
**PRINCETON
REACHOUT56-81-06**

**COLLEGE
ADMISSIONS
HANDBOOK**

“I make history.

I am the future.”

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INTRODUCTION

This is an exciting opportunity for you to plan your future and what direction your life will take.

1. You are in charge.
2. You are responsible for your own college admission.
3. Ask for help; ask questions (guidance counselors, teachers, mentors, parents).
4. Use the Internet (www.collegeview.com) (www.collegeEdge.com) (www.collegeNET.com).
5. Be punctual and meet deadlines.
6. Know your strengths and weaknesses.
7. Be honest with yourself.
8. Be energetic and work hard.
9. Use your resources (the college guidance office, the internet, the college admissions offices, mentors, etc.).
10. Have fun.

What's important to the colleges?

1. Your transcript (grades for Sophomore, Juniors and Senior years, Standardized test results (Regents, ACT, SAT I, SAT II).
2. Your teacher recommendations.
3. Your school's recommendation (Secondary School Report).
4. Outside recommendations (athletic, job, student offices, activities, church group, etc.).
5. Your part of the application.

The following pages include more detailed information intended to be helpful to you in applying to college.

SECTION 1

Important General Information

1. IMPORTANT INFORMATION you will use often.

SCHOOL NAME AND ADDRESS:

SCHOOL MAIN TELEPHONE NUMBER

SCHOOL FAX NUMBER

SCHOOL C.E.E.B. (COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION BOARD NUMBER)

SECONDARY SCHOOL NUMBER

HIGH SCHOOL NUMBER

SCHOOL CODE NUMBER

YOUR OWN SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

SS# _____

2. TELEPHONE NUMBERS YOU MAY USE

College Entrance Examination Board (C.E.E.B.) Customer Service	1-(609) 771-7681
SAT Registration/Score Check	1-(800)-728-7267 or 1-(800)-SAT-SCORE
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	1-(800)-433-3243
CSS Profile(College Scholarship Service)	1-(800)-778-6888
American College Testing Program (ACT)	1-(319)-337-1270

SECTION 2

Your College List

THE WAY TO START IS TO MAKE A LIST OF COLLEGES YOU MIGHT WANT TO ATTEND

WHAT COLLEGES SHOULD YOU PUT ON YOUR LIST?

1. Colleges you have heard about through family and friends.
2. Colleges graduates of your high school have attended (check with your friends and College Guidance Office).
3. Colleges near home (in your city, town, or nearby cities or towns).
4. Colleges you have read about in books or on the Internet.

(www.collegeview.com) College Search Engine with virtual tours, options, career center.

(www.collegeEdge.com) College Search Engine with on-line applications

(www.collegeboard.com) College Search

WHAT KIND OF PLACE DO YOU WANT FOR A COLLEGE?

1. Do you want to be in a city?
2. How far do you want to be from home?
3. Do you want a country campus or would you rather be in a city?
4. What kind of college do you want?

College is an institution of higher learning which offers courses of study leading to a bachelor's degree, with concentrations in various areas. This includes liberal arts (such as English and history), sciences (such as physics, chemistry and computer science), engineering and business. The college may stand on its own or be part of a university which offers graduate study in specific subjects (history, foreign languages, chemistry, physics, biology, etc.) as well as professional schools such as medical and law schools.

5. What do you want to study?
Liberal arts: English, history, foreign languages, math or sciences (chemistry, physics, biology) or
Vocational: business, architecture, engineering, etc.)
6. What activities do you want to participate in while at college? (athletics, arts, music, newspaper, church groups, community service)
7. How do you get information about each college? (check web sites, call or write or talk to friends there, campus visits)

HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD YOU APPLY TO?

