

Homeschool to College

College Prep Checklist by Grade

Freshman · Sophomore · Junior · Senior

A free companion to the Homeschool to College series at Roadschoo! Revolution. Work through each grade year at the start of that school year. Items marked [NEW] in green reflect additions from experienced homeschool parents in the community.

roadschoolrevolution.com/resources

How to use this checklist: Work through each grade year at the start of that school year. Check off items as they are completed. Items marked with ↓ are notes or context — not separate tasks. Items marked [NEW] are community-contributed additions from experienced homeschool parents. Not every item applies to every family — adapt to your student, your state, and your goals. Read the full Homeschool to College series at roadschoolrevolution.com.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Grade 9 · The Foundation Year — Build Systems and Habits

ACADEMICS

- ☐ Begin four-year English/Language Arts sequence
- ☐ Establish mathematics sequence through senior year
 - ↓ Identify current level honestly — close gaps now
- ☐ Start first year of laboratory science — document lab work
- ☐ Begin social studies/history sequence
- ☐ Introduce or continue foreign language
- ☐ Identify one deep-interest elective to develop across high school
- ☐ **[NEW]** If student is a potential college athlete, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center
 - ↓ Ensures 9th-grade courses meet Core Course definitions — free to register. Download the current NCAA Homeschool Toolkit for core-course guidance.

DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Create transcript template — even if mostly empty
- ☐ Establish a grading scale and apply it consistently
- ☐ Write first course descriptions at end of semester
 - ↓ One paragraph per course while content is fresh
- ☐ Start portfolio or learning folder for significant work
- ☐ Create homeschool name for use on official documents
- ☐ **[NEW]** Begin drafting 1–2 page School Profile
 - ↓ Include: homeschool philosophy, curriculum approach, how rigor is achieved, unique features such as roadschooling/travel learning, grading policy, and state compliance
- ☐ Verify state-specific graduation requirements
 - ↓ See State Compliance section below
- ☐ Save all curriculum syllabi and book lists
 - ↓ These become the building blocks of your School Profile

STUDENT STORY

- ☐ Have first open college conversation with your student
 - ↓ Direction, not decisions — what excites them?
- ☐ Identify 2–3 genuine deep interests worth developing
- ☐ Begin a story folder — experiences, projects, reflections
- ☐ Start journaling or narration habit to build reflective voice

LIFE SKILLS

- ☐ Begin graduated transfer of schedule ownership
- ☐ Assign 2–3 household responsibilities with real accountability
- ☐ Introduce basic financial awareness — budgeting concepts
- ☐ Practice writing professional emails independently

Tip: The most important habit to build in 9th grade is documentation. A course description written now takes 15 minutes. A course description reconstructed in 12th grade takes hours and is less accurate.

STATE COMPLIANCE & DIPLOMA DUE DILIGENCE

Homeschool graduation requirements are parent-directed in most states — you set the standards and issue your own diploma. Colleges nationwide accept well-documented homeschool transcripts and diplomas.

Visit [HSLDA.org/legal](https://hsllda.org/legal) → click your state (color-coded map: No Notice/Low → High Regulation).

High-regulation states (most paperwork/evaluations): NY, PA, MA, RI, VT

Moderate-regulation states: ME, NH, WA, OR, ND, MN, NC, SC, VA, WV, HI, OH

Missouri families (and most low-regulation states): Fully parent-directed — no notification, no state-issued diploma required, no mandatory testing.

Action for all families: Document compliance with any required subjects (e.g., Civics, Health, PE) and save all notices, evaluations, or portfolios as supporting evidence.

