

New 2007 edition!

Applying to

COLLEGE

A guide for students

A word to parents

The purpose of the booklet is to help your teenager make an informed choice about college—so we've written the booklet specifically for students.

As a parent, you play an important but delicate role in the college selection process. As the awesome task of choosing a college begins, your teenager needs you more than ever. Your son or daughter needs your guidance, wisdom, love, and support. But your teenager also needs you to step back, to let him or her take charge of the college selection process. That's not easy. Choosing a college and going through the admissions process can be a difficult and frustrating experience for both parents and students. There are the pressures of tests, deadlines, essays, and competition. But the college application process can also be a rewarding and expansive learning opportunity that brings you all closer together. The more you know about the process, the more you can help. The more you're willing to listen to your teenager, the more smoothly things will go. Try to keep in mind throughout the next few months or years that it's your son or daughter who is going to college. Try to see things through your teenager's eyes. Explore the possibilities the future holds together and you'll have fun along the way.

We are grateful to Sidney McClure, M.B.A., for her expert help in the development of this booklet. She is an independent college counselor in Massachusetts and has over 13 years of experience in college counseling and admissions. Before starting her own business, Ms. McClure served as assistant director of admissions at Wheaton College.

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If you're in high school, you're probably starting to think about college. You might be asking yourself questions like, "How do I start the college search?" "How will I choose the right school for me?" "What counts most in getting accepted?" These are all important questions. By planning ahead and working together with your parents, teachers, and guidance counselor, the college application process doesn't have to feel overwhelming.

INTROD

This booklet can help you think about a strategy for making the right decision. It will help you organize the entire college application process, from your freshman year to your senior year of high school. Use it as a working tool to help you develop your personal plan.

Remember, the more you plan ahead—by thinking about what you want, what your interests are, and what your college options are—the more informed your choice will be.

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- Creating a personal data portfolio
- Qualities found in the student body
- Academic and social atmosphere assessment

The college

SELECTION

process

College selection worksheet

Choosing a school where you'll feel comfortable and fit in is one of the most important considerations in the selection process. Use this page as a tool to help you decide what is important to you in a college.

What's important to you?	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Cost (stipulate range)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distance from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College selectivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Two-year college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Four-year college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Size of enrollment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Areas of study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extracurricular activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Co-op programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ROTC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Creating a personal data portfolio

Every college requires you, the applicant, to provide factual information about yourself. Start compiling your personal data now, and fill in information (like SAT scores and extracurricular activities) as it becomes available. Using this form will help you keep the information in one place and make completing individual applications easier later on. In addition, putting certain things down on paper—your school information, activities, community service, and work experience—can reveal to you your strengths, talents, and interests, and how to best match those with a college.

Personal Data

Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ E-mail _____

Social Security number _____

Parents

Father _____

Mother's maiden name _____

High School

School _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Guidance counselor _____

Counselor e-mail _____ Counselor fax _____

CEEB number _____

(This identification number, given to your high school by the College Board, is available from your guidance counselor. You will need it when applying to college.)

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Grade Point Average				
Class Rank				
AP/IB Scores				
PSAT/PLAN				
SAT I				
SAT II: Subject Tests				
ACT				

Awards and honors

Extracurricular activities (hours/week and weeks/year)

Sports _____

Clubs

Drama

Art

Music

Leadership

Volunteer

Other

Work experience (List where you have worked, for how long, and what your job responsibilities were. Jot down the name and phone number of anyone who could give you a recommendation.)

Community service (List where you worked, for how long, and what you did. List the name and phone number of anyone who could give you a recommendation.)

Travel (List any travel or travel-related experiences—such as an Outward Bound trip or a bike trip—that you feel helped you grow. Jot down a few sentences about how each experience contributed to your personal growth.)

Qualities found in the student body

Almost all colleges have a wide variety of students, but you will feel more at home if the mix of students feels comfortable to you. What characteristics would you like to find in other students? What do you value in others? What do you look for in a friend? Circle each quality or trait that you consider important, and write in any other characteristics you would like to find in the student body where you go to college.

ambitious

diverse

involved

social

artistic

down-to-earth

laid-back

sophisticated

athletic

friendly

liberal

spirited

career-oriented

fun

motivated

studious

caring

idealistic

outdoorsy

tolerant

competitive

independent

politically aware

traditional

conservative

innovative

progressive

unconventional

creative

intellectual

religious

unpretentious

responsible

Academic and social atmosphere assessment

While many schools may match your academic profile, it's important to identify the kind of academic and social atmosphere where you will feel most comfortable and successful. Here are some questions to ask yourself. You may want to discuss your responses with your parent or guidance counselor to form a clearer picture of what type of college would be the best choice for you.

- Do you prefer small or large classes?
- Do you work better when the teacher has time to meet with you one-on-one, or do you prefer to work independently?
- Do you want a school with many opportunities for activities, athletics, and leadership?
- Would you rather attend a college with a very intellectual, academic emphasis, or one with a balance between intellectual and social life?
- Do you think you would thrive in a rigorous, high-pressure atmosphere, or would you do better in a school with a more moderate amount of academic pressure?
- Is the option to take many different academic courses important to you? Or would you prefer a more career-directed course load?
- Do you want to attend a college with an emphasis on religious life?
- Are you interested in a single-sex college or a college oriented toward a particular ethnic group?
- Are you looking for a smaller student body, or a larger, more anonymous environment?
- Would you prefer a college in a city, suburb, rural area, or small town?
- Is it important for you to attend a college near your home or in your home state, or are you open to attending college in another region of the country?
- After carefully considering your academic profile, how selective should the colleges you apply to be?
- How important is cost and financial-aid availability in making your decision?

- Academic achievement
- Standardized test scores
- Personal profile
- Application choices
- The college application
- The college essay
- Letters of recommendation
- The college visit
- The interview

The college

ADMISSIONS

process



MOST STUDENTS APPLY TO BETWEEN SEVEN AND TEN schools. The schools are generally a mix of selectivity. Your final list should include some schools that you consider safe to get into, some that are likely possibilities, and a few that are a reach to get into.

