

JUNIORS- STEPS TOWARDS COLLEGE

You can eliminate or diminish your opportunities by neglecting to prepare.

1. **READ, READ, READ** widely in all subjects. For a list of 101 great books (according to College Board) look at the College Board website. Better yet, ask your English teacher. Write down in your portfolio the books you read, the authors, and something you learned or something that impressed you.
2. **WRITE** in and out of school. Also write about your goals for the future and what is important to you.
3. **BE INFORMED** on a wide variety of topics including CURRENT EVENTS. Plan on being asked about current events if you are interviewed for college or for scholarships.
4. **EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS LOGICALLY.**
5. **VOLUNTEER.** Spend your volunteer hours doing one thing (preferably); showing initiative and making a difference in peoples' lives. Working at a local charity or some other non-profit is a great way to benefit the community and you. It can help you to develop leadership and other skills that will last a lifetime. Write down where you worked, what you did and the dates. Be sure to put the information in your portfolio.
6. **GUARD YOUR REPUTATION.** Think about the following questions.
 - How are you viewed at school, church, work, home, with friends?
 - a. What kind of recommendation will be written about you by your teachers, pastor, guidance counselor, etc.? Will you be able to find any teacher who will write a recommendation for you?
 - b. Are you concentrating in every class every day and learning as much as possible? Are you interested in learning and going beyond what is expected?
 - c. Are you always respectful and genuinely friendly to other students, your teachers, parents, family, and everyone else? Are you generous in judging people and their actions?
 - d. Are you viewed as hard-working and industrious?
 - e. Do you have a godly character?
 - f. Do you unselfishly give of your time, energy, and talents to help others?
 - g. Are you positive and pleasant?
 - h. Are you dependable? Can you be counted on?
 1. Do you follow rules and instruction even if you don't think the rule is necessary?
7. **EARN THE BEST POSSIBLE GRADES:** Your grades should represent the best you can do. If they don't, do something about it now before it is too late. If you are a senior and your grades have been poor previously, earn good grades this semester and wait to apply to college second semester. If your GPA is too low and your SAT or ACT is too low, plan to attend a community college for a year or two before applying to a 4 year college. You can go ahead and apply to a 4 year college, but be prepared for the college to possibly say, "No".

8. TAKE THE HARDEST COURSES YOU CAN. Train your mind.

9. BEGIN COLLEGE SEARCH.

a. Look in books listing all colleges and the majors.

b. Check web sites for colleges. The following are just a few:

bigfuture.collegeboard.org

www.petersons.com

www.princetonreview.com

www.CFNC.org

c. Attend college fairs.

1. Cumberland County has a College Fair at the Expo Center every year in October.

2. There should be another one in the Spring in Charlotte and Raleigh (look for emails from me).

d. Check college websites for career days, open houses, any other kind of informative special days, and deadlines.

10. CLEP:

a. What is CLEP?

It is a credit-by-examination program designed to help students demonstrate college-level knowledge. CLEP helps students earn college credit for that knowledge regardless of how it was acquired- through advanced course work, independent study, or extracurricular activities. There are 2,900 colleges and universities in the United States that grant credit for satisfactory scores on CLEP exams. Depending on the college's CLEP policy, a student can earn up to two years of college credit.

b. What does the test cover?

CLEP examinations cover material taught in courses that most students take as requirements in their first two years of college. The exams cover subjects in English and literature, mathematics, natural sciences, social science and history, foreign languages and business. A college usually grants the same amount of credit to students earning a satisfactory score on the CLEP examination as it grants to students successfully completing the equivalent course. Many examinations are designed to correspond to one-semester courses; some, however, correspond to full-year or two-year courses.

c. How long is the test?

CLEP exams are 90 minutes long.

d. Where do I take the test and how do I register?

CLEP tests are administered on computer at 1,300 college test centers. Students receive instant score reports, except for the English Composition with Essay exam. CLEP exams are administered year-round but each college testing center sets its own schedule. Students should contact the closest testing center to register to take a CLEP exam. Look at www.collegeboard.com/clep for a list of test centers and a list of colleges granting credit for satisfactory scores. For

updated print information on CLEP, call 800-257-9558. Check with the college you plan to attend to see which CLEP tests they honor and what grade you need to earn on them.

e. What is the cost?

The fee for each test is \$80 or more, and most test centers charge an administration fee. The College Board recommends a test center administration fee of \$15; however, each college sets its own fee and may charge a different amount. Plan on about \$100.

f. How do I study for it?

<https://clep.collegeboard.org/earn-college-credit/practice>

You can sign up for free online CLEP courses through Modern States' Freshman Year for Free program (more info in link above).

The *CLEP Official Study Guide* contains sample questions and answers for all 33 CLEP exams.

CLEP Individual Exam Guides are downloadable from the CLEP area of the College Board Web site. They include the same information as the *CLEP Official Study Guide* but for individual subjects rather than all 33 exams. If a student wants to study for more than two exams, it is more economical to purchase the complete CLEP Official Study Guide, rather than the Individual Exam Guides.

11. AP CLASSES

a. What are they?

