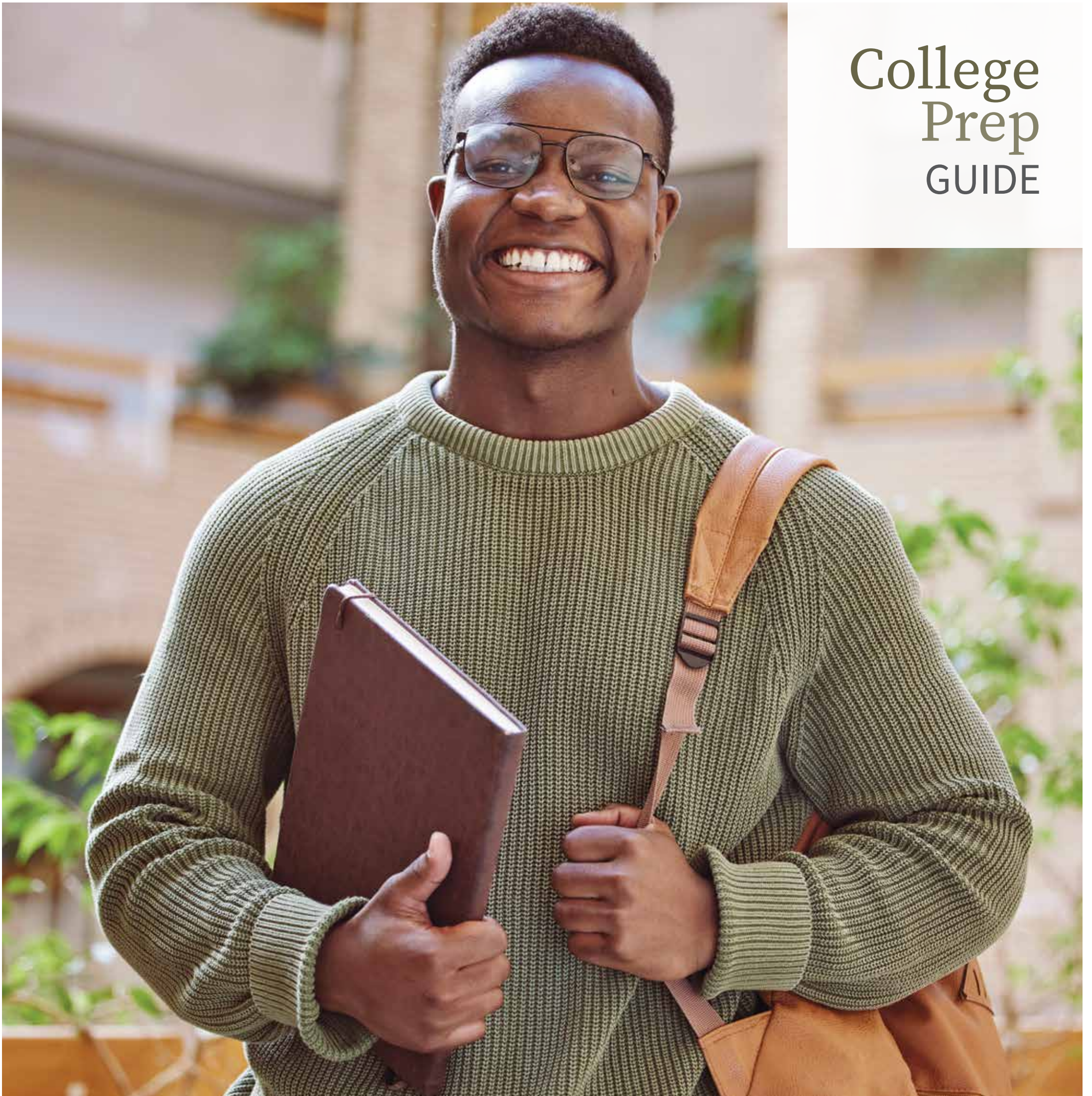


# College Prep GUIDE





# Understanding Deferral

When high school students apply to college through early decision or early action programs, they eagerly await a response.