When colleges make admission decisions they usually evaluate applicants in three areas:

- 1 *Academic achievement*
- 2 *Standardized test scores*
- 3 *Personal profile*

Academic achievement

Academic achievement is generally the most important criterion. It includes the quality of courses taken, grades, class percentile rank, and in some cases, teacher recommendations. The quality of courses is determined by academic level, such as general, honors, and college preparatory.

Standardized test scores

The second component is test scores, either SAT I or ACT. At most highly selective colleges, these tests are used in conjunction with the College Board SAT II: Subject Tests.

Most colleges require applicants to take a number of standardized tests and submit their scores. Check the information you have received from the schools you're interested in to find out what tests they require. Some special needs students may qualify for arrangements such as extended time limits or untimed tests. Registration forms and lists of test dates and centers are available in your high school guidance office and online.

Some common tests are explained below:

For information on the

PSAT contact:

PSAT/NMSQT Office
P.O. Box 6720
Princeton, New Jersey
08541-6720
609-771-7070
psat@info.collegeboard.org

For information on the

SAT contact:

College Board SAT Program
P.O. Box 6200
Princeton, New Jersey
08541-6200
609-771-7600
www.collegeboard.com

For information about the

PLAN or ACT contact:

American College Testing
Program
500 ACT Drive
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52243-0168
319-337-1000
www.act.org

ACT: The American College Testing Program Assessment tests four areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Calculators are allowed only during the math test. The tests are designed to assess educational development and readiness to handle college-level work. Each area is scored separately; a composite score is also given. Many colleges now ask either for the SAT and two SAT II: Subject Tests, or for the ACT.

PLAN: (Formerly PACT): The preliminary version of the American College Testing Program Assessment is given in the 10th grade as practice for the ACT.

PSAT: The Preliminary SAT is a two-hour and ten-minute test in three sections given in October and April as a practice test to familiarize sophomores and juniors with the SAT I. Results are reported in detail, so strengths and weaknesses can be easily assessed. The junior year PSAT also serves as the only National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) for students who may qualify to be designated as National Merit scholars, finalists, semifinalists, or commended students.

SAT I: The SAT is a three-hour and twenty-minute test given in three sections: writing, critical reading, and mathematics. The writing section is comprised of multiple-choice grammar questions and a student-written essay. The critical reading section focuses on sentence completions and reading comprehension of short and long passages of text. The math section contains multiple-choice questions and student-produced responses on numbers, operations, algebra, functions, geometry, statistics, probability, and data analysis. Calculators (you must supply your own) are permitted but not required. The SAT I is usually offered at least five times throughout the year. Scaled scores range from 200 to 800 in each section.

SAT II: Subject Tests. Each SAT II is a one-hour test measuring competence in a specific subject. You may take up to three tests on any given date and may decide the order in which to take them. It's generally best to take an SAT II test when you've just completed a course on the test subject. For instance, if you take biology as a junior, take the SAT II in biology in the spring of your junior year.

TOEFL: The Test of English as a Foreign Language is a standardized exam testing English language skill proficiency, generally taken by students who have learned English as a second language. This test is required by many post-secondary institutions and consists of three sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. For more information, call the Educational Testing Service at 609-771-7100; visit their Web site at www.toefl.org; or e-mail them at toefl@ets.org.

Worth noting

- Test registration deadlines are printed in all registration booklets. Register for each test well before the deadline. If you miss the deadline, there may be late registration or walk-in possibilities. Talk with your guidance counselor or contact the test programs for details. It's possible to register online for all tests.
- Scores will automatically be sent to the colleges to which you are applying if you designate their names on the test registration forms. If you do not fill in those names, you will be responsible for getting the scores to the school(s) at a later date and you will have to pay an extra fee to do so.

“The best way to prepare for the SAT is to take challenging academic courses and work hard in school.” – The College Board

- To prep or not to prep? That is the question and it's a big one. There is serious debate as to whether prepping for these tests helps to raise scores, though common sense dictates that establishing familiarity with a test is likely to be helpful. The best way to prepare for the PSAT and SAT is to take challenging academic courses, to read as many good books as possible, and to get into the habit of reading directions carefully throughout your school years. However, the College Board also recommends spending time going over sample questions and taking sample tests prior to your test date. Many schools offer classes in test preparation, and private courses and tutoring are usually available. A number of prep books and computer software programs can also be quite helpful. But ultimately, the decision to prep is up to you.

Personal profile

The third component, the personal profile, measures what the candidate does outside the classroom. This profile includes jobs, athletics, community service, religious activities, art, student government, and more. Unlike test scores and academic achievement, which are relatively easy to measure, the personal profile is far more difficult to evaluate. The application and letters of recommendation are two ways in which colleges gather information in this area. Some colleges use a personal interview with a student, which is another way for the college to evaluate a student's personal profile.

The relative weight given to each of these elements in the college's decision-making varies greatly. Large public universities are less likely to use the personal profile and are more apt to use test scores, formulas, and GPA or class rank cut-offs than are smaller, private colleges. In most cases, weaknesses in one area can be offset by strengths in another. Remember, the more selective a college, the more that college expects high academic achievement, test scores, and a favorable personal profile.

Keep in mind that colleges have other priorities that affect student admission, such as ethnic or cultural mix, geographical mix, talent mix, need for athletes, and general diversity of student body.

Application choices

As you begin the college application process, you'll hear about different application plans. There are many factors to consider when developing your application strategy. For instance, while many schools have higher admission rates for early applicants, those admitted tend to be the strongest candidates, so you might want to apply later when you can include academic records from your senior year. Remember that whether or not you submit applications early, you should start the process as soon as possible to avoid missing important deadlines for admission and financial aid. Missing a deadline by even one day can sometimes keep you from being considered for both admission *and* financial aid.

