

BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE PLANNING FOR SOPHOMORES



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College Board (CEEB) School Code for Berkeley High School: 050290



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Visit the College & Career Center website at
<http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net/resources/college-career-center/>
for more resources, including

COLLEGE PLANNING HANDBOOK

The various college options

Exploring specific schools

Preparing for the application process

SENIOR SUPPLEMENT

The admissions process

Applying for financial aid

Weighing admissions offers



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for funding of copy costs.

“But I’m only a sophomore!”



You may have noticed that adults are starting to ask you about your future. “What are you planning to do after high school?” “Have you thought about what colleges you might apply to?” “What do you want to study?”

If you are like most sophomores, you have no idea. And that’s good, because the most important thing to do at this point is to keep your options open. In fact, that is a perfectly good answer to give those inquiring adults. Tell them: *I don’t know yet; I’m keeping my options open.* Then use the opportunity to find out how their college thinking evolved: *Did you go to college right after high school? How did you choose? What did you study?*

You will discover that people had good experiences at all different types of colleges, big and small, urban and rural, public and private, community colleges and four-year colleges, well-known colleges and colleges you had never heard of before. Next year when you are a junior, you will need to start thinking about which colleges to consider applying to. But for now, just get a sense of how other people made their decisions and what kinds of colleges sound interesting to you. No pressure; there is no need for you to make any decisions right now about what colleges are a good fit for you or what you’d like to study: you have time.

In the meantime, to keep your options open, there are a few things you should keep your eye on.

What You Can Do Your Sophomore Year



WORK HARD IN YOUR CLASSES.

If you haven't already done so, you can start to establish a strong GPA by working hard your sophomore year. California's public universities, the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems, determine initial eligibility based on sophomore and junior year grades. Many private colleges use grades from all four years of high school.

Community colleges are open to all, but doing well in high school will mean you can bypass some first-year classes. High school is the last time your education is free. Take advantage of it!

IF YOU NEED IT, GET EXTRA HELP TO IMPROVE YOUR GRADES.

Many teachers at BHS offer extra help at lunch or after school. A list of tutors, subjects, and times is available in the College & Career Center and on the BHS website: see Tutoring Schedules and Tutoring Location in the left-hand column at <http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net>.

Free tutoring is also available Monday through Thursday after school at the College & Career Center (D221, 3:30–6:00 p.m.). Other free tutoring programs are available—ask your counselor for details. Another great way to get that extra support is to form study groups with your peers.

Review what courses are required for graduation from BHS and for college admission so you'll be able to plan what courses you need to take your junior and senior years. BHS graduation requirements and the UC and CSU admission course requirements are listed in the *BHS Organizer* and the *BHS Course Catalog*.

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME.

Your extracurricular and community service activities are important when it comes to college admission. These can include not only school organizations and clubs but community volunteer work, personal hobbies, and work experience that have particular significance to you.

College admission counselors like to see that students have shown passion for and commitment to an interest or activity over time, so your sophomore year is an important year to get involved.

If you have not already done so, you may want to try several activities. However, you should work to focus on a small number or single one that you would enjoy continuing over the next three years. It is better to be involved in fewer activities and show focus and commitment—qualities that predict college success—than rack up a long list of activities.

Lists of clubs and community service opportunities can be found on the BHS website, <http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net>, under the tab Students.

Keep a record of your activities and the number of hours you spend on them because the applications for UC and many private schools ask for this specific information.

TAKE PRACTICE TESTS FOR THE SAT AND ACT.

Your sophomore year is a good time to take practice tests for the college admission exams in order to decide which of these tests you would like to concentrate on for junior year (see page 9). You may also choose to take a SAT Subject Area test at the end of the year if you are presently taking a course in one of the subject areas offered (see page 10).