The goal is to get an acceptance, but a common response is to receive a deferral, something that can be confusing and disheartening.

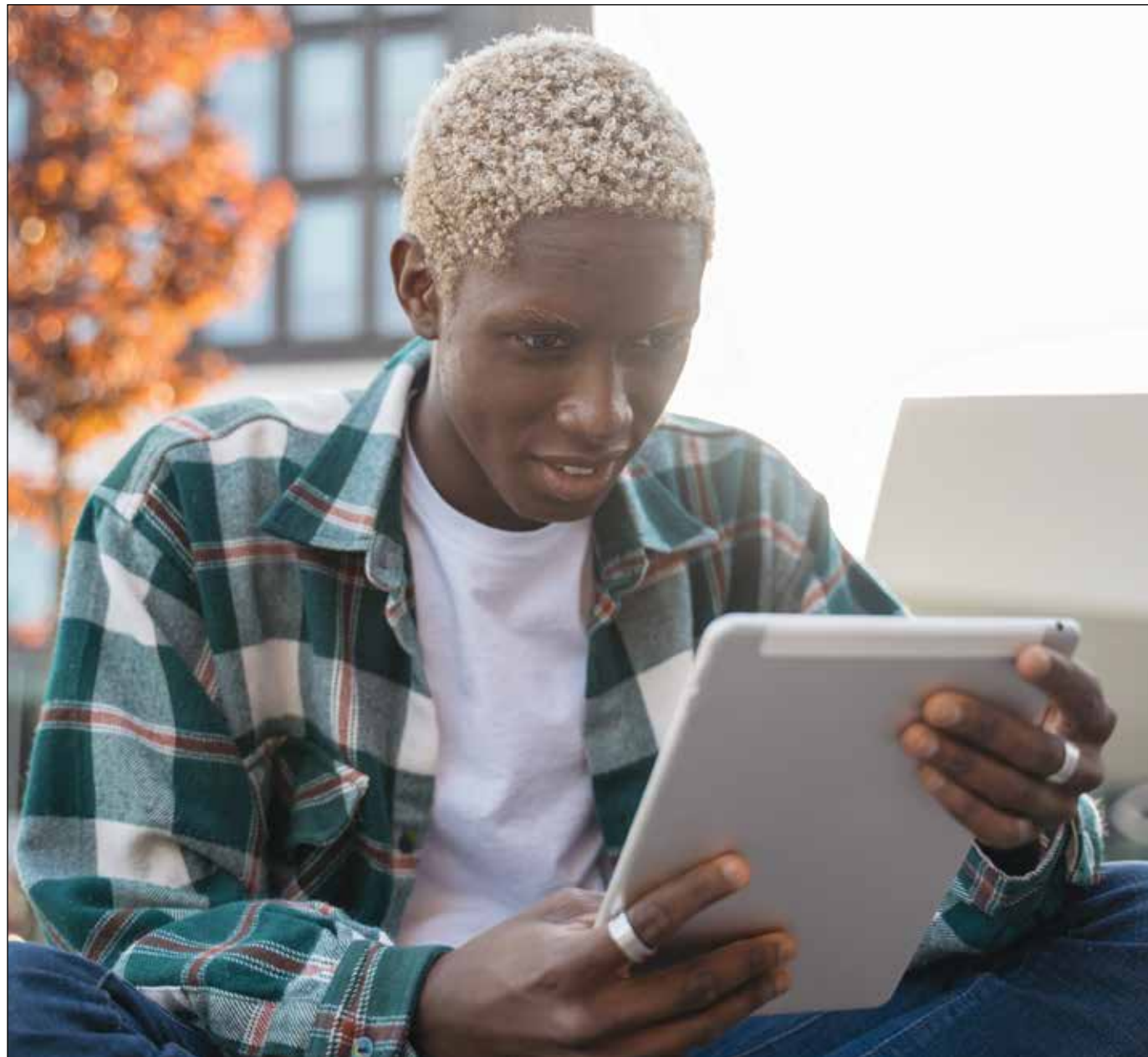
Take comfort in knowing that this is not an uncommon response. The College Essay Guy wrote that in 2023, 7,921 high school students applied early to Harvard. Of those, 8.74% were admitted, 7.7% were rejected, .5% withdrew their application and 83.06% — the vast majority — were deferred.

