



The College Application Process

A Complete Overview

The Circassian Education Foundation



Topics of Discussion

- ▶ Benefits of College Education
- ▶ What Colleges Look for in Students
- ▶ What Colleges to Apply to
- ▶ How to Apply to College
- ▶ You're In! Now What?



Top Excuses for not Attending College

“I can't afford it.”

“Nobody in my family has ever gone.”

“I don't know what I want to do with my life.”

“College is too hard for me.”

“I just won't fit in.”



Why Pursue a College Degree?

College enables you to:

- ▶ Expand your knowledge and skill set.
- ▶ Express your thoughts clearly in speech and writing.
- ▶ Grasp abstract concepts and theories.
- ▶ Increase your understanding of the world and your community.

College allows for:

- ▶ More Job Opportunities
- ▶ Increased personal/professional mobility
- ▶ Improved quality of life for yourself and your children

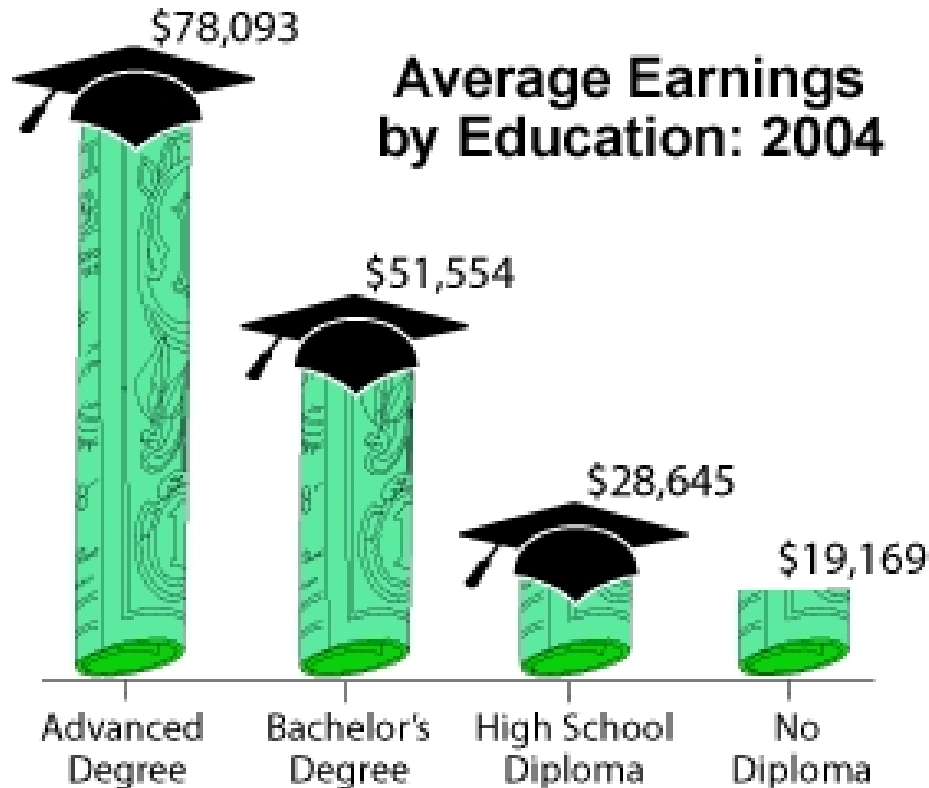
College helps you build:

- ▶ Leadership skills
- ▶ A social and professional network
- ▶ Better time management skills

“And once earned, a college degree is forever, as the payoff from higher education can never be erased, broken or laid off”-Anonymous