Notes

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Grade 10 · The Development Year — Deepen Story and Strategy

ACADEMICS

- ☐ Continue core academic sequence — all five subject areas
- ☐ Address any mathematics gaps before junior year
 - ↳ Math gaps compound — close them now
- ☐ Deepen laboratory science documentation
- ☐ Explore dual enrollment — research options and eligibility
- ☐ Continue or begin foreign language study
- ☐ **[NEW]** Record the homeschool SAT/ACT High School Code (970000) in your testing folder
 - ↳ Verify exact code each testing year via the College Board or ACT site

DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Transcript reflects 1+ complete year of coursework
- ☐ Course descriptions current through end of 9th grade
- ☐ Review transcript for credit balance across subject areas
- ☐ Continue School Profile draft — add rigor explanation, unique features, outside providers, and dual enrollment

STUDENT STORY

- ☐ Identify clear center of gravity for student narrative
 - ↳ The genuine interest that will anchor the application
- ☐ Deepen documentation of key interests and experiences
- ☐ Seek one meaningful outside engagement
 - ↳ Mentorship, community service, co-op, or apprenticeship
- ☐ Build one relationship with an adult mentor in area of interest
- ☐ **[NEW]** Document extracurriculars/activities in a resume-style list
 - ↳ Record hours, leadership roles, and impact for each activity — start now, update annually
- ☐ **[NEW]** Evaluate summer bridge activities — camps or independent projects
 - ↳ Deepens the student story and signals genuine sustained engagement

COLLEGE RESEARCH

- ☐ Build working college list — 8–12 institutions
- ☐ Research homeschool admission policies at each institution
- ☐ Research merit scholarship thresholds at each institution
- ☐ Calendar any early scholarship deadlines discovered
- ☐ **[NEW]** Run a Net Price Calculator (NPC) for at least two target schools
 - ↳ Reveals true net cost vs. sticker price — changes the financial strategy early

Tip: Visit campuses in 10th grade when the pressure is low and the observations are genuine. Roadschoo families: build campus visits into travel routes. The student who has been on a campus makes a more authentic application than one who hasn't.

JUNIOR YEAR

Grade 11 · The Critical Year — Test, Document, and Apply Early

ACADEMICS

- ☐ Junior year grades carry significant admissions weight — treat them accordingly
- ☐ Complete or continue dual enrollment if pursuing
 - ↳ One dual enrollment course adds powerful external validation
- ☐ Continue laboratory science with thorough documentation
- ☐ Advanced coursework in area of deep interest if appropriate
- ☐ **[NEW]** Prioritize external validation: dual enrollment, accredited online courses, AP exams (self-study), or CLEP

TESTING

- ☐ Take PSAT in October — required for National Merit eligibility
- ☐ Take SAT or ACT for first time no later than spring
 - ↳ Leaves time for a retake in fall of senior year if needed
- ☐ **[NEW]** Many colleges remain test-optional or test-flexible — strong scores provide valuable external validation for homeschoolers. Consider the CLT exam where accepted.
- ☐ Evaluate scores — decide whether to submit to target institutions
- ☐ Research CLEP exams for subjects of demonstrated mastery

DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Transcript substantially complete through junior year by spring
- ☐ All course descriptions current through end of 10th grade
- ☐ Request outside transcript review — fresh eyes matter
- ☐ School Profile complete and polished
- ☐ **[NEW]** Prepare parent-written Counselor Letter of Recommendation highlighting student growth and self-direction
- ☐ **[NEW]** Cultivate 2–3 external recommenders
 - ↳ Dual enrollment professors, mentors, community leaders preferred
- ☐ Begin assembling list of potential recommenders

SCHOLARSHIPS & STORY

- ☐ Begin systematic scholarship research — build tracking document
- ☐ Identify institutional scholarship deadlines — calendar all
- ☐ Draft core scholarship essay in spring
 - ↳ Built from student story — adaptable across applications
- ☐ Student story fully articulated and documented
- ☐ Personal statement direction identified
- ☐ Finalize college list — reach, target, and safety schools

Tip: Junior year is the year most families wish they had started earlier. If you are reading this checklist for the first time in 11th grade — start with the transcript and the scholarship tracking document today. Both are more recoverable than they feel right now.

