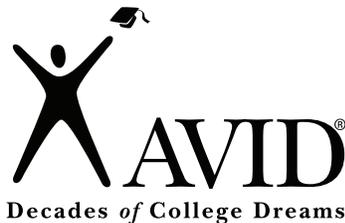


PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

TEACHER GUIDE

Grades 11 and 12

Developed by
Nancy Caine
Sharon Neumann



Acknowledgements

We want to acknowledge and thank the various district and regional directors, regional coordinators, and AVID teachers who provided us with valuable resources and activities. We give special thanks to California Regions 3 and 4 for their contributions, to the Advisory Committee, and to Stacie Valdez and Beverly Finch, whose feedback and support were so vital to the development of this guide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	.vii
Unit 1: Junior Year, First Semester .....	.1
Overview .....	.1
Timeline .....	.1
1. Testing .....	.2
Activity 1.1: Glossary .....	.4
Activity 1.2: Test Requirement Chart .....	.9
Activity 1.3: The PLAN Test and Preliminary SAT® (PSAT/NMSQT®) .....	.10
Activity 1.4: National Standardized College Tests .....	.12
Activity 1.5: College Admission Tests: ACT and SAT® .....	.14
Activity 1.6: Student Reports .....	.17
2. Preparation .....	.22
Activity 1.7: A “Crate” Idea .....	.24
Activity 1.8: Designing the “Perfect” College .....	.27
Activity 1.9: Data Sheet for College-Bound Students .....	.30
Activity 1.10: The Art of the Résumé .....	.33
Activity 1.11: E-Mail Etiquette .....	.36
Activity 1.12: College Mentor Sites Listed by State .....	.37
3. Exploration .....	.38
Activity 1.13: Types of Educational Institutions .....	.39
Activity 1.14: Web Sites for the AVID Elective .....	.41
Activity 1.15: Questions to Ask the College Representative or Admission Officer .....	.44
Activity 1.16: Exploring College Majors (Sample) .....	.46
4. “Fit” and Finances .....	.48
Activity 1.17: Financial Aid Facts .....	.49
Activity 1.18: Important Dates .....	.50
Activity 1.19: Self-Perceptions Worksheet .....	.51
Activity 1.20: Developing a “College-Going” Culture Among High School Students .....	.53
Unit 2: Junior Year, Second Semester .....	.55
Overview .....	.55
Timeline .....	.55
1. Testing .....	.57
Activity 2.1: Testing Tips .....	.58
Activity 2.2: Sample SAT® and ACT Comparison Chart .....	.59
2. Preparation .....	.61

Activity 2.3: Calculating a Grade Point Average .....	.63
Activity 2.4: Common Application 2005–2006 .....	.66
Activity 2.5: Me, Personally .....	.70
Activity 2.6: College Admission Essay Topics .....	.75
Activity 2.7: College Admission Essay Tips .....	.77
Activity 2.8: Top 10 Tips for Writing the College Essay .....	.78
Activity 2.9: The Letter of Recommendation .....	.80
Activity 2.10: Glossary of Terms: Admission Decision Options .....	.87
3. Exploration .....	.89
Activity 2.11: The College Admission Game .....	.91
Activity 2.12: Choosing a College Campus .....	.94
Activity 2.13: College Comparison Worksheet .....	.96
Activity 2.14: Helpful Hints for a Campus Visit .....	.97
Activity 2.15: College/University Visit Questionnaire .....	.98
Activity 2.16: What Do You Look for in a College? .....	.100
Activity 2.17: Summer Priorities .....	.101
4. “Fit” and Finances .....	.102
Activity 2.18: PIN Information .....	.104
Activity 2.19: Scholarship Research .....	.105
Activity 2.20: Scholarship Scams .....	.106
Activity 2.21: College Fair Overview: What Is a College Fair? Why Should I Attend? .....	.107
Activity 2.22: Military Scholarships .....	.110
Activity 2.23: Questions & Answers About Financial Aid .....	.111
Activity 2.24: Financial Aid: Some Answers to Your Questions .....	.113
Unit 3: Senior Year, First Semester .....	.115
Overview .....	.115
Timeline .....	.115
1. Testing .....	.117
Activity 3.1: Online Registration for the SAT®/ACT .....	.118
Activity 3.2: SAT® Fee Waivers .....	.119
Activity 3.3: ACT and SAT® Score Reports .....	.122
2. Preparation .....	.124
Activity 3.4: Ice Breakers—Warm-Ups .....	.126
Activity 3.5: Follow These Steps When Asking for Letters of Recommendation .....	.129
Activity 3.6: The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft .....	.132
Activity 3.7: The Role of the Essay in the College Admission Review Process .....	.133
Activity 3.8: What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay? .....	.134
Activity 3.9: Sample Letters .....	.135
Activity 3.10: Guidelines for Applying to Colleges Online .....	.136
Activity 3.11: Tips for Completing College Applications .....	.137

3. Exploration	138
Activity 3.12: Your Responsibilities	139
Activity 3.13: The Interview	140
Activity 3.14: Research Project: 25 Great Colleges...	143
4. “Fit” and Finances	151
Activity 3.15: Senior Year Important Dates	153
Activity 3.16: Financial Aid Web Sites	154
Activity 3.17: Checklist	155
Activity 3.18: Paying for College	157
Activity 3.19: Attention: Parents and Students—FAFSA Application Checklist	159
Activity 3.20: CSS/Financial Aid Profile®	161
Activity 3.21: Financial Aid Myths	162
Unit 4: Senior Year, Second Semester	165
Overview	165
Timeline	165
1. Testing	167
Activity 4.1: College Placement Tests	168
Activity 4.2: SAT® Score Reports/ACT Score Reports	169
Activity 4.3: AP® Grade Reporting Services	170
2. Preparation	172
Activity 4.4: Advice to Seniors (and Their Parents) on Picking a College	173
Activity 4.5: Points to Ponder... Issues Facing College Freshmen	174
3. Exploration	175
Activity 4.6: Making the Most of Campus Visits	176
Activity 4.7: Senior Form	177
Activity 4.8: Sample Letters	178
4. “Fit” and Finances	179
Activity 4.9: Real-Life Money Management	181
Activity 4.10: FastWeb Student Bulletin	186
Activity 4.11: FAFSA on the Web Worksheet	188
Activity 4.12: Compare Your Aid Awards	189
Activity 4.13: Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes... and Passing Them	191
Activity 4.14: Off-to-College Checklist	193

“AVID has become one of the key leverage points for Poway Unified School District [in San Diego County] as we move toward having all of our students college-ready. As a district, we are committed to providing an academic and well-rounded educational experience that supports all students obtaining the skills that will allow them to pursue a college education. AVID strategies, both within the individual classroom and schoolwide, have been key to our progress.”

—Dr. Donald A. Phillips, Superintendent, Poway Unified School District, California

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This publication is designed to be a resource guide for AVID teachers who are preparing students in grades 11 and 12 for college exploration and selection. This guide is designed to be used as a primary resource that eliminates the need to look elsewhere for college preparation information. The materials presented in this guide were the most current available at the time of publication; however, college information and resources change regularly, so teachers and counselors are advised to check the Web sites provided in these pages to ensure that materials are up-to-date.

Organization of Materials

This guide is organized into four units, one for each semester in the junior and senior years. Each unit includes an overview and a suggested timeline to help teachers plan and organize instruction. Activities and teacher information are presented in the following sequence for each semester's work:

1. Testing
2. Preparation
3. Exploration
4. "Fit" and Finances

Testing: Information that AVID juniors and seniors must know regarding tests they need to take for college admission. The timelines, activities, and references help make the testing process more manageable and understandable for AVID students.

Preparation: Activities and reference materials to prepare AVID juniors and seniors to explore college requirements and options.

Exploration: Practical activities that help AVID students explore the many options/information critical to choosing a potential college/university.

"Fit" and Finances: AVID students are often from financially disadvantaged homes and therefore finding the right college "fit" goes hand in hand with the affordability or financing of an education.

“The first and most critical goal is to raise expectations for all students and provide support for students to reach them. High schools should be encouraged and assisted to expand successful programs like Advanced Placement, AVID...In addition, we should require every high school student to complete ‘A–G’ requirements—the standard, minimum course load required for admission to our four-year universities.”

—State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Jack O’Connell
State of California Education Address

UNIT ONE: JUNIOR YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER

Overview

It is during the first semester of the junior year that students learn about the two college admission tests (ACT and SAT®) and the differences between them. One way for students to become familiar with these materials is to take both practice tests (the PLAN and the PSAT®) and use the results to prepare for ACT and SAT® testing in the spring.

Students also begin to prepare for college admission by gathering materials and organizing them into “crates” and by reviewing what they have accomplished in their first two years of high school. This will prepare them for writing a résumé, a good resource when completing college applications. This is also a time to look at college entrance requirements and to access a valuable research tool: the Internet.

AVID students may want to consider applying to both public and private schools. One way to explore the various elements of the college admission process is to visit a variety of Web sites. At College Mentor Sites and Higher Education Agency Sites (such as www.CaliforniaColleges.edu), students can find answers to their questions about entrance requirements, financial aid, career planning, and much more. College admission representatives who come to the school can provide additional information.

Financing their college education is a concern for many students. In this semester, some key concepts are introduced, but little can be done in this area until the senior year. Students can also begin self-exploration to help them determine which college(s) will be a good “fit” for them.

Timeline

1. Testing (Activities 1.1–1.6)

August–September: Review previous PLAN and PSAT® scores.

August–October: Prepare for PSAT® test. Take PSAT® test.

December: Interpretation of test results (counselor presentation).

2. Preparation (Activities 1.7–1.12)

August–September: Prepare student “crates.”

August–October: Do preparation activities.

October–January: Data sheets, résumé, verify e-mail address.

3. Exploration (Activities 1.13–1.16)

August–November: Presentations by college representatives.

October–December: College exploration on the Web.

January: AVID graduate panel.

4. “Fit” and Finances (Activities 1.17–1.20)

August–June: Explore types and varieties of financial aid.

December–June: Financial aid calendar; ongoing review.

1. Testing

Ideally, AVID students will have taken both the PSAT® and PLAN tests in their sophomore year. If they missed taking the PLAN as a sophomore, there will be another opportunity to take it in their junior year. The PSAT® should also be taken in October of the junior year so students will be eligible for the various National Merit programs. Have students review their previous scores and test booklets as preparation.

Go over the components of any required tests needed by students seeking admission to particular colleges and universities. Most state-supported institutions of higher education require college readiness testing before admission and/or placement is decided. Be sure to include an overview of any state college-readiness assessment your students may encounter before college admittance is granted. For more information, you may want to schedule a counselor presentation or access your state higher education agency at <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/>.

Focus on the upcoming PSAT® (Activity 1.3) administered in October and its importance to students in terms of scholarships (National Hispanic Recognition, National Achievement, National Merit), and make sure they have registered to take the test. Fee waivers are available from the counselor.

Distribute PSAT® practice materials in September. Work on sections of practice tests in groups, and use as warm-up activities. Review handouts on testing strategy. Make sure students know to bring pencils, calculators, and extra batteries to the test.

Since the PLAN and PSAT® are practice tests for the ACT and SAT®, this is also a good time to explain the differences between the two college admission exams (Activities 1.4/1.5).

Interpretation of Test Results

Once students have received their PSAT® scores (in December), ask the AVID or college counselor to come to the class and interpret the results (Activity 1.6). If this is not possible, review the PSAT® manual with students. Make sure each student has his/her own test booklet and score report (with official answers, as well as the student's own answers). Have students work—in groups or individually—on any questions they may have missed. Make sure they save these materials; let them know that they will be doing more college testing in the second semester.

Timeline

August–September: Review previous PLAN and PSAT® scores.

August–October: Prepare for PSAT® test. Take PSAT® test.

December: Interpretation of PSAT® test results (counselor presentation). Conduct goal-setting activities focused on required college placement/admission tests.

Activities/Materials

Activity 1.1 “Glossary”: College admission materials use a number of terms and abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to high school students, but understanding these terms and abbreviations is critical to completing the many steps leading to college admission.

Teacher Information: *You may want to review some of these definitions with your students. Have them keep this handout in the front of their notebook so they can refer to it as they encounter new terms.*

Activity 1.2 “Test Requirement Chart”: Help students understand the testing process required for college and university admissions by creating a personalized chart that tracks tests needed for high school graduation and

college admission. Students should research and discover each test required for admittance into the colleges of their choice.

Teacher Information: *Teachers will want to create a sample document that provides testing requirements for the colleges and universities in the area (especially schools attended by the majority of their high school graduates). Teachers should obtain college Web sites and individual transcripts before progressing with this activity. Have students create a chart that tracks each test required for high school graduation and college admission to each of the student’s selected schools.*

Activity 1.3 “PLAN and PSAT®”: This activity explains the features and benefits of both the PLAN and the PSAT®. Information is provided on the four sections of the PLAN test (English, reading, mathematics, and science), including content covered in each. This handout provides suggestions to help prepare students for the test(s), along with specific information about the types of questions that are found in each part. See www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org for further information about each test.

Teacher Information: *Survey the class to see who has taken the PLAN and PSAT®. If students have not taken these two tests, they should do so during their junior year. (This handout provides information about both.) Be sure that all juniors sign up for the PSAT®, which is given only once a year (middle of October).*

Activity 1.4 “National Standardized College Tests”: These pages provide basic information about the national standardized tests many students will take: ACT, SAT®, SAT® Subject, CLEP, TOEFL, AP®. The ACT and/or SAT® are required for college admission.

Teacher Information: *Review this information with students so they have an understanding of the tests they will be taking during their junior and senior years to prepare them for college.*

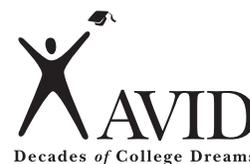
Activity 1.5 “College Admission Tests: ACT and SAT®”: This activity provides information about the two college admission tests: the ACT and the SAT®.

Teacher Information: *This handout will familiarize your students with the SAT®; additional information can be accessed on the College Board Web site (www.collegeboard.com). Also included is information about the ACT (www.act.org); since February 2005, an optional writing test has been offered. Encourage students to take both tests in the spring of their junior year.*

Activity 1.6 “Student Reports”: This handout provides sample test reports from both practice tests (PLAN and PSAT®).

Teacher Information: *Ask a college counselor to review test results with your students. Practice test scores are predictive for ACT and SAT® admission tests; once students have learned their areas of strengths and weaknesses, they will be able to develop a roadmap for areas of study prior to taking the ACT and SAT® in the spring of their junior year.*





Glossary

ACT: College admission test that measures English, math, reading, and science reasoning. Scores range from 1–36 along with a composite score and 11 sub-scores broken down by subject areas. An optional writing test is offered. Calculators are permitted on the math test but not on the science test. Pick up registration forms at school or register online at www.act.org.

Advanced Placement (AP®) Tests: Designed for students who have completed college level work in high school, AP® tests are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing in college.

Admission: The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

Admission Test: A standardized test used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student’s success in college.

Application: A formal request for admission to a college or university; requires the submission of forms and other materials.

Aptitude: A natural ability or talent.

Associate’s Degree (A.A., A.S.): A two-year degree that generally prepares a student for further study. Some associate’s degree programs provide sufficient training for specific careers, but many students in two-year colleges plan to complete their studies at a four-year college.

Bachelor’s Degree (B.A., B.S., B.F.A., B.A.A.): A four-year degree in a specified subject.

Certificate: Recognition provided to a student for completion of a short-term vocational or career training program.

Class Rank: A student’s approximate standing in her/his graduating class, based on grade point average (e.g., 72nd in a class of 410; in the “upper fifth” of the class).

Common Application: A standardized application form used by a consortium of colleges for admission.

Degree: The rank or title given by a college or university to a student who has met certain academic requirements. (See “Undergraduate Degree.”)

Diploma: Certificate issued by a school, college, or university to a student who has met coursework and graduation requirements.

Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.): Master’s Degree plus advanced graduate courses in specialized area. Normally requires three to five years of additional full-time studies after completion of a Master’s Degree.

Early Action: Early action is used primarily in highly selective colleges. Early action follows the same timetable as *early decision* (see below), but allows the accepted candidate until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission. Under an early action program, it is possible for an applicant to be denied admission outright and not automatically deferred for later consideration.

Early Decision: Not to be confused with *early action*, early decision is a plan under which a student applies to the first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1 of the senior year) and *agrees by contract to enter*

Activity 1.1 (2 of 5)

that college if offered admission. Early decision applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year test scores, class rank, and grades.

Important Note: *Early decision and early action programs vary from college to college. Read the literature of each college carefully, and ask questions if you do not understand some aspect of the program.*

Early Intervention: A process that begins in the late elementary and middle school grades when counselors and educators introduce the concepts of preparation for college and the admission process to students and parents.

Educational Testing Service (ETS): A nonprofit agency established by The College Board to produce educational tests (www.ets.org).

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): An amount the student and student's family are expected to contribute toward his/her education. It is used in determining eligibility for federal student aid.

Extracurricular Activities: Any school activity, such as athletics, drama, or music, that offers the student an opportunity to complement his or her classroom experiences.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) www.fafsa.ed.gov: A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program. A FAFSA is used to determine the specific Federal Student Aid programs that can contribute to a student's total college financial aid package and in what proportions. High school seniors should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1. The FAFSA is processed free of charge and must be submitted each year a student applies for financial aid.

Financial Aid or Assistance: Any financial award to a student (grant, scholarship, or loan).

Grade point average (GPA): An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance.

Grants: Awards based on financial need that do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, and educational institutions.

Honors program: Any program offering the opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced, or accelerated study.

Letter of Recommendation: An assessment of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years of college.

Master's Degree (M.S., M.A.): Bachelor's Degree plus graduate courses in specialized area. A Master's Degree usually requires two additional years of full-time studies after completion of a Bachelor's Degree.

Open admissions: The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission scores.

PLAN: a pre-ACT test and examination of interests and skills for 10th graders.

Post-secondary: Opportunities that are available after graduation from high school (secondary school); usually refers to colleges and universities in the admission process. May also be required for scholarship applications.

PSAT/NMSQT®: Preliminary SAT® and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Enables students to practice for the SAT® Reasoning Test and serves as the qualifying test for scholarship competitions conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Activity 1.1 (3 of 5)

Regular Decision: The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

Rolling Admission: The application process whereby a college reviews an application when the individual folder (application form and all supporting data) is completed and communicates the admission decision within a few weeks of reviewing the folder.

SAT® (Reasoning Test): College admission test designed to measure critical reading, math, and writing skills needed for academic success in college. SAT® scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math, and critical reading). By definition, a score of 500 on any section means that 50 percent of the test takers did more poorly than you on that section. One adds the writing, math, and critical reading scores to answer the question, “What did you get on the SAT®?” The SAT® is frequently preferred, and sometimes required, by colleges on the East and West Coasts. Bring a calculator to use for the SAT® math section. Pick up registration forms at school or register online at www.collegeboard.com.

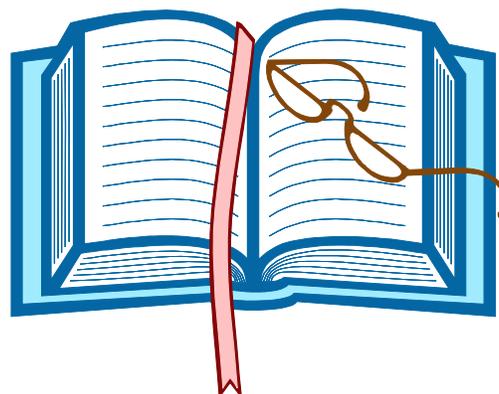
Scholarship: Financial aid based on merit and paid directly to the student in the form of an outright gift. Some scholarships are given to students who exhibit a particular ability or skill, such as in music or athletics.

Standardized Tests: Tests such as the ACT and SAT® that provide college admission officers with a comparative standard for evaluating a student’s academic aptitude and likelihood of success in college.

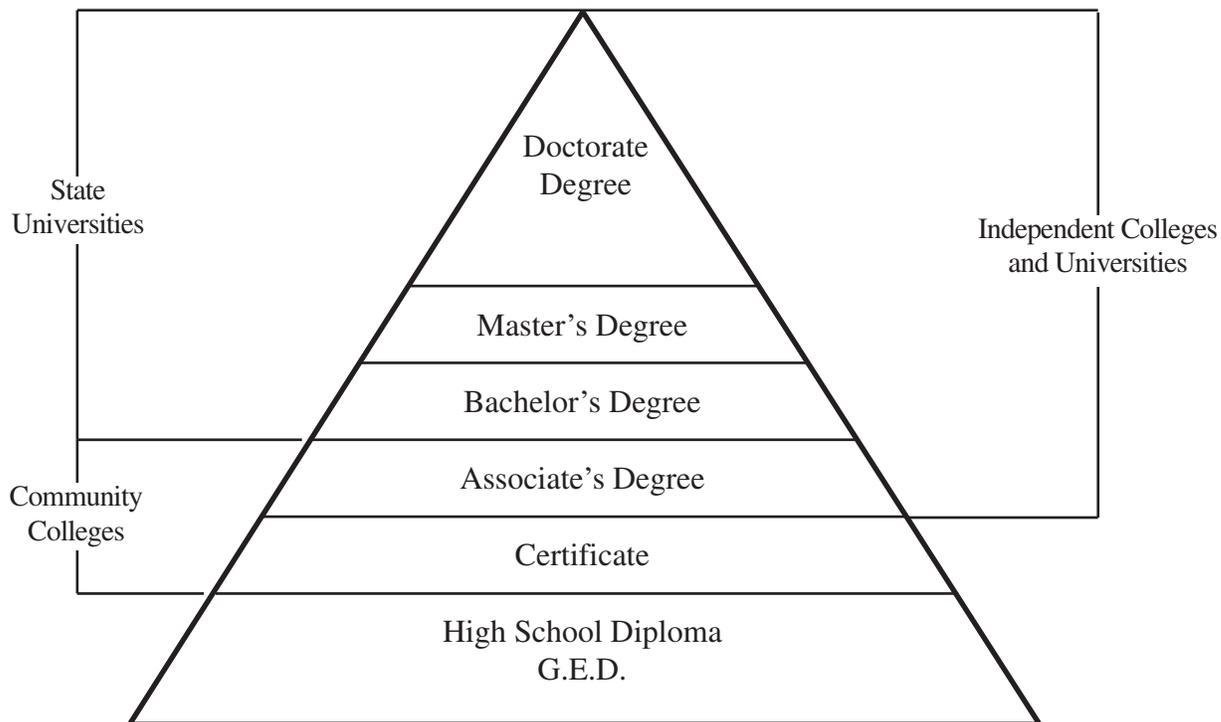
Student Aid Report (SAR): The information received after the FAFSA has been processed. The SAR reports the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Transcript: The official record of high school or college courses and grades, generally required as part of the college application.

Work/Study: Money earned in a job obtained through the help of the college’s financial aid office. Hours/location of the job are compatible with academic life and school schedule.



EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS



Certificate

Major Courses Only—Number of units required varies. A series of special major courses, all related to a particular occupational skill. Sole objective is immediate employment. Offered by community colleges and private educational organizations.

Associate's Degree

Major Courses PLUS General Education Courses & Electives. 60 units required. Usually referred to as A.A. or A.S. (Associate of Arts or Science) Degrees. Normally requires two years or four semesters of full-time work. Offered by community colleges.

Bachelor's Degree

Major Courses PLUS General Education & Minor or Electives, 124–132 total units required. Usually referred to as B.S. or B.A. (Bachelor of Science or Arts) Degrees. Normally requires four years of full-time work. You may complete the first two years at a community college and then transfer to a four-year university.

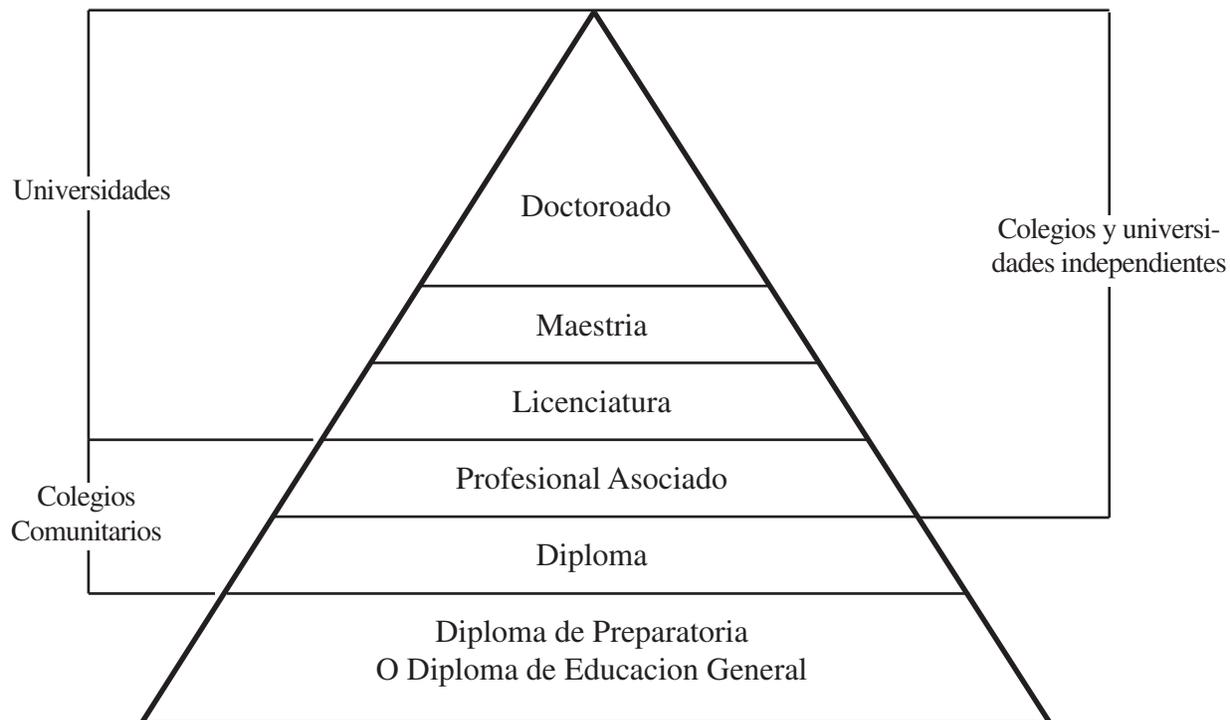
Master's Degree

Bachelor Degree PLUS graduate courses in specialized area. Bachelor's Degree units (124–132) PLUS about 36 units. Usually referred to as M.S. or M.A. (Master of Science or Arts) Degrees. Normally requires two additional years full-time work AFTER completion of Bachelor's Degree.

Doctorate Degree

Master's Degree PLUS advanced graduate courses in specialized area. Units vary, depending on field of study. Usually referred to as Ph.D. or Ed.D. (Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education). Normally requires three to five additional years of full-time work AFTER completion of Master's Degree. *Thesis required.*

OPCIONES EDUCATIVAS



Certificado

Solamente Cursos de Especializacion—Se debe de tomar una serie de unidades requeridas que pueden variar de acuerdo con la capacitacion y ocupación elegida. El objetivo principal de un diploma es el de poder obtener empleo. Estos cursos estan disponibles en colegios de su comunidad o a través de organizaciones de educación particulares.

Profesional Asociado

Cursos de Especializacion, Cursos en Educacion General, Cursos Electivos, se Requieren 60 Unidades. Por lo general es conocido como un titulo de Asociado en Filosofia y Letras (A.A.) o Asociado en Ciencias (A.S.). Normalmente se requieren 2 años o 4 semestres para teminar y son otorgados en colegios comunitarios.

Licenciatura

Cursos de Especializacion, Cursos en Educacion General, Cursos Electivos, se Requieren 124–132 Unidades. Por lo general es conocido como Licenciatura en Filofsofia y Letras (B.A.), o Licenciatrua en Ciencias (B.S.). Normalmente, se requieren 4 años. Se pueden terminar los primeros 2 años en un colegio comunitario y despues trasladarse a una universidad de 4 años.

Maestria

Licenciatura, Mas Cursos de Posgrado en Una Especialidad. Licenciatura (124–132 unidades) más aproximadamente 36 unidades. Por lo general es conocida como Maestria en Filosofia y Letras (M.A.) o Maestria en Ciencias (M.S.). Normalmente, se requieren 2 años adicionales despues de terminar el titulo de Licenciatura.

Doctorado

Maestria, Mas Cursos Avanzados de Posgrado en Una Especialidad. El número de unidades varia dependiendo de la especialidad. Por lo general es conocido como un Doctorado en Filosofia y Letras (Ph.D.) o Doctorado en Educación (Ed.D). Normalmente, se requieren 3 a 5 años adicionales despues de haber terminado la Maestria. *Se requiere Tesis Profesional.*

Activity 1.2

Test Requirement Chart

Teacher-Created Document to Use as Student Model

Test Scores and Dates

SAT® Reasoning Scores

(200–800 math/critical reading/writing; Essay 2–12)
(2400 total)

Date _____ M _____ CR _____ W _____ Total _____ Essay _____

Date _____ M _____ CR _____ W _____ Total _____ Essay _____

ACT Scores

(1–36)

Date _____ M _____ R _____ E _____ S _____ Comp. _____ W _____

Date _____ M _____ R _____ E _____ S _____ Comp. _____ W _____

SAT® Subject Scores

Date _____ #1 _____ #2 _____ #3 _____

PSAT®

(20–80 each section)

9th Grade	M _____	CR _____	W _____	Selection Index _____
10th Grade	M _____	CR _____	W _____	Selection Index _____
11th Grade	M _____	CR _____	W _____	Selection Index _____

PLAN

(1–32)

Date _____ M _____ R _____ E _____ S _____

Future Testing:

SAT® Test Date _____; Registration Deadline Date _____

SAT® Test Date _____; Registration Deadline Date _____

ACT Test Date _____; Registration Deadline Date _____

ACT Test Date _____; Registration Deadline Date _____

SAT® Subject Test Date _____; Registration Deadline Date _____

Activity 1.3 (1 of 2)

The PLAN Test

Overview

The PLAN is considered a pre-ACT test and is designed for 10th-grade students. This test has both academic assessment components and an interest inventory that helps students identify possible career paths.

Test Duration

Testing time for the achievement tests is one hour and 55 minutes. The PLAN has four sections: English, 30 minutes; mathematics, 40 minutes; reading, 20 minutes; and science, 25 minutes.

The UNIACT Interest Inventory, needs assessment, and high school course information sections require an additional 65 minutes. This portion of the PLAN can be given on a different day, and, in fact, it is advisable to do so.

Test Dates

The PLAN is administered by schools at their discretion. Schools may administer the test on any day they choose. ACT recommends that the test be administered sometime between September and December, but it may be given in the spring as well.

Skills Tested

The PLAN is a curriculum-based test that measures students' grasp of skills and knowledge commonly taught in schools as well as their ability to apply that knowledge. Subject areas covered include English, mathematics, reading, and science. For more detailed information regarding each subject, see the section's overview of the ACT.

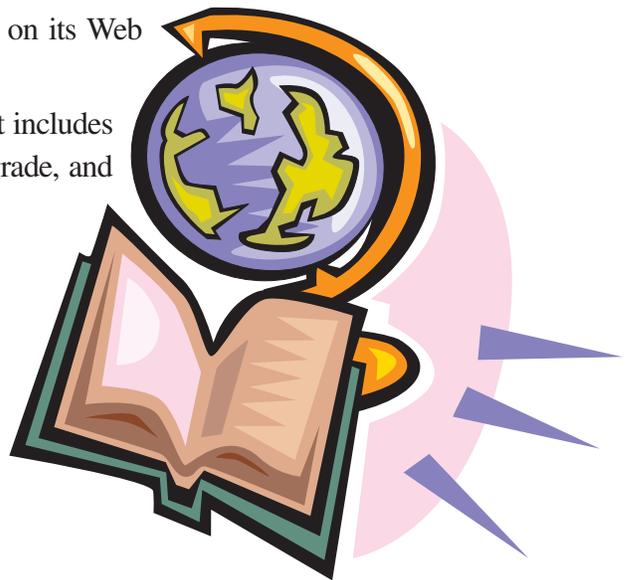
Format/Questions

All questions are multiple-choice: 50 items for English, 40 items for mathematics, 25 items for reading, and 30 items for science.

Additional Information

The ACT provides free practice materials and resources on its Web site at www.act.org.

The PLAN is designed to be used as part of a system that includes the EXPLORE in eighth or ninth grade, the PLAN in 10th grade, and the ACT in 11th or 12th grade.



Preliminary SAT (PSAT/NMSQT®)

Overview

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) is practice for the SAT® Reasoning Test. Many students take the PSAT® more than once, because scores tend to increase with repetition and because students generally become more comfortable with the test each time. During a student's junior year, the PSAT® is also used as a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program as well as other national scholarship programs.

While the PSAT® includes a writing skills section, it does not include a written essay, which is part of the SAT® Reasoning Test.

Test Duration

Total test time is two hours and 10 minutes. This includes two 25-minute sections of critical reading, two 25-minute sections of mathematics, and one 30-minute section of writing.

Test Dates

The PSAT® is offered once a year in mid-October. Schools may choose to participate in the exam either on a school day (usually a Wednesday) or on a Saturday.

Skills Tested

The critical-reading section tests extended reasoning, literal comprehension, and vocabulary in context.

The mathematics section tests algebra and functions; geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics, and probability.

The writing section tests grammar, usage, and word choice.

Format/Questions

The critical reading sections use sentence completions and passage-based readings. There are approximately 50 questions in the two sections.

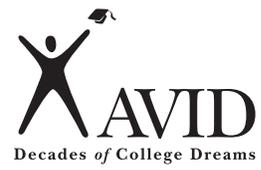
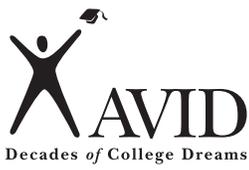
The mathematics section uses multiple-choice and student-produced responses. There are approximately 40 questions in the two sections.

The writing section uses multiple-choice questions that include improving sentences, identifying sentence errors, and improving paragraphs. There are approximately 40 questions in the section.

Additional Information

Like the SAT®, the PSAT® uses a negative scoring system in which a student loses a fraction of a point for each incorrect answer. Because students have been trained for years and years to answer every question on a test, the PSAT® and SAT® present a special challenge to many. Teaching them how to recognize questions they should skip is an imperative part of the preparation for this test.

For more information about the PSAT®, visit the www.collegeboard.com Web site.



National Standardized College Tests

ACT, SAT®, and SAT® Subject Tests

The ACT, SAT®, and SAT® Subject Tests are used by colleges in combination with the student's class rank, high school curriculum, recommendations (and sometimes essays) to determine the probability of success at their college and, therefore, acceptance to their institution. Sometimes your score determines placement in college courses. Most colleges will accept either the ACT or the SAT®, but applicants should check. The tests are offered several Saturday mornings a year and may be taken more than once. Test registration packets are available at school and need to be mailed to complete your registration.

ACT The scores range from 1–36. The test has four parts: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. There is a composite score and 11 sub-scores broken down by subject areas. Ninety-eight percent of the Midwest colleges, including Oakton and Triton, prefer the ACT results. Calculators are permitted on the math test, but not on the science test. Pick up registration forms at your school or register online at www.act.org.

SAT® The scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math, and critical reading). By definition, a score of 500 on any section would mean that 50 percent of test takers did more poorly than you on that section. One adds the writing, math, and critical reading scores to answer the question, “What did you get on the SAT®?” The SAT® is frequently preferred and sometimes required by colleges on the East and West Coasts. Bring a calculator to use for the SAT® math section. Pick up registration forms at school or register online at www.collegeboard.com.

SAT® Subject Tests Some competitive schools that ask for the SAT® will also require SAT® Subject Tests in one, two, or three subjects. Some will specify which subject tests must be taken; others may only recommend the SAT® Subject Tests. The SAT® Subject Tests are multiple-choice and are one hour each; up to three may be taken on a Saturday morning.

SAT® Subject Tests are often taken in the spring of junior year or fall of senior year. Take the test in your junior year (spring semester) if you are finishing a subject you won't be taking in your senior year (e.g., U.S. History, a science, a foreign language). Some students choose to take SAT® Subject Tests in their senior year to maximize course preparation. Looking at sample test questions at your school or on the www.collegeboard.com Web site may help you decide.

Students wishing to apply *early decision* to those few very competitive schools that require SAT® Subject Tests must take them in the spring to meet fall deadlines.

CLEP (College Level Exam Placement) A series of tests in a variety of college disciplines offered at more than 1,000 test centers. There are five broad-based liberal arts areas and 30 examinations in specific areas, such as U.S. History, accounting, Spanish, etc. Students should check with their college as to whether they can receive college credit by achieving an acceptable CLEP score. Each test costs about \$50, plus a service fee.

Activity 1.4 (2 of 2)

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Often used by colleges for admitting students who have been in the U.S. for fewer than two years before applying to college. Some schools ask any student who has not been in a U.S. high school all four years to take this test. See your college counselor in the fall of your senior year about the TOEFL.

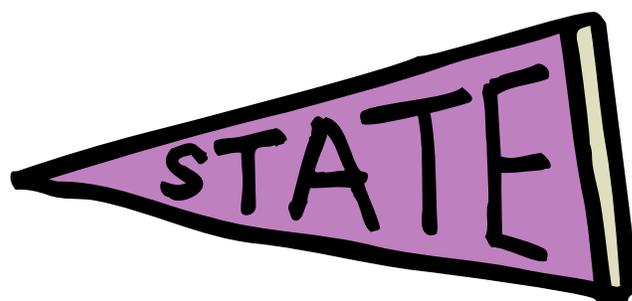
AP® Tests (Advanced Placement Tests) Taken in May after completing a specific AP® high school course of study. Scores range from 1 to 5. Colleges agree to grant to a student who has been accepted either advanced placement in their college curriculum or actual credit toward college graduation based on the student's AP® scores. The minimum scores and the benefits granted are entirely up to each college.

Do I need to know my college choice before taking a college entrance test?

Although it would be helpful, this is not necessary. The test application asks you to list four schools to which you want your scores sent. The fee for sending your scores to these four schools is included in the test registration fee whether or not you take advantage of this score reporting service. If you ask for scores to be sent at a later time, a fee will be assessed, so it's better to list your best four college choice "guesstimates" at the time of registration. Colleges consider your highest scores when determining your admissibility. The ACT reports only the test dates you request; SAT® reports your entire testing history when a score report is requested.

Why would I take both the SAT® and the ACT since both are college entrance exams?

Many juniors take both tests since *most schools* have no preference between the two. Students use the best score from whichever test to submit with their application.



College Admission Tests: ACT and SAT®

The ACT Assessment

Overview

The ACT is a standardized college entrance examination that measures students' knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning, and the application of these skills to future academic tasks.

Most colleges will use either ACT or SAT® scores for admission purposes. Students should check with the colleges in which they are interested to find out each school's specific requirements or preferences.

The writing test on the ACT is optional, and students may choose whether or not to take it depending on the requirements of the colleges to which they are applying.

Test Duration

Total testing time without the writing portion is two hours and 55 minutes. This includes 45 minutes for English, 60 minutes for mathematics, 35 minutes for reading, and 35 minutes for science.

The writing test takes an additional 30 minutes.

Test Dates

The ACT is given several times throughout the traditional school year. Check online or with school counselors for dates.

Skills Tested

The English test covers standard written English including punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure. Also covered are rhetorical skills including strategy, organization, and style.

The mathematics test measures skills students have typically acquired by the end of 11th grade. Students will need knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills, but are not required to know complex formulas or perform extensive computation.

The reading test requires that students show understanding of both direct and implied meaning. Students are asked to use referring and reasoning skills to determine main ideas; locate and interpret significant details; understand sequences of events; make comparisons; comprehend cause-effect relationships; draw generalizations; analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method; and determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and meanings.

The science test assumes that students are in the process of taking the core science course of study (three years or more) and have completed a course in earth science and/or physical science and a course in biology. The test presents scientific information in the form of data representations (graphs, tables, etc.), research summaries, and conflicting viewpoints. Students are asked questions that require them to recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information; examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed; and generalize from given information and draw conclusions, gain new information, or make predictions.

Activity 1.5 (2 of 3)

The optional writing test consists of one writing prompt that will define an issue and describe two points of view on that issue. Students are asked to respond to a question about their position on the issue. They may take one of the viewpoints offered in the prompt or develop a different one.

Format/Questions

Except for the writing test, multiple-choice questions are used in all the sections.

Additional Information

The ACT provides a multitude of information and practice materials on the Web site www.act.org.

Unlike the SAT[®], the ACT does not use negative scoring.

Students may use certain types of calculators on the mathematics section, but they may not use them on the science section.



Activity 1.5 (3 of 3)

The SAT® Reasoning Test

Overview

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT®) is widely used in college admission to assess a student's readiness for and potential for success in college. Scores from the SAT® Reasoning Test are used by colleges to supplement students' high school records. The SAT® Reasoning Test measures a students' abilities in critical reading, mathematics, and writing.

Test Duration

Total testing time is three hours and 45 minutes. This includes critical reading, two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section; mathematics, two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section; and writing, a 35-minute multiple-choice section and a 25-minute essay section.

Test Dates

The SAT® Reasoning Test is offered several times throughout the traditional school year. Check with high school counselors or online for test dates.

Skills Tested

The critical reading section measures a student's ability to identify genres, relationships among parts of a text, cause and effect, rhetorical devices, and comparative arguments. Reading passages are taken from different fields including the natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences, and literary fiction.

The mathematics section measures a student's ability in numbers and operations; Algebra I, II, and functions; geometry; and statistics, probability, and data analysis.

The multiple-choice writing section measures a student's ability to recognize errors, improve sentences, and improve paragraphs within a written context. The essay section measures a student's ability to develop and support a position on a topic. The student must first analyze a topic and consider his or her own viewpoint on it, and then support this position with reasoning and observations taken from the student's own reading, studies, experiences, or observations.

Format/Questions

The critical reading sections include sentence completions and multiple-choice items based on reading passages.

The mathematics sections include multiple-choice items and student-produced responses.

The writing section includes multiple-choice items and an essay.

Additional Information

Be sure to read the notes about negative scoring in the PSAT® section of this unit.

For more information about the SAT® Reasoning Test, visit www.collegeboard.org. Practice questions are available.

Student Reports



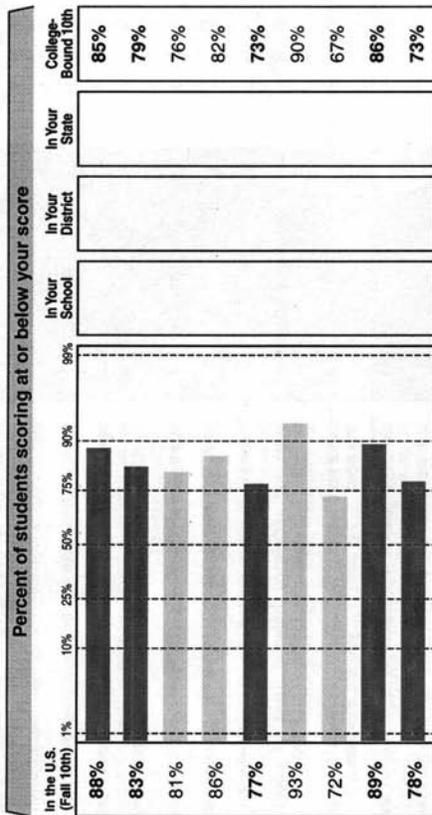
GRADE: 10
SORT CODE: --

TEST DATE: November 14, 2005



TEST FORM: 28B

SCHOOL CODE:



Subject	Score	Score Range (1-32)
Composite Score	20	20
English		
Usage/Mechanics (1-16)	10	
Rhetorical Skills (1-16)	11	
Mathematics	18	
Pre-Alg./Algebra (1-16)	11	
Geometry (1-16)	09	
Reading	21	
Science	19	

More Info at
www.planstudent.org

Your Estimated ACT Composite Score Range
21-25
Use this score range to help plan for college.

Your Educational Plans for After High School
Apprenticeship or OJT

Admission Standards
Colleges differ in their admission standards. For example, most students in "selective" colleges have ACT Composite scores in the range of 21 to 26. Some admitted students may have scores outside the range.

Admission Standard	Typical Scores
Open	16-21
Traditional Selective	18-24
Highly Selective	21-26
	25-30

Profile for Success
Applied Arts (Visual)
Successful college sophomores in majors related to your preferred Career Area typically have ACT Composite scores of:
21-25
See Using Your PLAN Results.

College Readiness
Students scoring at or above these PLAN benchmark scores, and taking college prep courses throughout high school, will likely be ready for first-year college courses. How do your scores compare?

PLAN Benchmark Scores	Your score is:		
	Below	At	Above
English 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics 19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading 17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Science 21	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About Your Scores. One or more of your PLAN scores fall below the benchmark scores that show readiness for college-level work. Suggestions for improving your skills are listed on the back of this report. Also, talk to your counselor or teacher about courses that can improve your skills. Check college websites to learn more about their admission requirements.

