



The Ultimate Guide to Applying for College

How to Complete a College Application That Stands Out

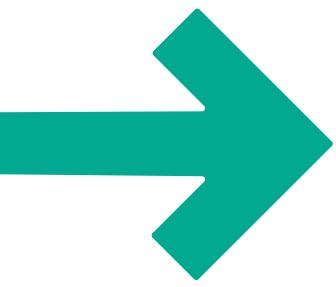
ACT[®]



Table of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 College Considerations	2
Chapter 2 Make Sure You're Ready	6
Chapter 3 When Should I Start Applying to College	9
Chapter 4 How Many College Applications Should I Complete	14
Chapter 5 Which College Application Deadline Should I Meet	18
Chapter 6 What's Included on a College Application	20
Chapter 7 What Can I Do after I Apply to College	29





Introduction

It may seem like the process of applying for college will take up just a small part of your entire high school career.

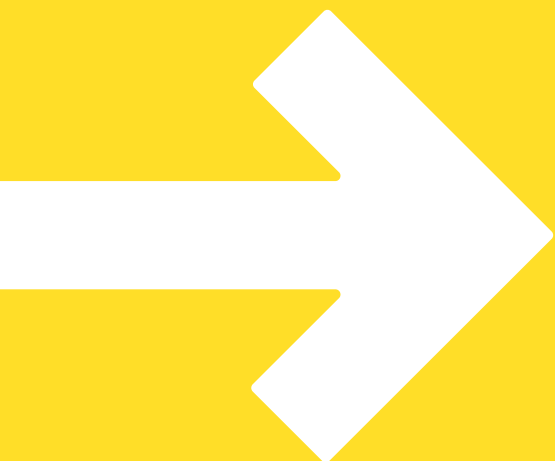
But when you actually start the process—filling out forms, asking mentors for letters of recommendation, crafting multiple personal statements, writing essay... after essay... after essay—you'll find that applying to college can be a HUGE undertaking. The pressure of submitting a strong application, coupled with the pressure of deadlines, can make this a time-consuming, stressful period.

Becoming familiar with the application process and having a plan can ease your stress, making applying for college more manageable, even exciting!



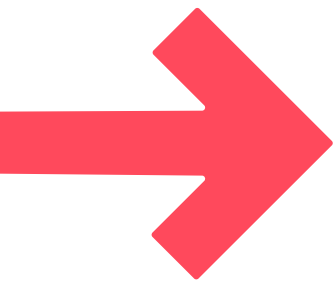
TO SAVE YOU TIME FROM SEARCHING THROUGH VARIOUS RESOURCES, USE THIS BOOK AS A ONE-STOP RESOURCE WITH INFORMATION ON:

- **WHEN TO APPLY TO COLLEGE**
- **HOW MANY APPLICATIONS TO COMPLETE**
- **WHICH COLLEGE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS BEST FOR YOU**
- **THE PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION**
- **WHAT YOU CAN DO AFTER APPLYING**



Chapter 1

College Considerations



Chapter 1

College Considerations

Before filling out applications, you'll need to identify the schools you'd like to apply to.

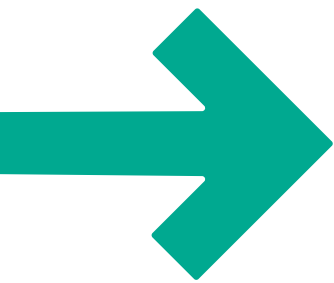
Consider who you are and what you want, and then use this research to explore different college options.

Are you a self-starter, or do you need a little motivation? Do you like being part of a crowd, or would you rather work alone or in a small group? How important is it to be close to family and your current group of friends after graduation? Or do you want a change of scenery and opportunities to meet new people?

The first step is knowing yourself by asking questions like those above, and then exploring college options to determine which ones are best for you.

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

- **COLLEGES** offer academic programs leading to four-year bachelor's degrees.
- **COMMUNITY** and **TECHNICAL COLLEGES** offer two-year programs leading to an associate's degree and transfer programs that are similar to freshman and sophomore offerings at four-year colleges and universities.
- **UNIVERSITIES** offer four-year and graduate programs in liberal arts, business, engineering, education, medicine, and other fields.
- **VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL** schools offer career-oriented programs that can last from a few months to a few years, awarding a certification or license in a specific field.



Chapter 1

College Considerations

Large vs. small colleges

The kind of education you're looking for—including the experience and major you want—can vary depending on the size of the college or university you want to attend.

Again, the key is knowing yourself, your needs, and your goals.

