

# StudentEdge

## Get Started Guide

StudentEdge is a one-stop online resource to help you and your family plan for the future. Whether you're going to college, trade or technical school, the military, or directly into the workforce, StudentEdge will help you prepare for success.

Each of the four main sections in StudentEdge focuses on a specific part of the college planning process:

### **Prepare for Tests**

Get ready for standardized tests by taking online courses or practice tests and reading information about test structure, tips, and strategies. StudentEdge helps you prepare for a variety of tests, including the SAT, ACT, PSAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP exams, and ASVAB.

### **Search for Schools**

Use college search tools to find the schools or career training programs that are right for you. CollegeQuest matches you with the colleges that are the best fit for you on all levels—academic, social, and financial. StudentEdge also has separate search tools for nursing schools, career colleges, and vocational-technical schools to help you find the program you want.

### **Explore Careers**

Learn about career options and find the path that's right for you. Taking the Career Key assessment will help you discover your Holland personality type, which directs you to occupations that are best suitable for you. You can use that information to browse through careers, learning about job skills, education needed, and potential earnings, and find occupations and college majors that you may want to pursue.

### **Pay for College**

Use financial planning tools and learn about sources of aid as you and your family prepare to pay for college. The savings calculator and tuition finder can help you develop and assess a savings plan. Search for scholarships to find additional sources of aid, and use the award analyzer to compare financial aid packages.

StudentEdge also has general planning tools, including podcasts, live chats with college admissions experts, and timelines that are specific to each grade level. In addition, the Advice Center contains hundreds of articles on a variety of college and career planning topics.

You can save the information you need, such as your college list, scholarships, and careers of interest, to your personal portfolio, which is accessible from the “My Portfolio” link in the top-right corner of each page.

Parents and students can use StudentEdge throughout the four years of high school. Go to the section of the guide that corresponds to your specific grade level to find out how you can use StudentEdge starting right now.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Freshman Year)

Although you only recently started high school, it's not too early to think about college and your career. What you do as a freshman—the classes you take, the extracurricular activities you participate in, how you plan—all affects the next three years and beyond. Don't worry though, because StudentEdge is your guide to getting through it successfully. The information below will show you how you can get started.

### Prepare for Tests

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Take a practice test for the PSAT. Use the answer explanations to learn about your strengths and weaknesses, and start to develop a study plan.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "PSAT" from the Admissions menu to learn more about the test. Select the "Practice Test" link at the top of the page to take a test.	You may want to start preparing for the PSAT in the spring if you plan to take it during the fall of your sophomore year.
Start to research the components of the SAT and ACT and think about which test will be right for you.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "SAT" or "ACT" from the Admissions menu to learn about each test.	You may want to learn about the tests in the spring. This will help you plan your testing schedule for your sophomore and junior years.
Learn about strategies for taking standardized tests.	In the Prepare for Tests section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the "General Advice" heading.	You may want to learn about test strategies in the spring. This will help you prepare for tests during your sophomore and junior years.

### Search for Schools

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Start your personal college profile of academics, honors, and activities.	On the Search for Schools tab, select "Start Here" to start building your profile in CollegeQuest.	You can add information to your profile throughout the school year.
Check out your potential college matches and review them with your family and guidance counselor.	In CollegeQuest, select your Match List to view your potential college matches. Select the name of a school to view its profile.	You can review your college matches throughout the school year. (Your match list will be available after you've completed a

		certain amount of your profile.)
Learn about the basics of the college selection process.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “Choosing Your College” heading.	You may want to learn more about choosing a college in the spring so you’ll be ready to get more involved in the process during your sophomore and junior years.

### Explore Careers

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Take the Career Key assessment and check out your Holland type score.	On the Explore Careers tab, select the “Explore Careers” link and then select “Take the Career Key Assessment.”	You may want to take the Career Key assessment in the fall or winter to evaluate your current personality type.
Investigate potential occupations based on your career interests and your Holland type score.	From your Career Key results page, select the lists of occupations that correspond to your highest scores. To search for careers by keyword or occupational category, select the “Explore Careers” link on the Explore Careers tab and then select “Search Hundreds of Careers.”	You may want to explore potential careers in the winter or spring to get a sense of the post-high school path you might choose.
Start a resume of extracurricular activities, volunteer work, honors, awards, and work experience.	On the Explore Careers tab, select the “Resume Builder” link.	You can add information to your resume throughout the school year.