Your High School Course Plans Compared to Core
Core means minimum number of high school courses recommended to prepare for college.

Subject	You:	Core:
English	4 Years	4 Years
Mathematics	3 Years	3 Years
Social Studies	3 Years	3 Years
Science	3 Years	3 Years

About Your Course Plans. Your plans fall short of the recommended courses. Consider taking additional courses in Science. (Most successful college students completed all of these recommended courses when they were in high school.) You may want to talk to your counselor or teacher to make sure you are getting the courses you need.

SCHOOL NAME:

Your reported needs

- Making plans for my education, career, and work after high school
- Improving my writing skills
- Improving my reading speed and comprehension
- Improving my study skills
- Improving my mathematical skills
- Improving my computer skills
- Improving my public speaking skills

Your Career Possibilities

STEP 1: You and the World of Work

The World-of-Work Map is your key to hundreds of jobs in the work world. The Map shows 26 Career Areas (groups of similar jobs) according to their basic work tasks involving people, things, data, and ideas.

The Map is divided into 12 regions. Each region has a different mix of work tasks. For example, Career Area P (Natural Science & Technologies) mostly involves working with ideas and things.

STEP 2: Your Interests

When you completed PLAN you were asked to:

- choose a Career Area you would like.
- complete an interest inventory.

Your results are shown on the World-of-Work Map below.

- You chose Career Area T: Applied Arts (Visual).
- Your interest inventory results suggest that you may enjoy jobs in map regions 9, 10, and 11. See the Career Areas in those regions.

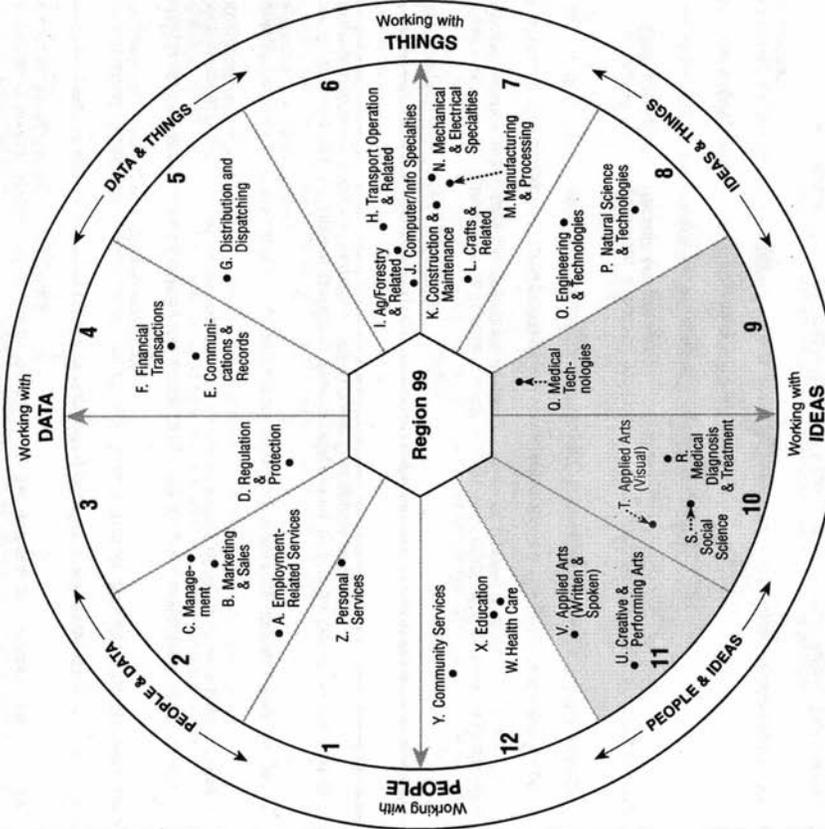
STEP 3: Exploring Career Options

The Career Area List below shows examples of jobs in each of the 26 Career Areas. Review all of the Career Areas, especially any that are shaded.

Circle at least two Career Areas that have jobs you might like best.

Find out more about jobs that are right for you. Use the tips in your booklet, or go to www.planstudent.org.

World-of-Work Map



Information for Counselors
 Scores: R6 I5 A8 S4 E4 C7
 %Like, Indifferent, Dislike: 26-36-38

Career Area List

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Employment-Related Services
Human Resources Manager; Recruiter; Interviewer</p> <p>B. Marketing & Sales
Agents (Insurance, Real Estate, etc.); Retail Salesworker</p> <p>C. Management
Executive; Office Manager; Hotel/Motel Manager</p> <p>D. Regulation & Protection
Food Inspector; Police Officer; Detective</p> <p>E. Communications & Records
Secretary; Court Reporter; Office Clerk</p> <p>F. Financial Transactions
Accountant; Bank Teller; Budget Analyst</p> <p>G. Distribution & Dispatching
Warehouse Supervisor; Air Traffic Controller</p> <p>H. Transport Operation & Related
Truck/Bus/Cab Drive; Ship Captain; Pilot</p> <p>I. Agriculture, Forestry & Related
Farmer; Nursery Manager; Forester</p> <p>J. Computer & Information Specialties
Programmer; Systems Analyst; Desktop Publisher; Actuary</p> <p>K. Construction & Maintenance
Carpenter; Electrician; Bricklayer</p> <p>L. Crafts & Related
Cabinetmaker; Tailor; Chef/Cook; Jeweler</p> <p>M. Manufacturing & Processing
Tool & Die Maker; Machinist; Welder; Dry Cleaner</p> <p>N. Mechanical & Electrical Specialties
Auto Mechanic; Aircraft Mechanic; Office Machine Repairer</p> | <p>O. Engineering & Technologies
Engineers (Civil, etc.); Technicians (Laser, etc.); Architect</p> <p>P. Natural Science & Technologies
Physicist; Biologist; Chemist; Statistician</p> <p>Q. Medical Technologies (also see Area W)
Pharmacist; Optician; Dietitian; Technologists (Surgical, etc.)</p> <p>R. Medical Diagnosis & Treatment (also see Area W)
Physician; Pathologist; Dentist; Veterinarian; Nurse Anesthetist</p> <p>S. Social Science
Sociologist; Political Scientist; Economist; Urban Planner</p> <p>T. Applied Arts (Visual)
Artist; Illustrator; Photographer; Interior Designer</p> <p>U. Creative & Performing Arts
Writer; Musician; Singer; Dancer; TV/Movie Director</p> <p>V. Applied Arts (Written & Spoken)
Reporter; Columnist; Editor; Librarian</p> <p>W. Health Care (also see Areas Q and R)
Recreational Therapist; Dental Assistant; Licensed Practical Nurse</p> <p>X. Education
Administrator; Athletic Coach; Teacher</p> <p>Y. Community Services
Social Worker; Lawyer; Paralegal; Counselor; Clergy</p> <p>Z. Personal Services
Waiter/Waitress; Barber; Cosmetologist; Travel Guide</p> |
|---|---|

Name: _____

Year: 2005

Grade: 10

School Code: _____

Optional Code: _____

School Copy

2005 PSAT/NMSQT®

Score Report Plus

Preliminary SAT/
National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test



INSIDE

- Your scores
- Review your answers
- Improve your skills
- NMSC scholarship program entry

OUTSIDE

- About your scores
- NMSC scholarship programs
- Online resources to prepare for the SAT® and for college

... AND MORE ONLINE

www.collegeboard.com/psatextra

- Explanations for answers to test questions
- Extra preparation for the SAT
- Career, major, and college exploration tool

Activity 1.6 (4 of 5)

Name: _____ Year: 2005 Grade: 10 School Code: _____ Optional Code: _____ School Copy

Your Scores

Critical Reading
62

Math
55

Writing Skills
57

Scores within these ranges can be considered similar to yours:

You scored higher than **95%** of sophomores.
You scored higher than **82%** of sophomores.
You scored higher than **86%** of sophomores.

PSAT/NMSQT®

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) Programs

Selection Index
174*

Percentile
81

The Selection Index (S.I.) is the sum of your critical reading, math, and writing skills scores. NMSC uses the S.I. as an initial screen of over 1.3 million students who enter its scholarship programs (see reverse).

The asterisk () next to your Selection Index means you do not meet entry requirements for NMSC's 2007 programs. See your responses to enter items below and further information on the reverse side.

Entry Requirements
Below is information you provided on your answer sheet.

Full-time high school student:
YES

Year to complete high school and enroll full time in college:
2008

Years to be spent in grades 9-12:
4

U.S. citizenship:
YES

Your Educational Plans

Grade Average: **A-**

College Major:
Pre-Law Studies

Information above is self-reported.

Description: Law schools accept students from a wide range of majors. In general, the best preparation for law school is rigorous course work in a liberal arts area such as history, the humanities, languages, social sciences, natural sciences, or mathematics, or in any major of great interest to you. Choose a major and courses in which you will develop strong writing, speaking, and analytical skills. The professional study of law takes three years after the completion of an undergraduate education.

Associated Skills: Reading critically, writing carefully, thinking analytically.

Recommended High School Courses: English 4, precollege mathematics 4, laboratory science 2, social studies 1-2, history 1-2, foreign language 3-4, and computer science 1.

Other Majors to Consider: American studies, Classics, Communications, English, History, Linguistics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Political science and government, and Psychology.

Careers: Upon completion of law school, students work for large law firms, for corporations, in industry, with the U.S. or state government in legal aid or agencies dealing with the environment, immigration, and other matters, in the court system, with nonprofit organizations, in private practice, and in other settings.

What SAT Ranges Can You Expect?

SAT Critical Reading: 560 - 710
SAT Math: 470 - 660
SAT Writing: 450 - 660

Review Your Answers

Ask for your test book back so you can see the questions.

Key

- ✓ Correct
- o Omitted
- u Unreliable
- e Easy
- m Medium
- h Hard
- Alg Algebra & Functions
- Data Data Analysis, Statistics & Probability
- Geom Geometry & Measurement
- Num Number & Operations

Scoring

- Correct answer = PLUS 1 POINT.
- Omitted answer = NO POINTS.
- Wrong answers to multiple-choice questions = MINUS 1/4 POINT.
- Wrong answers to math questions 29-38 = NO LOST POINTS.

Points are totaled, then converted to scores on the 20-80 scale.

SECTION 1

Sentence Completions

1	E	✓	e
2	C	✓	e
3	E	✓	m
4	D	o	h
5	A	o	h
6	E	✓	h
7	D	✓	h
8	E	✓	h

Passage-Based Reading

9	B	✓	h
10	B	✓	m
11	C	✓	h
12	D	✓	h
13	C	✓	m
14	E	✓	h
15	A	✓	m
16	D	✓	m
17	D	✓	m
18	A	✓	m
19	D	✓	e
20	B	✓	m
21	B	✓	m
22	C	✓	m
23	D	✓	m
24	B	✓	e

SECTION 2

Multiple-Choice

1	D	✓	e	Alg
2	A	✓	e	Alg
3	C	✓	e	Geom
4	E	✓	e	Alg
5	A	✓	e	Alg
6	E	✓	e	Alg
7	A	✓	e	Num
8	B	✓	e	Geom
9	E	✓	e	Num
10	E	✓	e	Alg
11	A	o	m	Data
12	B	✓	m	Num
13	C	✓	m	Num
14	D	✓	m	Data
15	B	A	m	Geom
16	B	o	h	Num
17	C	E	h	Geom
18	A	o	h	Alg
19	C	E	h	Alg
20	D	A	h	Geom

SECTION 3

Sentence Completions

25	B	✓	e	
26	A	✓	e	
27	A	✓	h	
28	E	✓	h	
29	E	✓	h	
30	C	✓	h	
31	B	✓	h	
32	A	✓	m	
33	E	✓	m	
34	E	✓	m	
35	E	✓	m	
36	A	✓	m	
37	A	✓	m	
38	B	✓	e	h
39	B	D	h	e
40	B	✓	m	
41	A	✓	m	
42	D	✓	e	
43	D	✓	m	
44	E	✓	m	
45	E	✓	m	
46	A	✓	e	
47	C	✓	m	
48	B	✓	e	h

SECTION 4

Multiple-Choice

21	A	✓	e	Alg
22	E	✓	e	Geom
23	E	✓	m	Num
24	C	D	m	Geom
25	A	✓	m	Alg
26	D	✓	m	Alg
27	C	✓	m	Data
28	B	E	h	Geom

Student-Produced Responses

Question	Correct Answer(s)	Your Answer	Difficulty	Content
29	180	✓	e	Num
30	2	o	m	Alg
31	100	✓	m	Geom
32	33	✓	m	Alg
33	2.5 or 5/2	✓	m	Geom
34	180, 320 or 480	59	h	Num
35	6	o	h	Alg
36	3/4 or .75	2/3	h	Data
37	18	o	h	Geom
38	0	✓	h	Alg

SECTION 5

Improving Sentences

1	C	✓	e	Alg
2	C	✓	e	Alg
3	B	✓	e	Alg
4	D	✓	e	Alg
5	A	✓	e	Alg
6	B	✓	e	Alg
7	E	✓	m	Num
8	B	✓	m	Num
9	D	✓	m	Num
10	E	✓	m	Num
11	D	✓	m	Num
12	C	✓	m	Num
13	C	✓	m	Num
14	C	✓	m	Data
15	D	✓	m	Num
16	D	✓	m	Num
17	D	✓	m	Num
18	B	✓	m	Num
19	E	✓	m	Num
20	A	✓	m	Num
21	A	✓	m	Num
22	B	✓	m	Num
23	A	✓	m	Num
24	D	✓	m	Num
25	E	✓	m	Num
26	B	✓	m	Num
27	E	✓	m	Num
28	D	✓	m	Num
29	A	✓	m	Num
30	D	✓	m	Num
31	C	✓	m	Num
32	D	✓	m	Num
33	C	✓	m	Num
34	B	✓	m	Num
35	C	✓	m	Num
36	E	✓	m	Num
37	E	✓	m	Num
38	A	✓	m	Num
39	D	✓	m	Num

Identifying Sentence Errors

21	A	✓	m
22	B	✓	m
23	A	✓	m
24	D	✓	m
25	E	✓	m
26	B	✓	m
27	E	✓	m
28	D	✓	m
29	A	✓	m
30	D	✓	m
31	C	✓	m
32	D	✓	m
33	C	✓	m
34	B	✓	m
35	C	✓	m
36	E	✓	m
37	E	✓	m
38	A	✓	m
39	D	✓	m

Improving Paragraphs

36	A	✓	e
37	E	✓	e
38	A	✓	e
39	D	✓	e

You answered correctly 27 of 39 writing skills questions and earned 27 points.
13 of 14 easy questions
14 of 22 medium questions
0 of 3 hard questions

You omitted 1 question(s).
You answered incorrectly 11 question(s) and lost 3 point(s).

You answered correctly 24 of 38 math questions and earned 24 points.
9 of 9 easy questions
13 of 18 medium questions
2 of 11 hard questions

You omitted 6 question(s).
You answered incorrectly 8 question(s) and lost 1 point(s).

At www.collegeboard.com/psatextra:

GET EXPLANATIONS FOR THE ANSWERS TO EVERY TEST QUESTION, including why wrong answers were wrong.

MAJOR, CAREER, AND COLLEGE EXPLORATION TOOL, including an assessment to make choosing your career path easier.

Improve Your Skills

The skills listed are based on your individual performance on the test and represent those that you have the best chance to improve with extra work.

Follow the suggestions to improve in each area.

Understanding complex sentences

How to improve: Ask your English teacher to recommend books that are a bit more challenging than those you're used to reading. Practice breaking down the sentences into their component parts to improve your comprehension. Learn how dependent clauses and verb phrases function in sentences.
See questions 5, 28.

Recognizing a definition when it is presented in a sentence

How to improve: Learn how such elements as appositives, subordination, and punctuation are used to define words in a sentence.
See questions 4, 7.

Comprehending long sentences

How to improve: Practice reducing long sentences into small, understandable parts.
See questions 5, 28.

Understanding geometry and coordinate geometry

How to improve: Review geometry units in your textbook involving perimeter, area, volume, circumference, angles, lines, slope. Familiarize yourself with the formulas given at the beginning of math sections of the test.
See questions 15, 17, 20.

Dealing with probability, basic statistics, charts, and graphs

How to improve: Practice solving problems that involve basic probability, basic counting, and finding the average (arithmetic mean), median, and mode. Look for charts and graphs in newspapers and magazines, and practice interpreting the data in them.
See questions 11, 36.

Making connections among mathematical topics

How to improve: Practice problems that require combining skills acquired in different math courses, such as problems that use combinations of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.
See questions 11, 15, 18.

Following conventions in writing

How to improve: Review the chapters in a grammar book that cover grammatical conventions, such as word choice, use of noun and prepositional phrases, and sentence construction. Work with your teacher to become more familiar with the conventions of standard written English.
See questions 15, 17, 30.

Recognizing improper pronoun use

How to improve: Learn to understand the distinction between informal, spoken pronoun usage and standard written pronoun usage. Review the way you use pronouns in your own writing. Ask your teacher to help you identify and correct pronoun errors in your own writing.
See questions 18, 26.

About Your Scores

- Your scores are reported to your school; some school districts and state education departments also receive your scores. As cosponsor of the test, National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) receives all students' scores. The PSAT/NMSQT® office does not report scores to colleges. PSAT/NMSQT scores should not be recorded on transcripts.
- To check the calculation of your scores and percentiles, ask to see a copy of *Understanding 2005 Scores* sent to your school with score reports.
- To order a copy of your answer sheet, send a written request and include your complete name, mailing address, school name, school code, and a check for \$4 by April 30, 2006, to:
PSAT/NMSQT, P.O. Box 6720, Princeton, NJ 08541-6720.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) Programs

NMSC conducts academic competitions for recognition and college scholarships. High school students enter these programs, usually as juniors, by taking the PSAT/NMSQT and meeting other published entry requirements.

To designate students who qualify for recognition in its 2007 competitions, NMSC will consider the 2005 PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores of some 1.3 million test-takers who meet program entry requirements. About 55,000 students whose scores qualify them for recognition will be notified by NMSC through their high schools in September 2006. (Forms of recognition and steps in the competitions are explained in the *PSAT/NMSQT Official Student Guide* you received before the test and on NMSC's Web site, www.nationalmerit.org.)

If there is an asterisk (*) next to your Selection Index score, it means you do not meet requirements to enter NMSC competitions for awards to be offered in 2007. To find out why, compare your responses to the program entry items listed in the NMSC section on the inside of this report with entry requirements given in the *Student Guide* and on NMSC's Web site. If you made a coding error or there has been a change in plans that may affect program entry, WRITE immediately to:

National Merit Scholarship Corporation

Attn: Educational Services
1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 200
Evanston, IL 60201-4897

Include the name, address, and code number of your high school.

Online Resource to Get the Most Out of Your Score Report: PSAT/NMSQT Extra

PSAT/NMSQT Extra helps you get the most out of the PSAT/NMSQT to help you prepare for the SAT® and for college. Go online to www.collegeboard.com/psatextra for free access to the following information and tools:

- Explanations for the answers to every question on the 2005 PSAT/NMSQT.** Use these explanations with the Review Your Answers section of your Score Report and your test book to learn from the questions you answered incorrectly.
- MyRoad™: career, major, and college exploration tool.** Includes:
 - Personality Profiler: an online assessment you can take to learn about your personality type and receive major and career suggestions
 - Sixty-seven profiles of academic fields
 - Articles covering over 450 occupations
- Sample SAT higher-level math questions.** The SAT has some higher-level math questions that do not appear on the PSAT/NMSQT. Get answers and explanations for sample math questions you might see on the SAT.
- Student-written sample SAT essays.** Find out about how the SAT practice essay be scored and see samples of student-written essays for the SAT practice essay question below.

Make sure you have this Score Report and your test book with you when you visit www.collegeboard.com/psatextra. If you do not already have a College Board account, you'll be prompted to create one. (You can use the same account to register for the SAT.) It typically takes less than two minutes to create your free account.

SAT Practice Essay

Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

Even scientists know that absolute objectivity has yet to be attained. It's the same for absolute truth. But, as many newspaper reporters have observed, the idea of objectivity as a guiding principle is too valuable to be abandoned. Without it, the pursuit of knowledge is hopelessly lost.

Adapted from "Focusing Our Values," *Nieman Reports*

Assignment: Are people better at making observations, discoveries, and decisions if they remain neutral and impartial? Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experiences, or observations.



2. Preparation

Use “A ‘Crate’ Idea” activity (Activity 1.7) to get students organized. Have students place their previous PSAT® and PLAN scores in the testing folder, along with any other testing data, prep materials, etc.

Encourage students to begin thinking about the qualities most important to them when it comes to choosing a college (Activity 1.8). Have students complete the “Data Sheet” (Activity 1.9) and update their “Activities Record” in preparation for writing a résumé (Activity 1.10). Have each student obtain a copy of his or her transcript; each student should review course requirements for the top colleges he or she has selected to research. Students should set up an account on at least one College Mentor Web Site (Activity 1.12). This provides another opportunity to involve the AVID or college counselor. Stress the importance of beginning (or continuing) community service, which is often a requirement for admission to college.

Timeline

August–September: Prepare student “crates.”

August–October: Do preparation activities.

October–January: Data sheets, résumé, verify e-mail address.

Activities/Materials

Activity 1.7 “A ‘Crate’ Idea”: This activity helps students organize all their college exploration and admission materials in one place—a “crate” filled with file folders. The “College Admission and Financial Aid Logs” provide a good way for students to track their progress in each of these categories. The “Required College-Entry Tests and Scores” page can be stored in the student’s testing file and updated as needed.

Teacher Information: *Reproduce one copy of “A ‘Crate’ Idea” and “Required College-Entry Tests and Scores” and 10 to 15 copies of “College Admission and Financial Aid Logs” for each student. Locate/provide crates and file folders, and have students prepare folders for the 12 categories listed on page 1. Additional file folders will be needed for each college the student decides to research for possible application. This step is an important part of organizing the college admission process and will reap benefits in the future by helping the students stay organized. (Note: This activity will take at least one class period.)*

Activity 1.8 “Designing the ‘Perfect’ College”: This activity helps students prioritize what is most important to them in choosing a college.

Teacher Information: *Encourage students to have their parents do this activity separately from them and compare the results. Emphasize how important communication is between parents and students throughout the college admission process.*

Activity 1.9 “Data Sheet for College-Bound Students”: This data sheet activity provides information about the student that will be helpful for teachers/counselors when writing letters of recommendation. The “High School Activities Record” tracks a student’s extracurricular activities and will be a great help when students write their résumés. The “Community Activities Record” tracks community service activities for grades 8–12.

Teacher Information: *This data sheet will take time and parental help to complete; it may be assigned as homework. Have students fill in as much information as they can on the “High School Activities Record.”*

Remind them to update this handout at the end of each semester.

Activity 1.10 “The Art of the Résumé”: This handout takes students through each step of the résumé-writing process; a sample student résumé is provided.

Teacher Information: *Once the data sheet and activities records are completed (Activity 1.9), students can begin writing their résumés. Review the rules of writing a résumé with them and go over the sample. Emphasize that this is a living document that will need to be updated as they progress through high school and that it can be an asset for students who are applying for jobs. Require that the résumé be word-processed and free of errors.*

Activity 1.11 “E-Mail Etiquette”: This handout tells students where and how to set up a new e-mail account.

Teacher Information: *Make sure students set up appropriate e-mail accounts for college communication.*

Activity 1.12 “College Mentor Sites Listed by State”: This handout lists Web addresses for College Mentor sites.

Teacher Information: *Plan at least one day in the computer lab for students to explore Web sites. Have students register at mentor sites of interest.*



A “Crate” Idea

Here is a “crate” idea to help you organize for the college exploration process you will be involved in during the next 12–15 months.

Find a plastic crate designed to hold hanging file folders. If you don’t have one around the house, they are available at office supply and discount stores. To begin, set up the following folders:

- Career Planning
- Standardized Tests
- College Planning
- Activities Résumé
- Campus Visits
- PIN
- Interview
- Personal Statement/Essay
- Scholarships
- Financial Aid (if applicable)
- Military/ROTC (if applicable)
- NCAA (if applicable)

Reserve another 10–15 folders to label for each college on your “long list.” Include a copy of the “Admission and Financial Aid Logs” in each folder (see next page). As you begin to receive information from your colleges, you can set up a file for each school. As you weigh each college choice, you’ll be moving the college files around, arranging them in order of preference at that particular time.

As you move through the college selection process, you will want to have more folders available. You will be adding material and making changes in your files to get you ready for “orientation” and “breaking away” and on to your freshman year in college.

It’s a challenging time and an exciting process. It will flow more smoothly if you get organized before you begin!

**Special thanks to Evelyn Yeagle for the documentation of this “crate” idea!*

Also, a special thank-you to Nancy Caine, Director of College Counseling, St. Augustine High School, San Diego, CA. For more information and excellent Web resources, please go to Nancy’s Web site: <http://www.sahs.org/college.htm>.

Activity 1.7 (2 of 3)

College Admission and Financial Aid Logs

College _____ Telephone No. _____

Address _____

College Admission Log

Financial Aid Log

Application Deadline and Fees:

Date _____ \$ _____

Application Form:

Requested from college Yes Date _____

Submitted to college Yes Date _____

Other Steps Required:

Tests required or recommended _____

-Test registration completed Yes Date _____

-Test taken Yes Date _____

-Results forwarded to college Yes Date _____

Necessary high school courses completed Yes

High school transcript submitted Yes Date _____

References submitted Yes Date _____

Interview completed Yes Date _____

College Reply:

Expected reply date _____

College decision _____

Contact person _____

Follow-Up Required:

1. _____ Date _____

2. _____ Date _____

3. _____ Date _____

4. _____ Date _____

5. _____ Date _____

College Admissions Office Notified of Your Decision

Yes Date _____

Special Notes:

Application Deadline:

Date _____

Application Form:

Requested from college Yes Date _____

Submitted to college Yes Date _____

Financial Aid Forms:

Which one(s): _____

Forms completed Yes Date _____

Results forwarded to college Yes Date _____

College Reply:

Expected reply date _____

College decision _____

Contact person _____

Follow-Up Required:

1. _____ Date _____

2. _____ Date _____

3. _____ Date _____

4. _____ Date _____

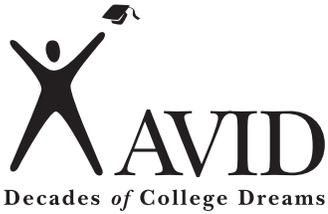
5. _____ Date _____

College Admissions Office Notified of Your Decision

Yes Date _____

Special Notes:

Activity 1.7 (3 of 3)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____ Grade: _____

Required College-Entry Tests and Scores

Test	Registration Deadline	Test Date	Test Taken	Score
PSAT® Critical Reading Math Writing Skills				
PSAT® Critical Reading Math Writing Skills				
SAT® Writing Math Critical Reading				
SAT® Writing Math Critical Reading				
PLAN				
PLAN				
ACT				
ACT				
SAT® Subject Test				
SAT® Subject Test				
SAT® Subject Test				

Note: Test fee waivers are available if you cannot afford to pay for test fees; check with your AVID teacher or counselor.

Designing the “Perfect” College

Directions

1. Cut apart the 12 cards on page 2 of this activity. *Each student should have his/her own set of cards.*
2. On the back of each card, write down the specific area, behavior, or action that occurs to you as you think of this category. (Do not share your ideas with others yet.) Use the following suggestions as a guide:
 - A. *Competitiveness of Admission:* Ivy League? Will I get in? Can I stay?
 - B. *Student Body:* Single sex or coed? Diverse or homogeneous? Large geographic representation?
 - C. *Academic Programs:* Is my major offered? Number of faculty in major? Breadth of courses?
 - D. *Religious Orientation:* Loose historical affiliation? Required religion courses? Strong emphasis?
 - E. *Cost:* Tuition? Availability of aid? Parent helps or student pays entire amount?
 - F. *Sports:* Division I? Strong intramurals? Could I play?
 - G. *Geographic Location:* Skiing? Ocean? Warm? Exposure to new parts of the country? Close to home?
 - H. *Academic Atmosphere:* Challenging? Intense? Relaxed? Supportive? Scholarly vs. career-oriented?
 - I. *Size of College:* Small? Large? Large/small classes? Housing availability?
 - J. *Social Atmosphere:* Orientation program? Residential? Commuter? Political? Party atmosphere? Sororities and fraternities?
 - K. *Surrounding Community:* Large city? Rural? Safety? Transportation?
 - L. *Extracurricular Opportunities:* School newspaper vs. journalism class only? Plays open to non-drama majors? Debate? Music opportunities available for non-music majors?
3. Rank the cards in order of importance to you. Arrange them so that the card with the most importance to you is on the top and the one with the least importance is on the bottom.
4. Discard any cards in which you have no interest.
5. How do your rankings compare with schools to which you are thinking of applying?

Activity 1.8 (2 of 3)

Priorities Board

A Few Things to Think About When Selecting a College

Competitiveness of Admission (Will I get in? Can I stay in?)	Student Body (Single sex or coed? Diverse or homogeneous?)
Academic Program (When must you choose a major? Is your major offered? Number of faculty in your major? Advising system?)	Religious Orientation (Loose historical affiliation? One required religious course? Strong emphasis?)
Cost (Availability of aid programs? Co-op programs? ROTC?)	Sports Programs (Division 1? Strong intramurals? Could I play?)
Geographic Location (Skiing? Ocean? Warm? Exposure to new area? Close to home?)	Academic Atmosphere (Challenging? Intense? Relaxed? Supportive? Scholarly vs. career orientation?)
Size of School (Professors or graduate student teachers? Effect of graduate programs, if they exist? Large classes in large college? Housing problems?)	Social Atmosphere (Orientation program? Residential or commuter? Small, close knit or large, diverse? Non-political or political? Party atmosphere? Support programs?)
Size of Community (Small town, city, megalopolis? A McDonalds? A ballet company? Ethnic restaurants? Fast or slow pace?)	Extracurricular Activities (Plays only open to majors? Student newspaper vs. journalism class? Debate? Radio?)

Priorities Board

A Few Things to Think About When Selecting a College

Activity 1.9 (1 of 3)

Data Sheet for College-Bound Students

Complete this entire sheet accurately. BE NEAT! Counselors and teachers will use this information to write letters of recommendation for college admission and job opportunities. In addition, the awards/scholarship committee may use this information to aid in the selection of candidates for scholarships and awards.

Date: _____ Counselor: _____

Name: _____
(last) (first) (middle)

Birthdate: _____ Social Security No.: _____

Address: _____

Father's or Guardian's name: _____

Father's or Guardian's home address: _____

Father's or Guardian's home phone: _____

Father's or Guardian's occupation: _____

Place of employment: _____

Mother's or Guardian's name: _____

Mother's or Guardian's home address: _____

Mother's or Guardian's home phone: _____

Mother's or Guardian's occupation: _____

Place of employment: _____

Check any that apply: Parents separated Divorced Parent(s) or Guardian(s) unable to work

Military service of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Name: _____ Branch: _____

Active Veteran Disabled Deceased

Explain any unusual family of financial circumstances (if any): _____

Labor and/or fraternal membership of parent(s) or guardian(s): _____

Students who wish to be considered for scholarships offered by religious organizations or groups of a national origin/ethnicity may complete the following:

Religious affiliation: _____ Nationality/ethnicity: _____

Number of dependent children in family, including applicant: _____

<i>Names</i>	<i>Ages</i>	<i>If over 18, reason for dependency.</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Activity 1.9 (2 of 3)

High School Activities Record

Place an “X” in the grade column for year of participation. (Be sure to indicate if you were an officer in any clubs or organizations.)

School Activities	Grade			
	9	10	11	12
Student Government				
Organizations (school clubs, etc.)				
Participation in creative and practical arts (photography, band, journalism, choir, drama, creative writing, publications, etc.)				
Athletics (including letters earned in sports)				
Cheer, Drill, Flag, ROTC, etc.				
Awards, honors, and other achievements				

Community Activities Record

Community Activities	Grade			
	9	10	11	12
Organizations (theater, religious, service, science fair, etc.)				
Clubs (youth groups, Boy/Girl Scouts, etc.)				
Volunteer Work				
Awards, honors, and other achievements				
Hobbies/activities not covered above				
Special talents (please list, e.g., playing piano, writing, languages, etc.)				

The Art of the Résumé

What is a résumé, also known as a curriculum vitae or CV?

A résumé is a brief but detailed synopsis of your high school activities, your interests, your involvement in your community, and so on. A good résumé can, in a couple of minutes, give the reader a sense of how you spend your time, and what skills you have developed during high school.

When is a résumé useful?

A résumé is most useful as part of a job application or interview. It is also helpful to have one for a reference when you fill out college applications (helps you remember everything you have done) or have college interviews (can serve as the basis for interview questions).

A good résumé will often include the following information:

- Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address
- Education
- Honors or awards
- Clubs and activities
- Community service
- Sports
- Summer activities
- Employment
- Personal interests
- Special talents

Keys to organizing your résumé:

Your résumé doesn't have to look like everyone else's. Its format will depend on what you have done and what your interests are. For example, if you don't play intramural or recreational sports, you won't have a "Sports" category to complete.

IT MUST FIT ON ONE PAGE. This is standard for anyone applying for anything from high school and even for people applying for jobs right out of college. Remember, you don't want to bludgeon your reader with information; a résumé is for highlights. If you don't feel you have enough information to fill a page, adjust the margins and font size, however, keep it professional looking.

Center at the top in bold:

Name

Street Address

City, State, ZIP

Phone Number

E-mail Address

Activity 1.10 (2 of 3)

The chronology in categories should go from most recent to oldest; i.e., list your current job at Baskin-Robbins before you list your job mowing lawns last year.

Use bold-faced type and bullets, indentations, or dashes at the beginning of lines to delineate a particular category or activity. Example:

Sports

- Varsity Volleyball, 9th–present: 2nd team all-league, 11th West Hills Invitational All Tournament Team, 11th
- Recreational Tennis, age 8–present

See how the dashes help separate all the volleyball information, which takes up two lines, from the tennis information.

Because your reader will move from left to right on the page, put the most important information first.

The best way:

- Special Olympics Volunteer, 9th–11th

Not as good:

- 9th–11th, Special Olympics Volunteer

If your entries all look like the latter, your reader will just see the numbers first, not what you have actually done.

Wherever you have room, provide explanations for your activities.

Example:

- Special Olympics (scorekeeper and food server), 2004–present

Avoid abbreviations that only an insider would understand, e.g., **MASCAPS** (Mother and Sons' Club Assisting Philanthropies), **FNL** (Friday Night Live), and so on.



Activity 1.10 (3 of 3)

John Smith
5550 Anderson Way
Anytown, CA 91111
(550) 987-6543
jsmith@aol.com

EDUCATION:

John Glenn High School, Anytown CA

- 12th grade: AP English Literature, AP Statistics
- 11th grade: AP English, AP U.S. History
- 10th grade: Honors English, Honors Geometry
- 9th grade: Honors English

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Scholastic:

- Principal's List (4.0 or better): 9th, 10th grades
- First Honors: 9th, 10th, 11th grades
- Second Honors: 9th, 11th grades

Baseball:

- Scholar Athlete: 11th grade
- *Anytown* All-Academic Team: 11th grade
- Central League Championship Team: 11th grade
- All Central League Honorable Mention: 11th grade
- Most Valuable Pitcher/Pitcher of the Year—JV Baseball: 10th grade

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES:

- National Youth Leadership Forum on Law: 11th grade (1 of 350 students selected nationwide based on scholastic and leadership abilities)
- Delegate to National Youth Leadership Forum: 12th grade
- Student newspaper: 10th, 11th grades
- Baseball Coach/Instructor: 9th, 10th, 11th grades

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

- YMCA Counselor-in-Training: 10th grade (summer camp volunteer, selected Outstanding CIT)
- Anytown Historical Society: 10th grade (museum information, sales, clerical assistance)
- Anytown Little League: 10th, 11th grades (Coach/Instructor for Baseball Camps)

LEADERSHIP:

- Discussion Group Leader: 12th grade AP English Literature
- Delegate to National Youth Leadership Forum: 12th grade—Presentations to students, recruitment of students
- National Youth Leadership Forum on Law: 11th grade Designated Supreme Court Justice

SPORTS:

- Baseball: Varsity Baseball 11th, 12th grades, JV Baseball 9th, 10th grades
- Traveling and Club Tournament Baseball Teams: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades
- Football: 9th grade
- Recreational sports: surfing, riding dirt bikes, mountain biking, hiking/camping, fresh and saltwater fishing

PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

Interests: recreational sports, spectator sports, car restoration, and music.

E-Mail Etiquette

If you don't already have an e-mail address, you need to get one as soon as possible. Colleges use e-mail to correspond with students and applicants. You can choose any of the sites below to register for an e-mail address—all are free.

- www.yahoo.com
- www.hotmail.com
- www.excite.com

A few tips for setting up your e-mail address:

1. Read the terms of agreement carefully before registering.
2. Do not use cute nicknames for your e-mail address (browneyes, whoischarliebrown, mexidiva, etc.). Remember, your e-mail often creates the first impression a college or scholarship committee has of you. Be professional.
3. Choose a professional e-mail address—preferably one that includes part of your name (bsmith, bobsm, bobsmith).
4. Do not use any of your Social Security number or birth date as part of your e-mail address (bsmith061992, bsmith6929).

Once you have an established e-mail address, check it on a regular basis.



Activity 1.12

College Mentor Sites Listed by State

State Mentor Site	Web Address
Alabama	http://www.alabamamentor.org/
California	http://www.californiacolleges.edu/
Connecticut	http://www.ctmentor.org/
Delaware	http://www.delawarementor.org/
Georgia	http://gacollege411.org/
Hawaii	http://www.hawaiimentor.org/
Illinois	http://www.illinoismentor.org/
Kansas	http://www.kansasmentor.org/
Kentucky	http://www.gohigherky.org/
Maryland	http://www.marylandmentor.org/
Massachusetts	http://www.massmentor.edu/
Mississippi	http://www.mississippimentor.org/
Nevada	http://www.nevadamentor.org/
New York	http://nymentor.edu
North Carolina	http://www.cfnc.org/
Ohio	http://www.ohiomentor.org/
Oregon	http://www.oregonmentor.org/
Pennsylvania	http://www.pennsylvaniamentor.org/
Tennessee	http://www.collegefortn.org/
Texas	http://www.texasmentor.org/
Utah	http://www.utahmentor.org/
Virginia	http://www.virginiamentor.org/
Washington	http://www.washingtonmentor.org/
Wisconsin	http://www.wisconsinmentor.org/
XAP Student Center	http://www.xap.com/

3. Exploration

Distribute information on “Types of Educational Institutions,” (Activity 1.13) and provide a list of schools and information pertaining to public and independent colleges and universities in your state. Read and discuss these materials with students, and then store materials in students’ “crates.”

Have students explore selected college and university Web sites (Activity 1.14). Many college Web sites provide an easy-to-use “one-stop” source for college planning and offer vital information for parents, students, educators, and counselors.

Invite college representatives to make presentations to the students. Make sure students practice asking questions (Activity 1.15) prior to these visits.

Begin planning for the second semester of college campus visits by contacting the admission offices at local colleges and universities. Counselors may be helpful with this. Use PSAT® and PLAN career interest results and other materials (Activity 1.16) to help students narrow their scope of interest for potential majors.

Have a panel of AVID graduates discuss their transition to college.

Timeline

August–November: Presentations by college representatives.

October–December: College exploration on the Web.

January: AVID graduate panel.

Activities/Materials

Activity 1.13 “Types of Educational Institutions”: This handout explains the different types of educational institutions available and their distinguishing features.

Teacher Information: Review this sheet with your class; discuss independent colleges and universities as viable options for AVID students. Explain that tuition costs often do not tell the entire (financial) story; independent colleges usually provide additional financial aid to offset the increased cost of tuition. **This is an important fact to emphasize with your students.** Provide a brief overview of each of your state’s private schools if possible. Consult Ed.gov’s Education Resource Organizations Directory (EROD) to access your state’s higher education agency or the applicable College Mentor Site.

Activity 1.14 “Web Sites for the AVID Elective”: This handout provides Web sites that are especially helpful during the college exploration process.

Teacher Information: A trip to the computer lab at this time would be especially valuable for students. Have them visit different Web sites and then share their results with classmates.

Activity 1.15 “Questions to Ask the College Representative or Admission Officer”: This handout prepares students for informational classroom visits.

Teacher Information: Have students practice asking these questions in class so they will be ready when college representatives visit your school.

Activity 1.16 “Exploring College Majors”: Included here is a “World of Work” map that shows potential majors students may want to explore.

Teacher Information: This handout, which explains the PLAN interest survey results, may provide keys to areas of student interest. Encourage students to take additional interest surveys as they encounter them on the Web; your career counselor can also help students determine aptitudes and interests. Visit www.act.org/college_search for additional information.

Types of Educational Institutions

Public Two-Year Colleges

Community colleges are open-access two-year comprehensive institutions supported in part by local taxpayers and therefore generally serve their local constituents. They offer certificate and associate degree programs leading directly into the workforce, courses and programs for transfer to a college or university, continuing education programs, developmental education, adult literacy, and basic skills programs.

Two-year technical colleges have a state-wide focus offering high-demand technical or workforce education programs with an emphasis on advanced or emerging technology not typically offered by community or state colleges.

State colleges are open-access, two-year comprehensive colleges offering certificate and associate degrees similar to community colleges. Unlike community colleges, however, state colleges receive no local tax revenue but are state-supported.

Public Universities

A university is an institution that awards undergraduate (bachelor) degrees as well as graduate and professional degrees. A university typically offers a wide range of academic programs (from art to zoology), and full-time undergraduate students can complete a degree in four or more years. Some undergraduate students commute to the university campus from their home, while many others live on the campus and can enjoy a variety of cultural and social activities.

Public universities are funded in part with state appropriations.

Public and Private Health-Related Institutions

A health-related institution is an institution that awards health-related degrees. While health science centers offer professional degrees to people studying to be doctors and other health professionals, many of these institutions also offer undergraduate (bachelor's) degrees in areas such as nursing, dental hygiene, and rehabilitation science. Students in these types of degree programs first take general education courses at community colleges or universities and then transfer to the health science center to complete the degree. Some students who are seeking certificate programs, for example to become emergency medical technicians, can enroll directly into the health science center for their study.

Independent Colleges and Universities

Independent institutions of higher education were once called private colleges and universities. Although often centers of tradition, they are also vibrant institutions emphasizing undergraduate teaching, creating innovative programs, and exploring the limits of knowledge.

Independent universities and independent junior colleges have a wide variety of missions. Some emphasize the liberal arts; others science and research. Some serve a traditional population of undergraduates; others open doors for older working adults. Some are faith-based; others serve a different demographic. Some have more than 14,000 students, while others have fewer than 100. All offer students the opportunity to realize their dreams and a chance to choose an institution that best meets their needs.

Activity 1.13 (2 of 2)

Career Schools and Colleges

Private career schools and colleges grant applied associate degrees concentrating on workforce education. The disciplines include business, computer- and electronics-related fields, culinary arts, acting, court reporting, medical assisting, paralegal studies, sonography, automotive and truck technology, refrigeration and HVAC, interior design, criminal justice, and mortuary science. Additional disciplines are added annually.

Degree-granting career schools and colleges offer the Associate of Applied Arts (AAA), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), or Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS) degrees. Students may complete their program at a career school or college in 18 to 24 months, depending on the area of study. These technical degrees typically lead directly into the workforce, and career schools and colleges generally have strong placement programs and high placement rates upon graduation. They can be excellent choices for students who want training that will place them into a good entry-level job quickly. In addition, many career schools are able to give students a level of individual attention that may not be available at larger institutions.



Web Sites for the AVID Elective

ACT www.act.org/

Provides information on all tests and products produced by ACT, as well as great college info.

America's Career Info Net www.acinet.org/

Find wage and employment trends, occupational requirements, state-by-state labor market conditions, millions of employer contacts nationwide, and the most extensive career resource library online.

Bridges Products www.bridges.com

Bridges Web site includes Choices Planner (explore careers and educational options), Choices Explorer (connect careers to programs/schools), Online test prep for elementary, middle school and high school.

Campus Tours www.CampusTours.com/

Virtual tours to hundreds of colleges and universities.

College Board Online www.collegeboard.com/

The College Board Web site provides information on all tests and products produced by the College Board, as well as great college info.

College Net www.collegenet.com/

Identifies schools based on criteria such as location, size, degree programs, etc.; provides links to individual college Web sites.

College View www.collegeview.com/

Career, college, and financial aid information, as well as virtual college tours.

Common Application www.commonapp.org,

Common college application for 255 selective, independent colleges and universities.

FAFSA www.fafsa.ed.gov/

Free Application for Federal Student Aid; this is THE site to apply for financial aid online!

Fast Web www.fastweb.com/

Free scholarship and college search service.

Fed Money www.fedmoney.org/

FedMoney.org is a comprehensive FREE, full-text, online resource on all federal government student financial aid programs. Here you will find detailed and up-to-date information about (1) who can apply, (2) how to apply, (3) full contact info, and much more...for over 130 government loans and grants (scholarships, fellowships, traineeships) related to education.