LARGER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

MAY OFFER:

- More areas of specialized study
- More courses in each area
- More anonymity
- Greater range of extracurricular activities
- Larger libraries
- More laboratory facilities
- Graduate programs

SMALLER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

MAY OFFER:

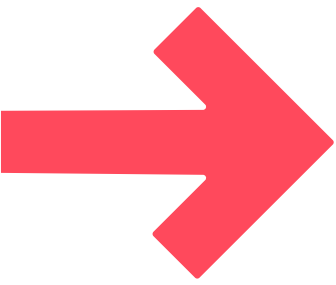
- A more personal atmosphere
- Small classes, more discussion, and fewer lectures
- A greater chance of participation in athletics, clubs, and leadership positions
- Less distance between students and faculty
- More flexible programs

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE COLLEGES

If you choose the four-year college route, you'll need to decide between a publicly or privately funded college or university. Private colleges are often smaller, with fewer students, more access to faculty, and better chances of getting into programs and classes. They're also typically more expensive than public colleges, although financial aid can offset those costs.

WHICH KIND OF COLLEGE YOU CHOOSE WILL DEPEND ON MANY OTHER FACTORS, AS WELL:

- Your comfort level (class size, distance from home, etc.)
- What you can afford
- Which college is the best fit to your program of study



Chapter 1

College Considerations

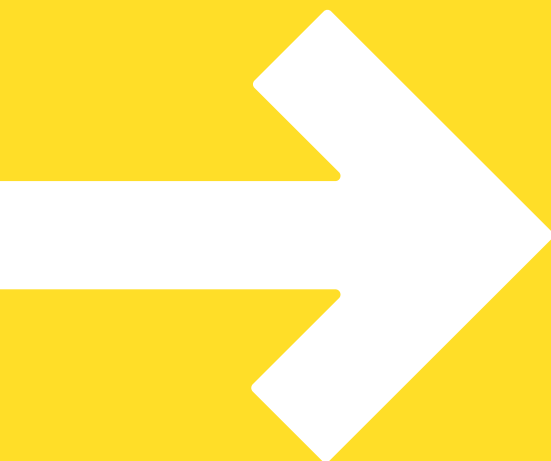
Researching colleges

You can research different kinds of colleges with lots of different of sources. **The important thing is to gather information from as many sources as possible so you can make an informed decision.**

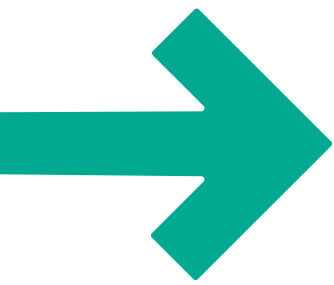
THESE RESOURCES CAN HELP:

- [MyACT](#)—A free, online resource that helps you explore colleges and careers
- [ACT College and Career Planning Resources](#)
- College websites
- Your school counselor
- Family members and friends who've attended college
- Professionals in your field of interest
- College fairs
- College representatives who visit your school
- College visits





Chapter 2 Make Sure You're Ready



Chapter 2

Make Sure You're Ready

Am I ready for college?

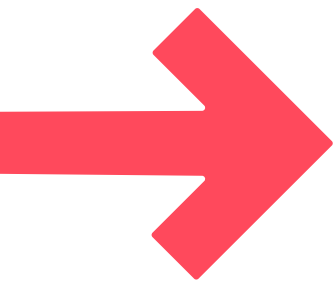
The best way to figure out if you're ready for college courses is to take a college admissions test.

The ACT® test is a widely trusted, research-based college admissions exam based on your high school curriculum—meaning it tests you on what you've learned during high school. It includes three areas — English, math, and reading — and it's designed to measure your current level of education in these subjects. You can also choose to take the optional science and writing sections to show off your strengths in those areas.

Taking a college admissions test is an important step in planning your future after high school. ACT recommends taking the test the first time during junior year so you'll have time to retest, if necessary. But it's not too late to take the test during senior year. Every university and college has its own deadlines, but usually early college application deadlines fall around November and regular application deadlines are typically between January 1 and February 1.

Eligible students can take the ACT for free. Learn more about the [ACT Fee Waiver program](#).

AND REMEMBER: YOU CAN SEND YOUR ACT SCORES TO UP TO FOUR COLLEGES FOR FREE. Remember to list those colleges when you [register](#) to take the test. Also, when you register, consider signing up for [ACT Recruit Me](#). This allows colleges, universities, and scholarship agencies to connect with you—and it opens doors to college access and financial aid.



