



11th Grade

Student Guidebook



Dear 11th Graders,

The finish line is within your sights! And not just the finish line, but the things that come after high school: new challenges, new opportunities, more freedom, and new responsibilities.

Whether this makes you feel excited, anxious, or a little of both, it's important to keep making good choices and to stay on the path to success. Spend this year getting good grades, and talking to people who can help you with your career and/or college plans.

Remember, the better you do academically, the more options you'll have after high school. Let's make this a great year!

Seth Rockman



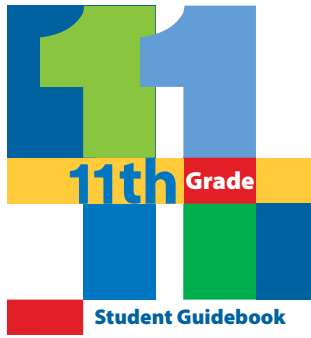


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are you on track?



Graduation is right around the corner, and you need to make sure that you're on track to graduate. You also want to make sure that you're taking the courses you need to achieve your career and/or college goals.

Take a few minutes to review your school's graduation requirements. If you think you might be short on credits or missing required courses, see your counselor. Your counselor can help you develop a plan to fulfill your school's requirements and graduate on time.

If you're thinking about going to college, meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans, and to also go over the courses you need for the kind of college and/or program you're considering.

What you don't want to do is simply hope that you're on track to graduate—or that you have the recommended courses for college. *You want to make sure.* Reviewing your high school record now gives you time to correct any area that might be lacking.

When you meet with your counselor, also ask for suggestions on how to make yourself and your transcript more attractive to colleges and/or employers.

Take charge of your life. Make sure you're doing everything you need to do to achieve your goals.

up your skills

You're a junior now, so you know the ropes. And you probably have a pretty good idea about how to succeed in high school. But now is not the time to coast and stay in your comfort zone.

Even if graduation seems like it's a long way off, before you know it, you'll be out of high school and facing new challenges. So, use this year to improve your current skills, and to develop some new ones.

Here are a few skills to work on this year.

1. Interpersonal Skills

Expand your social circle, and make an effort to be fully present when you're with friends and family. Also, get comfortable talking to different kinds of people in a confident and professional manner. Soon you'll be communicating with college admissions reps, employers, co-workers, and/or professors. You want to be able to present yourself well.



2. Computer Skills

Familiarize yourself with Microsoft Office, Google Drive, the most popular web browsers, and different types of search engines. Regardless of what you do in the future, you will be using computers.

3. Academic Skills

Challenge yourself to improve your study, organization, and time-management skills. Experiment with new study techniques and make an effort to improve your concentration. You'll be better prepared for future academic challenges—and get better grades.

explore your career options

As you get closer to graduation, people will ask you what you're going to do after high school—or they'll ask what your career goals are.



The good news is that a career path is never set in stone, especially at this point in your life. Career exploration is a journey that evolves and branches off in different directions—some times in directions you'd never expect. You just have to start the journey.

So, whether you've already chosen a career, or haven't given it much thought, this year is a great time to start reflecting on your abilities (what you're good at), aptitudes (your natural talents), interests (things you like to do), and values (what's important to you). You also want to start thinking about how these might relate to a career field and/or college major.

Ask yourself these questions:

- ▶ Which courses do you like the best? Which subject areas are you strongest in?
- ▶ Do you prefer working with (1) people, (2) things (objects or tools), or (3) information (words or data)?
- ▶ Do you want to go to college? For two years? Four years?
- ▶ What's important to you in a career? Being able to work outside? Making a lot of money? Making a difference?

If you need help figuring out what careers would be good for you to consider, talk to your parents and your school counselor.

For information on specific careers, go to www.bls.gov/ooh.

consider your education choices

You can't explore your career options without also considering your post-high school education choices.



Whether you let your career choice guide your education choice, or you start with an education choice and see where that takes you, careers and education go hand in hand. *So start thinking about which education option will be best for you and your career goals.*

Here are some education options to consider:

Four-Year College – A bachelor's degree can provide you with a wide range of career opportunities.

