



Graduation Planning

TIMELINE

10 Months until Graduation

- ◆ List 3-5 projects/activities you want to accomplish to celebrate and savor your student's senior year. Some examples are to take a holiday or spring break trip, plan a final game celebration, or assemble a t-shirt quilt.
- ◆ Schedule some time with your senior to discuss the items from the College Prep Timeline. Together, make a "To Do" list that covers the next nine months. Add any dates or times to the Graduation Planning Timeline.
- ◆ Check with your senior's Guidance Counselor for any important dates.

9 Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review incoming emails/messages/parent portals for senior-related activities. Add them to your calendar and enable 2-3 notifications for each one.
- ◆ What opportunities are you looking forward to this year? What about your senior? Write them down. If possible, add them to the calendar. Is there a way to make them more memorable/fun/special? Can you invite extended family or church family? Some examples are Senior Recital and Homecoming Tailgate.
- ◆ Review the Senior Year Bucket List Activities. Are the dates on the calendar?
- ◆ Review the College Prep List. What else is needed?
- ◆ Check your senior's school website for any updated school information and important dates.
- ◆ Review the 3-5 projects/activities you identified in last month. Are there any projects you need to add or remove? Update the list accordingly.

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review your 3-5 projects/activities list. Consider each project and break the process down into 4-6 smaller tasks. For example:

Project/Activity: Senior Highlight Video

- Research options and determine the scope of video (baby photos, elementary-high school photos, game or recital film, family photos, etc.)
- Establish a budget (if using professional service) or choose a program/system (if DIY)
- Set goals for photo gathering/scanning (i.e., September – do baby & preschool pictures, October — do elementary pictures, etc.)
- Choose music (if desired)
- Submit photos or add photos in batches to program/software

NOTE: These smaller tasks should not be accomplished at one time or even in the same month. The goal is to create a roadmap to help alleviate stress during the year and ensure you have a workable plan to accomplish your desired projects.

- ◆ What is needed from the College Prep List?
- ◆ Check with your senior about cleaning up their social media for the college and pre-career application process.
- ◆ Double-check the Senior Year Buck List dates. Do any of them need reservations?
- ◆ Set aside a Sunday to order your senior's favorite takeout so that they can tackle the application paperwork (See **College Prep Timeline** for more ideas).

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review your project and task lists. Did you begin work on the projects you chose? Why or why not? Can you block time on the calendar this month for specific tasks? Can you involve other family members in the projects?
- ◆ What does your senior need to accomplish this month? Is there a way to encourage or help him/her with it?
- ◆ Review the **College Prep Timeline**. Does an ACT or SAT need to be scheduled? Do you need to contact the guidance counselor?
- ◆ If college is not the path for your student, how can you encourage them in the trade they choose? Can you connect them with a mentor over coffee?
- ◆ Start a collection of pictures throughout the semester and place them in a folder (physical or digital) for easy access closer to the party.

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ What is one activity or project on your list that you have not planned or started? What steps can you take to make this a reality?
- ◆ Review the College Prep Timeline. What else is needed?
- ◆ You may have used meals from the 10 Life Hacks. Are there any your senior can learn to cook for your family this month?
- ◆ Think about a present or symbolic gift to give your senior at the graduation party. If it requires saving or planning, start reviewing tasks and lists now.

EXAMPLES

- Bracelet with Charms (each charm is a symbol representing a memory or activity).
 - Have family, friends, hero, or a particular mentor sign an item i.e., guitar, football, instrument.
 - Watch with an engraved message.
 - Rare Book.
- ◆ Take the extra time to review your calendar, gift list, and holiday plans. Are there any conflicts? Is there anything you need to eliminate or add?

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Take the extra time to review your calendar, gift list, and holiday plans. Are there any conflicts? Is there anything you need to eliminate or add?
- ◆ What is your senior looking forward to this month? Is there a way to encourage him/her in it or make it more memorable/fun/special?
- ◆ Will your senior be going away for school? If so, do research for physicians within the insurance plan, dentist for emergencies, counselors for emotional guidance, churches, and salons. Put together a Self-Care Kit and put it in their desk when you move them in. Let them know it is there—just in case. Maybe tuck in a few surprises too!
- ◆ Are there any dance recitals, ball games, robotics tournaments where you can invite family or friends over for a meal afterward?
- ◆ Remember to take digital pictures along the way to use at the graduation party.
- ◆ If you are putting together a highlight video, what do you have left to do?