Chapter 2

Make Sure You're Ready

How college admissions tests are used

When colleges make admissions decisions, they want to know about the whole student. They realize you're more than a test score, and that's why they ask for so much information when you apply.

COLLEGES CONSIDER ALL OF THE FOLLOWING (and maybe more) **WHEN MAKING ADMISSIONS DECISIONS:**

- Your GPA
- Your class rank
- Activities, volunteering, and other participation
- Your application and essay
- Difficulty of classes you've taken
- Your college admissions test results

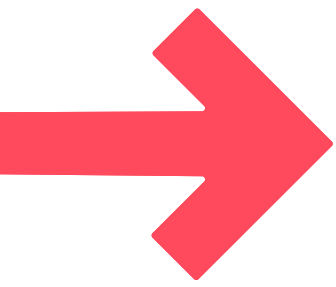
Colleges and universities will use test results and these other factors for course placement, advising, career counseling, and scholarship awards decisions. Your test results, just like all the other factors, are very important, so it's important that you do your best.





Chapter 3

When should I start applying to college?



Chapter 3

When should I start applying to college?

You'll face college and scholarship application deadlines throughout your senior year. You may believe that this is the time to start thinking about and gathering materials for your applications, but with schoolwork, extracurricular activities, graduation, and other college planning on your plate, it's important to **PLAN AHEAD**.

Begin the process in the spring of your junior year and accomplish **these four things**:

1. CREATE A COLLEGE LIST

There are nearly 4,000 degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States¹. How do you sort through all these options and select the few institutions you want to learn more about?

¹Information sourced from the [National Center for Education Statistics](#)

The type of colleges you consider will depend on your goals and expectations. There are plenty of aspects to consider, but start with these:

A. MAJOR:

What subject would you enjoy studying? Which colleges offer that subject as a major? If undecided, which colleges have support systems that help you explore interests and majors?

B. LOCATION:

Do you want to attend a school close to home? Do you want to live in a big city, or is a small town more appealing? Is there a certain part of the country where you'd like to live?

C. SIZE:

Do you prefer a more intimate atmosphere or more anonymity? Would you enjoy larger facilities, more programs, and a greater range of extracurricular activities? Or more discussion-based classes, a greater chance of participation, and less distance between you and professors?

If the spring of your junior year has already passed, it's OK. You still have time. These are just helpful ways to get a jump start on college applications.



Chapter 3

When should I start applying to college?

[Learn how to pay for college and university.](#)

D. COST OF ATTENDANCE:

What is the cost posted on the college or university website or materials? What scholarships and financial aid options does the college provide? Will you receive any help paying for college?

E. EXTRACURRICULARS:

Is there a specific activity you'd like to explore in college? Which colleges offer clubs or organizations in that area?

F. ADMISSION DIFFICULTY:

When comparing yourself to your graduating high school class, how do you rank? Do you think you'd be able to get into a selective college?

Once you've considered these qualities, which is your highest priority? Use it to start finding and researching colleges. For example, if staying close to home is the most important thing to you, search for colleges near you and start compiling your list.

If you find that more than 20 colleges align with your highest priority, move to the second-most-important priority. For example, if you find multiple colleges with great programs for your major, and you know being at a large school is the second-highest priority, you can eliminate smaller colleges from your list.

Keep going down your priority list until you have around 8-15 colleges you really want to spend time researching.

See the "Create a College List Worksheet" at the end of this book to help compile and narrow down your college list.





Chapter 3

When should I start applying to college?

2. ACHIEVE A COMPETITIVE ACT® TEST SCORE

Whether you're planning to meet early or regular decision deadlines, you want to know what your ACT score could give you by then. One point on your ACT test could make the difference in acceptance into college and/or thousands of dollars in scholarships.

If you think you might take the test more than once, it's a good idea to take it in the fall/early spring of your junior year. Doing this gives you:

A. A BENCHMARK To see where you are at and where you can improve

B. A FAMILIARITY WITH THE TESTING:

You've gone through the experience and know the process

Next, if you want to improve your score, consider testing again in the spring or summer. The format of the test, the types of questions on it, and the environment are all fresh in your mind—not to mention the knowledge you've gained during your junior year. Couple this “in-between” time with

practice on the subjects where you need to improve, and it's likely you'll raise your score.

As you consider retesting, check your target colleges' and universities' score preferences. Does your score meet their expectations? Could you increase your chances of getting into a certain program, or could you qualify for a scholarship if you raised your score, even by one point?