Advantages and disadvantages of different application choices

Application type	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Regular action: Students apply by the college's deadline (usually in December or January) and receive a decision by April 15 at the latest.</p> <p>Rolling admission: Students may apply at any time and are generally notified of the college's decision within four to six weeks, but not any earlier than September 15 of their senior year.</p>	<p>Deadlines and notification are later in the senior year, giving students ample time to decide where to apply and to review different financial aid packages before deciding on a college.</p> <p>Students can apply anytime throughout the year.</p>	<p>Students have to wait longer to receive the college's decision. Also, strong candidates may be at a disadvantage, as some of the very selective colleges have higher admission rates for those who apply early.</p> <p>Admission standards get more competitive as spaces fill up, so students are encouraged to apply earlier rather than later.</p>
<p>Early action (EA): Students apply by the college's earlier deadline (usually in October or November) and receive a decision in advance of regular applicants, usually by the end of January.</p>	<p>Students may submit multiple EA applications. Generally, these plans are not binding and students who are admitted may compare financial aid packages before choosing a college.</p>	<p>Students applying early do not have the opportunity to include senior year work on their applications. Because some colleges are more selective with their EA pool, this could put some students at a disadvantage.</p>
<p>Single-choice early action (SCEA)*: Same as EA except that students may not apply to any other early admission college. Please note that this application type is not available at most colleges.</p>	<p>These plans are not binding and students who are admitted may compare financial aid packages before choosing a school.</p>	<p>Students may only apply to one SCEA college, but they may submit other applications for regular action programs.</p>
<p>Early decision I (EDI)*: Students apply by a November deadline and are notified early (usually in December or early January); those who are admitted must enroll at the college and withdraw any other applications.</p>	<p>Many schools have higher admission rates for early applicants. EDI may be a good option for strong students who have identified a school as their first choice.</p>	<p>Students who are admitted EDI do not have the opportunity to compare financial aid offers. Thus, if financial aid is a concern, students may miss out on a package that would better meet their needs.</p>
<p>Early decision II (EDII)*: Same as EDI except students apply in January. Decisions are usually received by early March.</p>	<p>Students can include academic records from fall semester of their senior year.</p>	<p>Same as EDI.</p>

*This is a restrictive application type. You may not submit SCEA, EDI, or EDII applications to more than one college. If the schools find out, you will not be admitted to any of them.

Today, more and more colleges require online applications. Colleges have their own Web sites that offer the option of applying online or downloading and printing the application. And organizations like the College Board offer online application services for free. Check out their Web site at www.collegeboard.com for more information.

The application is a crucial document in the admission process. It demonstrates the quality of your writing and thinking, and tells the college how you've spent your time. Your application should be well-written and thoughtful. Regardless of how good your grades are, a poorly written, careless application can hurt your chances of acceptance. Unfortunately, there is no sure-fire formula that will guarantee a good application. But you may want to keep the following tips in mind:

- Read through all the materials before filling in any information on the application. If you are not filling out your application online, make extra copies for practice.
- Follow directions carefully.
- Be aware of deadlines and allow yourself plenty of time to develop a strong application. Be sure to request transcripts and recommendations so they arrive on time.
- Revise and rewrite it, leave it "on the shelf" for a few days, and then review it. Have a teacher, friend, or parent review it, too.
- Type the application or neatly print in black or blue ink.
- Make sure the final application is neat and clean. Double check that all applicant sections have been completed. If you are submitting an application online, view the document in print preview to check that your essays fit in the designated spaces. Keep copies of every application you send.

Check to see if the schools you're interested in accept the "Common Application," a single application accepted by a growing number of schools. You can pick up a copy at your high school guidance office, have the college's admissions office send you an application, or download a copy from www.commonapp.org.

The college essay

Of all the pieces that make up your college application, the essay can be the most challenging. Since it is a chance to show who you truly are, extra effort is worth it. A well-written, interesting essay can tip the scale in your favor in the admissions process. Remember—while it's probably too late to change grades or test scores, you can always write a better essay if you plan ahead and work at it.

When considering what to write about, think of your college essay as an opportunity to showcase yourself. It is your chance to offer opinions and feelings, and to demonstrate a sense of style that may not be found elsewhere in your application. Expressing creativity is fundamental to a successful essay. Clarity in your self-expression is paramount in revealing what is unique about yourself. Write about you, not what you think the admissions committee wants to hear.

Simply put, the typical admissions committee reader is looking at your finished product on three levels:

1. **Command.** Do you demonstrate a command of the English language? Your spelling, grammar, and syntax must all be perfect. Be sure to have others edit your work.
2. **Content.** Do you logically express an idea or argument? Are you able to say something of substance in the given number of words? (Long, drawn-out essays are often penalized.) When finished with each draft, read it aloud. Does the first sentence grab your attention? Does the conclusion leave you with a clear solution or response to the subject? Does this essay reflect who you are?

- 3. Creativity.** Creative essays must reflect your individuality. You might express yourself in the form of a story, a brief dialogue, or even with humor. Just be sure to answer what is being asked of you in each application's essay question. For example, writing poetry may certainly be appropriate for an open-ended question, but may prove awkward if the question is specific.

Letters of recommendation

You will be asked to submit letters of recommendation with your application. Ideally, you'll want recommendations from two academic teachers from your junior year, your counselor, and one other person such as a coach or a religious leader. When choosing whom to ask to write your recommendation, consider teachers who know you and who will take the time to write a meaningful assessment of your performance. Additional recommendations should come from others who also know you well and can provide insight into your leadership skills, character, and abilities. Recommendation letters need to tell something about you that the school is not going to find in your application. Make sure you find out if special forms are required. You should include stamped, addressed envelopes with the recommendation forms so they can be mailed directly to the college. You are the one responsible for making sure the letters of recommendation are written and mailed on time.

The college visit

Most students begin visiting colleges in the spring of their junior year to assess size, location, and general interest, and make their final visits in the summer and fall. However, campus visits can really take place any time during your high school years. Keep in mind that if you visit colleges in the summer, the atmosphere might be very different from the school year when most students are there.

- If the school doesn't offer guided tours, ask if you can simply walk around campus, and find out if there is a fall Open House program or other upcoming on-campus events you can attend.

- Unless you're positive about the kind of school you want to attend, check out several different types—three or so should give you some basis for comparison. It's a good idea to visit a large university (more than 10,000 students), a medium-sized college or university (2,000 to 10,000 students), and a small college (under 2,000 students) to compare. You may also want to look at schools in different locations—cities and small towns, close to home and far away.
- For schools that require them, on-campus interviews can be scheduled for the same day you're visiting. If a group interview or information session is offered, these also can be done the same day as the visit.

