

		How To Survive Freshman, Sophomore, Junior & Senior Year (SHS PTSO 2016)				
FRESHMAN	SUMMER Before...					
	Students could get involved in a high school activity, such as a fall sport or marching band, over the summer to get to know other students before school starts	ACADEMICS	Develop good study habits. Use a planner and record HW assignments and assessments. Organization is the key to an independent learner.	Freshman should spend 90 minutes a day studying.	If minimal HW is assigned, students should still spend 90 minutes catching up on readings, rewriting notes, doing practice problems.	Attend study/extra help sessions regularly. Put simply, this time spent will demonstrate to the teacher a strong effort and will pay dividends.
	Read, read and read some more during the summer. You can relax and enjoy reading books of your choice all while improving your comprehension and reading rate which will enhance your school success.	Communication	Attend conferences to check in on progress early and nip issues in the bud.	Email teacher once or twice a marking period to check in. Be pro-active not reactive.	Research shows that successful students have parents who demonstrate interest and are actively involved in their education	Parents and students should utilize Infinite Campus to monitor assignments, grades
	Serve your community. 10 hours of community service are required each year by May 1st. Review the school approved list to ensure your hours count. Or get approval from the school for community service that is not on the list. Don't forget to complete the Community Service Verification sign must be completed by May 1st.	THE SOCIAL DIMENSION	Get involved! Join at least one club, athletic or academic team this year.	Get involved in community service early in the school year and complete 10 hours of service prior to May 1st as required to be promoted to 10th grade.	Want to take AP biology, start a poetry club or ? Do it, don't worry about the fact that your BFF won't be in the class, this is your life. Not only will this help you find your passion, it'll also look great on that future college transcript!	
SOPHOMORE	Read, read, and read some more. Being a strong reader makes it easier to perform well in college. Reading may also lead to higher scores on the SAT. Meanwhile, reading comprehension is not something students can cram for in the weeks leading up to the test.	ACADEMICS	Rigor matters. Challenge yourself. This not only helps you to prepare for the heavy workloads you will get in college, but it also shows college admissions boards that you are a diligent student. Consider AP or high level/honors courses that will stretch your abilities without jeopardizing your GPA.	All sophomores and juniors at SHS will take the PSAT in October. The PSAT can provide students with an idea of how they might fare with the SAT. By getting an assessment early, there is plenty of time to address weaknesses.	If a student is interested in schools that require SAT Subject Tests, he or she should try to take the relevant exam right after completing the high school course. These tests are available in such courses as U.S. history, chemistry, mathematics, foreign languages, and molecular or ecological biology. Most colleges and universities don't require these extra	Keep track of all extracurricular activities, community service and leadership roles. Record dates, hours spent, advisor names, etc. All of this information will be necessary to pledge for National Honor Society in junior year as well as to complete college applications.
	Serve the community in a field that interests you. 10 hours of community service are required each year by May 1st. Review the school approved list to ensure your hours count and don't forget to complete your verification form.	THE SOCIAL DIMENSION	Don't forget extracurricular activities. Colleges care what a student does outside the classroom, but it is secondary to their academic profile. It's not the number of activities they are involved in, but their quality. Students should devote time to activities that they care about and resist any temptation to get involved in activities strictly to impress admission officers.	Hopefully nothing dramatic will happen but there's often a bit of a shake up in sophomore year and beyond within your friend group. Some of you will be driving, some won't, and some of you will just end up having very different social lives. Try to take it all in stride and keep in mind that you're changing too.	Get to know your school counselors. They are there for a reason—use their resources! They can help you research colleges of interest and schedule your classes accordingly. School counselors are also the ones who have direct contact with college admissions officers, so build strong relationships with them if you want to get an extra nudge when applying.	
JUNIOR	SUMMER Before...					
