The Ultimate Senior Session Prep Guide

For seniors (and the parents cheering them on) in
Alexandria, Northern Virginia & Washington, D.C.

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Your senior session is a celebration of everything that makes you, *you*: your style, your people, your passions, and the big adventure waiting after graduation. Think of this guide as your game plan.

It walks you through what to wear, where to shoot, and what to expect on the day, so you can show up relaxed and ready. Parents: this is for you too, so you'll know exactly what you're signing up for.

What to Wear

Let your location set the mood

Picture yourself among trees, gardens, and open fields? Keep it relaxed: jeans, a cotton dress, boots. Heading to Old Town Alexandria or the monuments in D.C.? Historic brick, cobblestones, and marble are perfect for dressing up a little.

Plan on 2–3 outfits

Your session includes two to three outfit changes, which gives us plenty of variety without feeling rushed. A mix that works well:

- **Casual:** your everyday favorite, just a little elevated
- **Dressy:** the outfit that makes you feel like a million bucks
- **All you:** a sports uniform, a varsity jacket, your theater hoodie, or gear from the college you'll be attending next. Rep that new school!

Make it yours

The best senior photos look like *you*, not like a catalog. A letterman jacket, your instrument, your cleats, or a favorite book are details you'll love looking back on.

Don't skip a great pair of jeans

Jeans are timeless and easy to move in. They make it easy to sit on steps, lean against a wall, or walk naturally. Dress them up with a cute top, tuck in a button-down, or add a cozy sweater when it's cool. In warmer months, jean shorts work too.

Quick tips

- Wear walking shoes, or even flip-flops, and bring your cute shoes to switch into for each outfit
- Steam or iron everything the night before

*Want more outfit ideas? Read the full **What to Wear for Senior Photos** post.*

Location Ideas

I'm based in Alexandria and happy to travel anywhere. Here are some favorite spots for seniors:

Close to home

Your senior photos don't have to be in front of a monument! Northern Virginia is full of beautiful spots, from pretty parks in your own neighborhood to local gardens like the Bon Air Rose Garden. Sometimes the place that feels like home is the most meaningful backdrop of all.

Old Town Alexandria

Charming streets, historic buildings, and waterfront views. Perfect for a dressier, "downtown" look.

Green Spring Gardens

Lush gardens and greenery right here in Northern Virginia, perfect for a softer, natural look. *(Permit and reservation fee required.)*

The National Mall & Monuments

The Lincoln Memorial, WWII Memorial, and Washington Monument make an epic backdrop for a milestone. The Mall gets busy, so I recommend a **weekday sunrise session**: gorgeous light, cooler temps, and hardly anyone around. Weekend mornings can work too, but evenings get too crowded.

Jefferson Memorial & Tidal Basin

White marble columns, water views, and the Washington Monument in the distance. Parking is easier here, and it's stunning in every season, especially cherry blossom season.

Constitution Gardens

Greenery, walking paths, and water, with the Washington Monument still in view. It's quieter and more relaxed than the Mall, and spring makes it feel like the perfect place to celebrate new beginnings.

National Gallery of Art

Grand, elegant, and a little artsy. See a **session here**.

The D.C. War Memorial

A quiet, classical marble dome tucked among the trees near the National Mall. It's elegant, peaceful, and perfect for a sharp suit-and-tie look.

Bishop's Garden at the National Cathedral

Stone walls, garden paths, and the Cathedral's gothic towers overhead. It feels like a storybook. *(Permit fee required.)*

More D.C. favorites

The DAR Portico: A hidden gem, with archways, magnolia trees, and the Washington Monument peeking through the pillars. It's especially beautiful when the magnolias bloom in spring.

Cherry Blossom Season: Worth the hype, and worth the early alarm! Peak bloom changes every year, so we'll plan together and pick a quieter spot if the Tidal Basin is packed.

Permits & picking your spot

Some locations, like Green Spring Gardens and Bishop's Garden, require a permit or reservation fee. Don't worry, I'll handle all of that during your inquiry and booking. We'll talk through location options based on what you're into and choose the spot that feels most like you and means the most to you.

More location details: ***The Best Locations for Photos in Washington, D.C.***

The Day of Your Session

How long is a session?

Up to 90 minutes. We use every minute, walking to different spots and switching looks, so wear comfy shoes! Flip-flops are a great option too, since they make it easy to slip into the shoes that go with each outfit.

Where do I change outfits?

You can change in the comfort of your car, or in a public restroom if there's one nearby. Hang your outfits in the car and bring a few clips or a small bag for accessories, and changes will take just a few minutes.

What time of day do we shoot?

I love shooting at sunrise or about an hour and a half before sunset, known as golden hour, when the light is soft, warm, and flattering. If it's cloudy that day, we can shift our start time a bit to make the most of the light.

Can my parents or a friend come?

Absolutely! Bring the whole crew and make it a party, or just bring one parent. The more the merrier, or keep it low-key. Whatever makes you happy is what we'll do.

What if it rains?

If rain is in the forecast during your session time, we'll reschedule for another day. No soggy senior photos here!

When will I get my photos?

I hand-edit every single image, no presets. Your gallery arrives through ShootProof within three weeks, and I always do my best to get it to you sooner. Need your photos in a hurry for a graduation party or a deadline? Expedited delivery is available for an additional fee. Just ask!

How Do I Book?

1. **Let's chat!** Send a message, and let's start dreaming up your session together. You can peek at **The Collections** for pricing first.
2. **Find your vibe.** We'll talk about the look you're going for, what you love, and which locations speak to you.
3. **Pick your spot.** Once we've found the right location, I'll send over your booking link.
4. **Lock it in.** Sign your contract and pay a small deposit through the booking link to secure your date, time, and location. That's it, you're booked!

Let's Do This!

Your session-day checklist

- 2–3 outfits on hangers, steamed or ironed the night before
- Walking shoes or flip-flops, plus the cute shoes for each outfit
- A few clips or a small bag for accessories
- Your "all you" details: jersey, letterman jacket, instrument, cleats, or gear from your future school
- Your crew, if you'd like them there. The more the merrier!

Let's Celebrate You!

Senior year only happens once. I'd love to help you plan a session that feels fun, easy, and completely *you*.

Ready for Your Close-Up? Contact Sarah

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