

COMMON APPLICATION TIP SHEET

1. Go to commonapp.org and select “Apply Now” to create your account. **WRITE DOWN YOUR PASSWORD!**
 - Use an email address you check often or create one you AND your parents can access for all college correspondence
2. Click on “College Search” to select the universities/colleges you want to apply to. Click the box next to the college name and select “add.” **Once added, you can view the college’s deadlines, application fees, required recommendations, required essay/other writing supplements. It is YOUR responsibility to have all sections submitted by the college’s deadline!**
NOTE: You can add and delete colleges at any time, but application requirements and sections change for each school. **Please add at least a few before you start working on your application.**
3. Once logged on, select the “Common App” tab and complete the following sections:
Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, Writing (there are MANY questions within each section!)
4. Once you’ve completed these sections, you will see a green check mark next to each. You must complete these sections prior to finishing the rest of the application. Here are some tips for each section:

Profile:

- Anything with a red asterisk is required to complete (not required to answer questions regarding religion, race, etc.)
- If you believe you qualify for the Common App Fee Waiver, you will be required to identify the way in which you qualify and it must be verified electronically by your guidance counselor when completing the Common App recommendation for you.

Family:

- You need to know your parents' occupations, name of employer, level of education, names of the universities/colleges they attended, name of degree, and year they earned that degree
- You will need to know your siblings' level of education and names of universities or colleges that may have attended along with name of degree and dates they began and ended their education.

Education:

Testing:

- You **MUST** send your official ACT and/or SAT Test scores to your university/college directly from the testing company – visit actstudent.org or collegeboard.org
- You can choose to self-report any of your test scores on Common App OR you can opt-out and not report any since you will send them via the testing company
 - Note: Even if you self-report, official scores must be sent as soon as possible. (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject, and AP)
 - You'll select the tests, number of scores you want to report from that test, number of future sittings for that test, composite score, and each section score (ACT/SAT) with the date that you earned that score

Activities: You have the option of reporting 10 activities.

Personal Essay:

- Some colleges require submission of the personal essay, but not all. You may submit a personal essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college. If not required by a college, you will be given the option during submission to include your essay or not for that college.
- The essay must be pasted in or typed directly in the box. You have 250-650 words and must select a prompt to answer.
- When you save, you will not know if the formatting took. You will need to wait until you Preview to check the formatting.

Check your formatting! Italics, bold, and underline make the text increase in size and occasionally cuts out text.

Disciplinary History: Be honest – if answering “yes” emphasize what you’ve learned from the situation.

Additional Information: This is a place to explain or clarify potential struggles or challenges you had. This may include shifts in your education, personal struggles that impacted your education, or difficulties with the law. Be authentic, but focus on remorse or the positive consequences. Don’t feel you need to fill the 650 words.

COURSES & GRADES – this section will only appear once you have added a college that requires it

- Answer “YES” to the four initial questions. While you can say “No,” it is questionable if other students from your high school self-report their grades and you don’t. Self-reporting “unofficially” is expected.
- Obtain a copy of your unofficial transcript from your guidance office. (There is no form or fee for this.)
- Proceed to the 9th grade tab and follow the Course Assistant for the first time. (You can skip this later, but at least complete it the first time.) **Do NOT enter middle school courses in 9th grade!**
 - School years: 9th (15-16); 10th (16-17); 11th (17-18); 12th (18-19)
- **Grading Scale:** “Other”
- **Schedule:** “Semesters”
- Enter the first course name from 9th grade exactly as the transcript says.
- Choose the most appropriate subject for that course
- **Course Level:**
 - “Regular/Standard” – all CHS courses without Essentials, Enriched, Accelerated, Honors, AP distinction
 - “Enriched” – CHS courses with the “Enriched” distinction
 - “Accelerated” – only use for “Accelerated Physics” or summer coursework
 - “Honors” – CHS courses with the “Honors” distinction, including Pre-AP Honors courses
 - “AP” – AP courses, including HAP courses
 - “Dual Enrollment” – all CCP coursework
 - “N/A” – Essentials level coursework
- Report Course Grades – only enter semester letter grades and symbols as they appear on your transcript. Do not enter a final grade. Enter the semester grade in the semester in which you took the course.
- Report Course Credits – enter credits as they appear on your transcript. Enter 1.0 in “Final” for yearlong courses. Enter the semester credit in the semester in which you took the course.
- Once you have used the Course Assistant the first time, you can continue to use it or enter straight into the course grid for each grade level. **Do NOT enter 10th grade courses in the 9th grade grid!**

Year: 2015-2016 School Year

Grade: 09

Building: Centerville High School

Course	Level	SM1	SM2	Credit
9 Modern World History Std.	1	A-		0.5
Biology 1	1	A-	A	1
Concert Band	1	B+	A+	1
English 9 Enriched	1	B+	A-	1
Geometry Enr	1	A-	A-	1
German 2	1	A-	A-	1
Health	1		A+	0.5
SS - Chemistry I	1	A-	B+	1

Courses & Grades - 9th grade

Use this grid to report your courses exactly as they appear on your transcript.

