

**Get  
Ready  
for**

**College**

**Loveless Academic Magnet Program High School  
Senior Guide**

# The Possibilities are ENDLESS!



Vanderbilt

Duke

Columbia

Howard

Birmingham Southern

Air Force Academy

Alabama

Yale

Troy

Furman

Naval Academy

Rice

ASU

UAB

Harvard

Emory

AUM

Auburn

Morehouse

Do not fall victim to **SENIOR SLUMP**: (v) a condition that affects high school seniors who feel that all there is to do this year is to show up, try not to fall asleep in 1<sup>st</sup> period, nod your head on occasion, and day dream about the freshman year party scene at your chosen institution of higher learning

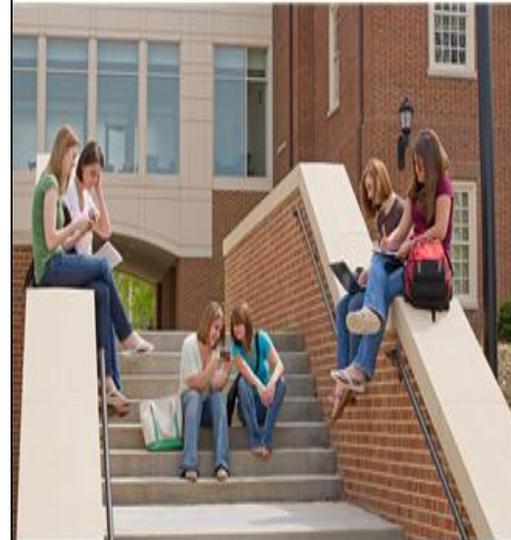
*So let's get busy seniors....your future awaits you  
Dr. Williams*

## Slacker Quiz

1. Do you have plans for the future?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you have plans for just today?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. What is the best invention since sliced bread?
  - a. Being able to AP exams for college credit
  - b. Remote Control
4. Have you begun your college search?
  - a. Have already narrowed it down to two choices
  - b. Are you kidding, I have plenty of time
5. Of the following, who do you admire most?
  - a. Mother Theresa
  - b. Paris Hilton
6. You run out of food in your house, you...
  - a. Accompany your parent(s) to the market
  - b. Order Chinese
7. Do you consider yourself a slacker?
  - a. No
  - b. Yes

\*if your responses are mostly "b".....I don't need to tell you.....

**GET BUSY ALREADY!!**



## College Planning Handbook 2002-2003

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# Choosing a College



## CALENDAR FOR SENIORS

This calendar will help you stay organized. Place a { in the { when you complete each item.

### SEPTEMBER

- { Take academic classes and keep up your grades. They do count!
- { Gather information on colleges and make your final college application list.
- { Visit some college campuses. Explore classrooms and dorms. Speak to students and faculty.
- { Retake SAT or ACT if necessary.
- { Send for catalogs and information regarding admission application procedures, financial aid, and entrance requirements.
- { Begin first draft of any required essays.

### OCTOBER

- { Begin filling out college applications. Note deadlines for application submission.
- { Work on admissions application essays.
- { Find out which financial aid applications your college choices require and when they are due.
- { Attend college fairs.
- { Request letters of recommendations from teachers, principal and/or counselor.

### NOVEMBER

- { Retake SAT or ACT exam, if necessary.
- { Finalize application essays and complete admission procedures.
- { Remind high school counselor and references of application deadlines, provide references with self-addressed, stamped envelopes to each school. Send thank you notes to these people.

### DECEMBER

- { Submit applications for admission.
- { Pick up a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Begin working on it.  
**DO NOT SUBMIT IT BEFORE JANUARY 1**
- { Apply for outside funding or scholarships.

### JANUARY

- { **January 1** - Submit financial aid application materials: *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). Web address is [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- { KEEP COPIES OF ALL FORMS YOU SUBMIT.
- { Complete scholarship applications that are due.

- { Finish any other college applications.

### FEBRUARY

- { Continue checking out scholarships.
- { Send in all applications and your FAFSA?
- { Verify that mid-year transcripts have been sent to schools receiving an application for admission.
- { Start a file for copies of all college paperwork.

### MARCH

- { Apply for scholarships.
- { Review your FAFSA Acknowledgment and Student Aid Report from the Pell Grant Program.
- { Contact admissions to make certain that you have submitted all required forms. Some colleges require a physical exam.

### APRIL

- { Inform the counselor of any scholarships offered to you, even if you do not intend to accept them.
- { Review your acceptances and financial aid offers.
- { Notify the college of your choice.
- { Check housing opportunities at your colleges.
- { Apply now through early summer for community and technical colleges.

### MAY

- { Notify colleges you have decided not to attend.
- { Send your Pell Grant Student Aid Report to your college. Keep a copy for your records.
- { Check on placement exams at various colleges.
- { Remind counselor to send final transcript to the college you will attend.
- { Remember to get your immunization information (blue slip) from the counselor. Your college will need this.
- { Take time to thank those who helped you.
- { *Graduation.....Congratulations!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*
- { Enjoy your summer!!

Source: Lynbrook High School

## HOW TO GET INTO THE COLLEGE OF YOUR CHOICE

### GENERAL:

- Just because you think a certain school is the best in the nation doesn't mean it is the college for you. Match your abilities and interest with the school.
- Parents should not choose a school for you. You need to make the decision, within reason, yourself.
- Before making a decision, you need as much personal, first-hand knowledge as possible. Do try to visit the school before deciding.
- Admissions officers are paid to sell their school. Listen carefully, but make up your own mind.
- DO NOT make a decision without examining the academic offerings of the school—not just the slick brochures but the actual courses required for the major you choose. Insist on a course catalog even if you have to buy one.
- Talk to students who attend (have attended) the college, if at all possible. Ask about all phases of life, academic, social, emotional etc...

### APPLYING:

- The quality of your application has a great deal to do with your acceptance/rejection. Admissions officers say that almost universally the quality of application received in their office well in advance of the deadline is superior to those received at the deadline.
- Include information about your everyday environment: schools attended, parents' employment status (or lack of employment), parents' marital status, family problems that might have affected grades, moves, etc...
- You will be asked to specify what type of degree you will pursue. If you wish to study for a liberal arts degree, "undecided" may be acceptable as a major; however, if you are interested in a professional school, i.e., engineering, medicine, you will be expected to declare a major.
- Do more than simply list extracurricular activities. Tell what you have done in the activities that make you different from other applicants. Be as specific as possible without being ridiculous.
- Don't pad the application with garbage.
- Tell how a job has contributed to your development. Let the admissions counselors know what you know of job(s) you have had and what you did.
- Don't substitute a resume' for the application.

- ❑ Make sure that you let the people who write recommendations for you know enough about you to write a good letter. Make several copies of your sheet and give one to each person who will write a recommendation.
- ❑ Choose people to write recommendations who can write a good letter.
- ❑ Ask the people chosen to write your recommendations if they feel that they can write a supportive letter on your behalf.
- ❑ Give the people who will write recommendations plenty of time to write the letters. It is inexcusable to ask them to write an original letter in a day or two. After the first letter is written, many people will make copies for subsequent requests, so time is not as big a factor with these later requests.
- ❑ ALWAYS thank the recommendation writers for their letters. A written note is nice, but at least a verbal thanks is imperative. Remember, it is not part of their “job” to write letters for you. They do it because they care and want to help you.
- ❑ Take the SAT and ACT as early as possible. If your scores are not too good, you will have time to take the exam(s) again. Achievement scores are required in some schools.
- ❑ Check deadline dates carefully. Late applications are usually not successful applications.
- ❑ Complete writing samples VERY CAREFULLY AND THOUGHTFULLY. PROOF READ!
- ❑ Remember, just about every student who applies to the more selective colleges is wonderful. If you are to be accepted to the college of your choice, you will have to do something that makes you more wonderful and different from all the others.

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We used the source listed below for some of our information. You may want to purchase a copy.  
PETERSON'S COMPETITIVE COLLEGES/Fifth Edition

Hegener, Karen C.  
Peterson's Guide  
Princeton, New Jersey

## CHOOSING A COLLEGE

### ACADEMICS

- ❑ More than anything else, you go to college to get an education. The type of academic atmosphere and variety of courses studied should be considered when choosing a school.
- ❑ Examine the academic offerings of the school --- not just the slick brochures but the actual courses required for the major you choose. Insist on a course catalog even if you have to buy one.

### SIZE

- ❑ Colleges range in size from 150 to 50,000 students. Small schools offer you more personal involvement. Large schools tend to be more impersonal, allow you to be more anonymous. Size does make a difference.

### COSTS

- ❑ A major factor to be considered is the cost of attending a college. The total cost for a year, as computed by the college financial aid office, includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. Total costs range from \$2,000 for a community college to \$37,000 for a private school.
- ❑ Make sure the school gives you a clear statement of its tuition and fees. Remember that any financial aid you get will be applied first to paying the school's tuition and fees. If there's any money left over, the school will give it to you to help you pay for things such as food and rent.