When a student applies to college under an early decision or early action plan and is deferred, it means that their application will be re-evaluated during the regular admissions cycle. Instead of receiving an immediate acceptance or rejection, the college has decided to postpone making a final decision on the application.

Essentially, the student's application is put on hold, and they are neither accepted nor denied admission at that time.

## DEFERRED VS. WAITLISTED

While being deferred and waitlisted may seem similar, there are key differences



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between the two outcomes. When a student is deferred, their application is reviewed again along with the regular applicant pool, and they still have a chance of being admitted.

Deferred happens only if you applied for early action or early decision to a school. It usually means they like your application but they want more information from you, want to see how you compare to other

applicants or because they have already met their quota of early admission students.

On the other hand, being waitlisted means the college has placed you on a list of applicants who may be admitted if spots become available after the initial admission decisions have been made. This happens when a college wants to offer you space but they don't have room. You will only be able to get in if another

accepted person rejects the offer.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN DEFERRED

Here are some steps to take after being deferred:

- **Stay positive.** While it's natural to feel disappointed, maintain a positive attitude and stay focused on your academic and extracurricular activities.

- **Follow instructions.**

Colleges often provide instructions or guidelines for deferred applicants, such as submitting mid-year grades or additional materials. Carefully review these instructions and comply with any requirements by the specified deadlines.

- **Update your application.**

Take this opportunity to update your application with any new achievements, awards or accomplishments that have occurred since you submitted your initial application. This could include improved test scores, leadership roles or significant contributions to your community.

- **Write a letter of continued interest.** Consider writing a letter to the admissions office expressing your continued interest in the college and highlighting why you believe you would be a good fit for the school. Be sincere and specific in your letter, and avoid making unrealistic promises or statements.

- **Explore other options.**

While you wait for a final decision from the deferred college, continue to explore other colleges and universities that interest you. Keep an open mind and consider all your options as you weigh your next steps in the college admissions process.

Being deferred from a college is a temporary setback. Remember that admissions decisions are ultimately out of your control, but your response and attitude can make a difference as you continue your college admissions journey.



# Maximizing Your College Visit

When it comes to selecting the perfect college, there's no substitute for firsthand experience.

College visits are exciting and practical ways to explore campus life, meet with faculty and students, and get a feel for the campus culture.

Sometimes tours are arranged as part of a group while other times individual students can set up tours with colleges, usually starting with their website and contacting the admissions office.

However, making the most of a college visit requires careful planning and preparation. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your college visit as part of making an informed decision about your future.

## PREPARATION

Before embarking on a college visit, research the schools you plan to visit. Familiarize yourself with their academic programs, extracurricular activities, campus amenities and admission requirements. Make a list of priorities and preferences to help guide your decision-making process.

Many college experts tell you to ignore college rankings as they are typically based on surveys of students attending those schools and not any useful comparison of data that helps you determine whether a school is a good fit.



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Find out ahead of time what sort of activities can be included in a college visit. Ask whether you will be able to attend a class, visit dormitories, eat in a dining hall, meet with students or visit nearby attractions. Learn whether you have the option to stay over-

night. Ask for some time to explore the campus on your own and walk around public areas.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

During your college tour, don't be afraid to ask questions. Here are some sample

4. What support services are available for students, such as tutoring or academic advising?

5. What is the student-faculty ratio, and how accessible are professors outside of class?

6. Can you describe the campus housing options, and are there any special-interest housing communities?

7. What extracurricular activities and clubs are available on campus?

8. How diverse is the student body, and what efforts are made to promote inclusivity and diversity?

9. What career services are available to help students secure internships and job opportunities?

10. Can you provide information about campus safety and security measures?

## PACKING AND ARRIVING

Dress comfortably and wear appropriate footwear for walking. Bring a notebook or smartphone to take notes and jot down any questions that come to mind during the tour.

