

SOMERS HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE



CEEB CODE: 335245

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Beginning Your College Search

Considering appropriate college choices begins with taking time to consider what you, the student, need and want, and in what type of college that can be found. Areas of study that are offered, staying home or going away to school, distance and means of travel necessary from home (car vs. airplane), the personality of the campus and students, cost of the education, as well as the intangible comfort level one may or may not feel on a campus are all significant factors in considering a college. Of course, first address the most basic question: Do I want to go to college and why?

Finding your own answers to these questions, without the influence of a classmate's passing comment, or unsolicited opinions that contradict your own beliefs, is perhaps the single most important aspect of this entire process. Make this your process and your decision. If you know college is your next step, ask yourself: Do I require smaller classes to learn, or am I more of an independent learner? What is affordable for me and my family, and how much debt can I reasonably manage? Do I want a traditional college campus or more of an urban setting? Does this school offer academic and extracurricular opportunities in which I might be interested? Does the personality of the campus that I've read about match my own? What is my initial "gut" reaction when I walk on campus? You may have other specific questions that are equally important to be answered. Answering them all honestly, and after getting your facts straight is the key.

Your primary partners in this search at SHS will be your school counselor, and college and career counselor. Working together with you and your parent(s) or guardian(s), our counselors and support staff will seek to shepherd you through this process and help you to find your answers to these important questions.

Lessons Learned!

Before beginning your own process, take advantage of lessons learned from SHS graduates who have gone before you, and heed their words of advice:

-Don't procrastinate!!!

-My one piece of advice is to apply to colleges that YOU love not just a college that has a name.

-Even though applying to college is a lot of work and is very stressful, don't put it off until the last minute because you will be even more stressed. Once the application process is over you will be much less stressed out.

-Make sure you only apply to colleges where you can really see yourself. And, as someone who got rejected from the school they thought they were in love with, the system really works and people always end up going where they belong. It was heartbreaking and stressful, but in the end, I am obsessed with where I am going and would not have it any other way.

-Don't apply to a lot of schools. It really messed with my head. In the end I say cap it off at 8 because personally I was accepted to so many I had the hardest time deciding.

-It is okay not to go to a 4-year school right out of high school. Community College is good too and you can always transfer.

-Sound like yourself in your college essay!

-Virtual college tours and the actual college tours are totally different. Strongly recommend actually going onto the campus to see if you truly love the school or not.

-Find a place that won't leave you with a lot of student loans!

-Breathe and relax.

Take Advantage of Your SHS Resources

In addition to direct work with your counselor, students can greatly ease stress and make the process of applying to college much simpler by using the unique level supports here in SHS.

The College and Career Center: Here, students can find additional focused support in their college and career searches, scholarship searches, workshops, college representative visits, and employment opportunities.

Naviance Student and Parent Workshops help both students and parents to better understand and best utilize all that Naviance has to offer.

Common Application Workshops help support students in completing the technical aspects of the Common App. Rather than struggle with any aspects of the application, students can attend a workshop, or schedule their own appointment.

The Writing Center: Here, students can schedule help with an English teacher experienced in helping students write the college essay. Utilizing this support can greatly ease the challenge of crafting both the main essay and any required supplements.

Summer Essay Boot Camp: This is a program sponsored by the SHS PTA for which students must pay a fee to participate. Students work over several days to brainstorm and work through drafts to produce a complete college essay.

Important Research Tools:

In addition to these practical opportunities for assistance, you will need to do your own independent research as well. The following tools should prove very useful to help to identify your best matches.

Naviance (student.naviance.com/somers): This is a district-supported program that offers application history from prior SHS graduating classes to provide a more accurate forecast of the likelihood of admission at a given college. Just keep in mind when you look at numbers in Naviance, you're not seeing the students' curriculum or extracurricular involvement. Naviance also offers college and career search tools, and will be the primary vehicle through which school application materials will be submitted (transcripts, letters of rec, profile, etc.) Passwords are distributed to students as sophomores through an introduction to career searches and mailed home to parents. If a password is lost or misplaced, contact the College and Career Center to have it re-set. Students or parents looking to sign on prior to receiving a personal code can do so with the guest password: tuskers. For more information on Naviance, see pg.7.

SHS Guidance and Counseling web page: This site houses a multitude of direct links to helpful information, including free college search sites, a direct link to Naviance, financial aid and scholarship links, links to the SUNY and Common Application, standardized testing information, and more.

Niche.com: This site is not affiliated with our school district, but it is a powerful tool to search for colleges and to read direct student feedback on their experiences at a given college or university. See how students rate their colleges from academics to social life, etc.

