

COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDE



LAGRANGE
ACADEMY

LaGrange Academy
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Dear Students and Parents:

Within the pages of this guide you will find almost everything you will need to know to begin the process of searching for your ideal college. Keep it with you until you graduate.

You may want to start a *college search portfolio* to which you can add reference and supplementary materials as you desire. This portfolio may either be in electronic or hard-copy format. This handbook's purpose is to present the practical information necessary to assist you with your college admissions. Examples of some materials you might want to include in your portfolio would be:

- Copies of your submitted applications
- Correspondence you have had with colleges or college coaches
- Information sheets from campus visits and/or interviews
- The name and number (or business card) of any person who interviews you
- Copy of your unofficial transcript
- Copies of any recommendations you have submitted with your applications
- Copies of any information you have downloaded from your computer
- Ongoing list of questions you have about the college admission process
- Copy of your activity list (brag sheet/resume)
- Calendar or timeline that identifies important dates, such as admissions deadlines or SAT/ACT registration and test dates
- A record of any communication (written, telephone, e-mail) you have with colleges that includes the date and name of the person with whom you spoke.

Remember that this portfolio is your personal resource and guide. Include all pieces of information and/or documents that will assist in this process. It will be very useful to bring this portfolio with you when you meet with me.

Good luck as you continue your search for the perfect post-secondary plan for yourself. Hopefully this handbook will provide you with "survival skills" you will need during this sometimes frantic era of your life. Keep your head up, stay focused on the goal, but most importantly...take time to have some fun as well.

If I can help you with anything feel free to stop by my office, call (706) 882-8097, or email TeresaKrizay@lagrangeacademy.org

Teresa Krizay
Director of College Counseling

Table of Contents

The College Search	4
Resources	6
Testing Information.....	7
Developing Your Checklists and Organizing Information	8
The College Visit.....	10
Application Procedure	12
College Representative Interviews	17
College Interview Tips.....	18
Scholarships/Financial Aid	22
Appendix.....	25
Tips for Parents on Finding a College Match	26
College Application FAQs: Students Ask, Counselors Answer.....	28
Potential Scholarship.....	30
Tips for Undertaking the Application Process.....	31
Assessing Your List of Colleges	33
College Profile Page.....	35
Campus Visit Summary Sheet.....	36
Dos and Don't's on Writing the College Application Essay	37
Senior Resume.....	39
How to Make the Most of a College Interview.....	41
How to Get the Most Out of a College Fair.....	45
Checklist for Student Athletes.....	47
Transcript Request Form	48
Request for Teacher Recommendation Letter Form	49
Parents' Guide to the <i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</i>.....	50
Glossary	53

The College Search

The college search process can be daunting to say the least. There is so much information out there between the internet and the mail. Unfortunately, some seniors panic and get overwhelmed by the overall process. Don't let this happen to you.

In reality there are but six aspects to the college application process: the application itself; your essay or personal statement; teacher and counselor recommendations; an interview; extracurricular activities; and SAT/ACT scores.

You have already taken the first step. When you met with your college counselor in the spring you discussed your likes and dislikes, your interests, and some of you even had a major in mind. The list you started last year was your jumping off point. Hopefully over the summer you continued to refine your list to find your "best fit" college.

Continue to read available information and ask questions, such as:

1. Do they have my major? What kinds of special programs/activities are associated with my major?
2. What if I don't know my major or I have 3 different majors? Does the school give me time or flexibility in selecting a major later?
3. What kinds of sports, activities, etc. Am I interested in or want to continue in college? Do the schools I am interested in have these activities?
4. Do I want to be a "big fish" or a "small fish" in terms of campus size or rigor of study?
5. What kind of weather do I want to live in for the next 4 years?
6. Are there scholarship/financial aid opportunities available?
7. What kind of student body do I want to be a part of?
8. Do I want to look in state or out of state?
9. Do I need any special support?
10. Am I self-directed or do I need a lot of guidance?

If you have your list set, great; if you don't – do not panic. You still have some time. Just remember to watch your deadlines. Some schools have an early deadline – **University of Georgia** has an **October 15 early action deadline and a December 15 regular admission deadline** for example, while many other colleges have rolling deadlines.

Having a sense of where you might want to apply—but not being quite sure—is perfectly fine as well. A good rule to follow is to have your list finalized and applications started by Thanksgiving. That way you are well on your way to being completely finished before Christmas. Who wants to spend Christmas vacation filling out applications and writing essays?

Narrowing the Search

To start narrowing the thousands of colleges and universities available to you, sort your thoughts along these lines:

- **Location:** Do you want to live far away, or do you want to commute? Does climate matter? Would you rather be in a city, a suburb or the countryside?
- **Size:** Again, would you rather be in a large school or a small college? The size of the college impacts relationships as well as the style in which your education will be delivered (small classes versus lecture, etc.)
- **Academic Challenge:** Will you be more successful in a less threatening academic environment or one that is more competitive?
- **Admissibility:** You should select your colleges by three categories:
 1. “Reach” or “dream” schools are those you would like to attend, but whose admissions standards may be a “reach” for you in terms of grades, test scores, etc.
 2. “Target” schools are those that are reasonably within range of your grades, test scores, etc.
 3. “Safety” schools are those schools you are certain to be admitted to, such as community colleges, etc.
- **Curriculum:** Be sure that the colleges you choose have the major areas of study in which you are interested. If you are unsure of the major, try to focus your selections on universities that provide a wide selection of programs within their individual colleges. This will ensure that you will not have to transfer later on to find a school with your major.
- **Cost:** It is important that you and your parents sit down and discuss finances for college honestly. Be aware that financial aid and scholarships usually will not cover the total cost of college. Also, you and your parents need to be sure that a large debt at the end of your undergraduate education will be worth it. If cost becomes a factor, you might want to look at a dual degree program at a local community college or a smaller, less competitive college, which will be more generous in scholarship offers.
- **Type of College:** Two-year or four-year colleges, universities, community colleges, or professional schools all offer different opportunities. It is important to investigate them all.
- **Social Life and Personality:** The intangibles are apparent during college visits. It is important to visit schools while they are in session. Have something to eat on campus and check out the atmosphere in the eating areas; look at the bulletin boards and see what’s being advertised for fun; watch the students interact on campus: do they look at each other and say “hello” often, for example?

Resources

There are many, many places in which to search for college information. Since web addresses change frequently, it is best to mark them as your Favorites or Bookmarks. Be sure to look for up-to-date information regarding college entrance, SAT dates and other valuable resources.

Georgia Futures: www.gafutures.org

- Find information regarding college planning, financial aid including HOPE

College Board Online: www.collegeboard.org

- This site, supported by the College Board, includes a scholarship search, **SAT registration** and college search

US News – Education: www.usnews.com/education

- A practical guide to college admissions process including the important steps of preparation, application, and admission

College Navigator: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

- Supported by the National Center for Education Statistics, this site allows you to tailor your college search

College 101: <http://www.shmoop.com/college/>

- Supported by Shmoop, this site provides many helpful links including the application process, financial aid, and interviewing.

Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com/>

- In addition to ranking colleges based on a variety of factors, this site also allows you to complete a profile and helps match you with colleges that fit your profile.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): fafsa.ed.gov

- You may use this online form to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will receive a Student Aid Report after filing the FAFSA. The Financial Aid Department at most colleges requires this form in order to process your financial aid request.

Testing Information

LaGrange Academy School Code: 111763

SAT Information 2017-2018

Test Dates	Tests Offered	Regular Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
March 11, 2017	SAT test only	February 10, 2017	February 21, 2017
May 6, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests	April 7, 2017	April 18, 2017
June 3, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests	May 9, 2017	May 16, 2017
August 26, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests	***While these dates have not been formally announced, the deadline is usually one month prior to the testing date.***	***While these dates have not been formally announced, the late registration deadline is usually two weeks prior to the testing date.***
October 7, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests		
November 4, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests		
December 2, 2017	SAT and Subject Tests		
March 10, 2018	SAT test only		
May 5, 2018	SAT and Subject Tests		
June 2, 2018	SAT and Subject Tests		

To register, go to: www.sat.collegeboard.org/register

LaGrange College SAT Test Center Code: 11510

West Georgia Technical College SAT Test Center Code: 11514

Not every Subject Test is offered on every date, so check the College Board website for a list of dates to see when the test you're interested in is offered.

ACT Information 2017-2018

Test Date	Regular Registration Deadline	Late Deadline – Fee Required
April 8, 2017	March 3, 2017	March 4-17, 2017
June 10, 2017	May 5, 2017	May 6-19, 2017
September 9, 2017	***While these dates have not been formally announced, the deadline is usually one month prior to the testing date.***	***While these dates have not been formally announced, the late registration deadline is usually the three weeks prior to the testing date.***
October 28, 2017		
December 9, 2017		
February 10, 2018		
April 14, 2018		
June 9, 2018		

To register, go to: www.actstudent.org

DEVELOPING YOUR CHECKLISTS AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION

There are many ways to get information on colleges.