1. Some colleges are more difficult to get into than others. The more difficult colleges require excellent high school performance, first rate test scores and extraordinary performance in extracurricular or other activities.
2. Once you have a list of colleges in which you are interested, you should decide what would be (a) reach schools for you, where it would be unlikely but very exciting if you were admitted, (b) safety schools, where it is clear you would be admitted (and where you think you would like to be for four years) and (c) schools in the middle where you have a fair chance of getting in and you think you would be happy. Your list should come to five to seven colleges to which you should apply.
3. Your College Guidance Counselor will help you decide in which categories your choices fall, to insure that you have the opportunity to attend a college of your choice.

SECTION 3

Your Application

Applying to college involves several steps:

A. Obtain Application Forms:

1. Go online. There are several web sites:

www.review.com: Princeton Review – “APPLY” is a program which allows you to complete your part of the application and print it out. The site has the forms for almost 200 colleges and universities.

www.collegeEdge.com: A College Search Engine with on-line applications

www.collegelink.com: A College Search Engine which connects you with the websites of individual colleges and universities.

2. Telephone the colleges and ask for an application.
3. Write a letter requesting materials and an application. Here is a sample:

Date _____

Dear _____, Director of Admissions

I am a Junior/Senior at _____ High School in _____ (city), _____ (state) and I am interested in learning more about _____. I would like to study _____ (area of interest) and I am thinking of a career in _____ (what you think you might like to do after college). Please send me your catalogue and all application materials including a financial aid application.

Thank you. I look forward to reviewing your materials.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Street Address)
(City, State, Zip Code)
(email address)

B. Next Steps

CHECK THE DEADLINES. WHEN ARE THE APPLICATIONS DUE. YOU MUST MEET THE DEADLINES THE COLLEGES HAVE STATED, AND FOR SOME, GET YOUR APPLICATIONS IN WELL BEFORE THE DEADLINE.

Some colleges have “rolling admissions”. This means that your application is considered and a decision made right after you send it in. State colleges fill early. For colleges with rolling admissions and state colleges you should apply as early as you can, well before the deadline.

1. The college application contains several parts:
(Over 150 colleges use the same form, called the Common Application. You can get a Common Application form in your Guidance Office.)
 - (a) Part I and Part II which you must complete and send in. A check, money order, or, in the case of need, a fee waiver application (speak to your College Guidance Office) must accompany the application.
 - (1) You should make a copy of these Parts to practice on before you complete the one you will send to the college.
 - (2) Write clearly and neatly. Answer all the questions and answer
”N/A” if the question does not apply to you.
 - (3) Part I asks for factual information about you.
 - (4) Part II asks for short answers and/essays. An “Essay Guideline” is attached as Section 5 of this booklet.
 - (b) Secondary School Report: Your school will send to the college its recommendation and a copy of your record (called a transcript)
 - (c) Recommendations: generally you will need recommendations from two academic teachers (English, language, history, science, mathematics). You should ask two of your teachers to do this, well in advance of the deadline, and give them a stamped, addressed envelope with the deadline date.

2. Standardized testing

- (a) SAT I (Scholastic Aptitude Test) – You can take SAT I several times on specific dates. You must register about six weeks before any date on which you intend to take the test. A booklet in the College Guidance Office gives you the relevant information, including how to send your test results to the colleges. You should seek out training for the standardized testing, either within your school or from outside sources. This is important because you are competing on these tests with students across the country, most of whom will have special training for these tests.
- (b) SAT II (Subject Matter Tests) –These are given in 24 subject areas such as writing, languages, math, sciences, and history. You pick which tests you want to take. Obviously you should take tests based on your relative success in the courses you have taken. Generally the English Writing Test is preferred by many colleges. You usually are required to submit three of these tests. The College Guidance Office has a booklet with the dates for registration and testing as well as how you have the results sent to the colleges.
- (c) ACT (American College Testing Program) This test combines subject areas (English, science, mathematics, social sciences) and verbal and quantitative (math) areas. It can be substituted for the SAT I and SAT II tests for some colleges. You can find out which colleges from their websites. You should talk to your Guidance Counselor about whether you should take the SATs or Act when you have a choice. The College Guidance Office has applications for registration as well as the dates on which the test is given. You should arrange to have the results sent to your colleges which will accept them.

