



# 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE TIMELINE

## DID YOU KNOW?

College graduates earn substantially more than high school graduates. Here is a breakdown of the median earnings by college degree:

Level of education completed	Mean (average) earnings in 2014
Less than a high school diploma	\$30,108
High school graduate, no college	\$43,056
Some college, no degree	\$48,984
Associate degree	\$52,364
Bachelor's degree	\$74,308
Master's degree	\$88,036
Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.)	\$105,456
Professional degree (e.g., M.D., J.D.)	\$124,904

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, unpublished tables, 2015, via [studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov)

## THE COURSES YOU TAKE IN HIGH SCHOOL ARE IMPORTANT.

Whether you plan to attend a 4-year college or community college, take at least five academic classes every semester in high school to develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and reasoning.

Colleges are looking for a solid foundation of learning that you can build upon. Keep in mind that even though they may not be required for high school graduation, most colleges prefer the following:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of math (including Integrated algebra, geometry, and algebra 2/trigonometry)
- 3 years of social studies
- 3 years of laboratory science
- 2-3 years of the same foreign language
- courses in fine arts and computer science

Many states have diploma options available to students, such as the New York State Regents Diploma, and options frequently require additional high school coursework. Your counselor can help you make the right class choices.

## TAKE ACADEMICS SERIOUSLY AND KEEP YOUR GRADES UP.

Your high school grades are important and the difficulty of your courses may be a factor in a college's decision to offer you admission. College admission officers will pay close attention to your grade point average (GPA), class rank, Advanced Placement (AP), and other honors-level courses, as well as your scores on standardized tests and state exams - such as the Regents in New York State. So, challenge yourself by taking tougher courses and maintaining good grades. Not only will this help prepare you for standardized tests (such as the PSAT, SAT and ACT), but it will also determine your eligibility for some colleges.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR TEACHERS, COUNSELOR AND PRINCIPAL.

Show them that you are both serious about learning and a hard worker. When you begin applying to college in a couple of years, you will have people who know you well. Those who know you well will write the strongest recommendation letters.

## GET INVOLVED.

Find something you like and stick to it! Colleges pay close attention to your life outside of the classroom and value these types of experiences.

It is not the quantity but the quality and longevity of involvement in activities or organizations that matter. For example, if, as a 9th grader, you join the school newspaper and are a club reporter and then in 10th grade become a sports reporter, in 11th, a sports editor and in 12th, the editor-in-chief, it demonstrates growth in leadership. In community service, the same applies. It is not a sign of commitment if you simply participate in a charity walk once a year for four years. Rather, you should find something in which you have an avid interest. Whether it is an animal shelter, a nursing home, or a soup kitchen, the idea is that you stay and put in significant time.

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SUMMER.

Keep busy by doing something meaningful such as finding a summer job, identifying a volunteer experience in a career field that interests you, learning or perfecting a skill or hobby, going to summer school to get ahead or catch up, attending a summer program or camp, or catching up on your reading.

Get a head start by creating your activities resume now. An activities resume is a great way to highlight your strengths and to inform colleges about your out-of-class accomplishments and special talents.

Additional ideas include the following:

- Find a community service project and commit significant hours.
- Attend a summer camp and hone your testing skills, athletic skills, or a hobby such as music.
- Find a summer college program where you can master subject areas of interest or leadership training.
- Go to summer school to advance or to repeat a subject that was failed.
- Utilize the 10th grade reading lists for English, social studies, etc. to complete assignments and free up time during the beginning of the school year.

Here are a couple of helpful resources to get you started:

- College Board's 5 ways to stay on track in summer at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-the-classroom/5-ways-to-stay-on-track-in-summer>
- Summer programs at [www.teenlife.com](http://www.teenlife.com)

## START SAVING FOR COLLEGE.

It's not too early to begin saving for college. Learn about 529 plans through the College Savings Plan Network at [www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org) and Upromise at [www.upromise.com](http://www.upromise.com) to earn points when you shop.

*Links to non-SUNY websites and information are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.*