1. Talk with me about test schedules, college choices, scholarships, and financial aid.
2. When contacting the Office of Admissions to obtain applications and material, ask to speak with an admissions representative (preferably the one who handles our school or the state of Georgia), introduce yourself, and ask a few questions that are important to you.

An example would be “Hi, my name is Lilly Jones and I am a senior at LaGrange Academy in LaGrange, Georgia. May I ask you a few questions? Thanks.....” This can also work for email.

3. Try to visit each school to which you plan on applying. Nothing is more valuable than stepping on campus and experiencing the school environment. If you can, try to sit in on a class, meet with a coach/professor/student, stay overnight etc.
4. It is perfectly fine to apply to a school you have not yet visited. However, it is **strongly recommended** that you eventually visit every school you are considering attending next fall.
5. Try to attend a few college fairs/college-sponsored information programs. Ask questions and keep notes when speaking to representatives.
6. **Get Organized.** Make a file for each college that you pursue. Keep all written and computer related correspondence in the file. **Make a copy of every application to keep in the file.**
7. Be proactive and request transcripts from your college counselor well in advance of the deadline. Ask teachers to write recommendations for you, and supply them with all required materials (see Appendix for Teacher Request Form).
8. Find out and remember all deadlines for test registration, admission, and financial aid applications.
9. Make sure your application and all other materials are your own work. You can have people review your essay and application, but they cannot complete them for you.

One important thing to remember is that getting into college is **your responsibility**. As your counselor, I am here to assist you in the process but picking colleges and applying to them lies solely with you. Thus, following the checklist, organizing information, and meeting deadlines is **your responsibility**. If you are successful with these tasks, you will save yourself a huge headache later on in the year.

Activities Resume

An activities resume provides you an opportunity to show off a bit to the college. Admissions Officers want to know what activities you have been involved in during the past four years. Typically, the application will have a special section in which to write your activities. Additionally, applications might ask for a resume or activity sheet. Even if the school doesn't require a resume, the information about your extra curriculars is very important. It gives the admissions committee a more "well rounded" view of your talents and how you will fit into their institution. In the appendix, there is a resume worksheet to help jog your memory as well as an example of a resume. There are usually two types of opportunities in the application process to explain and/or expand upon your opportunities.

- a. If the school has provided **a space for activities** on their application, print or type clearly and concisely in the space provided. Try to list the activities in order of importance. Be sure to follow directions. If the school says that you can use a separate sheet of paper to continue, then do so by providing your activities resume. If not, only use the space provided.
- b. If the school allows for an **activity resume** (practically all will), then complete one. Type the resume and go into detail about any special activities, awards, honors, or programs that are related to your high school experience.

Listed below are some tips relevant to this section. They include:

1. Don't go overboard in your activity resume. Colleges don't want to know what you did in 2nd grade. The admissions committee wants to look at current and important activities. Stick to your high school years.
2. Explain any special language or verbiage in your resume. For example, if you just put LGAFCA, the college officials reviewing your activities may not know what you mean.
3. You do not have to describe in huge paragraphs every single activity or accomplishment that you have done. It is important to show that you have been involved and are well rounded, but going overboard with the descriptions will not help your application.
4. Accomplishments outside of school (coaching, summer work, etc.) are things you want to include on your resume as well.
5. Always type and proofread your resume. (A sample resume is included in the appendix).

The College Visit

Taking a campus tour will allow you to experience the campus first-hand. While LaGrange Academy offers the annual college visitation trip and invites college representatives to visit our campus, you will probably want to visit other schools with your family.

Most colleges have an admissions website and you are generally able to schedule your visit directly online. Visiting a college campus is a great way to see what life would be like for you as a prospective student. Make sure you call the admissions office **at least two weeks in advance** of when you want to visit. By doing this, you have given the office more time to arrange any of the following that you might request:

- Interview with an Admissions Counselor
- Sitting in on a class
- Staying overnight in the residence halls
- A tour of the campus
- Meeting with a professor
- Meeting with students at the college
- Eating in the cafeteria

Before you visit, take time to familiarize yourself with the campus; look over their website and other materials. Look at things like the school calendar, course requirements and descriptions (especially for your major), study abroad programs, internships, etc.

It's a good idea to take an unofficial copy of your transcript (which you may obtain from Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Krizay) and your activities resume so that you might discuss with an admissions counselor your present situation at school, as well as accomplishments, classes, etc.

Consider the following as you tour the facilities of each campus you visit:

Library:

- How extensive are the hours?
- How extensive are the resources?
- Are tutoring services available?

Laboratories/Studios

- Are there sufficient computer labs?
- Are there foreign language labs?
- What do the science labs look like?
- Are labs equipped with state-of-the-art technology?
- Are there art studios, music studios, dance studios?

Theater

- What is the size and scope of the theater?
- Are productions open to non-theater majors?
- How many productions are scheduled each year?
- Is there a campus repertory company, choir, band, or orchestra?

Athletics

- What are the facilities for men and women?
- How important is the athletic program to campus life?
- What intercollegiate and intramural sports are offered?
- In what athletic division does the college participate?
- Are athletic scholarships available?

Housing

- Where are the residence halls located on campus?
- Are rooms singles, doubles, triples, or suites?
- Are residence halls coed or single sex?
- Where do freshmen live?
- How are roommates selected for freshmen?
- Can you change roommates or dorms?
- What are the residence hall rules?
- Are there quiet study hours?
- Is there a visitation policy for guests?
- Can freshmen live off-campus?
- Are there fraternity or sorority houses?
- Is housing guaranteed for four years?
- Are students permitted to have vehicles on campus?

Dining

- Where are the dining halls located?
- Are there apartment-style dorms where students do their own cooking?
- What types of meal plans are available?
- Can special diets be accommodated?
- Are there restaurants near the campus?

Health Services

- Are good clinical facilities available on-campus?
- During what hours are doctors and nurses available?
- Are good counseling services available to students?
- Is there a charge for medical care?
- What hospitals are near the campus?

Security

- Does an effective security staff patrol the campus?
- Are parking lots and walkways well lit?
- Is information on crime statistics regularly disseminated to the campus community?
- What is the administration's emergency preparedness plan?

Application Procedure

Once you have received your applications to fill out and mail (or submit electronically), there is a procedure that **you must follow** so that all information is correct and complete from you and the Lagrange Academy College Counseling Office. The following steps will assist you greatly in this critical part of the college application process.

A. Filling out your applications

1. The first thing to do is check deadlines for admissions applications, scholarships, etc. Make note of the following when looking over the application.
 - a. Are SAT – Subject Tests (SAT IIs) required? If so, which ones?
 - b. Which scores (SAT vs. ACT) will you send?
 - c. Is there a separate scholarship application?
 - d. Is there an SAT Optional application if you do not want to send your scores?
2. Many colleges require you to use the Common Application (www.commonapp.org) to apply to schools.
3. When using the common application, make sure to check to see if they have a supplemental part to the application.
4. Many colleges/universities will also encourage you to use their online applications. Be sure to check to see if this is available. When submitting a school application you should receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours. If you do not receive the acknowledgement, contact the admissions office to make sure your application was received.
5. Use black ink or go online (preferable) to complete your application. Long answers to questions in the application should be typed as well.
6. Make sure you give the necessary forms to the Counseling Office and your teachers well in advance. Remember: teachers are asked to write many letters; you can't expect them to write you a letter in one day. (The Transcript Request Form and Teacher Letter Request Form are located in the appendix).
7. Have your application and essay proofread by someone at home, your English teacher, or me.
8. Make a copy of all applications (online apps as well) and put them in the corresponding folder that you made earlier in this process.
9. If you apply on-line, don't forget that your teachers and me still need the necessary materials to complete their parts.

10. After two weeks, contact the admissions office to insure your application and related material have been received.

B. Handing Required Information from the Application to the Counseling Office

It's not necessary for your application (along with essays, resumes, etc.) to be sent by the counseling department. However, it *is* necessary that you let me know when and where you have applied. Please remember I have no way of knowing you have applied to a school unless you tell me. In order to make sure your school package is sent in a timely fashion, please follow the following guidelines:

1. Fill out a Transcript Request Form. (These are always available in a bin outside my office.) On the form you must provide the following information:

- Your name
- The date you submitted the request
- Application Deadline
- The name of the School
- The city and state where the school is located
- Did you apply early action, regular decision, rolling admission
- Is this a common application (this is important- there are special forms for the common app)
- The names of the teachers who are writing your letters
- Your signature (No transcripts will be sent without a signature)

Remember, the counseling office does not send standardized test scores. You must do that directly through www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org. **It is your responsibility to send the test scores directly to the school/NCAA/academy/etc.**

Below are some important notes about the application procedure. Read these over carefully so that you can make this process stress-free.

