

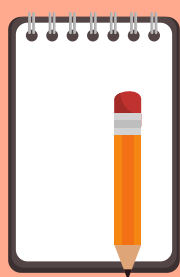
SOPHOMORE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL: 10 ESSENTIAL TIPS

In our experience, we've found that students who follow these 10 tips are more likely to enter the college application process with real momentum—not to mention that their junior and senior years wind up being far more enjoyable.



GET SERIOUS ABOUT ACADEMICS

This is when your grades really start to count. Be honest about your academic strengths and weaknesses, and reach out to your teachers or tutors for help in subjects where you're struggling.



TAKE CHALLENGING COURSES

If your school allows you start picking electives, be ambitious—instead of taking classes you find easy, take challenging classes in subjects that you're passionate about. In fact, it's better to get slightly lower grades in tough courses than straight A's in easy ones—especially in your sophomore year.



START PSAT PREPARATION

Not only is it invaluable SAT prep, but also it's the key to becoming a finalist for the prestigious National Merit Scholarships, which not only provide money for college, but also guarantee the attention of admissions officers.



DEVELOP YOUR EXTRACURRICULAR PROFILE

Start getting serious about extracurriculars—pick the 2 or 3 you like the most, preferably ones where you could see yourself moving toward leadership positions, and invest some real effort in them.



THINK AHEAD TO THE SUMMER

What you do over the summer matters. Prepare to take advantage of an academic, volunteer or professional opportunity. Ideally, this should be a project or program that you can return to next summer, and the summer after that, in positions of increased responsibility.



SIT FOR 1 SAT SUBJECT TEST

Choose a subject you're studying in school so that your coursework supports your test preparation. Many sophomores take the US History, Literature, or Biology.



TAKE A PRACTICE SAT/ACT

SAT/ACT prep can be one of the most stressful aspects of your junior year. That's why taking a practice SAT/ACT now can be so helpful: your performance on it—coupled with your PSAT will give you a sense of how much energy you will need to devote to the test next year.



DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

Ask your teachers for extra help if you need it, work with them through club membership, or just talk to them outside of class. This is a good idea for two reasons: first of all, you want your teachers to be able to write the best, most descriptive, most emphatic recommendations they can, and in order to do that, they need to know you well. Secondly, being able to approach professors is one of the most essential, yet hard-to-acquire skills you can have in college. People who actually engage with professors invariably report higher enjoyment and improved performance in college; getting comfortable approaching teachers now will pay big dividends in both the short and long term.



GIVE TIME TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Community service isn't just something you do to pad your resume. It can be a hugely fulfilling activity that takes you out of the environment of high school, and allows you to focus on helping other people. It's not just good for your application; it's good for your mental health.



STUDY A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The vast majority of colleges require that students take at least four semesters of a foreign language. The students who get the most out of that requirement are the ones who actually put enough effort into learning the language in high school that they enter college courses at a higher level. Additionally, a demonstrated passion for foreign language is essential for anyone who might want to major in government, policy, international relations, literature, history, or a whole host of other majors.

Sophomore year is the year when you start playing for keeps, academically. But if you follow these tips, you won't just be preparing yourself for the college application process in a few years, you'll be building skills that you will use throughout the rest of your academic—and professional—career.

Cambridge Coaching's college mentors can offer you unparalleled guidance, expertise, and insight, ensuring that you won't just be successful in the college process, you'll actually enjoy it. Contact us today for a free consultation, and see what our team of elite coaches can do for you!