Overview of College Requirements



Most four-year colleges require that students complete a set of required college preparatory courses (for example, four years of English). These courses are labeled (P), (H), (AP), or (IB) after the course name in the *BHS Course Catalog* and on your transcript. The *BHS Course Catalog* can be found here:

http://www.berkeleyschools.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BHS_Catalog_2015-16web.pdf?5759fb

UC/CSU PREPARATORY CLASSES

The UC and CSU systems require a specific pattern of courses for admission (called the “a–g requirements”), which all students at BHS are required to complete. These classes are identified with a (P) in the *BHS Course Catalog*.

For math and language courses, successfully completed middle-school classes can also contribute to meeting these requirements.

All UC/CSU applicants will need to complete 11 of the 15 specified “a–g” courses by the end of their junior year.

ADVANCED OPTIONS

Colleges like to see that students have chosen to take challenging courses. These may include Advanced Placement (AP), Honors (H), International Baccalaureate (IB), or community college classes.

This table summarizes the course and standardized test requirements expected for a variety of colleges, including the UC, CSU, community college systems, and other public and private schools. It lists the minimum requirements for admission. Taking additional academic courses beyond the minimum strengthens a student’s application, and many selective colleges prefer that students do so.

Sample Minimum College Admission Requirements

	Number of years required for each subject							Required tests	
	English	Lab Science	Math	Social Science/ History	World Language	Fine/Performing Arts	Electives	SAT Reasoning Test/ACT	SAT Subject Tests
California Community Colleges	High school graduation or equivalent required.								
California State University “a–g” requirements	4 “b”	2 “d”	3 “c”	2 “a”	2 “e”	1 “P”	1 ¹ “g”	X ⁵	
University of California	4	2	3	2	2	1	1 ¹	X	
University of Oregon	4	2	3	3	2			X	
Brown University	4	3 ²	3	2	3		1	X	2 ³
Howard University ⁴	4	2	2	2	2			X	

NOTE: Many colleges expect students to go beyond the minimum. Only “P” (college preparatory) classes are accepted to fulfill the requirements on the chart.

1. UC and CSU also require one year of electives, which can be composed of additional visual and performing arts, history/social science, English, advanced math, laboratory science, or foreign language.
2. One can be a non-laboratory science course.
3. Brown does not require any SAT Subject Tests if the student takes the ACT Plus Writing.
4. Howard University has a guaranteed admission program for students graduating from high school with at least a 3.0 GPA and minimum required scores on the SAT or ACT.

College Entrance Tests



Most four-year colleges—including the UCs and CSUs—require that you submit scores from the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT (you are not required to take both). Alternatively, some colleges require no standardized entrance tests (see www.fairtest.org).

Berkeley High students typically take the PSAT, a practice version of the SAT, during their sophomore and/or junior years when it is given at the school. Practice versions of the ACT are available online (<http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/>) and at the College & Career Center.

If you are now a sophomore, you will be taking a new version of the SAT when you are a junior or senior. It has been revised in accordance with the Common Core standards. The ACT will remain unchanged and is considered a more traditional test. You may do better on one test than the other. Taking a practice version of each test can help you decide if you would like to focus on taking only one of the tests rather than both.

Students may also take some of the SAT Subject Tests to enhance their college applications (see page 10).

PSAT—PRELIMINARY SAT

The PSAT is the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The test is very similar to the SAT except: 1) it is shorter, 2) it has a multiple-choice writing section but not an essay, and 3) it is scored on a scale of 320–1520.

Dates. The PSAT is offered once a year, in October. Exact test date, sign-up dates, and fees are announced in the Daily Bulletin and the Etree in September.

Preparation. Some students prepare by using self-study books available in bookstores, the College & Career Center, and the public library. Free test preparation materials may be found at <https://www.number2.com/>.

Scores. Students who take the PSAT in the fall receive their score reports, as well as their test booklet, in December or January. Listen for announcements in the Daily Bulletin and the Etree with information on where to pick up your scores and the test booklet you used so you can review your answers.

NOTE: Scores from the PSAT are used to identify semi-finalists for the National Merit Scholarship Program. However, scores are only considered for juniors taking the test. If you wish to qualify for this program, you will need to take the PSAT again in your junior year.