1. Read the application directions first. Some applications have special directions about the application procedures, so follow them carefully.
2. Be sure to give the application deadlines to your teachers for their recommendations.
3. Limit your outside letters of recommendation from people outside of academics to one or two. Admissions Committees like to have different points of view from which to draw from but overkill does not help the process or guarantee admission. Remember that outside letters of recommendation are not typically used by admissions offices and are only helpful if they add new and pertinent information.
4. Some applications have two parts; move through Part 1 quickly so that you will have plenty of time for Part 2. Within 10 working days of submitting Part 1, call the college to check that they have received Part 1.
5. All notices of college acceptances, denials, waitlists and withdrawals, and scholarships are to be reported to the College Counseling Department.

C. College Athletics

1. If you are a recruited athlete, you still have to apply by the required deadlines. Handing in your information in a timely manner to the admissions office shows that you are a dedicated student AND athlete. If you are being advised differently by a college coach or another individual, talk to your college counselor as soon as possible.
2. Make sure you follow all rules regarding the NCAA, official visits, and registration.
3. Please keep in mind that an athletic commitment does not mean you are admitted to the college/university. Even though coaches do have input into your admissions application, only the admissions office can officially admit you.
4. Please note that we do not send official transcripts and letters of recommendation to coaches. Only admissions offices receive these documents.

D. Requesting Teacher's Letters of Recommendation

Many colleges and universities will require/recommend at least one teacher to write a letter of recommendation to support your application. Below are the steps you must follow in order to get a proper letter of recommendation.

1. Once you have thought about which teacher would be the best person to write about you, you should ask them immediately (if you have not already done so) if they would be able to complete a letter for you. (Use the Teacher Letter of Recommendation Request Form)
2. Letters of recommendation should come from a junior or senior year teacher.
3. Teacher recommendations are your responsibility to coordinate. **I am not responsible for tracking down any letters of recommendation from a teacher.**
4. If you complete your application online, make sure you inform your teacher(s).

If you have any questions or concerns, speak with your college counselor.

E. Types of College Deadlines/Candidate Reply Agreement

Colleges and Universities have their own deadlines for applications and notification dates in which they inform students of their decisions. Below is a complete list of the types of deadlines and requirements associated with them.

REGULAR DECISION: Usually, these application deadlines vary from school to school. Most deadlines fall on January 1st, January 10th, January 15th, or February 1st. The decision notification from the institution to you is typically April 1st – April 10th. You have until May 1st to notify the school if you are planning to attend or decline admission (**UNLESS** you have applied Early Decision).

EARLY DECISION: This is a process for students who have selected a particular college or university as a clear **first and only choice**. In most cases, the application deadline is November 1st, and all supporting recommendations are due at the same time. The action by the institution can come in three forms:

Acceptance – By being accepted early, the student has two weeks (or less, depending upon the school) from the notification to inform the school that they are attending. By being admitted Early Decision, you are under contract to attend the school and must withdraw all other applications that are outstanding at that time; you cannot submit any other applications.

NOTE: If you do not withdraw all other applications, you will jeopardize your standing with your early decision institution. Once accepted under an Early Decision agreement, the Counseling office will not forward your information to any other colleges.

Deferred – the institution wants to see more supporting information and/or 1st semester senior grades to make a decision. At this point, the Early Decision agreement becomes void and you may apply to other institutions.

Denial – the institution has denied your application. You cannot reapply (although you can attempt to transfer after attending another institution).

EARLY ACTION: This is a program that requires submission of all application materials early in the senior year. Typically, the deadlines are November 1st or November 15th. Students will receive early notification of the school’s decision. However, unlike the Early Decision process, the decision is not binding. If admission is offered, the student has until the common reply date (May 1) to accept the offer.

“SINGLE CHOICE” OR “RESTRICTIVE” EARLY ACTION: This process is very similar to Early Action, yet there is one key difference. A school can explicitly state that you can only apply to their school early and no one else. Some schools that use this program can make exceptions which they will explicitly state in their materials. If you are admitted, you are not bound to attend the school and you have until May 1st to make a decision. There only a few schools that are doing this and if you have questions or are thinking of applying to a school that states this policy in their literature, talk to your college counselor about it.

Within every “early” program, it is important to understand that colleges and universities vary. For example, some schools that utilize Early Action specifically state that you cannot apply to an Early Decision program.

PRIORITY ADMISSION: Basically, this insures that your application is read in the first round. **It is not a binding admissions agreement.** For schools that have priority admissions, you can still apply after this deadline. However, spaces become limited. Thus, a priority deadline **may** give you an added advantage for admission.

ROLLING ADMISSION: This is a process used by many colleges and universities where students are accepted on a “first come, first served” basis. The earlier a student applies, the sooner he will be admitted.

CANDIDATE REPLY DATE AGREEMENT: The school you plan to attend will most likely require a deposit by May 1st.

When you have made your final selection of a college/university, please inform all other schools to which you have been accepted that you will not be attending their school. You must do this in writing, either by a form that they have supplied to you or a note that you mail. Do not use the telephone or email; most schools need this in writing. Please do this on or before the May 1st deadline.

IMPORTANT: Please know that you cannot “**double deposit**”. This is an unethical process that hinders schools in completing their freshman class and does not allow waitlisted students to gain admission.

College Representative Interviews

The Basics

The college interview is a part of the college application process at many colleges — but not all of them. You may meet in person to talk with someone from the admission office, a current student or a graduate of the college. Or you may be able to take part in a video interview, often via Skype.

Why Interview?

The interview is rarely the deciding factor in whether the college will accept you, but it can give a representative from the college a chance to get to know you better. And the interview gives you a chance to:

- Show your interest in the college.
- Share information about yourself beyond what's listed on your transcript.
- Bring up anything in your record that you'd like to explain, like a temporary drop in your grades.
- Discuss your goals and the reasons you want to attend the college.
- Ask questions about the college.

What to Expect

You'll talk one-on-one with the interviewer. If your parent comes with you, he or she probably won't be in the room (or on camera) during the interview but may get a chance to talk to the interviewer afterward.

An interviewer may ask questions like “Why do you want to go college?” and “Why do you want to attend this college?” He or she may also ask about your high school experiences, your hobbies and your accomplishments.

The interviewer will also ask if you have any questions. Asking questions shows the interviewer that you're interested in the college, and it allows you to get information you can't find on a website or in a brochure. If you're interested in a certain major, ask what the program is like. If you're planning to live on campus, ask about campus life. Just try to avoid asking questions that you can easily find answers to on the college's website.

The interview is a great chance to show your interest in a college.

College Interview Tips

Before the Interview

Do:

-Background research on your college. Odds are pretty high that your interviewer's going to pop the "Why do you want to go to this school?", so you'd better be prepared.

-See if you have to sign up for an interview. If you do have to sign up, it's always a good idea to do so, even if you aren't good at interviews—it shows that you care about attending, and a good interview helps your application a lot more than a bad interview hurts it.

-Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn, Google, or other social media sites. Don't mention that you quasi-stalked them during the interview, but it's worth checking up on them to see if your interests match theirs so that you can highlight the similarities on your resume, or to just see what their face looks like so that you both don't end up sitting at different coffee tables wondering who is who.

-Put together a resume. If you've already written one for the application, think about whether or not you want to shorten it. When your interviewer contacts you (or in your initial contact with your interviewer, if that's how the college wants you to do it), be sure to offer to send your resume so they can "preview" your accomplishments. If they agree, remember that the resume will be their first impression of you, so make sure it's formatted neatly and contains only information you'd be willing to talk about for thirty minutes to an hour.

-Think about all the common questions they might ask you, and prepare solid answers. Remember that your interviewer knows nothing about you besides what you tell them, and that they're trying to get a holistic opinion of you, which is *hard*—you want to make their job easier. Here are a couple potential questions to get you started:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Let's talk about this thing on your resume.
3. Why do you want to attend XYZ college?
4. What were your favorite classes/clubs/extracurriculars?
5. How would your friends describe you?
6. What gets you up in the morning? (don't answer "my mom" or "my alarm clock")
7. Describe some events that have had a major impact on your life.
8. What are your favorite classes and why?
9. What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
10. What is the most significant contribution you've made to your high school?

-Do a mock interview, either with yourself in the mirror, or with a friend, parent, counselor, teacher, etc.

-Be courteous to your interviewer. Their first impression of you comes from your initial email communication, so be sure to emanate the three C's: calm, cool, and collected. Sit on your emails before sending them out to make sure you haven't missed anything. Be flexible in terms of scheduling and location.