Understand what opportunities your score reflects, and plan accordingly. Use your scores on previous tests to continue focusing on the areas that need more instruction, and know that the more you progress through your high school career, the more prepared you'll become for the ACT—and college.

Students achieve the highest gains in their Composite score one to three months after taking their first ACT.



Chapter 3

When should I start applying to college?

We've already written an **'ultimate guide'** for campus visits. It goes into detail on the **'when'** and **'how'** to do these.

3. VISIT CAMPUSES

Once you have a narrowed list of colleges, our advice is to visit as many of these as you can. We know visiting multiple campuses can be difficult, so be sure to take advantage of virtual options, as well as in-person visits.

Stepping foot on campus and getting a first-hand look is still the gold standard for a college visit, but don't rule out schools on your list until you've at least given them a virtual look.

Successful college visits, in person or online give you insights into what your life might be like if you decide to attend and if it matches what you want.

4. ASK YOUR COUNSELOR, TEACHER, OR MENTOR FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Requesting that someone write a recommendation letter for you can be a daunting task. You're putting yourself "out there," hoping they know enough about you to describe your personal character. You may be worried they'll say no.

However, you'll find that your educators (counselors, teachers, and principals) usually have lots of experience writing recommendation letters and they want to see you succeed. If you've spent time cultivating good relationships with them, they will be more than happy to write you a recommendation.

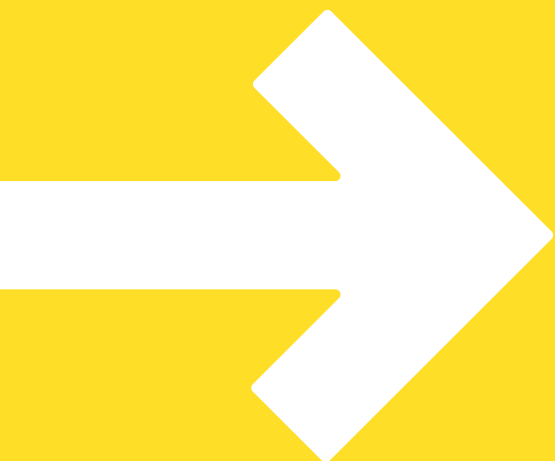
HERE ARE TWO THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN REQUESTING RECOMMENDATION LETTERS:

ASK A FEW MONTHS BEFORE APPLICATIONS ARE DUE Try not to wait until the last minute. At the very least, ask someone to write a letter a month before the application deadline. It's best to alert your letter writers during the spring of your junior year. This gives them plenty of time to plan ahead and fit in writing your letter with their school schedule and summer vacation.

If you can, make your request in person. This will make the request personal, respectful, and responsible. Practice what you're going to say beforehand. The request should be heartfelt, and tell them how you've enjoyed their instruction and guidance, and how you would be honored if they wrote you a letter.

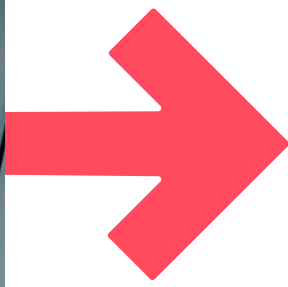
CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOU BEST The goal of a recommendation letter is to humanize you, to tell admissions officials about you as a person as well as a student, and to tell a bit about your character. Be sure to ask someone who you've spent a lot of time with, someone who can speak to your personality and give insight into who you are behind your grades.

Ask someone who you're interacting with already, like a junior-year teacher or counselor. If you're currently a student in their class or interact with them often, you'll be at the forefront of their mind, and that will make it easier for them to write your letter.



Chapter 4

How many college applications should I complete?



Chapter 4

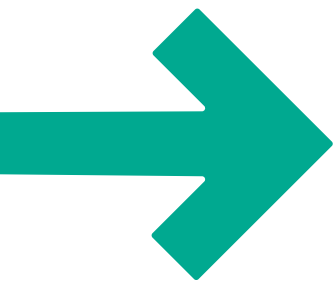
How many college applications should I complete?

You'll see a difference of opinion if you look online or elsewhere for suggestions. **But, here's the REAL answer: it depends. Helpful, right?**

The number of schools you apply to is unique to your situation. Maybe you have a DREAM college in mind, the only one you've ever wanted to attend. You apply early, get accepted, and that's it—your dream has come true. And you only had to apply to ONE school. Or maybe you have a list of schools, all of which you like, and it'll be a tough decision having to choose one.

