

Section 3: Getting Educated

Charting Your Course Scavenger Hunt

Step 1: If you have completed Sections 1 and 2, refer back to the occupations that fit your interests. Add others that are interesting to you.



List all the words you can think of that relate to that career:

Step 2: Search for schools using one of these methods. Try all three to see which schools offer the program of study you want to follow.

- ___ Search using Clusters Index
- ___ Search using Titles Index
- ___ Use Keyword Search

What did you find ?

1. School: _____
Notes: _____

2. School: _____
Notes: _____

Topics	Did you check?
Overview	
Program Admission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Typical Course Work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Things To Know	<input type="checkbox"/>
References	<input type="checkbox"/>
Out-of-state (WICHE)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Related Information	
Educational Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Occupations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>
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College Visits

In the preliminary search for the right college, a student may find that several colleges meet most of his/her requirements. However, one or two of these schools may be a better choice than others. The best way to determine which college is the right college is to visit the college campus.

The visit should enable the student to:

- Meet with admissions staff in order to obtain an idea of what they expect.
- Get a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere.
- See the facilities to be used for study, living, recreation, etc.
- Talk with students currently attending the school.
- Check out the community in which the college is located.

The visit should be carefully planned.

The following is a checklist of suggested items to help with a college visit.

- Make arrangements with the admissions office by writing or calling well in advance (preferably two or three weeks).
- If possible, the student visitor should inform the college of his/her special areas of interest when making the appointment. This will help the admissions staff plan a more meaningful visit.
- Refer to the college catalog to review basic concerns before leaving campus.
- Be prepared to give the admissions officer accurate and up-to-date information concerning high school courses you are taking as well as SAT or ACT scores, your approximate rank, the number of students in your high school graduating class, extracurricular activities in which you participated, special awards you have earned, significant interests, and experiences both in and out of school. (This is another effective way to use your portfolio.)
- The visit and interview will determine the personal impression made on the admissions officer. Some care should be given to dress and grooming.
- Plan to spend at least half a day (full day is preferred) at each college. In addition to taking a tour of the campus, the student should try to:
 - Sit in on a class.
 - Meet with financial aid staff.
 - Browse through the library.
 - Engage students (other than the tour guide) in conversation (upper classmen if possible).
 - Spend some time in the student center or union.
 - Spend some time in the community.
 - Read the school and local newspapers.

- Take notes on your visit(s). Do not rely on memory, particularly if other college visits are to follow.

After returning home, discuss your impressions with your counselor and your parents.

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You can do it! Conquering the College Admission Essay

By Carolynn Bright

Much to high school seniors' dismay, many colleges and universities rely on college admission essays to help them decide which applications to keep, and which ones to set aside. While the task may seem daunting, crafting an essay that makes a student stand out among his or her peers doesn't need to be a painful experience. Following a few simple essay-writing rules can make all the difference.

It's important for students to write about subjects they know. In many cases, colleges make that simple by focusing their essay questions on the applicants themselves. For example:

- Complete a one-page personal statement.
- Explain why this school is the right choice for you.

In other cases, schools may ask applicants to take their essay to the next level. For example:

- Describe an important person in your life and how they have affected you.
- Choose a quote by a famous person and explain how it relates to your life.

Ultimately, college admissions staff look to student essays to glean information about applicants' character, life goals and what they can contribute to the college or university to which they are applying. Asking students to write about themselves is an easy way to collect that information and works to the students' advantage in that it provides them with an opportunity to share their thoughts and to showcase their best features. However, college applicants should avoid turning the essay into a laundry list of their awards and extra-curricular activities. Students need to let their personality shine through their words!

Students must make their point in an efficient, effective manner. Most colleges don't give students an unlimited amount of space in to deliver their application essay. Word limits hover around 500 for many schools. While that may seem like a lot to many high school seniors, it isn't when it comes to convincing a college admissions office to choose one student over another.

- Don't rush the process. Students shouldn't put off finding out if the school of their choice requires an application essay. Once they know, it's time to get started.
- Brainstorm. Students should jot down all their ideas on the essay topic, eliminating the less important ideas over time.
- Create an outline. Students should remember to organize their essays into introduction, body and conclusion, featuring the key ideas from their outline appropriately. Writing efforts need to be focused, not rambling.

Students need to remember that this first impression could be their last. For that reason, presentation is almost as important as content. A sloppy admission essay could be an indication that college acceptance isn't particularly important to the applicant.

- Essays should be typed for ease of review.
- Students should spell-check their essays and have someone proofread the documents for them.
- Essays should be kept in a safe place. Spills, rips or wrinkles in the paper don't reflect well on the student.

By following these straight-forward tips, students can be confident that they have made their best effort to attract attention to their accomplishments and potential.

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Questions to Ask College Representatives

1. Admission

What are the admission requirements?
Ask for a copy of the college's current profile.

2. Majors

Do I have to select a major when I apply for admission?
Can I change it?
What courses are available?

3. Application

When should I file for admission?
What percentage of applicants are admitted?
When does the college notify students of admission?

4. Tests

Does the school accept both the ACT and the SAT I as college admission exams?
Do I need the SAT II; Subject Tests (Achievements)?
What is the average test score for entering college freshmen?

5. Financial Aid/Cost

What is the estimated annual cost?
What are the sources of financial aid and scholarships?

6. Housing

How difficult is it to secure on-campus housing? What housing options are available?
What is the cost?
How do I apply? Is it a separate process from the admission application?
How many students live on campus?

7. Community College

What are the advantages of going to a community college?
Will I be able to complete transferable prerequisites to my major field?

You can use the tracking sheet on the next page to record the important costs in the financial aid package you receive from various schools. This way you can compare up to three schools at once to see which is offering you the best deal.

Remember to contact the financial aid office if you have questions or need to follow up on missing information.

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Cost	College 1	College 2	College 3
Tuition and Fees			
Room and Board			
Other Costs (books, personal expenses, transportation)			
Total Costs			
Less			
Tuition and Fees			
Scholarships/Grants			
Work-Study Job			
Total Cost - Total Resources = Remaining Costs			

You can use this form when you go on college visits and when you receive award letters in the spring of your senior year. Award letters detail the amount of financial aid the school is offering you. It is important to compare the financial aid packages of various schools so you can select the best package for your situation.

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School Sort Fact Sheet

School Name: _____

Location: _____

Important Stuff to Know:

How much is it?

- Out-of-state tuition \$ _____
- In-state tuition \$ _____
- Room and board \$ _____

Percentage of recent freshman class (full time students) that completed a bachelor's degree:

- Within 4 years _____%
- Within 5 years _____%
- Within 6 years _____%

Enrollment Figures

Total enrollment _____

Undergraduates

- Women _____%
- Men _____%



Percentage of undergraduates 25 years of age and older _____%

Admission Requirements

Number of first time, first year applicants _____

Number of first time, first year applicants (Accepted) _____

Test Scores of Freshmen Who Took the ACT	
Score of 12 - 17	%
Score of 18 - 23	%
Score of 24 or more	%
Test Scores of Freshmen Who Took SAT I Verbal	
Score of 400 - 499	%
Score of 500 - 599	%
Score of 600 or more	%
Test Scores of Freshmen Who Took SAT I Math	
Score of 400 - 499	%
Score of 500 - 599	%
Score of 600 or more	%

Other information you find interesting:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____