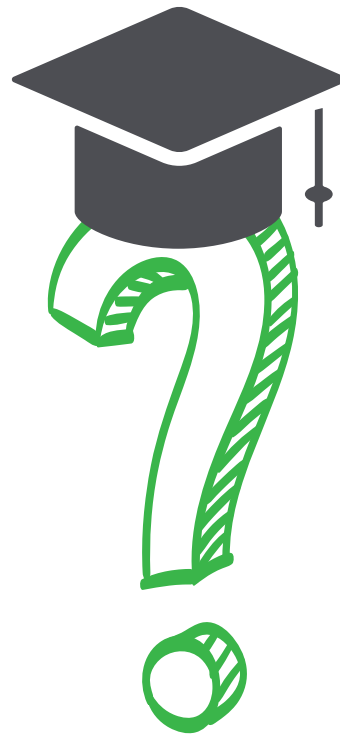
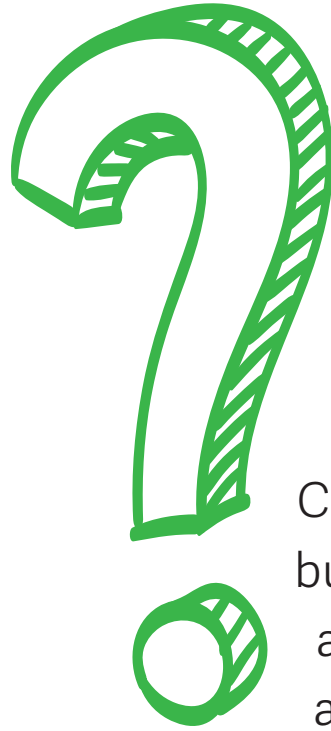


VERMONT
TECH



ARE YOU
READY
FOR COLLEGE

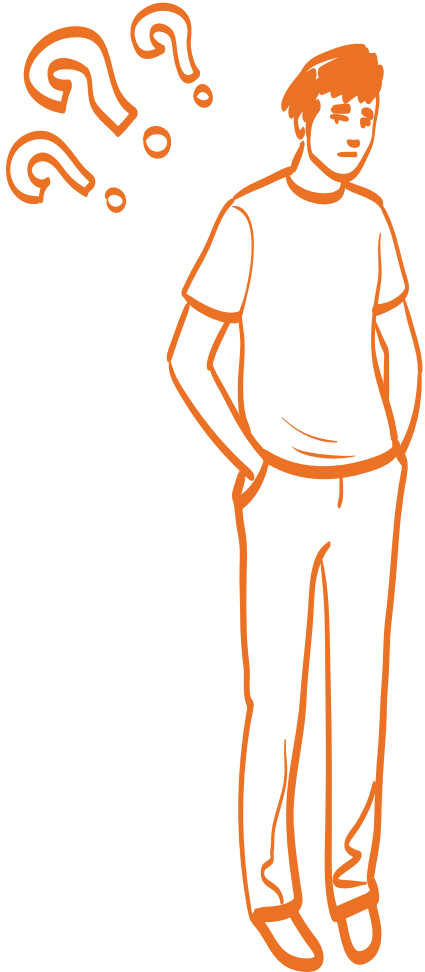
If you're in
middle or
high school,
**you might not
know what
you're going
to do** once
you turn 18.



College might not be on your radar, but consider this: Besides giving you a tremendous amount of knowledge and skills, **a college degree pays off.**

According to a recent U.S. Census Bureau survey, if you go straight to work after high school, you might make as much as \$28,000 a year. **If you go to college, you can almost double your salary,** to nearly \$50,000. And if you pursue additional degrees after your undergraduate years, you can triple your salary, to \$87,000-plus.

All of that sounds pretty good, but **how do you get into college in the first place?** Is there anything you can do when you're in middle or high school to increase your chances of getting into the college of your choice and even obtaining a scholarship?



When you think about college like building a house, it goes like this: **If you start planning early, you'll find that your path to college is a lot easier** and you might be eligible for more scholarships.

If you start later, you can still go to college; you just might need to work a lot harder and spend more time and money to get in.