If you don't fit into one of those categories, we recommend that you apply to 5-10 colleges, equally distributed between reach, target, and safety schools (more on these in a bit). **Why 5 to 10?** This will help you if you're undecided about which college to attend or want to increase your chances of being accepted.

We recommend not applying to more than 10. You'll only have so much time. Maybe you love the idea of applying to 15 or even 20 colleges, but realistically, amidst your classes, exams, extracurricular activities, and social obligations, applying to this many schools could put unnecessary stress on you.



Chapter 4

How many college applications should I complete?



Here are **THREE FACTORS** to help you narrow your college list and get you into that 5–10 range:

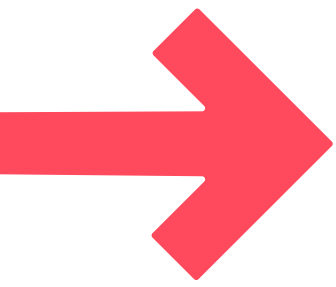
1. PRICE OF APPLICATIONS—If you have a limited amount of money to spend on application fees, this may force you to cut down your list. **However, if you take the ACT test using a test fee waiver, you can [request to apply to college for free!](#)**

2. DUE DATES OF APPLICATION—Gauge how much time you'll have before deadlines, and fill out a reasonable number of college applications, eliminating those you cannot fit in.

3. COLLEGE FIT—If you've done your research and gone on a campus visit, you should have a pretty solid idea of the environment and your likes and dislikes. Eliminate schools from your list that are a bad fit for you, whether it's related to a program of study, atmosphere, etc.

Earlier in the chapter, we discussed the importance of applying to an equal number of **reach**, **target**, and **safety** schools. What are the definitions of each?

- **REACH:** A school where you have a smaller chance of being accepted—your academic profile matches **25% or lower of the students admitted**
- **TARGET:** A school where you feel confident you'll be accepted—your academic profile matches **50% of the students admitted**
- **SAFETY:** A school where you're sure you'll be accepted—your academic profile matches **75% or higher of the students admitted**



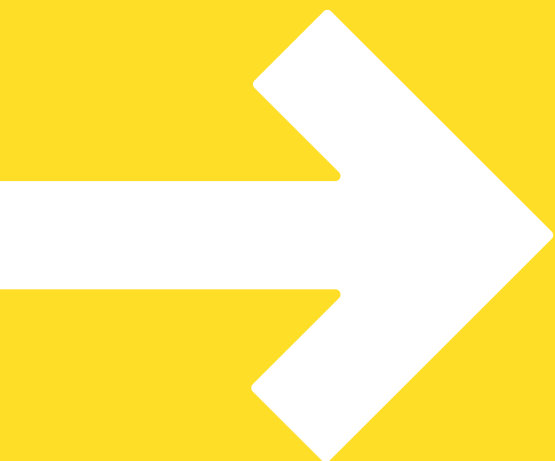
Chapter 4

How many college applications should I complete?

As you're doing your research, make a point to document the academic profile of an average admitted student. Usually colleges will have this information on their website or on websites that profile colleges—average ACT scores, GPAs, class ranks, etc. Compare your academic profile to the average.

We recommend you apply to 1-2 “reach,” 1-2 “target,” and 1-2 “safety” schools to have a good chance of getting into a college or university that’s a good fit for you. And you never know, some of those “reach” colleges might be within your grasp.





Chapter 5

Which college application deadline should I meet?



Chapter 5

Which college application deadline should I meet?

Here are the two big college application deadlines to remember—early and regular decision deadlines.

• EARLY DECISION OR EARLY ACTION

DEADLINES: type of college admissions process that requires students to submit applications earlier than regular admissions (*usually between October 1 and December 1*).

• REGULAR DECISION DEADLINES: normal time frame that students submit college applications (*usually between January 1 and February 1*).

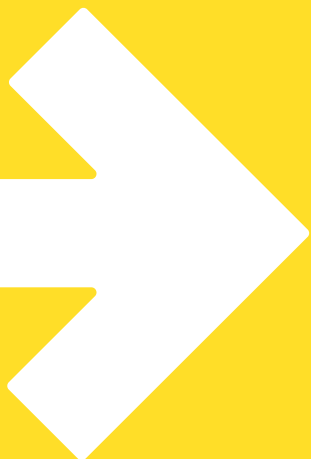
The most common question regarding early deadlines is whether or not it gives you an advantage over regular decision deadlines.