PRACTICE SAT AND ACT

Berkeley High offers juniors a combination practice ACT/SAT test each year, this year in the spring, so students can figure out which test is best for them. This same test is given several times a year at Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-act-practice-test#!practice>.

In addition, the following online resources are available:

Free test preparation materials: <https://www.number2.com/>.

Sample test questions: www.actstudent.org/testprep and <https://www.4tests.com/act>

Kahn Academy practice SAT: <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/new-sat>

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour long tests in the following subjects:

- Literature
- U.S. History
- World History
- Math Level 1 or Level 2
- Biology E/M (Ecological/Molecular)
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Several languages other than English

Students may take these tests in addition to the general SAT. Some schools require that students take two or three SAT Subject Tests in addition to the SAT; others do not. Most schools that accept the ACT do *not* also request SAT Subject Test scores.

Timing. Sophomores completing a course in an area of strength for which there is an SAT Subject Test may want to take that subject test *at the end of their sophomore year*, when their knowledge of the subject is most current.

Dates. Tests are offered in May (register in April) and June (register in May). Listen to the Daily Bulletin and watch the Etree for announcements of dates or visit the College & Career Center. The College & Career Center website also lists Subject Area Test dates.

Preparation. The SAT Subject Tests are challenging, and a standard high school course may not cover all of the information tested on the exam. You may need to study extra materials for the exam, either reading parts of texts not covered in class or using SAT Subject Test review books on the subject.

UC Consideration of. The UC system no longer requires SAT Subject Tests; however, some competitive majors at UCs (such as engineering, biology) may recommend applicants take specific Subject Tests. To determine which UC campuses are recommending SAT Subject Tests for particular majors, see the website www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/freshman and on the left, click on “Admission requirements,” then on “Examination requirement,” then on “SAT subject tests.”

Further information about the SAT Subject Tests can be found in the College & Career Center or electronically at www.collegeboard.org where you can find a list of the test centers available, test dates, deadlines for applying, fees, the preparation recommended for each test, and sample test questions in each subject.

TEST FEES

What if I can't afford the fees to take these tests? For juniors and seniors who can't afford the fees, fee waivers are available from the BHS College Advisors. Be sure to obtain them prior to registration deadlines and register by the regular registration deadline. The low-income eligibility guidelines for fee waivers are described on the website www.collegeboard.org for the SAT and on www.act.org for the ACT. No fee waivers are available for sophomores.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Be sure all of your test-taking accommodations are listed on your 504 Plan or your IEP.

If you have a diagnosed disability (learning, ADHD, or other disability), talk to your Academic Counselor now about applying for any needed college test accommodations.

Both the College Board (for the PSAT, SAT, and AP tests) and the ACT require forms requesting accommodations to be filled out by you, your parents, and the school and submitted many weeks ahead of the test. The BHS Academic Counselors and the Resource Teachers have the necessary forms.

PSAT. For accommodations for next fall's PSAT, submit the forms for accommodation this spring. The same accommodations will then apply to any other College Board tests you take after that. (For more information, go to www.collegeboard.org/ssd/student/index.html.)

ACT. If you plan to take the ACT, go to <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/disab/> for information about requesting accommodations.

Useful Websites



For information about college entrance tests:

PSAT and SAT <https://www.collegeboard.org>

ACT <http://www.act.org/>

For general information about colleges and their admission processes:

UC www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/freshman

CSU www.calstate.edu/ or www.csumentor.edu

Community colleges www.cccco.edu.

Information about private colleges can be found on the colleges' individual websites.

To search all public and private California colleges by major, distance, and other characteristics, use the search engine at www.californiacolleges.edu (click on “College Planning,” then on “College Matching Assistant” under the Quicklinks).

The Berkeley High School College & Career Center website has lists of resources, with live links, about choosing and applying to college. Go to <http://bhs.berkeleyschools.net> (under “Resources,” click on “College & Career Center,” then on “College & Career Guide” in the left-hand column).