SENIOR YEAR

Grade 12 · The Execution Year — Complete, Submit, and Celebrate

FALL SEMESTER (AUG – DEC)

- ☐ Finalize and review complete transcript
 - ↳ All four years, all courses, credits, grades, and GPA
- ☐ Complete all college applications
 - ↳ Most deadlines: Nov 1 Early Action/Decision, Jan 1 Regular
- ☐ **[NEW]** Complete Common App (or Coalition) as homeschooler
 - ↳ Parent serves as Counselor — upload transcript, course descriptions, School Profile, and Counselor Letter
- ☐ Submit standardized test scores to target institutions
- ☐ Submit institutional scholarship applications
 - ↳ Many deadlines fall with or before admissions deadlines
- ☐ File FAFSA as early as possible after October 1
 - ↳ First-come first-served for many need-based programs
- ☐ File CSS Profile if required by any target institution
- ☐ Submit national and external scholarship applications as due
- ☐ Request recommendation letters — give recommenders 6+ weeks
- ☐ Complete and submit personal statement and supplement essays

SPRING SEMESTER (JAN – GRADUATION)

- ☐ Evaluate all acceptance and financial aid offers
 - ↳ Compare net cost — not sticker price
- ☐ Negotiate financial aid packages where appropriate
 - ↳ More possible than most families realize — ask directly
- ☐ Continue submitting scholarship applications through spring
- ☐ Make enrollment decision by May 1
- ☐ Notify all other institutions of decision
- ☐ **[NEW]** Review college-transition life skills before departure
 - ↳ FERPA rights, health insurance, campus portals, and advocating for accommodations if applicable
- ☐ Conduct life skills audit — close any remaining gaps
 - ↳ See Life Skills Audit section
- ☐ Arrange housing, orientation, and enrollment logistics
- ☐ Send final transcript to enrolled institution after graduation
- ☐ Celebrate — completely and without reservation

Tip: The family that arrives at senior year with the previous three years well in hand experiences senior year as a satisfying completion. Every item checked in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade is one less crisis in 12th.

QUICK REFERENCE

BASELINE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

Subject Area	Minimum	Competitive	Notes
English / Language Arts	4 years	4 years	Composition + literature every year
Mathematics	3 years	4 years	Through pre-calculus minimum; calculus for STEM
Laboratory Science	3 years	4 years	Biology, chemistry, physics — document labs
Social Studies / History	3 years	4 years	US history, world history, govt/economics
Foreign Language	2 years	4 years	4 years = significant competitive advantage
Electives	3–4 credits	4–6 credits	Deep interest electives strengthen student story

Note: Competitive applicants often exceed minimums via dual enrollment, AP-equivalent work, or demonstrated depth in passion areas.

STANDARD HOMESCHOOL GPA SCALE

Grade	Percentage	GPA Points	Weighted +0.5	Weighted +1.0
A	90–100%	4.0	4.5	5.0
B	80–89%	3.0	3.5	4.0
C	70–79%	2.0	2.5	3.0
D	60–69%	1.0	1.5	2.0
F	Below 60%	0.0	—	—

Weighted GPA: Honors courses +0.5 · Dual enrollment / AP-equivalent +1.0 · Document weighting policy in your school profile.

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

When	What	Why It Matters
Oct — Junior Year	Take the PSAT	Required for National Merit Scholarship consideration
Spring — Junior Year	Take SAT or ACT (first attempt)	Leaves time for a retake fall of senior year
Summer — Before Senior Year	Draft core scholarship essay	Built from student story — adapt across applications
Aug/Sep — Senior Year	Research and calendar all scholarship deadlines	Many institutional deadlines fall with admissions
Oct 1 — Senior Year	FAFSA opens — file immediately	Need-based aid is first-come, first-served
Nov 1 — Senior Year	Early Action / Early Decision deadline (most schools)	Earlier = stronger signal; often better aid
Jan 1 — Senior Year	Regular Decision deadline (most schools)	Final deadline for most institutional applications
May 1 — Senior Year	National Enrollment Deadline	Notify all institutions of your decision by this date

HOMESCHOOL APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Use this as a pre-submission audit for every college application. Most homeschool applications require significantly more documentation than a traditional school application. Prepare these materials well in advance of deadlines.