Activity 1.14 (2 of 3)

FinAid www.finaid.org/

Comprehensive site for the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

HACU www.hacu.net/

HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities) represents more than 300 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain.

HBCU www.hbcuconnect.com/

The Web site for historically Black colleges and universities.

Homework Center www.infoplease.com/homework/

This site includes homework help, study advice, writing tips, resources (atlas, almanacs, encyclopedias, dictionaries) and historical facts.

IPEDS www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/

IPEDS (The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) is a comprehensive system designed to encompass all institutions and educational organizations whose primary purpose is to provide postsecondary education. The IPEDS system is built around a series of interrelated surveys that collect institution-level data in such areas as enrollments, program completions, faculty, staff, and finances.

Jewish Student Life www.hillel.org/

Extensive resources for Jewish students.

Kaplan www.kaplan.com/

Test prep and college comparison information.

NCAA www.ncaa.org

The National Collegiate Athletic Association Web site.

Peterson's www.petersons.com/

Information about colleges and universities, career schools, graduate programs, distance learning, executive training, private secondary schools, summer opportunities, study abroad, financial aid, test preparation, and career exploration.

Princeton Review www.review.com/

Information on colleges and universities, careers, and test preparation.

SallieMae College Answer www.collegeanswer.com/

Information on preparing for college and paying for college.

Scholarship 101 www.scholarships101.com

The award-winning "Scholarship 101" is now on the Web. It has a database of more than 600,000 awards, as well as information on federal and state programs.

Activity 1.14 (3 of 3)

Schools in the USA www.SchoolsintheUSA.com

Students can use this site to research schools, review admission requirements, and request application materials; provides direct links to university Web sites.

Test Prep www.powerprep.com

Helps students prepare for the ACT or SAT®.

The Career Key www.careerkey.org

Based on John Holland's theory of vocational choices; helps students find the right career path. Learn about jobs that fit your personality type.

The Homework Assistance Page www.geocities.com/ivonebl/

Designed to assist teachers and students in all subject areas; the college link provides instant access to great sites.

U.S. News Education www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm

This site is a valuable resource for the college application process, covering school selection, financial aid, test prep, admissions, applications, campus visits, and tuition.

What Can I Do With a Major In...? www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/majors/

A wonderful career-guidance site by the University of North Carolina.

Xap Corporation www.xap.com/

Guides students through all stages of preparing for college (comparison, selection, application, admission, financial aid).

Yahoo! education.yahoo.com/

Comprehensive site that includes college search, test prep, college survival, and college news.



Questions to Ask the College Representative or Admission Officer

A. Why do students leave? _____

Why do students stay? _____

B. What is the social life like? _____

Student government _____

In the dorms _____

In the community _____

C. What athletic programs are available?

Interscholastic _____

Dorms or clubs? _____

Intramurals? _____

D. What about residence life?

Must freshmen live in the dorms? _____

What are the options? _____

(Coed? Single sex?) _____ Number of students per room? _____

Availability of off-campus housing? _____

E. What is the campus like (appearance, size, distance between classes)? _____

F. What is the area surrounding the campus like (availability of cultural activities, shopping)? _____

G. What is the availability of food (cafeteria, other on-campus, close-by)? _____

H. Do you have an orientation program? _____

Activity 1.15 (2 of 2)

I. Do you have a summer bridge program? _____

J. How will my advisor be assigned? _____

K. What type of grading system is used? _____

L. What are the strongest, most unique, and/or alternative academic programs available? _____

M. Is it OK to have an undeclared major? Dual major? Change of major? _____

N. What is a realistic teacher-student ratio? _____

How large are the largest freshmen classes? _____

Are there many TAs? _____ What is the accessibility of regular faculty (office hours)? _____

O. How important is the essay? Recommendation letter? Other parts of the application? _____

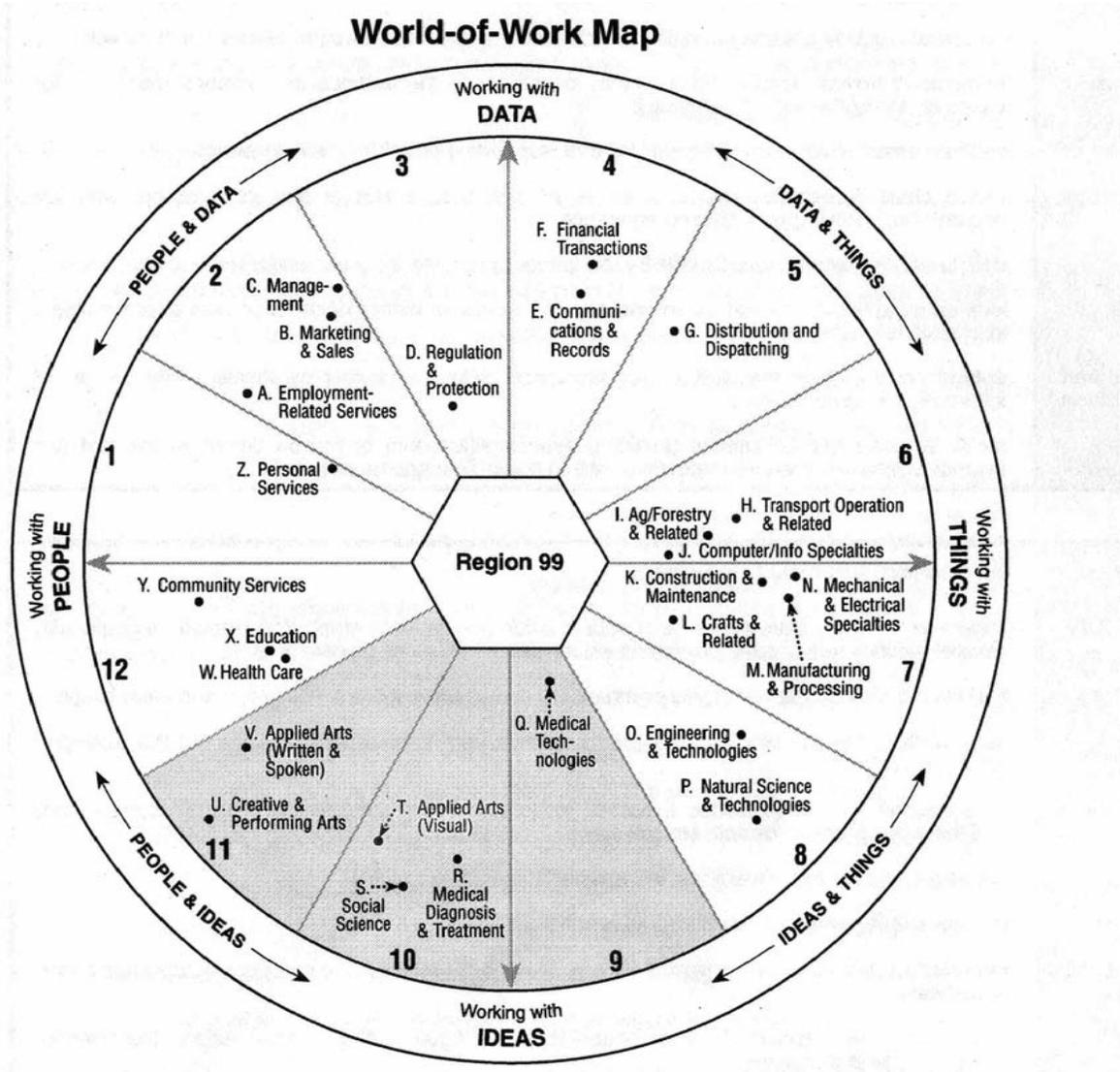
P. What kinds of helping programs (personal/academic/substance abuse counseling)? _____

Q. What kinds of transportation are available (to the city or town, from the terminal to the school)? _____

R. What is the availability of financial aid? _____

S. What resources or facilities are available to support my major? _____

Exploring College Majors (Sample)



STEP 1: You and the World of Work

The World-of-Work Map is your key to hundreds of jobs in the work world. The Map shows 26 Career Areas (groups of similar jobs) according to their basic work tasks involving people, things, data, and ideas.

The Map is divided into 12 regions. Each region has a different mix of work tasks. For example, Career Area P (Natural Science & Technologies) mostly involves working with ideas and things.

STEP 2: Your Interests

When you completed PLAN you were asked to:

- choose a Career Area you would like.
- complete an interest inventory.

Your results are shown on the World-of-Work Map below.

- You chose Career Area T: Applied Arts (Visual).
- Your interest inventory results suggest that you may enjoy jobs in map regions 9, 10, and 11. See the Career Areas in those regions.

STEP 3: Exploring Career Options

The Career Area List below shows examples of jobs in each of the 26 Career Areas. Review all of the Career Areas, especially any that are shaded.

Circle at least two Career Areas that have jobs you might like best.

Find out more about jobs that are right for you. Use the tips in your booklet, or go to www.planstudent.org.

Used with permission of ACT.

Activity 1.16 (2 of 2)

Career Area List

A. Employment-Related Services

Human Resources Manager; Recruiter; Interviewer

B. Marketing & Sales

Agents (Insurance, Real Estate, etc.); Retail Salesworker

C. Management

Executive; Office Manager; Hotel/Motel Manager

D. Regulation & Protection

Food Inspector; Police Officer; Detective

E. Communications & Records

Secretary; Court Reporter; Office Clerk

F. Financial Transactions

Accountant; Bank Teller; Budget Analyst

G. Distribution & Dispatching

Warehouse Supervisor; Air Traffic Controller

H. Transport Operation & Related

Truck/Bus/Cab Drive; Ship Captain; Pilot

I. Agriculture, Forestry & Related

Farmer; Nursery Manager; Forester

J. Computer & Information Specialties

Programmer; Systems Analyst; Desktop Publisher; Actuary

K. Construction & Maintenance

Carpenter; Electrician; Bricklayer

L. Crafts & Related

Cabinetmaker; Tailor; Chef/Cook; Jeweler

M. Manufacturing & Processing

Tool & Die Maker; Machinist; Welder; Dry Cleaner

N. Mechanical & Electrical Specialties

Auto Mechanic; Aircraft Mechanic; Office Machine Repairer

O. Engineering & Technologies

Engineers (Civil, etc.); Technicians (Laser, etc.); Architect

P. Natural Science & Technologies

Physicist; Biologist; Chemist; Statistician

Q. Medical Technologies (also see Area W)

Pharmacist; Optician; Dietitian; Technologists (Surgical, etc.)

R. Medical Diagnosis & Treatment (also see Area W)

Physician; Pathologist; Dentist; Veterinarian; Nurse Anesthetist

S. Social Science

Sociologist; Political Scientist; Economist; Urban Planner

T. Applied Arts (Visual)

Artist; Illustrator; Photographer; Interior Designer

U. Creative & Performing Arts

Writer; Musician; Singer; Dancer; TV/Movie Director

V. Applied Arts (Written & Spoken)

Reporter; Columnist; Editor; Librarian

W. Health Care (also see Areas Q and R)

Recreational Therapist; Dental Assistant; Licensed Practical Nurse

X. Education

Administrator; Athletic Coach; Teacher

Y. Community Services

Social Worker; Lawyer; Paralegal; Counselor; Clergy

Z. Personal Services

Waiter/Waitress; Barber; Cosmetologist; Travel Guide

Used with permission of ACT.

4. “Fit” and Finances

Financial aid is intended to make up the difference between what the family is expected to pay and the actual college costs. Discuss with your students the types and varieties of financial aid available (Activity 1.17), and then distribute a junior/senior year financial aid calendar (Activity 1.18).

To help students understand what is most important in selecting a college, have them complete the “Self-Perceptions Worksheet” (Activity 1.19). Continue to develop a “college-going” culture at your school (Activity 1.20).

Timeline

August–June: Explore types and varieties of financial aid.

December–June: Financial aid calendar; ongoing review.

Activities/Materials

Activity 1.17 “Financial Aid Facts”: This handout explains and simplifies financial aid; key terms are defined.

Teacher Information: This page provides a short overview in question/answer format on the basic process of financial aid. Encourage students to begin communication with parents about the importance of planning for college expenses. Juniors should register at free scholarship sites and begin scholarship searches.

Activity 1.18 “Important Dates”: A financial aid calendar for juniors and seniors.

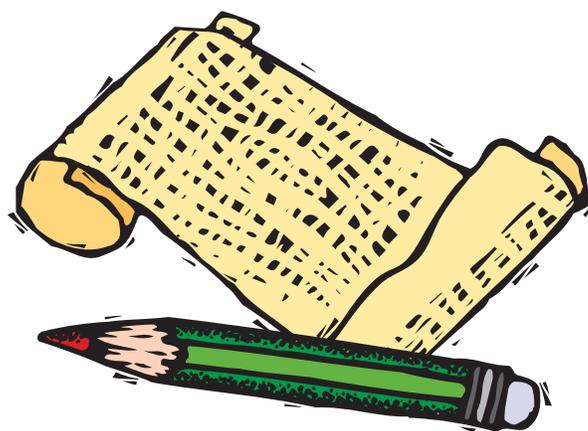
Teacher Information: It’s not too early to remind students of important deadlines coming up during their senior year. Students can keep this calendar in the financial aid file in their “crates.”

Activity 1.19 “Self-Perceptions Worksheet”: In this activity, students choose characteristics that describe themselves (how they are now and how they would like to be seen), and also learn how others see them.

Teacher Information: This introductory activity helps students determine what type of college will be the best “fit” for them; takes one class period to complete.

Activity 1.20 “Developing a ‘College-Going’ Culture Among High School Students”: This handout reinforces the importance of attending college and provides tips for being able to do so.

Teacher Information: A valuable resource for parents and students and a good topic for discussion in the classroom, at a parent meeting, or with the AVID panel of graduates.



Financial Aid Facts

(from www.collegeboard.com/)

Get the Lowdown

Don't be scared away by media reports on rising college prices. Financial aid is intended to make up the difference between what your family is expected to pay and what college costs.

Fact: Over 55 percent of the students currently enrolled in a college or university are receiving some financial aid.

What exactly is financial aid?

Financial aid is any type of assistance used to pay college costs that is based on financial need. There are three main types:

1. Grants and scholarships

Also called gift aid, grants don't have to be repaid and you don't need to work to earn them. Grant aid comes from federal and state governments and from individual colleges.

2. Loans

Most financial aid comes in the form of loans—aid that must be repaid. Most need-based loans are low-interest loans sponsored by the federal government. These loans are subsidized by the government, which means no interest accrues until you begin repayment after graduation.

3. Work

Student employment and Work-Study aid helps students pay for education costs such as books and supplies and personal expenses. Work-Study is a federal program which provides students with part-time employment to help meet their financial needs and gives them work experience while serving their campuses and surrounding communities.

Fact: Nearly 60 percent of all financial aid is loans.

How do you know if you'll qualify for aid?

It depends on your financial circumstances and on the cost of the college. One of the basic premises of financial aid is that the family is expected to contribute to college costs to the extent the family is able. If that amount can't cover the cost, financial aid can help make up the difference. This concept is frequently referred to as the Expected Family Contribution, or EFC for short.

Expected Family Contribution

The EFC is determined by whomever is awarding the aid—usually the federal government or individual colleges and universities. The federal government and financial aid offices use formulas that analyze your family's financial circumstances (such as income and family size) and compare them proportionally with other families' financial circumstances.

Fact: You're likely to be asked to contribute about the same amount whether you apply to a low-cost school or a high-cost school. So, don't automatically discount colleges with higher costs.

Say your EFC is \$5,000. At a college with a total cost of \$8,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$3,000 in financial aid. At a college with a total cost of \$25,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$20,000 in aid. In other words, your family would be asked to contribute the same amount at both colleges.

Important Dates

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

Aug.–June Start researching your financial aid options, paying close attention to the requirements and deadlines. Check out the free search engines on the Web such as FastWeb at www.fastweb.com and FedMoney at www.fedmoney.org.

March–April Sign up to take the SAT® or ACT. For a list of dates and locations, visit www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org.

May Begin to check out colleges by talking to your high school counselor, flipping through catalogs, visiting college Web sites, taking virtual tours, writing to colleges, meeting with college representatives who visit your school, and making personal visits to campuses.

Ask each college about its unique grant, scholarship, work-study and loan programs and whether it offers special tuition payment plans.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Aug.–Sept. Sign up for the SAT® and ACT if you haven't taken them yet or want to take them again.

Register for the College Board's PROFILE® application, if it's required by one of your independent colleges.

Sept.–Oct. Obtain an admission packet to state universities at your high school counseling office, nearby campus, or online. Request admission packets from independent colleges, career colleges, and out-of-state colleges. A number of colleges encourage you to apply online.

Apply for a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov so you can e-sign your online FAFSA. This way, filing the FAFSA in January will be much quicker.

November Print out the Pre-Application Worksheet for FAFSA on the Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Or pick up the paper FAFSA.

January Submit your FAFSA for federal, state, and college aid as soon as possible starting January 1.

In addition, be sure to submit any other applications required for private or college-based financial aid.

Self-Perceptions Worksheet

The purpose of this exercise is to give you a chance to take a look at yourself: to get a sense of how you currently see yourself; of how you'd like to be seen; and of how others might see you. What follows is a list of words, some of which probably describe you quite well and others that probably don't fit you at all. Cut out the words and arrange them in a stack.

Exercise I

Put the card that best describes you AS YOU ARE NOW on top, the one that next best describes you immediately below it, and so on until the card that you feel is most unlike you is at the bottom. Then, copy your list on the "How I See Myself" column.

Exercise II

Mix up your stack of cards and re-arrange them so that the card on top best describes how you would like to see yourself. Follow the same procedure until the card at the bottom shows how you would least like to see yourself. Then, copy your list on the "How I Want to See Myself" column. Circle any items that are more than four spaces (lines) apart on the two tables. *Highlight the items that are the farthest apart on your first two lists.* These highlighted items might suggest some areas of yourself you want to change.

Exercise III

Now ask a friend to arrange the cards according to how he or she sees you. Once your friend has completed the process, copy this list on the "How Others See Me" column. Circle any items which have moved four or more spaces from your "How I See Myself" column.

Intelligent	Inflexible	Unreliable
Shy	Satisfied	Caring
Unique	Outgoing	Tolerant
Insecure	Confused	Honest with myself
Talkative	Friendly	Honest with others
Insincere	Mature	Excuse-maker
Nervous	Attractive	Avoid facing things
Likeable	Selfish	Hard-working
Open-minded	Conscientious	Athletic
Moody	Organized	Rebellious

Self-Perceptions Worksheet

How I See Myself	How I Want to See Myself	How Others See Me
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.
13.	13.	13.
14.	14.	14.
15.	15.	15.
16.	16.	16.
17.	17.	17.
18.	18.	18.
19.	19.	19.
20.	20.	20.
21.	21.	21.
22.	22.	22.
23.	23.	23.
24.	24.	24.
25.	25.	25.
26.	26.	26.
27.	27.	27.
28.	28.	28.
29.	29.	29.
30.	30.	30.

Developing a “College-Going” Culture Among High School Students

From California Student Aid Commission

A Resource for Parents and Teachers

Messages for Students

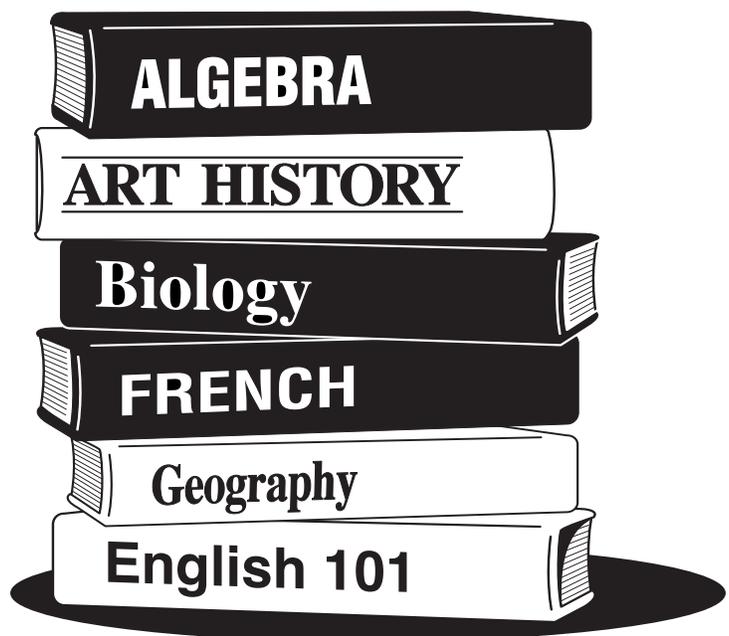
- Everyone CAN go to college.
- Discuss with your parent(s) how to finance your postsecondary education.
- Financial aid is available; always apply.
- Continue to be prepared academically.
- Good grades allow for more options.
- Plan with your school counselor.
- Begin researching courses of study, colleges, scholarships, and other financial aid.

Successful Ideas for High School Students

- Encourage all students to visit and utilize their high school career center/counselor’s office.
- Ensure that each student takes at least one career/aptitude test.
- Avoid labeling students and targeting only those who will probably go to college; assume every student will go to college.
- Have students write essays describing their anticipated lives after high school; have them justify their statements verbally.
- Ensure every student has an opportunity to visit a college campus with classes, tours, and contact with students and faculty.
- Work with students to keep a “Going to College” log and file of information they have researched, including definitions, types of schools, details about specific schools, costs, benefits, careers, courses of study, admission information, and financial aid facts.
- Encourage each student to become involved in a community service activity, such as visiting shut-ins, reading to the blind, delivering hot meals to the elderly, etc.
- Encourage students to regularly read for entertainment.
- Continue to limit the time spent watching and discussing TV.

Activity 1.20 (2 of 2)

- Encourage every student to engage in a healthy balance of academics, sports, performance and community activities.
- Encourage students to begin/continue study of a second language. Encourage students to keep a daily journal.
- Practice writing essays in preparation for college admissions and scholarship applications.
- Present creative problem-solving issues for students to research during school breaks.
- Establish and maintain a calendar of due dates for scholarships/other financial aid and college admissions.
- Encourage all students to take the required courses for college.
- Encourage all students to research all types of post-secondary education with consideration of family circumstances, finances, and student grades.
- Require students to interview people in their chosen career path and write a report on their findings.
- Assist and encourage students to research local scholarships that might not be shown on Web sites.
- Assign students to interview college students and write a report on their findings (a typical college day, living in a dorm, how to manage study requirements and working).
- Ensure that each student understands the perils of living on credit cards.
- Encourage all students to take the standardized testing required for college admission and/or scholarships.
- Ensure that each student can write, deposit, or cash a check; maintain a check register; establish a budget and live by it; change a car tire; carry on a meaningful conversation with an adult; take responsibility for a young child; do their own laundry; prepare a healthy meal; scrub a bathroom; make independent decisions; conduct research on the Internet, etc.



UNIT TWO: JUNIOR YEAR, SECOND SEMESTER

Overview

During the second semester of the junior year, students are encouraged to take both college admissions tests. They can then prepare for retaking their highest-scored test in the fall semester of their senior year. This is also the time to explain strategies that will help students when they take SAT[®] Subject Tests. Since many students will also be taking AP[®] tests for the first time, these can be coordinated with the SAT[®] Subject Tests.

Students can prepare for the college application process by beginning a first draft of their college essay and by considering whom they will ask to write letters of recommendation. This is also the time for updating data sheets and résumés.

Students will need to determine priorities for their higher education so they can focus on researching colleges that “fit” these priorities. Once a list of colleges is created, students will want to consider visiting these campuses before the first semester of their senior year. Finally, students need to plan a productive summer to ensure they are prepared for the application process in the fall.

This is also the time to research the costs involved in attending college and to determine how to pay these costs. It’s important to include parents in this discussion. Students can begin to search for financial aid and apply for a FAFSA PIN. Visiting college fairs in the spring to check for “fit” and continuing the search for scholarships are also a part of the second semester of junior year.

Timeline

1. Testing (Activities 2.1–2.2)

December–June: Register for March through June admission tests, including ACT, SAT[®], and SAT[®] Subject Tests. (SAT[®] Subject Tests are needed for highly selective schools.)

February–June: Take SAT[®], ACT, and SAT[®] Subject Tests.

May: Take appropriate AP[®] tests.

2. Preparation (Activities 2.3–2.10)

February: Review first-semester grades and compute GPA.

February–June: Update data sheets and résumé.

March–June: Explore the Common Application. Begin/refine essay prompts.

May–June: Focus on letter of recommendation procedures and teacher/counselor selection.

3. Exploration (Activities 2.11–2.17)

February: Complete college selection and priorities activities.

March–June: Do college/major research, using a variety of resources including Web sites, printed materials, speakers, and visits.

March–June: Create potential college lists. Use comparison worksheets. Finalize summer plans.

4. “Fit” and Finances (Activities 2.18–2.24)

February: Register for FAFSA PIN and discuss scholarship scams.

February–June: Continue searches and applications on FastWeb.

March: Use family financial aid predictor Web sites (www.act.org or www.collegeboard.com).

March–April: Visit college fairs.



1. Testing

It is important that students take both college admission tests during the second semester of their junior year. Review SAT® and ACT testing schedules at www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org; students can register online for both. By taking both tests early, students have time to compare results and determine which test best measures their strengths. In September or October of their senior year, students should retake the test that produced the highest score. Fee waivers are available to qualifying students for the ACT and SAT®. Invite the AVID counselor to review the registration process with the class.

Students who are eligible to attend highly selective private schools should also register for SAT® Subject Tests. These are one-hour tests that are required by some schools for admission. Try to coordinate the SAT® Subject Tests with completion of AP® or honors classes as this is when students will be best prepared to take them (Activity 2.1). Fee waivers are also available for these exams. Show students where to find online test prep sites (especially “Number 2 Pencil”) and include test prep activities, such as timed writings using SAT® practice prompts, in classroom activities.

As test scores are returned, make sure students file these results in their “crates.” A review of the scores will help them determine which test(s) need to be repeated during the fall of their senior year (Activity 2.2).

Timeline

January–May: Register for April through June admission tests, including ACT, SAT®, and SAT® Subject Tests. (SAT® Subject Tests are needed for highly selective schools.)

March–June: Take SAT®, ACT, and SAT® Subject Tests.

May: Take appropriate AP® tests.

Activities/Materials

Activity 2.1 “Testing Tips”: Teaching students testing strategies significantly improves the opportunity for student success. Activity 2.1 touches on the positive correlation between AP® classes/exams and SAT® Subject Tests. Teachers should not only introduce specific test-taking tips to students, but they should also help students schedule the SAT® Subject Tests at the opportune time for each student.

Teacher Information: Review this information with students and help them strategize. Students need to be reminded to take the SAT® Subject Tests as soon as they complete an honors or AP® class, as this is the most opportune time to do so.

Activity 2.2 “SAT® and ACT Score Comparison”: This chart gives students an opportunity to explore the differences between the ACT and SAT®. This is not an official comparison chart. Use only as an approximate chart of compared scores. An official chart may not be ready until the fall of 2007. Have students use the approximate chart to estimate the comparison of the ACT and SAT® scores and predict which test might better suit their academic strengths.

Teacher Information: Students can use this handout to track/compare their test scores to determine on which test they scored the highest. At the beginning of students’ senior year, they will want to retake either the SAT® or ACT to boost their test scores to the highest possible point. **Note:** A sanctioned comparison between the new SAT® and ACT has not yet been developed. The SAT® and ACT Score Comparison is an approximation.

Testing Tips

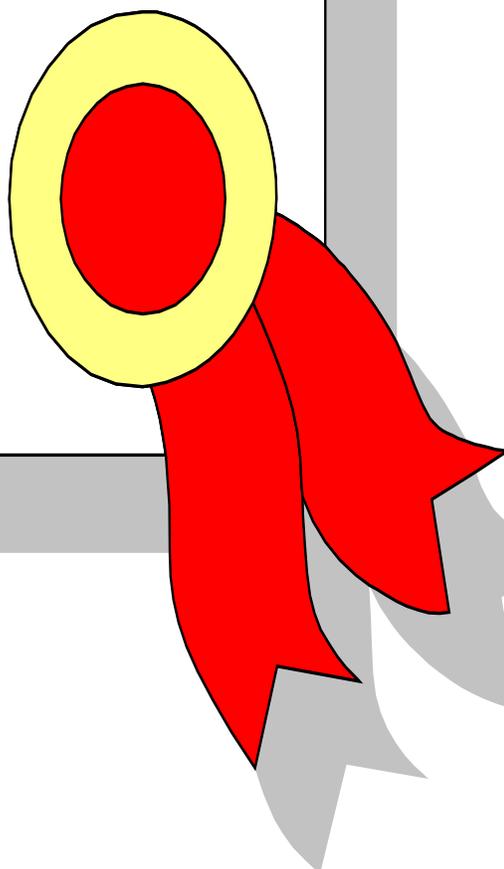
Tip 1: Take AP® courses because...

- These rigorous, college-level courses will prepare you for taking SAT® Subject Tests.
- The questions on AP® exams and SAT® Subject Tests often overlap. For example, if you take the AP® U.S. History exam, the odds are that many of its multiple-choice questions will mirror those on the SAT® Subject Test for U.S. History.

Tip 2: Take SAT® Subject Tests at the best possible time—

- The best possible time is immediately after completing the corresponding class. For example, the SAT® Subject Biology Test should be taken as soon as you finish AP® Biology.

Suggestions from Paul Kanarek, President,
the *Princeton Review of SoCal*



Activity 2.2 (1 of 2)

Sample SAT[®] and ACT Comparison Chart

This chart shows estimated scores for the ACT, the Current SAT[®], and the New SAT[®].

Last Current SAT[®]: January 22, 2005
 First ACT with Writing Test: February 12, 2005
 First New SAT[®]: March 12, 2005

ACT	Current SAT [®]	New SAT [®]
<i>If you scored a...</i>	<i>or a...</i>	<i>It's about the same as a...</i>
36	1600	2400
35	1560–1590	2340
34	1510–1550	2260
33	1460–1500	2190
32	1410–1450	2130
31	1360–1400	2040
30	1320–1350	1980
29	1280–1310	1920
28	1240–1270	1860
27	1210–1230	1820
26	1170–1200	1760
25	1130–1160	1700
24	1090–1120	1650
23	1060–1080	1590
22	1020–1050	1530
21	980–1010	1500
20	940–970	1410
19	900–930	1350
18	860–890	1290
17	810–850	1210
16	760–800	1140
15	710–750	1060
14	660–700	1000
13	590–650	900
12	520–580	780
11	500–510	750

This chart has not been approved by the College Board or ACT. It is a compilation of “best guess” estimates from several test prep companies.

Activity 2.2 (2 of 2)

College Admission Testing 101

Where to Begin: Words of Advice

- Plan ahead and register early online.
- Take practice timed tests and/or a test prep class.
- Do all testing in spring of the junior year (senior year is for damage control).
- Be rested and positive on test day.
- Arrive early to the test site and have a photo ID.

SAT® Reasoning Test (Formerly Known as SAT® I)

- Register online at www.collegeboard.com.
- Fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Students with disabilities can apply online to file accommodations at www.collegeboard.com/ssd. Plan ahead.
- Curricular test with three sections: critical reading, math, writing.
- Writing is done first and is not optional; test takes up to five hours.
- Each section scored 200–800 to equal a perfect score of 2400.
- Critical Reading: short and long passages from natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and literary fiction.
- Math: up to Algebra II; calculator is allowed.
- Writing: 25-minute persuasive essay; readers look for length, neatness, organization, opinion stated early, conclusion.
- PSAT® in grades 10 and 11 is good practice.

ACT: The “Other” Admission Test

- Register online at www.act.org.
- Fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Students with disabilities must apply early and with paper folio only.
- Curricular test with four parts and an optional writing that is taken last; test takes up to four hours with writing option.
- No penalty for guessing.
- Four-part test: reading, math, English, scientific reasoning.
- Reading: comprehension and reasoning.
- Math: up to trigonometry; calculator is allowed.
- English: grammar and usage.
- Scientific reasoning: interpretation and problem-solving skills.
- Score: 1–36 on each subtest and a composite (average score).
- Writing: persuasive essay with possible solutions given. Sub-score 2–12 with comments from raters on strengths or weaknesses.
- In-depth interest inventory.
- PLAN test in grade 10 is good practice.

SAT® Subject Tests (Formerly Know as the SAT® II)

- Additional tests required by some selective universities.
- Choices: history, English literature, math, laboratory science, foreign language.
- Student can take one, two, or three tests at any sitting.
- Strategy: take test when you complete an advanced course.

A special thanks to Louise McClain, Head Counselor at Granite Hills High School, El Cajon, California, for this information.

2. Preparation

First-semester grades should be reviewed at this time. Students should continually track their progression towards completing all courses and mastering all tests required for university admissions. Students should also compute their GPA (Activity 2.3) and update their data sheets and résumés at least once per semester.

After explaining the differences between public and private universities, distribute copies of the Common Application (Activity 2.4), which can be used to apply to 255 colleges and universities located nationwide. Discuss all parts of the application and its use with independent (private) colleges. It is helpful for students to reflect on who they are and what is important to them (Activities 2.5–2.6) before they attempt to write college admission essays. Students can then choose one of the six essay topics and begin a rough draft. Distribute Activities 2.7 and 2.8 to those who are interested, and have them begin drafts.

It is particularly important to discuss letters of recommendation (Activity 2.9) at this time to get students thinking about which teacher might write them an effective recommendation letter. Once they have selected a teacher, students should share their résumé with him/her this year (as well as with their counselor) in preparation for asking for a recommendation letter in the fall of their senior year.

Explain the advantages of Early Action and Early Decision admission programs (Activity 2.10) so students can begin considering these options.

Remind students to file all college-related materials in their “crates.”

Timeline

January–February: Review first-semester grades, update high school course requirements, and compute GPA.

February–June: Update data sheets and résumé.

March–June: Explore the Common Application. Begin/refine essay prompts.

May–June: Focus on letter of recommendation procedures and teacher/counselor selection.

Activities/Materials

Activity 2.3 “Calculating a Grade Point Average”: This activity will help students compute their GPA.

Teacher Information: *Students will need their transcripts in order to complete this handout. For an unweighted GPA, have students write down each college-preparatory course they have completed, assign the appropriate number of points (A=4, B=3, C=2), and do the math. To determine their weighted GPA, students will need to add a point to each grade received in an AP® or honors class.*

Activity 2.4 “Common Application”: This application, which is accepted by 255 private universities and colleges, can be completed online at www.commonapp.org (or by completing a paper form).

Teacher Information: *Reproduce the current Common Application (www.commonapp.org) and give a copy to each student. Discuss how to fill it out, emphasizing that this one application can be used to apply to 255 private universities and colleges. Reviewing the application with students will help them see the importance of keeping their résumé and data sheets current. If a state system-wide application is available, introduce students to that application document also.*

Activity 2.5 “Me, Personally”: This is another activity geared to help students examine themselves in preparation for writing their college essays.

Teacher Information: Reproduce all (or portions) of this activity, and have students answer the questions as thoroughly as possible. This exercise will help students organize their thoughts as they explore who they are in preparation for writing the first draft of their college essay.

Activity 2.6 “College Admission Essay Topics”: This activity provides essay prompts from several different admission applications.

Teacher Information: Use prompts for discussion and writing practice.

Activity 2.7 “College Admission Essay Tips”: This handout provides do’s and don’ts for college admission essays.

Teacher Information: Discuss these suggestions with your students; suggest that they refer to these tips as they write and edit their essays. Refer to college and university Web sites for further tips on writing admission essays.

Activity 2.8 “Top 10 Tips for Writing the College Essay”: This handout will help students prepare to write their college admission essay.

Teacher Information: Reproduce this handout and review it with students. Have students work on their essays paying close attention to the tips provided for writing their essays.

Activity 2.9 “The Letter of Recommendation”: Information for students requesting letters of recommendation for college admission. Also included is information for teachers who write these very important documents for their students.

Teacher Information: Now is the time for students to begin thinking about letters of recommendation: how to ask for them, whom they want to write them, and what materials they will need to provide the writer. Reproduce the information for students and have them determine whom they will ask for letters of recommendation. Students will want to have letters from at least one teacher and one counselor. A personal recommendation from someone outside of school (but NOT a relative) is often helpful for admission and/or scholarship applications. This activity also emphasizes the importance of having an updated résumé to accompany the request.

Activity 2.10 “Glossary of Terms: Admission Decision Options”: A glossary of admission decision terms.

Teacher Information: Students have options for college admission applications. This handout explains the following options: early decision, early action, regular decision, rolling admission, and wait list. You may want to reproduce this handout for students and discuss its ramifications.

Calculating a Grade Point Average

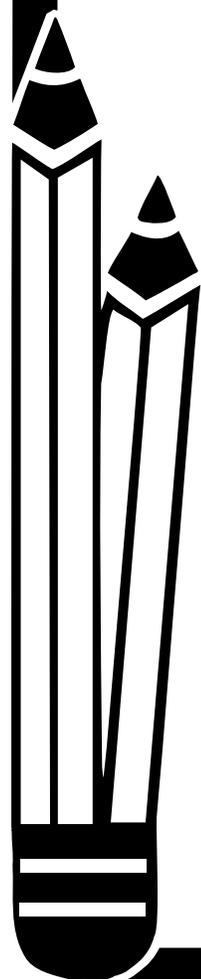
It is essential that students know how to calculate their grade point average (GPA) and that they review their transcripts after each semester (or quarter) to make sure all of their information is correctly recorded. Students should keep an ongoing record of courses, class rank, and credits earned to determine if they are improving and keeping on track toward their goal of college admission. Make sure students know that grades earned at the end of the marking period appear on their permanent records. If they receive a poor grade on a progress report, they have time to work extra hard to improve that grade before the end of the marking period.

Help students understand the importance of raising a 79 to an 80, or making a 90 instead of an 89, especially if their GPA, rank, or college admission is based on a 4.0 or 5.0 grade point scale.

GRADES + CLASS RANK + TEST SCORES = MONEY when it comes to college financial aid. Students should not only know their GPA and class rank, but they should use this information. Reviewing transcripts and calculating GPA are great activities to include with goal-setting lessons. Give students the opportunity to set academic goals based on their current grades.

Time: Less than 1 class period

- After each marking period, obtain new class ranks for each grade level and grades and/or unofficial transcripts (or summary of credits) for each AVID student from counselors.
- Walk students through how to calculate a GPA.
- After students compute their GPA, have them set their GPA goals.
- Have students revisit the GPA calculation activity and the goal-setting activity after each grading period.



Activity 2.3 (2 of 3)

Calculating My GPA

Name: _____ Date: _____

STEP 1

Complete chart below by filling in the grades you earned:

CLASS	GRADE
English	
Math	
History	
Science	
Foreign Language	
AVID	
Other: _____	

STEP 2

Count how many you have of each letter grade:

How many I have:	Letter Grade
	A
	B
	C
	D
	F

STEP 3

Multiply each grade you received with the value listed:

	How many I have:		Grade Points Earned
A		x4	=
B		x3	=
C		x2	=
D		x1	=
F		x0	=

STEP 4

Add your grade points earned. Add 1 point for every semester of an AP® class. The answer will be your total number of grade points.

Total Grade Points

STEP 5

Divide the total grade points by the number of classes you have grades for.

$$\frac{\text{TGP} = \text{Total Grade Point}}{\text{NC} = \text{Number of Classes}}$$

STEP 6

My GPA is _____

Activity 2.3 (3 of 3)
GPA Goal-Setting

Name: _____ Date: _____

Grading Period: _____ GPA on my progress report: _____ GPA on my report card: _____

My feelings about my grades: _____

My achievements so far this year: _____

My disappointments this year: _____

My GPA goals for the next two months: _____

My academic goals for the next two months (studying, time management, homework, specific class, notetaking, calendar, etc.): _____

My personal goals for the next two months to help achieve my GPA (attitude, TV, social issues, family, nutrition, etc.): _____

Activity 2.4 (2 of 4)

EDUCATIONAL DATA

Secondary school you now attend (or from which you graduated) _____ Date of entry _____

Address _____ CEEB/ACT code _____
Number and Street

_____ City or Town _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ Zip Code or Postal Code

Date of secondary graduation _____ Type of school public private parochial home school

Guidance Counselor's Name _____ Counselor's E-mail _____

Position _____ Phone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____
Area Code Number Ext. Area Code Number

List all other secondary schools, including summer schools and programs you have attended beginning with ninth grade.

<small>Name of School</small>	<small>Location (City, State/Province, Zip, Country)</small>	<small>Dates Attended</small>

List all colleges/universities at which you have taken courses for credit; list names of courses taken and grades earned on a separate sheet. Please have an official transcript sent from each institution as soon as possible.

<small>Name of College/University & CEEB/ACT Code</small>	<small>Location (City, State/Province, Zip, Country)</small>	<small>Degree Candidate?</small>	<small>Dates Attended</small>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	

- Not currently attending school Graduated from secondary school early.
 Describe in detail, here or on a separate sheet, your activities since last enrolled.

If you are a resident of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi or Texas, are you currently displaced by Hurricane Katrina or Rita? If so, please take a moment to provide details of your displacement, here or on a separate sheet.

TEST INFORMATION

Be sure to note the tests required for each institution to which you are applying. The official scores from the appropriate testing agency must be submitted to each institution as soon as possible. Please list your test plans below.

ACT

<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>English</small>	<small>Reading</small>	<small>Math</small>	<small>Science</small>	<small>Composite</small>	<small>Combination English/Writing</small>

**SAT I or
SAT Reasoning Tests**

<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Verbal/Critical Reading</small>	<small>Math</small>	<small>Writing</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Verbal/Critical Reading</small>	<small>Math</small>	<small>Writing</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Verbal/Critical Reading</small>	<small>Math</small>	<small>Writing</small>

SAT II or Subject Tests

<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Subject</small>	<small>Score</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Subject</small>	<small>Score</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Subject</small>	<small>Score</small>

**Test of English as a second language
(TOEFL or other exam)**

<small>Test</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Score</small>	<small>Test</small>	<small>Date taken/ to be taken</small>	<small>Score</small>

AP-2

Activity 2.4 (3 of 4)

FAMILY

Parent 1

Last/Family _____ First _____ Middle _____ Gender _____

Living? Yes No (Date deceased _____)

Home address if different from yours

Home phone _____

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Name of employer _____

Work phone _____

Work e-mail _____

College (if any) _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Graduate school (if any) _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Parents' marital status: married separated divorced (date _____) never married widowed

With whom do you make your permanent home? Parent 1 Parent 2 Both Legal Guardian Other relation

Legal guardian's name/address

Please give names and ages of your brothers or sisters. If they have attended college, give the names of the institutions attended, degrees, and approximate dates.

EXTRACURRICULAR, PERSONAL, AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES (including summer)

Please list your **principal** extracurricular, community, and family activities and hobbies **in the order of their interest to you**. Include specific events and/or major accomplishments such as musical instrument played, varsity letters earned, etc. Check (✓) in the right column those activities you hope to pursue in college. **To allow us to focus on the highlights of your activities, please complete this section even if you plan to attach a résumé.**

Activity	Grade level or post-secondary (PS)					Approximate time spent		Positions held, honors won, or letters earned	Do you plan to participate in college?
	9	10	11	12	PS	Hours per week	Weeks per year		
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACADEMIC HONORS

Briefly list or describe any scholastic distinctions or honors you have won since the ninth grade (e.g., National Merit, Cum Laude Society).

Activity 2.4 (4 of 4)

WORK EXPERIENCE

List any job (including summer employment) you have held during the past three years.

Specific nature of work	Employer	Approximate dates of employment	Approximate no. of hours spent per week
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

SHORT ANSWER

Please describe which of your activities (extracurricular and personal activities or work experience) has been most meaningful and why (150 words or fewer).

PERSONAL ESSAY

This personal statement helps us become acquainted with you in ways different from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. We are looking for an essay that will help us know you better as a person and as a student. Please write an essay (250–500 words) on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below. **Please indicate your topic by checking the appropriate box below.**

- 1 Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- 2 Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- 3 Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- 4 Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
- 5 A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
- 6 Topic of your choice.

 **Attach your essay on a separate sheet(s) (same size please). You must put your full name, date of birth, and name of secondary school on each sheet.**

APPLICATION FEE PAYMENT Check/money order attached Counselor-approved Fee Waiver attached

REQUIRED SIGNATURE Your signature is required whether you are an ED, EA, EASC, or regular decision candidate.
I certify that all information in my application, including my Personal Essay, is my own work, factually true, and honestly presented.

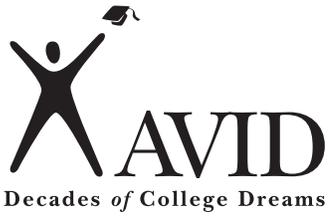
Signature _____ Date _____

IF APPLYING VIA EARLY DECISION OR EARLY ACTION (1) Complete the Optional ED/EA/EASC Declaration for your early application **only**. (2) Submit the college's required ED/EA/EASC form, if any. (3) Understand that it is your responsibility to report any changes in your schedule to the colleges to which you are applying.

