colleges announce admissions decisions in April. Make sure and reply by May.</p> <p>*Sign and return all required forms and deposits to colleges by the required deadlines.</p> <p>*At graduation practice, fill out a final transcript request for the college you are planning to attend.</p> <p>Tip—Writing thank you notes to people who have been helpful to you this year will establish contacts for your future.</p>	<p>*Advanced Placement Exams are given nationally in May in high schools. Be sure to have your scores sent to the college that you are most interested in attending.</p> <p>*Plan for a productive summer—freshman orientation, summer employment, or enroll for your college’s summer term.</p> <p>Tip—Don’t take the ACT or SAT too often. Scores may improve with the second and third tests and then begin to decline.</p>	<p>*Carefully review financial aid award notices from colleges. Call the financial aid office if you have any questions.</p> <p>*Compare the amount of money you will have left to pay at each college before making your final decision.</p> <p>*Notify aid offices <b>in writing</b> of your decision to accept or decline any offer you have received. Find out when school charges are due and pay them before the deadlines.</p> <p>Tip—Be wary of opening credit card accounts while in college. The debts you incur will affect your credit for many years.</p>