



Central Arkansas Christian

# College Preparation

## 12th Grade

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*\*Adapted from the College Board's College Planning Resources.*

### Things you can do before winter break (September–December):



**Strengthen your college list** and make sure it's a balanced mix of at least 6 academic safety, fit, and reach schools.

- **Safety** is a college that you likely have a very good chance of getting into and you can afford. Safeties should also be colleges you'd be happy to attend.
- **Fit** is a college you likely have a good chance of getting into that's also a good fit for you overall.
- **Reach** is a college that may be more of a challenge for you to get into. Getting in isn't a sure thing, but it's realistic enough to be worth the effort of applying.



- Stay organized and keep a master calendar or save application deadline on your phone. Your calendar should include:
  - Admission tests you plan to take and their fees, registration deadlines, test dates, and locations.
  - College application due dates.
  - Any forms and deadlines related to financial aid.
  - Any materials needed for your application, such as: letters of recommendation, transcripts, and a portfolio.
  
- Request your CAC transcript be sent to your colleges through [\*\*SCOIR\*\*](#).
  
- [\*\*Take the ACT one more time\*\*](#)
  - Getting better takes practice, so use Official [\*\*ACT Practice\*\*](#) to help you prepare for the test and improve your score.
  - Make sure to send your ACT scores to the colleges you plan to apply to. You can send 4 free score reports to colleges up to 9 days after taking the test.
  
- [\*\*Complete the FAFSA\*\*](#), the free application for federal student aid. Remember to create your FSA ID and begin working on your application as soon as the FAFSA opens on **October 1**. The earlier you complete it, the better.
  - You can also complete the [\*\*CSS Profile\*\*](#), an online application used by hundreds of colleges, universities, professional schools, and scholarship programs to award financial aid from sources outside the federal government.
  
- Learn [\*\*3 different ways\*\*](#) of getting financial aid and get a copy of your family's tax returns.
  
- If you're considering playing sports in college as a student-athlete, make sure the NCAA® gets your SAT score and ask your counselor to upload your official transcript to the [\*\*NCAA Eligibility Center\*\*](#)
  
- Check out our [\*\*College Planning Checklist\*\*](#) for Student-Athletes for more information



- Get ready for early decision, early action, or rolling admissions deadlines.
  - **Early Decision** You can apply to only one early decision college, and if the college accepts your application and offers you enough financial aid, you must attend that college.
  - **Early Action** You can apply to more than one early action college, and if they accept your application, you can accept right away or wait until spring to decide.
  - **Rolling Admissions** This means the college will consider each application as soon as all required information has been received and will usually notify you with their decision quickly.
  
- Ask a teacher for **letters of recommendations** if required for an application.
  - Your high school counselor may have a brag sheet to help you share your achievements, such as community service and volunteering, school clubs, leadership experience, employment, honors and awards, or other information that goes beyond your academic record.
  
- Write first drafts of your **personal essays** and ask teachers, classmates, or family members to read them and give feedback. Make sure you proofread everything before sharing and submitting your essays.
  
- Make a goal to complete at least 2-3 college applications by October.
  
- Ask your counselor to send your high school transcripts at least 2 weeks before the colleges need them.

### **Things you can do before the school year ends (January–May):**

When you start receiving acceptance letters and financial aid offers around mid-April, let your counselor know your decision and document your decision in SCOIR.

- If you have questions about housing options, talk to your counselor or call the college.
  
- Make sure you also **review your financial aid** awards and choose the aid package that's best for you and your family.



- After **reviewing your options**, inform the colleges whether you accept or kindly reject their offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1.
- Send your deposit to the college where you decide to enroll.
- If you're waitlisted**, stay active in school to show the college what you accomplished since you applied.
  - Try to get a sense of your admission chances by contacting the admissions office about your ranking on the waitlist or asking if they have a priority list.
  - If you intend to enroll if you're accepted, reach out to the admissions director and ask how you can strengthen your application.
- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college through SCOIR.

Visit **[bigfuture.org](https://bigfuture.org)** for more free, comprehensive college planning resources.

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