



**CALIFORNIA COLLEGE  
GUIDANCE INITIATIVE**

**Smart Summer Planning.** Use this summer guide to prepare you for next year, college, career, and beyond. Each section-Improve Your Academic Skills, Get Ahead with Advanced Coursework, Plan for College, Prepare for College Applications, Explore Your Career Options & Real Life Experiences - connects you with resources available on CaliforniaColleges.edu. First, if do not have an account on CaliforniaColleges.edu, create one now by going to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and clicking on create an account.

### Improve Your Academic Skills

**SUMMER SCHOOL.** Summer school is an option to make-up credits or to get ahead. Talk to your counselor to see what summer classes are required or recommended for you.

**Here's a Tip!** Start exploring Your Plan of Study. See what classes you will need to take to meet the requirements for high school graduation and college admission. Are you on track?

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → High School Planning → Your Plan of Study

**READ.** Read every single day (books, magazines, graphic novels, etc.). Your public library may have a summer reading program with book suggestions and prizes.

**Here's a Tip!** Use the journal tool to reflect on your readings – you might use your ideas in papers later!

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → Your Journal → Add a new journal entry

**WRITE.** You need strong writing skills for college, so practice over the summer. Write a journal or blog to reflect on the past year and the year to come. You can also write stories, poems, letters to friends or family, or even reviews of movies and books.

**Here's a Tip!** Fill up Your Portfolio! You will find self-reflection and goal setting prompts that you can refer to later as you meet milestones or goals in your academic or professional career.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → Your Portfolio → Your Profile → How You See Yourself → Select a section to complete

**TIME MANAGEMENT.** You will continue to take more advanced classes and become even more involved in activities. As you get busier, you will benefit from strong time management skills. Practice smart time management now!

**Here's a Tip!** Learn the basics of good time management.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → Search for "Time Management 101"

**Here's a Tip!** Learn more about what you have to do between now and high school graduation to prepare for college.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → High School Student → Know college academic requirements



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## Get Ahead with Advanced Coursework

**PRE-COLLEGE CAMPUS PROGRAM.** Many colleges have summer programs for high school students. These programs are usually residential (i.e., you live in the dorms), and you take classes and do other pre-college activities. Often, financial aid is available. Ask your counselor to learn about programs.

**Here's a Tip!** Often, the best way to find a pre-college campus program is to select a college that interests you and then visit that college's website. Find colleges that interest you:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → College Planning → Explore Schools School Finder (remember to click on Save to Your Portfolio for any colleges you are interested in)

**ONLINE COURSES.** If you do not have access to advanced coursework at your high school, consider taking an online AP, Honors, or college course during the summer. Your high school counselor may be able to help you find these online classes.

**Here's a Tip!** It is important to do your research before starting an online education program. Read more about the advantages and disadvantages on CaliforniaColleges.edu:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → College Planning → Prepare for College → Getting Ready for College → Online Education

**COLLEGE COURSE FOR ENRICHMENT.** Most community colleges, and some other colleges, have programs for high school students so you can explore a subject that interests you in greater depth. Some college classes transfer for credit if you later attend college.

**Here's a Tip!** Read more about college courses (or early enrollment) while in high school:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → College Planning → Prepare for College → Early Enrollment

**Here's a Tip!** Keep track of your advanced coursework by adding it to Your Portfolio.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → High School Planning → in Enrichment Courses and Workshops click on Add a course or workshop

## Plan for College

**COLLEGE CAMPUS VISIT.** Visit as many college campuses as you can. Contact the admissions offices of colleges you are interested in visiting to learn more about tours.

**Here's a Tip!** You can search on CaliforniaColleges.edu for colleges close to where you live:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → College Planning → Explore Postsecondary Schools → Distance Search

**Here's a Tip!** When you visit a campus, be sure to take notes about different aspects of the school. CaliforniaColleges.edu has a worksheet to help you make the most of your visit:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → College Planning → Worksheets → Career Fairs and Campus Visits



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**COLLEGE RESEARCH.** Continue your college. Be open to colleges you have heard of and new colleges you learn about. As you find the right college for you, consider location, size, cost of attendance, programs/majors offered, and student resources. If you have friends or older relatives who went to college, talk to them for insight and advice.

**Here's a Tip!** The School Finder and College Matching Assistant are two good ways to start college research.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → College Planning → Explore Postsecondary Schools → School Finder. When you find a college you like using the School Finder, save it to Your Portfolio by clicking on Save to Your Portfolio on the left side of that college's information page.

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → College Planning → Explore Postsecondary Schools → College Match Assistant. When you find a college you like using the tool, save it to Your Portfolio by clicking on Save to Your Portfolio on the left side of that college's information page.

**FINALIZE YOUR COLLEGE LIST.** Make a list of all the colleges that interest you and begin to decide exactly where you want to apply so you are ready to get started as soon as applications are available.