### LOCATION

- ❑ There are many reasons why the location of the college may be important to you. You should always consider the expense of travel, the need for independence versus the desire to stay near your family and the effects of living in a particular climate.
- ❑ The physical environment of the college you go to may be very important to you. Is the college in a large city, a "college town," or a rural area?

## Questions To Help You Evaluate Your College Preferences

- ✓ What degree of academic challenge is best for you?
- ✓ What balance of study, activities, and social life suits you best?
- ✓ How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life -- books, ideas, issues, and discussions?
- ✓ Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard, or one where you can make respectable grades without knocking yourself out?
- ✓ How important is it to you to perform at the top of your college class?
- ✓ How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
- ✓ What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college?
- ✓ What are you looking forward to?
- ✓ What worries you most?
- ✓ What do you hope to gain from college?
- ✓ What is the overriding consideration in your choice of college?
- ✓ Why do you want an education?
- ✓ Why are you going to college?
- ✓ How do you want to grow and change in the next few years?
- ✓ What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
- ✓ What interests do you want to pursue in college?
- ✓ Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities?
- ✓ Consider all your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities?  
Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training, or general knowledge and skills?
- ✓ How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country?
- ✓ How often do you want go home?
- ✓ What kind of change in your life-style and perspective might be exciting, or distressing and overwhelming?
- ✓ What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well being?
- ✓ Are there certain places, activities, climate, or pace of life that are important to you?
- ✓ Do you prefer a fast-paced environment where something is happening most of the time, or an organized environment where you can join a wide variety of planned activities?
- ✓ Do you prefer a more serene and relaxed environment where you can go your own way?
- ✓ How would you feel about going to a college where the other students are quite different from you?
- ✓ How would you react? Would you find it an exciting or intimidating environment?
- ✓ Would you prefer to be with people who share your viewpoints and life-styles, or who challenge and make you question your values?
- ✓ How free do you feel to make your own college decisions?
- ✓ Do you and your parents agree about your plans for college?
- ✓ How important are the opinions of your parents, teachers, and friends?
- ✓ How important are the considerations of familiarity, prestige, or reputation in your community?



## SELECTED COLLEGE INTERNET RESOURCES

### College Search

Think College	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/thinkcollege">www.ed.gov/thinkcollege</a>	College exploration, including virtual campus tours, criteria searches, and a student-campus-matching assistant. Financial aid and admissions planners for first-year and transfer students
College Net	<a href="http://www.collegenet.com">www.collegenet.com</a>	Financial aid resources, a search engines and Internet guide to colleges and universities. User can browse by specifying criteria – geography, tuition and enrollment size
College View	<a href="http://www.collegeview.com">www.collegeview.com</a>	College, career and financial aid information. Searchable database of over 3,000 two- and four-year schools.
Embark	<a href="http://www.embark.com">www.embark.com</a>	School, scholarship and career information. Tips on choosing a major.
Kaplan Online	<a href="http://www.kaplan.com">www.kaplan.com</a>	College, career and financial aid information and search.
Peterson's	<a href="http://www.petersons.com">www.petersons.com</a>	College, career and financial aid information and search.
College Opportunities On-Line (COOL)	<a href="http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool">www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool</a>	A site linking to over 9,000 colleges and universities, allows the student to search for a school by name, location, program, degree offerings, or a combination of criteria.

### Colleges

A2Z colleges (web site listings)	<a href="http://www.a2zcolleges.com">www.a2zcolleges.com</a>
Embark (free online application service)	<a href="http://www.fastweb.org">www.fastweb.org</a>
Alabama A & M University	<a href="http://www.aamu.edu">www.aamu.edu</a>
Auburn University at Montgomery	<a href="http://www.aum.edu">www.aum.edu</a>
Auburn University	<a href="http://www.auburn.edu">www.auburn.edu</a>
Alabama State University	<a href="http://www.alasu.edu">www.alasu.edu</a>
Faulkner University	<a href="http://www.faulkner.edu">www.faulkner.edu</a>
Samford University	<a href="http://www.samford.edu">www.samford.edu</a>
Troy State University	<a href="http://www.troyst.edu">www.troyst.edu</a>
Troy in Dothan	<a href="http://www.tsud.edu">www.tsud.edu</a>
Troy in Montgomery	<a href="http://www.tsum.edu">www.tsum.edu</a>
Tuskegee University	<a href="http://www.tusk.edu">www.tusk.edu</a>
University of Alabama	<a href="http://www.ua.edu">www.ua.edu</a>
University of Mobile	<a href="http://www.umobile.edu">www.umobile.edu</a>
University of Montevallo	<a href="http://www.montevallo.edu">www.montevallo.edu</a>
University of South Alabama	<a href="http://www.usouthal.edu">www.usouthal.edu</a>

# Testing

## Testing

College Board	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>	SAT, PSAT information and registration. Practice tools. Financial aid, college/career information and search. AP information.
ACT	<a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>	Register for ACT. College search, financial need estimator.
<i>Educational Testing Service</i>	<a href="http://www.ets.org">www.ets.org</a>	Test prep, sample questions for SAT, AP and TOEFL tests.
SAT Preparation	<a href="http://www.testprep.org">www.testprep.org</a>	Test prep and sample questions for SAT, AP and TOEFL tests.
TOEFL	<a href="http://www.toefl.org">www.toefl.org</a>	Registration information and sample questions.
Vocabulary.com	<a href="http://www.vocabulary.com">www.vocabulary.com</a>	Vocabulary prep and puzzles. May be helpful in verbal portions of PSAT, SAT or ACT

### PSAT/NMSQT - Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test

The PSAT is a practice SAT test that evaluates a student's ability to do college level work. Scores are not put on student's high school transcript and are not sent to colleges for entrance. The NMSQT portion is not a separate test, but uses the scores from the math, verbal reasoning, and writing to find the top 1% of the nation's juniors for eligibility in participating in Merit and Achievement programs. The PSAT is administered on campus once a year in October, is taken by college-bound juniors, and accelerated sophomores for practice.

### SAT I - Scholastic Assessment Test

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

The SAT I is a college admissions test comprised of a verbal and a math section. Students select a test date and register by one of two methods: either online at the College Board website or by mail. Registration forms are available in the counselor's office. The test is administered at various sites off campus several times during the year. Most college-bound juniors take this test in the spring of the junior year or the fall of their senior year.

### ACT - American College Test

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

The ACT is a college admissions test that tests English, mathematics, natural sciences, and social studies. Most colleges will accept either the ACT or SAT and will accept the test with the highest score. If you find that you did not score well on the SAT, you might like to take the ACT, which is administered on

different dates from the SAT. Most college-bound juniors take this test in the spring of the junior year or the fall of their senior year.

### AP - Advanced Placement

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

AP tests are placement tests taken after completing a college level course. Universities grant either advanced placement and/or credit with qualifying score. Tests are administered in May to students completing appropriate courses.

### TEST SIGN-UP PROCEDURE AND TEST DATES

Test applications are available in the Counselors office. Mail the application and check or money order in the envelope provided in the booklet. Registration also is available on the Internet at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

### Which College Admission Test Should I Take? ACT or SAT

- Most universities and private colleges require either the ACT (American College Test) or the SAT I (Scholastic Assessment Test).
- Students may take one or both, as colleges typically utilize the higher of the two scores for admission and scholarship purposes.
- Researchers suggest that students take both tests. Many students perform differently on each test.
- There is never a penalty for taking a test early or taking one over. Again, colleges will use the highest scores for admission and scholarships.**
- Test scores are only one piece of information a college looks at when considering your application. Your grade point average, number and content of college preparatory courses completed, school and community activities, and job (if applicable) will also be considered.



See Guidance for testing dates

# College Sports Are You Eligible?

NCAA  
initial-eligibility  
review



## COLLEGE SPORTS-----ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

All students who intend to play sports at a four-year college or university must first be cleared through the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.

## MONITORING YOUR INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY PROGRESS

College-bound student-athletes who want to practice, compete and receive athletically related financial aid during their first year at a Division I or II school need to meet the following requirements:

- Graduate from high school.
  - Complete a minimum of 16 core courses for Division I or 14 core courses for Division II. After August 1, 2013, student-athletes who wish to compete at Division II institutions must complete 16 core courses.
- Earn a minimum required grade-point average in core courses.
- Earn a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT.
- Request final amateurism certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center.

For Division I student-athletes who will enroll in August 2015 and later, the requirements to compete in the first year will change. In addition to the above standards, prospects must:

- Earn at least a 2.3 grade-point average in core courses.
- Meet an increased sliding-scale standard (for example, an SAT score of 1,000 requires a 2.5 high school core course GPA)
- Successfully complete 10 of the 16 total required core courses before the start of their senior year in high school. Seven of the 10 courses must be successfully completed in English, math and science.

Prospects that earn between a 2.0 and 2.3 GPA and meet the current sliding scale standard (for example, an SAT score of 1,000 requires a 2.025 high school core course GPA) will be eligible for practice and athletically related financial aid but not competition.