### Pay for College

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Assess your college savings plan by using the financial planning calculator with your family.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Calculate your savings” link.	You may want to use the calculator in the fall or winter to get an initial assessment of your savings plan.
Use the tuition finder to get an idea of college costs.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Scout out tuition costs” link.	You may want to use the tuition finder in the spring to get an initial

		sense of college costs.
Test your financial aid knowledge with a quick quiz.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Test your financial aid literacy” link.	You may want to take the quiz in the spring to discover what topics you should focus on learning more about during your sophomore and junior years.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade (Sophomore Year)

Sophomore year is transitional. Take this time to make sure you're on track with your course load and get to know your interests. StudentEdge helps you use this time to prepare for the more rigorous planning years yet to come. The information below will help you to focus on the key activities you should be doing this year.

### Prepare for Tests

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Take a practice test for the PSAT. Use the answer explanations to learn about your strengths and weaknesses, and help you focus your study plan.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "PSAT" from the Admissions menu to learn more about the test. Select the "Practice Test" link at the top of the page to take a test.	If you're planning on taking the PSAT in mid-October, you may want to take a practice test in early October to get ready.
Take the online course for the PSAT. Be sure to take the pre-test so the course will generate a learning path just for you.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "PSAT" from the Admissions menu. Then select the "Course" link at the top of the page.	If you're planning on taking the PSAT in mid-October, you may want to start the online course in early or mid-September to help you prepare for the test.
Research the standardized tests that you might want to take next year and learn the differences between the tests.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, hold your mouse over the menu titles to see the tests available. Select the name of the test you want to learn more about.	You may want to learn about the tests in the winter or spring. This will help you plan your testing schedule for future years.
If you plan to take the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, or AP exams, take a practice test. Review the answer explanations and see where you'll need extra practice.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select the name of the test from the appropriate menu. Then select the "Practice Test" link.	You may want to take a practice test about three to four weeks before the real thing so you'll have time to study and prepare.

### Search for Schools

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Update your personal college profile of academics, honors, activities, and college preferences.	On the Search for Schools tab, select "Start Here" to update your profile in CollegeQuest.	You can add information to your profile throughout the school year.
Review your college match list and any changes that may	In CollegeQuest, select your Match List to view your	You can review your college matches

have occurred from the past year. Go over your matches with your family and guidance counselor.	college matches. Select the name of a school to view its profile.	throughout the school year. (Your match list will be available after you've completed a certain amount of your profile.)
If you're interested in career colleges, nursing schools, or vocational-technical schools, search for the programs that will best fit you.	On the Search for Schools tab, select the appropriate search tool link under the "Additional School Searches" heading.	You can search for schools and programs throughout the year.
Contact colleges that interest you to find out more about their programs and requirements.	In CollegeQuest, use the links in the "Contact College" column of your Match List or Saved Colleges list, or review school profiles to find contact information.	You may want to contact schools in the spring. Getting more information from them will help you to build a college list.

### Explore Careers

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Take the Career Key assessment and check out your Holland type score. If you've already taken it, but your interests have changed, you may want to take it again to see if your scores are different.	On the Explore Careers tab, select the "Explore Careers" link and then select "Take the Career Key Assessment."	You may want to take the Career Key assessment in the fall or winter to evaluate how your personality type has changed.
Investigate potential occupations based on your career interests and your Holland type score.	From your Career Key results page, select the lists of occupations that correspond to your highest scores. To search for careers by keyword or occupational category, select the "Explore Careers" link on the Explore Careers tab and then select "Search Hundreds of Careers."	You may want to explore potential careers in the fall or winter to get a sense of the post-high school path you might choose.
Start or update your resume. Be sure to include extracurricular activities, volunteer work, honors, awards, and work experience.	To start a new resume, select the "Resume Builder" link on the Explore Careers tab. To update a current resume, select the "My Resume List" link from the My Portfolio page.	You can add information to your resume throughout the school year, but you may want to focus on preparing a polished copy in the spring so

		you can use it to apply for summer jobs or internships.
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### Pay for College