The Benefits of a College Education



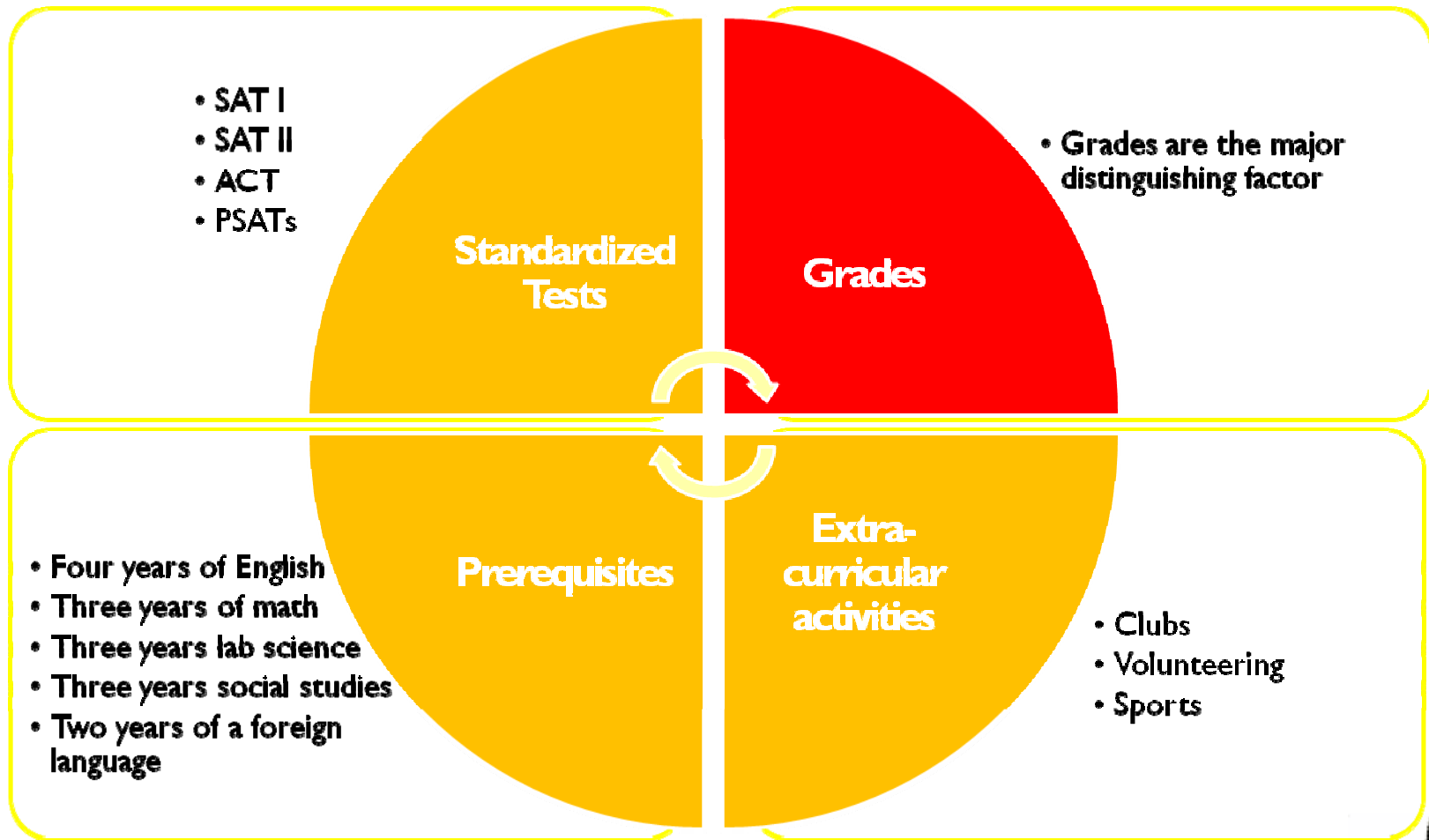
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in the U.S.: 2005

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

- ▶ **College graduates, on average, earn more than high school graduates.**
- ▶ **Over an adult's working life, high school graduates earn an average of \$1.2 million and bachelor's degree holders earn about \$2.1 million.**



What Colleges Look for in Students



Speak with your child's **high school counselor** to make sure your child is taking the courses needed to prepare for college. Keep in mind, some college majors have additional course requirements, and different colleges have different standard requirements.



Ask Your Child the Following Questions:

With thousands of colleges in the United States alone, how can you help pick the one that's right for your child? Ask your child the following questions below to help narrow the search.

- ▶ Why do you want to attend college?
- ▶ What are your goals for college?
- ▶ What would you like to study?
- ▶ Where do you want to go to college? Do you want to be close to home, or venture to a new city, new state or even a new country?
- ▶ In what type of environment would you like to live? Rural? Urban?
- ▶ Would you like to go to a school with a large or small student enrollment?
- ▶ Would you prefer to attend a public or private school?
- ▶ And finally, a question to ask yourself—how much can you realistically afford to pay for college? Consider potential financial aid, and determine which colleges you can afford.