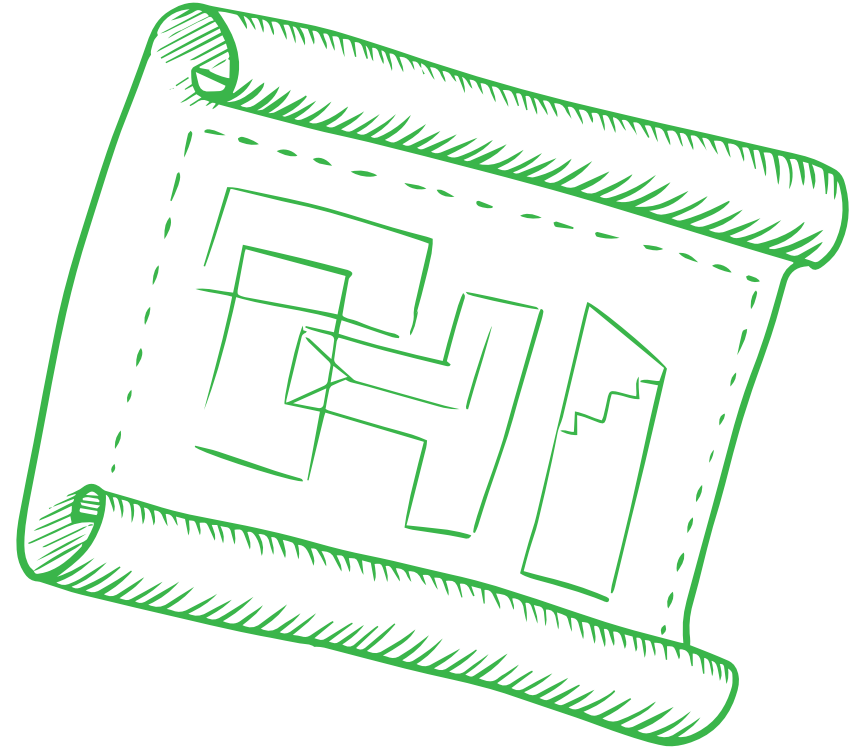
Preparing for college is a lot like **building a house.**

If you start early enough and plan well, you'll end up with the house of your dreams. If you don't, you might have to cram in a lot of extra hours and work to make up for lost time. Your house probably won't be built on schedule or on budget.

DRAWING UP YOUR BLUEPRINT

If the path to college is like building a house, then 8th grade is the time to find your site and draw up a blueprint.

“Finding your site” means you **start thinking about college as an option** – even if you haven’t decided whether you’ll go. It’s a time to **prepare for college**, just in case. If you ever want to go to college, then you’ll be ready.



It’s like drawing up a blueprint for a house. You might not decide to build it, but the blueprint is there, and waiting, if you decide to go.

The blueprint you draw up in 8th grade will be the courses you take. They'll prepare you for college-ready curriculum in high school – and the SAT and ACT tests required for application to most colleges and universities.

Although getting good grades is always ideal, **you shouldn't stress out too much about your grades in middle school.** They won't matter for college, but what you learn during middle school will have an impact on which classes you take in high school. And that will set you up for college.

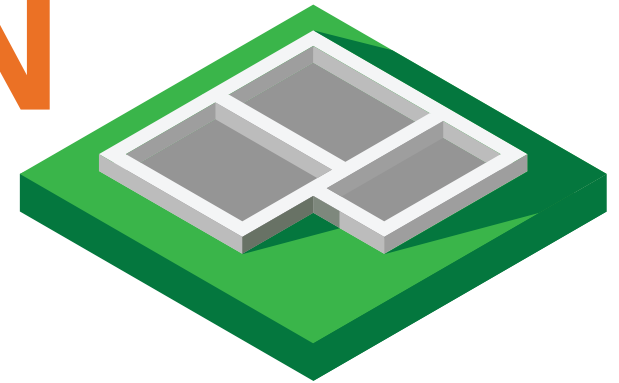


During Grade

8

- Take courses that will help you focus on the five core curricular areas that colleges care about: **math, science, English, social studies and foreign language.** If you already know you're headed to technical college, then you might not need a foreign language (it's not required for admission to most technical schools). But many students take a foreign language, anyway, because they might end up working at businesses that interact with global customers.
- Figure out **what interests you.** Do you like STEM (science, technology, engineering, math), the arts or sports? Can you sign up for special classes or extracurricular activities that focus on your interests? Many schools and communities offer activities and courses for free or low-cost, depending on your family's income, so make sure you take advantage of all opportunities.
- Check out the **courses and programs offered at the high school you'll attend.** Visit the school's website or talk to your middle school guidance counselor or teachers.
- Figure out **which courses you might take in high school** and when you should sign up. Many high schools have an orientation night for parents and students to learn about the curriculum. Talk to your middle school teachers to find out.
- Once you learn about your high school curriculum, **develop a game plan.** That's your blueprint, a guide you can use throughout your high school years to figure out if you're headed in the right direction.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION



If 8th grade is when you draw up a blueprint for your house, then 9th grade is when you **lay the foundation**. Now is the time to start building what will become a sort of “portfolio” to showcase who you are: your courses, your grades, your interests and your activities.

“Colleges really look for someone who’s well-rounded,” says Nate Ball, Assistant Director of Admissions. “What that means is: It’s a student who takes a variety of courses – math, science, history, writing, literature and so forth – and participates in a mix of activities, both at school and in the community.”