Division III college and universities set their own admission standards. The NCAA does not set initial eligibility requirements in Division III.

A list of your high school's approved core courses may be found by linking to the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse page of the NCAA Web site at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

Students should register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse after the completion of their junior year in high school. At this time, a transcript that includes six semesters of grades should be sent to the clearinghouse from the high school.

## **ACADEMICS AND ELIGIBILITY**

Student-athletes must meet academic standards throughout their careers on campus to remain eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics. Member institutions in each division create academic standards specific to that division's goals.

In Division I, student-athletes must complete 40 percent of the coursework required for a degree by the end of their second year. They must complete 60 percent by the end of their third year and 80 percent by the end of their fourth year. Student-athletes are allowed five years to graduate while receiving athletically related financial aid. All Division I student-athletes must earn at least six credit hours each term to be eligible for the following term and must meet minimum grade-point average requirements that are related to an institution's own GPA standards for graduation.

Teams in Division I are also subject to the Academic Progress Rate (APR), a standard that measures a team's academic progress by assigning points to each individual student-athlete for eligibility and retention/graduation.

In Division II, student-athletes must complete 24 hours of degree credit each academic year to remain eligible for competition. At least 18 of those hours must be earned between the start of fall classes and spring commencement at a student-athlete's institution (six hours may be earned in the summer). All Division II student-athletes also must earn at least six credit hours each full-time term to be eligible for the following term.

In addition, Division II student-athletes must earn a 1.8 cumulative grade-point average after earning 24 hours, a 1.9 cumulative grade-point average after earning 48 hours and a 2.0 cumulative grade-point average after earning 72 hours to remain eligible. Student-athletes are given 10 semesters of full-time enrollment in which to use their four seasons of competition, provided they maintain academic eligibility.

Division II student-athletes must complete their four seasons of competition within the first 10 semesters or 15 quarters of full-time enrollment.

While there are no minimum national standards for establishing or maintaining eligibility in III, student-athletes in that division must be in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress toward a degree as determined by the institution. Division III student-athletes must be enrolled in at least 12 semester or quarter hours, regardless of an institution's own definition of "full time."

Institutions in all divisions must determine and certify the academic eligibility of each student-athlete who represents the school on the field of play. Institutions are responsible for withholding academically ineligible student-athletes from competition. Waivers are available for many of these rules, including progress-toward-degree standards.

Student-athletes who are declared academically ineligible must use the student-athlete reinstatement process to be restored to competition.

For detailed information please visit: <http://www.ncaa.org>

SourceNCAA Core-Course Review



# The Application

## College Applications That Open Doors

- ❑ **Decide how many applications to submit**
  - ❑ Apply to at least four institutions – one that will definitely admit him, two he feels certain about and one where only a miracle will help.
- 
- ❑ **Keeping Track of the Paperwork**
  - ❑ Use file folders: one for test-score reports, one for each college being applied to, one for financial-aid information, and so on. On the outside of the college folders, your child should record dates: when applications were sent, when recommendations were requested and when transcripts were mailed from school.
- 
- ❑ **Do two things before the name is even filled in.**
  - ❑ First, make a photocopy of each blank application as a practice copy. (When all the information is correctly entered and the personal essay has gone through its final draft, then she can type the original.) Second, begin work on the applications in order of their deadlines so none will be late.
- 
- ❑ **Make a list of honors and awards**
  - ❑ Assemble scrapbooks, diaries, certificates, diplomas, ribbons, medals, letters or appreciation and anything else of a sort that she has garnered over the years. To this she should add a list of significant experiences she has had: vacations, camps, competitions, recitals and performances. This stockpile will make those white spaces on the application much less intimidating.
- 
- ❑ **Make a list of extracurricular activities.**
  - ❑ Including marginal participation will work against the student. Colleges would rather see participation in a couple of activities over a year or more than an affiliation with a dozen organizations for less than a semester each.
- 
- ❑ **Writing a Personal Essay**
  - ❑ The essay that impresses an admissions reviewer succeeds at doing two things: First, it proves that the applicant can write effectively. Second, it gives some insight into the person behind the facts. The personal essay is an opportunity to introduce characteristics or interests that will put the student in the best possible light.

## Looking Good on College Applications

- **A well-crafted application** can boost the chances of being accepted to the school of choice. Create an application that hits all the right buttons by checking out these pointers from college admissions pros. There's also advice on common pitfalls to avoid.
- **Show you relish a challenge.** All colleges are impressed by good grades -- even more so than high scores on college-entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT. However, keep in mind that colleges want to see students who've tackled tough courses, even if their grades are lower as a result. High grades in less-challenging classes aren't as impressive.
- **"Honors level and/or advanced placement courses** raise students to the next plateau academically," says Barry Ward, Director of Admissions at Monmouth College in West Long Branch, New Jersey. "Taking difficult courses indicates that a student wants to grow and learn and not just get by."
- **Tout your leadership skills.** Admissions officers like applicants who can handle responsibility. For example, if you moved from a cub reporter on the school newspaper to a management position, that shows leadership, says Shirley Binder, associate vice president for student affairs and director of admissions at the University of Texas, Austin.
- **The same holds true** if you've been in the band or another school or community activity. "It's not being involved in a bunch of activities that's impressive, but becoming a leader in one or two of those activities," says Binder. "Colleges are not interested in the shotgun approach to activities," agrees Pamela C. Kloeppe, senior coordinator of guidance in Norfolk City Public Schools in Norfolk, Virginia.
- **Take the essay seriously.** Most college-entrance applications include some sort of essay question. How much importance is placed on it varies school by school. For some colleges, it's second only to grades. Admissions officers agree that a spelling or grammatical error on the essay can be damaging to your child's chances. What to do? "Edit, edit, edit," says Ward. As far as the content of the essay, be you, suggest Nancy Maly, acting director of admissions at Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa. "The best essays I've read have been on simple topics. You don't have to have swum the English Channel to write an impressive personal statement.

- ❑ **Follow up with a phone call.** A few weeks after sending in your application, call the school. It gives you a chance to establish a link with the person handling your application, says Ward of Monmouth College. "A phone call helps connect a voice and a personality to a name."

## Common Mistakes on the College Application

- ❑ **Dodge common mistakes.** Even a minor error on your application, such as a misspelled word, can sidetrack your chances of acceptance.

- ❑ **Omitting an explanation of poor grades.** You may be an A student, but if your grades were poor one semester due to a death in the family, you need to explain it
- ❑ **Marring your application with eraser marks or correction fluid.** Neatness counts, so make a photocopy of your application and complete it first. Then, transfer that material to the real application. Use a typewriter, if possible.

- ❑ **Forgetting to include vital information or a part of your application.** Make sure that your birth date and social security number are correct, and that you use your formal name throughout the application process. It's also your job to assure that test scores, recommendations, and transcripts arrive at the college on time.

- ❑ **Sending information, such as the answer to an essay question, to the wrong school.** Keep separate folders for each college application.

- ❑ **Failing to send in the application fee.** Without it, your application won't be processed.

- ❑ **Submitting your application late.**

*Your College Application: Step-By-Step Help* and *Writing Your College Application Essay*. Both books are published by the College Board and can be found in bookstores.

Source: John B. Thomas

# College Application Guide

## Top Ten Tips for Applying to College

- Tip 1: Take a strong course schedule.**
  - Your class record is a big part of your college application. Don't take courses that simply pad your GPA - challenge yourself.
- Tip 2: Do volunteer work.**
  - Make a difference and volunteer for activities that reflect your personality and matter to you.
- Tip 3: Ace the entrance exam.**
  - Take sample versions beforehand. Before the test, get plenty of sleep and eat a good breakfast. Be sure to read the directions and pace yourself.
- Tip 4: Find the school that's right for you.**
  - Find matches with the help of your guidance counselor, FastWeb's College Directory, campus visits, college websites and fairs.
- Tip 5: Fill out the application accurately and well.**
  - Approach each application as if it were the only one that you're filling out. Read the directions carefully and follow them precisely.
- Tip 6: Craft excellent application essays.**
  - Start by brainstorming for an original topic. Be clear, concise and well organized. In addition, don't forget to check grammar and spelling.
- Tip 7: Submit applications as early as possible.**
  - Look for early January deadlines. Online applications are a great alternative for getting your forms in more quickly.
- Tip 8: Get great letters of recommendation.**
  - Choose adults who know you well. Provide them with all the necessary materials and information well in advance.
- Tip 9: Follow up on your applications.**
  - Don't be afraid to check on your application. Colleges do occasionally make mistakes.
- Tip 10: Dazzle them at your college interview.**
  - Stay calm. Practice beforehand and formulate a few questions to ask. Dress for the occasion. Follow up with a thank-you note.

**FastTip:** Get a jump on college with prep courses you can take in high school. AP classes, early college programs and summer programs all provide college-level challenges that can impress admissions officers.