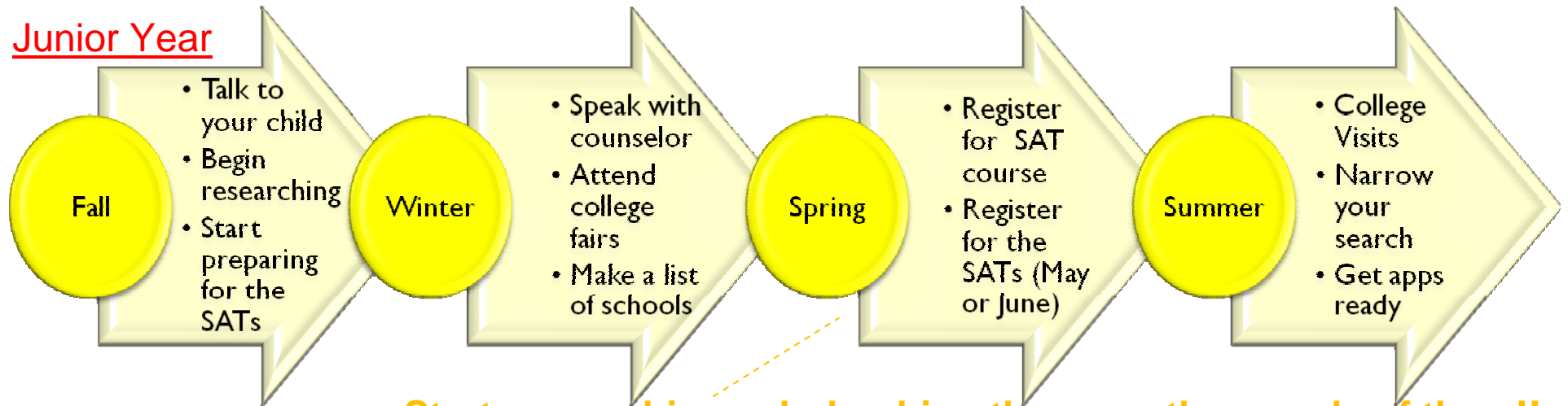




How to Apply to College

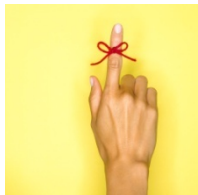
General Timeline to Keep in Mind

Junior Year



Start researching scholarships-there are thousands of them!!

Senior Year



****Remember to Keep Those Grades Up All Four Years****



The College Application Check List



- ❑ **Completed Application (Common or Individual)**
- ❑ **Transcripts-Sent by the Guidance Counselor**
- ❑ **Fees**
 - Each school requires a fee with each application-can range from \$50-\$75 dollars
 - Fee Waivers-Available for both college applications and SATs
 - A Request for Waiver of College Application Fee may be obtained from your child's guidance counselor
- ❑ **SAT Scores**-Results are sent to the colleges your child designates on the SAT registration form.
- ❑ **College Essays** - Appendix
- ❑ **Letters of Recommendation** – Appendix

NOTE: Get to know your child's guidance counselor; they are an invaluable resource.



Common vs. Individual

▶ Common Application

- ▶ What is it? The Common Application is an admission application – available online and in print-that students may submit to nearly 300 colleges and universities nationwide (PLEASE NOTE: Some universities require supplemental information-be sure to check)
- ▶ The 2007-2008 Application is now available (Essay topics are included)
- ▶ Available at www.commonapp.org

▶ Why use it?

- ▶ The application allows you to spend less time on the busywork of applying for admission, and more time on what's really important: college research, visits, essay writing, and senior year coursework.

▶ Individual College Application

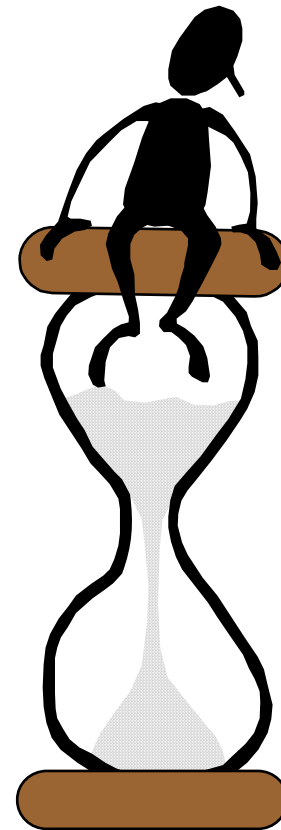
- ▶ Available both online and in-print . Contact admissions offices or your child's guidance counselor.

