



PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

A College/Career Preparation Checklist
Produced by the
Winter Haven Academic Booster Club
To complete online visit
www.whsabc.com

WELCOME TO WINTER HAVEN!

The Winter Haven High School Academic Booster Club has compiled this booklet to help students get ready for life after high school. Students may want to go on to a 4 year or 2 year college, a technical college, or directly to work. Regardless of where the student goes after high school, it is important

to begin preparation in the 9th grade and make the high school experience a success. This booklet is designed for the student to keep a record by year of activities, sports, clubs, honors, community activities and work experience in order to make the college and scholarship application process smoother.

We have provided space for you to record your activities for each grade. There are suggestions and guidelines for each year to keep you informed of deadlines for making the most out of high school.

We hope you find this booklet useful as you begin your journey through the halls of Winter Haven High School.

First, you need to ask yourself, "How many credits will I need to graduate?"



**Options at Winter Haven:
18 or 24 credits**

Career Tech • College Prep • College Prep/Career Tech Dual Diploma

Freshman year

- Take the most challenging courses you can.
- Join clubs and activities at Winter Haven. Get involved!
- Start an activity list using this booklet (or on your computer.) Include activities from last summer.
- Take Learners Permit Drug & Alcohol Course during 1st semester. You must pass this test in order to get your driver's permit or license.
- Visit the College & Career Center in Guidance.
- Improve your vocabulary - read, read, read!
- Think about volunteer or community service opportunities for the summer.
- Attend the district-wide *College Fair* in the early Fall.

FRESHMAN YEAR RESUME INFORMATION

Extracurricular Activities (Clubs, Organizations, Scholastic Competitions)

Offices & Leadership Positions / Responsibilities

Honors & Awards Received

Sports (School and/or Community - Include Letters Earned, Awards, Leadership)

Community Activities (Clubs, Volunteer Work, Church Activities)

Work Experience

Sophomore Year

- **Take the most challenging courses you can.**
- All sophomores will take the PSAT during school hours at no charge.
- Keep your grades up!
- Visit www.FCATS.org – “Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students” – for planning and managing your higher education experience.
- Find out about colleges, universities, or technical colleges you may be interested in. Visit the school websites.
- If you are taking an AP class, your AP test registration will be completed by your AP teacher and/or the Test Coordinator.
- You may want to take SAT Subject Tests if you have completed appropriate course material and if you are considering colleges that require SAT Subject Tests.
- Are you actively involved in your school and/or community? Look for leadership and/or service opportunities.
- All sophomores take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) for Reading, Math, and Writing in the Spring.
- What will you do this summer? Community service, job, school, travel?
- Look for ways to add to your resume and explore your career interests.
- Attend *College Night* in the early Fall.
- Start preparing for the SAT/ACT.
- Plan to take the Mock SAT/ACT offered in the Fall and Spring through ABC. Registration is available online at www.whhsabc.com.

JUNIOR ADVISEMENT:
Grades/Courses are very important!
Keep in Mind the Following When Planning
Your Sophomore & Junior Years:
Colleges look at three things:
Test Scores – GPA – Curriculum
(Take challenging courses!)



SOPHOMORE YEAR RESUME INFORMATION

Extracurricular Activities (Clubs, Organizations, Scholastic Competitions)

Offices & Leadership Positions / Responsibilities

Honors & Awards Received

Sports (School and/or Community - Include Letters Earned, Awards, Leadership)

Community Activities (Clubs, Volunteer Work, Church Activities)

Work Experience

Junior Year

- **Junior year grades are very important.**
Keep your grades up!
- Take the PSAT in October if you are interested in the National Merit Scholarship recognition. **(Juniors must stop by Guidance in September to register.)**
- Plan when you will take the SAT and/or the ACT. Every junior should take the SAT or ACT at least once.
- Plan to take the Mock SAT/ACT offered in Fall and Spring through ABC, registration available online at www.whhsabc.com.
- Plan to take a prep class for SAT/ACT (available through ABC at www.whhsabc.com)
- Take SAT Subject Tests when you finish appropriate classes – if they are required by colleges you are considering.
- Attend the College Fair - information in Guidance.
- Visit college websites and use resources in College & Career Center to help you decide on a list of possible schools.
- Watch for visits to Winter Haven by colleges you are considering.
- Plan your college visits – Spring Break, long weekends, summer.
- Get familiar now with scholarship and financial aid sources: www.whhsabc.com.
- If you are taking an AP class, your AP test registration will be completed by your AP teacher and/or the Test Coordinator.
- All juniors take the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) for Science in the Spring.
- Consider a college summer program for high school students.
- Be sure you do something productive over the summer – an educational program, career related internship or job and/or community service.

