



# 9<sup>TH</sup> Grade Checklist

*Your 9th grade year should be focused on your commitment to graduation. It is time to plan ahead and set goals for your future.*

- Organize yourself. Goal plan. Focus on academics. Decide to excel in ALL classes. Your overall GPA starts in your freshman year.
- Sign up for at least one Honors or AP course.
- Be involved! Join at least one club or organization on campus.
- Participate in at least one extra-curricular activity. This can be focused on academics and/or athletics.
- Volunteer in your community. Make a goal to donate at least 25 hours of your time this year.
- Start researching career and college options in preparation for the future. Complete a personal graduation plan.
- Participate in a Commitment to Graduate<sup>®</sup> celebration and join classmates in committing to graduate in 4 years.

Make a Commitment to  
**GRADUATE<sup>®</sup>**





# 10<sup>TH</sup> Grade Checklist

*Your 10th grade year should be focused on your goal—GRADUATION. Focus on academics. Your ultimate symbol of success is the Ticket to the Future™—your high school diploma.*

- Get serious about researching careers and colleges. Make a master list for each. During the summer select schools to visit and/or intern at a desired career choice.
- Begin creating a high school portfolio.
- Continue to volunteer in your community. Make a goal to donate at least 12 hours of your time this year.
- Update your personal graduation plan.
- If an option, take the PSAT on your campus. Sign up for the SAT/ACT—your first attempt to get acclimated to the test.
- Stay active in school through clubs, organizations and sports.
- Log on to [jostens.com](http://jostens.com) and click on “After School Explorer.” Practice SAT/ACT exams are provided by the Princeton Review.
- Participate in the Commitment to Graduate® Line of Life presentation with your classmates.

FOCUS on the Goal™





# 11<sup>TH</sup> Grade Checklist

*Focus on academics. Reassess your Commitment to Graduate.<sup>®</sup>*

- Narrow your college list/career options to 10. Research the qualifications, training, course requirements, etc. Determine whether your high school course choices meet the requirements of your goal and align with admission requirements.
- Visit some of your “top 10” college choices during the summer after your junior year. Try to narrow your choices to the “top 5”.
- Begin the application process for your top choices during the summer after your junior year. Most importantly, examine the required essays and begin writing them.
- Begin looking online and visiting your high school/college center to investigate scholarship opportunities. Complete as many applications as possible in the summer before your senior year.
- Update your high school portfolio.
- Continue to volunteer in your community. Make a goal to donate at least 15 hours of your time this year.
- Focus on academics. Reassess your Commitment to Graduate.<sup>®</sup> Are you on track or not? If not, what do you need to do about it? Consider signing up for dual credit classes to get a head start on college.
- Update your personal graduation plan.
- Stay active in school through clubs, organizations and/or sports.
- Log on to [jostens.com](http://jostens.com) and click on “After School Explorer”. This will lead you to practice SAT/ACT tests provided by the Princeton Review.
- Register to take the SAT/ACT in the fall of your junior year. If you are unhappy with the scores, retake it in the spring.

ASSESS the Possibilities<sup>™</sup>





# 12<sup>TH</sup> Grade Checklist

*Your 12th grade year should be focused on earning your “ticket to the future”<sup>™</sup>—your high school diploma. This checklist will serve as a guide for college-bound readiness and a positive 12th grade experience.*

- Don't forget the value of 4th year math, science and English courses! Take advantage of dual credit and/or AP courses.
- Immediately begin the application process for your top 5 college choices. You should plan to meet the early registration deadline—usually October 1st.
- Work on identifying and applying for scholarships. Ask three teachers and one administrator to write references for you. Be considerate and ask them early in September to allow time for completion before the first of October.
- In December and early January, work with family members to prepare the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Aid is given on a first-come/first-served basis and you can submit beginning February 1. Go online and request an electronic pin to assure a faster and easier financial aid experience.
- Update and finalize your high school portfolio. Review your personal graduation plan. How well have you done on your goals?
- Continue to be active in your school and community. Set a goal of 25 hours of community service again this year! You're a senior—lead a project! Get involved and make a difference!
- Log on to [jostens.com](http://jostens.com) and click on “After School Explorer.” You can get great information about many schools and apply to many of them online!
- Talk to your Jostens representative about how you can organize and start a Gown Signing Celebration tradition for your class to Finish Strong.
- Talk with your friends and classmates and make sure you create a positive way to teach underclassmen (especially incoming 9th graders) the traditions of the high school so you leave a solid legacy for future classes.
- Collaborate with your classmates and begin a plan for future alumni activities.

**TICKET to the Future<sup>™</sup>**  
**HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**





less crime **money** less substance abuse  
employment  
live longer less poverty top jobs health

# TOP 10 reasons to make a commitment to graduate

10. The top eight jobs of the future require a high school diploma and some post-secondary education.
9. The average yearly income of a high school dropout is \$19,365.
8. The average yearly income of a high school graduate is \$33,633.
7. A high school dropout has only a 58% chance of steady employment.
6. Three of every 10 students leave school without a high school diploma. The high school diploma symbolizes a student's Ticket to the Future.™
5. High school dropouts are significantly higher risk candidates for substance abuse and crime.
4. High school dropouts are twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty.
3. Increasing the national graduation rate by 10% would reduce homicides and assaults by approximately 20%.
2. Individuals with a high school diploma have better indicators of general health.
1. Individuals with a high school diploma live longer.

Sources: Education Commission of the States (2008); Levin (2009); Warren & Halpern-Manners (2007)