Don't:

-Be annoying to your interviewer. There's a fine line between being enthusiastic and responsive and being insistent and not giving your interviewer room to breathe. Remember that your interviewer is scheduling interviews with potentially dozens of other applicants, so don't pester them with too many emails.

-Stress yourself out. Interviews are important, but there's no point in worrying about them incessantly. Keep in mind that your interviewer is just a person who happens to be doing the college you're applying to a favor.

-Do nothing and plan on "winging it". As good as you might be at communication and making people like you, you'll be *so* much better if you're well-prepared. Regardless of how busy you are, it's worth the thirty minutes to an hour it takes to do some baseline research.

During the interview

Do:

-Dress nicely. Even if your interviewer tells you to dress casually, they can't fault you for a dress shirt and khakis. Ideally, dress business formal.

For guys, this means khakis or black dress pants, maybe a Polo or dress shirt on top. A tie is probably overboard, as is a suit jacket. Don't be afraid to put on a light sports jacket, though, especially if it's cold.

For girls, wear a nice blouse or buttoned-up shirt with dark-colored pants or a skirt that isn't too short. A good test to see if your skirt is too short is to put your arms by your side and see if your skirt is above your fingertips. Be sure not to show any cleavage and make sure not to wear excess makeup or perfume. You never know if your interviewer has the same tastes as you do.

-Be polite, courteous, all that. Your job is to convince the interviewer that you'd be a good addition to the college's class of 20-whatever, and being good-mannered will put you one step closer.

-Bring a copy of your resume, even if you've already sent one to your interviewer. The only time you shouldn't bring one is if they explicitly tell you not to. Bring it in a nice folder, and hold it with your left hand so you can shake your interviewer's hand without having to switch which hand it's in.

-Be yourself. Don't try to make yourself seem like someone you're not, because most people will be able to tell and it looks bad. You should be applying to college as the person you are; being genuine will take you a lot further than trying to act like someone you're not.

- Try to relax. During the interview, always be honest, try to relax and be yourself. You are a great candidate!

- Explain academic difficulties. If there were any academic difficulties that you encountered, be prepared to explain them.

-Ask questions. Odds are, they'll ask you if you have any questions for them, so try to come up with a few (ideally based off your conversation). Even if you can't, it's always a good idea to have a couple ready on hand, like:

1. What was your most/least favorite part about XYZ college?
2. Is there anything most incoming freshmen don't know that they should?
3. What clubs/organizations did you join/would you recommend joining?
4. If I have more questions later, do you mind if I shoot you an email?

Don't:

-Order messy food. It's your choice if you want to order a drink (especially if you're meeting at a coffee shop), but if you do, order something with a lid so spills aren't an issue, and only order one if your interviewer does too. Having a cup of coffee is handy to sip while listening to your interviewer, but be sure to be respectful about it and not let it distract you from your responses.

-Let your interviewer see your parents. If they're dropping you off at the interview place, have them drop you off somewhere your interviewer won't be able to see you, and walk in alone. You want to give an impression of independence.

-Bring up hotly contested issues like politics, the death penalty, abortion—the off chance that they'll disagree with your opinion could turn an otherwise great interview into an argument over something irrelevant to your application that will invariably hurt their opinion of you.

-Stick around after it's over. When the interview is done, shake your interviewer's hand and leave, even if it means waiting outside for a while for a ride home. There's nothing more awkward than

hanging around with nothing to say. If you have any questions for your interviewer, ask them during the interview, not after it.

After the interview

Send your interviewer a thank-you email. Ideally you want to mention how you enjoyed the discussion, even if you didn't and think it went terribly, and highlight some of your strong points again. It's important to sound sincere in giving thanks (and you should actually be thankful), because they're volunteering their time to help with your college applications. A thank-you email lends a sense of closure to the interview, and will leave you on good terms with your interviewer.

Sources: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews/college-interviews-the-basics>
<http://www.shmoop.com/college/college-interview-tips.html>

Scholarships/Financial Aid

Every year, many scholarships, grants, and other assistance (funded by both universities and private organizations) are available. Keep searching all throughout your senior year; many opportunities exist and can be found through internet searches and other resources listed below. A short list of available scholarships is included in the appendix.

One of the confusing parts of scholarships and financial aid can be the terminology. It is crucial that you understand the difference between **non need-based aid** and **need-based aid**.

NON NEED-BASED AID (i.e. merit scholarships) is money that a college/university will award which the student does not need to repay (also, financial information is not considered). Usually this aid comes in a form of a scholarship (for academics, athletics, or other talents i.e. music, drama, etc.) or a *special* grant awarded for a variety of reasons. Non need-based aid can also come from a variety of outside sources.

NEED-BASED AID is money that a college/university (and/or the federal government) will award an accepted student that the student **may** have to repay. This aid is based on the need as determined by various financial aid forms. Some need-based aid is in the form of a **grant** (which does not need to be repaid), a **work-study job** (which the student works on campus), or a **federally subsidized loan** (the student must repay).

Here are some other points of interest regarding scholarships:

1. Most colleges/universities offer a full range of merit and/or talent-based scholarships. Be sure that you check with each college/university that you have applied to for all/any of the scholarships offered. If there are minimum GPA, ACT/SAT scores, or other requirements, make sure that you and your family understand them.
2. Some scholarships require a counselor nomination or additional scholarship applications. Be sure to check with your counselor if there are any other additional requirements.
3. Some colleges automatically consider you for their scholarships, so no additional forms or nominations are required. Always check to make sure this is the case if you don't see any separate scholarship applications.
4. There are private scholarships that come from a variety of sources. One of your parents may work for a company that has special scholarships set aside for the children of employees. Be sure to ask your parents to check with their human resources office to see if such a program is available at their workplace.
5. Other sources to consider for private scholarships are fraternal organizations (Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary), private foundations, corporations (Coca-Cola, Papa John's, McDonalds) or community organizations (churches, civic leagues, etc.).

To apply for **need-based aid**, you and your parents must complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or **FAFSA**). This form is available online (www.fafsa.ed.gov) usually on

October 1st and is year-specific—so be sure to use the current year’s form. To apply for financial aid, all schools require this form. The CSS/Profile form is another type of financial aid form that you can complete anytime. Not all schools require this form. To obtain a current list of all colleges/universities that require the CSS/Profile form (and to apply), log on to <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>. In addition, some colleges may also require the completion of an institutional form. Make sure you have completed all necessary forms in a timely manner. The later in the process, the less money a college/university might have to allocate.

Below are some tips that should help you and your family through the scholarship and financial aid process.

1. When the FAFSA or CSS/Profile is filed, your **demonstrated financial need** is determined using the income and tax information provided on the forms.
2. Each college or university will create their own **Financial Aid Award (FAA)** when they have determined your demonstrated need. This award will consist of scholarships, grants, work-study, and/or loans. Every college/university will create their own package, so there may be great differences ranging from college to college.
3. Your parent(s) may file the FAFSA prior to filing their taxes by making an **estimate** of the tax return and income. Make sure the family’s estimate is as accurate as possible. If the tax return comes back and there is a sizeable gap between the estimate and the actual income, your financial aid will be affected.
4. When filing the FAFSA, make sure you and your parent each apply for a PIN code (which is your electronic signature). Everyone must have a PIN code or your FAFSA will not be processed. You can apply for the code at www.pin.ed.gov
5. When you talk to a financial aid officer, take notes on the discussion and write down names. You can refer to this information and ask for the same person again if you have an update or additional questions.
6. If you and your family decide to decline part of the financial aid package, a college/university reserves the right not to supplement the package with other aid. For example, if you decline taking the loan, the institution may not put any other aid in its place.
7. If you receive a FAA, remember it is not set in stone. You may appeal either by letter (preferable) or phone to request additional aid. There may be extenuating circumstances in your situation and an appeal is a great way to insure that your financial aid officer is aware of all information.
8. Student loans are usually federally subsidized loans that have a very low interest rate. Repayment of a student’s loan usually begins 6 months after graduation. A loan may be deferred while a student pursues graduate or postdoctoral studies.
9. Work-study programs are excellent opportunities for students to assist with paying for college. Usually, these jobs are administrative help that may require a student to work approximately 10-20 hours on campus.

10. While work-study may be a part of your FAA, please know that you can still work on campus even if you aren't required to work. Some colleges/universities have employment opportunities for students.

11. Under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), once you have reached the age of eighteen, your parents will be limited in the amount of information a college may disclose to them. You will need to assume this responsibility. A parents' guide to FERPA is included in the appendix.

The College Counseling Department is here to help you. Please stop by whenever you have any questions.