School Name	School Year	Grading Scale	Schedule			
Centerville High School	2014-15	Other	Semesters			
Subject	Course Name	Course Level	Semesters	Grades	Semesters	Credits
History/Social	Id History Std.	Regular/Stand	S1	A-	S1	0.5
Science	Biology 1	Regular/Stand	S1	A	S1	1
Art (Visual or	Concert Band	Regular/Stand	S2	A-	S2	1
English	Ish 9 Enriched	Enriched	S2	B+	S2	1
Math	Geo Enr	Enriched	S1	A-	S1	1
Foreign/Work	German 2	Regular/Stand	S1	A-	S1	1
Physical Educ	Health	Regular/Stand	S2	A+	S2	0.5
Science	5 - Chemistry I	Accelerated	S1	B+	S1	1

Add a Row [Use the Course Assistant](#)

[Instructions and Help](#) [Continue](#)

- Continue to report courses for each grade level.
- Courses for 12th grade – select “No”
- “Other Courses” – Enter middle school here. Use “P” for Pass and use “N/A” for credits that do not 0.25, 0.5, 1.0, etc.
- Finally, you may preview your entries to check your self-report. It probably will not be perfect. Do your best, and remember, the “official” transcript will be sent directly to the school when you request it in the guidance office.

5. From "Dashboard" you can click on the school name and answer each college's questions, assign recommenders, and Review & Submit your entire Common App

YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH SECTION FOR EACH COLLEGE AND SUBMIT SEPARATELY!

Recommenders and FERPA

FERPA – You have an option to sign a release, waiving your right to view your recommendations and supporting documents submitted on your behalf. While you do not have to waive your right, many recommenders will not submit information if you do not (much like a sealed envelope with a recommendation inside should not be opened by the student). There is a link to view a YouTube video further explaining FERPA under this section.

Recommenders:

Counselor: Invite your guidance counselor! Your guidance counselor must be included in order to complete the School Report and submit your transcript (this will be the second time you enter your counselor's information).

Teacher: MANY COLLEGE NO LONGER REQUIRE RECOMMENDATIONS. While they may "allow" up to 2 or 3, it is typically unnecessary. If you do want a recommendation from a teacher, choose a teacher who knows you well and has had you in class. Complete the teacher's information and select "Add Recommender." **Back on the "Recommenders and FERPA" tab, make sure to also assign your recommender.** Check-in with the teachers to make sure they received the email invitations from Common App and give them a specific deadline to upload it. Ideally, your teacher recommendation should be submitted at the same time or before your application.

Log back in to Common App to check the status of your recommenders. For the letters of rec written by the teachers, you will see "Submitted" and the date once it is done. For the School Report, you will see a green check mark once it is done.

Advisors: This is not for staff at Centerville City Schools! Counselors are not permitted to be both recommenders and advisors. This is for a professional, family member, or trusted friend who may be assisting you with your application. They can view your application, but they cannot alter or submit it. You do not have to enter an Advisor.

6. Notice all deadlines for each school – it is YOUR responsibility to make sure all parts of your application are in by this deadline (this includes the counselor portion and letters of rec submitted by teachers)

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

EACH COLLEGE MUST HAVE 3 "ITEMS" TO CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION COMPLETE AND BEGIN THE PROCESS OF MAKING AN ADMISSIONS DECISION:

1. APPLICATION!

Your application is complete when you have previewed the entire application, signed electronically, and paid the fee. You must do this separately by EACH college's deadline!

2. TEST SCORES! (This can be done prior to finishing application.)

You must send these directly from the testing agency to EACH college. They must reach the college before the deadline. This cannot happen instantly or even overnight.

3. HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT! (This can also be done prior to finishing application!)

**You must stop in your guidance office to complete
a Request for Transcript form and submit \$2 for EACH college.**

You must give your counselor AT LEAST 3 SCHOOL DAYS TO COMPLETE YOUR TRANSCRIPT REQUEST! Once again, this cannot happen instantly, overnight, or when school is closed.

Please plan ahead.