

Class of 2020 College Preparedness Checklist

May

- Complete and submit the resume, Junior Parent and Junior Student Surveys by June 7th, 2019.
- Review your senior year schedule to be sure it is rigorous and well balanced. Your classes should indicate your interests, intended major, or preferred career cluster. Prepare for a rigorous year as it can make the difference with admissions representatives.
- Request letters of recommendation. Identify and approach 2-3 teachers who could provide strong letters of recommendation. Submit your resume to the teacher. Allow ample time for the letter to be written.
- Register with the NCAA clearinghouse if you plan on playing a sport in college.

June

- Plan and register for your testing calendar for the fall. Make note of the registration deadlines for the SAT, SAT II and ACT. Please note that you **cannot** take the SAT and SAT II on the same day.
 - **SAT I and SAT II (Subject Tests):** Register at: www.collegeboard.org School code: 400088 Link your College Board and Khan Academy accounts for free practice!
 - **ACT:** Register online @ www.actstudent.org School code: 400088

July

- Visit and research potential colleges and create a list of possible majors and careers you are interested in.

and

Discuss college finances with your family. Review the **RI Promise** handout with your family (2 years free at CCRI). Review the **Joint Admissions Agreement (JAA)** between CCRI and URI or RIC complete 2 years at CCRI for free then transfer to URI or RIC with up to 30% tuition discount). Review **additional partnerships and discounts** offered if a student attends CCRI for the first 2 years then transfers:

www.ccri.edu/oes/records/transfers/transferarticulationagreements.html (general partnerships)
www.ccri.edu/oes/records/transfers/traagree.html (detailed program to program pathways)

Aug

After August 1st-Create a **Common Application** account at Commonapp.org if you are applying to schools on CA

- Enter all of your personal and family information.
- Add at least one college to your "My Colleges" tab in order to be able to invite your letter writers.
 - How to Invite Letter Writers: Click on "My Colleges", select one school on your list, and click on "Recommenders and FERPA". Submit the email address for each letter writer.
 - Commonapp will then send an invitation to your letter writers. They can upload their letter electronically to your commonapp account.
 - Invite your Guidance Counselor!!!
 - Invite any other "letter writers" (coaches, advisors, etc.) to your Commonapp.

- Review the **Common App essays**. Start writing the essay. Once you add at least one school to your "College List" you will be able to view the essay choices and supplements for each of your schools.

Sept

- Start to finalize your list of colleges.

Speak with your guidance counselor if you need a fee waiver. Fee waivers cannot be used for late registration for the SAT or ACT; therefore, you need to speak with your counselor ASAP.

- Attend a **Common App** tutorial session for help with completing your online application!

2018-2019 Common Application Essay Prompts

Why should you write your essay first before you answer any other question in common app?

Admissions officers read tens of thousands of applications each year. Your essay is your one shot to demonstrate who you are-to let that admissions officer hear your voice. If you write your essay last, chances are you will rush through it because of a looming deadline. Instead, write your essay during the summer when you have the most time to reflect, create, and convey your most personal voice. Write the first draft, let it sit for a week, reread and revise, and repeat this process several times. Share it with others and ask for honest feedback.

Prompts:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

The most popular essay prompt of the 2017-2018 application year (through January 5, 2018) is "Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth..." (23.6%), followed by the topic of your choice option (22.5%), and "Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful..." (21.4%).

"Through the Common App essay prompts, we want to give all applicants - regardless of background or access to counseling - the opportunity to share their voice with colleges. Every applicant has a unique story. The essay helps bring that story to life," said Meredith Lombardi, Associate Director, Outreach and Education, for The Common Application.

How to Write a Resume

Resume:

- A document that summarizes your skills, experiences and accomplishments so a potential employer can quickly see whether you are a good fit for a position
- A snapshot of your qualifications, education, interests and extra-curricular activities
- Needed for job applications, internships, or asking for letters of recommendation (letter writers will know more about you and your experiences from reading your resume)

Items to Include:

- Community Service Experiences and Extra-Curricular experiences show that you are hard-working
- Athletics, membership in an honor society, participation in an after school activity or club (at school or outside of school) demonstrate your commitment and dedication
- Participation or service in a leadership position
- Keep adding new experiences and skills to your resume

Other tips:

- Resumes should be 1 page
- It should be simple and short
- The information must be accurate and true
- Proofread your resume
- Ask for feedback from an adult