Appendix

Tips for Parents on Finding a College Match	26
College Application FAQs: Students Ask, Counselors Answer.....	28
Potential Scholarship.....	30
Tips for Undertaking the Application Process.....	31
Assessing Your List of Colleges	33
College Profile Page.....	35
Campus Visit Summary Sheet.....	36
Dos and Don't's on Writing the College Application Essay	37
Senior Resume.....	39
How to Make the Most of a College Interview.....	41
How to Get the Most Out of a College Fair.....	45
Checklist for Student Athletes.....	47
Transcript Request Form	48
Request for Teacher Recommendation Letter Form	49
Parents' Guide to the <i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</i>.....	50
Glossary	53

Tips for parents on finding a college match

How can your child find colleges that match his or her needs? First, identify priorities. Next, carefully research the characteristics of a range of schools. Finally, match the two. Here are some college characteristics to consider.

Size of student body

Size will affect many of your child's opportunities and experiences:

- range of academic majors offered
- extracurricular possibilities
- amount of personal attention your child will receive
- number of academic resources (e.g., books in the library)

In considering size, your child should look beyond the raw number of students attending. For example, perhaps she's considering a small department within a large school. She should investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also their accessibility to students.

Location

Does your child want to visit home frequently, or is this a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps he would like an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food, or major league ball games. Or maybe he hopes for easy access to the outdoors or the serenity of a small town.

Academic programs

If your child knows what she wants to study, she can research the reputations of academic departments by talking to people in the fields that interest her. If your child is undecided, as many students are, she may want to choose an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Students normally don't pick a major until their sophomore year, and those students who know their major before they go to college are very likely to change their minds. Most colleges offer counseling to help students find a focus.

In considering academic programs, your child should look for special opportunities and pick a school that offers a number of possibilities.

Tips for parents on finding a college match (page 2)

Campus life

Your child should consider what college life will be like beyond the classroom. Students have to maintain a balance between academics, activities, and social life. Before choosing a college, your child should learn the answers to these questions:

- What extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, and organizations are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Are students welcomed by the community?
- Is there an ethnic or religious group in which to take part?
- How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life?
- Is housing guaranteed?
- How are dorms assigned?

Cost

In considering cost, look beyond the price tag. For most students, today's college costs make finances an important consideration. At the same time, most colleges work to ensure that academically qualified students from every economic circumstance can find financial aid that allows them to attend.

Diversity

Your child should explore what she might gain from a diverse student body. The geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the students can help students learn more about the world. Investigate which student organizations or other groups with ethnic or religious foundations are active and visible on campus.

Retention and graduation rates

One of the best ways to measure a school's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to learn the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who go on to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates indicate that responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.

Source: www.collegeboard.com

Handout 3K page 2 of 2

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College application FAQs: Students ask, counselors answer

Do I have a better chance of getting in if I apply early?

This can vary from school to school and year to year and may depend on the applicant pool at the school to which you are applying. Check to see what percentage of students in the previous graduating classes at your high school were admitted as Early Decision to a specific college. Are you qualified to apply for Early Decision? If you are, and this is a school you really wish to attend, then apply for Early Decision.

How much time should I give my teachers to write letters of recommendation for me?

Teachers should always receive a minimum of two weeks' notice before the postmark date. Be sure to ask in a way that allows a teacher to decline comfortably if he or she does not have time to do an adequate job. For example: "Do you feel you know me well enough, and do you have enough time, to write a supportive letter of recommendation for me?" Give the teacher a stamped envelope addressed to the college, along with any recommendation form provided by the college.

How many times should I take the SAT®?

Some students are satisfied with their SAT scores the first time they take the test. Students who have taken the PSAT/NMSQT® more than once may feel well prepared for the SAT and take it only once. Most students will take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. Some students will take it three times.

My SAT scores are very low, and my grades are very high. Will this affect my chances of admission?

While SAT scores are an indicator of success in college, admissions staff look at many different factors when making a decision about whether to admit a student. One of the main things they are looking for is to see if your high school academic profile indicates that you have the potential for academic success on their campus. What kind of courses have you taken? Have you taken rigorous courses such as honors or AP® courses? Have you taken AP Exams so that there are scores to indicate how you may perform in a college-level course?

My parents don't make a lot of money — will colleges hold this against me?

Colleges should tell you whether they have a "need-blind" admissions policy. Those that do never consider ability to pay as an admissions requirement. Other schools, which are "need conscious," may consider ability to pay, but only for a very small proportion of the admitted group. My advice is always: Don't worry about this.

College application FAQs: Students ask, counselors answer (page 2)

How can I improve my chances of getting in from the wait list?

If a college is your first choice, let the college know that — although the college may not ask for this information. Write a letter to the director of admissions expressing your continuing strong interest and updating the admissions office with any new information that enhances you. In addition, you may wish to ask your counselor to make a call on your behalf. Many colleges keep track of these kinds of contacts, and students who are enthusiastic and persistent will get looked at first. Colleges want to admit students off the wait list who will accept the offer of admission.

Do colleges really care about your senior-year grades?

Absolutely! Many colleges will not make a decision until receiving seventh-semester grades. They expect to see a performance that indicates you are ready for college-level work. The college at which you make your enrollment deposit will ask for a final transcript at the end of the senior year. (Admissions letters often say something like, “Your admission is contingent upon your continued successful performance.”) It is not at all rare for a college to withdraw an offer of admission when grades drop significantly over the course of the senior year. (I have a folder full of copies of these letters.)

Answers provided by Mary Lee Hoganson, a former counselor at Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Illinois, and Nadine K. Maxwell, a former coordinator of guidance services for Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia.

Source: *The College Board*

Scholarship	Amount	Date Application Opens	Application Due Date	Special Requirements
Horatio Alger Assoc. Scholarship	\$22,000	August	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need based (\$55k or lower adjusted gross family income)
Outstanding Students of America	\$1,000		October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.0 GPA or higher
Coca-Cola Scholars	\$20,000 or \$10,000		October	
Diverse Power – Walter Harrison Scholarship	\$1,000	October	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need based • EMC member • Must attend GA college/university
Diverse Power Foundation, Inc.	Undetermined	November	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need based
Burger King Scholars Program	Range \$1,000 - \$50,000	November	January	
Hatton-Lovejoy Scholarship Plan	\$2,250/semester \$18,000 cap		February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident of Troup County (min. 2 yrs) • Upper 25% of class
Julian and Jan Hester Memorial Scholarship	\$1,000		April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must attend GA college/university • Based on academic merit, not need
Hooper Knight Memorial Scholarship	Undetermined	January	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident of Troup County • Upper 25% of class
Tolly McCall Burch Scholarship (JSL)	Undetermined	January	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper 25% of class • Demonstrate volunteerism and leadership
Mollie Lukken Memorial Scholarship (JSL)	Undetermined	January	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires Special Education major
H.O.P.E. For a Day	\$2,000		March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need based • Must explain how breast cancer has touched your life
Bryan Scholarship	\$1,000		April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male students only • Must plan on attending GA Tech
Heritage Bank of the South	\$500	March	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.0 GPA or higher • Must demonstrate community involvement
Society of American Military Engineers (Ft. Benning)	\$1,000 and \$1,500		April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must reside w/in 50 miles of Ft. Benning • Must plan a degree in engineering or Engineering Technology

Tips for undertaking the application process

Getting started

- Set up a folder for each application. Keep all material relevant to each college in its own folder.
- Request letters of recommendations at least two weeks (a month is better) before the deadlines.
- Review all application requirements. Set up a schedule for completing them. You might want to put off this task as long as you can, but procrastination is risky. There is a lot to do, especially if you have several essays to write. You may not do the application (and yourself) justice if you leave it until the last minute. Remember: Leave enough time for correcting and revising.

Completing the application process

- Review each page of the application and its directions completely before you start to work on it.
- Be accurate, honest and neat. Spell correctly and use correct grammar.
- Don't type your essay directly into the application. Draft it separately, then upload the final, proof-read version.
- Request the testing organization to send your official test scores directly to the colleges. Do not send a photocopy of your own test score report unless requested to do so. Sometimes, a college accepts a photocopy as a means of obtaining preliminary information, but it will need the official report to make an offer of admission.
- When you have completed your application, ask someone to review it and check it for errors.
- Print and save to your hard drive the completed application before you send it.
- If you file an online application, be sure to tell your counselor when you have submitted the application and which materials the school needs to send to the college (such as recommendations or the transcript).

Handout 4B

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Tips for undertaking the application process (page 2)

Tips for online applicants

- Make sure a person whose opinion you trust reviews the application for errors before you send it.
- Use standard spelling and grammar — not email-ese: Treat this like a paper application.
- Spell your name the same way on the online application and on other components that are sent via mail; this will help the colleges match the components of your application in a timely way.
- Have your test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying, if you haven't already.
- Print out a paper copy for your records.
- Do not apply electronically and send a paper copy in the mail: Wait for confirmation that the electronic copy was received (you should get that within three or four days, if not sooner).
- Tell your counselor of every online application you send, so he or she can send transcripts and letters of recommendation.