Planning your visits

- Talk with your family about how best to schedule the visits and handle transportation. Would a family member like to accompany you to the school? If not, how will you get there? Is a friend's family planning a drive to one of the schools? Is the school accessible by public transportation?
- Call the admissions office or check college Web sites to find out when they offer tours.
- If you're setting up an on-campus interview, it's wise to call as far ahead as possible—as many as four weeks in advance for some schools, maybe more in the popular fall months.
- Be sure to ask for directions to campus, places to stay if you'll be there overnight, and how long you might anticipate being on campus (for most schools, plan on at least two hours).
- If your visit happens around a meal time, ask about meal options on campus (to try the cafeteria food).
- If your visit is over a weekend, you're coming from a distance, or you've identified a school as a top choice, ask if you can stay on campus with a current student acting as your host. Some schools offer formal overnight visits, where students stay on campus, eat in the dining hall, and sit in on classes. At other schools, it's done informally on a case-by-case basis.

- Ask the admissions office if you can sit in on a class in your potential major during your visit. If that's not feasible, see if you can speak with a faculty member or with a current student from your potential major while you're on campus.
- If you're interested in specific activities such as sports or organizations, make appointments to speak with coaches, advisers, or leaders.
- If you don't already have information about the school, call, write, or go online to request an information packet now. Before you go, read it through to familiarize yourself with what the school is saying about itself. Develop a list of questions the information didn't address and bring it with you to the visit.
- Create a "Visit Notebook" or folder to bring with you. In it you can note questions you'd like to ask and your impressions of the school. This record-keeping becomes increasingly important if you visit several schools; they can all start to look alike. If you have a camera, you might find that taking photos of the campus is helpful in jogging your memory later and when you're writing essays on why you're interested in a particular college.
- Ask your high school guidance counselor or the college admissions office if they can refer you to graduates of your high school who are currently enrolled at the college you're planning to visit. It could be helpful to talk with them about their experiences—either before or during your visit.

During the visit

- Write the name of your tour guides in your Visit Notebook. (Most tours are conducted by current students.) Ask if they'd mind if you call or write to them after the tour with additional questions. While they are walking around with you, ask questions about their college experience. What are their majors? How did they choose this college? What do they like best about the school? What is the campus like on weekends? These are questions you might feel awkward asking an admissions representative, but would feel comfortable asking a person closer to your own age.
- If it's convenient, write down answers to important questions in your Visit Notebook. Jot down your impressions of the campus, the dormitories, the classrooms, the people, the library, and the dining hall as soon after the tour as possible.
- As you're touring the school, look at bulletin boards and posters hung up around campus. They can tell you a lot about regular activities, student interests, and special events.
- If the tour doesn't include the library, make sure you visit it on your own. Is it a comfortable place to study? Is it empty or full of students? Does it have current and up-to-date publications? Does it offer an inter-library loan program? Can you access the Internet there? Ask the library staff a little bit about the library—what's new or noteworthy?
- Ask for campus safety information from the admissions office. Schools are required by law to provide statistics of crime on campus to prospective students. If anything concerns you, ask the admissions staff for clarification.

After the visit

- If you have your tour guide's name, and feel comfortable doing so, follow up with him or her. Write a thank you note (c/o the admissions office). If you spoke with other students, a coach, or a faculty member, and feel comfortable doing so, write a follow-up note thanking them for their time.
- Expand on the preliminary thoughts you jotted down in your Visit Notebook. Follow up on any new or unanswered questions with the admissions office. Ask anyone who accompanied you on the tour what their impressions were and how they felt about the school, and note that in your notebook, too.
- If you feel you'd like to apply to a school, ask the admissions office for an application packet (if you don't already have one).

The interview

An integral but often misunderstood part of a college visit is the interview. Schools may use either a group meeting or a personal interview. Many colleges offer both, but appointments for personal interviews may require several weeks' notice. If you can't arrange an on-campus interview, ask if and when a representative from the college will be visiting your high school or area. Many colleges will arrange for you to be interviewed near your home by a local alumnus. If all else fails, interviews may also be conducted over the phone.

A group meeting usually requires little advance notice. This may be set up by the admissions office of the college, a high school guidance counselor, or by you. These are information sessions at which admissions staff members provide you and your parents with a short descriptive talk on the college and an opportunity to ask questions.

In addition to providing information, the personal interview involves an evaluation of the student. The importance of the evaluation will vary from college to college. The personal interview may have a bigger impact at schools that have more selective admissions policies. It may also be used to determine scholarships. Some colleges design interviews to be information-gathering sessions for prospective freshmen.

Most admissions officers do not want parents to sit in on the personal interview. Discuss this ahead of time with your parents; perhaps they can use the interview time to meet with the financial aid office or tour the campus.

Before a college interview

- Find out as much as you can about the college. Read any and all materials you've received; watch the video if you have it; visit the college's Web site. Check your local library or guidance office for guidebooks or computer programs that can tell you more. Talk about the school with your guidance counselor, friends, recent graduates, and parents, and get their opinions.
- Review your high school transcript and think about your extracurricular and summer activities so you can talk about them in depth. Be prepared to discuss your grades and academic record—what you're proud of and what you're not so proud of—if the admissions representative asks you about them.
- Practice answering questions you think an admissions interviewer might ask. Likely questions include the following : Why do you want to go here? What first brought our school to your attention? What do you want to do with your degree and your life? Ask a friend, parent, or another adult to conduct a mock interview, asking questions like these so you can hear how your answers sound. Have them give you the question you'd least want to answer or the question that scares you the most—for example, if there is a grade you're not proud of—and practice what you'd say.
- Think of several questions you would like answered. Every interviewer gives you a chance to ask questions, usually at the end of the interview. Make a list so you don't forget them (and so you look prepared). Avoid basic questions that could be answered in the catalog or guidebook, but be sure to ask about your individual concerns and interests. It can also be helpful to ask for more specifics on the major you're interested in, upcoming events on campus, or scholarship possibilities at the school. If the interview is being held on campus, it might be helpful for you to take your tour beforehand—you'll have time to get an impression of the school, and you may feel more knowledgeable asking specific questions of the admissions representative.
- On the day of the interview, try to be as relaxed and rested as possible. Students typically "dress up" for college interviews. While it's not necessary to purchase a new suit or dress, it is important to look neat and presentable. (Don't wear jeans, for example.) Wear comfortable shoes if you'll be taking a tour of campus. Be sure to be prompt for

the interview, and not more than 10 to 15 minutes early. If you are running late and know you will not be on time, call the admissions office to let them know.