Be sure to arrive on time and allow plenty of time to explore the campus and its surroundings. Approach the tour with an open mind and a positive attitude, and be prepared to engage with faculty, staff and students.

College visits are one of the top ways to gain insight into each school's offerings and determine which one is the best fit for your academic and personal goals. There are few better ways to learn about a school's culture and what it will feel like to actually attend.

questions to consider:

1. What sets your school apart from other colleges?

2. Can you tell me more about the academic programs I'm interested in?

3. What opportunities are available for undergraduate research or internships?



# A Guidance Counselor's Role

Among the many people that can help a student prepare for college, guidance counselors play a distinct role in helping students navigate the complex path toward higher education.

They are able to serve as invaluable resources, providing support, advice and essential information to help students succeed.

When consulted early in one's high school career, counselors can suggest extracurriculars that will look good on a college application and fit in with the student's long-term career and academic goals.

Throughout a student's high school career, the guidance counselor can monitor academic progress, meeting with students and their parents when there are gaps and identifying appropriate supports or interventions.

Guidance counselors serve as knowledgeable guides who help students navigate the college application process. From selecting the right colleges to understanding admission requirements and deadlines, counselors provide personalized advice tailored to each student's needs and aspirations. They help students explore their interests, identify suitable academic pro-



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grams and develop a strategic plan for achieving their college goals.

Additionally, guidance counselors help students explore financial aid options and scholarships. They provide information about available grants, loans and scholarships,

guiding students through the application process and helping them understand the financial implications of their college choices. By assisting students in securing financial support, guidance counselors ensure that economic barriers do not hinder access to higher

education.

Moreover, guidance counselors support students in preparing for standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT. They provide resources, study tips and practice materials to help students excel on these exams, which are an essential

component of the college admissions process. Counselors may offer test-taking strategies and advice on when to take the exams to optimize scores.

A guidance counselor might be able to help with such things as connecting students with people who can write letters of recommendation. When it comes to filling out applications, they might be able to provide waivers for college entrance exams and application fees. Given their connections with universities, they can help to arrange college visits.

Beyond academic preparation, guidance counselors help students develop essential life skills and personal qualities for college success. These might include time management, study skills and effective communication, empowering students to become independent learners and advocates for their education. Counselors offer support and encouragement to help students navigate challenges and setbacks along the way.

Another role they play is in promoting mental health and well-being among students. They provide a safe and supportive environment where students can discuss their concerns, anxieties and aspirations. Counselors offer counseling services, referrals to mental health professionals and resources for coping with stress and anxiety, ensuring that students' emotional needs are addressed as they prepare for college.

# Maximize Summer Break

Everyone wants to stand out from the crowd of other applicants to their favored college.

Summer break offers a valuable opportunity to engage in activities that can enhance college applications, academic readiness and personal growth.

Here are some ways that college admission reps suggest to make the most of your summer break.

## SUMMER PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Participating in summer programs and courses can provide valuable learning experiences and exposure to new subjects or fields of study. Consider enrolling in academic enrichment programs, pre-college courses or specialized workshops offered by colleges, universities, or educational organizations. These programs can help you explore your interests, strengthen your academic skills, and gain insights into college life.

Taking courses offered at local colleges or your high school can help you boost your GPA and add college readiness classes to your transcript.

## INTERNSHIPS

Internships offer hands-on experience in a professional setting and provide valuable insights into potential career



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paths. Look for internships in industries or fields that align with your interests and career goals.

Whether it's working at a local business, nonprofit organization or research institute,

an internship can help you develop valuable skills, build your resume and make meaningful connections in your chosen field. It also shows admission reps that you are pursuing important career

opportunities and laying the groundwork for future study.

## JOBS

Taking on a part-time job during the summer break can help you develop essential

workplace skills and earn extra income. Consider opportunities in retail, hospitality, food service or other industries that offer flexible schedules for students. A summer job can teach you valuable lessons in time management, responsibility and teamwork, which are essential for success in college and beyond. It also lets you start saving for college expenses.