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review your project and task lists. Assess your progress. Do you need to block additional time on the calendar this month? Review incoming emails/messages/parent portals for senior-related activities. Add them to your calendar and enable 2-3 notifications for each one.
- ◆ If your student is heading to college and will live on campus, discuss with your student color schemes, decor ideas, etc. Once you get a general sense of direction, keep an eye out for items while running errands.
- ◆ If they have prom and are interested in going, will they need a dress? A tux? If so, set aside time in your schedule and finances to prepare for prom season. Do you need to rent transportation? Volunteer with the school for the after-party?
- ◆ Graduation season can be an expense. Start to think about presents for your senior's friends. While running errands, buy one or two gifts every month to spread out the cost.
- ◆ Review the Senior Year Bucket List. Are there any adjustments needed? Activities you want to add?

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review your project and task lists. Assess your progress. Can you cross off a project on the list? Do you need to block additional time on the calendar this month or ask for help?
- ◆ Review incoming emails/messages/parent portals for senior-related activities. Update/add them to your calendar and enable 2-3 notifications for each one.
- ◆ Dedicate a section in your house for dorm room decor and supplies. As you run errands throughout the next three months, pick up an item here or there to help offset the final cost closer to move-in day.
- ◆ Now is the time for you and your senior to zone in on the details for the graduation party.

GRADUATION PARTY CHECKLIST

- Create a budget
- Pick a date and time
- Decided on a theme
- Choose the location
- Plan the menu
- Discuss and finalize the guest list
- Order invitations (include an RSVP for headcount)
- Research and book food/caterer

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Months until Graduation

- ◆ Review your project and task lists along with any incoming emails/messages/parent portals for senior-related activities. Make any necessary adjustments.
- ◆ Double-check the school's website for any final graduation details.
- ◆ Are there any graduation parties to be added to the calendar? Do you need to buy any extra graduation presents for your senior's friends?
- ◆ What does your senior need to accomplish this month? Is there a way to encourage or help him/her with it?
- ◆ Are there any dorm items you can pick up?
- ◆ Review the Senior Year Bucket List. Are there any adjustments needed? Any activities you want to add?
- ◆ Review the details for the party.

GRADUATION PARTY CHECKLIST

- Send invitations
- Shop for decorations
- Decide and purchase party favors
- Order flowers (if needed)
- Order graduation present
- Follow up with caterer and venue
- Check on the picture collection in the digital or physical folder
- Book a photographer (or ask a friend who is good at photography)
- Connect with any out-of-town guests for travel

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Month until Graduation

- ◆ Review your 3-5 projects/activities list. Have you completed everything? Make every effort to finish this month. The month of Graduation Day will be chaotic!
- ◆ Review your emails and calendar for remaining senior activities and events. Do you have unfinished tasks or requests?
- ◆ Review the **Senior Year Bucket List**. Any last ideas or alterations? Do you want to repeat one that worked well?
- ◆ Review the details for the party.

GRADUATION PARTY CHECKLIST

- Order a graduation custom cake, cupcakes, or desserts
- Order balloons

- Create (or purchase) the display for your senior's pictures at the party
- Check on additional photos for the collection
- Decide on your attire
- Discuss with your senior their attire
- Continue shopping for decor
- Order plates, napkins, silverware, and glassware
- Dedicate a section in your house to hold party decor and supplies



Graduation Month!

- ◆ Review your 3-5 projects/activities list. Have you completed everything?
- ◆ Review your emails and calendar for remaining senior activities and events. Is there something you missed?
- ◆ Review dates for graduation and all parties.
- ◆ Review the final details for the party.

GRADUATION PARTY CHECKLIST

- Review the RSVP list
 - Double-check caterer, venue, florist, balloons, photographer, cake, etc.
 - Wrap graduation present
 - Have family write a note of blessing to give to the graduation party
 - Prepare for any out-of-town guests
 - Put together the photo display of senior
 - Do a final check on all decorations and supplies
 - Write out all details on a DAY BEFORE checklist and a DAY OF checklist
 - Review those two lists the week of the party
- ◆ Have FUN at the Graduation Party! Your senior only gets one of these, so let yourself relax and enjoy the day. You have planned and prepared, and now is the time to trust the process. Events can be dazzling if we are at peace with a defect or two.

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Month after Graduation

- ◆ List 2-4 projects/activities you need to accomplish to prepare for the college move/transition/ pre-career training.
- ◆ Review the items you bought for the dorm. Shop for the remaining dorm room decor and supplies.
- ◆ Plan family visits or activities for the first year of college.
- ◆ Plan a family farewell getaway.
- ◆ Review dates for college deadlines/deposits/events.
- ◆ Any last **Bucket List** Activities?
- ◆ Schedule a time to celebrate after your senior has started college or pre-career classes. You finished well! Time to have a little party for yourself! Way to go Parent!