

College Application Guide

Application Checklist

Remember to ask about deadlines.

- **The General Application:** Is all information accurate and legible? Don't leave questions blank unless the application allows it.
- **Academic Transcripts:** Make sure they are sealed.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Do you have the number of recommendations required? Also, check with the admissions office if they need to be sealed.
- **Work Samples/Portfolios:** Include your name, contact information and the project title on every item. Send copies, not originals.
- **Application Essays:** Make sure your name, social security number, date of birth, contact information and essay title are on each page.
- **Reply Cards:** Include these for your prospective college to mail back to you as receipt of delivery. They should be stamped and self-addressed.
- **SAT/ACT Scores:** If you need to send test scores to additional schools, contact the testing company immediately. Scores are mailed about three weeks after your request.
- **Signatures:** Before mailing, verify that all necessary forms have been signed.
- **Keep Copies:** Create a file to hold copies of all documents in case you need to refer to them later.

Common Application Errors

"I'll start the application next week." Don't run out of time to complete the application. Give yourself at least two weeks to find mistakes.

"I already ran a spell-check on my computer." Words can be spelled correctly but used incorrectly. Ask a counselor, teacher or family member to proofread the application to catch any errors or poor phrasing.

"One copy is enough." Print out any online forms and keep copies of all paperwork.

"I can send my application as soon as I'm finished." Before you seal the envelope or click "Send" on your computer, double- and triple-check that you have included all necessary materials.

"I assume this is right." If you're confused by a question or any part of the application, ask someone. A quick call to the admissions office can save you from making an embarrassing error.

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Get Noticed: 10 College Essay Tips

- 1. Don't "recycle" essays.** An essay that sounds like it has been used before will blend with everyone else's.
- 2. Captivate your audience.** Make your essay engaging and memorable. Include a quick, enticing intro; give a reason to finish reading it.
- 3. Be yourself.** Choose a topic that is meaningful to you. Use your own voice. Show off a side of yourself that your application does not; don't simply write what you think an admissions office wants to hear.
- 4. Accentuate the positive.** When writing about a personal experience, emphasize how the experience changed you for the better.
- 5. Write in the active voice.** Doing so will make for a clearer, more concise essay.
- 6. Don't overextend.** Your essay isn't a term paper. Stay focused on your topic.
- 7. Ask people for input.** Whether it's a teacher, counselor, friend or parent, ask someone you respect for some candid feedback. Is it confusing? Boring?
- 8. Leave time for rewriting.** Look for weak or dull spots and spelling and grammatical errors. Never let your first draft be your final draft.
- 9. Revise, reword.** Improve on your first draft through various rewrites. Read the essay aloud to find awkward sentences or problems.
- 10. Pursue perfection.** Have someone else look it over. Quadruple-check the spelling. Type your essay carefully.