Source: Fastweb

## College/University Admission Comparison

Admission Competition Categories	Educational Opportunities in the US	SAT Scores (for 60% of entering freshmen)	ACT Scores (for 60% of entering freshmen)	Recommended High School Subjects*	Suggested Grade Point Averages
<b>Most Competitive</b> May only admit: 2% - 20% of applicants	Less than 50 schools: Ex.: Ivy League (Harvard, Yale, etc.), Military Academies, UNC-Chapel Hill for out-of-state residents	1400 to 1600	31 to 36	4 yrs. English 4 yrs. Adv. Math 3-4 yrs. Lab Science 3 yrs. Social Science 3-4 yrs Foreign Lang. (must take AP or most difficult classes at the high school)	37 to 4.0+
<b>Highly Competitive</b> May only admit: 20% - 40% of applicants	Less than 300 colleges: Ex. Vanderbilt, Emory, Spelman, NYU	1250 to 1390	27 to 30	4 yrs. English 4 yrs. Adv. Math 3-4 yrs. Lab Science 3 yrs. Social Science 3-4 yrs. Foreign Lang.	3.4 and up
<b>Competitive</b> May only admit: 40% - 60% of applicants	More than 1000 colleges. Ex: UGA, many private colleges	1050 to 1240	22 to 26	4 yrs. English 3+ yrs. Adv. Math 3 yrs. Lab Science 3 yrs. Social Science 2 yrs. Foreign Lang.	3.0 and up
<b>Selective</b> Admits most applicants	More than 800 colleges. Ex: TN Public Universities, many private colleges	900 to 1040	18 to 21	4 yrs. English 3 yrs. Math 2 yrs. Lab Science 2 yrs. Social Science 2 yrs. Foreign Lang.	2.0 and up
<b>Open Admission</b> Admits all: high school diploma or GED	More than 1000 colleges. Ex: Community College System				
<b>Specialized Admission</b> Criteria and competition varies	Conservatories (music, art) or Trade/Technical Schools			Basic academic requirements and courses in area of interest; special talent	Admission is based primarily on audition or portfolio

\*Some college major require additional coursework in a particular area; for instance, health-related major and engineering may require more math and science courses.

This chart indicates general admission probability; it does NOT attempt to categorize by quality of education! Also, remember that numbers (particularly test scores) are not absolutes; as a rule, the more selective the admission process, the more individual attention each application will receive. College admission committees are looking to build a community of student with diverse talents and strengths.

Source: Unknown

## College Applications

### Early Decision/Early Action

- ❑ **Early Decision options** allow students to submit their applications early- usually in November- and find out if they have been accepted – usually in December. Colleges’ policies vary, so read each school’s guidelines carefully.
- ❑ **Early Decision** is a binding agreement stating that you will attend the college or university that accepts you, if school offers a reasonable financial aid package. If accepted, you must withdraw any admissions applications sent to other schools.
- ❑ **Early Action** allows you to apply in the fall and receive a response by the middle of December. Early action gives you the opportunity to compare admissions and financial aid offers without committing to one.
- ❑ **Early Decision/Early Action** is most effective if you have a very strong interest in a school and you can compete with other Early Action applicants.

Source: FastWeb



**Interviews  
Essays  
And  
Recommendations**

## Acing the College Interview

An interview with a college admissions officer is a great opportunity for students to highlight individual strengths and interests and to gather information about the college. Below are some practice questions to help students prepare for upcoming interviews:

- How did you come to include this college among your choices?
- What makes you think that this college and you are right for each other?
- How do you spend a typical afternoon after school? Weekend?
- What have you liked or disliked about your school? What would you change?
- What is the most important thing you've learned in high school? What mark do you feel you have left?
- What do you want to get out of your college experience?
- Remember, the college interview is the opportunity for the interviewer to get to know you. Talk. Do not use one word answers!

Source: Kaplan

## Preparing For College Interviews

### Things to do right now:

- Learn as much as possible about colleges you might be interested in, or at least the type of college you want (large, small; urban, rustic Northern, Southern; public, private; religious, secular; etc.). Ask yourself why you made these choices; ask yourself what is best for you, your intended career, etc. Get material from your college counselor, local library or other source, including colleges themselves. Note carefully the entrance requirements.
- Study hard -- your junior year record may be the last hard data that your college choices have on you.

□ Take PSAT and as many achievement tests as possible, and/or ACT while still a junior; you can and should take them again senior year (only your highest score on each test will count, in most cases).

□ Do your best in existing activities you are in; seek leadership roles and accept meaningful responsibilities wherever and whenever possible.

□ Find new meaningful activities at school, in the community, at church, in youth groups, etc., in which to get involved; depth is probably more important than breadth. Show that you are a good citizen.

□ Plan meaningful activities in summer and on weekends -- job, educational study, travel, reading. Don't vegetate.

□ Be the best that you can be in everything you do -- schoolwork, sports, piano, Red Cross work. If you're third string, show you are dedicated. It's not so important to be the best as it is to do your best.

□ Plan your senior year academic schedule carefully, based on what the colleges you are interested in are looking for, and on what your career goals call for (chemistry for future doctors, etc.).

□ Plan to visit colleges that interest you, if feasible, and/or to talk with current students.

### **Things to do 2 - 10 days before the interview:**

Reread all the material you can about the colleges you are interested in; you want to show the interviewer that you care about his/her college.

□ Plan to discuss important specific points about the college with the interviewer (e.g., "I understand the faculty/student ratio is 1:5, which would indicate small class sizes -- is that the case?"; "I have read that the engineering program is especially good in electrical engineering, which is my area of interest. Could you tell me more about that?"). Almost any question is OK, but try to avoid ones you should know if you had read the catalogue (e.g., "Is it coed?" "How many students are there?" Such questions show a lack of preparation and interest).

□ Go over in your mind your entire life -- where you have lived, what you have done, what you have accomplished, what your school record is, what your jobs and trips and activities have been, etc. Be ready to talk about each.

□ Write down, and then neatly type up, your GPA, class rank (and number in class), College Board and achievement test scores, scholastic awards, courses taken this year and in your high school career, school activities, athletic activities, community activities, school year or summer employment, other summer activities, creative interests, hobbies or special interests, intended career, and anything else you feel will be helpful. Make copies. (See attached pre-interview form used by one college interviewer).

□ Restudy what you have put down in para. 4 above, and think of how you can expand on the most important things you list. Writing "stamp collection" on paper doesn't sound thrilling, but if your stamp collection is considered the best in the area or state, if adults seek your advice, if you made \$1,000 buying and selling stamps, if you have all the stamps ever produced by Botswana, etc., this might be of great interest to the interviewer. "Track team" sounds so-so, but if you have completed a marathon and have asthma, it shows grit, character, and drive. Art, crochet, acting, charity work, employment and many other areas may be worth discussing with the interviewer -- be ready to do so!

□ Think of all the likely questions the interviewer may ask you, and think about what your response would be. Preferably, have a parent or friend play the part of the interviewer and asks you questions; you should respond just as you would during the interview. Some likely questions are:

- ✓ -How did you hear about X College?
- ✓ -Why are you interested in X College?
- ✓ -What is your school day like?
- ✓ -What is your favorite subject? Worst? Why?
- ✓ -What do you want to do in college?
- ✓ -What career, if any, are you interested in? Why?
- ✓ -How do other kids in school view you?
- ✓ -What would your best friend say about you?
- ✓ -How much do you study? Why?
- ✓ -What books do you read? How much reading do you do?
- ✓ -You have (a lot of/very few) activities. Tell about them (or about a specific activity).
- ✓ -What do you think about youth today/youth gangs/drugs on campus/teen-age pregnancy/the world today/(etc.)?
- ✓ -What are your test scores? Grades? Courses?
- ✓ -What are your special interests? Hobbies?
- ✓ -Describe your community. School. School policies.
- ✓ -What's your family like?
- ✓ -What other colleges are you interested in? Why?

- The above questions (and others), and your response to them, may lead to other questions about your life, interests, philosophy, political thoughts, goals, aspirations, etc. Go over in your mind both what you would say and how you would say it. Remember the seven "P's" -- Proper Prior Planning Precludes Pathetically Poor Performance.

### Things to do at the interview:

- Treat the interview as a job interview (which it is) and come fully prepared, having done all the "homework" suggested above, especially about the college that will be interviewing you, and about your own life. Take your "resume" with you but don't give a copy to the interviewer unless it seems appropriate (if unsure, you can always ask by saying, "I don't know if it would help you, but I typed up a list of my activities just in case. Would you like it?")

- Relax. This will be fun.

- Nobody likes a smart aleck -- be thoughtful, confident, mature and reflective, but don't come across as a self-centered, conceited know-it-all.

- Interviews are two-way communications -- talking and listening are equally important for both parties. You want to listen to what the interviewer says about his or her college, and you want to discuss the college and project your best self to the interviewer. The interviewer wants to listen to what your questions are about the college and to what you have to say, and wants to discuss his or her college and project the best face of the college to you. It is like a potential courtship. You may each be trying to "sell" to each other -- the interviewer is trying to sell his or her college to you; you are trying to sell your talent to that college; but each is wary that the "sale" may not be in their own best interest. You each may be trying to "buy" if the terms are right -- you want to attend that college if it measures up (or other choices fall through); that college wants you to attend if you measure up. All you both are ultimately trying to do is see if there is a good match.