That doesn’t mean that you have to be a sports star or a singing sensation to get into college. Instead, Ball explains, **“Just follow your interests.”** That might mean volunteering at your school or in your community, joining clubs, going out for sports, participating in leadership opportunities, working or interning at local businesses or summer camps, or getting involved in theater, band, chorus or visual arts.”

Colleges also care about grades and 9th grade is when grades really start to count.

To understand why, just do the math.

All four of your high school years will be counted in a transcript, which is a record of your courses, credits and grades. **Ninth grade is 25 percent of that.** Your transcript will be sent to any college you apply to.

Some high schools “weight” grades depending on the level of courses you take. The more difficult the course, the more “weight” a grade carries.

Whether or not your high school does this, **colleges still look at your grade-point average and what types of courses you take.** They might not be too impressed if you take all easy courses. They might be more excited to see harder classes, even with a little bit lower GPA.



During Grade 9

- Start building “blocks” of skills, **knowledge and grades to carry you through all four years of high school.** What you do in 9th grade will have an impact on what you learn the rest of your high school years. Take math as an example. If you understand all the concepts taught in your 9th grade math class and get good grades, you will advance to the upper-level math classes that you need for college.

- Pay attention to what really interests you but also **explore classes and activities you wouldn't automatically consider.** Ninth grade is a great time to delve into more interests instead of fewer so that you can expand your base

of knowledge, skills and interests. It also will make you more well-rounded, and colleges love that.

- Think about grades as dollar signs. In reality, they can translate into **scholarship money for college.** They also can have a huge impact on whether you continue taking college-level courses in the five co-curricular* areas, something you need for getting into college.

* Remember: co-curricular areas are:

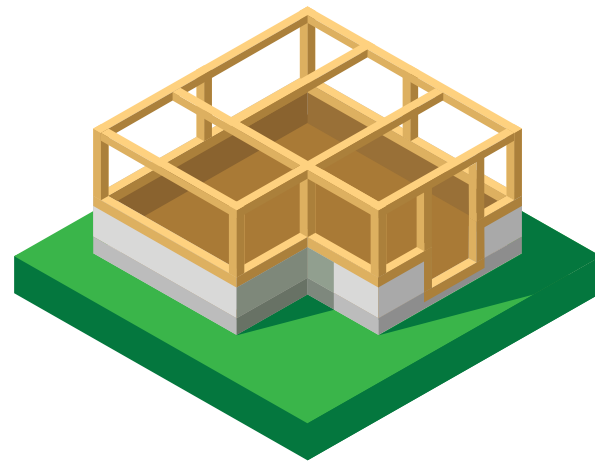
- math
- science
- English
- social studies
- foreign languages



CONSTRUCTING THE FRAMEWORK

If your path to college is like building a house, then **10th grade is when your house starts to take shape.**

You have laid the foundation; now it's time to start constructing the framework – the support beams and walls – that will allow you to more easily visualize the end product.



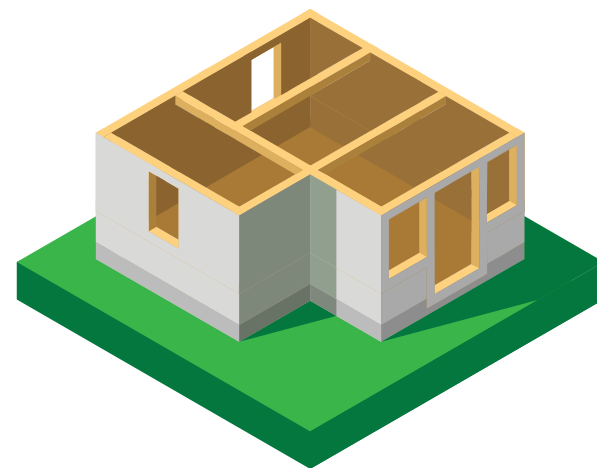


During Grade **10**

- Take the next in the series of core curriculum courses: **more advanced math, science, English, social studies and, if this applies to you, foreign language**. The better you do, the more time and flexibility you have to focus on classes and activities that highlight the unique “house” you are building.
- Challenge yourself. Follow the advice of college admissions counselors, the people who will help determine whether you get in to a certain college: Instead of signing up for the less challenging courses for the easy “A,” **take harder courses**. College admissions counselors pay attention to what types of courses you take. For them, a “B” in a challenging course can be a better indicator of your future success than an “A” in an easier course.
- Visit colleges. It’s really not too early! Explore a **wide variety, including those you never thought you’d be interested in**. Think you want a small school? Visit a large or medium-sized one for comparison. Many medium-to-large schools can feel small once you start to meet and interact with professors and students in a particular department. Larger schools also offer more services.
- Sign up for **college open houses** or events such as **“Try a Major” Day** at Vermont Tech. You’ll meet other potential students, and it’s an easy way to get a lot of information in a nutshell.
- Keep a **journal when visiting colleges**. Otherwise, you’ll start to forget all the details, and the colleges will all blend in your head. Keep track of all the questions you ask, and make sure to ask those same questions at the other colleges you visit.
- Develop your **list of college choice criteria**. Refer to your journal and college visits when developing your criteria.