Community College – Community colleges offer affordable one and two-year career programs. You can also start at a community college and transfer to a four-year college.

Career and Trade School – Career and trade schools offer short-term training in a wide range of career fields.

Apprenticeship – Apprentices learn a skilled trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training.

Military – The U.S. military offers enlistees free job training in over 2,000 job specialties.

There are many factors that will determine what kinds of opportunities will come your way, but the biggest determining factor will be your education.

thinking about college?

Even if you're uncertain, you've probably at least considered going to college. After all, college provides the opportunity to study new subjects, make new friends, gain more independence, and become the person you want to be.

If you're thinking about going to college, here are some things you should do this year.

determine what's important to you

Think about what you're looking for in a college.

- ▶ Do you want to attend a two-year or a four-year college?
- ▶ Is there a major or program you want your college to offer?
- ▶ What about location, size, and cost?

Once you know what you're looking for in a college, you can search online to find colleges that meet your criteria. A good place to start is bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

Have questions about college?

Talk to your counselor about your college plans and ask questions. Your counselor is an expert on this stuff and can help you every step of the way.

take college tests

Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October

The PSAT/NMSQT is good practice for the SAT, and you can find out how your skills compare to the skills of other college-bound students. Your counselor will have information on this test.

Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring

Most four-year colleges require scores from one of these tests as part of the application process.

College admissions officers generally recommend that students take at least one of these tests in the spring of their junior year. Students who want to improve their scores then have time to retake them in the fall of their senior year. For information and to register for the ACT and/or SAT, visit act.org (ACT) and collegeboard.org (SAT).



make college visits

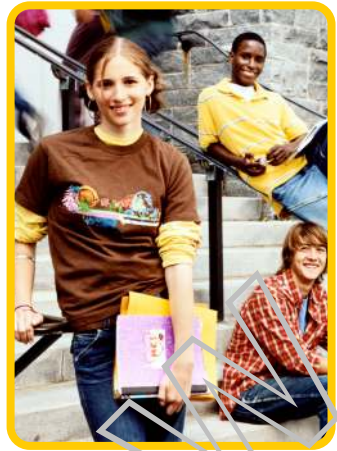
Visiting a college is the best way to find out if a college is going to be a good fit for you. Many colleges have open houses and visitation days designed specifically for high school students and their parents. Decide when you want to visit, then schedule your visit online or by calling the college admissions office.

Next year will be very busy, so the more college planning and preparation you can do this year, the better. You want to be ready to complete college applications early in your senior year



be safe!

Your safety is a top priority for your parents and for everyone in your school. But they can only do so much.



To make sure you stay healthy and remain safe, you have to do your part too

1. Be smart on the road.

Car accidents are the leading cause of death among young people ages 15-20. People like you. So drive the speed limit, always wear your seatbelt, put your phone away, and never get in the car with someone who is under the influence.

2. Be aware of your surroundings.

Be smart about where you go and what you do. Pay attention to what's going on around you, watch out for your friends, and remove yourself from any situation that feels unsafe. Also, let someone know where you are at all times.

3. Make good choices.

By now you're probably aware of the smart and not-so-smart choices that come with having more freedom. But as you get closer to starting college or pursuing a career, it's more important than ever not to succumb to peer pressure, to say no to drugs and alcohol, and to remember that you are not invincible. Be smart and take care of yourself!

be smart with technology

Nowadays it seems like everyone is glued to their phones. Whether or not that includes you, here are some things to keep in mind.

Clean up your online presence.

60% of employers and 35% of college admissions officers check the social media pages of their applicants. Make sure that you put your “best you” out there!

Avoid posting anything mean, offensive, embarrassing, or of questionable taste. *Like it or not, your online presence will follow you around for years to come.*

Think before you send.

If you’re thinking of texting or messaging something hurtful or inappropriate, remember, once it’s sent, you can’t take it back. Also, keep in mind that sending and receiving inappropriate photos of yourself or a classmate can be illegal. Never do it.

Unplug.