Sample Questions to Ask College Representatives

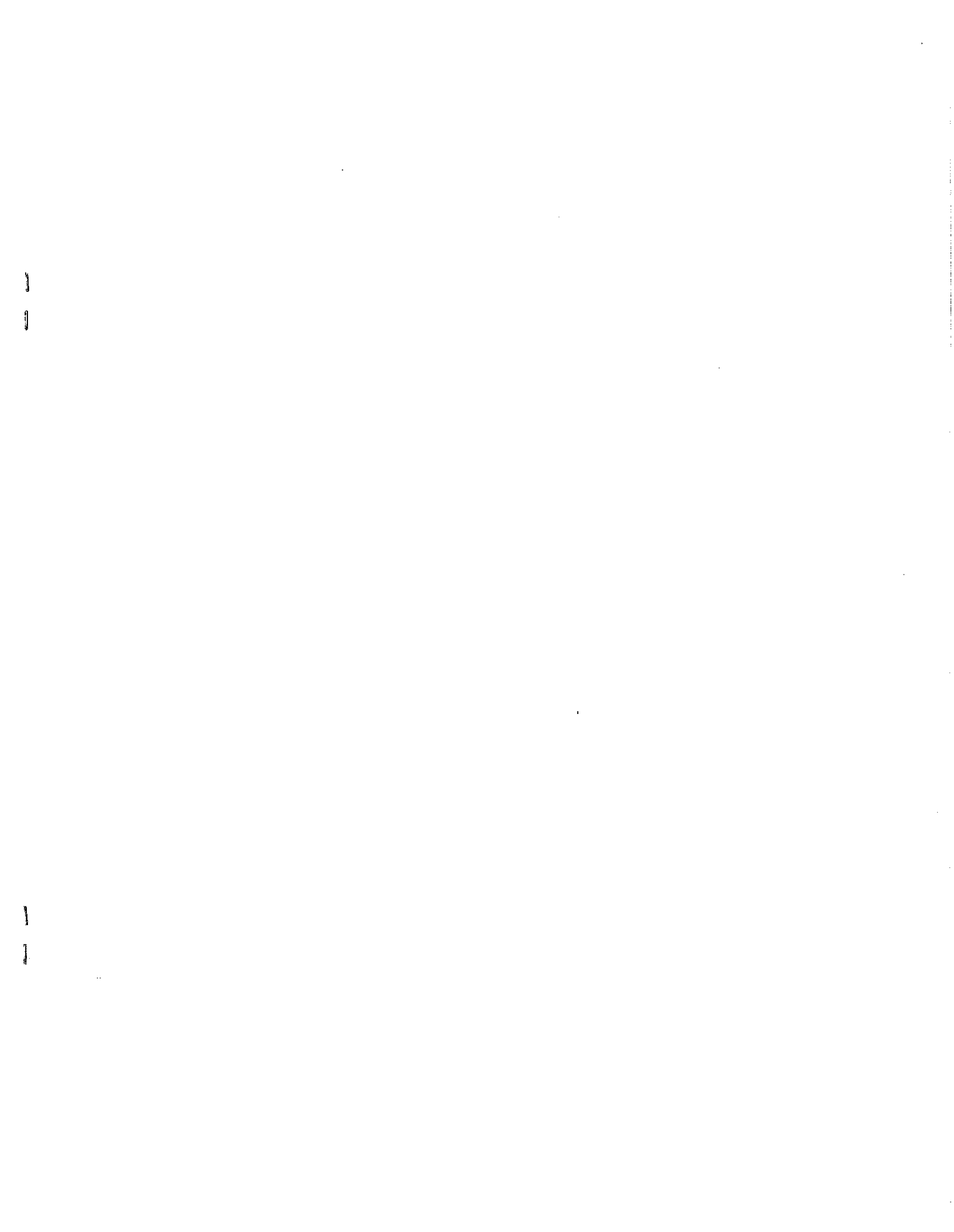
*Students should introduce themselves, ask questions, be an active participant, and a great listener. Please remember to represent yourself well. First impressions can be lasting impressions!

Campus and Community

- What distinguishes your university from others? Is there anything unique about your school?
- What is the average university graduation rate? Do the majority of students finish in four years?
- What types of activities do students participate in when they are not in class/studying (Greek Life, academic clubs, cultural clubs, sporting events, religious groups, etc.)
- Does public transportation provide easy access around campus and outside of campus such as the airport?
- What is the ratio of commuting students to on-campus students? Do most students stay on campus on the weekends?
- What percentage of freshmen return for their sophomore year?
- What security measures have been taken to ensure the safety of the university's campus?
- How diverse is your campus? Do students come from a particular area of country?