REQUIRED FOR MOST HOMESCHOOL APPLICATIONS

- ☐ Transcript (4 years — all courses, credits, grades, and GPA)
- ☐ Course descriptions (one paragraph per course — all four years)
- ☐ School Profile (1–2 pages: philosophy, curriculum, grading scale, unique features)
- ☐ Counselor Letter of Recommendation (parent-written — highlights growth and self-direction)
- ☐ External letters of recommendation (2–3 preferred — professors, mentors, community leaders)
- ☐ Activities list / resume (hours per week, weeks per year, leadership roles, and impact)

SUBMIT IF APPLICABLE

- ☐ Standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, or CLT — if submitting)
- ☐ Dual enrollment transcript(s) from college(s) attended
- ☐ CLEP or AP exam scores
- ☐ Portfolio of work samples (for art, design, writing, or creative programs)
- ☐ Additional essays or supplements required by specific institutions

COMMON APP NOTES FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES

On the Common App, the parent serves as the student's Counselor. You will complete the School Report, upload your homeschool transcript, attach your School Profile, and submit the Counselor Letter of Recommendation. Begin your Common App account in summer of senior year to understand all required fields before deadlines arrive.

SCHOLARSHIP TRACKER

Apply to a minimum of 10 scholarships across all four categories: institutional merit, national competitive, local/community, and niche. Volume and early action produce results.

Scholarship Name	Category	Amount	Deadline	Requirements	Status

COLLEGE RESEARCH NOTES

Track your working list of 8–12 institutions. Include reach, target, and safety schools. Run a Net Price Calculator for every institution — compare net cost, not sticker price.

College / University	Type	Homeschool Policy	Merit Aid Threshold	App Deadline	Scholarship Deadline	Net Cost Estimate

TRANSCRIPT PROGRESS TRACKER

Log every course as completed. Target: 22–28 total credits. Academic core = 18–20 credits. Remaining credits come from electives, dual enrollment, and passion-based independent study.

Course Name	Year	Credits	Grade	GPA Pts	Weighted?	Course Desc. Written?
TOTALS						

CREDIT SUMMARY BY SUBJECT AREA

English / Language Arts	Target: 4.0	_____ credits earned
Mathematics	Target: 3.0–4.0	_____ credits earned
Laboratory Science	Target: 3.0–4.0	_____ credits earned
Social Studies / History	Target: 3.0–4.0	_____ credits earned
Foreign Language	Target: 2.0–4.0	_____ credits earned
Electives / Independent Study	Target: 3.0–6.0	_____ credits earned
Dual Enrollment	As applicable	_____ credits earned
TOTAL CREDITS	Target: 22–28	_____ credits earned

STUDENT STORY BUILDER

Use these prompts to develop and document your student's narrative before the college application arrives. Answers become raw material for the personal statement, scholarship essays, and activity descriptions.

What is your student's deepest genuine interest? (The thing they pursue even when nobody asks)

What three experiences in their education have they been most genuinely engaged in?

What does your student do or know that most traditionally schooled peers do not?

What specific moment, place, or experience would make a compelling personal statement opening?

What adult mentor or professor could write a specific, authentic recommendation letter?

What is the through-line connecting their interests, experiences, and direction?

LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE READINESS AUDIT

Complete once per year in high school. Rate each skill: 1 = not yet developed 2 = developing 3 = independent 4 = fully capable. Goal: 4 in every category by graduation.

TIME MANAGEMENT & SELF-SCHEDULING	9th	10th	11th	12th
Builds and follows own weekly academic schedule without prompting				
Plans ahead for multi-week assignments and projects				
Manages competing priorities without parental organization				
Arrives on time to commitments independently				

FINANCIAL LITERACY	9th	10th	11th	12th
Understands checking and savings accounts				
Creates and follows a simple personal budget				
Makes considered purchasing decisions independently				
Understands basic concepts of debt, interest, and credit				

PRACTICAL LIVING SKILLS	9th	10th	11th	12th
Cooks 5–6 reliable nutritious meals independently				
Manages own laundry — wash, dry, fold, put away				
Maintains own living space without prompting				
Manages own healthcare appointments and basic medical needs				

COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY	9th	10th	11th	12th
Writes professional emails independently				
Schedules own appointments without parental help				
Navigates conflicts with peers or adults independently				
Asks for help from teachers or advisors without shame				