- Answer questions comprehensively but without bombast; initiate the conversation (by asking your own questions) in the same way. Avoid Valley Talk (it's like, grody to the max), jargon (it's radically uncool), pidgin English, doggerel, and other tell-tale signs of a TV-fried brain. Use complete sentences that actually have a noun, verb and object (e.g., "Yes, I like physics" in answering a question is better than "Yeah," a grunt or a nod -- and if you amplify why you like physics it's even better).

- ❑ Come to the interview dressed conservatively as you would for a job interview. "Sunday-go-to-meeting" clothes are suggested; if you simply can't bring yourself to do that or the interview is during the school day, at least wear clean, conservative, untattered clothing. Unless you're willing to gamble your future, forget about "making a statement" -- going in unshaven (boys), overly made-up (girls), slovenly, unkempt. Why take a chance that the person who may decide your admission feels you don't give a darn about the college (or about yourself)?

### Things to do when applying:

- ❑ Apply to colleges you are interested in as early as possible, so you have plenty of time to get the application forms back, review the material, and submit your forms. Be sure to apply to as many colleges as you and your guidance counselor feel are necessary to assure your acceptance into a college you have at least some interest in. Obviously, someone applying to the top three colleges in the country would be well advised to apply also to a college a rung down the ladder, and a "safety: several rungs down the ladder.

- ❑ Be sure to give great thought to all that each college wants as part of its application -- essay, teacher reports, letters from pastors, etc. All these should be completed long before the deadline to avoid any slip-ups.

- ✓ -Pick your teachers carefully regarding their reports. Talk with them.
- ✓ -Complete the essay only after writing drafts, rethinking what you have said, and treating it as the most important thing you have ever written in your life. It may be.
- ✓ -Be sure that you have taken all the tests required (as described earlier); retake them if possible because almost all colleges will count only your highest score on any test \*(e.g., if you junior year SAT verbal score was 600 and the math score 650, and your senior year verbal score was 580 and math 660, the college will credit you with 600/660 -- the junior year verbal and senior year math scores).

- ❑ Be sure you understand financial aid requirement sand policies if that is a consideration; feel free to contact the college if there are any questions. Investigate all possible scholarship opportunities, if appropriate.

- ❑ If you haven't already done so, try to visit colleges or at least talk with students who are attending now. If you don't know of anyone, the college interviewer probably can give you the names of local students who are now attending the college, or the college guidance counselor might be able to help you.

### Things to do if rejected by the college:

- ❑ Don't feel it is a personal rejection of you as an individual; colleges of merit receive far more applications from highly talented people than they can accept. Some top-flight people inevitably will be turned down in order to achieve diversity, balance or other mix that defies understanding (unless you were on the admissions committee). Maybe your desired college had all the Alabamians or Montgomerians it could take, or all the well-to-do or poor, or the "A" students or "C" students, or football players or tuba players, or clean-cut kids or far-out ones, or boys or girls, or blond-headed or black-haired, or ... who knows? Don't worry about it. As the saying goes, "Beware that you get what you asked for."
- ❑ Remember that everybody eventually gets in somewhere -- and that the "somewhere" is usually a great place and often the right place, as hard as that may seem to be true at first. Treat this as an opportunity to do even better than you would have done if you had gone to your first choice(s). You'll show 'em!

### Things to do when accepted at a college:

- ❑ Celebrate.
- ❑ Compare all acceptances, talk with your parents and people you trust, and make the best and most unemotional decision you can for your and your family, remembering that this is a key decision in your life, and your decision will probably be as important in shaping your future as almost anything you do in life.

### A final thought or two:

- ❑ It was a lot easier in "the old days" for students to get into selective colleges. Those days are gone. Now the brightest and most talented students compete vigorously, and prior planning -- including a strategy of doing your best in all areas (not just academics) and projecting your best side to colleges -- is a key part of getting into the college of your choice.
- ❑ Selective colleges got that way for a reason. They are worth striving for. Competition is part of American life. It can be healthy, beneficial and even enjoyable if you undertake it in a positive manner. Go for it!

PRE-INTERVIEW RESUME

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank in Class \_\_\_\_\_ No. in Class \_\_\_\_\_

College Board Scores: Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Test (Subjects) \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Tests (Scores) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ National Merit Score \_\_\_\_\_ Advanced Placement \_\_\_\_\_

Scholastic Awards: \_\_\_\_\_

Intended Career (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Colleges To Which You Have Applied: \_\_\_\_\_

Courses Taken This Year: \_\_\_\_\_

College Courses Taken (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

School Activities (please list any offices held): \_\_\_\_\_

Athletic Activities (please list sport, position, letters held, times or achievements, etc.):

Community Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

School Year or Summer Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Summer Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Musical/Art/Creative Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies/Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Favorite Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

## Application Essay Guide

### Five Dos and Don'ts of Applications Essays

Do	Don't
<b>Be yourself.</b> Choose a topic that is meaningful to you . Write what you feel, not what you think the admissions committee wants to hear.	<b>"Recycle" essays.</b> Nothing will land you essay in the circular file faster than an obviously recycled or "near match" essay.
<b>Be creative.</b> Try to come up with something different. The people reviewing your essay will have read hundreds - if not more - so stand out.	<b>Adopt a preachy tone.</b> Admissions officers don't want a lecture on deforestation. Instead, tell them how you became interested in environmentalism.
<b>Captivate your audience.</b> Your essay needs to be engaging and memorable. Try to draw the reader in with a quick, enticing introduction.	<b>Write just one draft.</b> Let your first draft sit for a few days. Then review it carefully, looking for weak or dull spots, as well as spelling errors.
<b>Stress the positive.</b> If you're writing about a traumatic experience, don't dwell on the negatives. Rather, explore how the experience changed you.	<b>Work alone.</b> Ask people you respect for some candid feedback.
<b>Pursue perfection.</b> Quadruple check the spelling. Have your English teacher look it over. Type the essay very carefully.	<b>Try just one version.</b> Put your draft through various rewrites to find the one that works best.

### What is the Common Application?

- The Common Application is a standardized undergraduate college application form that is accepted at nearly 200 accredited, independent colleges and universities nationwide, including Boston University, Cornell College, New York University and Syracuse University.
- Find out more about the Common Application at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

### Common Essay Errors

- Submit the correct number of essays. If it says "choose one", select only one of the suggested topics.
- If an essay question has more than one section, provide an answer for every part. And make sure that your responses answer the questions.
- If your essays are on separate sheets of paper, make sure to include them in the application packet.
- Use the spell-checker on both the applications and the essays. And double -check the spelling of the name of the school you're applying to.
- Don't count on the spell-checker alone. Something may be spelled correctly but still make no sense (e.g. "I not a lot about applying two college.")
- If you're going to use some of your responses for more than one school, make sure you've used the right college name.

## Writing the College Admissions Essay

□ Applying to a college involves assembling a wealth of information about you -- transcripts, recommendations, lists of jobs held, honors won, and organizations joined. However, after you've filled in all the blanks and distributed all the forms to the appropriate people, you still have to face the hard part -- writing the essay.

□ Colleges ask you for an essay for two reasons: they want to see how well you write, and more importantly, they want to see *you*. Transcripts test scores, and recommendations all give the college a profile of your abilities and your accomplishments. However, colleges ask you for an essay because they want to know the person behind the numbers, the lists, and the scores. Therefore, when the application form asks for a personal statement, you must aim to write about yourself as clearly, as interestingly, and as honestly as you can.

### THINK OF YOUR AUDIENCE

□ It's always hard to write to people you don't know, but it's especially tough when your future is uncertain. Putting yourself in your readers' place for a few minutes, though, can help you write a better essay.

□ You can expect that your essay will be read by several people -- some junior members of the admissions committee who may be just a year or two out of college, some senior members of the staff who have read thousands of these essays before, and perhaps a faculty member of two. Your essay will be one of hundreds, perhaps thousands that this committee will read. As you can imagine, these readers may be somewhat jaded: they'll feel they've read it all before, and they'll think that all the essays sound pretty much the same.

□ Nevertheless, at the same time, these readers will take genuine pleasure in an especially well-written essay. They are always on the lookout for that special student who has something different to say or a different way of saying it, that student who writes an essay that makes the reader want to meet the writer -- and admit him or her to next year's freshman class. Your task is to write that kind of essay. Here's how.

## Choosing your topic:

□ Most colleges suggest two or three topics for the essay. The topics usually center on significant experience in your life -- a book that changed the way you think, a teacher who redirected your interest in education, a notable success or failure. The topics on the Common Application form used by 118 colleges nationwide are these: "Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you." "Discuss some issue of personal, local, or national concern and its importance to you." "Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence." What would you write about these topics?

□ First notice the common word: **YOU**. No matter what you choose to write about, the essay should reveal something about who you are, what you value, how you think, what you hope to accomplish. As you search for a suitable topic, be sure to consider what the relationship is between the experience, the issue, or the person and **YOU**.