Among the most popular colleges, the average acceptance rate for applicants who applied to early decision and early action was about 70% compared to a 53.5% acceptance rate for applicants who applied to the regular decision deadline¹. **That's a difference of 16%.**

Learn more about different deadlines, and weighing their pros and cons, [here](#).

So, the numbers imply that there is an advantage to applying early, which is good news, but make sure you know all the college's early admission requirements and conditions. **You may be obligated to attend if you're accepted.**

¹Information sourced from [US News and World Report](#)



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

DO NOT wait until the last minute. After you submit this form, it may take a couple of days for the college to process it and send you a link to attach the rest of your materials.

Each college will ask for different information to learn more about you, but what we want to cover are the most common components of a college application.

1. APPLICATION FORM

These are usually the first forms you fill out online. They typically require information like your full name, Social Security number, address, etc. Sometimes a college will not let you attach the rest of your application materials until you've completed the general application form.

This part of the application process requires a lot of attention to detail and focus. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you are filling out a general application form:

- **CHECK** for grammatical errors or misspelled words
- **READ** all the fields and requirements carefully
- **LIST** the needed information accurately
- **KEEP TRACK** of the deadline and complete this section well in advance
- **USE** an appropriate email address when applying (no words or phrases you wouldn't use in the classroom)
- **WRITE** the application yourself but ask your guardian or counselor for help if you need it
- **CLICK** "submit" once you complete the form
- **CHECK** your email after you submit for a confirmation that the college received your application form



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

Start saving! As soon as you can, start setting aside some money, weekly or monthly, so you can become financially ready for the application process.

2. APPLICATION FEE

Some colleges will require you to pay a fee after you submit your application, while others will only require it once you are accepted. Application fees can range from free to around \$100. When you're researching schools, take note of the total amount in application fees and factor them into your budget. If you can only afford a certain amount, this may help you narrow your college list to fit that total cost.

Some colleges offer application fee waivers. You can qualify for a waiver when you apply for financial aid at that college, or the college might have a separate application portal just for fee waivers.

3. TRANSCRIPTS

Your official transcript is your high school's certified statement of your academic record. Colleges will ask that it be mailed or emailed to them, so read the requirements carefully.

Before your transcript is sent, read through the classes, grades, credits, and scores to make sure they're correct. Your counselor will be the one to send your transcript to your applied colleges.





Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

Learn about the **enhanced ACT**, designed to deliver the same trusted scores in a shorter, more flexible format.

4. ACT® TEST SCORES

When you register to take the ACT® test, you can select up to four colleges, for free, to receive your scores. There's a common myth that it's better to wait and see your scores before actually sending them, but this can be costly. If you send your scores as you're registering, you will show your selected colleges you're very interested and receive more targeted information that can help you when you apply.

When it comes to admissions, colleges only look at your highest score. So, if you take it again and raise your score, colleges will replace the old score with the new one. After the test, each additional college you want to send your scores to will cost a small fee and can be requested at: www.act.org/scores.

- **DO COLLEGES “SUPERSCORE” THE ACT?** Superscoring is the practice of factoring in your highest subject area scores to produce the highest possible Composite score. ACT will now provide an automatically calculated ACT Superscore to all students who have taken the ACT more than once from September 2016 to current day. Make sure to check if the colleges at which you're applying use the superscoring method. This can help if you just need to focus on one subject area during retesting. And, [research](#) shows that if you test multiple times to achieve that desired score, you may be indicating a “will do” attitude, showing colleges your motivation and persistence.

Colleges will look at your ACT Composite score when making admissions decisions. Most college websites will have information about what their incoming classes commonly score on the ACT. You can compare your Composite score to your desired college's range of accepted scores to see how you stack up against students they accept.

If you need to raise your Composite score to help get into the college you want, focus on your weakest subject areas, prepare, and try again.



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

5. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

See page 13 for information on how to request these from teachers, counselors, mentors, and other adults. **Here are two more recommendations for working with your letter writers:**

MAKE IT EASY ON YOUR RECOMMENDER

After you've asked for a letter of recommendation, give that individual all the supplemental material they need to "brag" about you. This should include a document(s) describing:

- Future aspirations and goals
- Intended major and why you're choosing it
- Awards, honors, or accomplishments
- Relevant extracurriculars
- Schools you're applying to and due dates for the letters

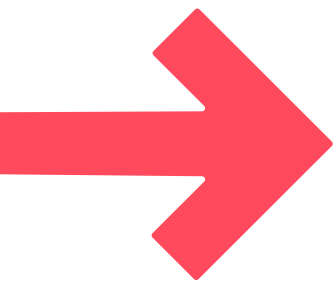
These materials will complement the wonderful and personal input your recommendation writer puts in their letter.