- ▶ Put your phone away during dinner, family times, and whenever you’re interacting with others.
- ▶ To help you get a good night’s sleep, turn off all devices an hour before you go to bed and put your phone in another room to charge.
- ▶ Occasionally leave your devices at home and spend some time outside. Take a walk, shoot some hoops, or read a book in the park. Enjoy life for a while without the ringing or buzzing of a phone.





make the most of **your** free time

School is a big part of your life. But it's not the only part.

Sure, you're spending a lot of time at school or doing homework, but the time when you're not doing school stuff is important too. As you go through this year, consciously think about how you can make the most of the time you have after school and on the weekends.

Here are some ideas.

Develop a hobby or skill.

It may not feel like it now, but this is the time in your life when you're likely to have the most amount of time to do the things you enjoy. So take advantage of it. Pursue a hobby. Improve a skill. Find something to be passionate about.

Also, take time this year to try something new. Take up painting, do yoga, learn to play a musical instrument—anything that looks like fun.

Look for leadership opportunities.

Whether you're involved in a school club or organization, on a sports team, or have a part-time job, look for opportunities to take on a leadership role.

Colleges and employers look for applicants with leadership skills because it shows they are able to communicate well, collaborate with others, and solve problems. Developing leadership skills in high school will serve you well throughout your life.

Work at a part-time job.

In addition to earning money, having a job teaches you how to manage your time, work and interact with different types of people, and balance multiple demands.

Having a part-time job can also help you start networking—supervisors and co-workers can be sources of information, as well as college and career references down the road.

Just don't overdo it. A couple nights a week and a weekend or two is great, but don't let a job get in the way of your studies.

Volunteer your time.

Why would you want to spend your time volunteering? Here are a few really good reasons.

- 1.** Colleges and employers love to see that students care about their communities.
- 2.** You surround yourself with generous, motivated people. Exposure to these kinds of people challenges you to be a better person.
- 3.** You get to know people who can serve as references for college and future jobs, and you have something impressive to add to your resume.
- 4.** Helping others is a great way to set your own stresses aside and feel good about yourself—while also making a difference.



So, find somewhere to pitch in and help out. Whether it's at an animal shelter, senior citizens center, or homeless shelter, proving that you're interested in more than your phone and friends is always a good thing.

connect with others



Our relationships greatly affect the quality of our lives.

Family Relationships – The relationships you have with your family members are a significant part of your life. Nurture these relationships. They need to last a lifetime.

Friendships – Friendships enrich your life, help you through difficult times, and make your life more enjoyable. True friends like you for who you are and want the best for you. Support and cherish your friends.

Romantic Relationships – We all enjoy having someone special in our life. Just make sure that any romantic relationship is based on shared interests and values, respect, and genuine affection.

Online Connections – Online friendships can be fun and easy to form, but because you don't really know who you're connecting with, you need to be careful. *Never let online relationships diminish or replace real-life relationships.*

Appreciate and strengthen your relationships.

- ▶ Make time for the people who are important to you, regardless of how busy you are.
- ▶ Be loyal and trustworthy. Stand up for those you care about, and never betray their trust.
- ▶ Be a good listener. Regardless of what's going on around you, give the person you are with your complete attention.
- ▶ Let others know how important they are to you.

choose **who** **you** want to be

As a high school junior, a lot of your thoughts are probably about your future.

Whether you realize it or not, a big part of your future depends on the kind of person you are.



We're all different. Maybe you're funny. A deep thinker. A dreamer. An introvert or an extrovert. Some personality traits last a lifetime, whereas others are choices you can change at any time.

Understand that you get to choose whether or not you become an adult who is responsible, hard-working, generous, understanding, and patient. Or one who is lazy, stubborn, disrespectful, and aggressive. *It's up to you to decide which qualities you value and which you choose to embrace.*

Think about how can you change those parts of yourself that are changeable—so that you can be the type of person your peers want to befriend, colleges want to accept, and companies want to hire. You can't control what others say or do, but you can control the kind of person you are.

Enjoy this year, work hard, and look ahead to a bright future!

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This booklet is filled with helpful tips and expert advice on how you can have an awesome junior year!



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