□ But you also have to consider how your topic will strike your readers. How many essays do you think admissions committees read every year about "The English Teacher at Central High Who Changed My Life"? Or about "The Importance of Winning the Big Game"? Or "Why the Drinking Age Should Be Lowered"?

□ Don't make the mistake of adding one routine essay to the pile. Remember that the topics that jump to your mind will probably also jump to the minds of thousands of other bright high school seniors applying to college this year. Instead, explore a new angle, explain how you are different from everybody else, or investigate an unusual opinion.

□ Remember all the times your English teachers have said, "You write best about what you're most interested in"? Take their advice. Find a topic that excites you, and idea that makes you outraged or jubilant; if you bring genuine interest to your writing, your readers will find it interesting as well.

## COMPOSING THE ESSAY

□ Your English teachers have given you other good pieces of advice to remember, too. Show your topic, don't just tell about it. Use vivid examples; describe the scene or the person with sharp nouns and active verbs; use details that will invoke the senses. How did it look? Feel? Smell? Sound? What, exactly, did the person say?

□ Don't just tell your reader "Uncle Henry was odd", show us his collection of second-hand staples and his pet slug, Seymour. Don't just say you've been involved "In various leadership positions"; show us how you talked the school board into changing the study hall policy and how you turned the annual youth group chicken BBQ at church from a poorly attended, money-losing embarrassment into a standing-room-only, budget-busting, finger-licking success.

□ One of your hardest tasks will be controlling tone. You need to come across as confident but not boastful, self-assured but not aggressive, accomplished but not a Superhero. Try to avoid claiming that everything you've done has been unbelievably great. Don't use endless strings of superlatives (biggest, best, newest, fastest). Don't be afraid to admit that you are human. Colleges don't want Saturday-morning-cartoon Supermen and Superwomen; they want interesting people who will bring variety and commitment to their campuses.

□ Because it's so hard to control the tone of an essay about yourself, you will want to ask several people -- teachers, friends, parents -- to read and respond to your essay. Get a variety of reactions, and then decide how you want to revise the essay.

## REVISING THE ESSAY

□ After you've finished a draft, take a break -- a couple of days if you can -- before you begin to revise. You need to take a fresh look at the essay. Does it reveal who you are? Does it represent your best academic ability? Does it sound like you?

□ Be sure to examine the overall structure of the essay. Does it make a stunning point at the beginning and then fizzle, or does it steadily build in interest and intensity? Have you made clear the relationship between your ideas? Is the essay well organized?

□ The essay needs to read smoothly. As you revise and refine the piece, be sure that it has an attractive introduction, carefully crafted body paragraphs, and a confident conclusion. Look for clear transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs try to vary sentence length and structure.

- ❑ Pay careful attention to the verbs of each sentence. They should be active, not passive (not "A decision was made," but "I decided.") and they should give your reader a clear picture of you in action.
- ❑ Although the essay needs to be personal, you shouldn't overuse the pronoun "I". Use it, of course, but don't start every sentence of the essay with it. Sometimes putting another word in the subject position of the sentence will help (Compare: "I cut lawns every summer during high school, and I learned a lot." "My lawn care business taught me to work hard, to manage my time and my money, and to communicate well with my customers.")

#### TARGET: PERFECTION

- ❑ If you ever write an error-free essay, this needs to be it. Grammatical and mechanical errors may ruin the entire application. Ask a knowledgeable person to help you proofread, and be sure that you type it carefully or -- if the application insists -- write it neatly by hand. Don't let careless last-minute flaws keep you out of the college you want to attend.

Source: David Klooster

## *Information Overload Yet?*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Most scholarship applications and some colleges require one or two teacher recommendations in addition to the Counselor/Principal Recommendation.

It's up to you to see that your high school transcript is sent to each college to which you are applying and that each person you have asked to write a recommendation completes it on time.

- ✓ Choose two teachers who know you well and ask them if they will write your recommendations. Usually one English or history AND one science or math.
- ✓ Give the two teachers the Recommendation Form (in this handbook) and the addressed envelope for mailing to the college.
- ✓ It is courteous to write a note to the teachers thanking them for writing for you.
- ✓ You should give teachers a month before the deadline to write the recommendation.

## Letters of Recommendation



## RECOMMENDATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
GPA \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Of \_\_\_\_\_

1. To whom/what organization is this letter of recommendation to/for?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are your hobbies/interests/talents?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you attended this school? What other high schools have you attended?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What clubs/ activities/ drama/ music /athletics/ etc... have you participation in?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Describe your involvement in community service/ religious groups.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of the above activities has been most important to you and why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. List all honors and awards.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Explain your outstanding accomplishments and/or abilities.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Is there anything special about your family (cultural background, activities, travel, family size) that has had an impact on your own interest and concerns?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Is there any additional information that may be helpful in writing your recommendation?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# Scholarships and Financial Aid

## SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

**Not all scholarship matching services and scholarship providers are out to help students. How can you tell a legitimate program from a scam?**

### Scam Warning Signs

- ✓ **Fees** – Financial aid should not cost you to apply.
- ✓ **Money-back guarantees** – No reputable sponsor can guarantee that you will win an award.
- ✓ **Credit card or bank account verification** – Scammers will ask this information to “verify” or “hold” a scholarship and then drain your bank account or run up charges on your credit card.
- ✓ **Awards** – A scholarship scammer will offer an award for which you did not apply.
- ✓ **No Company contact information** – A scholarship scammer does not release the company’s contact information.

### Phony Claims You Might Hear

***“For a small fee, we’ll give you a comprehensive list of scholarships for which you are eligible.”***

Never spend money for a fee-based matching service. The biggest and best award databases are available free on the Internet, including **FastWeb**

***“6.6 billion in scholarship money went unclaimed last year.”***

Statements about unclaimed awards are misleading, generally referring to tuition reimbursements that are not available to the public anyway. In general, scholarships are competitive and most awards are dispersed.

***“You are guaranteed a minimum of \$1000 in awards.”***

A service cannot guarantee what you will receive because they have no control over the decisions of scholarship judges.

***“We have a 96% success rate.”***

These false success rates indicate the percentage of students they have successfully matched with the database, **not** the number of students who actually received money.

## Financial Aid Advisors: Friend or Foe?

While most advisors want to help, a few look to take advantage of unsuspecting students. Here are some tips to make sure you get a qualified professional.

***Talk to your guidance counselor's office*** – They may be able to tell you if they've had trouble with any consultant in particular.

***Consider the advisor's qualifications*** - Try to find a consultant who has worked in a university financial aid office or is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

**Never use a consultant who encourages you to do something unethical, such as lying about your assets** – If you falsify financial aid forms, you can end up paying a big fine – or in jail.

## Colleges Expenses and Financial Aid

**There are five major components of a college student's budget:**

- ✓ Tuition & Fees
- ✓ Books & Supplies
- ✓ Room & Board
- ✓ Personal Expenses
- ✓ Transportation

**Financial Aid is usually categorized as need- based or non-need based.**

**Need-based- this type of aid is determined by methods established by federal government.**

- ✓ The FAFSA must be filed during the senior year but cannot be filed before January 1.
- ✓ After you file your FAFSA you will receive a student Aid Report (SAR).
- ✓ Be sure to review the SAR for accuracy.

- ✓ The SAR must be signed and returned to the address provided.

**Non-Need Based- This type of aid is awarded based on high academic achievement, athletic ability, or special talents.**

- ✓ The State of Alabama awards approximately \$700 to \$800 per year to students attending a private college/university in Alabama provided the student is not a religion/theology major.
- ✓ A form must be completed and filed each year and is available at the institution.

### **There are four types of Financial Aid:**

❑ **Scholarships-** Funds awarded based on need and/or achievement in a variety of areas from different endowments and organizations.

❑ **Grants-** Funds awarded that do not have to be repaid. Examples are The Pell Grant and The Alabama Student Grant Program.

❑ **Work Study-** The Federal work Study Program provides part-time on campus employment to students based on availability of funds.

❑ **Loans-** Money that must be repaid after graduation. These student loans usually have lower interest rates than commercial loans. Examples are, the Federal/Direct Stafford/Ford Loan, the Federal Direct Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS).