During the interview

- Walk in prepared to have an enjoyable conversation. Admissions representatives are generally pleasant people who are interested in learning more about you. You'll enjoy the interview more and find it easier to present yourself in a favorable way if you walk in with a positive attitude. Remember that the admissions interview is a time when you need to talk; if you're normally a shy or quiet person, make an effort to talk more freely than you normally would.
- In most interviews, you'll be asked about your academic record, your extracurricular activities, and your summer activities. The interviewer will want to go beyond the facts on your application or high school record, so be prepared to discuss what you've done. Don't assume that the interviewer has seen or is familiar with your application or transcript; you may need to remember specific courses you've taken and grades you've received.
- Try to have a thoughtful conversation. An interview should feel more like a discussion than a quiz. Be yourself. Ask questions. If there is something particularly important or unusual about your record, such as a noticeable improvement or decline in your grades, or a particularly interesting course or activity, make sure to bring it up so you'll have a chance to explain it in your own words.
- Sell yourself. This may be the only chance to tell a college what makes you special and what you can contribute to the school.
- If the admissions representative offers you a business card, take it, or be sure to ask for and write down his or her full name and title in your Notebook.

After the interview

- Write a short thank you note or send an e-mail to your admissions interviewer. Beyond the common courtesy, it will reinforce the fact that you are interested in the school, and may help you stand out among applicants.
- If you've thought of additional questions since the interview, make a list of them and call or e-mail the interviewer or admissions office for additional information. At some schools, you might also be able to e-mail your questions to the admissions interviewer. Remember, the admissions staff is there to be a resource for you.

Common questions asked at college interviews

Why are you interested in this college?

What are you interested in studying at this college?

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

What do you do in your spare time?

What kinds of work experiences have you had?

Who is your favorite author? Why?

What do you imagine doing 10 years from now?

What extracurricular activities have you participated in?

In what ways have you served your community?

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be?

Sample questions you could ask during the interview

Can you tell me what campus issues are most important to students?

What is the strongest academic program at the college?

What is the most popular department on campus? The most popular course?

What is the most difficult course, according to students?

How is the college trying to improve itself?

How many introductory courses are taught by faculty members and how many are taught by graduate assistants?

What are the student graduation rates? (The Student Right-to-Know Act requires colleges to monitor and calculate completion and transfer-out rates and to make this information available to current and prospective students.)

How has this college changed in the last five years?

- Grade 9 – freshman year
- Grade 10 – sophomore year
- Grade 11 – junior year
- Grade 12 – senior year

College admissions

TIMETABLE



OME PEOPLE BEGIN PLANNING FOR COLLEGE THE MOMENT they enter high school freshman year. Others don't start actively planning until well into their junior year. This timetable is meant to be adapted to your needs and what's possible for you.

Grade 9 **freshman year**

There isn't much you need to do freshman year to plan for college, except take the most challenging courses you can, and do the best you can in school. With the help of your school's guidance office, you might create a tentative four-year high school plan. If you plan to attend college, your course plan should include the following:

- Math:** Taking the appropriate math courses throughout your high school years will keep your career options open. The minimum requirements for most colleges usually include three years of math, including Algebra I and II and Geometry. If you are able, take Advanced Algebra, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, or Calculus. Keep in mind that if you plan to major in sciences or engineering in college, you must take senior year math in high school.
- English/Language Arts:** Colleges require four years of English, including both composition and literature. (Fortunately, this is also a requirement for high school graduation.) If you enjoy language arts and have the opportunity to take electives, you might want to take advantage of any honors courses. Make sure they fulfill the college prep criteria.
- Science:** Most colleges require at least three years of high school science. Courses with lab experience, like Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, are typically required. Course work in other sciences, such as Anatomy and Physiology or Biochemistry, will provide you with additional options.

- **Social Sciences:** Colleges expect a minimum of three years of study in Social Sciences or History. (As with English/Language Arts, these three years will also satisfy the minimum high school graduation requirement.) If you have the interest and available options at your school, however, you should consider taking more.

- **Foreign Language:** Most colleges look for a minimum of two years of study in a single foreign language and prefer more. Students who cannot meet this requirement for reasons such as a serious learning disability may be offered alternative programs and opportunities. It is more advantageous to focus on a single language and not to jump from one to another each year. As with math, insufficient foreign language preparation can limit your college choices. Advanced work will allow you to consider colleges requiring more than the two-year minimum in foreign language study.

Grade 10 **sophomore year**

fall

- ❑ **Take a careful look at your extracurricular activities.** Is your list of activities well rounded, or does it mostly focus on one specific area? Do you need to consider adding some different activities to your roster?
- ❑ **Review your course of study with your guidance office,** and fine tune it if necessary. Are you on track with college preparatory classes, and are you taking the most challenging level of classes for your capabilities?
- ❑ **Begin to become acquainted with the college resources available in your guidance office.** Is there a college video library for students to use? A collection of college books you can look at? Is there a computer you can use? Are there practice tests for the PSAT and PLAN? Is there a schedule posted of when college representatives will be visiting your school?

spring

- ❑ **Ask a counselor to help you decide which, if any, SAT II Subject Tests you should sign up for.** Be sure to register for any tests you decide to take.
- ❑ **Register for any SAT II: Subject Tests or AP (Advanced Placement) tests in subjects you'll complete this year,** for example, Biology or Chemistry. It's generally best to take these tests when you've just completed a course on the test subject.
- ❑ **Talk with athletic coaches about NCAA requirements, recruiting guidelines, and regulations.** Order the NCAA Clearinghouse Manual through your athletic department, or by calling 800-638-3731.

Grade 11 **junior year**

fall

- Obtain a Social Security number for use on college applications**, if you don't already have one. Your parents can help you with this. (You can look in the phone book's business section for the Social Security Administration office nearest you.)