Handout 4B

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Assessing your list of colleges

As you develop a list (mental or otherwise) of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

The basics

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

Where would you fit in?

- What are the admission test scores at the colleges that interest you? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

Visit the colleges' Web sites, read the guidebooks and look at their literature

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?

Assessing your list of colleges (page 2)

- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

Admissions process

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

Now answer these questions

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

Source: *Susan Stagers, Cary Academy, North Carolina*

College Profile Page

College/ University Name				
Academic Program				
Availability of Intended Major				
Possibility of combining majors of interest				
Reputation for academic quality				
Opportunities for cooperative education, internships, etc.				
Library resources				
Desired class formats and size				
Availability of off-campus programs of interest				
Quality of facilities that support intended major				
People				
Quality and accessibility of faculty				
Friendliness of students				
Social life				
Diversity of enrollment				
Intellectual level of students				
Accessibility of administration				
Campus				
Appearance of campus				
Access to cultural & social opportunities				
Availability of housing				
Quality of facilities & student activities				
Student involvement in campus government				
Sports programs				
Availability of good places to study				
Availability of nearby shopping				
Convenience of transportation				
Extra-curricular activities				
Cost				
Availability of financial aid				
Availability of employment				
Scholarship opportunities				
Other important items				

College/University _____
 Date of visit: _____

Campus Visit Summary Sheet

INSTRUCTIONS:

Immediately after finishing your campus visit, take time to respond to the statements below using the Strongly Agree/Agree/Disagree point-scale provided. Discuss each statement with your parents as you mark your response and add the points marked to calculate a total score. Use the total score to compare schools you visit to one another.

I agree or disagree with each statement.

	<u>Strongly</u> Agree	Agree	Disagree	
I feel comfortable on this campus.	5	4	3	2 1
I met students who could be my friends.	5	4	3	2 1
I respect the professors/instructors I met.	5	4	3	2 1
I like the size of this school.	5	4	3	2 1
I like the location of this school.	5	4	3	2 1
I feel safe on this campus.	5	4	3	2 1
The facilities and buildings are good on this campus.	5	4	3	2 1
I think the housing/residence hall rooms will be good to live in.	5	4	3	2 1
I like the dining hall food.	5	4	3	2 1
This campus offers activities I am interested in.	5	4	3	2 1
The nearby community offers activities I enjoy.	5	4	3	2 1
The transportation available to and from this campus is good.	5	4	3	2 1
This school has the academic programs and classes I want.	5	4	3	2 1
I think the quality of education is excellent at this school.	5	4	3	2 1
The support services for students are very helpful.	5	4	3	2 1
The career planning and placement office is helpful.	5	4	3	2 1
I think I could get a job in my major field of study with a degree from this school.	5	4	3	2 1
I feel like I fit in at this school.	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2 1</u>

Points possible: 90 Total Score = _____ Points

The Letter Grade I give this school based on my campus visit is: _____ Grade

Suggested Score Guidelines

78 - 90 points - I love this school! How can I get accepted? ("A" grade)
 54 - 77 points - I like this school. I definitely will apply here. ("B" grade)
 45 - 53 points - I'll be okay with attending this school. ("C" grade)
 36 - 44 points - I really don't care for this school. ("D" grade)
 18 - 35 points - I'm not applying here. ("F" grade)

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Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay

A great application essay will present a vivid, personal, and compelling view of you to the admissions staff. It will round out the rest of your application and help you stand out from other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of your application over which you have complete control, so take the time to do a good job on it. Check out these tips before you begin.

DOs

Keep your focus narrow and personal

Your essay must prove a single point or thesis. The reader should be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask someone to read just your introduction to see what he or she thinks your essay is about.

Essays that attempt to be too comprehensive end up sounding watered down. Remember, it's not about telling the committee members what you've done—they can pick that up from your list of activities—but about showing them who you are.

Prove it

Develop your main idea with vivid, specific facts, events, quotations, examples, and reasons. There's a big difference between simply stating a point of view and letting an idea unfold in the details:

- **Okay:** I like to be surrounded by people with a variety of backgrounds and interests.
- **Better:** During that night, I sang the theme song from *Casablanca* with a baseball coach who thinks he's Bogie, discussed Marxism with a little old lady, and heard more than I ever wanted to know about some woman's gallbladder operation.

Be specific

To avoid clichéd, generic, and predictable writing, use vivid, specific details.

- **Okay:** I want to help people. I have gotten so much out of life through the love and guidance of my family, I feel that many individuals have not been as fortunate; therefore, I would like to expand the lives of others.
- **Better:** My mom and dad stood on plenty of sidelines until their shoes filled with water or their fingers started to freeze or somebody's golden retriever signed its name on their coats in mud. I think that kind of commitment is what I'd like to bring to working with fourth-graders.

Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay (page 2)

DON'Ts

Don't tell your readers what you think they want to hear

Most admissions officers read plenty of essays about the charms of their university, the evils of terrorism, and the personal commitment involved in being a doctor. Bring something new to the table, not just what you think they want to hear.

Don't write a résumé

Don't include information that is found elsewhere in the application. Your essay will end up sounding like an autobiography, travelogue, or laundry list. Yawn.

- **Overloaded:** During my junior year, I played first singles on the tennis team, served on the student council, maintained a B+ average, traveled to France, and worked at a cheese factory.

Don't use 50 words when 5 will do

Eliminate unnecessary words.

- **Okay:** Over the years, it has been pointed out to me by my parents, friends, and teachers—and I have even noticed this about myself, as well—that I am not the neatest person in the world.
- **Better:** I'm a slob.

Don't forget to proofread

Typos and spelling or grammatical errors can be interpreted as carelessness or just bad writing.

Don't rely on your computer's spell-checker. It can miss spelling errors like the ones below.

- After I graduate **form** high school, I plan to work for a nonprofit organization during the summer.
- From that day on, Daniel was my best **fried**.

Source: *www.collegeboard.com*, based on information from *The College Application Essay, rev. ed.*, by Sarah Myers McGinty (New York: The College Board, 2004).

Senior Resume

Your resume (formerly known as your Brag Sheet) should be completed prior to beginning your senior year and can be updated throughout each grade in upper school. A good resume helps you attract the attention you deserve. Here are some tips:

1. Be sure to include at the top of the page your name, address and any other personal identification you wish to share, e.g. phone number, e-mail address.
2. Work backward chronologically from your present grade to your freshman year. Only include activities before high school if they are a part of a lengthy history, e.g. “Ten years of flute playing,” “Six years of lacrosse,” etc.
3. Lead from your strength. Mention first the activity that is most important to you, e.g. “Community service.”
4. Consider adding your list to your application if the application does not provide adequate opportunity to list your activities.
5. Format the document to showcase your involvements in the best light. If your activities are long-term and few in number, list them by category. If, on the other hand, you have many short-term activities, you might list them by year.
6. Keep this list on your computer so that you can use parts of it for your applications, and you can update it at any time.
7. To do this list correctly, you need to do some “bragging.” Ask your parents, your relatives, your friends to help you come up with things you might appropriately brag about. Don’t exaggerate, but don’t hold back.
8. Some categories to consider:
 - a. Community service
 - b. Athletics
 - c. Music/Art
 - d. Leadership
 - e. Clubs
 - f. Academic awards
 - g. Summer experiences
 - h. Hobbies
 - i. Travel
 - j. Work/Jobs

Sample Senior Resume

Type your full name
Address
City, State Zip
Cell phone * Home Phone
E-mail address:

OBJECTIVE	I strive to exceed the expectations of those offering me the experience to grow in the field of science focusing on learning, understanding and exploring new areas as related to the well-being of living animals, including humans and animals.	
EDUCATION	LaGrange Academy , LaGrange, GA Date of graduation: 05/2015 <i>Honors and Awards:</i> ACT (your test score) SAT (your test score) Georgia Certificate of Merit, 2014 Presbyterian College Academic Achievement Award – 2014 Wofford Scholars Program – 2014 Congressional Student Leadership – 2008 Governor’s Honors Program – 2014	09/2011 – 05/2015
WORK EXPERIENCE	Your employer’s name here , LaGrange, GA <i>Your job title</i> (Type a brief description of your job duties) EXAMPLE: Assist the veterinarian with any treatments, procedures, and/or surgeries being performed in the hospital setting. Prepare and administer daily medications to hospital patients. Maintain a sterile environment. Prepare surgery instruments and packs. Socialize the patients, support the clients and the patients.	07/2013 – Present
ACTIVITIES	National Honor Society , <i>Treasurer</i> Student Government Association , <i>President</i> Varsity Soccer , <i>Captain</i> Mu Alpha Theta , <i>Member</i> Beta Club , <i>Member</i> Volunteer West Ga. Health System	05/2014 – 05/2015 05/2014 – 05/2015 09/2014 – 05/2015 09/2012 – 05/2015 09/2012 – 05/2015 05/2011 – 09/2014
AWARDS, HONORS, AND CERTIFICATIONS	Georgia Certificate of Merit Presbyterian college Academic Achievement Award Wofford Scholars Program Top Honors – 2013, 2014, 2015 All State Soccer Player – 2013, 2014 All Region Basketball Player - 2012	