The Advanced Placement Program enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. With 38 courses and exams, AP offers many options for students from a wide array of interests and backgrounds to participate in a rigorous academic curriculum. Based on their performance on AP Examinations, students can earn credit, advanced placement, or both, for college.

b. Which ones are offered at FCS?

We will continue to offer AP classes on a limited basis. It will vary from year to year. Presently, we offer AP English Language & Comp., AP Human Geography, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Calculus AB, AP Physics and AP European History.

c. To see which AP courses particular colleges accept, look at the AP Credit Policy section on the College Board Website or the University you are contemplating attending.

12. CHECK YOUR TRANSCRIPT.

You are responsible to see that your transcript is correct. Ask for an unofficial copy of your transcript, check on the following, and let the guidance counselor know of any needed corrections:

a. Subjects (PE credit)

b. Grades

c. SAT and ACT scores (check to see if it needs to be updated).

d. GPA

Allow 2 days when requesting (from the guidance counselor) your unofficial or official transcripts. We will send your official transcripts to the colleges you request.

13. PORTFOLIO: Set up your portfolio and add to it each year. Make sure to include the following:

- a. Extra-curricular activities – what, where, when
- b. Service/volunteer projects – what, where, when
- c. Paying jobs- what, where, when, recommendation from boss
- d. Honors, awards, recognitions, offices or positions held
- e. Important philosophical papers you have written
- f. Opportunities you have taken to learn outside of school and schoolwork
- g. Life-changing experiences you have had
- h. When, where, why did you make a difference?

14. APPLY to at least 5 colleges.

- a. Seniors should send 5 college applications by the end of October (except if waiting for better grades this semester). Some colleges may want you to apply earlier, so check with the University.
- b. Know the difference between Early Decision and Early Action:
 - 1) **EARLY DECISION** is binding. You have made a commitment to attend that college and surrendered the right to wait until May 1 to make a decision. You may apply for Early Decision to only one college.
 - 2) **EARLY ACTION** is non-binding. Must submit application by November 1. The college lets you know whether you are accepted by early January, but you have the right to wait until May 1 before responding.
- c. Juniors should be narrowing down choices of majors and colleges this year and be ready to begin application in June. It is best to finish them before school begins in the fall. They do take time. Look at the college websites to see when to send your application.
- d. Know what colleges are looking for in essays and short answers. They need to be your words and writing (if not done online). Be real. They easily spot fakes. Write and rewrite and rewrite with having other people look at it before you submit it.
- e. Juniors, before school is out this May, ask two or three teachers if they will write a recommendation for you. This would be important in case any of your teachers do not return next fall.

- 15. FINANCIAL AID:** Work hard to get scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study.
- a. Seniors and Juniors could be looking up various sources for financial aid on the web and be printing off applications. The following are just a few of the helpful sites:
- www.CFNC.org (Register online so as to access all of the resources.)
 - www.collegeboard.org
 - www.ed.gov
 - www.fastweb.com
 - www.finaid.org
 - www.nasfaa.org
- a. There are many books regarding scholarships in all bookstores. I have a couple of the books in my office.
- b. Seniors request ID number from the federal government in order to access the FSA (Federal Student Aid) systems. A parent and the student need one. This allows you to be able to sign your forms electronically.
- c. Seniors must fill out FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) after October 1st, at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Your family's tax return won't be complete, so you put in the information from the previous year and go back and adjust after they have been submitted by using the IRS Retrieval Tool. This form is required before receiving any financial aid.
- d. Be wary of organizations that charge a fee to submit FAFSA or to find you money for school.
- e. If you or your family has unusual circumstances (such as loss of employment), complete FAFSA on the web to the extent you can, then submit the application and consult the financial aid director at the college you plan to attend.
- f. After being accepted by a college, contact that college about scholarships they offer. Do this ASAP.
- 16. MEET ALL DEADLINES.** Watch for, write down, and meet all deadlines here at school and concerning individual colleges. Doors will be closed when deadlines aren't met.
- 17. HAVE ALL NECESSARY IMMUNIZATIONS.** Check with your doctor and the CDC as to what is important. Certainly get all the shots your college requires but there may be others, for example, Meningitis and/or the series of hepatitis shots would be important especially if going to a state school.
- 18. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION:** This is the most important point. If you aren't already doing the following, please seriously consider doing them:
- a. Be walking with God every day- obedience, reading and meditating on His Word, studying the Word, and praying.

- b. Seek His will in your life for your major, college, scholarships, friends, roommates, marriage partner, etc. Only He knows what will be best for us in the long run and bring peace, true joy, and fulfillment.
 - c. Ask the advice of your parents and other adults influential in your life.
 - d. Be excited about this new phase of your life and to see the wonderful things that God has waiting for you!
19. **PSAT:** Sophomores and Juniors prepare for and take the PSAT mid-October. It is given here at FCS. Watch for announcements regarding date, time, and look at www.collegeboard.org for information, practice questions, and sources. You will receive a practice booklet in your Bible classes.
20. **SAT:** Juniors need to take at least once but maybe a couple times. Study before taking the second time or your score will be the same or lower. Seniors need to take if first two were not high enough. Watch for posted announcements and memos regarding dates to register and take. Look at www.collegeboard.org for information, practice questions, and sources for help.
21. **ACT:** Another test to take is the ACT. Look at www.act.org for information and help.