- Register for the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) through your guidance office.** Typically, registration is in October. Take the practice test found inside the free PSAT bulletin available in your guidance office. The junior year PSAT serves as the only qualifying test for students who might be National Merit scholars, finalists, semi-finalists, or commended students.

- Review the courses and extracurricular activities you're taking this year.** Is the course work challenging enough? Is it possible to move up a level to an honors or AP class? (Colleges typically weigh these classes more heavily in your academic average.) What about extracurricular activities—are your activities well rounded? If you still haven't become involved with any group, try at least one activity this year.

spring

- Review your PSAT scores as well as the section that details your incorrect responses and the correct answers.**
- Begin reviewing for the SAT or ACT.**
- Register for the spring SAT, SAT II, and ACT as necessary.**
- Determine which colleges you're most interested in visiting.** If the campus is far from home, check with your guidance office to see if it has that school's video, or call the school and request a video. Many schools have videos available on their Internet home pages. Reviewing these videos can give you a preliminary idea of what the school looks like. If you're still interested and willing to make the trip, you've done some legwork beforehand that didn't cost you anything.
- Begin working on a resume to present to the teachers whom you ask for recommendations.** Think about choosing a teacher who has written detailed (positive!) comments on your work. It's a good idea to schedule time to talk with this teacher; he will have a lot more to write about if he knows more about you. You don't want a vague recommendation. Give your teacher a page that includes your name, address, grade point average to date, any honors you've received, extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports you participate in. List information on a job you currently have, and anything else you can think of. Share literature from the college's admissions office with your teacher, so he can gear comments toward what the school says it's looking for. Use the "personal data portfolio" to help you compile your resume.
- Find out if schools you're interested in accept the Common Application.** Information about the Common Application should be available in your guidance office or online.

-  **Use the Internet as you gather information about colleges.** Most schools have Web sites for prospective students' use. You can request material about a college online; e-mail questions to the school, which will be answered by current students, the admissions office, and faculty members; find financial aid information; and search for scholarships and loans.
-  **Begin to research scholarships.** Remember that there are scholarships based on financial need as well as merit scholarships. Look at scholarship books in your local library or guidance office. Use the Internet to explore options. Call your state's Higher Education Agency for help—your guidance counselor should have this phone number. Find out if either of your parents' employers offers scholarships to college-bound students. If you've had a part-time job during high school, ask if that employer has scholarships. If you've ever delivered newspapers, bagged groceries, volunteered at a local organization, or if you attend a church, synagogue, or other establishment, see if it offers college scholarships. Most scholarships are locally based. All students should also submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
-  **By the end of junior year, you should be contacting schools to request brochures, college view books, and information about campus tours and Open House programs.** Generally, application forms for the upcoming year are not available until the end of the summer. You may be able to get information from schools using the Internet.
-  **Make appointments to visit campuses by calling the school's admissions office.** Be sure to ask if the school requires an interview; you could accomplish that interview on your visit.

Grade 12 **senior year**

summer

- ❑ You should begin to narrow your list to colleges of greatest interest. Most students apply to between seven and ten schools.
- ❑ Keep a planning calendar close by with all of your deadlines, test dates, appointments for campus visits and interviews, admission deadlines, financial aid deadlines, and so forth.

fall

- ❑ Write down the final list of colleges to which you are applying.
- ❑ Research application choices for each school.
- ❑ If your first SAT I/ACT scores were low, take the November/December tests and forward scores to the colleges to which you are applying.
- ❑ Most early action and early decision applications are due November 1-15. Make sure all application materials are forwarded to the college well in advance of the deadline date if early decision is your choice.
- ❑ Ask teachers and counselors if they're willing to write letters of recommendation for your college applications. Indicate which schools you're thinking about, tell them what your summer plans are, and let them know when you expect to be able to give them the recommendation form. (Remember to write a brief note of thanks when the recommendation letters are done.)
- ❑ Concentrate on keeping up your grades as you close in on the home stretch of the application process. Remember, many colleges will see your first semester grades and will be impressed if you've taken challenging courses.

- ❑ Register for the ACT, SAT I, and SAT II, as necessary. (For instance, the SAT I is usually offered five times throughout the year.)
- ❑ Wrap up campus visits, and, if you want to, schedule a time to spend an overnight at the college(s) you're most interested in.
- ❑ Investigate the fall visiting schedule of college representatives, which your guidance office will have. Schedule appointments with reps from any schools that particularly interest you. These appointments can serve as an ideal time to work on your interviewing skills.
- ❑ Continue to work on essay drafts and have someone edit and proofread your efforts.
- ❑ Meet with your counselor to review your final list of schools. Review how your guidance office will be involved in the processing of college applications. Determine how your college applications will be sent.
- ❑ If you're an athlete and wish to compete in Division I or II college athletics as a freshman, you must register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Your high school counselor should provide you with a student release form and a brochure entitled "Making Sure You Are Eligible to Participate in College Sports." Although you may register at any time before senior year, it's ideal to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse after your junior year grades appear on your transcript.

More than 50 percent of all college students do not graduate from the college where they started!

Senior year monthly strategy

This month-to-month checklist will help you stay on track and pay careful attention to deadlines. Being late, even by one day, can mean the difference between an acceptance or rejection of your admissions or financial aid application.