How to Make the Most of a College Interview

(Courtesy of *College Counseling Sourcebook*)

- The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and to allow the interviewer to learn about you. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission.
- When you schedule an interview, check to see if it is evaluative (used as a factor in admissions decisions) or informational (used in helping an applicant to learn more about the college). Knowing the purpose will help you prepare for the interview. In most cases, even if the interview is evaluative, it is not one of the most important criteria used by the college. Relax and be yourself!
- Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Keep this person's perspective in mind. Don't write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview. Interviewers have bad days, too.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and is almost always on your side. An experienced person knows that you may be new at interviewing and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will answer your questions, but will be more interested if you have helpful questions that show you've done some research on the college already.
- An important part of preparation is self-assessment. In what kind of environment do you work best? Would you take advantage of class discussions or would you rather learn by the lecture method? Know your test scores, your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so (half of college students change their intended major). You should, however, recognize that you are going to college primarily to learn. Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop, projects or situations that intrigue you.
- Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don't want to be silent when asked, "What would you like to know about our college?" Questions or comments like, "What if I can't decide between two majors?" "What kinds of internships are there, and how often do students take them?" or "I've liked art, but don't wish to major in it" show more maturity in your thinking than asking "How many books are in the college library?"
- Interviewers may ask questions about your interest, extracurricular activities/jobs, books you've read, meaningful experiences, reasons for applying to this college, life at school, and similar topics. Be ready to talk about these subjects.

- Be honest. Everyone has strong and weak points. College will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.
- Plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to speak with your parents after talking with you, rather than during the interview.
- Dress neatly and comfortably.
- When you return home, **write a thank-you note** to the person who interviewed you.

Questions to Ask the College Representative (Courtesy of *College Counseling Sourcebook*)

College reps, as well as college students, admissions counselors, and faculty, genuinely enjoy talking to high school students. They like to share their ideas about their college, and they all appreciate students who have thought about the college and want to know more than is in the course catalog, or on the Web site. They like thoughtful questions, and their answers can help you make a good college match. Ask questions of interest to you in the following categories:

Students

- How would you characterize the majority of students?
- From what economic background are the majority of students?
- Are there clubs, activities, or housing that are minority related?
- What do students like most about the college? Like least?
- Has the student government made any real contribution to the school? How did the administration react? What was the resolution?

Social life and campus activities

- What do students do for fun?
- What is the role of fraternities and sororities on campus? If I didn't want to join, could I have a satisfactory social life?
- What are the dominant social groups on campus? Do the groups get along with one another? Have there been any problems?
- What role do team sports play in the social life of the college? What happens on football or basketball weekends? If I didn't want to join in, would I find kindred spirits?
- Is there a good balance of academics, social life, and extracurricular activities?

- What were the social or cultural highlights last year?
- What is the role of the campus newspaper?

Is there an alcohol problem and, if so, how is the college handling it? What is the incidence of binge drinking? Do students feel safe on campus?

Campus facilities

Housing and dining

- Is there something I should know about housing that would help me in my choice?
- What are the types of food plans? All you can eat? Vegetarian? Kosher?

Activity centers and athletic and recreational facilities

Health, career counseling, special student services, and security

- Is there a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or career counselor on campus? What is the waiting period for appointments?
- Is the office for special services adequate to the demand?
- How good is the security campus?

Library

- What have been students' experiences with the library? Have there been complaints?
- Is the library well-equipped with computers and copy machines?

The community off campus

- What is there to do in town? How would I get there?

Academics and faculty

- What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the college? Has it changed much in recent years?
- Is the honor code working? How widespread is cheating?
- What is the most popular major on campus? Why?
- Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes? Do people talk about their courses outside of class?
- How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- Are there research possibilities with the faculty? In what areas?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the advising system?

- What is the quality of student and faculty relationships? Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do faculty members participate in student activities?
- Are curriculum changes in the works? How will that affect my college years?
- Are any departments being cut back or discontinued? If so, why?
- Are any new programs scheduled for the next four years?

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF A COLLEGE FAIR

Tips for Students

Reasons to Attend:

- Gain exposure to a variety of postsecondary institutions throughout the country
- Ask questions about admissions and financial aid
- Pick up free brochures on colleges that you might want to consider
- Receive answers to specific questions

Before the Fair:

- Answer the following questions to help you determine what kind of school would best suit you:
 - Do you want to attend a two or four- year institution? Co-ed or single sex?
 - What size school do you want to attend: small (2500 students or less), medium (5000-10,000 students), or large (over 10,000 students)?
 - What programs/majors of study are you considering?
 - How far from home do you want to go?
 - Do you wish to participate in any specific extra-curricular activities or athletics?
 - Do you want to attend a school in an urban, suburban or rural environment?
 - Do you require any special services (tutoring, note takers, readers, TDD or interpreters?)
- Discuss your college plans with your school counselor, family, teachers and friends.
- Research your college(s) of interest on the Internet and in your guidance office/library. Complete the National College Fair Worksheet and plan to visit these colleges at the fair.

Bring to Fair:

- A small notebook and pen with a list of colleges and questions you want to ask. After you leave a table, jot down your impressions of the college and answers the admissions representatives gave you. What did you like/dislike?
- A backpack or tote bag to hold all of the college information you will be collecting.

- Students with computers may wish to print up a few sheets of self-stick address labels. Include name, address, phone number, e-mail address, high school, year of graduation and career interest/intended major. This will save you time in filling out the same information over and over.
- Keep a personal profile of your class rank, grade point average, SAT/ACT scores and special talents on hand to give representatives an idea of your educational background.

At the Fair:

Look for a Fair Directory indicating where each college is located. Map out your route. This can be done on the way to the Fair (maps are usually available in the newspaper). Seek out specific schools (especially those that you researched on the National College Fair Worksheet.) Representatives are willing to invest more time in someone who appears to be taking the fair seriously. Ask representatives for their business card and phone numbers. Here is a list of some commonly asked questions.

- What are the two or three most popular majors? How many students take that major? What type of first year courses would you take in that particular major?
- If you are undecided, ask what services and supports are available to help students explore various majors.
- Ask about extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, fraternities, sororities)
- What academic background are you looking for? Does it vary depending on major?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid? What is the average aid package?
- Is your college “need blind” in the admissions process (do you determine admissions without regard to a student’s financial situation?)
- Where do most students live? What is the focus of social life?
- What is unique about your campus?

After the Fair:

- Don’t put the college materials in the back of your closet. Keep them nearby for when you’re ready to review them.
- Look through the materials and your notes within the week.
- Keep everything. Weed out colleges that aren’t a good fit.
- Research colleges that interest you. Explore websites, request more information from admissions offices, and plan to visit.

**LEAVE THE FAIR CONFIDENT THAT YOU HAVE DONE
SOMETHING POSITIVE TO HELP YOUR COLLEGE
DECISION!**

Checklist for Student Athletes

1. Decide on what level (NCAA Division I, II, III) you can compete in college. Ask your high school coach for an evaluation of your ability. Be honest with yourself.
2. Remember all NCAA Division I and II players must be registered through the NCAA Clearinghouse. You may use the web site at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net or use a link from the NCAA's web site at www.ncaa.org.
3. You do not have to go through the NCAA Clearinghouse to compete in Division III.
4. Be sure that you are familiar with the NCAA recruiting rules. They vary according to sport and your year in high school. It is **your responsibility** to know these rules.
5. Write or, if appropriate, e-mail coaches. Personalize each letter. Form letters are not as likely to impress coaches.
6. Return any questionnaire a coach sends you as soon as possible. Delay suggests lack of interest on your part.
7. Make a sports videotape. Many colleges will request a video showing your athletic skill; however don't send it before the college asks.
8. Send your high school schedule to the coaches. If you have a game in their area, be sure to highlight that game. Include an e-mail address and/or telephone number as well as contact information for your coach so s/he can confirm information regarding you.
9. Follow up any coach's response in a timely way with a phone call or an e-mail.
- 10. Be clear regarding the details of the level of your courses (regular, honors, AP), your high school grades, your approximate class rank, and your SAT or ACT scores.**

LaGrange Academy Transcript Request Form

Fill out ONE FORM for EACH COLLEGE and give the form and all documentation to either Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Krizay THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE DUE DATE.