**Here's a Tip!** When you search for colleges on CaliforniaColleges.edu, you can always click on Save to Your Portfolio on the left side of every college's information page. That will save the college to Your Portfolio. You can view a list of your saved colleges:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → Explore Postsecondary Schools → Saved Colleges and Postsecondary Schools (if you have not saved any colleges, click on Explore Postsecondary Schools)

**CAREER INTEREST SURVEY.** As you are researching colleges, think about what you would like to study. Taking a career assessment will allow you to find careers that match your interests and skills. You can find programs that lead to those careers, and about the colleges that offer those programs.

**Here's a Tip!** The Interest Profiler on CaliforniaColleges.edu is a great gateway to career exploration, as well as a way to deepen your college research:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Learn About Yourself → Interest Profiler

**OPEN A SAVINGS ACCOUNT.** Now is the time to practice managing your money and saving for college. Talk with a parent or guardian to help you open a savings account.

**Here's a Tip!** Learn the basics of financial fitness with a crash course on CaliforniaColleges.edu, "Managing Your Money 101":

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Financial Aid Planning → Financial Fitness



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## Prepare for College Applications

**SAT/ACT PREP.** Study for the SAT or ACT during the summer, when you are not stressed about classes. There are plenty of resources to help you—check your public library for text prep books, look online for free test prep, and see if your school can recommend any tutoring programs.

**Here's a Tip!** Starting preparing for these exams now. Check out free test preparation:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → College Planning → Test Prep → Click on the resources under Four-Year College or University Test Prep and Vocabulary Test Prep

**IDENTIFY TEACHER RECOMMENDERS.** Many colleges and scholarships require you to submit letters of recommendation from high school teachers and counselors. Identify two or three teachers who have taught you in academic subjects, know you well, and can say positive things about you as a student.

**Here's a Tip!** It is a good idea to provide a copy of your resume that highlights your accomplishments to teachers who write your recommendations. Get started with your resume:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Get a Job → Career Plan Builder → Resume Builder

**BEGIN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT.** Start your college essays, also known as personal statements, now! Even if you do not know the official essay question, all personal statements ask you to reflect on who you are, what you care about, and how you have grown as a person. When applications become available (usually between August 1-October 1 depending on the college), you can make small adjustments.

**Here's a Tip!** Learn more about the personal statement:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) → type "Personal Statement" in the search box → click on Tips on Writing the UC Personal Statement

## Explore Your Career Options & Real Life Experiences

**EXPLORE CAREERS.** Explore careers you are interested in and new ones.

**Here's a Tip!**

Start exploring by browsing Career Clusters. Make sure to save Career Clusters and careers that interest you by clicking on Add to Portfolio on the left side of the cluster's or career's information page:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Explore Careers → browse the Career Clusters (when you find Career Clusters or Careers that interest you, click on Add to Portfolio on the left side of the Cluster's/Career's information page)

**MEANINGFUL HOBBY.** Whatever your interests are, use your summer to explore and develop meaningful hobbies. These hobbies can lead to careers!



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**Here's a Tip!** Keep track of your hobbies with Your Portfolio:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → Your Profile → Experiences and Activities → click on Add an Activity or Add an Experience

**VOLUNTEER.** Choose a volunteer opportunity that relates to your interests, and try to do it regularly. Places to volunteer might include: a local summer camp, a food bank, an animal shelter, or the library.

**Here's a Tip!** Add volunteer work to Your Portfolio so you can add them to your resume later:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → High School Planning → in Extracurricular Activities click on Add an activity

**WORK.** Consider getting a summer job. Having work experience is a great way to prepare for college, plus you can save money for college. If you are under 18, you will most likely need a work permit from your high school office.

**Here's a Tip!** Use your CaliforniaColleges.edu account and fill up Your Portfolio! You can enter your job shadowing and other work experience so that you can easily reference them later when you update your resume, or to request recommendation letters!

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Your Portfolio → Career Planning → Work Experience → click on Add a work experience

**INTERN.** An internship is a good way to get professional experience and learn more about a career that you might want after high school. To apply for an internship, you will need a resume and an interview.

**Here's a Tip!** Get started with your resume (and cover letter and interviewing preparation) by using tools on CaliforniaColleges.edu:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Get a Job → Career Plan Builder → complete the Resume Builder, Cover Letter Creator, and Job Interview Practice tools.

**LEARN ABOUT YOUR FUTURE CAREER.** As you approach graduation, it is time to get serious about your future career. Learn more about careers that would match your interests and values, and check out what majors lead to those careers.

**Here's a Tip!** Save your career interests in your CaliforniaColleges.edu Portfolio!

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Explore Careers → browse careers (when you find Career Clusters or Careers that interest you, click on Add to Portfolio on the left side of the Cluster's/Career's information page)

**Here's a Tip!** Put your work, school, and life dreams together in a career plan:

Go to [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and sign in → Career Planning → Explore Careers → Career Plan Builder