

# JUNIOR SURVIVAL GUIDE

## JOURNEY TO COLLEGE



*“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”*

## ATTENTION JUNIORS:

THE SUMMER BEFORE YOUR SENIOR YEAR IS A VERY IMPORTANT AND EXCITING TIME IN YOUR LIFE.



ARE YOU READY?

*This packet is designed for you to use as you begin to make your post-graduation plans. What you will find is useful information to help you understand the college search and application process. This is not the only information available and should be used as a guide. It is very important that you seek information from various sources, beginning with your guidance counselor, teachers, parents, family members and friends who have attended college and the Internet.*

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## JUNE

Start thinking about college choices. Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do I want to stay in state or attend college out of state? East Coast? West Coast? North South or Midwest?
2. Do I want to attend college in a rural or urban setting?
3. Do I want to attend a large or small school?
4. Am I interested in sports, sororities, fraternities, etc...?
5. What other qualities are important to me in a school?

Start thinking about majors and career goals. Questions to ask yourself:

1. What activities am I good at?
2. What special talents do I have?
3. What majors and careers are interesting to me?
4. How long am I willing to train in my field?
5. Will I be able to find a job with this major or career choice?

Start thinking about whether you meet the requirements. Questions to ask yourself:

1. What GPA do the schools I am interested in require?
2. What is my GPA?
3. What extra-curricular activities or sports have I participated in?
4. What can I do during my senior year to improve where necessary?
5. What extra help might I need in college?

Start thinking about finances. Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do I/my family have money saved for college? How much?
2. What other sources are available?
3. What schools offer financial assistance?
4. What are their requirements?
5. What scholarships can I apply for?

## JULY/AUGUST

1. Register with College Board to search for colleges, register for and practice for SAT and ACT exams and get college information – [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).
2. Talk to your parents/guardians about college choices and college costs.
3. Register with FastWeb to find money for college – [www.fastWeb.com](http://www.fastWeb.com).

4. Study for SAT and ACT exams. Register for the next exams offered.
5. Request applications and brochures from your top college choices.
6. Begin typing college application essays – minimum of 250 words.
7. Create a calendar for your senior year. Indicate deadlines for college applications, college auditions or portfolios, SAT and ACT exams, financial aid and scholarship deadlines.
8. Contact schools and arrange to visit their campuses.
9. Get recommendation letters from employers or supervisors at local organizations or churches to which you belong or volunteer.
10. Search the web for scholarships (including FastWeb.com and collegeanswer.com)
11. Search the web for upcoming college fairs in your area (including the NJ National College Fair, HBCU Fair, NACAC Fair, Performing and Visual Arts College Fair, etc...).

## **SEPTEMBER**

1. Request letters of recommendation from teachers you have worked with at RHS.
2. Make an appointment with your guidance counselor. At your scheduled appointment time, be sure to bring with you the following:
  - a. Signed transcript release form (available in guidance department)
  - b. List of colleges to which you intend to apply (maximum five, at least one in New Jersey)
  - c. Four first class postage stamps for each college
  - d. Letters of recommendation
  - e. List of scholarships you have researched
  - f. Neatly typed essays for each school you are applying to
3. Review the *Senior Survival Guide* provided by Guidance to complete your journey to college.

## **REMEMBER, THE IDEAL COLLEGE CANDIDATE . . .**

- Is involved in extra-curricular activities, including sports, clubs, volunteerism, community service, employment, etc...
- Maintains consistent and good grades
- Has high achievement on standardized tests like the HSPA, PSAT, SAT and ACT
- Exhibits positive and appropriate behavior in school and community

Remember to review your counselor's web page periodically:

- Go to [www.rahway.net](http://www.rahway.net)
- Scroll down and click on "Rahway High School"
- Go to "Staff/Homework" assignments
- Click on your counselor's name under "Guidance"

# BRAG SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What is (are) . . .

Three things that you like about yourself?

Your greatest accomplishment (does not have to be academic)?

Your best subject(s) in school?

Your favorite subject(s) in school?

Your least favorite subject(s) in school?

Your planned major(s)?

Your career goal(s)?

Your reasons for wanting to attend college?

Your dream school?

Three adjectives your friends would use to describe you?

Your greatest strengths?

Your greatest weaknesses?

Do you think your academic record accurately reflects your ability and potential? If not, what circumstances have interfered with your performance?

List the books you have read on your own (not for school) in the past 12 months.

Which activity (club, sport, work, summer program, hobby, etc...) has been the most important to you? Why? Please describe.

## ACTIVITIES, HONORS & AWARDS

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any clubs, activities, or sports you have participated in.  
Include activities you have participated in school or in your community.  
Also include any volunteer work or paid employment.