Read each item carefully and answer each.

1. Your Name _____

2. Application Deadline _____ 3. Date you submitted this request _____

4. Send transcript to _____ City, State, Zip _____

5. Application: Sent online Mailed 6. Is this a *Common Application*? _____

7. Early Decision (binding) Early (Priority) Action Regular Decision Rolling Admission

NOTE: Colleges require that SAT or ACT scores BE SENT FROM THE TESTING SERVICES DIRECTLY; LaGrange Academy DOES NOT do this for you.

8. Many colleges require letters of recommendation. You must submit a *Request for Teacher Recommendation Letter Form* to your teachers at least TWO weeks in advance. Be sure that you have attached your resume to your transcript requests before submitting it to your teachers. If you are having difficulty with this, please see Mrs. Krizay or Mrs. Smith.

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTICE: Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you must grant permission to your school to send your academic records to the place/person named above, and after you matriculate you *will* have access to all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf after matriculating, unless one of the following is true:

1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation
2. You waive your right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent.

Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations done on my behalf.

No, I do not waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see any recommendations submitted to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

*I consent to the electronic submission of records through e-mail when requested.

10. Your signature _____

REQUEST for TEACHER RECOMMENDATION LETTER FORM

NOTE: all blanks must be filled in except for colleges, and this form should be given to your teacher at least TWO weeks before the date needed.

Your Name _____ Teacher's name _____

Does this recommendation ask that a FORM be completed for the school? ___ Yes ___ No

Is the FORM the Common Application form? _____ Yes _____ No

Date request given to teacher _____ Date this letter is needed _____

What college(s) is this for (you must name at least one)?

The recommendation letter and form will be returned directly to the College Counseling office by the teacher and used for as many colleges as you apply to if appropriate.

REQUEST for TEACHER RECOMMENDATION LETTER FORM

NOTE: all blanks must be filled in except for colleges, and this form should be given to your teacher at least TWO weeks before the date needed.

Your Name _____ Teacher's name _____

Does this recommendation ask that a FORM be completed for the school? ___ Yes ___ No

Is the FORM the Common Application form? _____ Yes _____ No

Date request given to teacher _____ Date this letter is needed _____

What college(s) is this for (you must name at least one)?

The recommendation letter and form will be returned directly to the College Counseling office by the teacher and used for as many colleges as you apply to if appropriate.

Parents' Guide to the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*: Rights Regarding Children's Education Records

October 2007

What is *FERPA*?

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* is a federal privacy law that gives parents certain protections with regard to their children's education records, such as report cards, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information, and class schedules. As a parent, you have the right to review your child's education records and to request changes under limited circumstances. To protect your child's privacy, the law generally requires schools to ask for written consent before disclosing your child's personally identifiable information to individuals other than you.

The following questions and answers are intended to help you understand your rights as a parent under *FERPA*. If you have further questions, please contact the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office using the contact information provided below.

My child's school won't show me her or his education records. Does the school have to provide me with a copy of the records if I request them?

Schools must honor your request to review your child's education records within 45 days of receiving the request. Some states have laws similar to *FERPA* that require schools to provide access within a shorter period of time. *FERPA* requires that schools provide parents with an opportunity to inspect and review education records, but not to receive copies, except in limited circumstances.

Parents whose children receive services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* may have additional rights and remedies with regard to their children's education records. The school district, local special education director, or state special education director can answer questions about *IDEA*.

Who else gets to see my child's education records?

To protect your child's privacy, schools are generally prohibited from disclosing personally identifiable information about your child without your written consent. Exceptions to this rule include:

- disclosures made to school officials with legitimate educational interests;
- disclosures made to another school at which the student intends to enroll;
- disclosures made to state or local education authorities for auditing or evaluating federal- or state-supported education programs, or enforcing federal laws that relate to those programs; and
- disclosures including information the school has designated as "directory information."

What is directory information?

FERPA defines "directory information" as information contained in a student's education record that generally would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

Directory information could include:

- name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, and grade level;
- participation in officially recognized activities and sports;
- weight and height of members of athletic teams;
- degrees, honors, and awards received; and
- the most recent school attended.

A school may disclose directory information to anyone, without consent, if it has given parents: general notice of the information it has designated as "directory information;" the right to opt out of these disclosures; and the period of time they have to notify the school of their desire to opt out.

Does *FERPA* give me a right to see the education records of my son or daughter who is in college?

When a student turns 18 years old or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, all rights afforded to you as a parent under *FERPA* transfer to the student ("eligible student"). However, *FERPA* provides ways in which a school may—but is not required to—share information from an eligible student's education records with parents, without the student's consent. For example:

- Schools may disclose education records to parents if the student is claimed as a dependent for tax purposes.

- Schools may disclose education records to parents if a health or safety emergency involves their son or daughter.
- Schools may inform parents if the student, if he or she is under age 21, has violated any law or policy concerning the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- A school official may generally share with a parent information that is based on that official's personal knowledge or observation of the student.

Contact Information

For further information about *FERPA*, contact the Department's Family Policy Compliance Office.

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-5920
202-260-3887

For quick, informal responses to routine questions about *FERPA*, parents may also e-mail the Family Policy Compliance Office at FERPA.Customer@ED.Gov.

Additional information and guidance may be found at FPCO's Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpc/index.html>.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS GLOSSARY

Regular Decision: Deadlines usually begin December 15. Students are notified by April 15 and must respond to the college by May 1. We encourage you to complete your application as soon as possible and not wait until the postmark deadline.

Rolling Admissions: Applications are read as they are received. Although candidates may receive acceptance within one month, they maintain the right to wait until May 1 to accept the offer of admission. The earlier you apply the better. You may be the most qualified applicant, but they may not have a space for you in April.

Early Decision I: This is a contractual agreement between the college and the student. The agreement is that if accepted, the student will attend. Notification is given usually by December 15. You may submit only one ED application. If accepted, you must withdraw any other applications.

Early Decision II: This works the same as EDI, but has a later due date to allow students more time to make an informed decision.

Early Action: This is a non-binding application with early deadlines for the student and the college. You may apply to other schools and have until May 1 to accept an offer of admission.

Early Action – Single Choice: This is a non-binding early admission option for those students who have completed a thorough and thoughtful college search. It allows students to learn of their admission decision in December without requiring a response until May 1 or obligating them to enroll at that school. Further, Single-Choice Early Action allows applicants to apply to as many colleges as they want under a Regular admission time frame. This option, therefore, gives early admitted students considerably more time to reflect on future plans and, if they so choose, explore a variety of educational institutions that might meet individual needs and aspirations.

Wait List: A list of qualified applicants to a school who may be offered admission if there is space available after all admitted students have made their decisions. Being on a wait list does not guarantee eventual admission, so some students may choose not to remain on the list, particularly if the school is not their first choice.

ACT Assessment: Group of tests administered by American College Testing and required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process; tests measure development in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning.

SAT I: Tests verbal and mathematical abilities; given by the College Entrance Examination Board at specified test centers throughout the year; required or recommended by colleges as part of the admission process.

SAT Subject Tests: One hour course specific tests. We recommend students take this the summer after they take that course AP Exam. Not all schools require these. See your counselor with questions about taking them.

Advanced Placement: Granting of credit and/or assignment to an advanced course on the basis of evidence that the student has mastered the equivalent of an introductory course.

Aid Package: Combination of aid (scholarship, grant, loan, and work) determined by the financial aid office.

Cooperative work-study education: Program in which the student alternates between full-time college study and full-time paid employment related to the area of study.

Financial Aid Need Estimator: Service from American College Testing that helps students and parents plan for financing education after high school; it indicates the likelihood of qualifying for need-based federal financial aid, identifies major sources of aid, and helps project estimated educational expenses and sources of funds over a calendar year.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The application for federal student financial aid, processed at no cost to the applicant; used to determine a student's eligibility for federal grant, loan, and work funds.

Net Price Calculator: This calculator should allow students to calculate an estimated net price of attendance at an institution (defined as a cost (price) of attendance minus grant and scholarship aid) based on what similar students paid in a previous year. The net price calculator is required for all Title IV institutions that enroll full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate students.

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

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

Independent Study: An arrangement which allows the student to earn college credit through individual study, usually planned with and supervised by a faculty advisor.

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.

Rolling Admission: Rolling admissions schools will accept and examine applications as they are sent in, instead of waiting to judge all applications concurrently. Schools with rolling admissions can be great for late admissions, or for finding out early on whether or not you are accepted, so you can change your plan accordingly.

Scholarships: Non-repayable awards to students based on merit or merit plus need.

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