3. Financial Aid.

- (a) Individual College Financial Aid Forms. You should complete and return these forms at the time of the deadlines for your college applications. (If the deadline is before your family has completed its Federal Income Tax form for the current year, you should attach the Form for the prior year with a note that you will send a copy of this year's as soon as you can). It is important to get the current year's form in as soon as possible.

- (b) College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (CSS - FAF) Some colleges require this Profile in addition to their own Financial Aid Form. It is important to check at your College Guidance Office to see if this is required. The CSS Profile is in the College Guidance Office. You submit your form together with the list of colleges to which you want the results sent. The CSS then sends to you and to the colleges the estimated amount of financial aid you will need to attend that college.
- (c) FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) You also may submit this application to the colleges to determine a financial need. The form arrives at the College Guidance Office in December and must be submitted no sooner than January 1 and not later than February 15. You can submit the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

4. Additional Information Which Help the College Know More About You

- (a) Additional Recommendations – These may come from a coach, an advisor of a school activity or club, a leader of your church youth group or your supervisor of a job you have had. Having these kinds of additional recommendations will help the colleges understand you better. We suggest two or three at most. Ask the persons well in advance and give them stamped, addressed envelopes with the deadline dates on them.
- (b) Letters from a graduate of a particular college to which you are applying. These can be helpful. The writer is telling his or her college that he or she thinks you and the college would be a good “match”. Be sure to give these persons your grades, course of study, interests and activities so they have material about which to write. You can reach out for these people by calling the admissions offices of the colleges to which you are applying and asking them whom you should call to secure such a letter.
- (c) Examples of Special Areas of Your Interest. If you have done well in art or music (i.e., if you paint or if you play an instrument) or you have been involved with the school newspaper or yearbook or other activities where there is a work product, you should send samples of your work to the college admissions offices. This will help the colleges better understand who you are and why you would be a good choice for them.

SECTION 4

How Do You Pay For College? (Financial Aid)

Financial Aid allows you to attend a college if you do not have the finances to meet the costs of tuition (the academic program) and room and board (living in a residence hall and eating meals in the college facility)

HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

All colleges require applications for financial aid on designated forms. Some require only one and some require two or three. The following are the forms generally used:

1. College Financial Aid Form of the individual college. You get this on-line or from the colleges to which you are applying and send the completed form to the colleges with your applications for admission.
2. College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (CSS - FAF) Some colleges require this Form in addition to their own Financial Aid Form. It is important to check with your Guidance Counselor or the College's website to see if this is required. You can get the CSS Profile form in the College Guidance Office. You submit your form together with the list of colleges to which you want the results sent. The CSS then sends to you and to the colleges the estimated amount of financial aid you will need to attend that college.
3. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) You may also submit this form to the colleges to which you are applying to determine your financial need. The form arrives at the College Guidance Office in December and must be submitted no sooner than January 1 and not later than February 15. You can submit the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. FAFSA forwards it to the colleges you designate.

Financial Aid Packages:

- (1) Grant –These are funds granted to you which do not need to be repaid.
 - (a) Colleges have some funds for grants.
 - (b) Pell Grant – This is a need-based federal grant for which you apply when completing the FAFSA. Even if you do not qualify for the grant, the Student Aid Index Number, which every applicant receives, can open other financial aid possibilities.