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Assess your college savings plan by using the financial planning calculator with your family.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Calculate your savings” link.	You may want to use the calculator in the fall or winter to assess how your savings plan is progressing.
Use the tuition finder to get an idea of college costs.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Scout out tuition costs” link.	You may want to use the tuition finder in the winter or spring to get a sense of the costs for the schools on your list.
Test your financial aid knowledge with a quick quiz.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Test your financial aid literacy” link.	You may want to take the quiz in the spring to discover what topics you should focus on learning more about during your junior year.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade (Junior Year)

Your junior year is a key year in terms of college and career planning—there’s a lot that you need to do. It may seem daunting, but StudentEdge gives you everything you need to get ready and take it one step at a time. Be sure to keep your family and guidance counselor aware of your plans so they can give you advice and support. The information below will guide you through the important tasks you should do this year.

### Prepare for Tests

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Finalize which standardized tests you’ll need to take based on your college goals.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, hold your mouse over the menu titles to see the tests available. Select the name of the test you want to learn more about.	You may want to set up a testing plan in the fall, so you’ll have ample time to prepare for the tests you’ll be taking.
Take a practice test for the PSAT. Review the answer explanations and see where you’ll need extra practice.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select “PSAT” from the Admissions menu and select the “Practice Test” link at the top of the page.	If you’re planning on taking the PSAT in mid-October, you may want to take a practice test in early October to get ready.
Take the online course for the PSAT. Be sure to take the pre-test so the course will generate a learning path just for you.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select “PSAT” from the Admissions menu. Then select the “Course” link at the top of the page.	If you’re planning on taking the PSAT in mid-October, you may want to start the online course in early or mid-September to help you prepare for the test.
Take a practice test for the SAT or ACT to ease your test-taking anxiety. Use the answer explanations to develop a study plan.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select “SAT” or “ACT” from the Admissions menu and select the “Practice Test” link at the top of the page.	You may want to take a practice test about three to four weeks before the real thing so you’ll have time to study and prepare.
Take the online course for the SAT or ACT. Be sure to take the pre-test so the course will generate a learning path just for you.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select “SAT” or “ACT” from the Admissions menu. Then select the “Course” link at the top of the page.	You may want to start an online course about six to eight weeks before you take the test. This will give you plenty of time to work through the lessons, take practice tests, and discover where you need to study.

If you plan to take any SAT Subject Tests or AP exams, take a practice test. Review the answer explanations and see where you'll need extra practice.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select the name of the test from the appropriate menu. Then select the "Practice Tests" link.	You may want to take a practice test about three to four weeks before the real thing so you'll have time to study and prepare.
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### Search for Schools

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Update your personal college profile of academics, honors, activities, and college preferences.	On the Search for Schools tab, select "Start Here" to update your profile in CollegeQuest.	You can add information to your profile throughout the school year.
Review your college match list and any changes that may have occurred from the past year. Go over your matches with your family and guidance counselor.	In CollegeQuest, select your Match List to view your college matches. Select the name of a school to view its profile.	You can review your college matches throughout the school year. (Your match list will be available after you've completed a certain amount of your profile.)
If you're interested in career colleges, nursing schools, or vocational-technical schools, search for the programs that will best fit you.	On the Search for Schools tab, select the appropriate search tool link under the "Additional School Searches" heading.	You can search for schools throughout the year, but you may want to start narrowing your choices in the winter or spring.
Contact colleges that interest you to find out more about their programs and requirements.	In CollegeQuest, use the links in the "Contact College" column of your Match List or Saved Colleges list, or review school profiles to find contact information.	You may want to contact schools throughout the year. This will help you learn more about entrance requirements and allow you to set up campus visits and interviews.
Compare your college choices and build a college list.	Review school profiles to compare information. Save schools that interest you to your Saved Colleges list. Rank those schools using the "My Rank" column.	You can research your college choices throughout the year, but you may want to narrow your list by the spring so you can more easily manage the visiting and application processes.

Start planning campus visits of colleges you might want to attend.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “Campus Visits” heading.	You may want to make campus visits in the spring or summer to get a feel for the schools on your list.
Review the college application process. Start thinking about your admission essays and ask for letters of recommendation early.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “How to Apply” heading.	You may want to start the application process in the spring. This will make the fall of your senior year less hectic. You can use this time to write first drafts of admission essays and ask for letters of recommendation.