Academic Programs

- Which type of academic calendar does the school follow: semesters, trimesters, one course at a time, co-op's, etc.?
- Which majors are most popular?
- Which academic programs are particularly competitive at the university?
- Is it difficult to double major?
- What is the average class size for introductory classes?





College Fair Checklist

Before the fair...

- Review the list of college fair participants.
- Locate the schools you want to interview.
- Check out the schedule of information sessions.

Questions

Check off questions you would like to ask school representatives.

Admissions

- What are the admission requirements?
- What qualities should prospective students have?
- Which standardized test scores do you require?
- What majors are offered? What's the most popular?
- What are the application deadlines for admission?
- Are interviews required? Are there group or individual interviews?
- How can I arrange a campus visit?
- How long should I expect to wait for an answer once I submit my application?

Financial aid

- How much will it cost?
- What financial aid options are offered?
- When is your financial aid deadline?
- Estimate the percentage of work study, loans, grants, and scholarships awarded in your financial aid packages.

Classroom

- What is the average class size?
- How accessible are professors outside of class?
- Will professors or graduate students teach my courses?
- When must I choose a major?

- Do I need a computer?
- What student services are offered (tutoring, career counseling, study workshops)?
- How are the libraries, computer labs?

Housing

- What type of housing is available?
- Is student housing guaranteed for four years?
- Would I have a roommate or live alone?
- How are roommates selected?

Student life

- What special interest groups, activities, fraternities/sororities are available?
- What's it like on campus on the weekends?
- Are any programs offered to help students adjust to the college life?
- Are intramural, club, and varsity sports offered?
- How are the sports facilities?
- What types of meal plans are available?

Just the facts

- What is the school known for?
- What are recent graduates doing now?
- How many freshmen return for their sophomore year?
- How safe is the campus and its surrounding neighborhoods?

Time Saving Tip

Print address labels to paste on the College Information cards. Include your name, address, e-mail, phone, high school, year of graduation, intended major(s), and extracurricular activities.

Put down your impressions of the schools and answers admission representatives provided. Then use the right column to rate each school (10 is the highest).

| Rating (1-10) | School |
|------------------|--------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

College Answer and the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) have partnered to provide this College Fair Checklist at NACAC's National College Fairs.

For additional planning and paying for college tips and checklists, visit:

www.CollegeAnswer.com
www.NACAC.com

9 steps to nailing your college essay

Posted by **Lindie Johnson** on Oct 19, 2014 10:26:00 AM

College planning is stressful. It's hard to decide where to apply, you want to make sure your application is just perfect, and you may even have to meet face-to-face with a college rep for an admissions interview. But nothing seems to get high school seniors in as much of a frenzy as the college essay.



The **college essay** is a big part of your application. It is your one and maybe only chance to show the admissions team your personality, how you will fit into the campus culture, and what makes you unique. To top it off, there are so many ways to approach your college essay. Do you want to write about a big accomplishment? A struggle? An experience or a failure?

There are definitely some common themes to college essays. Admissions officers are used to that. The idea is that even if you are writing about something that others may be writing about, you need to do it in your own voice and cite specific examples in your life that gives your story substance.

Following these **nine tips** will help you get your college essay off to a great start:

1. Brainstorm as much as you write.

Don't pick up a pen (or computer, more likely!) until you have really thought about what you want to tell the college about yourself. Having trouble coming up with something? Talk to people about like trusted school advisors, close friends and your family, and ask them what they think is your greatest personality trait.

2. Choose a theme.

Don't try to cover everything about yourself in your college essay. Don't re-create a list of your activities and accomplishments - that is already in your college application. Think about your best personal trait, your interests, values and goals. Focus on one of these qualities and make it the theme of your essay

2. Use imagery and examples.

Not everyone is a professional-quality writer, but adding examples and imagery to your story will help put the reader in your shoes. Instead of saying, "It was a great day," describe what about it was a great - "the day was filled with energy, cheer and crisp fall leaves." Be vivid.

3. Be genuine.

Never, ever, let anyone else write your essay for you. Be yourself, let your personality shine and be authentic. Tell an honest account of your story.

4. Let it flow.

Disregard grammar, vocabulary, and structure when writing your first draft (but only your first draft!). Instead, let your ideas flow naturally. Jot down everything you can think of that helps demonstrate your point. Later, you can go back and edit to make sure your essay is clearly communicated, properly punctuated, and filled with flowing prose.