- (c) Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) – Grants that the government disperses through the colleges to supplement the financial aid package.
- (2) Expected Family Contribution –The amount which colleges expect the student and his/her family to contribute to the college costs.
- (3) Loans –Funds loaned to you through your college or the federal government which you have to repay. The loans are at a low interest rate and are repaid after graduation from college.
 - (a) Colleges have some funds for loans.
 - (b) Perkins Loan – A federal loan program based on need. Loan applications are made through the college financial aid office.
 - (c) Stafford Loans – Low interest loans made by a bank, credit union, or similar institution. The college financial aid office or the state guarantee agency can help you find a lender.
- (4) Work Study –You are given a part-time job at college as part of the financial aid package.
- (5) Other Sources of Financial Aid – There are many other sources of financial aid available to you. Check the bulletin board at School and also with your College Guidance Counselor. There sometimes are funds from churches, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club and other civic groups.
- (6) Financial Aid on the WEB
 - (a) www.finaid.org – This matches you with scholarships according to the information you provide.
 - (b) www.fastweb.com - Financial Aid Search Through the Web – allows you to set up a personalized profile that will match your specific skills, abilities, and interests to the database of over 400,000 scholarships.
 - (c) www.college-scholarships.com - Over 100 different scholarship web sites.
 - (d) www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssctop.html - Financial aid services for students and parents
 - (e) www.nelliemae.com - Student Loan provider
 - (f) www.sallimae.com - Student Loan provider

(g) www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/finaid.tml - US Department of Education, FAFSA available to download and print and Student Financial Assistance Programs

(7) Generally colleges which have accepted you will outline for you the financial aid package they will provide if you attend their college. These packages, which are prepared by the colleges, will normally be a combination of grants, loans and work-study, determined by the colleges based on the funds available to them and their students and accepted applicants needing financial aid. If the package seems to you and your family to be inadequate, you should not hesitate to go back to the college, explain why you think the package is inadequate and see if the deficiency can be made up.

SECTION 5

Guidelines for Writing College Essays

The purpose of the essay on the College Application is to provide you with an opportunity to let the college know you. Everything else that goes into the Application is an evaluation by someone else. This is your chance. Below you will find some guidelines which may be helpful to you in writing the essay.

You will be having an Essay Writing Workshop as part of your English classes. The Workshop will include practice in writing an essay for a college application

General Procedures

1. Start.
2. Write without stopping; revise later.
3. Even if you do not like what you write, keep it. You may go back to it later.
4. Save often on the computer. Rewriting saved material is much easier than trying to recreate lost material.
5. Revise.
6. You may be able to use the same essay slightly revised for several colleges. Be sure to check all the essay questions in all the applications you are making.
7. If the essay is limited to 600 words, the college means it. This is because the college believes it is harder to write a short essay than a long one.
8. If you write about your childhood, be sure to link what you are saying to the present; otherwise you are not telling about yourself at your current age.
9. Essays on people who have influenced you can be tricky because the essay needs to be about you.
10. Ask your teachers for help, you should do this well before the deadline, in order to have time to revise.
11. Revise, revise, revise.

Usage to Avoid and Techniques to Try

1. Avoid long lists.
2. Avoid qualifiers – probably, very, truly, honestly, totally, really.
3. Avoid boring and dull beginning.
4. Avoid corny or trite ending.
5. Avoid the passive voice – use the active. Use “I struggled to escape the falling rocks”, not “I was crushed by the avalanche”.
7. Show, do not tell the reader.
8. Add sensory details – the hot night, the cool light, etc.
9. Write in the present tense. The past tense is not as effective.
10. Vary the length and construction of your sentences– not always subject-verb-object or beginning with an introductory dependent clause.
11. Choose active, exciting verbs: frolic, tickle, lope, tumble, invigorate, bubble, jostle, snarl, shriek, exhilarate, flutter, and celebrate. Repeated use of forms of the verb “to be” can put readers to sleep.
12. Use a first sentence and beginning that catches the reader’s attention.
13. Don’t use common phrases and slang such as “people from all walks of life”, “from this I learned”, “room to grow/breathe/stretch”, “you have to look twice”, “no easy feat”.
14. Get your reader to experience what you experienced – make your language immediate and vivid.
15. Use specific detail, not generalizations.

CONCLUSION

Now you have the basics!

1. You’ve got a lot going for you!
2. You are determined!
3. You are willing to work hard to get what you want!
4. You have many people out there to help you – your family, your teachers, your guidance counselor, your friends and your mentors!
5. You have a smile on your face as you look to the future!
6. So take a deep breath and begin!

Good luck and success in all you do!