goals for October

- Review for any standardized tests you'll be taking.
- Pick up the College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE form from your guidance office or apply online.
- Familiarize yourself with the exact process by which transcripts and applications are submitted.
- Have your counselor, English teacher, or parent check your college application essays.
- Submit early action and single-choice early action applications after carefully checking them and making duplicate copies of the final applications for your files.
- Take the appropriate October tests you've already registered for.
- Other tasks: _____

goals for November

- Be sure you've filled out the necessary forms ensuring that ACT, SAT I, and SAT II: Subject Test scores will be sent to your colleges of choice.
- Double check that the people who agreed to write your recommendations have the appropriate forms, stamped envelopes, and reminders about the due dates.
- Confirm that your transcript has been sent to your colleges of choice.
- Complete all remaining applications, making copies of everything.
- Inquire about any overnight programs being offered at the colleges you're interested in.
- Write and mail thank you notes to everyone who wrote a letter of recommendation.
- Other tasks: _____

goals for January

- Complete applications for those colleges with later deadlines or rolling admissions.
- Prepare all the required financial aid forms.
- Check with the colleges' admissions offices to verify they have received all required materials from you and your high school.
- Other tasks: _____

goals for February

- Confirm that your mid-year report goes to every college to which you've applied.
- Send in all of your financial aid forms, after making copies for your personal files.
- Write to let colleges know of any new honors or accomplishments you've achieved.
- Other tasks: _____

goals for March

- Register for any Advanced Placement test(s) you want to take later this spring.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report from the federal government. Respond immediately if any changes or corrections are necessary.
- Call the Financial Aid office at colleges where you have applied to determine if they require any additional information.
- If applying to colleges with rolling admissions, complete those applications by the end of the month to ensure eligibility for any financial aid programs.
- Check with your guidance counselor and other local resources for grant or local scholarship opportunities.
- Other tasks: _____

goals for April

- Review the acceptances and financial aid offers you receive with family and your guidance counselor.
- Be sure you understand the financial aid offer. Call the school to discuss any changes you wish to see in your offer. Call or write to the school(s) if you want to reject their offer at this time.
- Go back to visit your top-choice schools, then make your final decision.
- Be sure the school you've chosen receives your deposit by its deadline.
- Other tasks: _____

● Grade 11 – junior year

● Grade 12 – senior year

College

FINANCING

timetable (for parents)



FINANCIAL AID FILLS THE GAP BETWEEN THE COST OF COLLEGE attendance—tuition fees, books and supplies, room and board, and personal expenses—and what your family can afford to pay. Keeping track of financial aid forms and deadlines can be tricky. Use this checklist to help make sure you meet all the deadlines.

Grade 11 **junior year**

fall

- Get copies of the financial aid forms**—the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE are most common—from your teenager’s school counselor, the college financial aid office, banks, or libraries, or contact the higher education agency in your state. You can also visit www.fafsa.ed.gov. Check with your son or daughter’s guidance counselor to see if any state or federal regulations have changed.
- Attend a financial aid information night** at your teenager’s high school or at a nearby college to learn about the process. Practice filling out the FAFSA to see if you understand the questions and have all of the information required.

spring

- Pick up information on financial aid policies at local colleges.** If there are none nearby, write, e-mail, or call a college for copies. Most colleges will have brochures describing how financial aid is awarded. Use this to plan for your needs.

Grade 12 senior year

fall

- Pick up copies of the financial aid forms if you haven't already.** Be sure you have the correct forms for the right colleges. Many colleges have a form of their own instead of, or in addition to, the FAFSA or PROFILE forms. Forms are usually available in November.
- If you need to search for additional funds to pay for college, check with your teenager's guidance counselor** about local or national scholarships. Check with the financial aid officer of the colleges to which your son or daughter is applying, too.
- File the FAFSA and PROFILE forms as soon after January 1 as possible.** Always try to file by February 15. The sooner you file, the better your chance of being considered for limited funds.
- You do not need to have completed current income tax forms.** Estimates of last year's earnings will do, although as soon as you file completed copies of your taxes, it may be necessary to mail a copy to the colleges handling your financial aid processing.
- It is most important that you follow the instructions on the forms exactly.** Errors, omissions, or failing to follow directions will create costly delays for you. Don't forget to include a check for the proper amount to cover any processing fees. And make copies of everything submitted!

Don't forget

1. File for financial aid at each college where your teenager applies.
2. You must file a separate financial aid form for each child you have in college.
3. You should discuss any special circumstances with a college financial aid officer.
4. You must re-apply for financial aid yearly.

spring

- When your financial aid form has been processed at the central processing center you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) and acknowledgment page.** Make sure the information is correct and was sent to the colleges to which your teenager is applying. If there are any errors, make the corrections on that page and return it immediately.
- The SAR will tell you about your eligibility for financial aid and your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).** Save the SAR. You may need it.
- Call the school to discuss any changes you'd like to see in your financial aid offer.**
- Make sure you complete any other applications or forms requested by a particular college or program.**
- Expect most selective colleges to notify your teenager in early April of their admissions decision.** Some will advise you of their financial aid offer at the same time. Some schools use rolling admission and may notify you sooner or later than April 15.

The program that sent you this booklet also offers these helpful life articles on paying for college:

- [Financial Aid Forms and Packages](#)
- [Questions to Ask the Financial Aid Office](#)
- [Applying for College Scholarships and Loans](#)
- [Selecting the Best College for the Best Price](#)

GLOSSARY

HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE TO SOME OF THE MOST COMMON abbreviations and terms you may come across when applying to college.

ACT American College Testing Program Assessment. A standardized test measuring competence in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Admissions folder A file kept at a college to which you apply, containing your completed application, high school transcript, standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, and other pertinent information (writing samples, portfolios, and so on).

Admissions Testing Program A testing program administered by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) which includes the SAT I and SAT II.

Advanced Placement (AP) test A test usually given at the end of your junior or senior year, after you have completed certain AP or Honors courses. Many colleges give advanced standing and/or credit for these College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) sponsored tests.

Advanced standing Some colleges allow students to enter college at the sophomore level, depending on the number of AP courses taken.

Associate's degree A degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of full-time study.

Award letter The document issued to you by the financial aid office indicating the types, amount, and disbursement dates of the funds awarded from the various financial aid programs, and the conditions that govern the award.

Campus-based financial aid programs Programs administered directly by the college, such as the Federal Work-Study Program.

Candidate's Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) Allows you to defer attendance decisions at participating colleges until May 1. This enables you to hear from most of the colleges you have applied to before having to select one.

CEEB An identification number given by the College Board to every high school in the U.S. This number is requested on many college application forms. Check with your guidance office to find your high school's CEEB and record it in your "personal data portfolio."

Class percentile rank Your standing in your class based on grade point average (GPA).

College Board An independent group that oversees testing and scholarship applications.

College fair A regional or local event where representatives from college admissions offices are present to hand out information and answer your questions.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) Provides an opportunity for students (typically adult students) to demonstrate and receive college credit for competency obtained through life experiences. The test consists of five general examinations, with an additional few covering specific subject matter. Some colleges grant credit to students who excel in the exam.

