

## *The Process...*

THE FIT: Things to consider when choosing a college

Requirements—make sure you have met the admission requirements for the particular schools you are interested in, i.e., GPA, ACT, foreign language, and years of core classes

Location—distance from home; weather; off-campus setting; geography—mountains, beaches, etc.

Campus—size; atmosphere; dorms; diversity; cost (tuition, room & board, fees); financial aid

Academics—majors offered; academic reputation; teaching style; classes outside your major; class size;

Social Life—clubs, sports, recreational opportunities; art scene; Greek life; etc.

THE APPLICATION: **Apply online** (preferred) or acquire an application (download from website; Guidance Center may have paper copy). **Utilize the “College Application Checklist!”** Procedure to send:

Fill out and keep a copy of completed application; make sure to follow application directions carefully so that all required materials are sent. Some colleges require recommendations, essays, writing samples, auditions for certain majors, etc. while others need only an application and transcript.

If applicable, send in payment (credit card, check); if you need a fee waiver for the application fee, please see your counselor

Let your counselor know you’ve applied so a transcript can be sent

Your ACT/SAT scores are part of your high school transcript; however, many colleges/universities require that official scores need to be sent from the testing agency. Make sure you check this out!

If required, you may include your teacher recommendations with your transcript; otherwise, provide a college-addressed, stamped envelope for the recommender to send

Be sure to look at the application to see if there is a counselor section. If pertinent, please download and give to your counselor. This will be sent with the transcript

Beware of priority filing dates! This means applications received after this date are evaluated more selectively. More state schools are setting priority dates, i.e., University of IL Champaign November 1, Illinois State University and Northern IL University November 15.

The cost to send transcripts are \$1.00 for every three sent

Follow up to make sure all materials arrive at the college

### THE LINGO: The difference between application options!

Regular admission—send in your application by the college’s deadline. On a set date, the college will tell you whether you’ve been admitted; you will have a reply date to decide whether to attend—last date is May 1.

Early decision—this is a plan to use only if you have a clear first choice college. Usually you will apply early and receive notification of admittance early. You also will make a commitment to attend the college if you are accepted.

Early action—this plan usually has an early application deadline and early notification of admittance from the college. However, you will not have to commit in advance to attend the college if you are accepted. The reply date is usually the same as for regular admission.

Rolling admission—this is the same as regular admission, except that the college makes its admission decisions as application are received. You might receive notification of admission early, but the reply date is the same as in regular admissions.

### THE VISIT:

Develop a list of important questions to ask (**see attached sheet for suggestions**)

Schedule your visits through the college admission offices and ask about meeting with faculty, coaches, etc.

Take a tour and get an overview of campus

Sit in on a class; spend the night; attend a function (play, sporting event, etc.)

Talk to current students about their experiences

### THE FINANCES:

Investigate scholarships that may be available at your college (academic, co-curricular, talent, heritage-or religion affiliated, etc.)

Fill out additional forms required for scholarships

Review “Counselor’s Corner” weekly for local, state, national scholarships

Fill out FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

### THE EXTRAS:

For your recommendation writers, a resume is a great way to let them know what you are all about! Most word processing programs have a “resume template” that you can tweak for you own activities, volunteer work, honors, etc. **See attachment for an example!**

Need help writing the admissions/scholarship essay? There are many web sites with tips, selecting topics, and actual samples! **See attachment for some guidance!** Also, register for the “College Essay Workshop” sponsored by the City of Galesburg on September 24 and October 1 and taught by Mrs. Qualls. Information in the Guidance Center!

## *QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO ASK A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE*

Fall is the time for admissions officers to make high school visits, attend college fairs, and conduct group presentations! It's also an excellent opportunity for high schools students to learn more about a college visit! Having a prepared list of questions for college representatives can enhance a student's knowledge of the different schools he or she may be considering. Following are some examples of the type of questions that can be helpful in the college search:

- Do you offer a wide variety of majors and can students easily change their course of study? How many students double major?
- What is the composition of the student body (e.g., from what states, how many undergraduates/graduates, male/female ratio, commuter vs. residential, racial and cultural backgrounds)?
- What percentage of students lives on campus? Is housing guaranteed for freshmen?
- What percentage of students returns for sophomore year? What percentage graduates in four years?
- What is the academic advising system like?
- Do faculty members teach courses? What is the average class size?
- What courses are required? Can I get credit for Advanced Placement or college courses I have taken in high school?
- Are there opportunities for research, independent study, internships, and study abroad?
- What choices do students have for their extracurricular activities?
- What is the neighborhood surrounding the campus like? How do the students get involved in the local community?
- Do you offer academic scholarships? What is the application process for scholarships?
- What are the characteristics of this school that make it unique?