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a meaningful way to give back to your community while gaining valuable experience and skills. Look for volunteer opportunities with local nonprofits, community organizations or service-oriented groups. Whether it's tutoring students, assisting at a food bank or participating in environmental clean-up projects, volunteering allows you to make a positive effect while developing empathy, leadership and communication skills.

## PERSONAL PROJECTS

Summer break is an ideal time to pursue personal projects or passions that may not fit into your regular academic schedule. Whether it's starting a blog, launching a small business, performing with a musical or drama group or working on a creative endeavor, personal projects allow you to explore your interests, express your creativity and develop new skills. Use this time to pursue activities that inspire you and reflect your unique talents and aspirations.



# Consider Renters Insurance

With all the expenses of college life, renter's insurance often fails to make the list of things students need. However, that can be a costly oversight.

Renters policies provide financial protection for personal belongings and liability coverage in case of unforeseen events like theft, fire or accidents.

## MISCONCEPTIONS

College Confidential reports there are several misconceptions that college students have about renter's insurance. The primary one is that they are covered by their landlord's insurance or the college's insurance. However, that insurance typically covers only the building and injuries. It does not cover a student's personal property.

Other misconceptions students have are that they don't own enough property to cover, that the insurance is too expensive or that their roommate's insurance covers them both. College Confidential points out having to replace everything — from clothing to laptops to bikes to textbooks — can get costly without insurance and typically a policy can be found for as little as \$10 to \$30 a month. Also, renter's insurance is personal; it does not cover everyone living at a property.



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## PROS AND CONS

One of the key benefits of renters insurance is that it covers the cost of replacing personal belongings, such as electronics, furniture and clothing, in case of damage or theft. Additionally, renters insurance typically includes liability coverage, which can help cover legal expenses and medical bills if someone is injured in your rental unit and sues for damages.

Depending on the policy, it may protect your belongings if they are stolen or damaged

while you are away from your living space such as in a classroom or the library.

However, renters insurance also has some drawbacks to consider. One potential downside is the cost of premiums, which can vary depending on factors such as location, coverage limits and deductible amounts. Additionally, renters insurance may not cover certain events, such as floods or earthquakes, so students should carefully review their policy to understand what is and isn't covered.

## FINDING A PLAN

Purchasing renters insurance for campus housing is relatively straightforward. Students can typically obtain coverage through insurance companies that offer renters insurance policies, either online or through local agents. When shopping for renters insurance, compare quotes from multiple insurers to find the best coverage options at affordable rates.

Consider factors such as the coverage limits, deductible amount and any additional coverage options available. Choose

coverage limits that adequately protect personal belongings without paying for unnecessary coverage. Review the policy's deductible amount, which is the out-of-pocket expense a policyholder has to pay before the insurance kicks in.

Once you have purchased insurance, create an inventory of items you have. Some agents recommend taking pictures of what you own and backing it up to a cloud storage. This will help you file a claim in the event of fire, theft or other disaster.



# Safety Strategies for Students

For many students, college will be the first time they have lived away from home.

While colleges work to create a safe environment for everyone, there are dangers that can include natural disasters, crimes, active shooter events, fires or medical emergencies.

Having a plan can help keep you safe as can learning campus safety protocols, resources and self-defense strategies.

College campuses should be environments where students feel safe to learn, grow and thrive. Safety concerns can affect students' overall well-being and academic performance. Having a plan can reduce anxiety and panic while protecting lives and well-being.

Students can contribute to their safety by doing such things as creating a basic emergency kit and keeping it in their dorm room. They can also work with their roommates to develop a check-in or communication plan for emergencies.

## SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Colleges and universities implement various safety protocols and measures to safeguard their campuses. These protocols may include:

- **Campus police:** Many colleges have their own police departments or campus security forces dedicated to patrolling the campus, responding to emergencies and enforcing safety regulations.



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- **Emergency alert systems:** Colleges use emergency alert systems to notify students, faculty and staff about potential threats, such as severe weather, active shooters or other emergencies. These systems often include text messages, emails and loudspeaker announcements.

- **Security cameras and lighting:** Surveillance cameras and well-lit areas help deter criminal activity and enhance overall security on campus.