Google Maps street view: This is an often overlooked tool that allows you to see a campus without any marketing influence before deciding to visit. Just drag and drop the little yellow person in the bottom right to the street view of the area you're exploring. Be sure to visit the area surrounding campus as well with this tool before visiting. This will help to avoid the defeat of driving or flying many hours only to find out a campus is not at all what a student envisioned!

Standardized Testing for Juniors Q & A

Q: What tests should I be taking this year?

A: No one testing schedule fits every student, but after taking the PreACT in sophomore year, most juniors should consider taking the PSAT, the ACT and/or the SAT. Note that Community Colleges do not require standardized testing, and many colleges are test optional. See Fairtest.org for a full list.

Q: When should I take my tests?

A: Ideally, students should develop a plan to complete testing in the spring semester of junior year. The most common testing dates are April through June of junior year, although some students begin testing during the winter of junior year, and some also test in the fall of senior year.

Q: Do I need sign up to take the optional Writing/Essay portion of the ACT?

A: Most colleges do not require the written portion of the ACT, but more selective colleges may recommend it. Students must review the application requirements of their prospective colleges to determine if this is needed.

Q: How do the tests I take get delivered to the colleges to which I decide to apply?

A: In senior year students must request (online) official scores from College Board or ACT be sent to the colleges to which you are applying. Some people stress over which scores to send, but admissions offices will typically “superscore”, by combining your highest sections from different test dates, or use your highest single test day score.

Q: What is the difference between the ACT and the SAT?

A: The ACT and the SAT have similar features, yet most students have a preference after sitting for both and take one of these tests at least one more time to ensure their best score is achieved. Here are some key differences between the two tests:

ACT

SAT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English, Math, Reading, and Science sections are each scored between 1-36, and are combined for a Composite Score of 1-36. - Includes an optional Writing Test, scored 2-12. - Includes a separate Science section (will be optional in 2025) 	Topics and scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence-based Reading and Writing and Math are both scored between 200-800, and are combined for a total score of 800-1600.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test is 2hrs., 55 mins., not including breaks (2hrs in 2025) - Optional Writing Test is 40 mins. 	Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test is 2 hrs. and 14 mins., not including breaks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to an emphasis on algebra with some trig, a greater percentage of math is devoted to geometry. - A calculator can be used on all math problems. - No formulas provided. 	Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the two math sections covering algebra, some geometry and some trig does not allow the use of a calculator. - A greater percentage of the overall score is based on math. - Formulas are provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More questions in less time related to five reading passages, but more straightforward. 	Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer questions related to four reading passages, but more complex. - Includes reading and comprehension of charts, graphs, and tables.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires analysis of documents and producing evidence to support a position taken. There is no wrong opinion, but reasoning through quality writing are important. 	Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No longer offered as of June, 2021

Q: How do I prepare for either test?

A: Students take different approaches, from enrolling in group prep courses, to hiring individual tutors, to taking advantage of free online resources. Regardless of the route taken, the single most effective strategy towards achieving your best score is taking multiple, timed practice tests. Free ACT/SAT prep is available online through www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat, or <https://academy.act.org>.

Q: How do I register for a test, and where can I find the testing dates?

A: Below are links and steps for registering for both tests. You will also find details on test dates and registration deadlines on each site.

SHS CEEB Code = 335245

SAT Registration: <https://www.collegeboard.org/>

It's a good idea to plan ahead — and get comfy — before you start to register.


1. Sign in to your free College Board account. Your parent or counselor can't register for you.
2. Provide your full, legal name and other identifying information. Make sure it's the exact same name and information shown on your photo ID.
3. Decide if you want to answer other questions about yourself. This takes time, but it's worth it if you want colleges and scholarship organizations to find you. Learn why you should opt in to Student Search Service®.
4. Decide whether to sign up for the SAT with Essay. See which colleges recommend or require it.
5. Upload a photo that meets very specific photo requirements.
6. Check out, and print your Admission Ticket.

You Might Also Need ... If you're using a fee waiver, enter the identification number on your fee waiver card.

If you've been approved by the College Board to test with accommodations, enter the SSD number on your eligibility letter.

ACT Registration: <http://www.act.org/>


What You'll Need

 **About 40 Minutes** - Information you provide will be visualized on your score report to help you to explore possible careers that align with your stated interests

 **Desktop or laptop with an internet connection** - Mobile and tablet not recommended




 **Credit Card or other form of payment**

 **High school course details**


 **Headshot photo** - Now or anytime before the photo deadline


ACT Composite Score	SAT Composite Score
36	1590
35	1540
34	1500
33	1460
32	1430
31	1400
30	1370
29	1340
28	1310
27	1280
26	1240
25	1210
24	1180
23	1140
22	1110
21	1080
20	1040
19	1010
18	970
17	930
16	890
15	850
14	800
13	760
12	710
11	670
10	630
9	590


Reminder for testing accommodations: In order to receive accommodations (extended time, etc.) on any standardized test you must apply for approval with that company (College Board or ACT). Be sure to discuss this with your counselor at least two months prior to testing.