**Student Name**  
**Student Address**  
**Student City, State, Zip**  
**Student Phone #**

Honors and Achievements

- National Honor Society: 11, 12
- Principal's Scholar: 9, 10, 11, 12
- Spanish National Honor Society: 11, 12
- Triple G Award: 12
- Athletic Letter Winner (Football, Basketball, Baseball): 9, 10, 11, 12
- Western Big Six All-Academic Conference Team (Football, Basketball, Baseball): 11, 12

School Activities and Organizations

- Member of Student Council: 10, 11, 12; President 12
- Member of FCA—Fellowship of Christian Athletes: 11, 12
- Stage Call: 11, 12
- Budget—School Newspaper: 12
- Reflector—School Yearbook: 12
- Office Aide: 12
- G-Club: 9, 10, 11, 12
- Class Officer (Vice President): 9
- Member of Football team: 9, 10, 11, 12; Captain 12
- Member of Basketball team: 9, 10, 11, 12; Captain 11
- Member of Baseball team: 9, 10, 11, 12

Community Services

- Member of Lutheran Church: 17 years
- Member of Lutheran Church Council: 2 years
- Lutheran Church Youth Group: 6 years
- Lutheran Church Officer (President): 2 years
- 4-H Member: 10 years
- 4-H Officer (Reporter): 2 years
- Helped with tornado clean up: 20 hours
- Special Olympics Volunteer
- Member of Independent Order of Vikings, Thor Lodge: 3 years
- Showing livestock at various fairs: 10 years

Employment

- Galesburg Softball League and City Recreational Council (umpire/referee): Observe actions of girls' softball, boys' baseball, and elementary basketball students to detect infractions of rules, decide disputable matters according to established regulations, and anticipate play and position to best see the action, assess the situation, and determine any violations (Summers and Winters, 2007 - 2012)
- Area farmers: Bale hay, unload hay and feed, various odd jobs for local farmers (Summers 2007 - 2012)

## 8 Essential Essay Tips

Write your way into college!

Writing a college admissions essay is a daunting task. Whether you're bucking to be the first high school student to win a Nobel Peace Prize or your greatest accomplishment is getting to homeroom on time, you're probably not sure exactly what to write.

*Relax.* According to admissions experts, some of the best essays are about ordinary student experiences. "Learning how to drive could be an interesting topic," says Sanford Kreisberg, founder of Cambridge Essay Service, a consulting company in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "So could the first time you had an argument with your parents."

*Still stuck?* Remember the main reason for the essay: The admissions staff wants to know more about you. What is it that your transcript can't convey about you, your experiences, and your personality? Think critically about your experiences and consider their significance in a broader context. Educational planner Judi Robinovitz explains, "For example, if you write about your grandmother's illness, you might focus on how that affected your relationship with her."

Once you've settled on a topic, here are some tips to help make your essay stand out.

- 1. Follow the Rules.** If the essay guidelines specify a 500-word limit, it means 500 words. What if no limit is specified? Try to keep your essay at about 500 words. The college admissions counselor who has to read 50 essays a day will appreciate it!
- 2. Remember Your Audience.** Admissions reps are not your peers. Slang and obscure references will not impress them.
- 3. Mind Your Grammar.** Nothing says sloppy and careless like an essay that uses poor grammar. So check—and double-check—each sentence for structure, clarity, word choice, spelling, and punctuation.
- 4. Choose Your Words Carefully.** You're guaranteed a dull essay if you generalize, use too few (or too many!) adjectives, or use clichés and colloquialisms. Describe experiences and events with precise, colorful words: it'll be more interesting and show off your vocabulary.
- 5. Write in Your Own Voice.** No matter how much you admire Ernest Hemingway, don't try to emulate his, or anyone else's, writing style. Remember, this essay is all about you. Let your own style shine through.
- 6. Humble Your Humor.** Unless you're already moonlighting as a writer for Conan O'Brien, think twice before writing a humorous essay. The person reading it might not "get" your sense of humor, and the point of your essay will be lost.
- 7. Proofread and Revise.** Sorry, spell check alone won't cut it. Print out your essay, read each sentence slowly, check for spelling, and revise for clarity. Put your paper aside for at least a day. Then read it again, implement your changes, and proofread a final time.
- 8. Ask Someone Else to Read Your Essay.** Ask an English teacher, guidance counselor, or someone else whose judgment you trust read your essay. An objective reader can often find mistakes you've overlooked.