### Explore Careers

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
If your interests and goals have changed, take the Career Key assessment again to reflect these changes in your Holland type score.	On the Explore Careers tab, select the “Explore Careers” link and then select “Take the Career Key Assessment.”	You may want to take the Career Key assessment in the fall or winter to evaluate how your personality type has changed.
Investigate potential occupations based on your career interests and your Holland type score.	From your Career Key results page, select the lists of occupations that correspond to your highest scores. To search for careers by keyword or occupational category, select the “Explore Careers” link on the Explore Careers tab and then select “Search Hundreds of Careers.”	You may want to explore potential careers in the fall or winter to get a sense of jobs, college majors, or educational programs you may want to pursue.
Start or update your resume. Be sure to include extracurricular activities, volunteer work, honors, awards, and work experience.	To start a new resume, select the “Resume Builder” link on the Explore Careers tab. To update a current resume, select the “My Resume List” link from the My Portfolio page.	You can add information to your resume throughout the school year, but you may want to focus on preparing a polished copy in the spring so you can use it to apply for summer jobs or internships.
Get advice about finding	In the General Advice section	You may want to look

summer employment or enrichment opportunities.	of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “Make Summer Count” heading.	for summer opportunities in the early spring so you’ll have enough time to apply and make appropriate plans.
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## Pay for College

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Assess your college savings plan by using the financial planning calculator with your family.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Calculate your savings” link.	You may want to use the calculator in the fall or winter to assess how your savings plan is progressing.
Test your financial aid knowledge with a quick quiz.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Test your financial aid literacy” link.	You may want to take the quiz in the fall or winter to discover what topics you need more information on. This will give you time to research these topics before you get more deeply involved in the financial aid process.
Use the tuition finder to get an idea of college costs.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Scout out tuition costs” link.	You may want to use the tuition finder in the winter or spring to get a sense of the costs for the schools on your list.
Search for scholarships by filling out a scholarship profile. Review scholarships that meet your qualifications; if you’re eligible now, begin applying for scholarships.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Locate FREE scholarship money” link.	You can search for scholarships throughout the school year, but getting started early will help you find more opportunities.
Become familiar with the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) and the related procedures to securing financial aid.	In the Pay for College section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the following headings: Federal & State Aid, College-Based Awards, Scholarships, and Loans.	You may want to become familiar with the federal aid process in the winter or spring, so you’ll be prepared to pursue and secure financial aid during your senior year.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (Senior Year)

You're almost there, but senior year is where all of that planning finally springs into action. It's easy to get overwhelmed, but StudentEdge will help you get through it. The information below will help you to stay on track with the key tasks you need to accomplish.

### Prepare for Tests

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Prepare for a final round of the SAT or ACT with the online course. Be sure to take the pre-test so the course will generate a learning path just for you.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "SAT" or "ACT" from the Admissions menu. Then select the "Course" link at the top of the page.	You may want to start an online course about six to eight weeks before you take the test. This will give you plenty of time to work through the lessons, take practice tests, and discover where you need to study.
Take a practice test for the SAT or ACT to ease your test-taking anxiety.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "SAT" or "ACT" from the Admissions menu and select the "Practice Test" link at the top of the page.	You may want to take a practice test about three to four weeks before the real thing so you'll have time to study and prepare.
If you're interested in a military career, take a practice test for the ASVAB. Use the answer explanations to develop a study plan.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select "ASVAB" from the Career Exams menu and select the "Practice Test" link at the top of the page.	You may want to take a practice test in the winter or spring so you'll have time to prepare before taking the real thing.
If you plan to take any SAT Subject Tests, or AP exams, take a practice test. Review the answer explanations and see where you'll need extra practice.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select the name of the test from the appropriate menu. Then select the "Practice Tests" link at the top of the page.	You may want to take a practice test about three to four weeks before the real thing so you'll have time to study and prepare.
If you'll be entering the workforce directly, see if you need to take any standardized tests. If so, take a practice test; review the answer explanations and see where you'll need extra practice.	On the Prepare for Tests tab, select the name of the appropriate test from the Career Exams menu to learn more about it. To take a test, select the "Practice Test" link at the top of the page.	You may want to research potential job requirements in the fall or winter. This will give you time to set up a testing plan if necessary and take a practice test to prepare for the real