NOTE: Choosing the application format is a matter of personal preference.



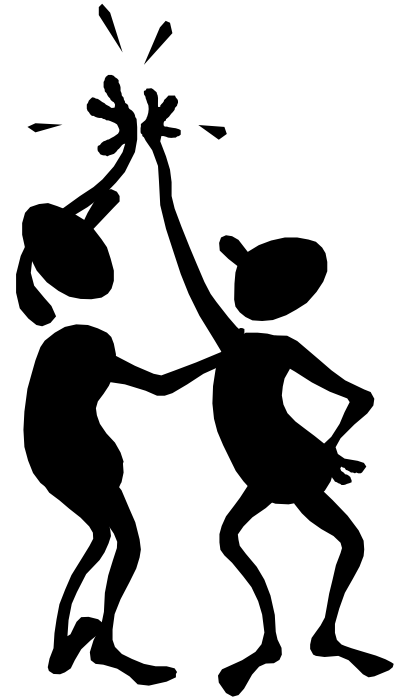
The Anticipation

- ▶ You've submitted the application with all supporting documentation.
- ▶ Now it's time to wait.
- ▶ Typically, turnaround is 6-8 weeks depending on the time of submittal.



Congratulations, you're in! Now what?

- ▶ You've heard back from a few schools and it looks good. Which one do you choose? Based on what?
 - ▶ Pro/Con list including cost. Don't be scared by the numbers. This is an investment in your future. There's always a way to pay for it. More information to come in our Financial Aid Workshop.
- ▶ So you're set on a school. What now?
 - ▶ Making sure to return your signed acceptance letter and carefully follow your school's instructions. Keep in mind there are deadline for declaring acceptance, housing, financial aid and placement tests. Each school is different.
 - ▶ Remember, the admissions office is your friend. Do not hesitate to call with any questions. There are people who are there to help you; it's their job.



Useful Links

- ▶ www.commonapp.org - Common Application Information
- ▶ www.collegeboard.com – Register for the SATs/PSATs/ACTs
- ▶ <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> - Financial aid information resource. FAFSA is the form that determines your eligibility for federal and state aid.
- ▶ www.usnews.com – US News & World Report rates the best schools for many different disciplines.
- ▶ www.fastweb.com – Free Scholarship search engine.
- ▶ www.kaplan.com – Register for prep courses (Check with CEF before joining) .



Future CEF Events

- ▶ **SATs: What you and your child need to know.**
 - ▶ Saturday, 16 February 2008
 - ▶ 6-8 PM, Nalmes Hall-CBA

- ▶ **Financial Aid: Get the aid you deserve.**
 - ▶ Sunday, 16 March 2008
 - ▶ 6-8 PM, Nalmes Hall-CBA





Any Questions?

Contact US

- ▶ Please feel free to contact us should you need additional information.
 - ▶ Rasha Altidoka - rasha.altidoka@gmail.com
 - ▶ Tamara Barsik – tamara.barsik@gmail.com
 - ▶ Lisa Jarkasi – ljarkasi@gmail.com





Good luck and thank you!

The Circassian Education Foundation





Appendix

Parents Application Timeline

- ▶ Help your child begin researching colleges in the junior year of high school, or one and a half years before attending. Your child should speak with teachers and advisors for recommendations of colleges that might be right for them. Encourage your child to use the Internet to browse different colleges' Web sites. Go to college fairs. Visit college campuses. And request that colleges send brochures and catalogs to your home.
- ▶ Talk with your child about setting priorities when [choosing a college](#). Have them review our [College Criteria List](#) and identify which factors are most important. Help compare colleges based on these criteria.
- ▶ Have your child write a list of colleges in which they are most interested. Determine which are most difficult to get accepted into, which are easiest and which are in the middle. Select 3-6 total colleges, with 1-2 of the most difficult, 1-2 of the easiest and 1-2 of the middle choices. This will be a good list of colleges to which your child should apply.
- ▶ Have your child request applications from each of the selected colleges. Many colleges allow you to download their admissions applications, or apply online. Otherwise, call or write to colleges to have materials sent. Keep in mind, if a friend or family member is an alumni of a college, they may be able to get an alumni referral application for your child. These applications generally waive the cost of applying, saving you money.
- ▶ Stress the importance of deadlines, and have your child complete applications with earlier deadline dates first.
- ▶ Find out which [standardized test\(s\)](#) (SAT/ACT) are required by the colleges chosen. Make sure your child registers for and takes the test(s) necessary.
- ▶ Have your child request [letters of recommendation](#) from teachers, [counselors](#), advisors, etc. Encourage your child to allow the individuals writing the letters ample time to complete them prior to the admission application deadlines.
- ▶ Make sure your child thoroughly and accurately completes college admissions and financial aid applications and required [essay\(s\)](#). Double-check all completed forms and keep copies for your records.
- ▶ Have your child's high school send official high school transcripts and test scores to the appropriate colleges.
- ▶ Make sure your child sends in completed applications as early as possible rather than waiting for the deadlines. Be sure any fees or fee waivers are attached.