FOLLOW UP AND SEND A THANK YOU

As the application deadline approaches, it's a good idea to contact your recommenders and politely remind them to submit their letters if they haven't already.

After they've submitted your letter, write them a thank-you note, buy them a small gift, or find another way to show how much you appreciate what they've done for you.





Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

6. RESUME

You may think a resume is only useful when trying to find a job, but some colleges encourage you to include one with your application materials. Effective resumes give colleges a greater idea of who you are and what you're interested in. Resumes should illustrate beyond what colleges see in a transcript and highlight experiences you weren't able to mention in an essay or application form.

Here's how to craft a college application resume that stands out:

STEP 1: LIST ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE What have you accomplished during your high school career? Awards, honors, leadership roles, community service projects, skills, talents, work experience, etc.—write it all down.

STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT SHOULD GO INTO YOUR RESUME Once you have everything written down, cut down the text until what you have left are your most impressive accomplishments and roles. This is where a counselor, teacher, or parent could help you decide what to ultimately include.





Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?



STEP 3: FORMAT YOUR RESUME A general rule is to keep your entire resume on one page (two pages, at the most). Have a header with your name, email address, phone number, and home address. If your rank is not highlighted on your transcript or any other documents, or if it's an emphasis for a college's admissions process, include this at the top of your resume along with your high school's name and GPA.

Next, include the accomplishments and roles you selected to go on the resume, grouped into specific sections. For example, you may have some, or all, of these sections on your resume:

- Summer programs
- Honors and awards
- Extracurricular activities and your roles within them
- Volunteer activities
- Work experience
- Skills and/or talents

Each section should list the most recent accomplishments and roles first. Describe each experience in a bulleted list format, making it easily readable for admissions officials. Begin each bullet with an action verb and use concise language, including numbers that describe your accomplishments (money raised, etc.).

STEP 4: AFTER YOU HAVE A DRAFT, REVIEW IT Then ask a counselor, teacher, friend, or parent to review it, too.



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

7. ESSAYS

For some, this might be the most stressful part of the application, requiring a lot of time and effort. But, application essays can be the most effective way for you to communicate your uniqueness to admissions officials and show how passionate you are about their institution.

Some colleges will have specific prompts they want you to answer. Others will ask for you to just describe your story. Whatever it is, be yourself, speak in your voice, and don't try to fit in a bunch of words from the thesaurus. **Colleges want to hear from YOU.**

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR CRAFTING A STELLAR ESSAY:

- 1. START EARLY**
The first thing you should do is plot out how many essays you need to write and their deadlines. It's a good idea to start the spring of your junior year or summer of senior year so you give yourself plenty of time to think through the topics and brainstorm writing points.
- 2. CREATE AN OUTLINE**
Take the prompt (the question asked) of each essay and break down its parts. Think about why an admissions official would ask this and what they are hoping to get from you. Next, pair personal stories or experiences that illustrate your answers. Organize your thesis along with these anecdotes, in bullet-point format, into a clear beginning, middle, and end. This is your outline.
- 3. READ SOME EXAMPLES**
Some colleges will publish essay examples on their website. See if the college you're applying to does this and, if so, check them out. It's a great opportunity to get a feel for what that college identifies as a strong application and what it doesn't.
- 4. ADDRESS WHAT'S NOT ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT**
Think of your essay like an in-person interview. As you write your essay, imagine you're sitting in the room with the admissions official. You've given her or him your transcript and resume. The question he or she keeps asking you is, "what else should I know?"

That's what you should keep in mind as you're forming your essay. How could you expand upon the information presented in the other parts of the application or bring to light new facts and traits about yourself.
- 5. THE DEEPER YOU GO, THE BETTER**
For your anecdotes, focus on specific details and really flesh out the scene. You might not have enough space to tell your entire life story, but if you focus on a couple of examples, it can make your essay vivid and make it come to life.
- 6. HAVE A FEW PEOPLE REVIEW IT**
After you've finished a draft of your essay, have someone you trust (a parent, counselor, or teacher) review it. Check for grammatical and spelling errors. But limit the number of people who review your essay to one or two. Too many voices can muddle yours.

Otherwise, if you search online for "sample college essays," many examples will pop up, giving you an idea of what a strong essay might look like. (Just remember NOT to plagiarize them.)



Chapter 6

What's included on a college application?