CHECKING OUT THE VIEW

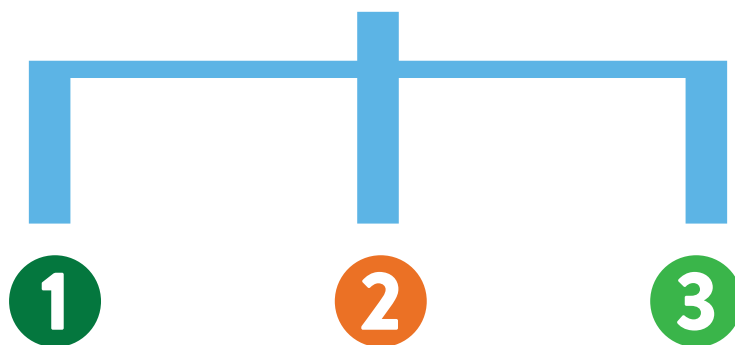
You've developed your framework. Now take a look around. How is your house looking, and what's the view like from your vantage point?



Your junior year is the time to assess your interests and skills and how they connect to the larger world.



CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:



1
What is going on in the job market? What sectors are growing?

2
Where do you want to work after college? Which field? What location?

3
Where can you find a job in the field in which you're interested?

Talk to your high school guidance counselors, do some research online, talk to your family and friends and **find out the answers.**



During Grade **11**

- Take the SAT and/or ACT. You might need to take these tests more than once, so **start early**.
- Narrow your list of college visits to five, and **go visit them again**. Visit them during summer or on family vacations. This time around, ask different questions.
- Make sure you **"opt in" at each college** to receive information via email regarding events, deadlines, scholarships and more. You don't want to miss out on any important opportunities.
- Talk with your guidance counselor about **Dual Enrollment** and **Early College** programs, like the Vermont Academy of Science & Technology (VAST) at Vermont Tech. You can start your college career while still in high school.
- Develop your list of **career choice criteria**. Keep a record of your online research and try some job shadowing to inform your list.

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Your house is almost ready, except for a few finishing touches.



**Your senior year is
when you zero in on
what really matters to you.**



AN **IMPORTANT** POINT TO REMEMBER:

Don't think of senior year as a vacation. **Colleges pay attention to what you're doing in your final year.** If you back off

on classes and activities, colleges will think you don't care about your future.



During Grade **12**

- Consider **enrolling in an Early College** program or take a **dual enrollment course** (or two!) to build a college transcript while in high school.
- Take the **SAT or ACT** again as needed.
- Consider what you've learned from your **college visits** and information-gathering.
- Pick the college you like and apply based on these **five criteria**:
 1. Your **interests**.
 2. How each college **"fits"** with you, based on your visits. How often did you visit? What time of year did you visit? What did you learn when you visited?
 3. **Size**. This shouldn't be as important as "fit."
 4. **Location**.
 5. State vs. private schools. Remember that state schools will **cost less**, and almost always will have a program you're interested in.
- Call and ask for an **application fee waiver** if you need it. Many colleges will waive these fees.
- Take advantage of **admissions departments** at your state's colleges and universities. Call them and stay in touch. They are there to serve you.
- Complete the **FAFSA form as early as October 1**, so you have options for financial aid and scholarships.
- Once you receive all your acceptance letters and financial aid and scholarship offers, sit down with your family to **evaluate your options**. This is the time to start considering the cost factor, not before.



Get ready for college CHECKLIST

Grade 8

DONE?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Focus on core classes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Figure out what interests you | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Research courses/programs available in your high school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop your "blueprint" game plan | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grade 9

DONE?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Build blocks of skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Explore classes/activities that are new to you | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteer at school or in the community | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Keep your grades up! | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grade 10

DONE?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Challenge yourself with advanced courses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Visit colleges | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend college open house events | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop your list of college criteria: | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |

Grade 11

DONE?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Take the SAT and/or ACT | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Narrow college list and visit them: | DATE? |
| 1. | (_ / _ / _) |
| 2. | (_ / _ / _) |
| 3. | (_ / _ / _) |
| 4. | (_ / _ / _) |
| 5. | (_ / _ / _) |
| "Opt in" at colleges to receive info | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider Early College and Dual Enrollment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop list of career criteria | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Grade 12

DONE?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Don't treat 12th grade like a vacation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider Early College and Dual Enrollment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Take the SAT and/or ACT again (as needed) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Apply to colleges | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Complete FAFSA by October 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Receive acceptance letters | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evaluate financial aid/scholarships | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pick your college! | <input type="checkbox"/> |