These colleges are committed to administer all educational policies and activities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, handicap, or gender.

AP-4

Activity 2.5 (1 of 5)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Me, Personally

Answer the following questions about yourself as completely as possible. You will be referring to this later while you are writing narrative essays or your college admission essay.

1. What are some of my strongest abilities?

2. What things interest me most?

3. What activities, people, things really make me feel happy?

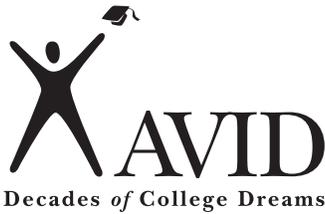
4. What issues, world problems, current events concern me most?

5. What are my personal strengths? (For example, I get along with people, I'm not a quitter, I am a good friend, etc.)

6. What do I need improvement in?

7. What have I had to overcome?

Activity 2.5 (2 of 5)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Discovering Myself

Do you ever think about the type of person you are? Here are some activities that will help you to know how to characterize yourself in a narrative essay or college admission essay.

Brainstorming: Think of words or phrases that someone who knows you well might use to tell someone about you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

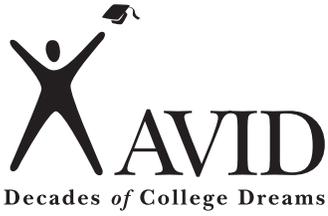
Now rank these characteristics in the order of importance. Explain.

Characteristics

Reasoning

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |
| 6. _____ | _____ |
| 7. _____ | _____ |
| 8. _____ | _____ |

Activity 2.5 (3 of 5)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

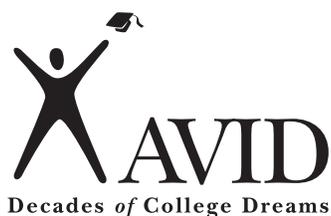
My Ideal Self

Create a description of your “ideal self.”

What would you do if you had the power and resources to do what you wanted?

What activity would give you the most fulfillment?

Activity 2.5 (4 of 5)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Thinking about this now will help you get ready to write your admission essay.

In what way am I...

Unique _____

Pleasant _____

Friendly _____

Intelligent _____

An individual _____

Quiet _____

Thoughtful _____

Talented _____

Mischievous _____

Studious _____

What different qualities do I have that would enhance a college campus?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Activity 2.5 (5 of 5)

If you were suddenly placed in a very different culture, how would you react?

Identify a different culture:

Describe a situation:

Explain how you would react:

Activity 2.6 (1 of 2)

College Admission Essay Topics

Read through the topics listed below. All are topics that have been required on actual college admission forms. Choose the one that you feel you can answer best. Write a 2–3 page essay developing the topic.

What have you undertaken or done on your own in the last year or two that has nothing to do with academic work?
(Northwestern)

Imagine that you have the opportunity to travel back through time. At what point in history would you like to stop and why? (Swarthmore)

What is the best advice you ever received? Why? And did you follow it? (University of Pennsylvania)

Select a creative work—a novel, a film, a poem, a musical piece, a painting or other work of art—that has influenced the way you view the world and the way you view yourself. Discuss the work and its effect on you.
(New York University)

What do you think has been the most important social or political movement of the 20th century? Do you share a personal identification with this cause? (Trinity College, CT)

If you were to look back on your high school years, what advice would you give to someone beginning their high school career? (Simmons)

It has been said [by Andy Warhol] that “in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes.” Describe your fifteen minutes. (New York University)

What single adjective do you think would be most frequently used to describe you by those who know you best? Briefly explain. (Stanford)

Describe an intellectual experience of the past two years that has given you great satisfaction. (Amherst)

If you were to describe yourself by a quotation, what would the quote be? Explain your answer. (Dartmouth)

Tell us about the neighborhood that you grew up in and how it helped shape you into the kind of person you are today. (Yale and the University of Chicago)

You’ve just written a 300-page autobiography. Send us page 217. (University of Pennsylvania)

If you could be a “fly on the wall” to observe any situation (historical, personal, or otherwise) describe what you would choose to observe and why. What would you hope to learn and how would it benefit you? (University of Pittsburgh)

If we could only admit one more student to the University of Pittsburgh, why should it be you? (University of Pittsburgh)

Describe a risk that you have taken and discuss its impact on your life. (Kalamazoo College)

If you could spend a year with any real or fictional person in the past, present, or future, whom would you choose? Why? (Kalamazoo College)

What invention would the world be better off without, and why? (Kalamazoo College)

If you had the gift of telepathy, the ability to read other people’s minds, would you use this gift or not? Explain.
(Middle East Technical University)

Activity 2.6 (2 of 2)

Tell us about one of the best conversations you've had. (Stanford)

If you were to write a book, on what theme or subject matter would it be based, and why? (Stanford)

Tell us how a particular book, play, film, piece of music, dance performance, scientific theory or experiment or work of art has influenced you. If you choose a novel, film, or play, assume we know the plot. (Notre Dame)

Select a technological innovation of this century and discuss its effects on your family, local community or nation. (Notre Dame)

Read Annie Dillard's *An American Childhood*. Choose one of her observations or ideas and write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (Notre Dame)

Read Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Drawing upon personal experience, write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (Notre Dame)

"If you had only \$10 to plan a day's adventure, where would you go, what would you do, and whom would you take with you?" (Johns Hopkins)

Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you. (Common Application)

Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. (Common Application)

Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence. (Common Application)

Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence. (Common Application)

A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity on you. (Common Application)



College Admission Essay Tips

When You Write Your Essay...

Do start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite. You can improve on your presentation.

Do read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the question as directly as possible, and you'll want to follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and as clearly as you can.

Do tell the truth about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you; you are completely unknown to it. Even if you run into a committee member in the future, he/she will have no way of connecting your essay (out of the thousands read) to you.

Do focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalizations.

Do feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.

Do tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this particular school can do for you. Your essay can have different slants for different colleges.

Do speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.

Do write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them!

But...

DON'T repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it—and it looks as though you have nothing better to say.

DON'T write on general, impersonal topics—like the nuclear arms race or the importance of good management in business. The college wants to know about you.

DON'T use the personal statement to excuse your shortcomings. (It would give them additional attention.)

DON'T use clichés.

DON'T go to extremes: too witty, too opinionated, or too “intellectual.”

Remember:

The personal statement is YOURS. If it looks like Madison Avenue, the admission committee will probably assume that it is your mother's or your father's (or another adult's) work.

A “gimmick” essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee may be amused but unimpressed with your candidacy.

Write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

Top 10 Tips for Writing the College Essay

1. **Start early.** The more time you have, the less stress you'll have. And you'll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.
2. **Be yourself.** Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it.

One of the biggest mistakes students make is “writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them,” says Richard M. Fuller, dean of admission and financial aid at Hamilton College (NY). An essay like that is not just boring to write—it's boring to read.

3. **Be honest.** You're running late (see #1), you can't think of what to write—and someone e-mails you a heart-warming story. With just a tweak here and there, it could be a great essay, you think. It's what you would have written if you'd just had enough time.

Don't be fooled! College admission officers have read hundreds—even thousands—of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Adapting an e-mail story, buying an essay from some Internet site, getting someone else to write your essay—admission people have seen it all. Don't risk your college career by taking the easy way out.

4. **Take a risk.** On the other hand, some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing. Imagine an admission officer up late, reading the 50th essay of the day—yours. Do you want that person to nod off because he or she has already read 10 essays on that topic?

“The danger lies not in writing bad essays but in writing common essays—the one that admission officers are going to read dozens of,” says Scott Anderson, associate director of college counseling at Mercersburg Academy (PA). “My advice? Ask your friends what they are writing—and then don't write about that!”

5. **Keep in focus.** This is your chance to tell admission officers exactly why they should admit you. Unfortunately, some students try to list every single reason—their stellar academic record, their athletic prowess, their community service—all in a page or two. When that happens, the essay looks like a grocery list.

Instead, read the essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay. You don't have to list all your achievements—that's what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.

6. **Write and rewrite.** Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try. It's not possible—and all that pressure is likely to give you writer's block. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling. Just get it down on paper (or computer screen). Then let it “rest” for a few hours or a few days.

When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Some people are “fat” writers: they write long, wordy first drafts that need to be shortened later. Others are “skinny” writers: they write short and simple first drafts and then need to add details or examples to “flesh out” the skeleton. Either way, don't be afraid to make major changes at this stage. Are there details that don't really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

Activity 2.8 (2 of 2)

Here are two other things to try, suggested by college counselor Marti Phillips-Patrick.

1. Remove the introductory and concluding paragraphs, and then see if your essay seems stronger. These paragraphs are often the most likely to have unnecessary detail.
 2. Go through the essay and cut out every “very” and every “many.” Words like these are vague, and your writing is often stronger without them.
7. **Get a second opinion.** Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they’re sent to the publisher. When you’ve rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing—a favorite English teacher, a parent, a friend who writes for the school paper. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay—and what you can do to improve it.

Criticism of your writing can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don’t have to make every change suggested—after all, it’s your essay and no one else’s—but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

8. **Proofread.** Finally, you’re ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Read it over one more time, looking for those little errors that can creep in as you write or edit. If you’re using a computer, also run a spell check.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to catch minor typos—you’ve read the essay so many times that you see what should be there rather than what is there. To make sure you catch everything, try reading your essay out loud or having someone else read it out loud to you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. That makes it just unfamiliar enough for errors to stand out.

9. **Don’t confuse applying online with sending e-mail.** Applying online is just as serious as applying “the old-fashioned way.” It may feel like you’re sending e-mail, but you’re not.

“One thing I’ve often seen is that students who apply online submit sub-par essays,” says Palmer Muntz, director of admission at Oregon Institute of Technology. He has found that essays submitted online tend to be much shorter than those submitted on paper. In addition, students often use e-mail language—no capitalization, or abbreviations such as BTW or “thanx”—which are not appropriate to a formal document. Make sure that you put as much effort into an online essay as you would if you were sending it snail mail.

10. **Don’t expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but it’s not the only thing that is considered. “Can [the essay] make a difference in getting the ‘thin versus thick’ envelope? Absolutely,” says Fuller. “But that is the exception rather than the rule.”

That’s because admission officers look at the whole package—your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. A great essay rarely makes up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a mediocre essay won’t necessarily consign your application to the “deny” list. So make your essay as well-written as you can, but don’t put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

Written by Jennifer Gross.

Copyright © 2004 National Association for College Admission Counseling

Activity 2.9 (1 of 7)

The Letter of Recommendation

- Most private colleges, competitive college major departments, and some employers will request a letter of recommendation.
- Colleges are looking for personal insights about student applicants, not a reiteration of grades and test scores. The most effective letters are usually obtained from teachers who know the student very well.
- The most competitive colleges usually prefer letters from teachers of college prep courses (i.e., English, lab science, advanced math, and foreign language). These faculty members have witnessed strengths in the classroom. These teachers are often better able to promote admission than, for instance, an administrator who has not had such extended personal interaction.
- In selecting people to write your recommendations, consider that you may want these letters to illustrate a balance of your interests. For instance, recommendations from an English teacher, a math teacher, and a coach would give a broader picture than recommendations from three math teachers.
- When requesting a letter of recommendation, allow the teacher 10–14 days for completion. Requesting the letter of recommendation early will help both you and the teacher to avoid the last-minute rush to meet a critical deadline.
- Make personal contact with the teacher. **DO NOT** assume the letter will be completed if you send a request by mail.
- Be sure to give the teacher an addressed, stamped envelope. It would help if you would also leave the following information on a sheet of paper:
 - the name of the individual/office to receive the letter
 - why you are interested in this particular college or position
 - a summary of your career goals and plans for college
 - a few words about your involvement in any of the following:
 - clubs and service organizations
 - non-school activities (church, community, employment)
 - student government
 - athletics
 - hobbies, special interests, talents
 - awards, honors
 - a short statement describing your strengths, attitudes, and/or skills which may help you to be successful
- Write a short thank-you to the individual who has taken the time to support you in this way.

Activity 2.9 (2 of 7)

Student Information Worksheet

When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, be sure to:

- Fill out the student information worksheet as completely as possible; not all sections may apply.
- Think of a teacher who knows you well.
- Make an appointment to ask the teacher to write a letter or recommendation for you. Plan ahead to meet your timeline, and allow the teacher 10–14 days for the completion of the letter. DO NOT assume the letter will be completed if you leave the request in the teacher’s mailbox; make sure you make personal contact with the teacher.
- At the time of the appointment, give the teacher an addressed, stamped envelope for each school that requires a letter and your completed information worksheet.
- Write a short thank-you to the teacher who has supported you in this way.

Name (*as it appears on applications*) _____

Address _____ ZIP Code _____

Birthplace _____ First language _____

Relevant family history _____

Most significant experiences in your life _____

Greatest challenges in your life (*hurdles you have overcome*) _____

Individual accomplishments (*academic and school-related: give grade levels and offices held, if any*) _____

Community activities (*church, charity, community service*) _____

Activity 2.9 (3 of 7)

Employment experiences (*include grade level*) _____

If employed, how many hours a week do/did you work? _____

Advanced classes you have completed or in which you are currently enrolled _____

Awards or honors you have received (*include the year*) _____

College and career plans _____

Possible majors (in order of preference) _____

Personal and professional goals _____

Three words that best describe you _____

If there is something special or unique about you which might interest other or help you to get accepted, please include it here. _____

Anything else that will help to make this letter as specific and as convincing as possible in describing you and your accomplishments _____

Letter is for _____ and is due _____

Teacher Guidelines for Writing Student Letters of Support

The letter of support written by a teacher for the college applicant is an important ingredient of the student's total application package. In fact, this part of the student's application just might be the deciding admission factor.

Colleges tell us that they are looking for more than a “recommendation.” They want a characterization that helps to make the student come alive as a person. Knowing this often causes a feeling of panic as a teacher sits down to tackle those inevitable requests each year. The purpose of these guidelines is to give suggestions that will help to make the recommendation writing process easier and less stressful.

Before the Request

Get into the habit of being “tuned in” to watching for incidents that might be used later in a letter. Teachers observe these occurrences all the time, but often forget about them during the actual letter-writing process.

Think of this observation as a future “anecdote” in which you will briefly describe an event or happening that will make the student come alive. Be on the lookout for such things as:

1. A kindness to another student
2. A particularly astute comment in class discussions
3. An instance in casual conversation that illustrates a student's sense of humor, fairness, honesty, etc.

The hardest part of this procedure is actually *writing the anecdote* down as soon as it is observed. You may have the time to write up a full description, or you may simply wish to jot down a one-word reminder on a scrap of paper. This reminder can then be stored for later use in whatever filing system you choose. Of course, you may never get a request from that student, but if you do, this will save you time and it will be an excellent starting point for your letter.

The Request

Writing a college recommendation letter is a *volunteer* duty for the teacher. Because the teacher letter should be a letter of support, if you cannot support the student, it is best not to write the letter.

If you feel uncomfortable about writing a supportive letter, it is perfectly permissible to say “no.”

Keep in mind that:

1. Timing is important, and if the request comes too close to a due date or at a busy time for you, it is okay to refuse.
 - a. The student has the responsibility of asking early enough unless there is a very good, specific reason for a late request.
 - b. A two-week notice is not unreasonable to expect. If you receive less than that, you have every right to refuse to write the letter.
2. If you feel you cannot write a complimentary letter, you have two choices:
 - a. Simply tell the student you will be unable to write the letter (no explanation is necessary).
 - b. Tell the applicant honestly how you feel about writing the letter. Share any reservations you may have with him/her.

Activity 2.9 (5 of 7)

The Letter

Preparation for Writing

1. Pull out the recorded “anecdotes,” if any.
2. Ask the student about academic and career goals.
3. Identify the student’s strengths and weaknesses as you see them.
4. Review the student’s transcript.
5. Read the “Student Information Sheet” in the counseling office. You might want to ask your students for a Xeroxed copy of this sheet before they turn it in to the counseling office.
6. Ask another teacher for a “quotable” quote about the student. Use this as a backup or to add variety.

Content of the Letter

1. Give background information, which relates to your class or classes.
 - a. Explain briefly what you teach.
 - b. Give the length of time you have known the student.
 - c. Give the classes you have taught the student.
 - d. Relate briefly the type of learning and thinking required in your class.
2. Explain your relationship to the student.
3. Provide comparisons if at all possible. Compare the applicant to previous candidates to the same college or to his/her classmates.
4. Discuss any growth and maturity you have noted in the student. This applies particularly well if you have had him/her for more than one year.
5. Explain what the student is like in class.
 - a. How does he/she relate to her peers?
 - b. In what ways is he/she appealing to teachers?
 - c. Is he/she the center point of classroom discussions?
6. Discuss some or all of the following traits that you have observed in this applicant.
 - a. Creative, original thought
 - b. Motivation
 - c. Initiative
 - d. Intellectual ability
 - e. Academic achievement
 - f. Written expression of ideas
 - g. Disciplined work habits
 - h. Potential for growth

Activity 2.9 (6 of 7)

Do:

1. Keep your letter concise and easy to read. Brevity is extremely important. One page or less is better than two.
2. Remember the importance of your first sentence. Try to write a first sentence that will grab the attention of the reader.
3. Feel free to provide your telephone number if you have information you would like to convey verbally (in the strictest confidence).
4. Be on time! Deadline dates are *very* important.

Do Not:

1. Rehash the student's extracurricular activities, as this has already been addressed in other parts of the application. The exception would be if the activity could be shown specifically to relate to something in the classroom.
2. Use routine praise such as "good student" or "steady worker."
3. Include GPA, test scores, and other items that are shown clearly on the student's transcript.
4. String together a laundry list of non-specific, affirmative adjectives.
5. Use vague generalizations.
6. Worry about saying something negative. Sometimes this helps to make the student seem more human. (Example: "His interests are still too unfocused, and his roles and responsibilities are too many to excel in all that he would like. When deadlines and demands compete for his time, he has trouble. He will be able to address these problems successfully with time and maturity, however.")

After the Letter

You only need to write one letter for each student. This same letter can be used each time a new request is made by that student.

1. Save a copy of the letter you write.
2. Add a "P.S." pertaining to the specific university in your own handwriting at the bottom of each new letter if you wish.
3. Write "see attached" and enclose the letter rather than complete the "Teacher Recommendation Forms" that many colleges provide. This is perfectly acceptable unless stated otherwise on the form.
4. Keep a record of when you mailed each letter.

Finally, at times a tough situation might arise about sharing the letter with the student. Remember, the student does not have the right to see the letter. Showing the letter is solely the prerogative of the teacher. But if teachers only write letters for students whom they can support, sharing the letter can be one more positive interaction cementing an already excellent student/teacher relationship.

www.avidonline.org ©2005 AVID Center. All rights reserved.

Activity 2.9 (7 of 7)

Words That Win Because They Add Specificity

1. Mental Qualities:

educated	erudite	scholarly	learned	wise
astute	talented	intellectual	precocious	capable
gifted	reasonable	rational	sensible	shrewd
prudent	observant	clever	ingenious	inventive
subtle				

2. Moral Qualities:

idealistic	exemplary	temperate	truthful	honorable
decent	trustworthy	straightforward	respectable	

3. Social Qualities

tactful	courteous	polite	cooperative	genial
affable	gracious	amiable	cordial	amicable
sociable	cheerful	sensitive	convivial	ebullient

4. General Personal Qualities:

admirable	eminent	distinguished	influential	impressive
imposing	generous	benevolent	charitable	imposing
munificent	humane	gentle	patient	compassionate
sympathetic	tolerant	ambitious	conscientious	persevering
industrious	persistent	efficient	assiduous	courageous
resourceful	scrupulous	droll	punctual	self-reliant
zealous	sober	strong-willed	determined	resolute
confident	earnest	self-starter	pensive	valorous
intrepid	diligent	indomitable	imperturbable	enthusiastic
solemn	serious	sedate	discreet	cautious
garrulous	wary	eloquent	persuasive	reserved
taciturn	laconic	witty	uncompromising	considerate
responsive	natural	candid	unaffected	ingenuous
reticent	humble	self-effacing	modest	unassuming
amenable	serene	nonchalant	indifferent	philosophical

www.avidonline.org ©2005 AVID Center. All rights reserved.

Glossary of Terms: Admission Decision Options

for first-time freshmen as defined by The National Association of College Admission Counselors

May 1 Reply Date

Colleges and universities subscribing to NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice must permit students admitted as first-time freshmen to the fall term to choose, without penalty, among offers of admission and financial aid until May 1. Colleges may solicit commitments to offers of admission, financial aid, and/or housing prior to May 1 provided those offers include a clear statement that written requests for extensions until May 1 will be granted, and that such requests will not jeopardize a student's status for housing and/or financial aid. Candidates admitted under an early-decision program are a recognized exception.

Early Decision

Early Decision is the term used to describe the application process in which a commitment is made by the student to the institution that, if admitted, the student will enroll. Only a student who can make a deliberate decision that the institution is his or her first choice should apply under an Early Decision plan because the institution will require a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1. The student will be required to withdraw all other applications at the time of admission to that institution.

The institution will respond to an application for financial aid at or near the time an offer of admission is extended if the student has followed the proper early decision aid application procedures. If admitted, the student is expected to enroll unless the aid award is inadequate.

Notes:

1. It is possible for a student to be disqualified for admission at one institution (College "A") at the request of another college or university (College "B") if the student had been admitted to College B under an Early Decision plan and decides to attend College A. This will only happen if both colleges have an early decision plan and the student's decision to attend College A was not based on an inadequate financial aid package from B.
2. It is recommended that colleges require the signature of a parent or counselor on the Early Decision form in order to assure that the student understands the requirements of the program.
3. Usually the Early Decision application deadline is earlier than the regular deadline for applications and Early Decision applicants are usually notified well before other applicants for admission.
4. Not every institution has an early-decision plan.

Early Action

Early Action is the term used to describe the application process which permits a student to make an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the normal response dates in the spring. The student is not required to enroll at that institution or to make a commitment deposit prior to May 1. The student may apply to other colleges and has the luxury of waiting for their responses prior to making a decision.

Glossary of Terms: Admission Decision Options

Regular Decision

Regular Decision is the term used to describe the admission process in which an institution reviews all or most of its applicants prior to notifying the majority of its candidates of decisions. The institution will state a deadline for completion of applications and will respond to completed applications by a specified date (usually in late March or early April).

Rolling Admission

Rolling Admission is the term used to describe the admission process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and completed, and offers decisions as applications are reviewed. The institutions may have a stated or recommended application deadline or priority date.

Wait List

Wait List is the term used by institutions to describe a process in which the institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends the possibility of admission in the future to the student. These institutions use such a list to protect against shortfalls in enrollment. They insure that the wait list is of reasonable length and that all decisions be complete no later than August 1. Students are not required to submit a commitment deposit to remain on the wait list.



3. Exploration

Exploration activities will help students choose the characteristics about a school that are most important to them.

Once students have determined their college priorities, they can begin an online college search at sites such as California Colleges, ACT College Finder, Peterson’s, or College Board college finder (Activities 2.12–2.13). To develop a list of colleges, students will need to enter information such as GPA, priorities, interests of study, possible majors, and any other relevant information.

Students should also visit colleges during this time (Activities 2.14–2.15). Their college lists should include: a) “Pluses”—schools where students are certain to be accepted; b) “Evens”—schools where students should be accepted because they fit the school’s profile; and c) “Reaches”—“dream schools,” but ones that are realistic. This is an ideal time to do college comparison activities (Activities 2.16–2.17).

The summer between a student’s junior and senior year is extremely important to the college admission process (Activity 2.18). If possible, students should enroll in “summer-on-campus” courses or similar programs, such as Upward Bound, that provide students with a bit of the college experience. Summer activities might also include test prep, college research, camps (band, sports, academic, leadership), and community service.

Timeline

February: Complete college selection and priorities activities.

March–June: Conduct college research (include career, degree, major, aptitude, discovery research) using a variety of resources, including Web sites, printed materials, speakers and visits.

March–June: Create potential college lists. Use comparison worksheets. Finalize summer plans.

Activities/Materials

Activity 2.11 “The College Admission Game”: This activity demonstrates to students specific characteristics that give one applicant an advantage over another in the college admission process.

Teacher Information: In this game, students role-play the college admission process for selective colleges. Each student is given a student profile and then responds appropriately as the teacher reads the 23 instructions. The insight gained is amazing!

Activity 2.12 “Choosing a College Campus”: Another handout that will help students find colleges that are a good “fit.”

Teacher Information: Have students consider the various factors on page 1 and then complete the “Choosing a College Worksheet.”

Activity 2.13 “College Comparison Worksheet”: This chart helps students track details about colleges in which they’re interested.

Teacher Information: The “College Comparison Worksheet” lists a variety of options for students to consider, such as location, size, environment, admission requirements, expenses, housing, and activities. As students do their research, have them record pertinent information on the worksheet provided.

Activity 2.14 “Helpful Hints for a Campus Visit”: Provides information to help students prepare for—and conduct—a campus visit.

Teacher Information: College campus visits are an important step in the selection process. Sometimes, just a walk across campus or a quick lunch in the student union can greatly influence a student's perception of a particular school. Students can usually tell after a short visit whether or not they will want to live, work, and study at a school for the next four years. This handout prepares students for visits to schools of interest.

Activity 2.15 “College Visit Questionnaire”: Provides a list of questions for students to ask when visiting a college campus; topics include facilities, dorm life, and recreation.

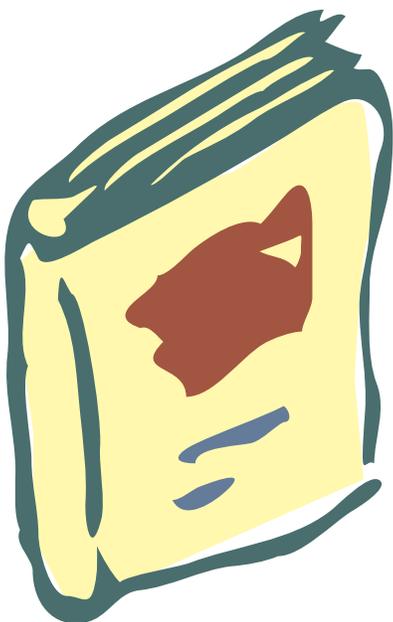
Teacher Information: Students will need one copy of this handout for each college they plan to visit. Go over questions with class and help students determine which ones will be important to ask when visiting a campus.

Activity 2.16 “What Do You Look for in a College?” Provides a chart for comparing four colleges, using basic facts, personal criteria, and the student's evaluation.

Teacher Information: Help students complete this college comparison handout once they have compiled the information that is needed. This handout allows students to compare facts about four different schools along with personal criteria that may help students determine the value of each college that they may be considering.

Activity 2.17 “Summer Priorities”: Students can use this sheet to set priorities for goals to be accomplished between their junior and senior years.

Teacher Information: Students should complete this worksheet well before summer begins. Have them prioritize the items on the list and complete the “Notes” column to produce a plan for accomplishing each of their goals. Emphasize the importance of doing these activities NOW, so they won't feel additional stress in the fall when applications need to be submitted.



Activity 2.11 (1 of 3)

The College Admission Game

Student Profiles: Put GPA in large lettering on front side of paper, and student profile on the back.

- 4.1 GPA You took a strong academic program.
You forgot to change the name of the college when word-processing the essay that was sent to several different schools.
- 4.0 GPA You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years.
You decided not to take AP® classes (even though your school offered them) because you wanted to protect your grade point average.
- 3.7 GPA The topic of your essay was sports (as a metaphor for life).
You're an Eagle Scout.
You're all-region in basketball.
- 3.5 GPA Your intended major is Greek.
You participated in NO extracurricular activities.
You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years.
- 3.3 GPA You applied early decision to your first-choice college.
Your intended major is psychology.
You plagiarized an American history paper and got caught.
- 3.1 GPA Your intended major is psychology or pre-med.
You wrote an essay that was passed around the office because it was so good.
You're the first in your family to attend college.
You're a varsity athlete.
You made a "D" in your junior year but wrote to the college to explain extenuating circumstances.
You've taken a strong academic program.
- 2.9 GPA You direct the gospel choir at your church.
You are quiet and don't know your teachers well enough to ask for a recommendation.
You've participated in community service.
You're taken a strong academic program.
You're from a single-parent household and must work to help with expenses.
- 2.8 GPA You're a legacy at the college to which you're applying.
You did not write the optional essay for your college application.
You've participated in some community service.
Your last name is Kennedy and the college library is named after your grandfather.

Activity 2.11 (2 of 3)

Activity Directions

Ask for volunteers to be each student, and have them line up in order of GPA from highest to lowest. They should hold up the card with the GPA side facing the audience. Then, read the following instructions:

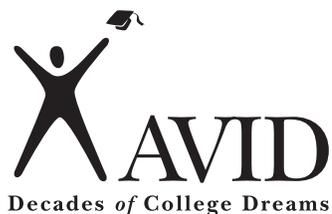
1. If you have taken an exceptionally strong academic program, move up two spaces.
2. If you direct the gospel choir at your church, move up one space.
3. If you clearly stated that this college is your first choice by making an early decision application and commitment, move up two spaces.
4. If your intended major is psychology or pre-med, move back one space.
5. If your intended major is Greek, move up one space.
6. If you do not know any of your teachers well enough to feel comfortable asking for a recommendation, move back two spaces.
7. If, when you word-processed your college essay, you forgot to change the name of the college you were applying to, move back three spaces.
8. If you are a legacy, move up two spaces.
9. If you did not write the optional college essay, move back one space.
10. If the topic of your college essay was sports as a metaphor for life, move back one space.
11. If you wrote the “Essay of the Year,” the one that was passed around the office, move up two spaces.
12. If you plagiarized an American history paper and got caught, sit down—you’re out of the competition entirely.
13. If you will be the first in your family to attend college, move up two spaces.
14. If you attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years, move up two spaces.
15. If you have participated in no extracurricular activities, move back three spaces.

Activity 2.11 (3 of 3)

16. If you have participated in a significant community service project, move up one space.
17. If you are an Eagle Scout, move up two spaces.
18. If you are a varsity athlete, move up one space. If you're all-region in a sport, move up another space.
19. If you got a "D" in an academic course at the end of your junior year, move back three spaces.
20. If you wrote a letter to the college admission officer and explained the extenuating circumstances surrounding a grade of "D," move up one space.
21. If you decided to protect your GPA by not taking AP[®] classes offered at your school, move back two spaces.
22. If you come from a single-parent household and must work part-time to help with expenses, move up two spaces.
23. If your last name is Kennedy, and the name on the college library is Kennedy, and it's not a coincidence, move all the way to the front of the line and stay there.



Activity 2.12 (1 of 2)



Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Choosing a College Campus

Choosing a college or university is an important and complicated decision. A great many factors contribute to the process, but the important thing is to find a place where you are both comfortable and stimulated to do your best. Several factors you should consider about a school's atmosphere and suitability are listed below:

A. Program

1. Does the college offer a good program in your area of interest?
2. Is the faculty qualified, friendly, and concerned?

B. Admission Requirements

1. What specific high school subjects, grade point average, and entrance tests are required?
2. What are the application deadlines?

C. Geographic Location

1. How close is it to snow/surf/smog? Is it located in a metropolitan or rural area?
2. How far is it from home? Will travel costs present a problem?

D. Type and Size

1. Is it a coeducational or a men's or women's college?
2. Is it a religion-related institution? Does this matter to you?

E. Costs and Financial Aid

1. How much does the institution cost per year (tuition, fees, campus housing, books and supplies, transportation, etc.)?
2. Is financial aid available? The more expensive schools usually offer a greater amount of financial aid.

F. Housing

1. Does the campus provide residential facilities?
2. Are there restrictions on off-campus housing for freshmen?
3. What is the dorm life like? Coeducational?

Choosing a College Worksheet

Who Am I?

1. How do I rate myself as a student?

Excellent Good Average Below Average

2. What are my best subjects? _____

3. What are my weakest academic areas? _____

4. Do I work best in a competitive or relaxed atmosphere? _____

5. Do I work best independently or with others? _____

6. I enjoy the following activities:

Sports _____

Clubs _____

Paid Work _____

Volunteer Work _____

Community Groups _____

Travel _____

7. Do I want to go away to college or stay local? _____

8. What career goals do I have in mind? _____

9. Why do I want to go to college?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

10. Which college system will best fit my needs and abilities?

Public In-State (4 Yr.)

Public Out-of-State (4 Yr.)

Private College or University (4 Yr.)

Community College (2 Yr.)

Activity 2.13

College Comparison Worksheet

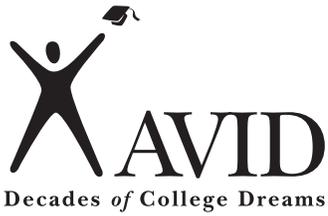
College Name			
Location • distance from home			
Size • enrollment • physical size of campus			
Environment • type of school (2- or 4-year) • school setting (urban, rural) • location and size of nearest city • co-ed, male, female • religious affiliation			
Admission Requirements • deadline • test required • average test scores, GPA, rank • notification			
Academics • your major offered • special requirements • accreditation • student-faculty ratio • typical class size			
College Expenses • tuition, room and board • estimated total budget • application fee, deposits			
Financial Aid • deadline • required forms • percentage receiving aid • scholarships			
Housing • residence hall requirement • food plan			
Facilities • academic • recreational • other			
Activities • clubs, organizations • Greek life • athletics, intramurals • other			
Campus Visits • when • special opportunities			

Helpful Hints for a Campus Visit

A campus visit is highly recommended. Before you visit the campus, consider some of the options below. It is also important to develop a list of questions and plan specific activities in order to accomplish your goals.

- Schedule an interview in the Admission Office.
- Inquire about admission requirements (tests, high school grades, etc.).
- Discuss your chances for success.
- Learn about the college environment.
- Determine the placement record for graduates in your field of study.
- Talk with students.
- Meet the faculty.
- Investigate your academic program.
- Consider attending a class—witness class size, teaching style, academic atmosphere.
- Check the student residence halls and dining facilities.
- Ask about financial aid opportunities (deadlines, forms required, etc.).
- Obtain a school calendar and fee schedule.
- Take a campus tour.
- Identify career planning services for undergraduates.
- Visit the library.
- Ask about the amount and kind of study necessary for success.
- Investigate transportation options.
- Find out how students use their out-of-classroom time.
- Become aware of student activities (clubs, organizations, intramurals, etc.).
- Inquire about campus life in terms of dating and social activities.





Name: _____ Grade: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Activity 2.15 (1 of 2)

College/University Visit Questionnaire

(Make a copy for each school you visit.)

College/University: _____

Address: _____

Size of the College/University

1. How many students in the freshman class? _____
2. How many students in the largest lecture class? _____
3. Do professors teach freshman classes? _____ Do graduate assistants teach freshman classes? _____
4. What is the ratio of students to faculty? _____
5. How accessible are faculty members to students? _____
6. What percentage of freshman get their first-choice classes? _____
7. What facilities are available in my major area of interest? _____

Student Life

1. What extracurricular activities and athletics are available? _____

2. What interesting outlets for students does the surrounding community offer? _____

3. What ethnic and/or religious groups are available for student participation? _____
4. How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life? _____

5. Are freshman required to live on campus? Is housing guaranteed? _____
6. What services and activities does the student union provide? _____

7. What is the general atmosphere of the campus? _____

Activity 2.15 (2 of 2)

Student Services

1. What financial aid and scholarships services are available? _____

2. Is there a career planning and placement center? _____
3. What counseling services are available for students? _____
4. What kind of medical facilities are available for students? _____
5. What are the library hours? _____
6. What about computer labs—equipment, hours, availability? _____

Leisure Activities

1. How many movie theaters are available? _____ How far are they? What kind of films do they offer? _____

2. Are there museums and concert venues in the area? _____

3. Who were some of the performers who gave concerts last year? _____

4. Do you have dances? _____ What kind? How often? _____

5. What kind of recreational facilities does the school offer? _____

6. What types of intramural sports are available? _____

Activity 2.16

What Do You Look for in a College?

Ratings, tuition, faculty/student ratios—the job of choosing a college can seem like a numbers game. But it isn't really. Your choice of a college will be an extension of yourself: what you are, what you want to become, your lifestyle, your learning style. Everyone wants and needs different things from a college. By focusing your decision-making on what is important to you, this college comparison worksheet can help you turn what seems like a numbers game into a careful, thoughtful process.

Comparative Criteria	College A	College B	College C	College D
<i>Basic Facts</i>				
1. Enrollment				
2. Location				
3. Cost				
4. Admission Selectivity				
5. Deadline				
6. Test Requirements				
<i>Your Personal Criteria</i>				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
<i>Your Evaluation</i>				
1. Positive Impression				
2. Negative Impression				
3. Parent/Counselor Opinion				
4. Your Order of Preference				
5. Your Chances of Admission				

Activity 2.17

Summer Priorities

Directions: Look at the list below as you review your portfolio. Decide which of these areas are the *most important* to you and which are the *least important*; use the column on the left to rank them in order of importance from 1 to 7.

Order of Importance	Item	Additional Information	Notes
	Coursework	How are your grades? Do you have any past D's or F's that would make you ineligible to apply to college? Will you be able to complete all the necessary coursework during your senior year to meet the eligibility requirements for the colleges of your choice?	
	Test Scores	How are your SAT [®] and ACT scores? Are they where you need them to be to reach your goals and get accepted at your first-choice colleges? Can test preparation help you raise your scores?	
	Extracurricular Activities	Review your extracurricular activities log. Have you pursued all the activities in which you are interested? In what ways can you extend your current activities or interests during the summer? Are there internships or work experience available?	
	College Research	Have you finalized your list of colleges or do you still feel uncertain about where you want to apply? What else do you need to know to finalize your list?	
	College Visits	How many of the colleges on your list have you visited? It's important to make a visit to a school before you make your final decision in your senior year. Is it possible this summer to visit some of the colleges in which you are interested?	
	Personal Statements	Do your personal statements need more work? How important are they in the application packet of the colleges on your list? Do they reflect what you want colleges to know about you? Do they help colleges know you as a person?	
	Scholarship Research	What is your financial outlook for college? Will scholarships be important when you make your final decision about where to attend? What kinds of scholarships are you eligible for?	

4. “Fit” and Finances

Encourage eligible students to register for a FAFSA PIN at www.pin.ed.gov (Activity 2.18). Keep a master list of all PINs, and remind students that their parents must register at the site, also. Refer undocumented immigrant students to the MALDEF Web site at www.maldef.org. MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) is the leading nonprofit Latino litigation, advocacy, and educational outreach institution in the United States. The California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation at (916) 446-7904 can provide additional assistance for undocumented students and/or students who are in citizenship transition.

Students should continue scholarship searches on FastWeb (www.fastweb.com), applying for awards as appropriate and sharing their results with the class (Activity 2.19). Discuss with students the reality of scholarship scams. Review the “scholarship scams” handout and further investigate disreputable scholarship dealers at the following organizational Web sites: Federal Trade Commission, Better Business Bureau, your State Attorney General’s Office, your State Bureau of Consumer Protection, and the National Fraud Information Center. Other financial aid scams to guard against: telemarketing grant scams, dishonest financial aid consultants, (Activity 2.20).

Students should also continue their search for summer opportunities, including college campus experiences, internships, and other related programs. Many such programs are free or available through scholarships. Explain that these experiences can help them see if they “fit” the college or career they have been researching.

Students can e-mail or write colleges to request information about scholarships, financial aid, and other topics of interest. If possible, take your class to a college fair in the spring (Activity 2.21). These fairs make it possible for students to learn about a number of colleges at one time and in one place.

Students interested in military scholarships may begin applying in May (Activity 2.22).

The financial aid predictors on the ACT and College Board Web sites are a great resource for students and their families as they plan ahead for the costs of college (Activity 2.24).

Timeline

February: Register for FAFSA PIN.

February–June: Discuss scholarship scams and other financial traps to guard against while searching for financial aid. Continue scholarship searches and scholarship application reviews on FastWeb and other reputable, free scholarship Web sites.

March: Use family financial aid predictor Web sites (www.act.org or www.collegeboard.com).

March–April: Visit college fairs and college campuses.

Activities/Materials

Activity 2.18 “PIN Information”: Obtaining and remembering a PIN are key steps in the admission process.

Teacher Information: *The PIN Web site (www.pin.ed.gov) provides an introduction to the federal financial aid process. Students should have an e-mail address before applying for a PIN; encourage them to access their PIN number as soon as they receive an acknowledging e-mail. Once they have a PIN, they should keep this number in their “crate.” Students may also want to explore this Web site in anticipation of completing the FAFSA. (Note: Students cannot submit a FAFSA until January 1 of their senior year.)*

Activity 2.19 “Scholarship Research”: Provides teacher information for helping students do an online search for scholarships at www.fastweb.com.

Teacher Information: This activity will require at least one class period in the computer lab. Have students share their results with the class.

Activity 2.20 “Scholarship Scams”: Students must be smart consumers and learn the basic rules for obtaining financial aid. They should be knowledgeable about the various scholarship scams so they will not be easy targets for financial aid con artists.

Teacher Information: Help students access www.fin.aid, www.ftc.gov, www.collegeparents.org, www.fraud.org, and Web sites from Better Business Bureau, your State Attorney General’s Office, your State Bureau of Consumer Protection, and the National Fraud Information Center for information regarding possible fraud in the financial aid industry.

Activity 2.21 “College Fair Overview: What Is a College Fair? Why Should I Attend?”: Describes college fairs and explains why students should attend them.

Teacher Information: If possible, take your class to a college fair in the spring of their junior year; have students share what they learned with their classmates.

Activity 2.22 “Military Scholarships”: Provides the Web site home pages for ROTC scholarships.

Teacher Information: Students interested in military scholarships can do online research to determine if they qualify. You may also want to ask a recruiter to speak to your class about scholarship opportunities. Check with your career center or guidance center for more information.

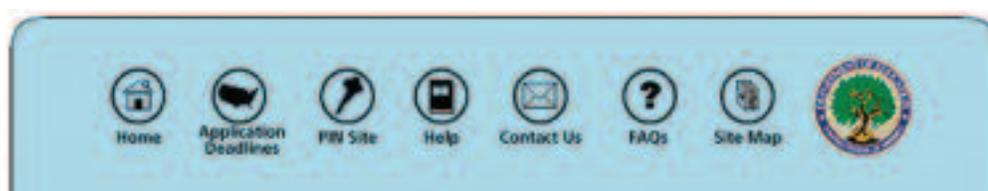
Activity 2.23 “Questions & Answers About Financial Aid”: General information about financial aid that will be helpful for both parents and students.

Teacher Information: Handout that reviews general financial aid information in a question-and-answer format to help students determine what resources are available to finance their college education. Stress the importance of involving parents in the process.

Activity 2.24 “Financial Aid: Some Answers to Your Questions”: Explains how financial aid is money from other sources that helps pay for a college education.

Teacher Information: This information from EdFund’s “Credit for College” brochure answers questions students may have about financial aid. Included are some ways to cut college costs.

Activity 2.18



PIN Information

The Personal Identification Number (PIN) serves as your electronic signature and provides access to your personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems. It's like the Personal Identification Number (PIN) that you get from your bank that enables you to access your account. Anyone—including parents of dependent students—who has a valid Social Security Number and is a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen may apply for a PIN. Because you can use your PIN to sign your financial aid documents, you should keep it in a safe place. **Do not give or entrust it to anyone**, even if that person or organization is helping you fill out your FAFSA.

After completing a FAFSA on the Web application, you and your parents—if you are a dependent student—will need to sign your application. Using a PIN to sign your application electronically is by far the fastest and most reliable way to sign your application. However, you can print, sign and mail in a signature page, or provide signature(s) on your paper Student Aid Report (SAR).

Each year that you apply for financial aid you can use your PIN to access and electronically sign your FAFSA. You and your parents do not need to apply for a new PIN from one year to the next. The PIN stays the same.

If you, or your parents, do not have a PIN, apply for one now. You can apply at the U.S. Department of Education's PIN site, www.pin.ed.gov, by selecting **Apply** for a PIN. Students and parents of dependent students who have not previously applied for a PIN are able to apply for a PIN within the FAFSA application. Once you successfully complete a request, your PIN will be mailed or e-mailed to you, depending on whether you and your parents provided an e-mail address. It will take approximately 1–3 business days after you request your PIN for you to receive an e-mail notification with instructions on how to retrieve it electronically, or 7–10 days to receive it in the mail via the U.S. Postal Service.

Visit the U.S. Department of Education's PIN site. Some of the online options available are:

- Apply for a PIN for the first time
- Check the status of a PIN application
- Request a duplicate PIN if it has been lost or forgotten
- Request your PIN be changed if it has been compromised
- Update your PIN e-mail and mailing address
- Reestablish/Disable your PIN

Activity 2.19

Scholarship Research

If your students plan to apply for scholarships, it is important to start the research during the junior year. Use the activities below to help your students get started. Be sure to work with your school counselors to learn about local and community scholarships that are typically awarded to students from your school.