5. Edit and proofread, edit and proofread.

Once you have your ideas and thoughts on paper, now is the time to edit, proofread, edit, proofread, edit, and proofread. Get the point? Read your essay more times than you think you need to. Think about the structure of every sentence. Could it be phrased in a better way? Run spell check, grammar check, and have others read it looking for errors.

6. Be clear, concise, and direct.

Stick within the limits outlined on your college application. If there is no specific limit, keep your essay around 500 words. Make sure every word counts, get to your point right away, and leave out information that isn't relevant. Remember, admissions officers have to read stacks of these, and you don't want to frustrate them by submitting an epic essay.

7. Give it structure.

Make sure you have a clear introduction, body, and closing to your essay. Make the theme of your essay clear in the introduction and reiterate it in your closing.

8. Accentuate the positive.

Students often choose to write about painful experiences. That's okay, but remember to accentuate what you gained from that experience.

9. Get feedback.

Have others read your essay. Ask them what they learned about you from the essay. Did you get your point across? If not, rethink your examples and make some edits.

Want some other great college planning tips? **Download the College Planning Guide** and sign up for emails guiding you through the whole process.

Financial Aid

JUNIOR YEAR: SUMMER/FALL

- Take an inventory of your interests and passions.** Scholarships are based not only on academic achievement. Many scholarships award money for college based on a student's activities, talents, background, and intended major.
- Research the various types of financial aid.** Find out the difference between a grant and a loan, the way work-study can help with college costs, and more. Read **Financial Aid Can Help You Afford College**.
- Continue talking with your family about paying for college.** Start planning your financial strategy. Most families use a combination of savings, current income, and loans to pay their share of tuition and other costs.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT®.** Juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October, are automatically entered into the National Merit® Scholarship Program. Organizations such as the American Indian Graduate Center, Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, and United Negro College Fund use the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT™ 10 to identify students for scholarships.
- Learn the difference between sticker price and net price.** A college's sticker price is its full published cost, while the net price is the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you receive. Knowing the difference will help you understand why most students pay less than full price for college. Read **Focus on Net Price, Not Sticker Price** to learn more.
- Get perspectives and tips from people who know.** Visit the **Video Gallery** to watch short videos of college students and education professionals talking about paying for college.
- Think about getting college credit while you're still in high school.** Consider taking Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) classes and exams, which can count for college credit, placement, or both, and may help you save money. Read **Getting College Credit Before College** to learn more about AP and other college-level courses.

Notes:

JUNIOR YEAR: WINTER/SPRING

- Keep looking up colleges' estimated net prices**—net price calculators get updated every year. Pick a college you're interested in, and go to **College Search** to find its profile. Click Calculate Your Net Price to see that college's estimated net price for you—the cost of attending a college minus the grants and scholarships you might receive.
- Start researching scholarship opportunities.** Scholarships are free money; that is, unlike student loans, they don't have to be paid back. Use the **College Board Scholarship Search** tool to find scholarships you might qualify for.
- Get to know the FAFSA.** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the key to having access to federal financial aid. You can find out more about the form at fafsa.ed.gov. You can't fill out the FAFSA until after October 1 of your senior year, but you can create your account and get FSA ID to get a head start.
- Go to a financial aid event.** Many schools host financial aid nights, so students and their families can get information and ask questions.
- Set aside money from a summer job.** Even a little extra money will help you pay for books and living expenses while in college or enable you to buy some of the things you need to make a smooth transition to college.
- Gather the documents you'll need to fill out your financial aid applications.** You and your parents will need to gather tax returns, income statements, and lists of assets to prepare to fill out the FAFSA, the CSS Profile™, and other applications. Read **How to Complete the FAFSA**.

Notes:

SENIOR YEAR: SUMMER/FALL

- Research local scholarship opportunities. Talk to your school counselor, teachers, or other adults in your community about scholarships offered by local organizations. Go to your local library, and ask your parents to see if their employers grant scholarships. And don't forget to check the College Board Scholarship Search.

- Look up deadlines. Don't miss the priority deadlines for your colleges' financial aid applications—meeting these will help you get as much money as possible. You can compare deadlines for different colleges by using the College Search tool. And be sure to find out the application deadlines of any private scholarships or loans you plan to apply for.
- Get an estimate of what the colleges on your final list will actually cost. Get a better idea of what you'll pay to attend a college by looking at its estimated net price—the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you receive. You can get this figure by going to the net price calculator on the college's website or, for some colleges, by using the College Board's Net Price Calculator.