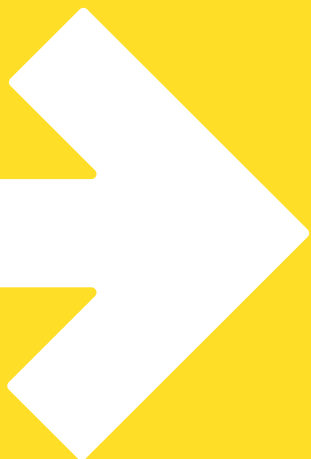
What part of the application is the most important?

This question is asked a lot and rightfully so. Many students want to know what to “make shine” in order to stand out. **The truth is, the most important part is making sure you submit your application on time.** Give yourself a couple of buffer days to have all of your stuff done just in case of an emergency. You can work diligently on the different parts of an application, but unless you submit it, your time will be all for naught.

Every college weighs applications differently. Maybe you have to be in the top 10% of your class to apply, or maybe you have to show extensive participation in extracurriculars, or maybe showcase a potent written voice in an essay.

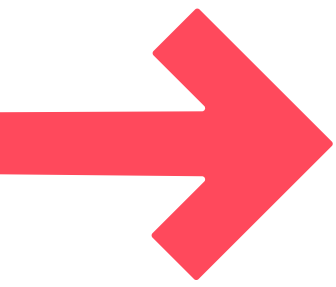
Whatever it may be, the best thing you can do is to make sure each part of your application is filled out with your utmost effort and focus. **Most colleges are looking for a well-rounded individual that shows promise in a lot of areas.** If you make every section a “standout” section, then you will have crafted a strong application.





Chapter 7

What can I do after I apply to college?



Chapter 7

What can I do after I apply to college?

After you submit your application, check for a confirmation that the college received your submission and all the correct materials.

This confirmation might come in an email or in the online portal of the college itself. It's possible to submit an application incorrectly and miss out on being accepted by a dream college.

Once you've confirmed that your application is safely with the school, it's time to wait. Most schools will take a month or two to get back to you depending on the number of applications they receive. Sit back, relax, and take pride that you submitted the best college application you could. The worst thing you can do is worry, constantly monitoring your email or checking online forums. Shift your energy and finish your last year of high school strong.

GOOD LUCK THIS APPLICATION SEASON! And remember, our mission is to see you succeed. That's why we created this ebook and why we're here with you every step of the way.



Top Application Tips



Mistakes to Avoid

- Be sure to prioritize which college is your first choice, and rank others according to:
 1. Your ability to cover tuition, either yourself or with financial aid.
 2. Availability of majors and programs.
 3. Likelihood of admission.
- Know the application process, deadline, and fee schedule for each school you're considering.
- Complete applications and return them to the admissions offices as early as possible.
- Keep copies of your records.
- Ask your counselor or administrator's office for all the forms you need, such as:
 - Transcripts
 - Records
 - Test scores
- If a college asks for references, be sure to identify people who know you well, and get their permission before sharing their contact information. These people could include:
 - Teachers
 - Counselors
 - Principals
 - Employers
 - Community leaders
- Misspellings and grammatical errors.
- Applying online without submitting or attaching the application and essay.
- Forgotten signatures.
- Not reading instructions carefully.
- Listing extracurricular activities that aren't school-approved activities.
- Forgetting to tell your counselor where you applied.
- Giving references too little time to submit letters of recommendation.
- Using a "funny" or inappropriate email address.
- Not checking email regularly.
- Letting parents, relatives, or friends fill out the application for you.
- Forgetting to use common sense on social media (remember: if strangers can read your posts, admissions officers can, too).

Create a College List

Print this worksheet and use this tool to help you sort through different colleges and universities and find the institutions that match your priorities and preferences.



Create a college list

The first step is to search for a list of colleges and universities where you might want to apply. Put those in the “college or university” column. Then, go down the table and research each quality listed (*major, location, size, etc.*) There are a few open columns for you to insert qualities that are important to you.

After doing your research, insert a...

2: If you LIKE that quality

1: If you are INDIFFERENT about that quality

0: if you DISLIKE that quality

...about each college

There’s a line at the bottom of each column where you can total your points for each school. The colleges or universities with higher point totals indicate a better fit based on your interests and priorities.

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

TOTAL:



Create a college list

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:



Create a college list

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:



Create a college list

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:



Create a college list

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY:

Major:

Location:

Size:

Cost:

Extracurriculars:

Admission difficulty:

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

(Insert own):

TOTAL:

ACT[®]

Connect with us **act.org**