Into

Time: 1 class period

- Have an expert on financial aid visit as a guest speaker to review the elements of financial aid and give a clear explanation of how scholarships fit into the financial aid package (grants, loans, work study, scholarships, etc.).
- Be sure that students and their parents understand the meaning of Expected Family Contribution (EFC). If possible, have an expert help families estimate their EFC, so that students can see how scholarships may/may not impact their financial aid package.

Through

Time: 2 class periods

- Plan a day in the computer lab to have your students register on the www.fastweb.com Web site. This is a legitimate, free service that matches students with scholarships they may be eligible for.
NOTE: While this service is free, it does include advertisements; be sure to prepare your students for how this Web site operates and caution them against answering the ads. It is strongly advised that you visit the Web site and go through the registration process yourself before taking your students through it.
- Have your counselor or your campus scholarship advisor speak to your students about scholarship scams. There are many “services” out there that promise students scholarships, but charge for their service. Take the time to warn your students and their parents about these scams.

Beyond

Time: Varies

- As students get results from FastWeb, have them bring in the information to share with the class.
- Since they may not be able to apply for most of these until their senior year, have students save the information in their “crates.”

Activity 2.20

Scholarship Scams

Need money for college? Doesn't everybody? Unfortunately, in their efforts to pay the bills, many students and their families fall prey to scholarship scams. The FTC cautions students to look for tell-tale lines:

- “The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”
- “You can’t get this information anywhere else.”
- “I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.”
- “We’ll do all the work.”
- “The scholarship will cost some money.”
- “You’ve been selected” by a “national foundation” to receive a “scholarship” or “You’re a finalist” in a contest you never entered.

Information for Students and Parents

- Looking for Student Aid
- OUCH... Students Getting Stung Trying to Find \$\$\$ for College [PDF]
- Scholarship Scams Audio
- 6 Signs That Your Scholarship Is Sunk Poster [PDF only], Bookmark [PDF only]
- US Department of Education
Student Guide
Funding Your Education
- En Español
- Public Service Messages
- List of Defendants in Project \$cholar\$cam

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit www.ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

from: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/index.html>

College Fair Overview: What Is a College Fair? Why Should I Attend?

A college fair features a wide variety of college representatives who have traveled to one site in a region to meet students and their parents. The event offers students and parents an opportunity to gather as much information as possible about college options.

Three Sources of Information at a College Fair:

College admission representatives are the main focus of the fair. The individuals you meet are all professional members of the admission offices of their institutions.

The Counseling Center consists of experienced high school/community resource counselors who can assist you in finding your way around the fair. Reference books on requirements, scholarships, and majors are available, as well as information on college entrance tests.

Special interest sessions include information on subjects such as Financial Aid, NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Requirements, and Career Planning.

Reasons to Attend:

- To meet college admission representatives face-to-face.
- To gain exposure to a variety of post-secondary institutions throughout the country.
- To ask questions about current admissions and financial aid.
- To pick up free brochures on colleges you might want to consider.
- To receive answers to individual questions in the Counseling Center.
- To learn from experts conducting special interest sessions.

How can I get the most out of the fair? Plan ahead!

- Bring the following materials to the fair:
 - A large, plastic bag for college brochures
 - Completed “college cards” to present to college representatives (see page 3 of this handout).
 - A pen and notepad
- List and study a few questions to ask the college representatives. Students, *not parents*, should ask the questions. Present yourself well; if this college representative helps evaluate your application, your conversation may serve as a mini-interview. Here are some suggestions for college fair questions:
 1. Looking at my GPA and test scores (present the “college card”), do you think I would be eligible for your college? In the major I want?
 2. How could I explore my interest in _____ (academic major/extracurricular interests)?
 3. What percentage of students receive financial aid? What is the average aid package (in your income bracket, if you wish to be specific)? What happens after freshman year?
 4. What kinds of students attend your campus? What is the minority enrollment?

Activity 2.21 (2 of 3)

5. Where do most students live? What is the focus of social life?
 6. What do you think is unique about your campus?
- Study the floor plan on the large map at the entrance to the fair and circle the colleges on your program that you wish to see. Create a priority plan to include an initial eight colleges. If possible, complete a “college card” for each school. Remember that the room is very big, time is limited, and there are over 100 colleges at the fair.
 - Stop at the Counseling Center if you would like help in selecting colleges to visit at the fair.

Courtesy Tips for Students Attending the Fair:

Experienced college representatives have offered the following suggestions:

1. Talk with college representatives before taking materials so that you choose only relevant pieces; avoid collecting expensive materials indiscriminately with the thought of reading later. Realistically, you probably won't.
2. If a teacher has given you an assignment to complete, *do not simply hand the assignment sheet to the representative to fill out*. Do the work yourself by questioning the representative and reading the brochures.
3. Ask conversational questions. Speak for yourself rather than depending on your parents. Avoid reading a long list of basic questions that could be answered by reading the college materials. Instead, choose questions that reveal the nature of the college or university.
4. Respect reasonable time limits with college representatives as many people will want a turn. Before speaking to a representative, complete a “college card.” This will give college officials a quick profile of you and serve as a way to request materials.

What Procedure Should I Follow After the Fair?

- Read through and organize your materials; create a file for each school.
- Make notes about your impressions.
- Plan to visit a college when it is in session.



Activity 2.21 (3 of 3)

College Cards

The National College Fair is an excellent opportunity for you to learn about a wide variety of colleges and universities. To help yourself get ready, use the inquiry cards below. Fill out the cards before arriving at the fair. *Suggestion:* Fill out one card, then duplicate. Then, hand cards to the colleges from which you are interested in receiving more information and they will put you on their mailing list.

National College Fair

(Fill out and hand to college representative.)

Name _____ Please list your current courses.
Address _____ 1. _____
City _____ 2. _____
State _____ Zip _____ 3. _____
Phone _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____ GPA _____ 4. _____
School you now attend _____ School CEEB Code _____ 5. _____
Year of high school graduation _____ PSAT® or SAT® scores CR _____ M _____ W _____ 6. _____
Areas of academic interest _____
Extracurricular interests _____

Optional

Ethnicity: African American American Indian Asian Caucasian Hispanic
 Other _____

National College Fair

(Fill out and hand to college representative.)

Name _____ Please list your current courses.
Address _____ 1. _____
City _____ 2. _____
State _____ Zip _____ 3. _____
Phone _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____ GPA _____ 4. _____
School you now attend _____ School CEEB Code _____ 5. _____
Year of high school graduation _____ PSAT® or SAT® scores CR _____ M _____ W _____ 6. _____
Areas of academic interest _____
Extracurricular interests _____

Optional

Ethnicity: African American American Indian Asian Caucasian Hispanic
 Other _____



Military Scholarships

These scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit rather than financial need.

Army Reserve Officer Training Corps

Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships are offered at hundreds of colleges. Application packets, information about eligibility, and the telephone number of an ROTC advisor in your area are available from

College Army ROTC, Gold QUEST Center,
P.O. Box 3279, Warminster, PA 18974-9872
Telephone: 1-800-USA-ROTC (1-800-872-7682)
Web site: www.armyrotc.com

Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps

The Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) college scholarship program targets students pursuing technical degrees, such as certain engineering and science programs, although students entering a wide variety of majors may be accepted. Information about AFROTC scholarships is available from

College Scholarship Section, 551 East Maxwell Blvd.,
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-5917
Telephone: 1-800-522-0033
Web site: www.afrotc.com

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps

The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) offers both two-year and four-year scholarships. For information about the program, contact

Naval Service Training Command
250 Dallas Street, Code 0D2,
Pensacola, FL 32508-5268
Telephone: 1-800-NAV-ROTC (1-800-628-7682)
Web site: <https://www.nrotc.navy.mil>
E-mail: pnsn-nrotc.scholarship@navy.mil

Questions & Answers About Financial Aid

General Information

Paying starts with planning.

Please don't think that you can't afford to go to college. With the right planning, a college education is within reach for every student. Below are answers to common questions about paying for college.

How much does college actually cost?

The cost of a college education varies, depending on the college you select and whether you live at home or in an apartment or on campus. In one state, for example, the average price tag for tuition and fees, room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses for one year ranges from a low of \$9,128 (at a public technical college) to a high of \$32,255 (at a private college or university).

Some colleges cost much less than the average; others will be higher. For information on private colleges and universities, visit the college's Web site.

What are the major costs of college?

The cost of college can be broken down into two main categories:

1. Instruction and Facilities Costs

These costs at Public Colleges and Universities are normally paid through a combination of funding from state taxpayers, tuition and fees from students and other funding sources. Currently, students and parents pay only about 20 percent of the cost. The amount varies based on the type of school you go to (university, community college, or technical college).

Although their tuition and fees are higher than public colleges and universities, private colleges and universities often offer a lot of financial aid. Most states also provide grants for needy students to help equalize the tuition costs between public and private schools. So the actual cost you pay at a private institution may be about the same as that at a public institution. For more information on private colleges and universities, visit your state mentor Web site.

2. Room and Board, Books and Supplies, and Other Living Expenses

The typical student budget includes room and board (on- or off-campus), books and supplies, transportation costs, and other living expenses. Before you choose your college, you will want to research costs of your selected colleges.

How will you pay for college?

Many students receive financial aid to help pay for college. Families are expected to contribute to their students' education, even if the contribution is a small one. Most families use a combination of resources to help pay for college. These include:

- Money they have saved over time
- A portion of their current income
- The student's part-time and summer earnings

Activity 2.23 (2 of 2)

- Financial aid, including educational loans
- Other resources

Typically, families spread the cost of college over a long period of time—the same way you pay for other major expenditures, such as homes and cars.

Many families will need assistance. Students who demonstrate financial need (after completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid) may be eligible for federal and/or state financial aid to help pay for college.

What is financial aid?

Student financial aid is money used to help pay for college expenses. It is available from many sources and in many forms: grants, scholarships, work-study opportunities, loans, and other programs. Financial aid can be used to pay for tuition and fees, books and supplies, and the living expenses associated with attending college.

How do you know if you qualify for financial aid?

Generally, students from a family that qualifies for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program will qualify for need-based assistance. If your family’s income is above this level, you might still qualify for need-based financial aid.

Additional Resources

The college financial aid office is the student’s best source of information on grants, scholarships, work-study opportunities, loans, and other programs. Many resources are also available online, but be wary of sites or companies that charge you for information or promise “guaranteed” scholarships. The same information is free from other sources.



Financial Aid: Some Answers to Your Questions

Simply put, financial aid is money you get from sources other than your family to help you pay for college tuition, books, fees, and living expenses.

Will I need financial aid?

Most students find that they need some financial aid to get through college. Whether or not you or your parents have saved money for your college education, the simple fact is that college costs keep rising, so it pays to check out financial aid resources.

In general, financial aid comes in three forms:

1. Scholarships and grants
2. Work-study programs
3. Loans

Many students use a combination of all three types of financial aid.

Scholarships and grants

The best part of scholarships and grants is that the money doesn't have to be paid back. Plus, you can start applying for them while you are still in high school. Some scholarships can be applied for as early as the 9th grade. Your high school counselor or librarian can help you get started.

It takes time and effort to track down and apply for scholarships and grants. Still, the free money you can get makes it time well spent. Think of it this way: Even if you spend five hours applying for a scholarship that only pays \$250, if you get the award, you will have “earned” \$50 an hour. Where else can you make that kind of money? That's why you should make applying for scholarships and grants your top priority in searching for financial aid.

Work-study programs

The Federal Work-Study Program is another form of financial aid. If you qualify for this program based on financial need, you can get jobs both on campus or with nonprofit groups and public agencies to help pay for your school expenses. Your college will assist you in finding a job, and the federal government will pay part of your salary.

Loans

Many students are unable to complete their college education without loans. While loans may be relatively easy to get, remember—they are real money! You must pay the money back—with interest.

The federal government and private lenders have student loan programs. Typically, it's best to start by exploring federal student loans. These loans often have lower interest rates, and the federal government may not require you to start repaying the loan until you are out of school.

How do I get financial aid?

The first step in applying for financial aid is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, form. You will complete this form during your senior year in high school. The form will ask for a lot of

Activity 2.24 (2 of 2)

information about your family’s finances, most of which will be on your parents’ income tax returns. This information will be used to calculate how much financial aid you need.

A paper version of the FAFSA is available each November at high schools, career centers, libraries, and college financial aid offices. Or, you can call 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) to request a copy. You also can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If you need help completing your FAFSA, ask your high school counselor for help.

What does the FAFSA do?

The FAFSA helps map out your financial needs by determining how much of your college costs you and your family can afford, and how much help you’ll need from other sources, such as scholarships, grants, work study, and loans.

How can I find out more about financial aid?

Talk to your high school guidance counselor or call the financial aid office at the colleges you are interested in attending to learn more about financial aid. Go to EdFund’s Web site at www.edfund.org, click on the “Student/Parents” section. You’ll find information about student loan programs, scholarships, financial planning for college, and more.

How much does college cost?

The American Council on Education (ACE) reports that people often overestimate the actual cost of college. In a recent ACE poll, Americans’ average estimate of tuition at a public four-year college was \$11,637—but the actual average tuition cost at the time was \$3,754!

What else can I do to cut college costs?

Here are a few ideas:

- Sign up for challenging classes in high school and get the best grades you can. Doing these things will increase your chances of winning a scholarship.
- Take Advanced Placement® (AP®) courses and exams in high school. If you score high enough on AP® exams, you can get advanced placement in college or college credit. This can save you time and money because you may be able to take fewer classes in college to graduate.
- Serve your country. Service in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC), or in AmeriCorps, the country’s domestic Peace Corps, entitles students to scholarships of varying sizes to cover college expenses.

Reprinted with permission of EdFund and the National Endowment for Financial Education.

UNIT THREE: SENIOR YEAR, FIRST SEMESTER

Overview

The first semester of the senior year is a critical time for the college-bound student, for this is when all the elements of college admission come together and the application is completed and submitted. Students will have one final chance in the early fall of their senior year to retake college admission tests (ACT, SAT®, and/or SAT® Subject Tests). Test results should then be sent to all schools to which students intend to apply.

Students should finalize their choice(s) of colleges, and, ideally, visit college campuses. If visiting is not possible, they should plan to meet with college representatives. This is also the time to review admission requirements for selected colleges and determine the requirements that have been satisfied and continue to work towards completing any unmet requirements. Students should also finalize requests for letters of recommendation, finish college admission essays, update résumés, and gather materials needed to complete college applications.

The preferred method for completing and submitting a college application is online, although students may want to prepare for this by using a paper application as a worksheet. All required materials should be gathered together, and, if possible, taken to the school's computer lab. Application deadlines vary. A good rule of thumb is to submit public or state college and university applications prior to Thanksgiving. Private college applications are usually due in December or January. Fee waivers are available.

This is also the time to make financial aid arrangements, beginning with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form, which is key to nearly all types of financial assistance, should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1 (the earliest date for submission). In some cases, the CSS PROFILE® form will be required as well. Financial Aid Application reference materials are available, at no cost, to assist teachers, students, and parents with this process.

Timeline

1. Testing (Activities 3.1–3.3)

August–December: Register for ACT, SAT®, and/or SAT® Subject Tests, as appropriate. Send scores to colleges of interest. File test results in the testing folder in the student's "crate."

2. Preparation (Activities 3.4–3.11)

August–September: Update résumés and compute the final GPA to be submitted with applications.

September–October: Complete college research; review guidelines for applying to college online; visit colleges of interest; request applications.

October: Ask selected teachers/counselors/others to write letters of recommendation and provide each with a packet of information. Revise essays and finalize for submission.

3. Exploration (Activities 3.12–3.14)

October–November: Submit public college applications online if possible (with final draft essays).

November–December: Submit private college and university applications (with final draft essays). Schedule interviews.

4. “Fit” and Finances (Activities 3.15–3.21)

August–January: Continue to apply for scholarships.

October: Verify FAFSA PIN and register for PROFILE®, if needed.

October–January: Attend financial aid events.

January: Complete FAFSA application worksheet.



1. Testing

Students should retake the college admission test on which they scored highest (ACT or SAT®). Encourage students to register early for the tests (Activity 3.1) at www.collegeboard.com (SAT®) or www.act.org (ACT) so they can take them on the earliest date in the fall. This will give them one more opportunity to improve their test score before they submit their college application. Fee waivers are available, if needed (Activity 3.2). (**Note:** The regular registration deadline for the ACT is in August, so some students may have to pay a late fee to retake it.) Some colleges and universities require students to take the ACT/SAT® no later than October of their senior year; many schools ask students to complete testing by early December.

Some students may want to retake the SAT® Subject Tests in November and December or take additional SAT® Subject Tests at this time. Make sure students send their scores to schools of interest. Fee waivers for applications should be requested at this time.

As students receive test results (Activity 3.3), they should place them in their “crates” and record the scores on “Required College-Entry Tests and Scores” (Activity 1.7 from Unit 1: Junior Year, First Semester).

Timeline

August–December: Register for ACT, SAT®, and/or SAT® Subject Tests, as appropriate. Send scores to colleges of interest. File test results in the testing folder in student’s “crate.”

Activities/Materials

Activity 3.1 “Online Registration for the SAT®/ACT”

Teacher Information: *Students need to register to retake the SAT® or ACT college admission test as soon as they return to school in the fall. The school’s guidance center should have paper applications that can be mailed to colleges, but online registration is more convenient. Students may register online at www.act.org and www.collegeboard.com (with a credit card or fee waiver number). Test dates and registration deadlines are also listed on the ACT and SAT® Web sites; if students miss a deadline, there will be an additional fee.*

Activity 3.2 “SAT® Fee Waivers”

Teacher Information: *Students from low-income families may qualify for fee waivers; senior counselors and/or AVID counselors should have these forms. Plan to receive only one ACT fee waiver during high school, and up to four SAT® test fee waivers. Students who take the SAT® are also eligible for a limited number of college admission application fee waivers. (See the AVID or college counselor.)*

Activity 3.3 “ACT and SAT® Score Reports”

Teacher Information: *A report showing test results is mailed home to the student and a copy sent to the school. Have students file their test results in the testing folder in their “crate” and record their scores on the “College Entrance Exam Comparison” handout (Activity 2.2 from “Unit 2: Junior Year, Second Semester”) or the tracking chart students created in Unit 1 to match their individual state and college testing requirements. Students need to check the college admission criteria for their selected schools and determine if their scores are in the school’s acceptable range.*

Activity 3.1

Online Registration for the SAT®/ACT

The screenshot shows the ACT website homepage. At the top left is the ACT logo. To its right is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for ABOUT US, EMPLOYMENT, NEWS, and STORE. Below the logo is a red banner with the text "The Test". Underneath, there are sections for "Education" and "Workforce Development". The "Education" section features a photo of three students and lists links for parents, educators, policymakers, adult learners, and families. It also includes a "Featuring" section for a report titled "Reading Between the Lines" dated Wednesday, March 01, 2006. The "Workforce Development" section features a photo of a group of people and lists links for profiling, training, and certification. On the left side, there are "Quick Tools" and "Business Solutions" sections with various links like "Site Index", "College Search", and "Financial Aid Estimator". At the bottom, there is a copyright notice for 2006 by ACT, Inc. and a registration link to www.act.org.

ACT®

SEARCH

ABOUT US | EMPLOYMENT | NEWS | STORE

ASSESSMENTS | OTHER SERVICES

The Test

Education

America's most widely accepted college entrance exam — and more! ACT provides [educational and career planning](#) for students and teachers at every level.

FEATURING

Wednesday, March 01, 2006

Reading Between the Lines

ACT's policy report addresses high school students' college readiness in reading.

GO

▶ ACTSTUDENT.ORG
Register, send scores, and more!

Rescheduled Test Centers for the February 11 Test Date

▶ ABOUT THE ACT
Next Test Date: April 8, 2006
Registration Deadline: March 3

Available now:
The Writing Test

QUICK TOOLS

▶ SITE INDEX
▶ COLLEGE SEARCH
▶ COLLEGE APPLICATION
▶ FINANCIAL AID ESTIMATOR
▶ WORKKEYS® REGISTRATION
▶ LOCATE AN ACT CENTER™
▶ EVENTS CALENDAR
▶ CONTACT US

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS ▶

Workforce Development

A skilled workforce is critical to any organization's success. Our [Workforce Productivity Solutions™](#) offer training, testing, consulting, and learning management services to meet your needs — from hiring to retiring.

▶ PROFILING AND ASSESSMENTS
▶ TRAINING
▶ RETAINING AND MOTIVATING
▶ CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE

Introducing [ACT International Services](#)

Reproduced with permission of ACT. © 2006 by ACT, Inc. All rights reserved. Register at www.act.org

The screenshot shows the CollegeBoard website homepage. At the top is a blue banner with the CollegeBoard logo and the text "CollegeBoard connect to college success". Below the banner are three photos of students and a navigation menu with links for "For Students", "For Parents", and "For Educators". The main content area features a "College QuickFinder" search box, a "Register for the SAT®" button, and a "Prepare for the SAT" button. There is also a "Research Shows AP Exam Grades Predict College Success" section and a "Thanks to the Big 12 for its support" message. At the bottom, there is a footer with links for PRESS, CONTACT, CAREERS, ABOUT US, PRIVACY, and TERMS OF USE, and a registration link to www.collegeboard.com.

CollegeBoard connect to college success

▶ For Students ▶ For Parents ▶ For Educators

College QuickFinder

Find

College MatchMaker

Register Now for the SAT!

Research Shows AP Exam Grades Predict College Success

▶ Register for the SAT®

Register online now for the next SAT test date.

▶ Prepare for the SAT

Get ready for the SAT with official practice tests and questions.

▶ College Search

Explore over 3,500 schools. Compare, apply, and more.

Thanks to the Big 12 for its support

PRESS | CONTACT | CAREERS | ABOUT US | PRIVACY | TERMS OF USE

Copyright © 2006 collegeboard.com, Inc.

Register at www.collegeboard.com

Activity 3.2 (1 of 3)

SAT[®] Fee Waivers

(from www.collegeboard.com)

The SAT[®] Program Fee-Waiver Service is designed to help students for whom test fees represent obstacles on the road to college.

High school juniors and seniors in the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. territories who cannot afford to pay the test fees can request fee waivers through their school counselors. The waivers cover the basic test fees for SAT[®] or Subject Tests, as well as either the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or the Student Answer Service (SAS). A fee waiver may qualify you for application fee waivers at many colleges. If you are eligible, your counselor will give you a fee waiver card to mail in with your completed Registration Form (or to use as instructed to register online). If you are a home-schooled student, you must provide proof of eligibility to your local high school fee waiver administrator.

Eligibility

You are eligible for consideration for fee waivers if you are:

1. An American citizen or a foreign national testing in the United States, Puerto Rico, or United States territories; or
2. An American citizen living outside the United States, who meets the financial eligibility guidelines; or
3. A home-schooled student (you must provide proof of eligibility to your local high school fee waiver administrator/counselor, who will provide you with the fee waiver card for the appropriate test and no more than four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms)
4. And you participate in the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch/National School Lunch Program or meet the financial eligibility guidelines for fee waivers. Your guidance counselor will share these guidelines with you.

Registering with Fee Waivers

1. Online Registration

To register online using a fee waiver, your school counselor will provide you with the online registration fee waiver identification number. When registering online, you will be asked to enter your fee waiver identification number, your school's six-digit code (which your counselor writes in), plus the fee waiver identification number—which are the preprinted numbers on the fee waiver card. The fee-waiver identification number can only be used once.

2. Mail Registration

To register by mail using a fee waiver, obtain an SAT[®] Registration Bulletin along with a fee waiver card from your counselor. Mail the fee-waiver card along with a completed registration form by the **regular registration deadline**. You must send in the entire card or your registration will not be processed. Your Registration Form will be returned to you if the fee waiver card is missing or improperly completed and your registration will be delayed.

Sample Fee-Waiver Cards for SAT® Subject Tests and SAT® Reasoning Test

CollegeBoard SAT
 connect to college success™

SAT Reasoning Test™ Fee-Waiver Card
 Maximum card value: \$41.50
 \$62.50 (international) \$83.50 (India or Pakistan)

29F25F

REGISTRATION BY MAIL (mail entire card)
 This entire card must be mailed with a completed Registration Form. Incomplete cards or cards received with online portion missing will not be honored.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON REVERSE SIDE

1. TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNSELOR GRANTING WAIVER

A. School or agency granting waiver information (please print)
 Counselor's Name _____

B. College Board Code Number (High School Code/Agency Code)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

C. Counselor Signature I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the student named on this form meets the eligibility guidelines for the SAT Fee-Waiver Service.

 Must be endorsed by person authorized by school or agency to grant College Board fee waivers.

2. TO BE COMPLETED BY ELIGIBLE STUDENT

A. Student information (please print)
 Name _____
 Last First M.I.
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

B. Choose your test date. Check only one test date.
Register by the regular deadline. Fee waivers are not accepted for late or standby registrations.

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Test Date	Registration Deadline
<input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 8, 2005	Sept. 14, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> April 1, 2006	Feb. 24, 2006
<input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 5, 2005	Sept. 30, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> May 6, 2006	Apr. 3, 2006
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 3, 2005	Oct. 28, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> June 3, 2006	Apr. 28, 2006
<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28, 2006	Dec. 22, 2005		

C. Student's Signature
 I certify that I meet the fee waiver eligibility guidelines for the SAT Program.

 Attention student: This waiver is not valid without your signature.
WAIT! Do not detach if you are registering by mail.

Reasoning Test™ ONLY

Reasoning Test™ ONLY

CollegeBoard SAT
 connect to college success™

SAT Subject Tests™ Fee-Waiver Card
 Maximum card value: \$59.00
 \$80.00 (international) \$101.00 (India or Pakistan)

C97987

REGISTRATION BY MAIL (mail entire card)
 This entire card must be mailed with a completed Registration Form. Incomplete cards or cards received with online portion missing will not be honored.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON REVERSE SIDE

1. TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNSELOR GRANTING WAIVER

A. School or agency granting waiver information (please print)
 Counselor's Name _____

B. College Board Code Number (High School Code/Agency Code)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

C. Counselor Signature I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the student named on this form meets the eligibility guidelines for the SAT Fee-Waiver Service.

 Must be endorsed by person authorized by school or agency to grant College Board fee waivers.

2. TO BE COMPLETED BY ELIGIBLE STUDENT

A. Student information (please print)
 Name _____
 Last First M.I.
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

B. Choose your test date. Check only one test date.
Register by the regular deadline. Fee waivers are not accepted for late or standby registrations.

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Test Date	Registration Deadline
<input type="checkbox"/> Oct. 8, 2005	Sept. 14, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28, 2006	Dec. 22, 2005
<input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 5, 2005	Sept. 30, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> May 6, 2006	Apr. 3, 2006
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 3, 2005	Oct. 28, 2005	<input type="checkbox"/> June 3, 2006	Apr. 28, 2006

C. Student's Signature
 I certify that I meet the fee waiver eligibility guidelines for the SAT Program.

 Attention student: This waiver is not valid without your signature.
WAIT! Do not detach if you are registering by mail.

Subject Tests™ ONLY

Subject Tests™ ONLY

CollegeBoard SAT
 connect to college success™

SAT Reasoning Test™ Fee-Waiver Card
 (maximum card value: \$41.50 \$62.50 (International) \$83.50 (India or Pakistan))

ONLINE REGISTRATION Only
Counselor: Please fill in High School or Agency code, then detach and distribute this portion only to students registering online.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

29F25F

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON REVERSE SIDE
Student: Go to www.collegeboard.com to register.
WAIT! Do not detach if registering by mail.

CollegeBoard SAT
 connect to college success™

SAT Subject Tests™ Fee-Waiver Card
 (maximum card value: \$59.00 \$80.00 (International) \$101.00 (India or Pakistan))

ONLINE REGISTRATION Only
Counselor: Please fill in High School or Agency code, then detach and distribute this portion only to students registering online.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

C97987

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ON REVERSE SIDE
Student: Go to www.collegeboard.com to register.
WAIT! Do not detach if registering by mail.

ACT Fee Waiver

If you can't afford the registration fee for the ACT (No Writing) or ACT Plus Writing, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. Funds are limited, and once they are gone, requests for waivers will be denied. **To use a fee waiver, you must register by paper folder.**

To be eligible, you must meet all three of the following requirements:

- 1 You currently attend high school as a junior or senior.
- 2 You meet at least one indicator of economic need listed on the ACT fee waiver form. Information about these indicators and how to request fee waiver forms is mailed each fall to every high school. Ask your counselor for the information.
- 3 You may register only once with an ACT fee waiver, either in your junior or senior year. The waiver has been used once you register, even if you do not test.

Fee waivers cover only the basic registration fee for either the ACT (No Writing) or the ACT Plus Writing, including up to four valid college choices (listed at the time of registration). Waivers do not cover test date changes, test center changes, or any other fees.

For more information, see your high school guidance office.

Please Note: You can't request a waiver directly from ACT; you have to do it through your high school guidance office. Your registration folder won't be processed without a signed official ACT fee waiver form for the current testing year. Only ACT fee waiver forms will be accepted.

from <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html>

Reproduced with permission of ACT.

Request for Fee Waiver for the ACT

The ACT Fee Waiver Program is designed to assist students for whom payment of the basic test fee could be a barrier to college entrance. **Only a limited number of fee waivers are authorized by ACT each year, beginning in the fall. Once funds have been exhausted, requests for waivers will be denied.**

- Fee waivers may be used to register for **either** the ACT or the ACT Plus Writing. Students must indicate their test option in Block M of the registration folder submitted with this request form.
- Fee waivers are available **only** for high school **juniors or seniors**.
- Students may **REGISTER ONLY ONCE** with a fee waiver, in either their junior **OR** senior year.
- The student's fee waiver eligibility is used once the student **REGISTERS**, even if the student does not test on the test date requested.
- The waiver covers the cost of **regular registration only**, including one report to the high school and up to **four** college choices (only if valid codes are provided at the time of registration)—total amount shown in box below.
- Fee waivers may **NOT** be used to pay for the **late registration** fee, additional college code choices at the time of registration or later, other services on the folder, test date change, test center change, residual testing, or standby testing fee.

ECONOMIC NEED: The student must meet one or more of the following indicators of economic need. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

<input type="checkbox"/> Family receives public assistance. <input type="checkbox"/> Student is ward of the state. <input type="checkbox"/> Student resides in foster home. <input type="checkbox"/> Student participates in free or reduced-price lunch program at school. <input type="checkbox"/> Student participates in a federally funded TRIO Program such as Upward Bound.	<input type="checkbox"/> Family income is at or below the 2005 Bureau of Labor Statistics Low Standard Budget listed below:
--	---

No. in Family	2005 Total Income Before Taxes
1	\$10,900
2	17,800
3	24,500
4	30,200
5	35,600
6	41,700
over 6	\$41,700 plus \$3,250 for each additional person in family

If no item is checked, the request will be denied.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENT: Provide the information requested below. You must **personally** sign the certification statement.

PLEASE PRINT
 Student's Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Student's Telephone (_____) _____
 Current Grade in School 11th 12th
 Social Security Number --

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I understand the eligibility guidelines for a waiver of the ACT or ACT Plus Writing fee. I certify that I have **NOT** previously REGISTERED with a fee waiver and that I meet all requirements for a waiver.

Student's Signature (Do NOT print) _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL/AGENCY OFFICIAL: Check the indicator(s) of economic need above and print the requested information. You must **personally** sign the certification statement. Printed, stamped, or photocopied signatures are **NOT** acceptable.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the student named on this form has **NOT** previously registered with a waiver for the ACT or ACT Plus Writing, is currently enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade in high school, and meets the indicator of economic need checked above.

Official's Signature _____
 Official's Title _____
 School/Agency Name (print) _____
 School/Agency Address _____

 Official's Office Phone (_____) _____ ext. _____

This fee waiver covers the fee for the test option marked in Block M of the registration folder—ACT (\$29.00) or ACT Plus Writing (\$43.00).

WAIVER DOES NOT COVER ADDITIONAL LATE FEE OR STANDBY TESTING FEE.

(Valid September 2005–June 2006)

ALTERED OR PHOTOCOPIED FORMS ARE NOT VALID.

6540
IC 080105050

ACT

ACT and SAT® Score Reports

What Do ACT Scores Mean?

1. The number of questions answered correctly is counted. (*Note:* points are not deducted for incorrect answers.)
2. Test scores (English, Math, Reading, and Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). A composite score is the average of the four test scores.
3. The seven sub-scores (usage/mechanics, rhetorical skills, etc.) range from 1 (low) to 18 (high).
4. The Combined English/Writing score weights the English Test score two-thirds and the Writing Test score one-third to form a combined score that ranges from 1 (low) to 36 (high).
5. The essay is scored holistically. Two readers will read and rate the essay, scoring from 1 (low) to 6 (high). The sum of those ratings is the writing sub-score, which can range from 2 to 12.

What Are National Ranks?

The printed Student Report gives the ranks of scores as dashed lines, and the ranks show the percent of recent high school graduates who took the ACT and scored at or below each of these scores. The ranks provide a sense of strengths and weaknesses in the four broad areas represented by the test scores and in the seven specific areas represented by the sub-scores. A high rank in a content area may suggest a good chance of success in related college majors and careers. A low rank may indicate that skills need to be developed more in that area.

Nearly half of all test takers score with a range of 17–23. All tests will vary, but here are some typical results

Composite Score	Percentile Rank	Approximate Number Correct
31	99%	90%
26	90%	75%
23	76%	63%
20	54%	53%
17	28%	43%

What Do SAT® Scores Mean?

1. The number of questions answered correctly is counted. (*Note:* $\frac{1}{4}$ point is deducted for each incorrect answer.)
2. Raw scores are converted to 200–800 scaled score for each section (Math, Critical Reading, and Writing).
3. The essay is scored holistically, and the sub-score can range from 0–12.

Colleges haven't published an average combined score for the new test, so, the easiest way to understand test scores is to break it down into sections, and compare only the reading and math scores (with a maximum 1600 score, rather than the 2400 score on the new SAT®). It is important to remember that SAT® scores are reported on a bell-curve. This means that the median score on each section will always be close to 500 (the midpoint between 200 and 800), with a decreasing frequency of scores down to 200 and up to 800.

Activity 3.3 (2 of 2)

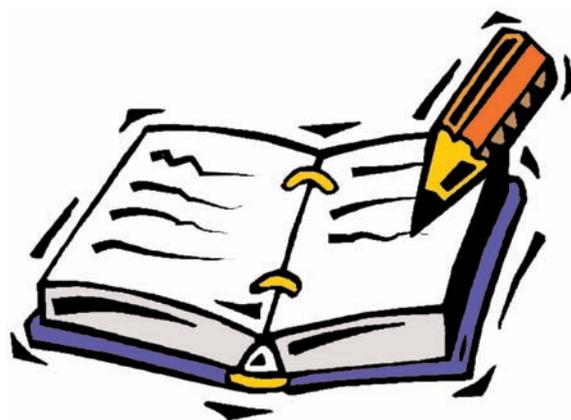
The Writing Section

Not all schools are using the writing section in the same way. Elite schools that have traditionally required the SAT® Subject Writing Test are indicating they will require the SAT® Writing score for admissions. Other schools may look at it, but not give it much consideration. Be sure to find out what select schools require (and if and how they will use the writing score).

Testing Again

If you are satisfied with your score, congratulations! Then there is more time to focus on SAT® Subject Tests, AP® exams and applications.

However, don't despair if the score should be higher. Most students take the SAT® more than once, and some even take it three times! Use the information in the score report to help understand strengths and weaknesses in order to hone preparation for retaking either the SAT® or ACT.



2. Preparation

Finding the right college, one that is a good “fit” for the student, is extremely important. To help them make the best decision, students should visit schools of interest and meet with college representatives who visit the high school campus. (See Activities 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16 from “Unit 2: Junior Year, Second Semester.”) Students should question representatives carefully for information about the campus and continue to fill out their comparison worksheets. Attending fall college fairs/on-campus workshops/information sessions is also helpful; most colleges value such activities as part of the “Demonstrated Interest Process.”

Students should already have an unofficial copy of their transcript in their “crate.” Now that they have completed their junior year, they will be able to compute their GPA using all four semesters of Grades 10–11. Be sure that students continue to monitor their course selections in order to meet necessary college admission requirements.

Students should update their résumés to reflect summer activities and add any new information to their Mentor Web pages (if applicable). Background materials needed for letters of recommendation should be prepared and given to the selected teachers and counselors no later than October 15. Encourage students to closely follow the steps listed in Activity 3.5.

Rough drafts of essays that were begun last year should be revised and finalized for submission (Activities 3.6–3.8). AVID teachers need to make sure all college application essays have been read by a qualified adult before essays are deemed “ready to submit.” Counselors, English teachers, and AVID teachers have experience in reading college application essays and may have helpful suggestions.

If students need additional college applications, now is the time to request them (Activity 3.9). Review guidelines and help prepare students for the online college admission application process (Activities 3.10–3.11).

Timeline

August–September: Update résumés and compute the final GPA to be submitted with applications.

August–October: Complete college research; review guidelines for applying to college online; visit colleges of interest; request applications.

October: Ask selected teachers/counselors/others to write letters of recommendation and provide each with a packet of information. Revise essays and finalize for submission.

Activities/Materials

Activity 3.4: “Ice Breakers—Warm-Ups”: A list of warm-up suggestions that may help reduce anxiety and help students focus.

Teacher Information: Use these activities with your students to remove some of the stress from the college admission process.

Activity 3.5 “Follow These Steps When Asking for Letters of Recommendation”

Teacher Information: Students may not know how to request letters of recommendation. Review this handout with students well in advance of the October 15 deadline so they can get their packets together for their teacher(s) and counselor(s). How they ask for the letter and the timeliness of the request are important aspects of the process to emphasize with students. Preparing the packets well in advance will help ensure quality letters of recommendation. AVID teachers and/or counselors may also want to put together and

give educators a packet on “How to write an effective letter of recommendation,” because many teachers/coaches/administrators often just reiterate information on the student’s résumé.

Activity 3.6 “The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft”

Teacher Information: This handout will help students, even the most hesitant of writers, start their rough draft for the college admission essay. Because the activity is timed, it forces students to focus on—and write about—a positive aspect of their personality.

Activity 3.7 “The Role of the Essay in the College Admission Review Process”: Includes suggestions from admission officers for writing the college essay.

Teacher Information: Review these essay-writing suggestions with your students, emphasizing the elements that college admission officers look for in a personal statement.

Activity 3.8 “What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?”: Provides another assessment of what is important in a college essay.

Teacher Information: This information will be especially helpful as students revise/finalize their essays; they can check the list of personal characteristics and descriptions to ensure their personal statements truly reflect who they are.

Activity 3.9 “Sample Letters”: Models for requesting applications or financial aid information.

Teacher Information: Share these sample letters with students so they will know how to write this type of business letter.

Activity 3.10 “Guidelines for Applying to Colleges Online”: An item-by-item list of what students need to complete an online application.

Teacher Information: Review this information with students; remind them that online applications are preferred, and, in fact, some schools accept only online applications.

Activity 3.11 “Tips for Completing College Applications”: Presents advice from MIT about completing college applications.

Teacher Information: Review these “tips” with students; emphasize the need to devote time and thought to each of the various parts of the application.

Ice Breakers—Warm-Ups

Seniors are fraught with anxiety about college and the unknown. We often assume they will remember what we say the first time—and they don't! Reducing anxiety and adding a little humor with warm-up activities will help students function better throughout the college selection/admission process.

Start group guidance sessions and workshops with one of the following activities. By warming up students, you can ensure they will be ready to receive and process information and stay on track.

College IQ Test

Ask 5–10 multiple-choice questions, ranging from the serious to the silly. This way, students and parents will learn a little about college (e.g., How many colleges are there in the country? How many seniors have perfect SAT's?) as well as something interesting and fun (Which college offers a bagpipe scholarship?).

The Worst Thing

Tell students: "Imagine what awful things could happen during your interview." Act them out.

Write a Letter Rejecting a College

Tell students: "Add hyperbole to make your letter rejecting a college sound worse than the one they sent you."

What "Bugs" Me About College?

Tell students: "Use the ladybug sheet (page 2 of this handout) to cut out bugs. Write something that "bugs" you about college and then crumple it up and toss it into the garbage." Keep score to see who gets the most baskets.

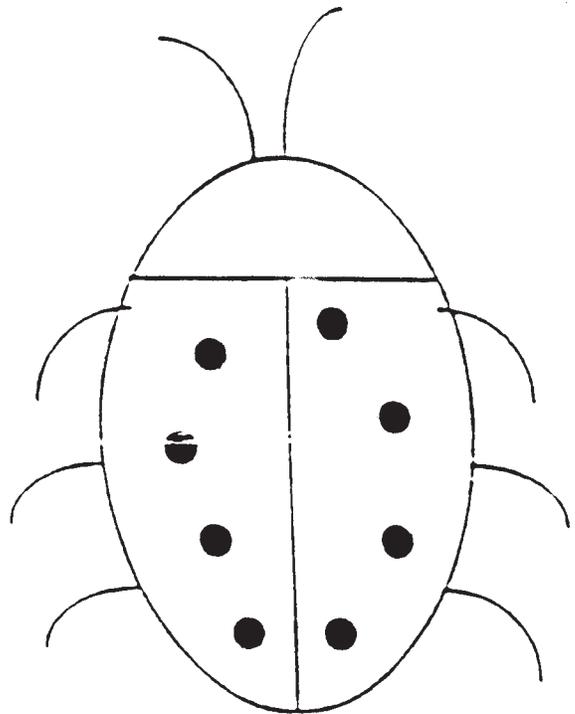
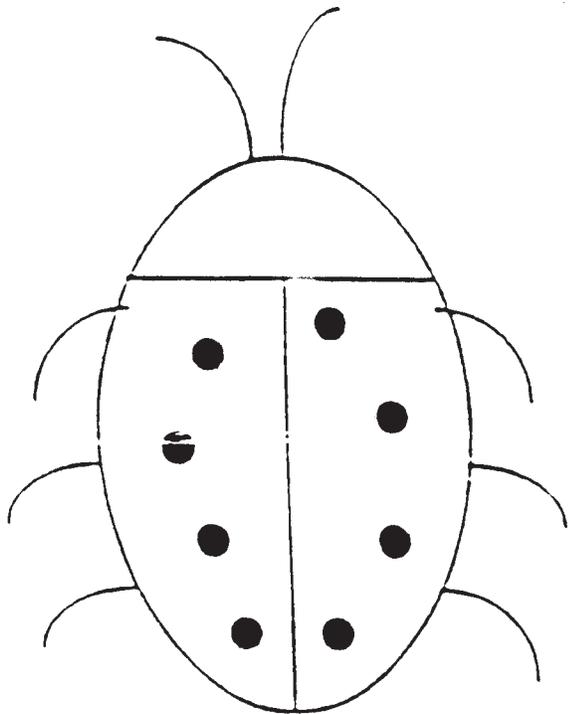
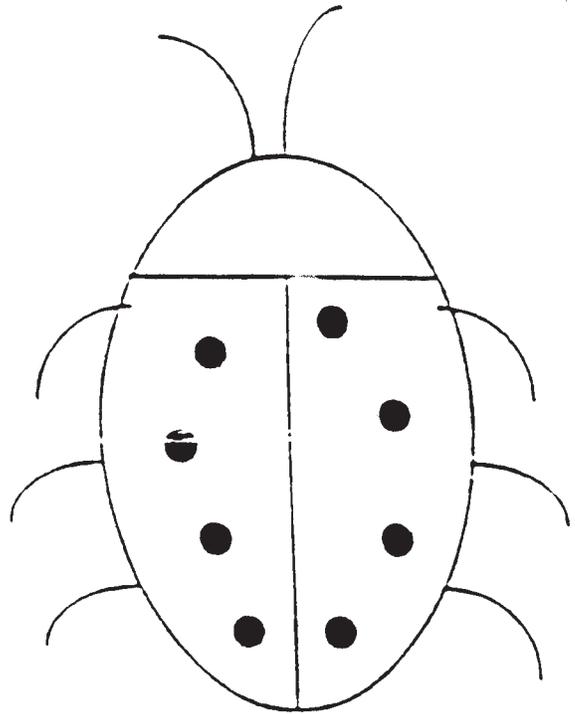
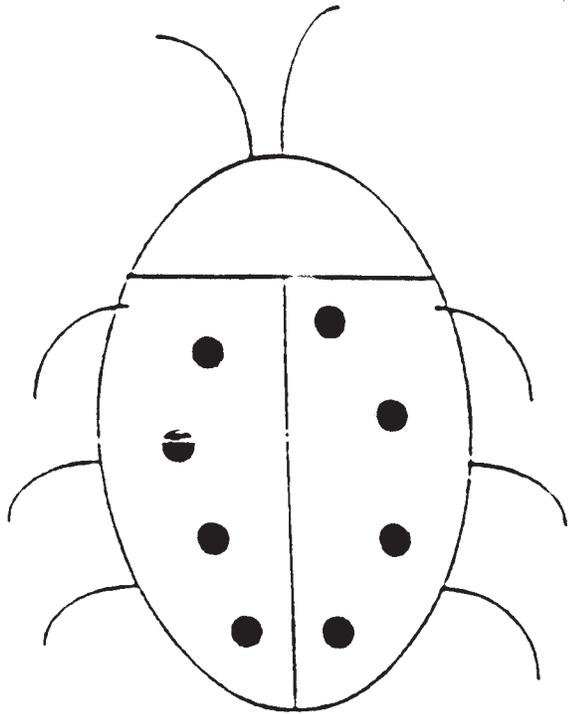
College Sweatshirt

Tell students: "Write the name of your dream college in the middle of the sweatshirt (page 3 of this handout). Under it, design a logo that describes what you want out of college. On the left sleeve, write your best academic strengths. On the right sleeve, write your best personal qualities. Above the sweatshirt, write a post-college goal you are striving for. Under the sweatshirt, write something you need to work on to get to your goal."