<b>Activity (employment, club, sports, volunteerism) (Include dates of participation &amp; brief description)</b>	<b>Time Commitment (hours per week)</b>	<b>Leadership Roles (President, Chairperson, etc.)</b>	<b>Other information (Special projects, awards earned, etc.)</b>

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## **SAMPLE COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAY QUESTIONS**

- What do you see as the turning point(s) or important events in your life and why do you view them as such?
- Who are the people who have done the most to influence your personal development and in what ways were they influential?
- What prominent person (past or present) do you particularly admire? Why?
- What idea has most influenced your life? Explain.
- What is the most critical moral, ethical, or social problem facing America today?
- Describe your ideal of the honorable person. Feel free to use examples.
- Discuss briefly the one or two extracurricular, work or community activities that have meant the most to you.
- What responsibility have you had for others and how has it affected your personal growth?
- If you were given the opportunity to spend an evening with any one person living, deceased, or fictional, whom would you choose and why?
- Please cite and discuss a literary quotation or brief passage that has special meaning to you.
- Describe a situation in which your values or beliefs caused conflict with someone you respect. How was the situation resolved?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?

## **ESSAY WRITING TIPS**

1. Clearly state your thesis in your introduction paragraph.
2. Make sure your essay has a beginning, a middle and an end consisting of at least three paragraphs.
3. Stay on topic. Do not introduce new information late in the essay that does not clearly relate to the topic.

4. Proofread, proofread, proofread!!!

## A SAMPLE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

College Admission Essay – “Love of Learning”  
By C. Flax

My friends and I decided to go to the beach yesterday. On our way we drove down Woodward Avenue, a street that happens to be lined with beautiful old tulip trees. “Those are tulip trees; they are the largest deciduous trees in North America.” I told my friends. Of course I received the inevitable question from the back seat, “How do you know that?” I had to think about that for a minute, and then I knew; when I was in first grade we started learning about plants, and we learned the difference between coniferous and deciduous trees. I can remember sitting in my father’s car telling him about what I had learned, and he told me about the Tulip Trees that lined Woodward Ave.

My friends are always amazed that I can hold onto information for such a long time. Of course my ability doesn’t impress me. What I find astonishing is the way that learning grows from itself, like a plant whose cutting you can put into water so that it will root. Knowing one thing, the difference between deciduous and evergreen trees, led to my learning about something close to home, which led me to learn about when the tulip trees were planted, by whom, and what zoning rules were causing some of them to be preserved while others were cut down. Knowledge is just like that - you get a little bit of it and it grows.

When I think about going to college, about leaving the facts and sights that I’ve known and explored for years I am filled not with fear but with a rising tide of excitement. To live day in and day out in a place filled with my peers who are all in the pursuit of different branches of academia seems like a dream come true for me. The conversations and information that I will receive outside of class alone will be staggering, and the ability to choose and specialize my educational pursuits and goals is thrilling.

Someday I hope to be a teacher and to have the ability to pass on what I have learned into the future. What will be truly exciting about this job will not only be the opportunity for me to educate others, but that I will be learning constantly from my students.

Every time you get out of bed and start a new day you are giving yourself a new opportunity for experience and learning. Each day that you spend awake is a day unlike any other that has ever been lived or will be lived again. There is nothing which, once learned, serves no purpose; for, even if its only use is repeating it at an apropos time, there is always the chance that you are planting a seed in someone’s mind. When I leave my home and my Tulip Trees I will not walk forward without casting a backwards glance. A love of knowledge has been sown and now it can only flourish.

*Sample taken from College-admission-essay.com*

*Note: essays should be double spaced, 1” margins on all sides, 12 pt Times New Roman font*

## 2008 – 2009 SAT TESTING DATES

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION
October 4, 2008	September 8, 2008	September 12, 2008
November 1, 2008	October 1, 2008	October 9, 2008
December 6, 2008	November 3, 2008	November 10, 2008
January 24, 2009	Dates to come	Dates to come
March 14, 2009	Dates to come	Dates to come
May 2, 2009	Dates to come	Dates to come
June 6, 2009	Dates to come	Dates to come

## 2008 – 2009 ACT TESTING DATES

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION
October 25, 2008	September 19, 2008	September 20 – October 3, 2008
December 13, 2008	November 7, 2008	November 8 – 20, 2008
February 7, 2009	January 6, 2009	January 7 – 16, 2009
April 4, 2009	February 27, 2009	February 28 – March 13, 2009
June 13, 2009	May 8, 2009	May 9 – 22, 2009

## TEST TAKING TIPS

- ✚ Get a good night's sleep and eat a balanced meal before the test.
- ✚ Show up early to the test site so you won't have to worry about being late.
- ✚ Keep a positive attitude throughout the test and stay relaxed.
- ✚ When you first receive your test, do a quick survey of the entire test so that you know how to budget your time.
- ✚ Do the problems that have the greatest point values first.
- ✚ Write legibly. Neat papers get better grades.
- ✚ Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- ✚ If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.

- ✚ When writing an essay focus on one main idea per paragraph.
- ✚ Proofread your work and correct errors before turning it in.