- **Access control:** Restricted access to buildings and residence halls through key cards or electronic locks helps prevent unauthorized entry and enhances campus security.

- **Safety training and education:** Colleges may offer safety training sessions, workshops and educational programs to educate students about personal safety, sexual assault prevention and emergency preparedness. They may conduct safety drills and exercises so people

know how to respond to an emergency.

- **Active shooter protocols:** Typically, campuses teach the “Run, Hide, Fight” approach. During an active shooting event, individuals should silence their cell phones, avoid drawing attention and provide accurate information to emergency responders.

- **Evacuation routes and safety zones:** Pre-determined evacuation routes help safely empty dorms, classrooms and

common areas during fires, natural disasters or other incidents. A campus may have a designated safe zone to retreat to during weather or security events.

## SELF-DEFENSE STRATEGIES

Here are some self-defense strategies that College Confidential recommends every college student know:

- **Awareness:** Stay vigilant and aware of your surroundings at all times. Avoid distractions such as texting or wearing headphones when walking alone, especially at night.

- **Instincts:** If something feels off or unsafe, trust your instincts and remove yourself from the situation immediately.

- **Travel:** Whenever possible, travel with friends or classmates, especially when walking to and from campus late at night.

- **Self-defense techniques:** Consider taking a self-defense class or workshop to learn basic techniques for protecting yourself in threatening situations. Techniques such as striking vulnerable areas, escaping holds and using improvised weapons can be valuable skills.

- **Campus resources:** Familiarize yourself with campus safety resources, such as emergency call boxes, safe walk programs and campus escort services. Don't hesitate to use these resources if you feel unsafe or threatened.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility, and together we can create safer and more inclusive college communities.



# Making Friends as a Freshman

Starting college can be an exciting yet daunting experience, especially when it comes to making new friends.

Many college graduates say they made the most important friendships of their life in college — and that’s a lot of pressure.

For many freshmen, forging connections with peers is an essential part of the college experience. But take comfort in knowing that it won’t happen on day one and that if you are among the many people who have difficulty making friends, there are things you can do to navigate the social scene and get the process started.

## PREPARE

Big Future suggests making friends begins before you arrive. They recommend taking an inventory of your personal strengths, including your cultural wealth. This can include such things as having served as interpreters for your family if you come from a bilingual home or resistance capital if you had to learn how to stand up to injustice or inequality.

They also recommend making the most out of freshman orientation and connecting with your roommate before you arrive on campus. Join a Facebook group with alumni from your high school who



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went to the same college or ask your guidance counselor for contacts.

## TIPS

One of the most important things you can do to make friends in college is to be open and approachable. Smile, make eye contact and engage in friendly conversation with your classmates, roommates and fellow students. Don’t be afraid to introduce yourself and strike up a conversation with someone new.

Joining clubs, organizations and extracurricular activities is a great way to meet

like-minded individuals and expand your social circle. Whether you’re interested in sports, music, art or community service, there’s likely a club or group on campus that aligns with your interests.

Don’t wait for others to invite you to hang out — take the initiative to make plans and invite classmates or roommates to join you. Whether it’s grabbing coffee between classes, studying together in the library or exploring the campus together, taking the first step can lead to meaningful connections and friendships.

College campuses are buzz-

ing with social events, parties and gatherings. Attend campus-sponsored events, dormitory socials and off-campus activities to meet new people and experience the college community. Keep an eye out for flyers, posters and announcements about upcoming events, and don’t hesitate to join in the fun.

Social media and online platforms can be valuable tools for connecting with classmates and making new friends. Join Facebook groups, follow campus organizations on Instagram, and participate in online forums and discussion

boards related to your interests. Reach out to fellow students online and strike up conversations that can transition into real-life friendships.

Step outside your comfort zone. Connect with people of different backgrounds and life experiences.

Above all, be yourself and stay true to your values as you navigate the social scene in college. Don’t feel pressured to conform to peer expectations or compromise your beliefs to fit in. Authenticity and genuineness are key ingredients for building lasting friendships that enrich your college experience.