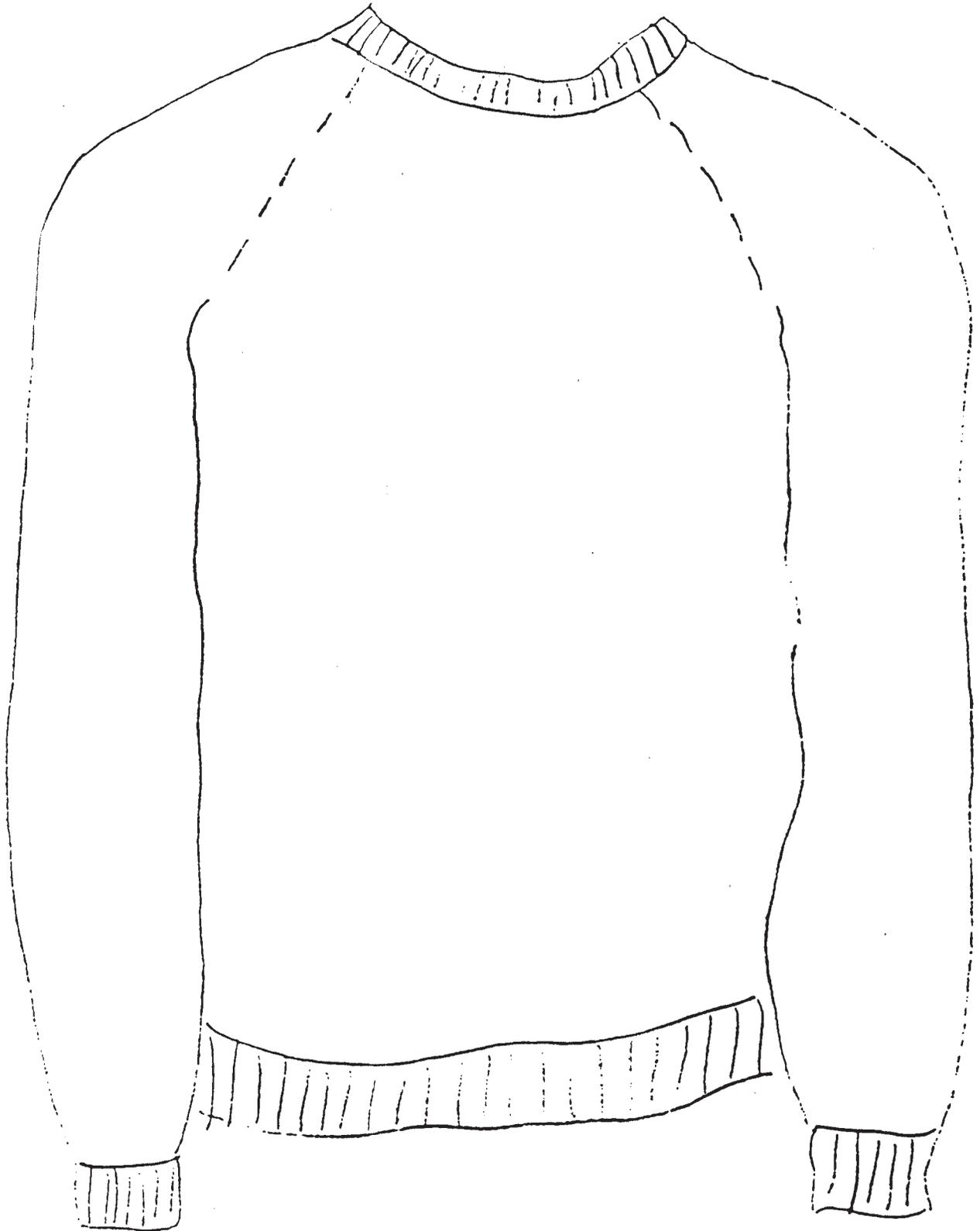
MICROLAB

Ask three to four questions to help students get started talking about themselves and their feelings about college. An index card will help them organize their ideas. Have them share in small groups and then as a large group.

Things That Bug Me



College Sweatshirt

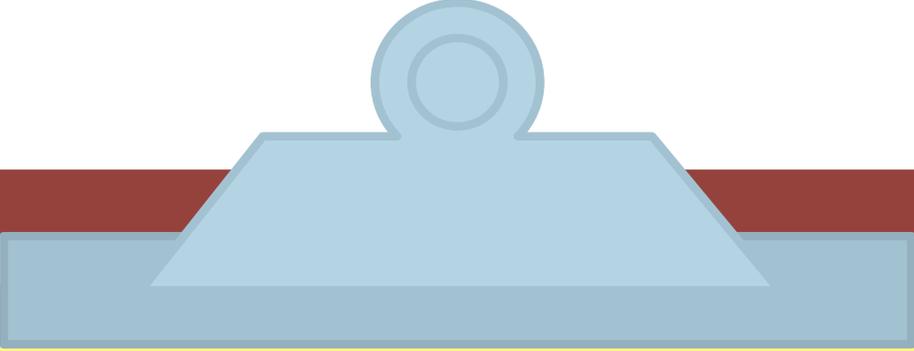


Activity 3.5 (1 of 3)

Follow These Steps When Asking for Letters of Recommendation

1. Ask teachers, counselors, administrators who know you well and who will write you a personalized, glowingly positive letter of recommendation. If this person is a teacher, it is preferable that you are currently in his or her class or were a student of theirs last year.
2. Make your request *at least three weeks* before the letter is due. Explain any extenuating circumstances to the potential letter writer.
3. Provide a photocopy of any information you have about the school or organization requesting the recommendation. Be sure that you provide the exact name of the organization or college and the person whose name should appear in the salutation (Dear _____).
4. Provide a photocopy of your AVID information sheet and/or résumé. Keep the original for future requests.
5. Provide an up-to-date copy of your unofficial transcript.
6. Supply a stamped envelope addressed to the college or organization. If possible, provide two sheets of school letterhead and any forms provided by the college or organization.
7. Place all of the above in a file folder. On the front of the folder, clip a note with the following information: “Letter of recommendation for (your name). Due (due date). Mail directly or return to (your name).”
8. Mark on your calendar the date you need to give a “friendly reminder” to the letter writer. (This should be about four days before the letter is due.)
9. **Important:** After you have received the letter of recommendation, or the letter has been mailed, send the writer a thank-you note. He/she will appreciate it, and chances are you will need to request another letter later in the year.
10. If the letter is given to you directly and you have not waived your right to see it, photocopy the letter before putting it in the mail. (*Note:* you should waive the right to see the letter if given this option.) Obtain a certificate of mailing from the post office for your records.





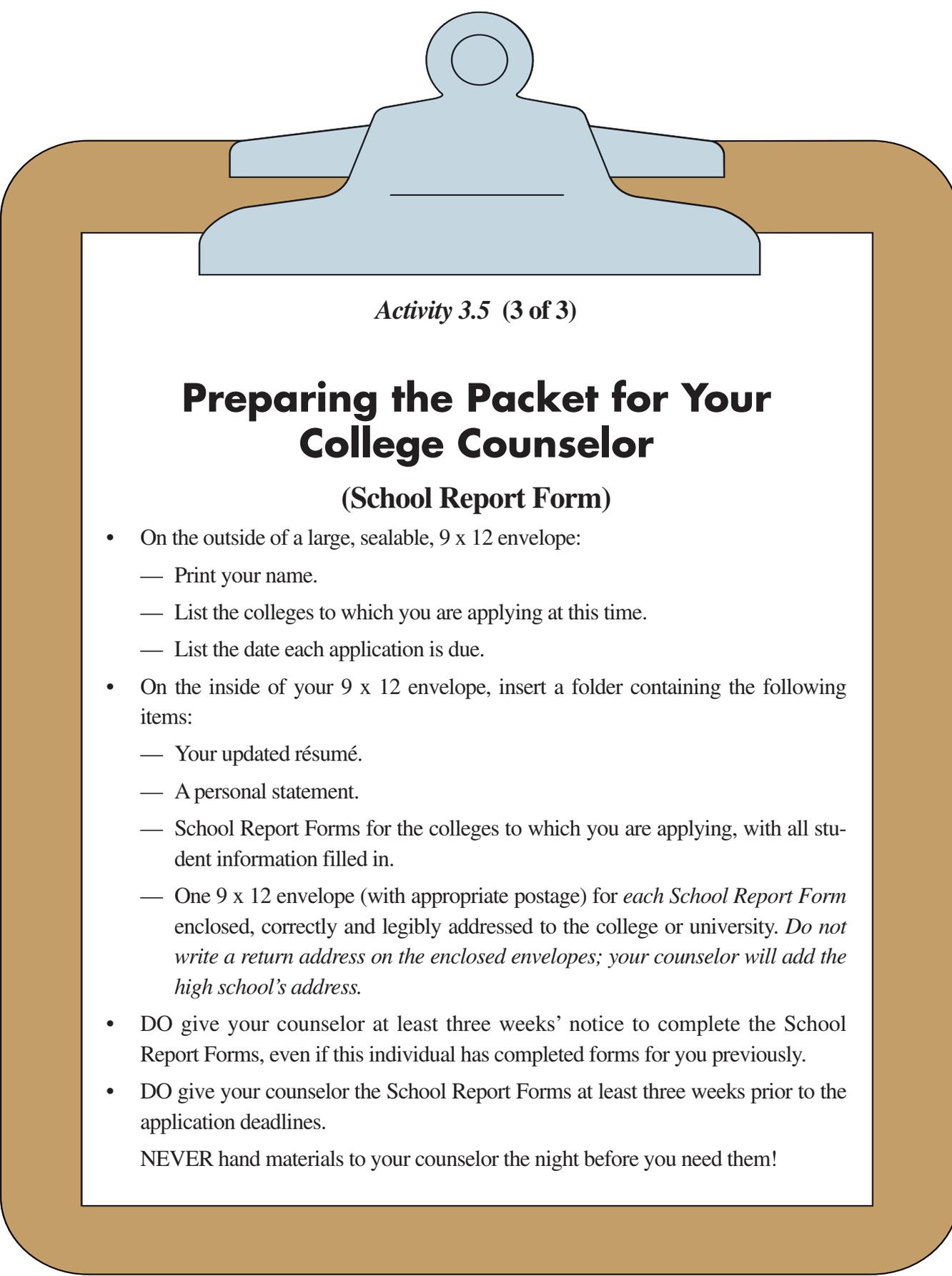
Activity 3.5 (2 of 3)

Preparing the Packet for Your Teacher

(Letter of Recommendation)

- **On the outside of a large, sealable, 9 x 12 inch envelope:**
 - **Print your name.**
 - **List the colleges to which you are applying at this time.**
 - **List the date each application is due.**
- **On the inside of your 9 x 12 envelope, insert a folder containing the following items:**
 - **Your updated résumé.**
 - **A personal statement.**
 - **Teacher recommendation forms for the colleges to which you are applying, with all student information filled in.**
 - **One business-size envelope (with appropriate postage) for each application enclosed, correctly and legibly addressed to the college or university. *Do not write a return address on the enclosed envelopes; your teacher will add the school's address.***
- **DO give your teacher at least three weeks' notice to write a letter of recommendation, even if this individual has written one for you previously.**
- **DO give your teacher the recommendation forms at least three weeks prior to the application deadlines.**

NEVER hand materials to a teacher the night before you need them!



Activity 3.5 (3 of 3)

Preparing the Packet for Your College Counselor

(School Report Form)

- On the outside of a large, sealable, 9 x 12 envelope:
 - Print your name.
 - List the colleges to which you are applying at this time.
 - List the date each application is due.
 - On the inside of your 9 x 12 envelope, insert a folder containing the following items:
 - Your updated résumé.
 - A personal statement.
 - School Report Forms for the colleges to which you are applying, with all student information filled in.
 - One 9 x 12 envelope (with appropriate postage) for *each School Report Form* enclosed, correctly and legibly addressed to the college or university. *Do not write a return address on the enclosed envelopes; your counselor will add the high school's address.*
 - DO give your counselor at least three weeks' notice to complete the School Report Forms, even if this individual has completed forms for you previously.
 - DO give your counselor the School Report Forms at least three weeks prior to the application deadlines.
- NEVER** hand materials to your counselor the night before you need them!

The College Application Essay: A Recipe for a Draft

Okay, it's time. You've made a list of college options, you've read over some applications, and you've settled into the first marking period. Time to think **ESSAY**. You've probably looked at the questions, wondered what the colleges meant by the phrase "a significant experience"—does someone have to die?—and hoped this part of the application would go away.

Let's take it on. Here's a recipe for getting started.

Assemble these ingredients:

- 3 sheets of paper
- a timer or stopwatch
- a pen or pencil

Procedure:

- Begin by thinking about yourself. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What are your best qualities? Are you a pluggger? An intellectual? A creative type? Curious? Passionate? Determined?
- Choose a positive quality you'd like to convey to the admission committee, a strength that makes you an addition to any group. (DON'T pick an event or something you've done. President of the Nuclear Awareness Club is not a personal quality.) Focus on a quality of your mind or of your character. now complete this sentence: "I am a very _____ person."
- Set the timer for 20 minutes. Pretend you're taking an exam at high school and the question is: "Tell a story about an experience or time when you showed you were a very _____ person." Use the characteristic you identified in Step 2. Write non-stop for 20 minutes; force yourself to keep telling the story and what it reveals until the timer goes DING.

OK...that's it. You've got a rough draft for your application essay!

You can look at the college application forms now and see what questions they ask. No matter what the questions are, however, you've already identified the important characteristic you want to convey to each college. You've actually answered any question that asks, "Tell us about yourself," or "Tell us about a significant experience in your life," or "We'd like to get to know you better." And for "Tell us about a person..." or a book, or a quote, you can make your choice based on the same quality you want to convey.

The key here is that the focus is on **YOU** and not on **THEM**, not on what they want but on what you are. So **WRITE ON!**

©Sarah M. McGinty, www.collegeboard.org, 1999

The Role of the Essay in the College Admission Review Process

Whether you are applying to selective independent (private) schools or a large state university, your admission essay may very well make the difference between *acceptance or rejection*. In other words, your essay is very important. Here are some additional suggestions to help you think strategically from the office of the President of the University of California.

- 1. What are the qualities they are looking for in your essay?** They are NOT looking for a specific set of activities, but rather evidence of some or all of the following:
 - Intellectual achievement, curiosity, complex intelligence
 - Creativity
 - Tenacity, self-discipline, motivation
 - Leadership
 - Special talents or interests not mentioned in the application
 - Commitment to others, volunteerism
- 2. What do they recommend?**
 - Think about the full range of all of your experiences.
 - Think carefully of what you have accomplished.
 - Think of what you have gained from these accomplishments.
- 3. What do they suggest?**
 - Write your own essay. Write it in your own voice so that they can get to know you as they read your essay.
 - Step outside of yourself and think reflectively.
 - Take time in writing. Follow the rules. Support your thesis; check your spelling, grammar, and theme development. Allow a few days before finishing. It will help you to see errors and any inconclusive or irrelevant statement.
 - Don't be wildly funny or creative.
 - Avoid cliches and trite statements.
 - Do not manufacture hardships. If, indeed, you have had to overcome undue hardships, show not only in what ways this experience has affected you, but what you have learned from it and how you have grown from this experience.
- 4. What do they tell you to do (or not do)?**
 - Read instructions carefully before starting. Write to the prompts.
 - Don't be cute with fonts.
 - Proofread and avoid careless errors. Poorly written essays work against you.
 - Understand the nature of the very competitive schools. *Choose your colleges realistically.*
 - Don't borrow someone else's voice. **Don't plagiarize.**

In conclusion: Give the fullest view of who you are behind your grades.

Activity 3.8

What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Description</i>
Creativity	Innovation, imagination
Intellectual Orientation	Enthusiasm for learning Independent pursuit of knowledge
Exceptional Recognition	Prestigious or unusual honor, award, citation
Hardship	Economic, educational, physical, familial Ability to overcome as well as the degree of hardship
Initiative/Motivation	Going far beyond normal expectations in academics and/or extracurricular activities
Leadership	Guiding, directing, taking responsibility, and following through
Persistence	Resoluteness, tenacity
Special Spark	Extraordinary attribute(s) not described elsewhere on this list (could be unusual insight or maturity)
Substantial Experience with Other Racial/Cultural Groups	Experience in or with another culture, resulting in distinguishable personal growth or insight. Highly unusual or extraordinary background/experience that adds to awareness
Rare Talents	Uncommon ability in the arts, sports, academics



Activity 3.9

Sample Letters

SAMPLE APPLICATION REQUEST

October 5, 2006

Admission Office
Name of University
Address of University
City, State, ZIP Code

Dear Admission Officer,

I am interested in attending your university in the fall of 2007. Please send me the necessary information to apply to your campus: admission application forms, priority or deadline dates, housing forms, tuition information, and any other college program information (e.g., EOP) that will be helpful in the application process.

Thank you for taking the time to answer my requests.

Sincerely,

William A. Jones
1234 Any Street
San Diego, CA 91234

SAMPLE FINANCIAL AID REQUEST

October 5, 2006

Financial Aid Office
Name of University
Address of University
City, State, ZIP Code

Dear Financial Aid Officer,

I am interested in attending your university in the fall of 2007 and will need financial assistance. Please send me any information that will be helpful and all the necessary forms regarding scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans.

Please include priority or deadline dates required by your institution and your Title IV Code for Financial aid/FAFSA.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

William A. Jones
1234 Any Street
San Diego, CA 91234

Guidelines for Applying to Colleges Online

What you will need when applying online:

1. “Paper College/University Application” (Complete the paper application to use as a draft, but DO apply online!)
2. Current and complete high school transcripts (also community college transcripts, if applicable)
3. Social Security card number.
4. Payment option:
 - **Credit or debit card.** *You will need the card number, the complete name as it appears on the card, and the expiration date. (Some schools will also ask for a special code number, usually a 3-digit number, on the back of the card.)*
 - **Fee waiver.** *Usually a part of the application process; many schools will accept the College Board Fee Waiver. See your counselor or AVID teacher for details.*
 - **Payment by mail.** *Some schools will allow you to send payment by mail using a check or money order.*
 - **Billing.** *Some schools will bill you by mail for the application.*
5. All your test scores (ACT, SAT®, SAT® Subject Tests, AP® tests)
6. All your personal information (*address, phone, e-mail address, extracurricular activities, awards, etc.*). Pick one e-mail address to use for all your college and financial aid applications and check it regularly.
7. The Web addresses for the colleges where you are applying.
8. For some schools, you will need a copy of your college admission essay on disk so you can copy and paste it on the application. (**Note:** make sure the essay has NO errors and that you have appropriately answered the correct question.)



Tips for Completing College Applications

In an admission report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Education Council, the following reminder was given to future applicants: “People do not apply to colleges: folders do. The folder and application are a single opportunity to influence the process. Approach each aspect of the application as an opportunity. Devote time and thought to each of the various portions.”

As you think about your folder circulating among the admission committee, consider the following:

1. Read *every word* of the directions before you even print your name.
2. Make a copy of the application and use that copy as a work sheet.
3. Demonstrate your *best* work—something of which you can be proud.
4. Essays should be error-free, thoughtful, logical, and organized. Do not overreach. Use comfortable vocabulary. Be yourself. “The essay should say something the rest of the application doesn’t say, or at least should elaborate on something the application barely suggests—a talent, an interest, thoughts on a world or local problem, a personal accomplishment.”
5. Do not write what you think the admission office wants. The committee reading your application wants to know *you*—whatever you think and do. No matter how “ordinary” you may feel, your folder represents a different individual from all others.
6. Use specific examples when describing your interests and achievements. Explain your involvement—why the things you chose to discuss are important to you. It is better to emphasize the degree of involvement in a few activities than a long list of superficial interests.
7. Why are you going to college? To learn? To learn what? Why? A college should be convinced that you truly want an education. *Avoid simplistic answers and reasons.* If you want to be an engineer, for example, cite some experience from your own life that led you to this present choice.
8. If humor is a part of your style, feel free to use it.
9. Typing or printing is acceptable. In some cases, you will be required to write an essay in your own handwriting. Neatness and legibility are obviously essential.
10. Proofread. Spelling errors are unacceptable.
11. Clear copies are perfectly acceptable, but sign each one individually. Your name should be on each page or item submitted with the application.
12. Proofread again!

3. Exploration

Ideally, students applying to the same university system (for example, UC or CSU) or using the same common application for an admission application (Texas Common Application or the Common Application for private schools) will do so as a group in the school’s classroom or computer lab (Activities 3.12–3.13). Make sure students pay special attention to the informational pages; although optional, family status, income, and level of parental education are important elements and should be included.

The activities and leadership pages of the application need to state and demonstrate student service, activities, and leadership. Remind students to include their AVID participation under the special programs section of an application.

The final draft of the admission essay can be attached to the application by copying and pasting it from a computer file. Remind students to mention AVID in their admission essay, if applicable. The deadline for some college and university applications is as early as November 30, so instruct students to submit applications before Thanksgiving break in order to avoid last-minute stress.

If possible, have students complete private college applications before the winter break. Ask them to schedule appointments for interviews and help them practice their interviewing skills. Remind students to send thank-you notes to interviewers and to those who wrote letters of recommendation. They may also want to send thank-you notes to college representatives who visited the AVID classroom.

Undocumented students wishing to apply to public colleges and universities should obtain help from AVID teacher, counselor, and college admission representatives. This is also a good time to play “The College Admission Game” (Activity 2.11).

Timeline

October–November: Submit public college applications online (with final-draft essays).

November–December: Submit private college and university applications (with final-draft essays). Schedule interviews.

Activities/Materials

Activity 3.12 “Your Responsibilities”: A one-page chart that will encourage student accountability in the college admission process.

Teacher Information: *Help students complete the chart “Your Responsibilities” as needed. The chart includes spaces to record important information, such as application and financial aid deadlines and scheduled visits/interviews. This chart will help to remind students about the many responsibilities they have in the college admission process.*

Activity 3.13 “The Interview”: A list of interview tips for students, plus questions they may be asked; also includes questions students may want to ask their interviewers.

Teacher Information: *Have students role-play asking/answering these commonly asked questions; it’s important that their responses during the interview come across as honest and natural.*

Activity 3.14 “Research Project: 25 Great Colleges...” A list of 25 lesser-known, but highly respected, schools that students may want to consider.

Teacher Information: *Review this list with your students to introduce them to some excellent schools they may not have heard of, but which might provide the perfect “fit.” Then have each student research one of the 25 schools, following the assignment directions.*

Activity 3.12

Your Responsibilities

Your Responsibilities	<i>College A</i>	<i>College B</i>	<i>College C</i>	<i>College D</i>
College Name:				
Telephone Number:				
Information Requested on:				
Application Requested on:				
Informal Visit Planned on:				
Information Sessions Scheduled on:				
Comparison Worksheet Completed on:				
Deadlines				
Application:				
Transcript and Secondary School Report:				
Financial Aid - Federal:				
Financial Aid - College:				
Test Dates:				
Achievement Tests Requested:				
Test Scores Sent to College:				
Date Scores Sent:				
Interview				
Required?				
Campus Appointment On:				
Campus Appointment At:				
Application Forms				
Essays Written on:				
Application Mailed on:				
Fee Mailed on:				
Financial Aid Forms Mailed on:				
Completed Application or School Report Given to Counselor on:				
Teacher Recommendations				
#1 Given to:				
On:				
#2 Given to:				
On:				
#3 Given to:				
On:				

The College Interview

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. You should look at the college interview as not only an opportunity to impress your interviewer, but also a chance to get your questions answered by someone who represents a college in which you are interested. The interviews should be informative as well as evaluative. Keep in mind that interviewers interview students because they enjoy meeting young people who are interested in the institutions they represent. The best interviews are those that are comfortable, interesting and fun!

Preparing for the Interview

Wear something neat, clean, and comfortable that does not make you self-conscious. Jeans are, in most cases, too casual.

Know the location of the interview and how to get there. Lateness shows a lack of regard for the interviewer's time. Call if you are unavoidably delayed. Be prepared to stay to complete the interview.

Know what you want to get across to your interviewer before you walk in.

The Interview

Smile and stand as you meet the interviewer. Give a firm handshake and state your name clearly. Make sure to introduce anyone else who has come to the interview with you, pronouncing their names and offering their relation to you.

Use the interviewer's name, addressing the person as Mr., Miss, Ms., Dr., etc. Unless invited, do not use the interviewer's first name.

Keep eye contact while speaking; this is another way of "connecting" with your interviewer.

Nervousness is understandable. If you become aware that it is showing, don't overreact. Breathe deeply and concentrate on the conversation. Be confident—you know what you are talking about!

Be truthful, honest, and sincere. Neither exaggerate nor discount your qualifications. Exaggeration is often obvious and reflects poorly on your credibility. Minimizing what you have accomplished should not be seen as humility but rather as a missed opportunity.

Speak clearly with confidence and enthusiasm. Listen to the interviewer's questions and do not interrupt. Give thoughtful and complete answers.

Offer more than is asked of you. Interviewers do not know you before you enter their office. Questions are used as prompts to allow you to share yourself. Simple yes and no answers or one-line responses make the interview more difficult for the interviewer, hence less enjoyable.

Have a few questions to ask at the end of the interview. Make sure the answers are not found readily in the college literature, or else it is obvious that you have not done enough research. Take notes if you like.

After the Interview

Write some quick notes to yourself about how you thought the interview went and what kind of impression you made with the interviewer. Pay attention to "gut feelings."

Send a thank-you note to the person who conducted your interview!

Activity 3.13 (2 of 3)

Know yourself!

Questions to ask yourself to prepare for an interview...

1. How have I liked high school? If I could change one thing, what would it be?
2. What are my academic strengths and interests? Why?
3. What are my personal strengths and interests? Why?
4. How do I spend my free time? In what sorts of activities am I engaged in when I “lose track of time?”
5. What do I like to read? Why?
6. With what kinds of people do I like to spend my time?
7. How do I feel about people who are different from me?
8. How do I feel about competition?
9. What do I expect to get out of college besides a degree?
10. Why do I feel that I am a good fit for this college? Why would they want me?
11. If I could go anywhere or do anything I wanted for a year—what would I do?
12. What would I like others to know about me that isn’t always obvious?

Questions you may want to ask your interviewer...

You can ask any question that is on your mind, but it is best to ask questions that are not easily answered in a brochure. This is a chance to “read between the lines.” Use this opportunity to ask the interviewer about his or her “sense” of the institution.

Academic Standards and Policies

- What are the strongest programs or majors?
- What percentage of graduates go directly to graduate school? Professional schools?
- What percentage of the faculty hold a Ph.D. degree?
- How large is the library? Does it have open stacks? Any special features?
- What is the SAT® range of the middle 50% of the applicant pool?
- Do graduate students teach any courses?
- What are the required freshman courses? Is there a core curriculum?
- What computer facilities are available? Do all students have access to email? Are the dorms wired?
- Ask about transfer and AP® credits if they apply to you.

Student Body

- What is the geographical distribution of the student body?
- How many international students attend the college? Students of color?
- What is the average size of the freshman class?
- What percentage return for sophomore year? Why do students leave the college?

Activity 3.13 (3 of 3)

Campus Regulations

May freshmen have cars on campus? May upperclassmen have cars on campus?

Are parking facilities available?

Are there curfews in the dormitories?

Housing

What percentage of students live in the dorms? Is housing guaranteed?

What are the dorms like?

Is there preferred housing for freshman/upperclassmen? Are the classes mixed in each dorm?

Are the dorms co-ed?

Are laundry facilities available in the dorms?

Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What percentage of students are involved?

Extracurricular Activities and Social Life

What is the form of student government? Is it active?

What percentage of students remains on campus during weekends? What do they do?

Ask specifically about activities, events, clubs that interest you.

Support and Personal Services

Are academic advisors assigned to entering freshmen?

Is there an orientation program for freshmen?

Does the college have 24-hour infirmary/health center service?

What is religious life like on campus?

Ask specifically about any concerns you may have.

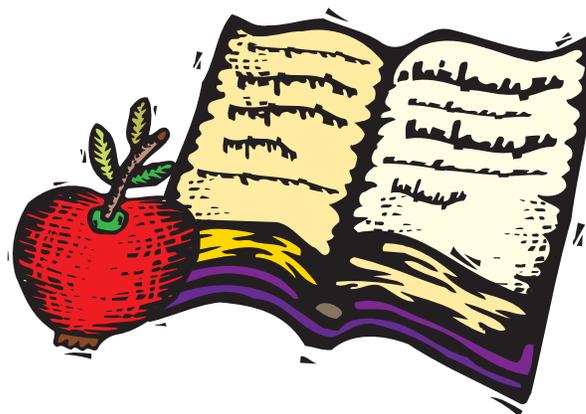
Financial Aid

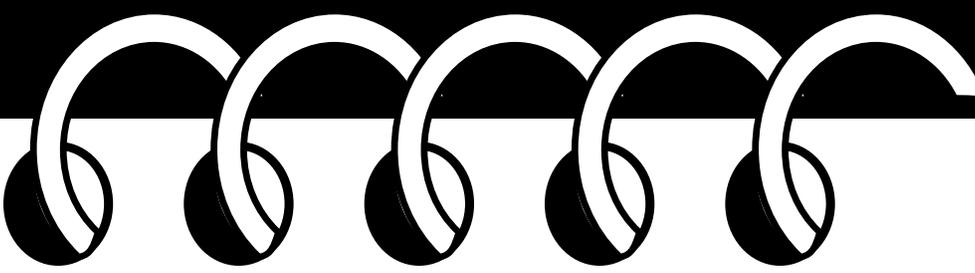
What percentage of the student body receives grant aid from the college?

What percentage work to meet tuition costs?

Ask any specific questions that you may have.

Reprinted with the permission of Bryn Mawr.





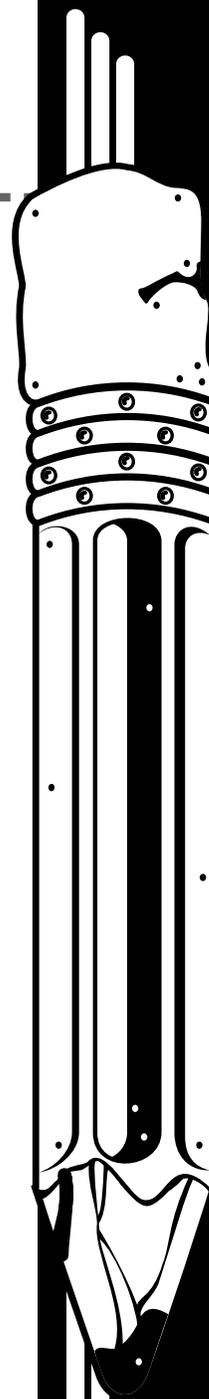
Activity 3.14 (1 of 8)

Research Project: 25 Great Colleges...

Here is a list of colleges that are not local, and you probably don't know much about any of them. Research one college and from your findings complete the chart "One of 25 Great Colleges That You (Probably) Haven't Considered," and then create an informative poster and display for a gallery walk. Only ONE student will research a college, so you will need to sign up as soon as possible. Complete the following steps in your research.

1. Use the Internet to compile the information requested on the attached chart. We will be scheduled in the library for two class periods for research.
2. Write to the admission office of your assigned college right away. You will need to allow time for their response. Do this on the first day we are in the library. Once the letter is printed and placed in an addressed, sealed envelope, ask your AVID teacher to mail it for you.

After you have gathered your information, you will create a poster and display. Your poster should include information from all categories on the research chart, pictures of the college, maps, other relevant information, a copy of the admission application and the catalog. Read the attached rubric for an understanding of how you will be assessed on this project.



25 Great Colleges You (Probably) Haven't Considered

By Christina Wright, College Counselor, Collegewise—Irvine, CA

1. **Allegheny College** (Meadville, PA)—If you'd be more inclined to share a grilled cheese sandwich with your French professor in the dining hall than you would to share beers with the bros in a frat house, explore Allegheny. If you believe that physics majors should also adeptly discuss great novels, Meadville, PA, just might beckon you. You'll find 2,000 Allegheny students who live in and are excited about the gray areas. They're jazzed about the process of learning, they freely chat with their professors about their ideas, and they enjoy sharing the beliefs that they've culled. Every Allegheny senior must complete an independent research project and defend it before an academic panel. But Alleghenians don't mind. They had so much fun wading through the sea of learning and they want everyone to know about it.
2. **Babson College** (Babson Park, MA)—Have you always wanted to run your own business? Well, then get ready to do just that—in your first year of college—at Babson. Groups of first-year students are given \$3,000 to invent, develop, launch, manage, and liquidate a business. Recent ventures include “The Shake Up,” a company manufacturing vibrating pillow alarm clocks, and “Crunch Time,” a distributor of tasty kettle corn. And any proceeds received go directly to charity. Babson encourages students to make even the craziest business idea work. As their motto says, “It's Possible. At Babson.”
3. **Bates College** (Lewiston, ME)—Don't let Bates' small-town, summer-camp feeling confuse you—this is a college that prepares students to take on the world. Even the academic calendar reflects this. Students study on a 4-4-1 plan, meaning that there is a normal fall and winter semester, with the addition of a one month “short term” in May. During that “short term,” Bates students can study the economics of China and Taiwan in those countries, or produce a Hungarian play at a theater in Budapest, or complete conservation studies on the Galapagos Islands. And when they return to Lewiston, Maine, their professors will be waiting to celebrate their findings at the Mount David Summit, a campus-wide festival of student academic achievement.
4. **Bucknell University** (Lewisburg, PA)—Bucknell is a small community of 4,000 learners with the resources of a 40,000-student institution. And like a larger university, there isn't just one stereotypical Bucknell student. Undergraduates can choose to live in regular dorms or one of six residential colleges, with themes such as the environment, arts, and social justice. These living-learning centers make academic discussion part of everyday life. But just because you've chosen to live in the society and technology residential college doesn't mean that you can't play the saxophone in the jazz band—anyone at Bucknell can get involved in music or performing arts. Who knows? You may find yourself performing at the late-night music showcase in the campus' 7th St. Café.
5. **Carleton College** (Northfield, MN)—If your idea of college involves making an impact in your community, even if it's in the silliest of ways, then Carleton might be the right place for you. This is the school that hosts an annual Tofu Princess Contest and pits dorms against each other for an energy conservation challenge during the month of February (three Carleton students even camped outside for an entire frigidly cold week to do their part). This is a school with its own arboretum, used for everything from biology labs to cross-country running practice. Civic-minded students can live in the Wellstone House of Activism. Future rock stars can hone their skills playing live in The Cave, the oldest college-owned and operated club in the nation. And all Carleton stu-

Activity 3.14 (3 of 8)

dents release stress during primal scream, a campus-wide yell at 10 p.m. on the night before final exams. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something, at Carleton.

6. **Centre College** (Danville, KY)—Colleges make lots of promises to prospective students. But Centre College, a liberal arts college with 1,070 students in Danville, Kentucky, actually gives you a guarantee. All students who meet the college's academic expectations are guaranteed an internship, study abroad, and graduation in four consecutive years. Centre's students enjoy a rigorous, liberal arts education that is integrated with real-world experience through internships at places like the Center for Disease Control, 6th District Court of Appeals, State Farm Insurance, Toyota and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. But it's not all academics and internships at Centre. In addition to a vibrant Greek system and plenty of on-campus organizations, there are some pretty great traditions for Centre students. As seniors, the female students serenade the college president...in their bath towels.
7. **Drexel University** (Philadelphia, PA)—Drexel students aren't just learning about business and entrepreneurship from text books—they're actually working as business-people and entrepreneurs. Through the Co-Op program, Drexel students gain up to 18 months of on-the-job experience prior to graduation. Aspiring financial advisors can see the real thing at BlackRock Funds. Those interested in the pharmaceutical industry can work at Merck & Co., Inc. And future doctors can see if they've got what it takes at the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania. Drexel is a place for students who know exactly what they want to do for a living. If you've already got a 5-year plan, give Drexel a look.
8. **Earlham College** (Richmond, IN)—This is a school where late-night talks replace frat house antics and "extra-curriculars" are never really extra. Earlham students take the Literature of the Industrial Age course during the day and attend a lecture about the impact of that time period's art movement at night. Later they contemplate what they've learned that day with their professor around the fireplace in the coffee shop. And they address their professors by first names—this is not a place for archaic formalities. Then they'll post their thoughts on the "Opinion Board"—a public discussion bulletin board in the student union where Earlhamites argue about everything from civil rights to campus administration.
9. **Grinnell College** (Grinnell, IA)—Other than a mandatory first-year writing tutorial to enhance critical thinking, writing, and discussion skills, there are no course requirements for Grinnell students. Instead, students work closely with academic advisors to determine their own course of study. Grinnell is a member of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, a coalition of 14 liberal arts colleges that focuses primarily on study-abroad opportunities. Students can choose semester-long programs to study subjects like art in Florence, Italy; language and culture in Russia; or tropical field research in Costa Rica. And the Grinnell Pioneers have the highest-scoring basketball team in the nation, using a run-and-gun offense that shoots the ball every 12 seconds for scores of over 100 points per game.
10. **Guilford College** (Greensboro, NC)—A Guilford education begins with a strong foundation of core courses that emphasize the school's mission to "study human values as well as the interrelatedness of the world's knowledge and cultures." First-year students complete the First Year Experience seminar to engage themselves in interactive learning as well as acquiring essential skills like time management and academic honesty. Students must also take courses on historical perspectives, foreign languages, and college reading and writing. From the foundation courses, students move through the academic ranks until their senior year, when they

Activity 3.14 (4 of 8)

complete a capstone course in which they draw on the interdisciplinary classes they've taken to write a concluding paper.

11. **Hampshire College** (Amherst, MA)—How much academic freedom can you handle? Hampshire College has no majors—instead, students work with faculty advisors to develop their academic path. Hampshire students use their interests as their guide to finding their intellectual passions. These unique learners truly study in an interdisciplinary way and it is hard for Hampshire to outline specific areas of study—courses change year to year based on interest. If Hampshire doesn't specifically offer a course, students can take the class at any school in the Five College Consortium (including Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and UMass-Amherst). So even though Hampshire College itself is very small, there are four other thriving college campuses within 10 miles to keep your interest.
12. **Hendrix College** (Conway, AR)—Hendrix College looks at the undergraduate experience as an odyssey. In fact, they've recently created the Hendrix Odyssey—an active learning curriculum that inspires students to engage in educational exploration in subjects personalized to their interests. Unearth ancient artifacts on an archaeological dig in Pompeii, Italy, or convince your favorite science professor to abandon his sabbatical to research with you. These odysseys, and many more, have come to fruition at Hendrix. If you've got a quirky idea for your academic path, Hendrix might just be right for you.
13. **Kalamazoo College** (Kalamazoo, MI)—As part of the K-Plan, “K” students are as comfortable with globe-hopping as most college kids are with sleeping in on Saturday mornings. English majors might find themselves studying Shakespeare in London, biology majors exploring ecology in Costa Rica, and political science majors studying Israeli history in Jerusalem. Graduates of this 1,300-student body have worked aggressively to make the entire world their classroom, with over 80 percent of students studying abroad before graduation. For those not yet keen on disappearing to Senegal or Sierra Leone for months at a time, the K-Plan also includes writing a Senior Individualized Project (SIP) involving in-depth research under faculty mentorship.
14. **Kenyon College** (Gambier, OH)—Kenyon encourages students to experiment and find their academic passions. Every major at Kenyon culminates in a senior exercise to demonstrate students' depth of knowledge within their majors. Depending on the major, the senior exercise may be a research paper, an examination, a presentation, an art exhibit, or a multimedia project. Traditions define the experience at Kenyon. Incoming freshmen gather on the steps of Rosse Hall to sing Kenyon songs to the rest of the community. On Matriculation Day in October, freshmen sign a book that contains the names of virtually every Kenyon student since the early 1800's. On the last night of Senior Week, members of the graduating class join together with faculty and administrators in the annual Senior-Faculty dinner. And graduating seniors gather once again on the Rosse Hall steps to sing on the day before Commencement.
15. **Lake Forest College** (Lake Forest, IL)—A college in the Midwest within walking distance to a beach? You've got it at Lake Forest College! This gorgeous campus is just an hour north of downtown Chicago and adjacent to Lake Michigan. The 1,600 Lake Forest College students know their professors well—in fact, professors are also academic advisors and mentors. After a great philosophy class, you might find yourself at a cute coffee shop in the town of Lake Forest, discussing what you've just learned with your professor. And all Lake Forest students, regardless of major, garner a comprehensive humanities background through the core courses.
16. **Macalester College** (St. Paul, MN)—Macalester students represent the world. This is a school where international relations are brought to life by the daily interaction between students on campus. Macalester students

Activity 3.14 (5 of 8)

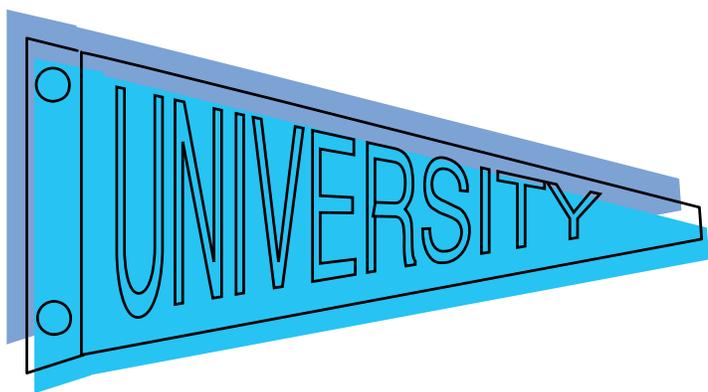
come from 80 countries and all 50 states. In fact, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, is a graduate. This intercultural mindset begins during the first year, when students enroll in a 16-person class in which they learn to aptly write, argue, and make connections. Imagine discussing the Mideast conflict with students from Israel and Iran. That kind of international discussion is the goal of Macalester College.

17. **Oberlin College** (Oberlin, OH)—1,000 things to do on a college campus in rural Ohio? Believe it, at Oberlin College! This outstanding liberal arts college is teeming with activity—anything from one of the 400 annual campus concerts to warming up with Tuesday Tea in the Allen Art Museum. Students may pursue academic endeavors in humanities, science, social sciences, music, theater, and dance. In fact, Oberlin is home to its own Conservatory of Music. This Conservatory contributes to the thriving art community on campus and everyone benefits from the work of its students.
18. **Oglethorpe University** (Atlanta, GA)—If you want a small liberal arts college within proximity to a large city, try Oglethorpe. From your first day as a freshman to your final day as a senior, Oglethorpe makes sure its students are successful. This is due in part to the core curriculum—courses that every Oglethorpe student takes at the same time. For freshmen, there is Fresh Focus, a class designed to help first-year students select the appropriate classes by drawing on experience from upperclassmen and professors. And every senior must take Senior Transitions, a class created to help graduating students make the transition into life beyond college.
19. **Rhodes College** (Memphis, TN)—Rhodes is another gem of a small school within a thriving metropolitan area. And Rhodes loves being part of the community—through the Rhodes CARES program, students combine their academic interests with community service, working at places like St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital. The Center for Outreach in the Development of the Arts (CODA) awards 16 Rhodes students with annual scholarships to strengthen their own artistic abilities while taking advantage of Memphis’ cultural community. If you want your college life to be intertwined with your community, check out Rhodes.
20. **Simmons College** (Boston, MA)—Think that going to an all-women’s college sounds boring? Well, then you haven’t heard of Simmons. While this all-women’s college prides itself on its community of smart and strong female students, undergraduates also take advantage of the multitude of activities that Boston offers. Simmons students describe their school as a “sisterhood, not a sorority.” Here, everyone’s interests are respected as integral parts of the colorful Simmons universe. And these sisters come together to explore Boston—probably the greatest college town in the universe with over 300,000 students swarming the city. So if you’d like to become part of an exciting intellectual sisterhood, take a look at Simmons.
21. **Skidmore College** (Saratoga Springs, NY)—This liberal arts college in upstate New York truly believes in the benefit of studying “the arts”—almost one in five undergraduates is a visual or performing arts major. The campus is home to The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery. Its exhibitions, collections, and programs are an integral aspect of the Skidmore experience. But it’s not just about art. Skidmore offers majors in everything from American to Asian Studies. And the town of Saratoga Springs is a thriving college town that students love.
22. **Southwestern University** (Georgetown, TX)—Want to get to know your professors really well? Check out Southwestern. This small liberal arts university north of Austin, Texas, is full of professors who hand out their home phone numbers and notice if you miss a class. This is an academically serious school where the library is often full on Friday nights. Many students also hang out in The Cove to play pool, grab a snack, lounge by the fireplace and just catch up with friends. Southwestern students can even develop a “student-guided” experi-

Activity 3.14 (6 of 8)

ence, working with faculty members through the Paideia Program to understand current events and contribute to their community while pursuing their academic interests.