College Planning Guide

If you haven't started already, where do you begin when planning for your child's future education? If you have a child in high school or even middle school, consider taking the following steps toward college:

- ▶ Start saving early! The cost of tuition rises each year. In fact, in the last 10 years, tuition at New Jersey colleges has increased nearly 75 percent. And tuition is only part of the cost of going to college. Other costs include fees, room and board or commuter expenses, books, supplies, etc.
- ▶ Support your child's academic development, interests and talents. Encourage good study habits and be involved in his/her study time, school projects and extra-curricular activities. Keep your child motivated and stress the importance of being active and involved as important pieces of preparing college.
- ▶ Help your child develop his/her interests and encourage activities and reading books related to those interests. Talk about college and possible careers. Discussing the future will help your child develop strong dreams, keeping your child motivated and interested in academic and personal growth.
- ▶ Be open to our child's interests and dreams. Encourage the exploration of ideas and offer alternatives. It may help to research certain areas of interest with your child.
- ▶ Speak with your child's counselor to make sure your son/daughter is enrolled in the correct classes to prepare for college.
- ▶ Talk about college early to make the idea of attending very natural for your child.
- ▶ Discuss why all classes are important for learning and growth. Explain the importance of subjects such as math, writing and science, as they pertain to your child's future.
- ▶ Ask what your child plans to do after high school, and after college. Discuss college as the way to accomplish possible career goals and attain future dreams.



High School Freshman

- ▶ [Keep saving for college](#). Review your current college savings plans (529 [prepaid tuition](#) and/or [college savings accounts](#)) to make sure they're keeping up with the annual inflation of college tuition.
- ▶ Work with your child to develop a high school curriculum plan that includes [college-prep courses](#) and any potential [Advanced Placement-credit](#) opportunities.
- ▶ Talk with your child about getting a summer job or internship to earn money for college.
- ▶ Remember it's never too early to plan for college. Make sure you focus on high grades. If you are struggling, seek extra help. Teachers are always available afterschool.



High School Sophomore

- ▶ [Keep saving for college](#). Review your current college savings plans (529 [prepaid tuition](#) and/or [college savings accounts](#)) to make sure they're keeping up with the annual inflation of college tuition.
- ▶ Begin researching grants and [scholarships](#) with your child.
- ▶ Work with your child to develop a high school curriculum plan that includes [college-prep courses](#) and any potential [Advanced Placement-credit](#) opportunities.
- ▶ Research different [career options](#) with your child.
- ▶ Your child should take the [PSAT](#) as practice for college testing.
- ▶ Talk with your child about getting a summer job or internship to earn money for college.



High School Junior

- ▶ [Keep saving for college](#) to make sure you're keeping up with the annual inflation of college tuition.
- ▶ Research different [career options](#) with your child. Attend career fairs and speak with a high school counselor about career opportunities.
- ▶ Begin [researching colleges](#) and collecting admission information.
- ▶ Your child should take the [ACT](#) and/or the [SAT I](#) assessment test(s).