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## Search for Schools

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Update your personal college profile of academics, honors, activities, and college preferences.	On the Search for Schools tab, select “Start Here” to update your profile in CollegeQuest.	You can add information to your profile throughout the school year, but you may want to have it as complete as possible before you begin the application process.
Finalize your college list and go over your selections with your family and guidance counselor.	Review school profiles to compare information. Rank the schools on your Saved Colleges list using the “My Rank” column.	You may want to finalize your college list in the early fall. This will help you prepare for the application process.
Contact colleges on your list to make sure that you meet the entrance requirements.	In CollegeQuest, use the links in the “Contact College” column of your Match List or Saved Colleges list, or review school profiles to find contact information.	You may want to contact colleges in the early fall. This will help you gather all the information you need before applying to schools.
Plan your final campus visits of colleges you might want to attend.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “Campus Visits” heading.	You may want to visit colleges in the early fall so you’ll be able to get an impression of the schools before you apply.
Fill out your applications, write your essays, and ask for letters of recommendation.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “How to Apply” heading.	Many application deadlines arrive soon after the winter holidays, so you may want to complete your applications in the late fall to make sure you’re prepared. It’s a good idea to send the necessary materials a few weeks before the deadline to make sure they arrive on time.

## Explore Careers

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
If your interests and goals have changed, take the Career Key assessment again to reflect these changes in your Holland type score.	On the Explore Careers tab, select the “Explore Careers” link and then select “Take the Career Key Assessment.”	You may want to take the Career Key assessment in the fall or winter to evaluate how your personality type has changed.
Investigate potential occupations based on your career interests and your Holland type score.	From your Career Key results page, select the lists of occupations that correspond to your highest scores. To search for careers by keyword or occupational category, select the “Explore Careers” link on the Explore Careers tab and then select “Search Hundreds of Careers.”	You may want to explore potential occupations in the fall or winter to get a sense of jobs or educational programs you may want to pursue.
Think about how to match your career interests with possible majors in college.	In the Search for Schools section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the “Majors” heading.	You may want to explore your career interests in depth in the winter. This will help you as you consider potential college majors.
Finalize your resume to give to colleges or potential employers.	To start a new resume, select the “Resume Builder” link on the Explore Careers tab. To update a current resume, select the “My Resume List” link from the My Portfolio page.	You can add information to your resume throughout the school year, but you may want to focus on preparing a polished copy in the winter so you can use it to send to colleges or apply for jobs.
If you’ll be entering the workforce directly, see if any post-secondary education is necessary for career advancement.	If you need to search for career colleges, nursing schools, or vocational-technical schools, go to the Search for Schools tab and select the appropriate search tool link under the “Additional School Searches” heading.	You may want to search for programs in the fall and narrow your choices in the winter. This will help you get ready for any necessary admission processes.

## Pay for College

<b>What To Do</b>	<b>Where To Go</b>	<b>Suggested Timeframe</b>
Assess your college savings plan by using the financial planning calculator with your family.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Calculate your savings” link.	You may want to use the calculator in the fall to assess how your savings plan is progressing.
Review college costs with your family by using the tuition finder.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Scout out tuition costs” link.	You may want to use the tuition finder in the fall to get a sense of the costs for the schools you’re applying to.
Search for scholarships by filling out a scholarship profile. Apply for scholarships that match your qualifications.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Locate FREE scholarship money” link.	You can search for scholarships throughout the school year, but getting started early will help you find more opportunities.
Learn more about the financial aid process and how to find sources of aid.	In the Pay for College section of the Advice Center, check out the articles under the following headings: Federal & State Aid, College-Based Awards, Scholarships, and Loans.	You may want to learn more about the financial aid process in the fall or winter. This will help prepare you to fill out the necessary forms and pursue sources of aid.
Work with your family to fill out the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after the first of January.	To access the FAFSA website, go to the Pay for College tab and select the “Fill out the FAFSA” link.	You may submit the FAFSA after January 1. The earlier you submit the form, the sooner your information can be processed and used to determine financial aid packages.
Once you’re admitted to colleges, compare schools’ financial aid packages with the award analyzer.	On the Pay for College tab, select the “Analyze your college awards” link.	You may want to use the award analyzer in the spring after you’ve received all your award letters. This will help you make an accurate comparison of the aid packages.