



College Preparation Toolkit

Applying

Completing college applications can take a lot of time. So you want to make sure that you get it right the first time. Here are some tips to guide you through the process:

Know the Guidelines

Before you start applying to schools, find out the application deadline and fees for each school you are considering. Read the information carefully to see if you are eligible for early admission decisions.

Plan Ahead

It takes time to get standardized test scores tabulated and mailed, and it takes time for school counselors and others providing references to gather information. Give school officials plenty of notice.

Follow the Instructions and Proofread

The application is often a college admission committee's first contact with you. Make a good impression with a neat application free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Work with Your High School

Go to your school counselor for help in getting all necessary transcripts (grade history), test scores and applications sent to prospective schools. If you decide to apply to schools that have not already received your test scores, you can ask the counselor to send your scores to that college.

Make the Most of Personal References

Ask people who know you well, and who will give the best impression of you to your school. Prepare a neat and legible reference form and give your references plenty of time to respond.

Write an Outstanding Essay

Most college applications require an essay, so spend time developing a good one. While a great essay probably won't get you into college if you don't meet the other academic requirements, it could move you from a "maybe" to a "yes."

Be Ready to Interview, Audition or Submit a Portfolio

Some colleges also require a personal interview or examples of work in special areas such as art or music.

Keep a Copy of All Application Materials

You never know when you might need them again.