High School Senior

- ▶ Review your current [college savings program](#) to make sure you're keeping up with the annual inflation of college tuition.
- ▶ Encourage your child to attend a [financial aid](#) workshop with you.
- ▶ Help your child research and apply for [scholarships](#), grants, [work-study programs](#) and [loans](#).
- ▶ [Tour campuses](#) and investigate admissions and costs.
- ▶ After January 1, and when your taxes are prepared, help your child file a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).
- ▶ By this time, your child should choose three to five potential colleges that he or she would like to attend and [submit applications](#) to them.
- ▶ Take your child to meet with a financial aid officer at each college to research [financial aid options](#).
- ▶ Help your child review the financial aid options offered, including [scholarships](#), grants and [loans](#), and determine the financial aid to accept. Use the [Financial Aid Package Comparison Worksheet](#) to help compare financial aid packages and decide which is best. While cost shouldn't be the only factor when deciding on a college, you will still need to take it into consideration when helping your child make his or her final selection.
- ▶ Retrieve the money from your 529 [prepaid tuition](#) and/or [college savings programs](#).
- ▶ [Develop a long-range budget](#) to help your child pay for college.



College Admissions Essay, and Recommendations

College admissions essays and personal statements

- ▶ In addition to the standard application, the colleges that you are applying to may require an essay, a personal statement, or both. The essay is an opportunity for the school to evaluate your writing and personal communication skills. Essay topics are typically assigned, or you may be able to choose from several possible topics. The personal statement, is your opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants by telling the college about your experiences and accomplishments.
- ▶ In order to write a competitive and effective essay, consider the tips below:
- ▶ Obtain previous years' applications from the colleges of your choice to give yourself a head start. Essay questions used by colleges in the past will probably be similar to those asked on your current application.
- ▶ If you are allowed to choose your topic, be sure to select something that will fully answer the question, while at the same time highlights your strengths and skills.
- ▶ When answering any question, attempt to respond in a way that will distinguish you from other potential students. Why will you be an asset to the class? What makes you unique?
- ▶ Be sure that you fully understand the question before you begin. What is being asked and why?
- ▶ Think broadly before answering the question. Chances are, it will ask for a personal experience or idea. Brainstorm and come up with stories, memories and thoughts related to the topic. Then, select the one that defines you best and will help you answer the question most effectively.
- ▶ Demonstrate how your work or life experiences have shaped or affected you.
- ▶ Ask your high school counselor, advisor or co-worker to look over your essay and offer proofreading assistance and/or suggestions for improvement.
- ▶ [Click here for more tips on writing successful essays.](#)



Essay – Continued

- ▶ Pick a topic. If a topic has been assigned, make sure it's narrow enough to write a good paper—especially if it's an analysis of that topic. If you get to choose the topic, pick something that interests you. Determine if the topic you picked is right for the paper's objectives and is interesting enough to write about and have other people read.
- ▶ Write out the objective and make an outline for the entire paper. An outline will help you keep organized as you write your paper—though it may change as you go.
- ▶ Write your thesis statement. Make sure it clearly states the point you're trying to make. Include the topic and the point of the essay in the thesis statement.
- ▶ Write the body of the essay. First write your main points. Then, support each of those points with supporting points. Next, expand on those points. Be sure to include transitions between points.
- ▶ Write the introductory paragraph. Make sure it's attention-grabbing, with interesting information, a quick story or something else that would be intriguing to the reader. The last sentence of your introductory paragraph should be your thesis statement.
- ▶ Write your conclusion. Your conclusion should sum up all your points, leaving the reader with a good understanding of your final and overall point.
- ▶ Review your final paper. Reread it to make sure it flows well, makes sense and makes your point. Then go back and check for grammar and spelling errors.
- ▶ Make your final paper look good. Content is most important, but if your paper is hard to read because of poor ink, illegibility or anything else that may hinder it visually, then your reader will have a hard time getting through it. Or worse, he/she may not read it at all.



Letter of Recommendation

- ▶ Your letter of recommendation should come from an adult who knows you very well. You might ask a teacher, [counselor](#), CBA member, high school organization advisor, coach, work supervisor, or a coordinator from an out-of-school or volunteer activity.
- ▶ Some colleges require that the letter be submitted with your admissions application, and others want it to be sent in separately. Make sure you follow each college's directions. And remember your application for enrollment won't be considered complete until you have supplied ALL required documents.
- ▶ Make sure you ask the writer early during your senior year of high school, or about a year before you plan to attend college, if he/she can write your letter of recommendation. Be sure to give him/her the required forms and good directions at least one month before the letter is due. Give him/her a copy of the essay you wrote and some points you'd like to have included in the letter, along with a stamped and addressed envelope.
- ▶ Remember to thank him/her in person and with a note for his/her help.