JUNIOR YEAR RESUME INFORMATION

Extracurricular Activities (Clubs, Organizations, Scholastic Competitions)

Offices & Leadership Positions / Responsibilities

Honors & Awards Received

Sports (School and/or Community - Include Letters Earned, Awards, Leadership)

Community Activities (Clubs, Volunteer Work, Church Activities)

Work Experience

Senior year

- **Keep your grades up! Senior grades are still important, even early acceptances are contingent on final transcripts!**
- Take the Fall SAT and/or ACT if your junior year scores were not high enough, or if you haven't taken it at all. You can still take a test prep course to help boost your scores.
- Take SAT Subject Tests if needed.
- Decide which teachers you will ask for college application recommendations. Pick up the forms in Guidance and allow the teachers at least 2-3 weeks' notice.
- Watch for visits to Winter Haven by colleges you are considering.
- Attend the College Fair – information in Guidance.
- Make a list of all the colleges you are considering. Find out more by visiting their websites.
- **Pay close attention to deadlines on the college applications!** Apply online. You will need official transcripts for each application.
- Be sure your SAT/ACT scores are sent to all schools to which you will apply.
- Remember, you must pass all the reading and math portions of the FCAT (FLA Comprehensive Assessment Test) to graduate in Florida.
- Continue your scholarship/financial aid search. Check the ABC website at www.whhsabc.com for information.
- All males must register with Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Go to www.sss.gov for more information.
- FAFSA - Your parents need to send in your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon as possible after January 1st. This is required for most colleges nationally go online: www.fafsa.ed.gov (Winter Haven hosts a FAFSA workshop for students and parents.)
- Make your final decision about college/career/technical college.
- Notify the Guidance department to mail your **final** transcript to the school of your choice.
- **Congratulations! You've graduated!!!**

SENIOR YEAR RESUME INFORMATION



Extracurricular Activities (Clubs, Organizations, Scholastic Competitions)

Offices & Leadership Positions / Responsibilities

Honors & Awards Received

Sports (School and/or Community - Include Letters Earned, Awards, Leadership)

Community Activities (Clubs, Volunteer Work, Church Activities)

Work Experience

PSAT? SAT? ACT? AP? **Who Should Take Them & When!**

There is confusion among parents and students about when, where and who should take the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, PSAT and AP tests. The Academic Booster Club has compiled the following general information:

THE TESTS

Winter Haven's School Code is 101890

SAT: A college entrance exam, the SAT is a **reasoning test** designed to help measure a student's ability to handle college level work by gauging the student's critical thinking and problem solving skills. Questions appear in order of difficulty. The SAT carries a wrong answer penalty, and most but not all, questions are multiple choice. The test has three parts: critical reading, mathematics and writing. Critical reading (formerly verbal), evaluates reading comprehension. Mathematics includes algebra, geometry, statistics, probability and data analysis. Writing (essay), evaluates grammar, usage, and word choice. Each section is scored on a scale from 200 to 800 with 2400 being a perfect score. Test results are accepted by most colleges (always check carefully with each college on what tests they require). If you take the test multiple times, some colleges will look at your best score from each individual section, some colleges do not. Check with each college for their policies. The SAT is administered by College Board. See their website for complete information on test dates, locations and to register online at: www.collegeboard.com.

ACT: A college entrance exam, the ACT is an **achievement test**. It is still a test of problem solving skills, but it is more content based (what you have learned in high school). The multiple choice test measures skills in four areas: mathematics, English, reading and science. Mathematics includes algebra, geometry and trigonometry. English includes punctuation, sentence structure, grammar and usage. Reading evaluates the student's reading comprehension. The science section emphasizes scientific reasoning skills in the natural sciences (including biology, chemistry, physics and earth science). Questions do not appear in order of difficulty, and carry no penalty for wrong answers. The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay. The ACT is scored from 1 to 36. Test results are accepted by most colleges, but always check with each college on specific requirements. The test is administered by ACT (American College Testing). See their website for complete information on test dates, locations and to register online: www.act.org.