Common Application A generic application accepted by a growing number of colleges and universities.

Cooperative work-study education Provides full-time paid employment related to a student's field of study. You alternate between work and full-time study. In most cases, a bachelor's program usually takes about five years to complete.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) A program integrating a classroom study and work experience, offering credit and salary.

Cost of education Generally, this includes the college tuition and fees as well as the cost of room and board, books and supplies, and transportation expenses.

Deferred entrance An admissions plan that allows an accepted student to postpone entrance for one or more years.

Dependent student A student who is dependent upon his or her parents or legal guardian for financial support or who does not meet the criteria for classification as an independent student.

Early action (EA) An admission plan that allows you to apply before the normal deadline and to receive the college's decision in advance of regular applicants. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Early decision I (EDI) An admission plan that allows you to apply before the normal deadline (usually in November) and receive the college's decision within a short time. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Early decision II (EDII) Same as EDI except applications are usually due in December or early January. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Amount that you and your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) can reasonably be expected to pay for college.

Federal Work-Study Program An award of part-time employment for students who demonstrate financial need. The maximum amount you can earn under this program is determined by financial need.

Fee waiver Students who can show substantial financial need may be permitted to submit college applications and test registration forms without the typical fee. Check with your guidance counselor for details.

Financial aid package The combination of financial aid that a college awards to a student generally from federal and state grants, scholarships, student loans, and/or work-study jobs.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) The U.S. Department of Education form required to apply for all federal financial aid, and many state, private, and institutional funds as well. Forms are available at high school guidance offices, local libraries, and college admissions and financial aid offices.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Your accumulated academic average based on grades and credits, usually figured on an A = 4.0 scale.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) An athletic governing body to which approximately 500 small four-year colleges and universities belong. The NAIA governs athletic recruitment and scholarship awarding policies.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) An athletic governing body to which 800 colleges and universities belong. Each school chooses a general division 1, 2, or 3 and is required to follow the policies regarding recruitment and scholarship awards that have been established for that division.

National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT) Scores from the PSAT given in October are used to determine if a student qualifies for a National Merit Scholarship.

NCAA Clearinghouse If you are planning to enroll in college as a freshman and participate in Division I or II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse ensures consistent application of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements for all prospective student athletes at all member institutions.

Needs analysis The process used to evaluate your financial situation to determine how much financial aid you need to help meet educational expenses.

Open admissions Anyone can send in an application; there are no minimum admissions requirements (such as test scores, class rank, or GPA).

PLAN (formerly PACT) Preliminary American College Program Assessment Test. An assessment program designed for sophomores, which includes tests in writing skills, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning, and also contains an interest inventory and study skills assessment.

PROFILE form or CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE form A supplemental application form from the College Scholarship Service (CSS)—the financial aid division of the College Board—used by some state and private colleges. Always check with the college financial aid office to request required forms.

Parents' contribution The part of the Expected Family Contribution that parents are expected to provide according to the needs analysis.

Preliminary SAT (PSAT) This is an abbreviated form of the SAT I and is designed to give sophomores or juniors an opportunity to practice taking a test that is similar to but shorter (1 hour) than the SAT I. It is given in October of the sophomore or junior year.

Recommendations Letters supporting you written by teachers or counselors and submitted to colleges. Try to choose people who know you very well and who will submit a positive, well-written letter.

Registrar College official who registers students and collects fees. The registrar may also be responsible for keeping permanent records, maintaining student files, and forwarding copies of student transcripts to employers and schools.

Regular action or **regular decision** Most colleges have an early winter application. Students must have applications completed by the college deadline (typically due before February 1). The college will notify applicants by April 15. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Rolling admission An admissions plan that accepts and acts upon applications throughout the year. Decisions are usually made as soon as your admissions folder is complete. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Combines military education with college study leading to a bachelor's degree. Students who commit themselves to future service in the Army, Navy, or Air Force usually are eligible for financial assistance opportunities.

Scholarship A form of financial assistance that does not require repayment and is usually made to a student who shows potential for distinction in academic or athletic performance.

SAT I This three-hour and twenty-minute standardized test measures a student's mathematical, critical reading, and writing abilities.

SAT II: Subject Test One-hour tests offered in subjects such as English, foreign languages, science, history, and mathematics. These tests measure a student's knowledge of particular subject areas.

Single-choice early action (SCEA) Same as **early action** except that students may not apply to any other early admission plan. See chart on page 17 for more information.

Student Aid Report (SAR) The U.S. Department of Education report on your Expected Family Contribution to college costs. The SAR is issued in response to your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), after a standard federal formula determines how much a student and family can contribute to a year of education costs.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Helps foreign students demonstrate their ability to understand the English language. Many colleges require foreign students to take this test as a routine part of the application process.

Wait list A reserve list used by colleges when students meet the requirements for admission but there is not enough room in a class. A college selects students from this list if room becomes available.

RESOURCES

Books

The following books are available at most local and online bookstores.

Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges

Peterson's
2000 Lenox Drive, 3rd Floor
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
609-896-1800
www.petersons.com/bookstore

Peterson's Guide to Two-Year Colleges

Peterson's
2000 Lenox Drive, 3rd Floor
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
609-896-1800
www.petersons.com/bookstore

America's Best Colleges

U.S. News & World Report
C/O Sisk Fulfillment Services
P.O. Box 470
Federalsburg, MD 21632
800-836-6397
www.usnews.com/usnews/store

The College Handbook

The College Board
45 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10023-6992
At most bookstores

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges

St. Martin's Press
At most bookstores

The Fiske Guide to Colleges

Edward Fiske
www.fiskeguide.com
At most bookstores

Web sites

Peterson's Education & Career Center
www.petersons.com

The College Board
www.collegeboard.com

FAFSA on the Web
www.fafsa.ed.gov

The Student Guide
www.studentaid.ed.gov/guide

There is a lot to think about when applying to college. But the college selection process can be an exciting time! Remember, the earlier you begin planning, the better prepared you'll be. And turn to your parents, teachers, counselors, and friends for support.



Military OneSource
1-800-342-9647
www.militaryonesource.com