Notes:

SENIOR YEAR: WINTER/SPRING

- Apply for any private scholarships you've found. Make sure you understand and follow the application requirements and apply by the deadline.
- Compare your financial aid awards. The colleges you apply to will send financial aid award letters to tell you how much and which kinds of aid they're offering you. Use the Compare Your Aid Awards calculator to make side-by-side comparisons of each college's aid package.
- Contact a college's financial aid office, if necessary. Financial aid officers are there to help you if you have questions. If your financial aid award is not enough, don't be afraid to ask about other options.
- Select a financial aid package by the deadline. Once you've compared the offers, you and your family should discuss which package best meets your needs. Financial aid is limited, so if you don't accept your award on time, it may go to another student. You can, however, ask for an extension if you're waiting to hear from other schools. Each college will decide if it's able to give you an extension.
- Complete financial aid paperwork. If loans are part of your financial aid package, you'll have to complete and submit paperwork to get the money.
- Get ready to pay the first college tuition bill. This usually covers the first semester and is due before you enroll.

Notes:

Visit bigfuture.org for more information.

10 Ways to Demonstrate Interest in a College

February 3, 2015

Nicole Hosemann

Once you've determined that one or more of the colleges you are applying to consider demonstrated interest in admissions, how do you make sure they know you really want to go there? It's easy – below are some of the ways I recommend!

1. Get on the mailing list

This can be done any time during high school – simply visit the college's website and sign up. You can also stop by their table at a college fair or fill out a card if the representative visits your high school. (Also, read this post on managing the influx of email that will follow.)

2. Attend the presentation

Colleges often keep track of who came out to see them during their high school visits. Try to ask thoughtful questions, and take time to introduce yourself to the representative – the folks who visit high schools are often the regional admissions officers who also read the applications, so you want them to have a positive recollection of you.

3. Visit the table at a college fair

College fairs are an excellent place to learn about lots of colleges all at once, and the regional admissions officer will often staff the table. Take the time to chat with the colleges you have your eye on – it's a wonderful way to get questions answered by the people who know the college best, while also making a good impression. And be sure to fill out a contact card while you are there!

4. Visit campus

Taking the time to visit campus is one of the strongest signals you can send to show a college you are interested, not to mention the best way to learn about the college up close and personal. When you visit, sign up for the official tour, ask to sit in on a class and consider staying overnight in the dorms if this is offered.

5. Call or email the admissions office

This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to show a college you are interested. Admissions officers are extremely friendly people (I can say this for certain because I call them all the time!) and they love to talk to prospective students about their school. It's important that the questions you ask are things that can't be found on the website – otherwise it will seem that you haven't bothered to do your research.

6. Conduct an interview

Many private colleges (and a few publics) offer prospective students the opportunity for an informal interview before they apply. These help the student learn more about the college, and also help the college learn more about the student. They can be conducted during a campus visit (usually by an admissions officer) or off-campus near the student's home (usually by an alum). Check each college's website to see what they offer.

7. Send a thank you note

After you've had an interview or sat in on a class, it's helpful – and extremely classy – to send a handwritten thank you note. You don't have to go overboard; just a simple note will show that you appreciate their time and effort in helping you to learn more about their school.

8. Connect on social media

More and more, colleges are looking at applicant's online presence to determine their level of interest. So go ahead, "like" them on Facebook, and comment on their posts. Follow them on Twitter. Make sure to mention your top choice schools in your own posts and Tweets. And never, ever badmouth any college in any online forum.

9. Write strong supplements
The school-specific supplements are an ideal – and often underutilized – place to demonstrate that you'd be a great fit at a particular college. Many colleges will ask directly: "Why Do You Want to Go Here?" Others will construct questions that reference their school's mission or strengths. The purpose is the same – to gauge how well an applicant will fit at the school. Take the time to do your research and let your knowledge of the school shine through.

10. Apply early

Applying Early Decision is the strongest way to show a college that they are your number one choice. This is why most colleges accept ED applicants as a much higher rate than Regular Decision applicants – they love students who are "sure-bets." Early Decision is not for everyone though, so if you aren't ready to commit to just one school early in the game, applying Early Action still shows a strong level of interest. At the very least, get your application in well before the Regular Decision deadline to show the college you care enough not to wait until the last minute.