23. **University of Mary Washington** (Fredericksburg, VA)—This might be the right choice for you if you're looking for that prestigious private school feeling, but don't want to pay the high price tag. University of Mary Washington offers small class sizes and professors whose number one priority is teaching, not research, all without high tuition costs. And with more than 100 clubs on campus, UMW has the resources of the expensive private schools. Every freshman is paired with an upperclassman to ease with the transition into college and to introduce incoming students to the opportunities on campus.
24. **Ursinus College** (Collegeville, PA)—Ursinus College is a place for writers. Ask any of the 1,200 students on campus what their favorite book is and chances are many will say *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger. Salinger attended Ursinus briefly for the fall semester of 1938, but his influence continues to permeate campus life. In honor of this famous former student, Ursinus awards the Salinger Scholarship—a \$25,000 annual four-year scholarship for creative writers. Everyone gets involved at Ursinus, even the professors. Every week, one faculty member is designated as “coach of the week” for the football team, giving pep talks before games and even contributing strategic plays. During the football team's most successful year, two female professors served as “coach of the week.”
25. **Whitman College** (Walla Walla, Washington)—Quaint Walla Walla, Washington, doesn't offer much in terms of activities for Whitman students, which is why there are so many exciting things constantly happening on campus. Students affectionately refer to their academic home as the “Whitman Bubble”—they feel that there's not much need to venture away from school when there's so much happening at their doorstep. Students are the number one priority at Whitman, voicing opinions on candidates for the next college president and giving feedback during the admissions process. And they take advantage of everything that the “Whitman Bubble” offers—groups ranging from the Telemark Skiing club to writing for the newspaper to being a security escort. Whitman professors are incredibly accessible to their students and these teachers strive to better their skills at the Center for Teaching and Learning. So if you want a college campus that you'll never want to leave, take a look at Whitman.



Activity 3.14 (7 of 8)

One of 25 Great Colleges That You (Probably) Haven't Considered

Student Name: _____ College Name: _____

TOPIC	INFORMATION NOTES
Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> city, state distance from home 	
Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enrollment campus (physical) size 	
Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> type of school school setting (urban/rural) location & size of nearest city co-ed, male, female religious affiliation 	
Admission Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deadline tests required average test scores, GPA, rank notification 	
Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> majors offered special requirements accreditation student-faculty ratio typical class size 	
College Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuition, room and board estimated total budget application fee, deposits 	
Financial Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deadline required forms percentage receiving aid scholarships 	
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> residence hall requirement food plan availability off campus 	
Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic recreational other 	
Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clubs, organizations Greek life athletics, intramurals other 	
Campus Visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when special events 	

Rubric for “25 Great Colleges That You (Probably) Haven’t Considered”

Student Name: _____ College Name: _____

Information:

Assessment in each category will use the following numerical scale:

- 1—Poor: limited information; little effort involved
- 2—Fair: some information, although not detailed; some effort
- 3—Good: adequate information with some detail; effort is evident
- 4—Excellent: substantial, detailed information; strong effort is obvious

- 1. Location _____
- 2. Size _____
- 3. Environment _____
- 4. Admission Requirements _____
- 5. Academics _____
- 6. College Expenses _____
- 7. Financial Aid _____
- 8. Housing _____
- 9. Activities _____
- 10. Campus Visits _____
- Subtotal _____/40

Artifacts (10 points for each):

- 1. Catalog _____
- 2. Application _____
- 3. Pictures _____
- Subtotal _____/30

Appearance:

- 10—Handwritten, often sloppy, little effort involved
 - 20—Some typed, some handwritten, mostly neat, some effort
 - 30—Typed and expertly arranged, obvious effort involved
- _____ /30

Total _____ /100

4. “Fit” and Finances

Completing the financial aid process is one of the most daunting tasks in the college-application process (Activities 3.15–3.19); *it absolutely requires parent involvement*. The entire financial aid process revolves around the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Almost all sources of financial aid for college, including federal and state grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study, are based on the FAFSA. The FAFSA is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov in both English and Spanish. It should be available in a paper format at your school by November; however, the online application is preferred and more efficient.

Although some students may think they do not qualify for need-based financial aid, many colleges use the FAFSA to award their private dollars. Verify that both students and parents have their PINs, and then have them work together to complete the FAFSA application checklist in readiness for the January submission of the FAFSA (Activity 3.19). **Note:** The FAFSA cannot be submitted until January 1.

Often independent colleges require additional forms, such as the College Board’s CSS/PROFILE® (Activity 3.20) or the college’s own supplemental form(s). Have students register for the PROFILE®, if necessary, and any other required forms. Students should check directly with each college’s financial aid office to find out what is required.

Students will also want to compare expenses at different colleges (Activity 4.12). It’s important for them to continue to apply for scholarships, including college-based special scholarships (merit, ethnic, leadership etc.). ROTC scholarship applications should be completed by October. Encourage students and parents to attend financial aid events offered in the fall in order to learn more about available assistance.

Timeline

September–January: Continue to apply for scholarships.

September–October: Verify FAFSA PIN and register for PROFILE®, if needed.

October–January: Attend financial aid events.

January: Complete FAFSA application worksheet.

Activities/Materials

Activity 3.15 “Senior Year Important Dates” A list of key dates for financial aid planning during the senior year.

Teacher Information: *Use this list of dates to plan financial aid activities in the classroom. Remind students well in advance of deadlines, many of which occur during the second semester of the senior year.*

Activity 3.16 “Financial Aid Web Sites”: This handout lists Web sites that provide information on planning and paying for college.

Teacher Information: *These Web sites cover all aspects of financial aid. Have students research a Web site, and then share results with the class.*

Activity 3.17 “Checklist”: List steps to take now to plan and pay for college.

Teacher Information: *This checklist presents steps your students will want to pursue to learn about financing their college education, plus a summary of federal student aid programs.*

Activity 3.18 “Paying for College”: Questions for families to ask college representatives (or the college’s financial aid office).

Teacher Information: Review this list of questions with your students so they can anticipate the kinds of financial options they will need to consider. You might also use this handout at a financial aid evening.

Activity 3.19 “Attention: Parents and Students—FAFSA Application Checklist”: A list of items necessary for students to complete the FAFSA.

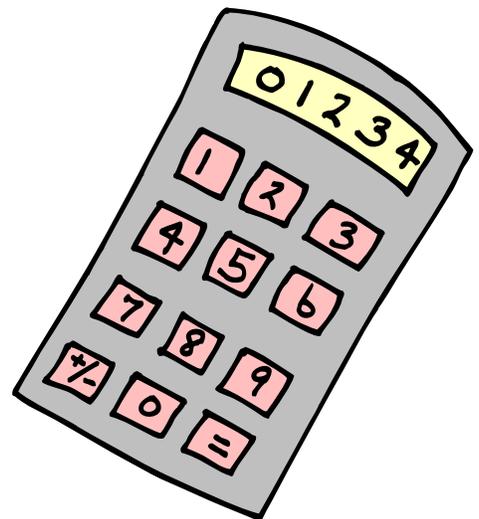
Teacher Information: Reproduce this checklist (available in both English and Spanish) for students to share with their parents in preparation for completing their FAFSA. If you are planning a financial aid evening and will be mailing home information to promote the event, include this information in the packet.

Activity 3.20 “CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®”

Teacher Information: The only method for completing the PROFILE® is online at www.collegeboard.com. Reproduce this information for your students or have them go online to complete the PROFILE®.

Activity 3.21 “Financial Aid Myths”: Discounts misinformation students may have about financial aid.

Teacher Information: Share this information with students and parents. This handout, from CollegeBoard, will help reduce barriers to students completing financial aid applications.



Activity 3.15

Senior Year Important Dates

October–November

- Attend high school college fairs and financial aid workshops.
- Complete college admission applications and ask about deadlines for financial aid applications such as the PROFILE®.

January–February

- Complete and submit your college financial aid application and the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1, but not before.
- Keep a photocopy or printout of everything you send.
- Make sure your parents have completed their income tax forms in anticipation of the financial aid applications. If they have not completed their taxes, providing estimated figures is acceptable.
- Review your Student Aid Report, or SAR, which you should receive within four weeks of filing your FAFSA, or sooner if you file online. If you haven't received the SAR, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1.800.4FED.AID.
- Complete your scholarship applications.
- Contact the financial aid office of the college(s) to which you have applied to make sure that your information has been received, and that they have everything they need from you.
- Respond promptly to any requests for additional information from your college, private scholarship organizations or your state's higher education agency.

March–April

- You will probably hear from the colleges whether or not you are accepted by April 15. Compare your acceptance letters, financial aid and scholarship offers. Consider grants, scholarships and other aid you don't have to repay before accepting a student loan.
- When you choose a college that has accepted you, you may be required to pay a nonrefundable deposit for freshman tuition (this should ensure your place in the entering freshman class).

May–June

- You should decide by May 1 which college you will be attending and notify the school by mailing your commitment deposit check. Many schools require that your notification letter be postmarked by this date.
- Sign and return your college's financial aid award letter, noting the awards you're accepting and the ones you're declining.
- Contact your college to determine when fees for tuition, room and board are due and how much they will be.

Activity 3.16

Financial Aid Web Sites

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/guide> The U.S. Department of Education's *The Student Guide*, a comprehensive resource for Title IV programs, can be accessed here.

www.collegeboard.com Use the College Board's Web site to register for the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid PROFILE®. The CSS PROFILE® is the application used to apply for nonfederal financial aid.

www.co-op.edu Learn more about cooperative education, a work-learn program at this site.

www.edfund.org Information on applying for financial aid and managing student loans.

www.fafsa.ed.gov Online registration for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, along with answers to frequently asked questions about the financial aid process.

www.fastaid.com A free online scholarship database. Also includes financial aid information and gives you help in understanding the SAR (Student Aid Report).

www.fastweb.com This destination is among the largest and best-known online database of private-sector sources of financial aid.

www.finaid.com This site pulls together information on financial aid and how to apply for it. It has calculators to estimate expected family contribution.

www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams Learn how to avoid scholarship scams.

www.gmsp.org These scholarships, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and administered by the United Negro College Fund, are for outstanding Pell Grant-eligible students who are African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanic Americans or Asian-Pacific Islanders.

www.guaranteed-scholarships.com This Web site lists many, many scholarships offered by specific colleges to students with a good combination of SAT® scores and GPAs. The amount of the scholarships and the level of scores and grades needed to qualify vary widely.

www.hsf.net Explores scholarships offered by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

www.mapping-your-future.org/paying Federal Family Education provides information on loan programs, financial aid, savings plans, etc.

www.ncaa.org The National Collegiate Athletic Association provides information for students who would like to participate in college sports and learn about athletic scholarships.

www.salliemae.com Guidance on financial aid includes interactive calculators to help forecast college costs, estimated eligibility, education loan payments, and more.

www.todaymilitary.com Provides information on financial aid for college provided by the military.

Activity 3.17 (1 of 2)

Checklist

- Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov in November and complete the Pre-Application Worksheet for the FAFSA on the Web.
- Make sure you have a Social Security number. You need to have one to apply for federal and state aid. You can apply for a SSN at your local post office or Social Security office. To learn more, go to www.ssa.gov.
- Apply for a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov so that you'll be able to electronically sign the online FAFSA in January. Your parents should get a PIN too. (You can also print, sign and mail in the FAFSA signature page or submit the online FAFSA without e-signing it. You'll simply receive an incomplete Student Aid Report that must be signed and returned. Just be sure to give yourself enough time.)
- Browse www.studentaid.ed.gov or call toll-free 800.433.3243 to learn more about Federal Pell Grants and other federal student aid.
- Consider a federal student loan if you need to borrow. For details go to www.edfund.org and studentaid.ed.gov.
- Check out scholarships, AmeriCorps, military and veterans' benefits and other options by visiting www.fastweb.com, www.finaid.org, www.americorps.org, www.gibill.va.gov, www.hsf.net, www.gmsp.org, and www.todaysmilitary.com.
- Attend Goal Sunday, which provides students and parents with the opportunity to receive free help in completing the FAFSA. Participating states and the District of Columbia host College Goal Sunday during the months of January and February. For dates, times, and locations, visit www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/.

Activity 3.17 (2 of 2)

Federal Student Aid Summary

The following is a summary of the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs that will help you pay for school. Check with your school to find out the programs in which your school participates.

Federal Student Aid Program	Types of Aid	Program Details	Annual Award Amounts
Federal Pell Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid	Available almost exclusively to undergraduates; all eligible students will receive the Federal Pell Grant amounts they qualify for	\$400 to \$4,050 for 2005–06
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; priority is given to Federal Pell Grant recipients; funds depend on availability at school	\$100 to \$4,000
Federal Work-Study	Money is earned while attending school; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; jobs can be on-campus or off-campus; students are paid at least minimum wage	No annual minimum or maximum award amounts
Federal Perkins Loan	Loan: must be repaid	5% loans for both undergraduate and graduate students; payment is owed to the school that made the loan	\$4,000 maximum for undergraduate students; \$6,000 maximum for graduate students; no minimum award amount
Subsidized FFEL ¹ or Direct ² Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid; you must be at least a half-time student	Subsidized: U.S. Department of Education pays interest while borrower is in school and during grace and deferment periods	\$2,625 to \$8,500, depending on grade level
Unsubsidized FFEL ¹ or Direct ² Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid; you must be at least a half-time student	Unsubsidized: Borrower is responsible for interest during life of the loan; financial need not a requirement	\$2,625 to \$18,500, depending on grade level (includes any subsidized amounts received for the same period)
FFEL ¹ or Direct ² PLUS Loan	Loan: must be repaid	Available to parents of dependent undergraduate students enrolled at least half time	Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid the student receives; no minimum award amount

¹ This type of Stafford Loan is from the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. The loan is known as a FFEL (or Federal) Stafford Loan.

² This type of Stafford Loan is from the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program. The loan is known as a Direct Loan.

Paying for College

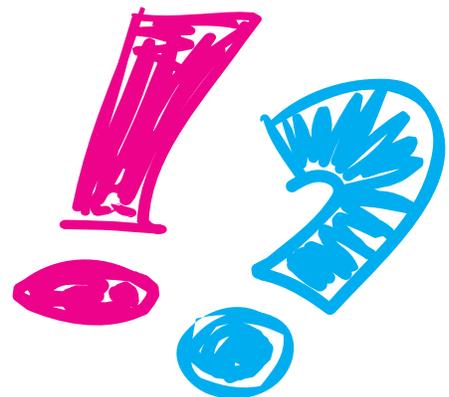
Questions for Families to Ask Colleges

1. What are the average costs for tuition/fees, books/supplies, room/board, transportation, and personal expenses?
2. How does financial need affect admissions decisions at a particular institution?
3. What types of financial aid programs does the institution offer?
4. Does the institution offer merit scholarships that do not include consideration of financial need?
5. How and when should students apply for need-based and merit aid?
6. What forms are required to complete the financial aid process, and what is the priority deadline for applying for aid?
7. When will families be notified about the financial aid decisions?
8. How much financial aid will the student receive?
9. Will the student be billed for his/her share of the costs?
10. Are there any other costs the student should anticipate that are not accounted for in the aid offer, (e.g., books, transportation, and personal needs)?
11. If parents cannot meet the financial responsibilities from current income or assets, what financing options are available to help pay their share?
12. Will the aid office provide each family with an explanation of the award package and how the expected family contribution is determined?
13. If financial aid is insufficient to make it possible for our child to attend this institution, under what condition, if any, will the aid office reconsider its offer?
14. What terms and conditions of the financial aid program are included in our child's aid package (e.g., treatment of outside scholarships, renewal criteria, etc.)?
15. When can we expect to receive bills from the institution?
16. How many times a year will we be billed?
17. Are penalties assessed if the bill is not paid by the deadline?
18. Does the institution accept payment via credit card?
19. Is there an option to pay monthly?
20. Is all financial aid credited to our child's account, or will our child receive checks for some of the financial aid awarded?

Activity 3.18 (2 of 2)

21. Can financial aid be used to pay for books and supplies?
22. How much money will our child need during the first week of school for such things as books, parking permit, etc?
23. Can books and supplies be charged to our child's account?
24. What are the typical out-of-pocket incidental expenses incurred during the year by most students?
25. Are banking services available on or near campus with fee-free ATM and/or check cashing?
26. Does your institution provide information to students regarding budgeting resources, money management, and establishment of good credit?
27. What will happen to the financial aid award if there is a significant change in family financial circumstances or in our child's or a sibling's enrollment status?
28. How are jobs assigned in student employment including federal work-study?
29. How many hours per week will our child be expected/allowed to work?
30. What are the academic requirements for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
31. How often and in what manner will earnings be paid?
32. How will our child's aid package change from year to year?
33. How will cost increases impact the aid package?
34. What amount of student loan indebtedness from student loan programs does the typical student borrower have upon graduation?

Source: College Scholarship Service® (CSS®) Disclosure Work Group



Attention: Parents and Students

FAFSA Application Checklist

Check and fill in the following items, if they apply to you and your family.

** The following items are necessary for the student to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in the pursuit of federal and state assistance through grants, work-study, scholarships and loans. The information sought on this page often requires parent information and we encourage parents and guardians to assist their student in this collegiate endeavor.

- Student Social Security card and driver's license** (or other form of **government-issued ID** if you do not have a driver's license)
SS#: ____ - ____ - _____, Driver's License #: _____
- Your parents' **Social Security cards**
Mother's SS#: ____ - ____ - _____, Father's SS#: ____ - ____ - _____
- Parents' Marital Status: **Circle One:** *Married/Re-Married/Widowed/Divorced/Separated/Single*
Date Married/Separated/Divorced: ____ / ____ / ____
- Parents' Dates of Birth:**
Father: ____ / ____ / ____ **Mother:** ____ / ____ / ____
- Student's **Federal Income Tax** return from prior year (and your spouse's if you are married)
Adjusted Gross Income: _____ *Federal Income Tax:* _____
- Your **Parents' Federal Income Tax** Return from prior year
Adjusted Gross Income: _____ *Federal Income Tax:* _____
- Records of other **untaxed income** received such as welfare benefits, Social Security benefits, TANF, veteran's benefits, or military or clergy allowances
- If you had a job last year; your **W-2 forms** or other records of the income you earned that year (such as check stubs if you do not have or cannot find your W-2's)
Student's Wages: \$ _____ **Mother's Wages:** \$ _____ **Father's Wages:** \$ _____
- Student's and/or Parents' **combined current bank statements (checking/savings) if any:**
Student's checking and savings: \$ _____ **Parents' checking and savings:** \$ _____
- If student and/or parents have **stocks, bonds, or other investments**, please bring records of them
- If applicable, **business or farm records**
- If you are not a citizen, your **alien registration card (MICA):** A _____
Residency Status _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____
- Any other **immigration documentation**
- List of **colleges/universities** the student may possibly attend

Atencion: Padres y Estudiantes

FAFSA Lista de comprobacion

Revisen y llenen los articulos siguientes, si aplican a usted y su familia

** Los puntos siguientes son necesarios para que sus estudiantes pueden terminar su solicitud gratuita de ayuda federal para estudiantes (FAFSA) en la busqueda de becas, trabajo-estudio, becas privadas y préstamos. La información buscada en esta página requiere la información del padre y animamos a los padres o guardianes que asistan a su estudiante en este esfuerzo colegial.

- Numero de Seguro Social y licencia de conducir** (o otro tipo de identificación del gobierno si no tienes licencia de conducir)
SS#: ____ - ____ - _____, Licencia de Conducir #: _____
- Numero de Seguro Social de sus padres:**
Madre SS#: ____ - ____ - _____, Padre SS#: ____ - ____ - _____
- Estado civil actual: **Seleccione:** *Casados/Vuelto a casar/Viudo(a)/Divorciado(a)/Separado(a)/Soltero(a)*
Fecha que se Casaron/Separaron/Divorclaron o Enviudaron: ____/____/____
- Fecha de nacimiento de sus padres:**
Padre: ____/____/____ **Madre:** ____/____/____
- Declaración de ingresos para el estudiante** (y su esposo(a) si casados)
Ingreso Bruto Ajustado: _____ *Cantidad del impuesto Federal:* _____
- Declaración de ingresos para los padres**
Ingreso Bruto Ajustado: _____ *Cantidad del impuesto Federal:* _____
- Información de **beneficios de asistencia social**, incluyendo la Ayuda Temporal para Familias Necesitadas (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - TANF). No incluye cupones de alimentos ni vivienda subsidiada.
- Si tuviste un trabajo, **sus formas W-2**, o otra **documentación sobre la cantidad que ganaste** por el año (como **talones de cheque**).
Sueldo del Estudiante: \$ _____ **Sueldo de la Madre:** \$ _____ **Sueldo del Padre:** \$ _____
- Saldo total de dinero en efectivo, ahorros y cuentas corrientas:
Saldo total del Estudiante: \$ _____ **Saldo total de sus padres:** \$ _____
- Documentación del patrimonio neto de las inversiones, incluyendo bienes raíces** menos las casa donde viven
- Si aplicable, el **patrimonio neto de negocios, o inversiones en fincas**
- Si no eres ciudadano, su **número de registro de extranjero (MICA):** A _____
Estado de residencia y fecha: ____/____/____ (Estado) _____
- Cualquier otro tipo de **documentación para extranjeros**
- Lista de instituciones postsecundarias** que posiblemente va a asistir el estudiante

CSS/Financial Aid Profile®

What is the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®?

PROFILE is a service of the College Board—a not-for-profit membership association of high schools, school systems, colleges and universities, and educational organizations. The College Board's mission is to connect students to college success.

Colleges, universities, graduate and professional schools, and scholarship programs use the information collected on the PROFILE to help them award *nonfederal* student aid funds. The College Board

does not award scholarship money or other financial aid.

The PROFILE Application is customized for you based on the information you give when you register for the service. By completing the PROFILE, you provide the college with a complete picture of your family's financial circumstances. PROFILE allows you to include explanations about special circumstances on the application.

Completing the PROFILE process is as easy as 1,2,3.

1 Register for your customized PROFILE Application at www.collegeboard.com.

- Click on CSS/PROFILE under "Pay for College" on the student's home page. Connect any day at any time.
- Click on current year PROFILE.
- Enter your username and password. If you do not have a collegeboard.com username and password, click on "Sign Up" and provide the required information.
- Save your username and password so that you can return to your PROFILE application.
- Click on "Register for PROFILE."
- Print the Pre-Application Worksheet and Application Instructions (in English or Spanish) before beginning the registration step. These will help you complete the PROFILE process.
- Complete the registration questions and select the colleges and programs to receive your PROFILE report. Your application is not saved until you complete these steps.
- If any of your colleges or programs require your parents to complete the Business/Farm Supplement, you will be instructed to download the form and print it.
- If your biological or adoptive parents are no longer living in the same household, one or more of your colleges or programs may require you to submit the Noncustodial PROFILE Application. If this is the case, the College Board will e-mail you instructions for completion of the online application to forward to your noncustodial parent. Neither you nor your custodial parent will be able to access your noncustodial parent's information since it is password protected.
- Register at least two weeks before the earliest priority filing date specified by your colleges and programs. Go to the PROFILE Online home page and click on "Participating Institutions" to check the priority filing date for each of your colleges and programs.

2 Complete your PROFILE Application.

- After registering, print the Supplemental Information Worksheet to learn what additional information will be required by the colleges and programs you selected during the registration step. The Pre-Application Worksheet that you printed before registering contains only the standard questions asked of all applicants.

- You can begin the online application immediately after you register, or you can come back later. You do not need to complete the entire application at one time. You can save the information and return to it later.

3 Submit your PROFILE Application.

- Submit your PROFILE Application to the College Board at least a week before the earliest priority filing date specified by your colleges and programs. The College Board will record the date and time you submit your application based on Eastern Time.
- It can take up to one week from the time you submit your application for your information to be delivered to your selected colleges and programs.
- After you complete your PROFILE, you will receive an online PROFILE Acknowledgment. Your Acknowledgment provides a record of the information you entered on your application. The Acknowledgment also contains crucial information about important next steps required to complete the financial aid application process. You should read the Acknowledgment carefully. You can always return to the PROFILE Web site to print another copy of the Acknowledgment if needed.
- Once you submit your PROFILE, you cannot revise your information online. Any changes must be sent directly to your colleges or programs.

PROFILE Online is secure, convenient, and fast!

- Online help is available.
- You can print customized pre-application materials to help you complete the application.
- Automated online editing increases your ability to provide complete and accurate information, resulting in faster processing of your application.
- Applicants completing the PROFILE after January 1 are provided an online worksheet to help them complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Applicants get timely information about options to help their families finance college. If your parents choose, the College Board will send them information about their eligibility to borrow through the College Board's PLUS (federal parent loan) program.

Financial Aid Myths

Don't Believe Everything You Hear

(from www.collegeboard.com)

Literally billions of dollars in financial aid is available to those who need help paying for college. Yet lots of misinformation clouds the facts about what type of aid is available and who is eligible. Here are some myths dispelled for students confronting the process of securing financial aid.

1. College Is Just Too Expensive for Our Family

Despite the media hype about rising college costs, a college education is more affordable than most people think, especially when you consider college graduates earn an average of \$1 million more over their careers than high-school graduates. The average yearly cost of a four-year public school in 2005–2006 is just \$5,491. There are some expensive schools, but high tuition is not a requirement for a good education.

2. There's Less Aid Available Than There Used to Be

In fact, student financial aid in 2004–2005 rose to a record level of more than \$129 billion. Most students receive some form of aid. Less of this aid now comes in the form of grants, however; most aid is awarded through low-interest loans or institutional and other grants.

3. My Parents' Income Is Too High to Qualify for Aid

Aid is intended to make a college education available for students of families in many financial situations. College financial aid administrators often take into account not only income but also other family members in college, home mortgage costs, and other factors. Aid is awarded to many families with incomes they thought would disqualify them.

4. My Parents Saved for College, So We Won't Qualify for Aid

Saving for college is always a good idea. Since most financial aid comes in the form of loans, the aid you are likely to receive will need to be repaid. Tucking away money could mean you have fewer loans to repay, and it won't mean you're not eligible for aid if you need it. A family's share of college costs is calculated based mostly on income, not assets such as savings.

5. I'm Not a Straight "A" Student, So I Won't Get Aid

It's true that many scholarships reward merit, but the vast majority of federal aid is based on financial need and does not even consider grades.

6. If I Apply for a Loan, I Have to Take It

Families are not obligated to accept a low-interest loan if it is awarded to them. "In my opinion, everybody should apply for financial aid," says Tally Hart, Director of Student Financial Aid at Ohio State University. "Student loans are at all-time low interest rates." She recommends applying for and comparing the loan awards with other debt instruments and assets to determine the best financial deal.

Activity 3.21 (2 of 2)

7. Working Will Hurt My Academic Success

Students who attempt to juggle full-time work and full-time studies do struggle. But research shows that students who work a moderate amount often do better academically. Securing an on-campus job related to career goals is a good way for you to help pay college costs, get experience, and create new ties with the university.

8. I Should Live at Home to Cut Costs

It's wise to study every avenue for reducing college costs, but living at home may not be the best way. Be sure to consider commuting and parking costs when you do this calculation. Living on campus may create more opportunities for work and other benefits.

9. Private Schools Are Out of Reach for My Family

Experts recommend deferring cost considerations until late in the college-selection process. Most important is finding a school that meets your academic, career, and personal needs. In fact, you might have a better chance of receiving aid from a private school. Private colleges often offer more financial aid to attract students from every income level. Higher college expenses also mean a better chance of demonstrating financial need.

10. Millions of Dollars in Scholarships Go Unused Every Year

Professional scholarship search services often tout this statistic. In fact, most unclaimed money is slated for a few eligible candidates, such as employees of a specific corporation or members of a certain organization. Most financial aid comes from the federal government, though it's also a good idea to research nonfederal sources of aid.

11. My Folks Will Have to Sell Their House to Pay for College

Home value is not considered in calculations for federal financial aid. Colleges may take home equity into account when determining how much you are expected to contribute to college costs, but income is a far greater factor in this determination. No college will expect your parents to sell their house to pay for your education.

12. We Can Negotiate a Better Deal

Many colleges will be sensitive to a family's specific financial situation, especially if certain nondiscretionary costs, such as unusually high medical bills, have been overlooked. But most colleges adhere to specific financial aid-award guidelines and will not adjust an award for a family that feels it got a better deal at another school. "We won't bargain, but we want to make sure we know the family's full financial picture," says Tally Hart, Director of Student Financial Aid at Ohio State University.



“AVID is not just an academic program, but provides experiences in real-life situations. AVID rejuvenates students who may not be the smartest kids, but who want to learn. The program has also rejuvenated me as a teacher and a person because I have seen their success stories.”

—Wayne Dickey, Sam Houston High School,
San Antonio Independent School District

UNIT FOUR:

SENIOR YEAR, SECOND SEMESTER

Overview

Depending on which college, students may still have time to take college admission tests (ACT or SAT®) in January. Once students have been accepted, there may be additional enrollment requirements; some students may be required to show proof of proficiency in writing and math and may have to take placement tests for these subjects. Advanced Placement students will also be taking AP® tests in May.

As students begin receiving acceptance letters, they should prepare “College Comparison Grids.” Celebrate acceptances by creating a “Hurrah Board” that honors the student and university. Sending thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who have helped with the admission process is highly recommended. It is also time to begin preparing students for the transition from high school to college.

Invite AVID graduates to visit the class and share their college experiences. Encourage students to visit the schools to which they have been accepted and to attend freshman orientation or “Accepted Students” events. Once they have decided where they will attend, students must notify the school and send in any required deposits (usually by May 1). Students should also notify other colleges that have accepted them that they will not be attending there.

Filing for FAFSA as early as possible (after January 1) is the financial priority for this semester. Applying online is the preferred method. The process is complex, but there are many resources to help students and their parents. As graduation nears and students prepare for the transition to college, discuss important topics with the class such as academic, personal, and social success in college.

Timeline

1. Testing (Activities 4.1–4.3)

January–February: Make sure all test scores have been submitted to colleges, especially if tests were taken in January for admission to private or out-of-state colleges.

February–May: Register for and take any required placement tests.

May: Take Advanced Placement (AP®) tests; be sure to indicate to which college the scores should be sent.

2. Preparation (Activities 4.4–4.5)

February–April: Complete comparison grids with info taken from colleges from which you have received acceptance letters. Post acceptances on the “Hurrah Board.”

February–March: Submit mid-year transcripts, if requested.

April–May: Begin transition activities (from high school to college).

June: If not already done, write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who helped during the application process.

3. Exploration (Activities 4.6–4.8)

February to mid-April: Visit/Revisit campuses (where students have been accepted), if needed. Attend “Accepted Students” events.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; inform the college of choice and send deposit. Notify other colleges of decision.

June: Request that final transcript be sent to the college of choice.

4. “Fit” and Finances (Activities 4.9–4.14)

January–February: Submit FAFSA and GPA verification forms (if applicable).

January–February: Make sure financial forms for all colleges are completed.

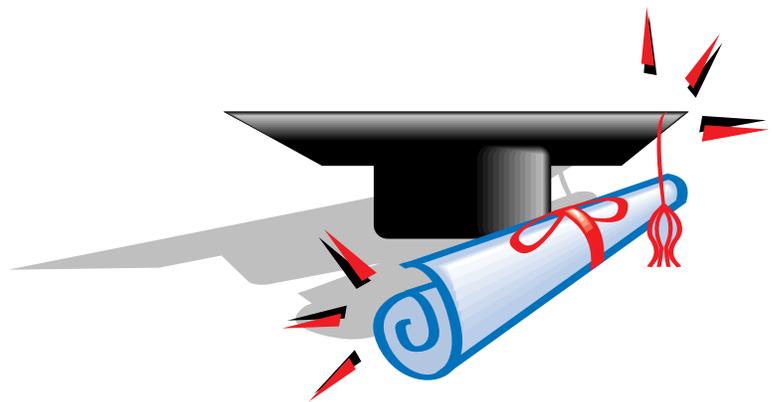
January–June: Continue to apply for scholarships and pay attention to deadlines.

January–June: MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING.

February–April: Carefully review all financial aid offers and file in “crate”; complete financial aid comparison sheets.

March: If necessary, appeal financial aid award of first-choice college. This must be done in writing and submitted with additional relevant information.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; sign all appropriate documents for college of choice. If required, send in tax forms as soon as prepared.



1. Testing

Make sure that students have submitted all required test scores (ACT, SAT®, and SAT® Subject Tests) to their colleges. In addition to the ACT or SAT®, some schools also require two SAT® Subject Tests, plus either the new SAT® Writing Test or the optional ACT Writing Test. When students take AP® tests in May, remind them to write the name of the college they plan to attend on the test so their scores can be sent to that college. Otherwise, there is a fee to have this done later. Students should file their completed AP® student booklet in their “crate” for future reference.

Students may be required to take an entry-level mathematics test and/or English placement examination. Check with individual schools to see if placement tests are required. Prepare students who need to take these tests (Activity 4.1) by giving them practice tests. Some students may be exempt from these required tests. Ask the AVID or Senior Counselor for up-to-date testing information.

Timeline

January–February: Make sure all test scores have been submitted to colleges, especially if tests were taken in January for admission to private or out-of-state colleges.

February–April: Register for and take any required placement tests.

May: Take Advanced Placement® (AP®) tests; be sure to indicate to which college the scores should be sent.

Activities/Materials

Activity 4.1 “College Placement Tests”:

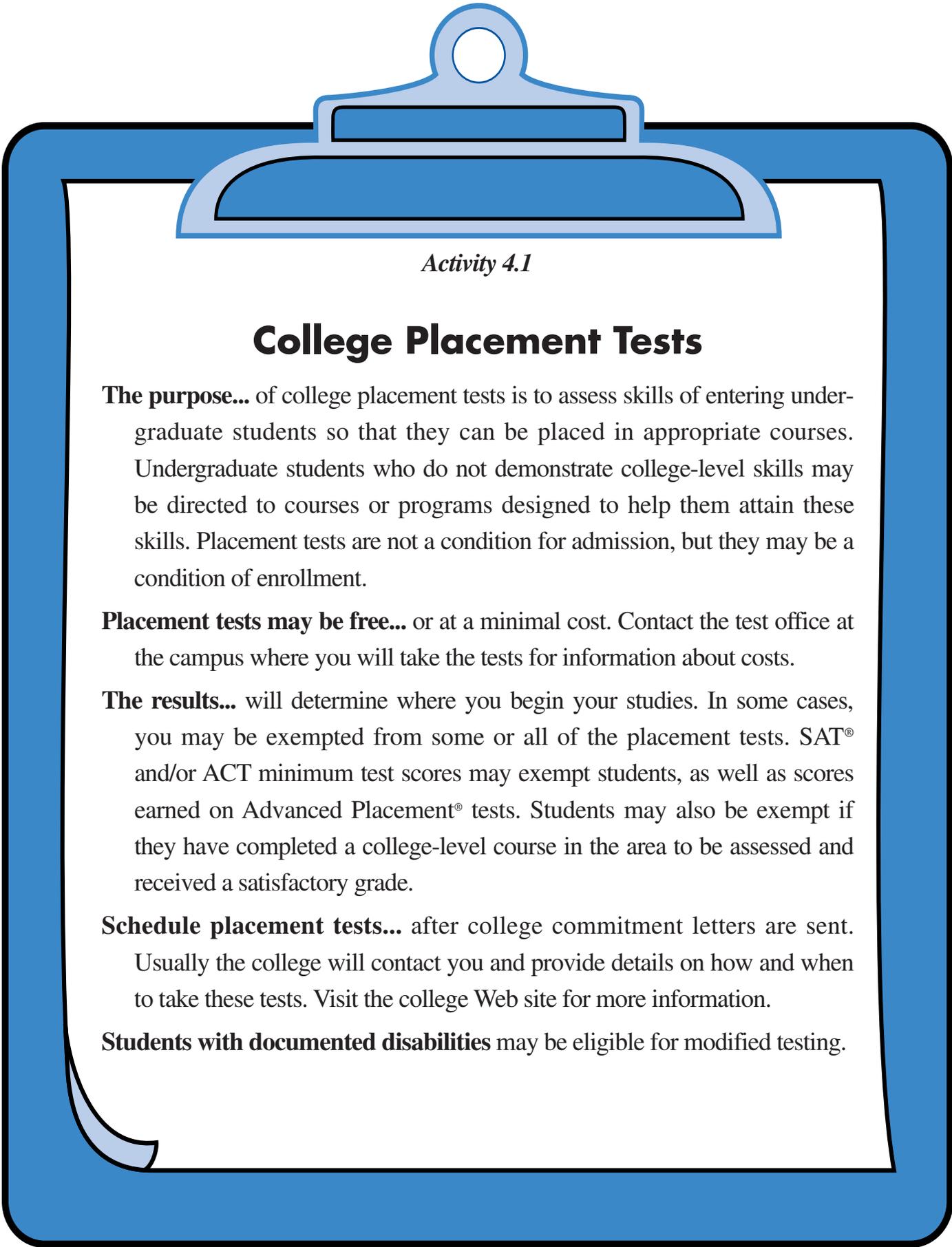
Teacher Information: An explanation of placement tests that may be a condition of enrollment. Students may want to check with individual colleges to see whether placement tests are required.

Activity 4.2 “SAT®/ACT Score Reports”:

Teacher Information: Students may ask questions about score reports. This information from the College Board and ACT Web sites explains how scores are reported to the colleges.

Activity 4.3 “AP Grade Reporting Services”: Provides information about reporting services for AP® exam grades (from the College Board Web site).

Teacher Information: When students take their Advanced Placement® (AP®) tests in May, they need to remember to request that the scores be sent to the school to which they have been admitted. Otherwise, there will be an additional charge to have this done later. For current information, check the College Board Web site at www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/exgrd_rep.html. You may also want to visit AP® Central at www.apcentral.collegeboard.com.



Activity 4.1

College Placement Tests

The purpose... of college placement tests is to assess skills of entering undergraduate students so that they can be placed in appropriate courses. Undergraduate students who do not demonstrate college-level skills may be directed to courses or programs designed to help them attain these skills. Placement tests are not a condition for admission, but they may be a condition of enrollment.

Placement tests may be free... or at a minimal cost. Contact the test office at the campus where you will take the tests for information about costs.

The results... will determine where you begin your studies. In some cases, you may be exempted from some or all of the placement tests. SAT® and/or ACT minimum test scores may exempt students, as well as scores earned on Advanced Placement® tests. Students may also be exempt if they have completed a college-level course in the area to be assessed and received a satisfactory grade.

Schedule placement tests... after college commitment letters are sent. Usually the college will contact you and provide details on how and when to take these tests. Visit the college Web site for more information.

Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for modified testing.

SAT® Score Reports

Making Changes to Score Recipients

When students register for the SAT®, they can also register to send score reports to four colleges at no additional cost.

The SAT® Online Score Report

Students can also view their SAT® online score report. The SAT® online score report is available free to every student who takes the SAT®—through a collegeboard.com account.

Send SAT® Scores

In addition to the score reports a student chooses to send when registering for the SAT®, scores can be sent to additional colleges and scholarship programs for a small fee by accessing a collegeboard.com account.

- Only score reports from completed and scored tests will be sent.
- Scores are mailed approximately three weeks after requests are submitted.
- All available scores will be sent, including those from previous test administrations. Scores cannot be sent for latest or highest SAT® Reasoning Test scores, or separate scores for critical reading or math or writing, or only SAT® Reasoning Test or only SAT® Subject Tests scores.
- Rush reporting is available at an additional cost. Rush scores are sent two business days after a request is received.
- Remember, most colleges and universities require official score reports sent from the College Board.

ACT Score Reports

ACT scores from national test dates can be viewed online. During the early viewing period, normally for about two weeks after scores are first available to view, a fee will apply. This service allows students to view scores before the official score report arrives by mail.

ACT scores may be sent to other colleges and scholarship agencies in addition to the ones (up to four) selected during registration. Requests are processed **AFTER** the test has been scored and all results from it are available in ACT computer files.

- ACT reports **ONLY** the scores from the test date a student authorizes and not any other test scores.
- A complete report is processed within one week after the request is received. ACT delivers these to colleges and agencies selected depending on their preferred schedule, at least twice a month.
- A priority report (available for institutions within the U.S.) is processed one working day after ACT receives the request and usually delivered three business days later.

AP[®] Grade Reporting Services

(from www.collegeboard.com)

Except for “Grades by Phone” students can order these services by contacting AP[®] Services:

AP[®] Services

P.O. Box 6671

Princeton, NJ 08541-6671

Phone: (609) 771-7300 or (888) 225-5427 (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada)

When Requesting Grade Reporting Services

Be sure to include the following information with each of your requests:

- The grade reporting service(s) you are requesting.
- Your full name, home address, gender, date of birth, AP[®] number(s), and Social Security number.
- Each year you took AP[®] Exams.
- A credit card number and expiration date, or a check or money order for the exact amount due. Make checks and money orders payable to AP[®] Exams.
- When requesting additional grade reports, also include the name, city and state, and college code of the college(s) you would like to receive your report.
- When requesting grade withholding, grade cancellation, multiple-choice rescoring, or your free-response booklets, also include the name(s) of the exam(s) to which your request applies.

Grades by Phone

Starting July 1, AP[®] Grades by Phone for the current year’s exams will be available for students in the United States, U.S. territories, and Canada for a fee per call. This service will be offered 24 hours a day and will remain available for about six weeks. The toll-free number is (888) 308-0013.

Additional Grade Reports

If you would like a grade report sent to an additional college, or if you did not specify a college to receive your grade report at the time of testing, you can contact AP[®] Services to request the delivery of additional grade reports. Requests generally take one week to process from the date they are received. Rush reports are processed within two working days.

Grade Withholding

You may have one or more grades withheld from the report sent to the college you indicated on your answer sheet. To have a grade withheld from the indicated college, AP[®] Services must receive your written, signed request by June 15 accompanied by a fee. If your request is not received by June 15, the grade is automatically sent to the college indicated on your answer sheet.

The grade will be withheld from any future grade reports sent to that particular college. You may later release the grade to that college by sending AP[®] Services a signed written request.

Activity 4.3 (2 of 2)

If you later decide to send an AP[®] Grade Report to a different college, however, you need to contact AP[®] Services to have the grade withheld from that grade report.

A request to withhold a grade does not permanently delete your grade, and all exam grades, even those withheld from grade reports sent to colleges, are sent to you and your school.

Grade Cancellation

Grade cancellation deletes an AP[®] Exam grade permanently from your records. Grades may be canceled at any time. However, for grades not to appear on the current year's grade report, AP[®] services must receive a signed letter requesting cancellation by June 15. While there is no fee for this service, your exam fee is not refunded. The grade report that you and your school receive will indicate that the grade has been canceled.

Free-Response Booklets

Students may obtain their original free-response booklet(s) from the exam administration by contacting AP[®] Services. No comments, corrections, or scores are included. AP[®] Services must receive requests by September 15, and students will not be able to order their booklet(s) after this date.

Multiple-Choice Rescore Service

Students may request that their multiple-choice answer sheet be re-scored by hand. This score and the free-response score are then appropriately weighted and combined. The resulting score is converted to an AP[®] grade and compared with the reported grade. The multiple-choice section is not disclosed, and therefore scores on this section are not available. AP[®] Services must receive a request by October 31 of the year in which a student took the exam.



2. Preparation

During the spring, students will begin receiving letters from colleges announcing their acceptance or rejection. As students receive acceptance letters, they should prepare college comparison grids and consult with their parents in anticipation of making a decision and choosing a college to attend by May 1 (Activity 4.4).

It is important to celebrate college acceptance letters. One way to do this is to create a “Hurrah Board” that honors each student and the school that has accepted him or her. Cut out stars or some other shape (e.g., school logo or mascot) and then write in each student’s name and the school selected; pin to the “Hurrah Board”—and watch the acceptances of your students multiply!

Remind students to send mid-year transcripts, if requested. Begin discussing with them the transition from high school to college. Finally, if students haven’t already done so, they should write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who have helped them throughout the college admission process.

Timeline

February–April: Complete comparison grids for colleges from which acceptance letters have been received. Post acceptances on the “Hurrah Board.”

February–March: Submit mid-year transcripts, if requested.

April–May: Begin transition activities (from high school to college).

June: If not already done, write thank-you notes to teachers and counselors who helped during the application process.

Activities/Materials

Activity 4.4 “Advice to Seniors (and Their Parents) on Picking a College”: Offers concise, helpful tips on choosing a college.

Teacher Information: Review this information with your students. This one-page handout provides thought-provoking questions and topics for discussion in the classroom and with parents.