**MAKE COPIES OF ALL FINANCIAL AID FORMS**

## Sources for Financial Aid

Fast Web	<a href="http://www.fastweb.org">www.fastweb.org</a>	Premier site free online searchable databases for scholarships, grants, loans and fellowships.
Financial Aid	<a href="http://www.finaid.org">www.finaid.org</a>	Numerous articles and information on all aspects of financial aid, great financial aid estimator programs.
<i>Free Application For Student Aid</i>	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>	FAFSA form online. General information on the FAFSA.
College Financial Aid on The Sallie Mae Home	<a href="http://www.salliemae.com">www.salliemae.com</a>	Interactive calculators allowing users to calculate the cost of college, estimate loan payments, etc.
Federal student financial aid information	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/studentaid">www.ed.gov/studentaid</a>	Includes texts of some publications. From the U.S. Department of Education
Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits	<a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a>	Information on tax cuts for education
Looking for Student Aid	<a href="http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool">www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool</a>	
Calculate loan repayments	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/calc.html">www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/calc.html</a>	

Source: Lynbrook High School

## Top 10 Financial Aid Tips

- ✓ **Beware of scams-** Never pay a fee for financial aid information.
- ✓ **Consult your guidance counselor-** This person is an excellent resource and can tell you about financial aid in general and where to look for help.
- ✓ **Read and follow directions-** Filling out an application properly and neatly is important. You may be disqualified for failing to complete all questions, answering them correctly, or missing deadlines.
- ✓ **Apply, apply, apply-** By applying for several types of aid, you increase your chances of receiving enough to pay your school costs.
- ✓ **Learn about low-interest loans-** You should first seek aid that does not have to be repaid.
- ✓ **Search for free information about student financial aid-** Go to your high school or public library and look for books with sources of financial. Consult *Getting In*, a KHEAA publication widely used by those getting for college (web site: [www.kheaa.com](http://www.kheaa.com)).
- ✓ **Talk with the college financial aid administrator-** Ask about aid programs that are available through the school.
- ✓ **Make good grades in high school-** You will be better prepared for college and can earn money for college or technical training. The better you do in high school, the more likely you will qualify for scholarships to help pay expenses. **Submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 to obtain aid for the fall semester-**FAFSA forms are available through school counselors and financial aid officers.
- ✓ **Complete tax forms early-** Make sure to keep a copy.

Source: from Alabama student loan program-KHEA

# ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

## STATE OF ALABAMA FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION AND VALUE	WHO MAY APPLY	HOW TO APPLY
<b>ALABAMA GI DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT PROGRAM</b>	Tuition, fees and book assistance to children and spouses of eligible Alabama veterans (with at least a partial disability). Recipients may attend public institutions of higher education in Alabama.	Students who are children or spouses of eligible Alabama veterans and who attend public postsecondary educational institutions in Alabama. Must enroll as an undergraduate student.	Application forms may be obtained from the Alabama State Department of Veterans Affairs, P.O. Box 1509, Montgomery, AL 36102-1509, or from any county veterans service officer. Phone 334/242-5077.
<b>ALABAMA NATIONAL GUARD EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>	An award to be used for tuition, educational fees and book/supplies for Alabama National Guard members to attend a public postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. Awards are limited to \$500 per term, and no more than \$1,000 per year. Is not based on need.	Students who are active members in good standing with a federally-recognized unit of the Alabama National Guard. Participants may receive federal veterans benefits, but must show a cost less aid amount of at least \$25.	Applications are available from Alabama National Guard units. Funds are limited, so students who are Guard members are encouraged to apply early. Forms must be signed by a representative of the Alabama Military Department and the financial aid officer at the college or university the student plans to attend.
<b>ALABAMA PREPAID AFFORDABLE COLLEGE TUITION PROGRAM</b>	Under construction.		
<b>ALABAMA SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEPENDENTS OF BLIND PARENTS</b>	An award to cover instructional fees and tuition at an Alabama state institution of higher learning for children from families in which the head of the family is blind and whose family income is insufficient to provide educational benefits.	Students who are Alabama residents and from families in which the head of the family is blind and whose family income is insufficient to provide educational benefits for attendance at an Alabama postsecondary institution. Students must apply within two years of high school graduation.	Applications are available from Debra Culver, Rehab. Specialist, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, 2129 East South Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36116-2455 800/441-7607 334/613-2248 256/362-0638.
<b>ALABAMA STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>	Need-based, state/federal grant ranging from \$300 to \$2,500 per academic year. Awards are limited to undergraduate work.	Undergraduate students who are Alabama residents attending eligible Alabama institutions. Nearly 80 Alabama institutions participate in the program.	Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This form should be filed early and is available from your high school guidance office or the financial aid office at the institution you plan to attend.
<b>ALABAMA STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM</b>	An award of grant assistance at an eligible independent Alabama college or university. Is not based on need. Up to \$1200 per academic year with maximum amount available only when sufficient funds are available.	Undergraduate students--both half-time and full-time--who are Alabama residents attending Amridge University, Birmingham-Southern College, Concordia College, Faulkner University, Huntingdon College, Judson College, Miles College, Oakwood College, Samford University, Spring Hill College, Stillman College, United States Sports Academy, University of Mobile and South University - Montgomery Campus.	Applications are available from the financial aid office at the institution you plan to attend. Application deadline dates are printed on the application form.
<b>AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM</b>	A grant award to be used for tuition, fees and board expenses to attend a public postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. Awards are restricted to students who attend institutions having on-campus housing.	Students who are sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters of veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, or Vietnam and who are residents of Alabama.	Applications are available from the American Legion Department Headquarters, American Legion Auxiliary, 120 North Jackson Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. Application deadline is April 1. Phone 334-262-1176.
<b>AMERICAN LEGION SCHOLARSHIP</b>	A grant award to be used for tuition, fees, and board expenses to attend	Students who are sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters of	Applications are available from the Department Adjutant, The American Legion, P. O. Box 1069,

<b>PROGRAM</b>	a public postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. Awards are restricted to students who attend institutions having on-campus housing.	veterans of World War I, World War II, Korea, or Vietnam and who are residents of Alabama.	Montgomery, AL 36192. Application deadline is April 1. Phone 334/262-6638.
<b>JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM</b>	An award not to exceed total tuition and books for attendance at public junior and community colleges in Alabama. Awards are based on demonstrated athletic ability determined through try-outs. Limits on various sports apply. Awards are not based on financial need.	Full-time students enrolled in public junior and community colleges in Alabama. Awards may be renewed on the basis of continued participation in the designated sport or activity.	Contact the coach, athletic director, or financial aid officer at any public junior or community college in Alabama.
<b>JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM</b>	An award not to exceed in-state tuition only for attendance at public junior and community colleges in Alabama. Awards are based on demonstrated talent determined through competitive auditions. Awards are not based on financial needs.	Full-time students attending public junior and community colleges in Alabama.	Contact the financial aid office at any public junior or community college in Alabama. Competitive auditions will also be scheduled as part of the application process.
<b>POLICE OFFICER'S AND FIREFIGHTER'S SURVIVOR'S EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>	A grant covering tuition, fees, books and supplies for dependents and eligible spouses of Alabama police officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty. There is no limit on the amount awarded to recipients. Awards are available for undergraduate study in public institutions in Alabama.	Students who are dependents or spouses of police officers or firefighters killed in the line of duty in Alabama. Must be enrolled in an undergraduate program at a public postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. Other special eligibility criteria apply.	Application forms may be obtained from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, P O Box 302000, Montgomery, AL 36130-2000. Phone 334/242-2273.
<b>SENIOR ADULT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM</b>	A free tuition program for senior citizens (persons aged 60 or over) who meet the admission requirements and attend public two-year postsecondary institutions in Alabama.	A free tuition program for senior citizens (persons aged 60 and over) who meet the admission requirements and attend public two-year postsecondary institutions in Alabama.	Contact the financial aid office at any public two-year postsecondary educational institution in Alabama.
<b>TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM</b>	An award not to exceed in-state tuition and books for attendance at public two-year postsecondary educational institutions in Alabama. Awards are based on demonstrated academic merit as determined by the institutional scholarship committee. Awards are not based on financial need.	Students who are accepted for enrollment at public two-year postsecondary educational institutions in Alabama. Awards may be renewed if students demonstrate academic excellence. Priorities are given to in-state residents.	Contact the financial aid office at any public two-year postsecondary educational institution in Alabama. Application deadline dates are printed on the application form.

# Community Service

## Types of Community Service

- ❑ Special Education Field Day Volunteer
- ❑ Special Olympics
- ❑ Assist in Community Construction Projects
- ❑ Habitat for Humanity
- ❑ Youth Camp Counselor
- ❑ Community Blood Drive Volunteer
- ❑ Goodwill Volunteer
- ❑ DARE Program Role Model
- ❑ Elementary School Mentor/Tutor
- ❑ Read to Elementary Classes
- ❑ Hospital Volunteer
- ❑ Boy or girl Scouts/ Eagle Scout
- ❑ Community Cleanup Volunteer
- ❑ Library Volunteer
- ❑ March of Dimes/ Relay for Life
- ❑ Teen Court
- ❑ Other Secular and Non-secular Activities

## How Can You Get Involved?

There are many opportunities available in your area. These opportunities change constantly. Keep track of your volunteer hours. The following students earned scholarships for their community service work.

