



**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, Real Life Experiences, Understand Finances, and Get Ready for College-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 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 → 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 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 → Your Portfolio → Your Profile → How You See Yourself → Select a section to complete

Real Life Experiences

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 and sign in → Your Portfolio → High School Planning → in Extracurricular Activities click on Add an activity



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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 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 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 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 and sign in → Career Planning → Explore Careers → Career Plan Builder

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

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

Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → Your Portfolio → Your Profile → Experiences and Activities → click on Add an Activity or Add an Experience



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Understand Finances

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 and sign in → Financial Aid Planning → Financial Fitness

HAVE A BUDGET. Take control of your money. Plan how much you expect to spend on different items (rent, food, entertainment, etc.) and then track what you actually spend.

Here's a Tip! Demystify how student loans will fit into your budget with the Student Loans Over Projected Earnings (SLOPE) tool:

Go to www.californiacolleges.edu → Financial Aid Planning → Financial Aid Calculators → SLOPE Calculator

Get Ready for College

SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAMS. Your college may have a summer bridge program to help you transition from high school to college. Usually, bridge programs have students stay in dorms and take specific classes with other incoming freshmen. You will learn about all the resources and skills you will need to be successful in college. Your school will usually send you information about summer bridge programs, but if you are not sure, contact the admissions office directly.

Here's a Tip! Make a plan for your transition from high school to college using Your Portfolio:

Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → Your Portfolio → College Planning → Postsecondary Plans → in After High School Transition Plan click on Have you got a plan?

FIRST-YEAR ORIENTATION. Most schools offer an orientation for incoming freshman during the summer. Find out when orientation is being held at your school and make sure to sign-up. Some colleges have you register for your first semester's classes at orientation. When the fall semester/quarter begins, there will probably be more orientation or welcome activities in the dorms or on campus. Attend all the programs you can, even if they are optional!

Here's a Tip! To make the most of your college orientation, take some time to make a list of goals and questions. What do you hope to get out of this orientation? Your goals may be general (for example, "I want to meet other students") or very specific (for example, "I want to find out where the gym and the cafeteria are"). Record your thoughts in your Portfolio:

Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → Your Portfolio → Your Journal → Add new journal entry



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TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING. Know how you will get to campus and your housing options. If you plan to live on campus, be sure to meet the application deadline.

Here's a Tip! Load all of the documents that your college sends you to Your Portfolio so they will all be in one place to refer to. This can include confirmation of your enrollment, information on your housing and meal plan, and your academic calendar (registration deadlines, first and last days of classes, etc.):
Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → Your Portfolio → College Planning → on the right side of the screen, click on Upload Document in the box that reads "Your College Planning Documents"

HEALTH RESOURCES AND INSURANCE. Colleges require you to have health insurance and offer health insurance if you will not keep your current health insurance. Check your school's policy and meet all the deadlines. Additionally, know the basic health resources at your school, like a health clinic for when you get sick, or a peer support program for when you feel stressed.

Here's a Tip! If you need special accommodations for any kind of disability, contact your school as soon as possible. Read more:
Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → type "Students with Disabilities" in the search box → click on College Planning for Students with Disabilities

COLLEGE SHOPPING LIST. When you move to college, you will need to go shopping—and not just for textbooks! Put together a list of everything you need. Your university's residential office may provide a packing list for students living in the dorms.

Here's a Tip! Check out a sample "Dorm Room Checklist":
Go to www.californiacolleges.edu → High School Planning → High School Planning Timeline → 12th Grade → Scroll to summer

COURSE REGISTRATION & SCHEDULING. Prepare for your orientation by looking up the Schedule of Classes for your university EARLY. Whether you know your major or not, planning is imperative.

Here's a Tip! Choosing a program and major can be overwhelming. Get trustworthy information:
Go to www.californiacolleges.edu → College Planning → Prepare for College → Insight on Programs and Majors

BUILD YOUR NETWORK BEFORE GETTING TO COLLEGE. Find other students who are going to your college! Consider coordinating transportation or housing with them, or just talking to them about your upcoming experience.

Here's a Tip! Enter your contacts in Your Portfolio! You can keep track of their e-mail addresses or phone numbers so that you'll always be able to get in touch.
Go to www.californiacolleges.edu and sign in → Your Portfolio → Your Profile → Experiences and Activities → in Networking click on Add a network contact



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PREPARE FOR YOUR COLLEGE PLACEMENT TESTS. Many schools, especially community colleges, require incoming freshmen to take placement tests in English, math, and other subjects before registering. Contact your university's counseling office to find out what placement tests are offered or required, and use the summer to study.

Here's a Tip! Find free preparation for community college placement tests:

Go to www.californiacolleges.edu → College Planning → Test Prep → Community College Test Prep