

Interested in Semi-Private SHSAT, ISEE, SSAT, SAT or ACT classes? [Reserve spot now!](#)



Kaitlin M. —  August 2, 2021

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

TEST PREP

IVY TUTORS

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

SUMMER VACATION

(+2 more)

---

There's no way around it - your junior year of high school is a busy, stressful, and significant moment in your academic career. During this part of your timeline, you'll be asked to do some serious soul-searching as you intensely prepare for the college application process. Get ready for a year of test prep, college tours, and -- most importantly -- a heavy academic course load.

Junior year may sound intimidating, but there are steps all students can take to alleviate some of the anticipated anxiety and demands. Just picking one of these five suggestions for your summer will tremendously help you as you enter the new school year.

## Start PSAT, SAT, or ACT Prep

The PSAT is offered in October of each year, and you will be registered to take this exam through your school. Unless you have previous experiences with middle or high school entrance exams, the PSAT might be your first exposure to formal standardized tests. Notably, it is also the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. The PSAT can be considered a baseline as you prepare for the ACT and SAT later in the school year. Though the skills required for both exams are the same, the actual tests have many differences, which you can learn about [here](#). Think of your PSAT test prep and score as a warm up for the real deal, but don't get too confident or discouraged by how you fare during this process. You should still expect to develop a strong study schedule for the ACT and SAT as soon as you get your PSAT scores.

Many students use the summer before junior year to take an [SAT or ACT diagnostic](#). Based on the diagnostic exam

results and what else you have planned for the summer, you may want to start your **SAT or ACT prep** already. There are many advantages to starting SAT or ACT prep this summer. First of all, the summer is a time free of schoolwork and homework, so there is more time for a stress-free and focused test prep process. Using the summer to do test prep also means you might be done in the fall, leaving you more time to focus on difficult 11th grade courses and to prepare for any AP exams that will be given in May. We find that students who take advantage of summer months to study often see higher score increases for these reasons.

## Focus on Academics

Your junior year is prime time for you to focus on keeping your grades up (or getting your grades up) to boost your GPA and set a good impression for college applications. If you want to attend a selective college, you are expected to challenge yourself continuously. This means that you must take and excel in a variety of challenging classes.

Take time over the summer to familiarize yourself with the material that your most difficult classes will cover in your junior year. If you are taking AP courses, get your hands on the exam prep book and review the content. Inquire about the texts you will be reading in your English classes and consider taking online language classes to brush up on your foreign language skills before heading into the school year.

Maybe your school doesn't offer that many AP or honors classes. Or maybe you just want to challenge yourself even more! Many colleges offer both in-person and online programs for high school students. While some of the most prestigious programs may come with higher price tags, note that there is often financial aid available. Don't be afraid to ask. If you take a class at a local college for credit, you may even be able to transfer those credits later.

In today's world, there are many other ways to keep learning and challenging yourself in the topics you are passionate about. You can take serious classes and experience deep learning outside of traditional educational institutions, like colleges or high schools. One example is Coursera. But even the right YouTube channels can help you find ways to challenge yourself and keep learning.

challenge yourself and keep learning.

## Start Thinking About Your College Major/Minor(s)

In what subject areas do you excel? What topics or courses fascinate you and appeal to your passion and curiosity? What career paths have always interested you? If you've had a job, internship, or volunteer position, which roles exist within the organization(s)? Would you want the job that your boss had? ... or that any of your family members or their friends have? These are excellent brainstorming questions for you as you determine which area(s) you should choose for your college major and even minor(s).

Determining how you see your academic path going will also help you properly develop a list of colleges you want to visit and apply to. Not all schools will offer your area(s) of interest, but some might be top-ranked for those departments. This is one way to start making your school list. If you aren't set on just one path, you can still make a shortlist of realistic possibilities for your future major. Exploring your interests and options will be far more beneficial to you in the long run than going into the process blind.

## Build Out Your College List

The summer leading up to junior year and the first semester of junior year are well spent learning as much as you can about as many colleges as possible. Although you won't apply to colleges until your senior year, you will need to devote time during your junior year trimming down your college list to those schools to which you'll apply. It will be important for you to determine which schools fall into the ranges of reach, target, and safety.

Before you can properly analyze your choices and determine which schools are the best for you and your goals, you need to compile a deeply comprehensive list. You can learn about various schools by networking with friends, family, and mentors and by researching schools online. Consider factors such as test score ranges, geographic location, majors

offered, and school size, among many other choices. These ideas will help you weed out the types of schools you definitely do not want to consider as you continue to build your ideal college list.

If you're lucky enough to do any traveling this summer, make sure that you plan some college visits. In-person college tours tend to book up fast. It's always a good idea to plan ahead and try to get a spot on the tour. However, do not be discouraged if all tours are full. You can always do a self-guided tour or find students at the college or university you are visiting to show you around. Even if actual travel isn't a possibility for you, make sure you start the process of doing virtual tours of college websites. This is a very important first step in creating your college list.

## **Get a Summer Job or Unpaid Internship/Shadowing/Volunteer Experience**

If you're looking to apply to selective schools, you likely already have a list of extracurricular activities and experiences that show you are heavily involved, motivated, and passionate. As a rising junior, you may be eligible for opportunities to which younger students do not have access. Boost your already strong resume with a summer job or an internship, shadowing, or volunteer experience in an area of professional or personal interest to you. Ideally, you could land a position that is in line with your passions and interests, but even if the job you pursue during this time is unrelated to your long-term goals, the opportunity still demonstrates your dedication and drive, as well as your ability to manage time and hold responsibility. Any position you take will boost your resume, build your network of contacts and provide you with a unique opportunity you could refer to during the college application process.

While we definitely encourage you to relax and enjoy your summer vacation, we know that a bit of mental preparation for the upcoming year will prove to be tremendously helpful. If you feel that you are having difficulty managing your anxiety before or during the school year, you can learn more about how to beat your academic anxiety [here](#).

## Take a Diagnostic Exam in NYC

Start with a diagnostic SAT, ACT, SHSAT, ISEE, SSAT, TACHS, or AP test so you know where you stand and where you need improvement. Knowledge is power!

SIGN UP

## Contact Us

Name

Email

Student's HS Graduation Year (e.g. 2025)


I am a...

- Parent  Student  Other

What can we do for you?

SEND




 [info@ivy tutorsnetwork.com](mailto:info@ivy tutorsnetwork.com)

 212-519-1981



- [About](#)
- [Locations](#)
- [Subjects](#)
- [Services](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Find a Tutor](#)

- [Join Our Team](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

-  5 West 37th Street, PH, New York, NY 10018
-  335 Carroll Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231
-  4 Havens Lane, Sag Harbor, NY 11963