Activity 4.5 “Points to Ponder... Issues Facing College Freshmen”: Topics to consider before heading off to college.

Teacher Information: This handout poses questions about situations college freshmen will face, including dealing with new-found independence. Other items deal with stress, roommates, homesickness, drinking and drugs—good topics for discussion in class and with parents.

Activity 4.4

Advice to Seniors (and Their Parents) on Picking a College

- Pick schools that offer your major(s) and/or interests
- Take a close look at what the actual costs are going to be and compare prices:
 - Tuition and fees
 - Room and board
 - Basic furnishings (refrigerator, microwave, TV, stereo etc.)
 - Books, lab fees, participation fees
 - Travel between school and home for winter and spring breaks, Thanksgiving, etc.
 - Money for fun (pizza, movies, and other entertainment)
 - Other living expenses (bicycle upkeep, gym fees, groceries)
 - Computer/computer use fees
- Can you/your parents afford the costs?
- Will you have to work to support your lifestyle?
- Do the medical facilities meet your needs?
- Where are you going to live?
- Does the college have the extracurricular activities and events you want?
- Can/Will you spend all four years at the school?
- Don't go just because your friends will go.
- Don't choose a college away from home just to get away from home.
- Don't choose because others say it's "the best," "the most fun," etc.
- Know that you can tolerate the differences in weather, attitudes, etc.

Senior Mantras

- College admission isn't a judgment on my life.
- College admission isn't a judgment on my parents or my upbringing.
- There's going to be some sort of rejection in all this.
- Successful college admission is about ending up with a choice... and being happy a year from now.
- I have all the information and guidance that's available; I will take charge, believe in myself, and trust the process.

Points to Ponder...

Issues Facing College Freshmen

Independence. How will you handle it? Make your own decisions—make your own mistakes. No one to remind you ... no one to do it for you ... no one to fix it for you ... no one to pick up after you ... no one to wake you up ... no one to make you study.

Social issues. Making friends ... dating ... “How come everyone else is so cool and I feel like such a nerd?”

Managing time. 24 whole hours every day—and absolutely no one to tell you where to go, when to go, and what to do. It only seems like no one else ever studies and is always out having more fun than you are.

Dealing with stress. What are the “stress busters” for you—running, working out, talking with friends?

Finances. Making your monthly allowance last. No more refrigerator to raid—you have to pay for every Twinkie and Diet Coke. Do you realize how many quarters it takes to do your laundry?

Academics. No one takes roll—do you have to go to class? There’s no daily homework—the tests are the grade. A whole semester’s grade may depend upon one exam. “Everyone here was the smartest kid in their high school, except me.” No more spoonfeeding. Finding a quiet place to study—it probably won’t be your dorm room. Tutors and getting help.

Living with a roommate. Liking each other is not as important as being considerate of each other.

Drinking and drugs. You had better have your answer ready because the peer pressure can be tremendous.

Tolerance. You will meet lots of different types of people, lots of strange ideas, lots of controversial subjects.

Campus activities. How will you get involved, what activities will you pursue, how many activities can you realistically handle?

The home ties. What and how often will you call home? or e-mail? Should you make an “official break” with the high school sweetheart?

Your values system. It will be challenged.

Will you be getting a campus job? How much time will you have to work? How much money do you need to earn?

Athletics. Are you planning to go out for a team your freshman year? Do you have a scholarship that requires you to play? How much practice and play time will be required?

Homesickness. Like the tides, it comes and goes.

Keeping in touch. Collect names and addresses of your friends so you can keep in touch and share freshman experiences. Caution!! Everyone else’s college experiences will sound better than yours. Take them with a grain of salt.

3. Exploration

Once students begin receiving admission offers, the decision-making process begins. One way to assist students in this process is to invite AVID graduates to speak to your class about their college experiences, especially during their freshman year.

Students should attend freshman orientation activities and “Accepted Student” events. It’s also important to encourage them to visit the colleges to which they have been accepted (Activity 4.6). Students should then complete college acceptance comparison sheets. This activity should better help them choose.

Finally, it is time for students to MAKE A DECISION and inform the college of their choice by MAY 1. They should also send registration and housing deposits by this date, and request that a final transcript be sent to the school (Activity 4.7).

Timeline

February to mid-April: Visit/Revisit campuses (where students have been accepted), if needed. Attend “Accepted Students” events.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; inform the college of choice and send deposit. Notify other colleges of decision.

June: Request that final transcript be sent to the college of choice.

Activities/Materials

Activity 4.6 “Making the Most of a Campus Visit”: A list of questions to ask when visiting a college campus.

Teacher Information: These questions will be helpful when students visit colleges where they have been accepted. A questionnaire for campus visits and other useful information can also be accessed at the U.S. News Web site: www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college.

Activity 4.7 “Senior Form”: This form provides a place for students to list all colleges/universities that have accepted them and to specify the school they will attend.

Teacher Information: Have students complete this form for your records. You may want to follow up with the registrar to make sure transcripts have been sent to the students’ colleges by the end of the school year.

Activity 4.8 “Sample Letters”

Teacher Information: This handout provides two sample letters—one for the student to write to a college that has placed him/her on a waiting list to let the school know he/she is still interested, and one for writing to a college that has accepted the student to inform the school that he/she will be attending elsewhere. The “thanks, but no thanks” letter (#2) allows a school to admit another student who may have been placed on the waiting list (#1).

Activity 4.6

Making the Most of Campus Visits

College acceptance packets are arriving daily. The challenge is choosing which school to attend. One way is to visit the campuses of colleges you are considering, and imagine attending each college for the next four years. Here are some suggestions that may help you decide:

- Schedule an interview with an admission officer, and participate in group discussions in the admission office.
- Take a campus tour. Walking in and out of buildings gives you a sense of the campus facilities.
- Talk to other students, and not just the tour guide. Informal talks in the student union or other meeting places can give you a chance to see what students say about the college.
- Ask students what they like and dislike most about this college.
- If you are interested in competing on a varsity team, see if you can talk to a coach of a sport in which you might be interested.
- Sit in on a class in a subject that interests you. Then ask to meet with the professor after class.
- Wander around the campus. Stop in at the library and find a book to read. Try to find a quiet place where you could study.
- Find the cafeteria and have lunch. Read the student newspaper and other student publications. Check out the bulletin boards to see what student life is like.
- Browse at the student bookstore.
- If you are thinking about living on campus, see if you can spend a night in a dorm.
- Drive or walk around the community that surrounds campus. Listen to the campus radio station or watch a show or two on the campus TV station.

Activity 4.7

Senior Form

Name: _____

Please list all colleges/universities that have sent you an acceptance letter:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The college/university I will attend next September and where I want my transcript—with *8th semester* grades on it—to be sent is: _____

OR I will be attending the following community college and want my transcript to be sent there.

Only one transcript will be sent—after your 8th semester grades have been placed on it.

Please indicate—for your transcript—which sports/clubs you were involved in this year. For sports, indicate if you were captain, MVP, etc., in the “Honors Received” column; for clubs, indicate if you were one of the officers under “Honors Received.”

Sport/Club	Honors Received
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sample Letters

SAMPLE WAITING LIST REQUEST LETTER

Your Address
City, State, ZIP
Date

Director of Admission

College Address

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your letter notifying me that I have been placed on your waiting list. I want to assure you that I am still very serious about my application to _____ and express my hope that I will be able to gain admission for September.

Let me also assure you that I am maintaining my high academic standards this year and would be more than willing to come for a second interview or send further academic proof of my eagerness to attend _____

Please let me know if there is any way I can convince you of my sincerity.

Sincerely,

Your name

SAMPLE DECLINING ADMITTANCE LETTER

Your Address
City, State, ZIP
Date

Director of Admission

College Address

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for accepting me at _____. I am writing to inform you that I will not be attending _____ in September as I have decided to go elsewhere (*you may name the school if you wish*).

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

4. “Fit” and Finances

After verifying that students and their parents still have FAFSA PINs, have students complete the FAFSA Pre-Application worksheet in readiness for submitting the FAFSA in January. The easiest and fastest way to apply for federal and state student aid is to complete a FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov (Activities 4.10–4.11). Students can apply at any time beginning January 1. The site uses skip logic, so students need to answer only those questions that apply to them; prompts and on-the-spot corrections help eliminate errors. Also, make sure students have registered for the PROFILE® financial aid form if required by their selected school.

Once the FAFSA is transmitted, students should receive their Student Aid Report (SAR) within 72 hours if they provide an e-mail address. The SAR recaps submitted information for correction and computes the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Have students check their SARs carefully and make corrections promptly, paying special attention to the loan portion of their package to ensure the amount is not excessive.

Remind students that they do not have to accept the entire financial aid package, but rather they can pick and choose (e.g., accept the grant, but reject the loan). If a student receives a financial aid offer from his/her first-choice campus that seems unreasonable, he/she can appeal the offer. This appeal must be in writing and needs to include new information that is compelling.

Students should continue to apply for scholarships; remind them to explore special college-based scholarships (merit, ethnic, leadership, etc.). Encourage students and parents to attend financial aid events offered in the region. As students explore financial aid options, they should keep copies of everything they send and receive so they can compare offers for financial aid packets (Activity 4.12).

Students must make a decision and send a deposit to the college of their choice by May 1. They should base their decision not only on the financial aid package, but also on how well the college “fits” their needs and wants.

Timeline

January–February: Submit FAFSA forms.

January–February: Complete financial forms for all colleges.

January–June: Continue to apply for scholarships.

January–June: MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING.

February–April: Carefully review all financial aid offers and file in “crate;” complete financial aid comparison sheets.

March: If necessary, appeal financial aid award of first-choice college. This must be done in writing complete with additional information.

Mid-April: MAKE A DECISION; sign all appropriate documents for college of choice. Send in tax forms as soon as prepared (if applicable).

Activities/Materials

Activity 4.9 “Real-Life Money Management”: Practical advice for college-bound students.

Teacher Information: Share with your students this information from EdFund’s Credit for College booklet. It helps students manage their money, including information about checking accounts, credit cards, savings accounts, and ways to cut expenses.

Activity 4.10 “FastWeb Student Bulletin”: A student resource on FAFSA.

Teacher Information: *These student bulletins, updated annually, explain FAFSA and provide tips for completing the form (online and paper versions).*

Activity 4.11 “FAFSA on the Web Pre-Application Worksheet”: A worksheet to assist students in completing the FAFSA online.

Teacher Information: *This worksheet, updated annually, lists the questions in the order they appear online. (See www.fafsa.ed.gov/preappwk45.pdf for downloadable pages.) You may want to have students fill in the worksheet with help from their parents, and then complete the FAFSA in the computer lab. This handout could also be used at a financial aid evening event.*

Activity 4.12 “Compare Your Aid Awards”: Provides forms for comparing financial aid offers.

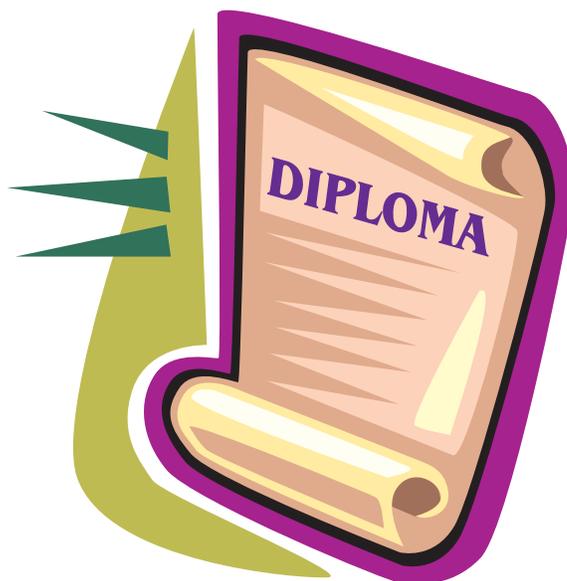
Teacher Information: *The online form reproduced on page 1 of the handout (accessible at www.collegeboard.com) provides a calculator that compares four financial aid offers. Students can use page 2 of this handout to do a financial aid comparison on paper; by filling in the form and “doing the math,” they can determine their net cost to attend each of three colleges.*

Activity 4.13 “Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes... and Passing Them”: Provides information on how to succeed academically in college.

Teacher Information: *Review this information with students... and add tips of your own. In addition to tips related to the classroom, this handout also provides a helpful list of “Little Things You Never Would Have Thought to Bring to School.”*

Activity 4.14 “Off-to-College Checklist”: A definitive list of everything needed for the first year of college.

Teacher Information: *Distribute handout or have students access the list at the College Board Web site (www.collegeboard.com). The list includes kitchen needs, room and storage needs, electronics, toiletries, items to purchase upon arrival, and much more. It also provides suggestions on how to get along with a roommate.*



Real-Life Money Management

For most people, college is the first time they've ever been on their own. The sense of freedom can be scary—and exciting. It's easy to make mistakes when you're trying to create a great lifestyle and become friends with a lot of new people. It's easy to make mistakes with money, too.

So now, while you're still in high school, is the time to build smart money skills that can never be taken away. Let's start by looking at how to use a checking account and a credit card, and how to resist advertising hype. Knowing these things will help you keep more money in your pocket. Stick to it and by the time you're in college, you'll be the smartest money manager on campus.

Checking Accounts 101

At some point during high school—maybe after you have your first job—you may be ready to open a checking account. A checking account is good to have because:

- It's convenient.
- It keeps your money safe.
- It helps you track your spending habits.
- It usually costs less to have a checking account than it does to buy money orders or cashier's checks to pay your bills.

Banks, savings and loans, and credit unions all offer checking accounts. Try to find one with low fees that's also convenient to home and school. Be sure to tell the bank teller or officer that you're a student—the bank may have checking accounts for students that cost less.

The diagram illustrates a check with the following details: **1** Payee name: JAMES C. MORRISON, 1765 SHERIDAN DR., YOUR CITY, STATE 00022, 916-555-0000. **2** Date: March 10, 2000. **3** Check number: 104, MICR line: 00-000/000. **4** Payee: Joe's Bike Shop. **5** Amount: twenty-two dollars and 37/100. **6** Signature: James C. Morrison. **7** Bank: Your Bank, Sacramento, California, MEMO: Bicycle Repair. **8** MICR line: @0000@0000: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 Write the payee's name as far to the left as possible.

2 Date currently. Writing a check dated ahead of time can result in an overdraft if cashed early.

3 Checks are usually prenumbered. Use checks consecutively for easy record keeping.

4 These are identification numbers for the bank.

5 These digits written in Magnetic Ink Character Recognition are bank identification symbols including your checking account number.

6 Sign exactly the way your name appears on your signature card.

7 Match the amount in numbers and the amount in words. The written sum is legally binding. Write to the left.

Reprinted with permission of EdFund and the National Endowment for Financial Education.

Activity 4.9 (2 of 5)

Keeping in balance

But how on earth do you manage a checking account? It may sound like a lot of work, but don't worry—it's not so bad. Here are some tips:

- Keep a careful record of the checks you write and your withdrawals from automated teller machines (ATMs) so you don't spend more money than you have in your checking account. (That's called being "overdrawn.") Every time you write a check or make a withdrawal of cash from your account, write down the amount, date, and to whom the check was written in your checkbook register. Then, subtract the amount from your previous balance.
- It sounds obvious, but don't ever write a check for more money than you have in your account. The check will "bounce" and it can cost you big time. The bank will charge you \$20 to \$30 for each bounced check. Plus, your reputation will be hurt both with the bank and with the people to whom you owe money.
- Don't sign a check unless you're sure the information is correct. If a check isn't usable, write "VOID" across it in big letters.
- If you lose your checks, or someone steals them, call your bank immediately.
- Always use a pen, typewriter, or check writing machine to fill out a check. Don't ever, ever use a pencil that can be erased.
- Never lend your checks to anyone.
- Use check cards and debit cards carefully. They look like a credit card—except that the money is pulled directly out of your checking account. When you use a check or debit card, make sure you write down the amount in your checkbook register and subtract it from your balance so you don't overdraw your account.
- Don't endorse (sign the back of) your paycheck until you're at the teller's window. If your endorsed check is stolen, the thief can cash it! The only exception is when you are making a deposit. In that case, write "for deposit only" and your account number on the back of the check. That way, no one else can cash it.
- Balance your checkbook every month. When you get your checking account statement each month, make sure the dollar amounts on the statement match the dollar amounts in your checkbook register. If not, look for errors. The checking account statement will have directions on how to do this. Remember to take into account any fees your bank charges. If you get confused, ask your banker for help. That's what they're there for.

Give Yourself Some Credit

Another important next step in becoming money wise is learning about and handling credit. In this section, you'll read about some of the pluses and minuses of using a credit card, and you'll decide if you want a credit card at all. Remember, you can't get a credit card without parental permission until you are 18. After that, watch out! The offers will come in the mail and you'll have to be ready to make credit decisions.

Credit card advantages—and disadvantages

Credit cards are handy. They can help you through an emergency, such as paying to repair your car. You can use credit cards to make purchases by telephone or online. Credit cards offer more safety than carrying a wad of cash in your pocket. And, they can help you build a credit record for the future.

Activity 4.9 (3 of 5)

But credit cards also have a downside. Credit cards can tempt you to spend money that you don't have. They can cost a lot of extra money if you have to pay annual fees or interest on amounts that you don't pay off every month. Credit card debt can take months—even years—to repay if you pay only the minimum payment due.

If you go too far in debt with a credit card, you can hurt your credit record for years to come. A poor credit record may mean that you can't get a loan in the future when you need it. A poor credit record can even hurt your chances of getting a job or renting an apartment.

So, while it may feel cool to whip out a credit card and treat your friends to something, remember, you'll feel foolish if the credit card statement comes in the mail and you don't have the money to pay the bill. It's easy to get into debt but much harder to get out of it.

How old will you be?

Question: Let's assume you are 18 years old and owe \$3,500 on your credit card. The interest rate on the card is 18%. If you make the 2% minimum payment each month, when will you be debt-free?

Answer: When you are 45 years old! By that time, you will have paid more than \$7,700 in interest, plus the original \$3,500 that you borrowed.

Credit card tips

Despite all these concerns, most college students have at least one credit card. Some high school students also have a credit card.

If you plan to get a credit card when you turn 18—or if you use one now—here are some tips to make sure you stay in charge of your credit card, instead of letting it take charge of you!

- Have one credit card. That's right. One. Choose one bank credit card that can be used many places, instead of a department store credit card that can only be used at that store.
- Shop around for a card with no or low fees, a lower interest rate (called an annual percentage rate or APR), and a 25-day grace period before interest is charged on new purchases. Look on the Internet for a credit card with the best deal. (A good site is www.bankrate.com.)
- Pay off your credit card bill in full each month. If you can't do that, at least make more than the minimum payment.
- Mail your payment early to avoid late fees.
- Think of a credit card as a loan. Before you use it, ask yourself, "Would I really go to the bank to get a loan for this?"
- Never lend your credit card to someone else.
- Don't use your credit card to get a cash advance unless you have an emergency. Cash advances are expensive. Besides paying a fee for the money, you also will be charged interest immediately, often at a higher rate.

Who me? Worry?

OK, you're thinking, this is pretty good information. But why should I worry about credit while I'm still in high school?

Activity 4.9 (4 of 5)

Think of it this way: The money habits you develop now will affect your future. If you learn how to handle credit wisely now, you'll know how to stay out of unnecessary debt later. You'll also be ready to handle your student loan if you need one to help pay for college.

So, start building good money-management habits right now. They will pay off big time in the future.

Don't Let Them Pull Your Strings

Another way to take charge of your money is to become advertising savvy. Have you ever seen one of those puppets that dangle from a maze of strings? If you react to every commercial or advertisement you see or hear in the media, you're like one of those puppets.

Face it: Advertising is just a way that companies and other people try to push you to do something. Advertisers know that their methods work and they often target teens. Why? The answer is simple: Teen spending is a powerful force in the U.S. economy. According to Teenage Research Unlimited, teens spent \$155 billion in the year 2000 alone! There are actually marketing companies that specialize in teaching businesses how to sell things to teens—how to pull your strings.

Here's a quick exercise: Think of your favorite television show, and then think of how many commercials are on each show. How are the advertisers trying to pull your strings?

Do you really believe:

- That a particular product will make you happy?
- That a product will bring you romance?
- That a product will make you more attractive to the opposite sex?

We didn't think so.

How often have you seen an advertisement or a commercial urging you to save money, or plan for college? Not too often.

So think before you buy. Do you need it? Or do you want it? If you really want it, ask yourself why.

Thinking about who is trying to pull your strings—and why—will help you say “bye, bye, bye” to the urge to “buy, buy, buy.”

Watch How Money Works for You

There's a concept called the “time value of money.” That's the relationship of time, money, and the rate of interest to how fast your money grows. It's pretty simple really:

- The more time you have to save, the more money you'll have.
- The more money you save, the more money you'll have.
- The higher the rate of interest you earn, the more money you'll have.

Over time, your investment will earn compound interest. That means interest is paid on your original investment, plus the accumulated interest you've earned.

Remember that \$3-a-day café mocha? Well, if you decided to skip the mocha and save \$3 every day, you'd end up with an extra \$90 a month, which would turn into an amazing \$1,080 every year!

Activity 4.9 (5 of 5)

Imagine if you put that money into savings, instead, or invested it at 8 or 9 percent interest. The chart below shows the power of compound interest over different periods of time. The first row assumes your money stays in a savings account with a 3 percent interest rate. The second row uses a 9 percent rate, which assumes that your money is in a long-term investment, such as a mutual fund.

\$90 a month	2 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	20 years
3% return	\$2,223	\$5,818	\$12,577	\$20,428	\$29,547
9% return	\$2,357	\$6,788	\$17,416	\$34,057	\$60,110

Rule of 72

The Rule of 72 is a fun way to figure out how many years it will take to double your money when you save or invest it. Here's how it works:

Divide 72 by the interest rate you expect to earn. This will show you approximately how long it will take to double your money. As an example: Assume you earn 8 percent interest on your money each year. ($72 \div 8$ percent interest = 9 years.) You invest \$500 at 8 percent interest. Your \$500 will double to \$1,000 in nine years. Not too shabby!

Stretch Your Dollars

Here are some ideas to cut expenses and keep more money in your pocket.

- **Ask for student discounts.** Simple things like going to the movies, buying a pizza, or riding the bus may cost you less—right now—if you show your student I.D. You can search the Web for student discounts, too. Keep using these discounts when you get to college.
- **Buy only what you need.** Before you make a purchase, ask yourself, “Do I really need this? Or do I just want it?” Remember that you’re saving for the future. After you graduate from college, you’ll have more money to get some of those “wants.”
- **Evaluate your habits.** For instance, do you smoke cigarettes? Not only is it bad for your health; at about \$3 a pack, it’s expensive. So are goodies like a daily cup of gourmet coffee, muffins and fast food.
- **Learn how to cook.** You’ll save yourself a lot of money in the future.
- **Use public transportation or a bicycle.** It’s much cheaper to ride the bus than it is to own a car. Another option is to ride your bike. Not only is cycling inexpensive and good for the environment, it’s great for your body, too.
- **Go to the library rather than buy books or magazines.** Many libraries let you check out videos, too. Most libraries also offer free Internet access.
- **Shop around for clothes.** Look for sales, off-season bargains, and overstock stores. Also, check out garage sales and thrift stores for gently used (and sometimes really funky and cool) items.



FAFSA: Step By Step

Basic FAFSA Facts

What is it?

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for financial aid, which includes: grants, work-study, scholarships and loans.

Why fill it out?

The FAFSA is used to determine how much aid you will receive. Think of it this way:

FAFSA → *EFC* → *Financial Need* → *Financial Aid*

EFC is Expected Family Contribution, which is the amount of money your family can be expected to contribute each year to your college costs.

What type of aid can I expect to receive?

Your prospective college will try to meet your financial need through federal, state, school and private sources, as well as loans, grants and student employment.

Step 1: Get the FAFSA

You can get a copy of the FAFSA one of three ways:

1. Get a paper version from your guidance counselor's office or local library
2. Complete FAFSA on the Web: www.fafsa.ed.gov
3. Call **1-800-4-FED-AID** to ask for a copy

Step 2: Fill out the FAFSA

Keep a completed copy for your records. For the 2005-2006 school year, use info from 2004. You'll need the following to fill out the form:

- Social security number
- 2004 W2 and/or tax return (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, etc.)
- Driver's license (if any)
- 2004 federal income tax return
- Parents' 2004 income tax return (if a dependent)
- 2004 untaxed income records (if any)
- Current bank statements
- Current mortgage and investment records (if any)
- Alien registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)

FAFSA Tips

- Fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1. Early submission maximizes your chances of receiving aid.
- Do not leave any fields blank. If a question doesn't apply, enter "0."
- List your information accurately. Do not enter false information as a way to qualify for more aid. Doing so is a federal crime and can be punishable with fines or prison.
- Take your time and follow the instructions. If you need assistance, ask your guidance counselor or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- Sign the application. If you are filing as a dependent, make sure your parents sign too.
- Report ALL required sources of untaxed income (e.g., Social Security or child support).
- Fill out the FAFSA every year, even if you don't think you will qualify for aid. It may be a prerequisite for scholarships.

* Remember that the FAFSA is FREE! If you need help, ask your guidance counselor or call the FAFSA Help Desk at: 1-800-4-FED-AID.

Step 3: Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)

The SAR is proof that your FAFSA was received. Review it carefully. If you filed electronically, you should receive your SAR in 2-3 weeks (4-5 weeks if you filed a paper FAFSA).

What if I find errors on my SAR?

Report them immediately to the FAFSA Help Desk and ask how you should make corrections. Unresolved errors could delay your aid.

What if I don't receive my SAR?

Call 1-800-433-3243 (1-800-4-FED-AID) if you do not receive your SAR in 4-5 weeks. Provide your name, Social Security number and date of birth for verification.

Why is there an asterisk after my EFC?

It means your SAR has been selected for verification (happens to about 1 in 3 SARs). It means your prospective college will compare your SAR with other documents to verify your financial status. If asked for verification, submit the information requested to your prospective college's financial aid office ASAP.

Search over \$1 billion in scholarships for FREE!
(Plus award updates, tips and more)

www.fastweb.com

Questions? Concerns? Contact your school's financial aid office and/or call 1-800-4-FED-AID!



Student Bulletin

Dec. 2004/Jan. 2005
High School Edition

Visit www.fastweb.com for a free search over \$1 billion in scholarships!

FAFSA on the Web: What You Need to Know

Basic FAFSA on the Web Facts

What is it?

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for aid, including: grants, work-study, scholarships and loans. FAFSA on the Web is the online version of a paper FAFSA.

Why would I want to complete my FAFSA on the Web instead of on paper?

- The federal processor can do an "edit check" of your information and alert you of any mistakes.
- The process is quicker. Receive your SAR in 2-3 weeks (or 3-5 days if you include an e-mail address) vs. 4-5 weeks if you fill out the paper version.
- Eliminate postal service problems or delays.

How do I get started?

Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov and click "Before Beginning a FAFSA" to get started.

Signing the FAFSA

Whether you complete a paper or electronic FAFSA, you will be required to provide your signature (and parent's signature if you are a dependent student). Here are three ways:

1. Use your 4-digit PIN (see below) issued by the U.S. Department of Education to electronically sign your FAFSA. (Your parents will also need their own PINs to electronically sign your FAFSA.)
2. Print the signature page, get the required signatures and mail the form to the address listed on your signature page.
3. The third option is the slowest and is not recommended. Wait until you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR), get the required signature(s) and return it through the U.S. Postal Service via certified mail.

Remember that the FAFSA is FREE! If you need help, ask your guidance counselor or call the FAFSA Help Desk at: 1-800-4-FED-AID.

FAFSA Web Tips

Use a sample FAFSA worksheet: Click "Before Beginning a FAFSA," then "Print a Pre-Application Worksheet." Use the print-out as a guide before committing answers online.

DO NOT enter online answers directly from the paper FAFSA! Web vs paper FAFSA questions are in a different order!

Save your FAFSA online if you can't finish it in one session: Click the "Save" button at the bottom of each step to save info for 45 days. Use a password (which you select at the start of the process) to retrieve your information later.

Fill out a FAFSA even if you don't think you will qualify for aid: You may qualify even if you don't think you do. Also, being rejected for federal aid is sometimes a prerequisite for receiving a private award.

Follow the instructions: Take your time and get help if you need it. Ask your guidance counselor or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.

Accurately list your information: DO NOT enter false information as a way to qualify for more aid. Doing so is a federal crime and can be punishable with fines or prison.

Print out a copy: Keep a completed copy for your records.

FAFSA on the Web: www.fafsa.ed.gov

More about your PIN: www.pin.ed.gov

**Search over
600,000 scholarships
4,000 colleges
(Free updates, tips and more)
www.fastweb.com**

PIN: Your Key to Online Identification

The Personal Identification Number (PIN) is the code that the U.S. Department of Education uses to identify you online. A PIN allows you to:

- Electronically sign your FAFSA to speed up the process
- Check the status of your FAFSA
- Make corrections to your personal information online
- Fill out an online Renewal FAFSA next year

To obtain a PIN, eligible students and parents can visit www.pin.ed.gov. Click on "Apply for PIN" at the bottom of the page. You can choose to receive your PIN via e-mail or regular mail. You must submit your name, date of birth and social security number to receive a PIN. It takes about three business days to receive a PIN electronically.

Do not reveal your PIN to anyone. The PIN allows anyone to electronically sign federal documents and access confidential information.

Activity 4.11



FAFSA ON THE WEB WORKSHEET

WWW.FAFSA.ED.GOV

DO NOT MAIL THIS WORKSHEET.

You must complete and submit a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) to apply for federal student financial aid and to apply for most state and college aid. Applying online with *FAFSA on the Web* at www.fafsa.ed.gov is faster and easier than using a paper FAFSA.

For state or college aid, the deadline may be as early as January. See the table to the right for state deadlines. Check with your high school counselor or your college's financial aid administrator about other deadlines.

- Complete this Worksheet only if you plan to use *FAFSA on the Web* to apply for student financial aid.
- Sections in grey require parent information.
- **Submit your FAFSA early, but not before January 1.**

Apply Faster—Sign your FAFSA with a U.S. Department of Education PIN.

If you do not have a PIN, you can apply for one at www.pin.ed.gov before beginning *FAFSA on the Web*. You will receive your PIN within a few days, and then you can electronically sign your FAFSA when you submit your information. If you are providing parent information, one parent must sign your FAFSA. To sign electronically, your parent can also apply for a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov.

You will need the following information to complete this Worksheet:

- Your Social Security Number and your parents' Social Security Numbers if you are providing parent information;
- Your driver's license number if you have one;
- Your Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. citizen;
- 2005 federal tax information or tax returns (including IRS W-2 information) for yourself and spouse if you are married, and for your parents if you are providing parent information. If you have not yet filed an income tax return, you can still submit your FAFSA but you must provide income and tax information.
- Records of untaxed income, such as Social Security benefits, welfare benefits (e.g., TANF), and veterans benefits, for yourself, and your parents if you are providing parent information; and
- Information on savings, investments, and business and farm assets for yourself, and your parents if you are providing parent information.

WARNING!

Be wary of organizations that charge a fee to submit your application or to find you money for school. In general, the help you pay for can be obtained for free from your school or from the U.S. Department of Education.

NOTE:

If you or your family has unusual circumstances (such as loss of employment), complete FAFSA on the Web to the extent you can, then submit the application and consult the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend.

STATE AID DEADLINES

AK	April 15 (<i>date received</i>)
AR	For Academic Challenge - June 1 (<i>date received</i>). For Workforce Grant - check with your financial aid administrator
AZ	June 30 (<i>date received</i>)
* CA	For initial awards - March 2 For additional community college awards - September 2 (<i>date postmarked</i>)
* DC	June 30 (<i>date received by state</i>)
DE	April 15 (<i>date received</i>)
FL	May 15 (<i>date processed</i>)
IA	July 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# IL	First-time applicants - September 30 Continuing applicants - August 15 (<i>date received</i>)
IN	March 10 (<i>date received</i>)
# *KS	April 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# KY	March 15 (<i>date received</i>)
# LA	May 1 Final deadline - July 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# MA	May 1 (<i>date received</i>)
MD	March 1 (<i>date received</i>)
ME	May 1 (<i>date received</i>)
MI	March 1 (<i>date received</i>)
MN	30 days after term starts (<i>date received</i>)
MO	April 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# MT	March 1 (<i>date received</i>)
NC	March 15 (<i>date received</i>)
ND	March 15 (<i>date received</i>)
NH	May 1 (<i>date received</i>)
NJ	June 1 if you received a Tuition Aid Grant All other applicants - October 1, for fall and spring terms; March 1, for spring term only (<i>date received</i>)
* NY	May 1 (<i>date received</i>)
OH	October 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# OK	April 15 Final deadline - June 30 (<i>date received</i>)
# OR	March 1 (<i>date received</i>). Final deadline - contact your financial aid administrator
* PA	All State Grant recipients & all non State Grant recipients in degree programs - May 1 All other applicants - August 1 (<i>date received</i>)
# RI	March 1 (<i>date received</i>)
SC	June 30 (<i>date received</i>)
TN	For State Grant - May 1 For State Lottery—September 1 (<i>date received</i>)
* WV	March 1 (<i>date received</i>)

For priority consideration, submit application by date specified.

* Additional form may be required.

Check with the school's financial aid administrator for these states and territories: AL, *AS, CO, *CT, *FM, GA, *GU, *HI, ID, *MH, *MP, MS, *NE, *NM, *NV, PR, *PW, *SD, *TX, UT, *VA, *VI, *VT, WA, WI, and *WY

Activity 4.12 (1 of 2)

PLANNING
FOR COLLEGE

TAKING THE
TESTS

FINDING THE
RIGHT COLLEGE

GETTING INTO
COLLEGE

PAYING FOR
COLLEGE

MY
ORGANIZER

 collegeboard.com



[Paying for college](#) > Compare Your Aid Awards

Compare Your Aid Awards

It's easy to compare your aid awards:

- ✓ Before you get started, [check out our tips](#) for using the comparison tool.
- ✓ Enter your cost and aid information in the blank fields. Then click on the Calculate button.
- ✓ Click on the links in the left column for advice about what to enter in each field.

Costs and Financial Aid

	College or University			
State You Live In <input type="text" value="--"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Cost of Attendance				
Tuition and Fees	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Room and Board	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Books and Supplies	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Travel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Personal Expenses	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Financial Aid				
Gift Aid				
Grants and Scholarships	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Gift Aid	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Self Help Aid				
Student Loans				
Federal Stafford/Federal Direct Loan	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Federal Perkins Loan	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Student Loans	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Work				
Work-Study/Job Offer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Our Family Share of Costs

Copyright © 2002 by collegeboard.com, Inc. and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Activity 4.12 (2 of 2)

Comparing financial aid award letters

Use Worksheet 6 to record and compare your financial aid awards. List the award deadline date and the total college expense budget (from line A in Worksheet 1).

The award deadline date and the total cost of attendance will probably be included in your award letter. If you have not received an award letter, find the figures in this book or the college catalog for estimating the cost of attendance, or call the school's financial aid office.

Worksheet 6: Comparing financial aid award letters			
	<i>College A</i>	<i>College B</i>	<i>College C</i>
Award deadline date			
A. Total college expense budget	\$	\$	\$
<i>Grants and scholarships:</i>			
1. Pell	\$	\$	\$
2. SEOG	\$	\$	\$
3. State	\$	\$	\$
4. College	\$	\$	\$
5. Other	\$	\$	\$
6. Other	\$	\$	\$
R. Total grants and scholarships	\$	\$	\$
S. Work-study programs	\$	\$	\$
<i>Loans:</i>			
7. Stafford	\$	\$	\$
8. Perkins	\$	\$	\$
9. Other	\$	\$	\$
10. Other	\$	\$	\$
T. Total loans	\$	\$	\$
U. Total financial aid award			
Grants and scholarships + Work-study + Loans =	\$	\$	\$
A. Total college expense budget	\$	\$	\$
Minus			
U. Total financial aid award	\$	\$	\$
Equals			
V. Net cost to attend	\$	\$	\$

Compare your financial aid awards online

A free online service called *Compare Your Financial Aid Awards* is available on www.collegeboard.com to help students and parents understand, compare, and evaluate aid offers from institutions to which they were admitted. The tool is free, easy to use, and will help families:

- Calculate how much they will be expected to pay at each college.
- Get advice about college costs, education loans, and college work-study offers.

- Learn helpful strategies for evaluating and comparing offers.
- Get practical tips and information for paying the bill.

The service also provides practical advice and information about understanding costs, asking the right questions, and interpreting the award letter. With links to College Board loan repayment calculators, families can figure out what their loan debt and repayments will be.

This service also includes a special section on paying the bill, with financing strategies and helpful information about the most popular financing options.

Tips for Signing Up for the Right Classes... and Passing Them

1. Consult your academic advisor when deciding what classes to sign up for, so that you know you're starting off on the right foot to graduation. (Don't skip freshman orientation.)
2. Try to pick classes that fill more than one requirement.
3. If possible, try to schedule back-to-back classes on the same side of campus. That way, you're not running from one end of the university to the other. (Often, there is only ten minutes between classes.)
4. If you are not a morning person, DO NOT schedule early morning classes! Once you start college, you'll be getting fewer hours of sleep at night. If you don't like to get up in the morning—and you've had a late night—you'll miss class because you have a very important date with your warm bed.
5. If you are a minority (African-American/Asian/Hispanic/Pacific Islander/Native American), take advantage of classes offered by OMA (Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs) and/or EOPs (Educational Opportunity Programs).
6. Get a map of the school and find where your classes are *before they begin*. That way, you won't get lost the first day of school.

WARNING

Some upperclassmen find it funny to create false maps of the campus—placing buildings in wrong places, giving other buildings wrong names, and then distributing the maps to freshmen (especially those in the dorms), leaving poor underclassmen flopping around like fish out of water. So stay in the fishbowl by using only maps that are in official university handouts.

Once Your Classes Finally Begin

1. Introduce yourself to your professors.
2. Attend class regularly.
3. Take notes and review them regularly—that way, you won't have to cram at the end of the term.
4. If you need a tutor, don't hesitate! The longer you wait, the harder it gets.
5. Be aware of the dates of all upcoming tests.
6. Keep all of your syllabuses handy throughout the term.

Miscellaneous Information About Classes

1. Lecture classes tend to be harder than classes with a smaller number of students in them.
2. Lecture classes also tend to assign more reading than other classes.
3. Try to take 15 credits per term so you're not scrambling for credits in the spring.

***FYI:* Little Things You Never Would Have Thought to Bring to School**

1. If you live in the dorms, bring shower shoes! You don't know who used the shower before you and what type of grime or dirt they left behind for you to step in.
2. Bring quarters for the laundry! (50¢ or more per wash load)
3. Bring headphones for when your roommate wants to watch TV and you want to listen to music.
4. If you live in a dorm, bring some type of dish rack to place your washed dishes on so you can carry them back from the bathroom.
5. Scotch tape—to help decorate your walls.
6. Garbage bags.
7. A long-distance phone card.
8. Lots of money for textbooks. (They can cost from \$150 to \$300 per book—mucho dinero!)
9. Shelf organizers/closet organizers.
10. Hooks for towels, a bathrobe, etc.
11. A hot pot.
12. An answering machine.
13. A water purifier. (The water is cloudy when it comes out of the faucet and drinking fountain.)
14. Kleenex, Q-tips, etc.
15. Vitamins.

Taken from <http://gladstone.uoregon.edu>

Off-to-College Checklist

(from www.collegeboard.com)

Print this checklist to make sure you have everything you need for your first year at college. Each person's needs are different, so tailor this list to suit your requirements.

Kitchen Needs

- Plastic bowl and cup
- Coffee cup
- Fork, knife, spoon
- Can/bottle opener
- Chip clips

Room Needs/Storage

- Bedside lamp
- Alarm clock/clock radio
- Wastepaper basket
- Milk crates or other sturdy storage cubes (a collapsible crate also comes in handy for carrying laundry or other things)
- Stacking baskets
- Under-the-bed storage trays
- Lots of hangers
- Desk lamp
- Fan
- Drying rack
- Adhesive hooks, tacky adhesive, and mounting tape
- Bulletin board and push pins
- Dry-erase wall calendar/board
- Toolkit

Electronics

- Computer and printer
- Phone cord/Ethernet cord for computer
- Headphones
- Surge protector
- Extension cords
- 3-2 prong adapters

- Phone (check with roommate[s] to avoid duplication); should be cordless, with multiple message boxes in the answering machine
- Portable CD or cassette player (great to use at the gym)

Linens/Laundry Supplies

- Sheets and pillowcases (2 sets); check with school for size needed—some college twin beds are extra long
- Towels (3 each for bath, hand, and face)
- Pillows (2)
- Headrest pillow
- Mattress pad; check with school for size needed—some college twin beds are extra long
- Blankets (2)
- Comforter and duvet cover (makes laundering easier)
- Clothes hangers (wire ones take up less space; plastic are easier on your clothes)
- Laundry bag/laundry basket
- Laundry marking pen
- Laundry stain remover
- Roll(s) of quarters
- Quarter dispenser
- Lint brush
- Sewing kit

Toiletries/Miscellaneous

- Pepto-Bismol®
- Imodium®
- Aspirin or ibuprofen
- Vitamins
- Neosporin®

Activity 4.14 (2 of 3)

- Band-Aid® bandages
- Cough drops
- Shower tote
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Hair-styling products
- Bath and face soap
- Travel soap container(s)
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Dental floss
- Comb/brush
- Tweezers
- Nail clippers
- Hair dryer
- Razor and shaving cream
- Lotion and/or facial moisturizer
- Q-tips®

Office/Desk Supplies

- Computer disks
- Phone/address book
- Assignment book
- Heavy-duty stapler and staples
- Printer paper
- Pens and pencils
- Pencil holder and sharpener
- Notebooks
- Pocket folders
- Labels of various sizes
- 3 x 5 cards
- Post-it® notes
- Paper clips
- Rubber bands
- Scissors
- Highlighter pens (multiple colors)
- Ruler
- Stackable desk trays (at least 4)
- Hanging files or folders
- Dictionary and thesaurus
- Stamps/envelopes

Items to Be Purchased Upon Arrival

- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Light bulbs
- All-purpose cleaner
- Zip Lock® bags
- Kitchen storage containers
- Laundry detergent (tablets are easiest to manage)
- Fabric softener (sheets are easiest to manage)
- Dish soap
- Wet wipes
- Tissues

Clothing Guidelines

- 21 pairs of underwear
- 21 pairs of socks (more if you play sports)
- 7 pairs of pants/jeans
- 14 shirts/blouses
- 2 sets of sweats
- Pajamas
- Slippers and/or flip flops
- 2 sweaters (if appropriate)
- Light/heavy jackets
- Gloves/scarf/hat (if appropriate)
- 1 pair of boots
- 2 pairs of sneakers or comfortable/walking shoes
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 set of business attire
- 1 set of semi-formal attire (optional)

Shared Items (Check with Roommate(s) to Avoid Duplication)

- Audio equipment
- TV and/or VCR
- Coffee maker/hot pot
- Microwave/toaster oven
- Small refrigerator
- Area rug
- Camera
- Posters/art

Roommates

Dorm life is one of the biggest issues on the minds of many freshmen. The second you move into the dorms, a whole new set of priorities, freedoms, rules, and regulations come into your life. Think about it—it's the first step in living on your own, only there are no major responsibilities, like grocery shopping every week, paying for utilities, or mowing the lawn. I would definitely recommend living in the dorms for any first-year college student because it is the number one best way to meet other students, unless you join the Greek system or organizations/clubs. Otherwise it can be pretty hard to come to a new school, a new town, and make friends that you can hang out with on a day-to-day basis.

First, let's look at some of the most commonly asked questions among incoming freshmen regarding dorm life:

Q: How do I AVOID problems with my roommate?

A: First, before you even move in with your new roommate, call him or her on the phone and get to know each other before you get to school. Decide who's going to bring what to the room (like a refrigerator, computer, television, stereo, etc.).

This way, you'll be able to get to know your roommate a little bit and at the same time find out about his or her lifestyle. For instance, when you ask if he/she has a TV to bring, also ask what type of shows are favorites. Or when you are deciding who is bringing a stereo, ask what type of music he/she likes. Asking these types of questions will help clue you in beforehand whether you're going to get along. Secondly, stay out of each other's space! Even though you are sharing a room the size of a closet, try and keep things (like your clothes or school books) on your side of the room.

Q: What do I do if I don't get along with my roommate?

A: You can do one of two things:

1. Stay out of each other's space, and have respect for the other person. You don't want to make your first year of college a miserable experience.
2. Move out. If your personalities totally clash, don't worry, you can always sell your dorm contract and move into a different complex. I would suggest that if you and your roommate are having problems—and there is absolutely no chance that you will get along—move out after the first term.

But don't worry; there is a very good chance that you and your roommate will get along just fine.

“...what AVID shows is that high minority achievement can be more ordinary when schools not only insist on academic rigor but also offer personal support. AVID offers a blueprint for this scaffolding.”

—Richard Rothstein, *New York Times*