PSAT: The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is a practice SAT given to all sophomores in the fall during the school day at no charge. When taken in the junior year, it is also the determining factor for National Merit competition, Governor's Honors Program (GHP) and future scholarship offers. Juniors who are interested in these offers must stop by Guidance in the fall to register to take the PSAT and pay a small fee. (www.collegeboard.com)

SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II): These are one-hour, primarily multiple-choice tests that measure knowledge of particular subjects. They are not required by all colleges, but many require one or more SAT Subject Tests for admission or placement. Check the requirements of the colleges you're considering. Tests are offered on the same day as the SAT, and you can take up to 3 SAT Subject Tests on a given test day. You may not take both the SAT and the SAT Subject Tests on the same day. (www.collegeboard.com)

AP TESTS: (Advanced Placement) Students who have completed an AP class at Winter Haven may register to take the AP test in the Spring. Tests are in May, and March is the sign-up deadline. There is a small fee. Students are not required to take the tests, but are encouraged to do so. Scores of 3 or higher (on a scale of 1-5) can grant a student college credit, although this is determined by the college. Students should see counselors to be sure colleges have received their AP scores by the end of Senior year.

Why Keep Your Grades Up?

Florida Bright Futures Scholarships, that's why!

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program has helped more than 405,000 Florida students attend a postsecondary institution. The program offers three levels of scholarship awards – The Florida Academic Scholars award (FAS), the Florida Medallion Scholars award (FMS), and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award (GSV). Students must complete the Initial Student Florida Financial Aid Application after December 1 during your last year in high school, before graduation. To apply online, visit www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org. Students must earn the necessary G.P.A. in the required high school classes and must earn the minimum required test score (SAT, ACT, or CPT) for the award for which you wish to qualify. There is no income requirement to qualify and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is not required but you are encouraged to apply as it may help you find other available financial aid.

SOME IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

College Fair: Polk County Schools sponsors the district-wide event in early fall to inform parents and students about what is required to apply and be accepted at the college of their choice. Representatives from colleges are available to answer questions and/or concerns about the college application process.

National Merit Scholar: National Merit semi-finalists are announced in September of the Senior year and are based on the PSAT scores taken as Juniors in October of the previous year. Semi-finalists are those Juniors who scored in the top 1% of the nation. Finalists are announced in the spring of the Senior year. Finalists may be offered full or partial scholarships to many universities.

Dual Enrollment: A unique opportunity for academically accelerated high school students to earn college credit at universities while satisfying their high school graduation requirements in English, math, social science and foreign language.

FCAT (FLA Comprehensive Assessment Test): Given in the spring of the freshman, sophomore, and junior years in specific content areas; all students must pass the reading and mathematics portions of the test to receive a regular diploma in the state of Florida.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

www.act.org – Register online for ACT

www.collegeboard.com – Register online for SAT; practice test questions; essay tips; scholarship search

www.fafsa.ed.gov – FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Online application required for financial aid at many colleges.

www.FACTS.org – Online resource to help students plan, apply and pay for college. Comprehensive info on colleges, universities and technical colleges in Florida.

www.polk-fl.net – Polk County School District’s website. Contains news items, links to schools, Board of Education, school calendar and much more.

http://schools.polk-fl.net/whhs – Winter Haven’s website for school info: clubs, sports, faculty

http://schools.polk-fl.net/whhs/collegeandcareer.html - Winter Haven’s website for college and career information

whpl.mywinterhaven.com – Winter Haven’s library website with comprehensive research info

www.WHHSabc.com – Winter Haven Academic Booster Club (Organization bringing academic information to parents and students)

TEST PREPARATION HELP *from the Academic Booster Club*

SAT PREP COURSES: offered at WHHS in the Fall and Spring.
Mock SAT/ACT: practice tests are offered at WHHS, usually twice yearly.