	Visit schools. The summer between sophomore and junior year can be a convenient time to begin checking out colleges and universities. The visits may help motivate students by showing them what all their hard work can lead to.	ACADEMICS	Get good grades. Obviously. All your grades matter, and colleges do look at them. If you were hit or miss in your freshman and sophomore years, now's the time to buckle down.	Take challenging courses. Even if your grades aren't all As, taking AP or advanced classes shows admissions committees that you push yourself. If you take a foreign language, work toward the highest level you can. You might be able to test out of language courses in college if you do well.	Students should also identify which areas they need to improve upon to get into their dream schools. Some students may need to retake the SAT or ACT, to meet the requirements of their preferred colleges.	Think about your weaknesses. Assess yourself as a candidate. Any bad grades in the past? Disciplinary problems? No activities? You still have time to make up for past mistakes and plan now to do something about them.
	Whether you are volunteering at a local animal shelter or taking on your first internship or job, this is the time for you to set your path straight to get into the college of your dreams. Use this time to craft your art skills if you want to go to art school or practice taking the SATs if you didn't do so well on your PSATs. Whatever it is, don't waste it!	COLLEGE PREPARATION	Get involved. Now's the time to dive into extracurriculars. By junior year, you should know the one or two that you are most passionate about — focus on those. It's better to have a leadership role in one activity than to be a member of 12 different clubs and not do anything in any of them. If you have already found what extracurricular activities you enjoy being part of, that's great! As your next challenge, try taking on some leadership roles.	Make contacts. Get to know your counselors. You'll work together a lot in the next year or so as you begin the college application process. The better they know you, the more useful your meetings will be.	Know your financial situation. Will you need to apply to scholarships? Financial aid? Do you not have to worry about it? Talk to your parents early in the process so you know how much aid (if any) you might need down the line. Ask your school counselor for scholarship applications. You may be surprised that many of these scholarships are within your reach!	When selecting courses for Senior year be sure your courses coincide with college requirements. Especially if applying to schools out of state, keep in mind that some colleges require 4 years of Science, others require 3 years of a language, etc. For example, the University of Texas requires 4 years of Science.
SENIOR	The summer before senior year is focused on activities related to completing college applications for many students. Rising seniors should refine and finalize college application essays, resumes and other materials over the summer, and work on creating them if they haven't gotten started yet. And remember, there is still time in the fall to do some of this, but best to get a head start as fall is certain to be a busy stressful time.	COLLEGE PREPARATION	Purchase a large wall-mounted, multi-month calendar. Mark important academic and extracurricular dates. Viewing more than one month at a time can help you see what lies ahead and avoid forgetting about important dates that are several weeks away. Remember that the calendar app on your smartphone is perfect for routine homework assignments and recurring events, but a multi month calendar is better for keeping track of weeks ahead. Record deadlines right away!	Prioritize! It's very important that you don't neglect your schoolwork with the excuse that college applications are more important. Not only do colleges and universities still look at your grades and work throughout your senior year, but it's important for you, too. Letting your study habits slide into chaos now won't set you up very well for when you actually begin college. And use your calendar to stay organized.	Take a practice exam to determine your weakest subjects, and then plan how to study in the weeks ahead with these areas in mind. (Make a note to review your strengths too!) Not only will you accomplish more, but you will have the satisfaction of seeing your ACT/SAT progress.	Combat Senioritis. You're winding down, applications are out. Yes, grades aren't everything at the moment. But don't throw away all you've worked so hard for over the past three years. Developing bad habits now can follow you into college. So stay the course! And don't forget, colleges still ask for a final transcript.
	Scholarships - Summer is a good time for students to search and apply for scholarships. And don't forget to read too!	THE SOCIAL DIMENSION	Make new friends, and keep the old ones. Senior year can often be overwhelming and stressful. Your true friends will be there for you to get through the stressful times and provide much needed relief with laughter and fun.	Clean up your social media presence! Remember that prospective colleges, roommates, potential employers, etc. will likely look you up! Enough said.	Start doing your own laundry if you haven't already.	Thank the school staff including the secretary, custodian, etc. Tell the teachers who meant something to you just that.
	Students should determine which teachers to ask for recommendation letters and reach out to teachers about them toward the end of the summer. Don't wait until the fall, as your request may not be granted due to teachers' time constraints.			Take a great photo of you and your family.	Go to prom if you have even a tiny smidge of interest in doing so.	Catch up with a friend you drifted away from. Apologize to someone you treated poorly.
			Attend a school event you normally wouldn't	Make a playlist of songs that you played the most.		