EMOTIONAL REGULATION & RESILIENCE	9th	10th	11th	12th
Recognizes own stress responses and uses coping strategies				
Sits with difficulty without requiring immediate rescue				
Recovers from setbacks with appropriate support				
Maintains physical health habits — sleep, nutrition, movement				

COLLEGE TRANSITION READINESS	9th	10th	11th	12th
Understands FERPA rights — knows what information the college can share with parents				
Has health insurance plan and knows how to access healthcare independently				
Can navigate campus portals, email systems, and online registration				
Knows how to request academic accommodations if applicable				

PATHWAYS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Your strong transcript, School Profile, student story, and documentation prepare your student for any next step — not just four-year college. Here is how the preparation in this checklist serves every major pathway.

Traditional 4-Year College

Full checklist applies — applications, FAFSA, scholarships, and transcript. Homeschool students are competitive at every tier of institution.

- Complete all four grade-year sections of this checklist
- Compile the full Homeschool Application Package (see page 5)
- File FAFSA and research merit scholarships at every target institution
- Personal statement and student story are the primary differentiators

Community College + Transfer

Open enrollment makes community college accessible to all homeschool graduates. Dual enrollment credits often transfer directly. Lower-cost entry with a clear path to a four-year degree.

- Dual enrollment credits earned in high school frequently transfer
- Community colleges typically require only a transcript and diploma
- Apply for merit scholarships at the CC level — often overlooked
- Request a transfer guide from target four-year institution early

Trades, Apprenticeships & Vocational Certifications

Hands-on learning is homeschooling's natural strength. A student with documented life skills, independent projects, and deep practical experience is a compelling trade or apprenticeship candidate.

- Highlight hands-on electives, projects, and practical life skills on transcript
- Obtain industry certifications where available (OSHA, CompTIA, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation from mentors or employers carry significant weight
- Resume and activity list replace the personal statement in most trade applications

Military Service

Homeschool graduates are fully eligible and competitive for all military branches. Strong documentation and ASVAB performance are the primary evaluation criteria.

- Obtain Tier 1 status with a well-documented transcript and diploma
- Prepare for the ASVAB — strong math and reading scores open advanced roles
- Service academies (West Point, Annapolis, etc.) require a congressional nomination and full application package
- ROTC scholarships are available and competitive for homeschool applicants

Gap Year or Service Year

A purposeful gap year can significantly strengthen a future college or career application. Document all experiences — AmeriCorps, City Year, mission work, travel, or independent projects count.

- Defer college acceptance if admitted — most colleges allow one-year deferral
- Document gap year activities with dates, hours, and descriptions
- AmeriCorps and similar programs provide education awards for future tuition
- Gap year experiences often become the strongest personal statement material

Direct Workforce & Entrepreneurship

A student with a strong portfolio, demonstrated initiative, and documented skills is competitive in the workforce from day one. The student story built in this checklist translates directly to interview performance.

- Build a portfolio of work samples — writing, design, code, projects, or products
- Use the student story and activities resume in job interviews directly
- Pursue relevant certifications to supplement the homeschool credential
- LinkedIn profile built from transcript credits and activities list establishes professional presence

Tip: Run the same credit summary and life skills audit for every pathway. External validation — CLEP scores, industry certifications, dual enrollment credits — adds value across all routes.

RESOURCES

Homeschool to College Blog Series

Eight posts covering everything from college readiness to transcripts to scholarships to the four-year plan. Read the full series at roadschoolrevolution.com.

State Homeschool Law Reference

HSLDA.org/legal — State-by-state legal requirements, color-coded by regulation level. Verify your state annually as laws can change.

NCAA Homeschool Resources

NCAA Eligibility Center (eligibilitycenter.org) — Register in 9th grade for potential college athletes. Download the current NCAA Homeschool Toolkit for core-course definitions.

Financial Aid & Net Price Calculators

[FAFSA \(studentaid.gov\)](https://studentaid.gov) — File October 1 of senior year. Each college's website — run the Net Price Calculator in 10th grade to understand true cost before building your list.

Free Downloads

All free resources including this checklist are available at roadschoolrevolution.com/resources.

The door is not closed. It is wide open.
And you are ready to walk through it together.