

## Looking Ahead to College: Tips for Making the Most of High School

- **Read!** Read *anything of interest* to increase your vocabulary, e.g. novels – assigned or your choice; sports, music or fashion magazines; newspapers– you’ll see what a difference it makes in SAT Critical Reading scores! (Another great way to increase your vocabulary is by doing the New York Times crossword puzzles for teens. Access them free of charge along with the answers at [http://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/index.html?page=home&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/index.html?page=home&_r=0) Look at Google’s “Word of the Day,” too.)
- **Interests:** *Identify* a few and *participate* in activities both in and out of school; *make connections* with coaches, mentors, teachers.
- **Connect:** Start *now* to let teachers and your school counselor get to know you well. You can do this by dropping by to see them after school or in the morning, and by participating in class (adding to the discussion, asking questions, raising new issues to illustrate your creative and critical thinking abilities). In high school, teachers and your school counselor write recommendations for college and are asked to assess your ability compared to others as well as your contributions and character.
- **Visit Campuses:** Anytime you get a chance, stop and walk around college campuses -- *it makes college “real”* -- and you can begin to set your sights on a college or just begin to notice whether you like the feel of the size, location, campus, student body, etc. (*A family car trip detour when you spot a sign directing you to a college is a great way to start!*)
- **Challenge Yourself:** The best way to show that you value your education is by challenging yourself. That means *choosing courses that are rigorous* and that allow you to learn the most you can. (Those teachers who are “hardest” usually end up being your favorites because they had faith in your ability to learn.)
- **Volunteer!** *Experience the reward of helping others.* It’s not too early to tutor younger students, form clubs at school, and join in service clubs either at school, religious institution, and in the community. Don’t forget about summer activities!
- <https://www.gafutures.org/> is the one-stop-shopping site for career and college exploration, Free SAT Prep, and more.... Get to know it now!
- **Think of some of your own ideas to display your strengths and uniqueness!**