- ❑ Mary created a summer arts program, called A.R.T...S., which brought together volunteer artists and at-risk elementary children.
- ❑ Kristin created classroom- learning libraries for an entire elementary school in her community.
- ❑ Carrie created a gardening project for children in her community that brings together nearly 100 volunteers, elementary school children, local food banks and a local domestic violence shelter.
- ❑ Emily created a community service club, Called RACS (Random Acts of community Service Club) at her high school. This club became a vehicle for over 50 high school students to find opportunities to connect to the world outside of school.
- ❑ John helped to start the 48,member Youth Action Council that encourages community and youth development through community service such as neighborhood cleanups.
- ❑ Tameka established a high school program that works in conjunction with big Brothers/Big Sisters to create a mentoring program that matches local high school students with local children.
- ❑ Joannie has been raising guide dog puppies for the blind.
- ❑ Armen initiated a fund raising project that involved his school's 200 member Key Club in raising money for cerebral palsy rehabilitation for two local families and for the United Cerebral Palsy foundation.
- ❑ Kafani organized a group from his high school to read stories about famous African- Americans to elementary children during Black History month.

**GET INVOLVED! MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY, THE WORLD , AND TO YOURSELF!**

Volunteer Match- [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) enter your zip code and get a listing of local opportunities.

Source: [www.cyberguidance.net](http://www.cyberguidance.net)

# So You Think You Can Volunteer?

1. What are my interests? (top 3)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are my skills? (I'm good at/I can do very well)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do I most want to learn from the experience?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What will I gain from volunteer work?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Will my volunteering affect my other commitments?

a. yes b. no

6. How flexible am I?

a. I'm open to a variety of experiences

b. I would like to work/volunteer in/with a specific area, population, location...

7. How much time do I have?

a. I plan to work through out the year until summer

b. I can work during holiday seasons

c. I plan to continue this volunteer service

8. Do I want to work alone, or with a group?

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# Community Colleges and Technical Schools

## Community and Two Year Colleges

### General Information

#### A good choice if....

- You want an excellent value in education. The community college offers quality education at a low cost.
- You plan to complete a four-year college program (Bachelor's Degree) by spending your first two years at a community college and then, transferring to a four-year college/university as a junior.
- You plan to attend college for one or two years to learn job skills and receive training necessary to enter the job market.
- You are not sure of the field of study you wish to pursue and want to explore various subject areas.
- You plan to begin your college career while remaining in your home community.

Source: Lynbrook High School

## TRANSFER PROGRAM

Junior and Community colleges offer academic courses that enable students to prepare for a transfer to a four-year college or university. If you are a "transfer" student and plan carefully, you may enter the four-year university as a junior after two years of community college work.

**Your community college counselor will help you organize a program that will be acceptable by the four-year college, so that you will not lose any credits when you transfer.**

**If you are attending a public two-year or four-year institution in Alabama and you plan to transfer to another public two-year or four-year institution in Alabama.** The web site <http://stars.troyst.edu/scripts/cgiip.exe/request.r> will allow two-year students to obtain an AGSC approved transfer guide in your chosen major. Four-year transfer students will be directed to the most current transfer information for their chosen major. *You will be asked to provide the following information: e-mail address, first/last name, address, phone, institution that you are currently attending, and your major.*

Also, [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org) will help you select the proper courses at the community college that will meet the requirements for your major at the university to which you plan to transfer.

Source: Lynbrook High School

## **Alabama Commission on Higher Education Public Two-Year Colleges**

Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute  
Department of Postsecondary Education

Alabama Southern Community College  
Ayers State Technical College  
Bessemer State Technical College  
Bevill State Community College  
Bishop State Community College  
Calhoun State Community College  
Central Alabama Community College  
Chattahoochee Valley Community College  
Drake State Technical College  
Enterprise State Junior College  
Faulkner State Community College  
Gadsden State Community College  
Ingram State Technical College  
Jefferson Davis Community College  
Jefferson State Community College  
Lawson State Community College  
L.B. Wallace Junior College  
MacArthur State Technical College  
Northeast Alabama Community College  
Northwest-Shoals Community College  
Patterson State Technical College  
Reid State Technical College  
Shelton State Community College  
Snead State Community College  
Southern Union State Community College  
Trenholm State Technical College  
Wallace State Community College (Dothan)  
Wallace State Community College (Hanceville)  
Wallace Community College (Selma)

Source: [www.ache.state.al.us](http://www.ache.state.al.us)



# Students with Disabilities

Colleges and universities have policies that provide accessible programs, services and activities and reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

## **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

“ No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... Shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

## **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

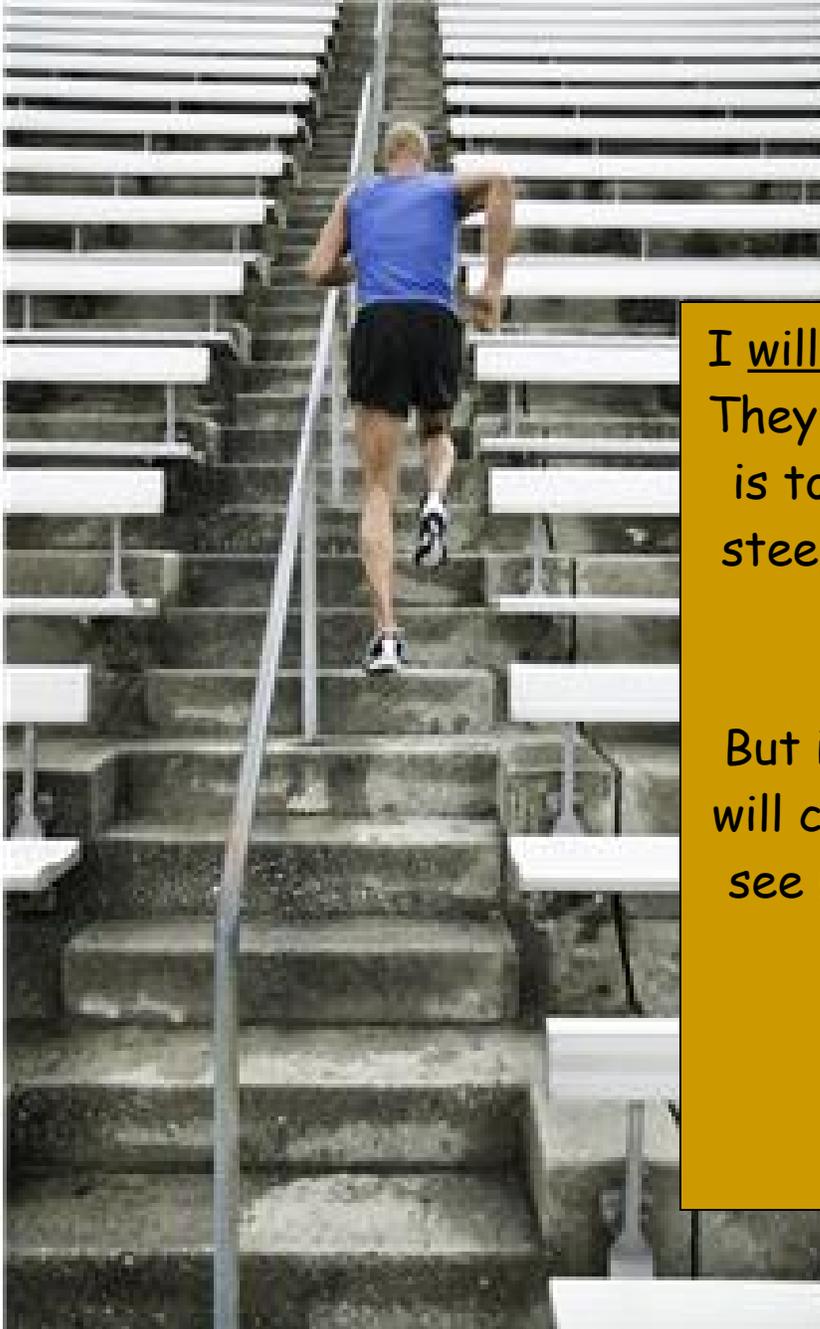
The ADA extends civil rights protection for people with disabilities to employment, public accommodations, services provided by state and local government, and telecommunication services.

## **PROCEDURES**

Students with disabilities seeking accommodations, information or assistance are encouraged to contact the college or university's special services center. You schedule an interview prior to enrollment at the school. Accommodations are made on an individual basis and determined by current documentation of the disability from a qualified professional.

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# ***You're Almost There!***



I will climb this mountain. They have told me that it is too high, too far, too steep, too rocky and too difficult.

But it is **MY** mountain. I will climb it! You will soon see me waving from the top.....

*idlehearts*

**Enjoy your LAMP senior  
year experience...**

**There will never be another!**





WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN  
The Carpenters

We've only just begun to live  
White lace and promises  
A kiss for luck and we're on our way  
(We've only begun)

Before the risin' sun, we fly  
So many roads to choose  
We'll start out walkin' and learn to run  
And yes, we've just begun

Sharing horizons that are new to us  
Watching the signs along the way  
Talkin' it over, just the two of us  
Workin' together day to day  
Together  
Together

And when the evening comes, we smile  
So much of life ahead  
We'll find a place where there's room to grow  
And yes, we've just begun

Sharing horizons that are new to us  
Watching the signs along the way  
Talkin' it over, just the two of us  
Workin' together day to day  
Together  
Together

And when the evening comes, we smile  
So much of life ahead  
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And yes, we've just begun