-  COLLEGES
Home
-  COLLEGES
I'm thinking about
-  COLLEGES
I'm applying to
- Find Your Fit >
- Research Colleges >
- Apply to College >
- Scholarships and Money >

SuperMatch College Search

AVERAGE NET PRICE 

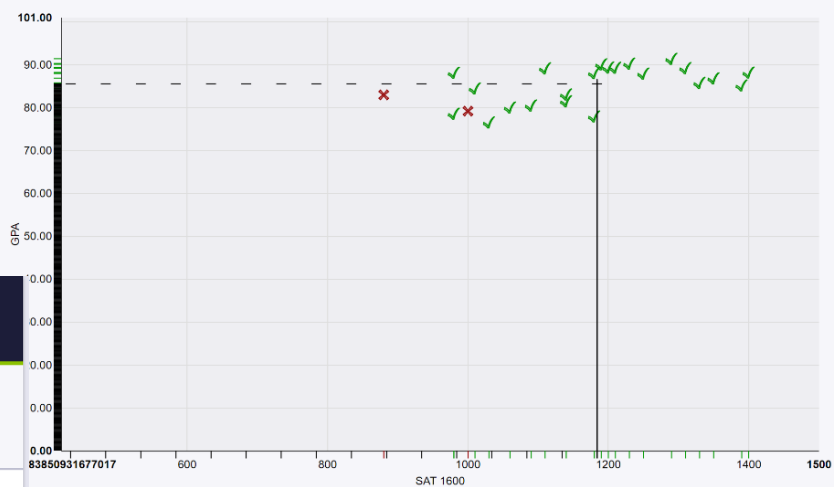
ACCEPTANCE RATE 

GRADUATION RATE 


Scattergrams | Applications for Somers High School

COLLEGE OVERLAPS

Comparing Unweighted GPA with SAT (1600 Scale)





Explore Careers and Interests

-  CAREERS AND CLUSTERS
I'm thinking about
- Career Cluster Finder
- Career Interest Profiler

Roadtrip Nation Interview Archive

Roadtrip Nation has gone on **52 roadtrips** and interviewed **752 leaders** creating **6,132** videos on struggle, triumph, and self discovery that have been broken into **48 themes** and **29 interests**

-  ABOUT ME
Home
-  STUDENT
My Account
- My Stuff >
- My Assessments >
- My Surveys >
- Postsecondary Plans >

StrengthsExplorer

SHS POST-HS PLANNER

The SHS Counseling Office takes pride in working to shepherd all students through their individual post-HS planning, and the college application experience. We understand that all students do not all follow the same timeline, but the checklist below will provide a structure from which to work. By participating in the following comprehensive program design and working closely with your school counselor, students and parents will best be able to navigate the years ahead. **Note that while evening events are targeted towards specific grade levels and audiences, students and parents of all grade levels are welcome to attend to better understand the road ahead.**

Grade 10

September

_____ Counselors visit 10th grade social studies classes to share information about **optional PSAT** registration and introduce standardized testing for college admissions. The PSAT is a test designed for students in grade 11, but may be **appropriate for students advanced in math** and seeking early exposure to standardized testing. (Note that students with school-based testing accommodations must apply to the College Board approximately 7 weeks in advance of testing for approval of accommodations.)

October

_____ Students registered for the **PSAT** take the Saturday exam.

December

_____ If eager to get information sooner, attend **College Night for Juniors** at SHS.

_____ Review your PSAT (if taken) score report online through the code sent to student e-mail accounts. If an e-mail address was not provided at the time of testing, you can view a score summary through your Naviance account.

January

_____ Counselors introduce students to **Naviance** and students complete **career interest inventory**.

_____ **BOCES Tech Center and IB Diploma** information presentation during the school day.

_____ Attend **BOCES Tech Center tour** and Parent and Student **Open House**, if interested.

_____ Attend **Curriculum night**

February

_____ Attend **IB Information Night**, if considering the IB Diploma.

_____ Course selection conversations with teachers

March

_____ Pre-ACT. This standardized practice test is designed for students in grade 10, and given on a Saturday.

_____ 1:1 scheduling meeting with school counselor.

Grade 11

September

- _____ If eager to get information sooner, attend **Senior College Night** at SHS.
- _____ Counselors visit 11th grade classes to share information about **PSAT registration** and the junior year testing calendar. Note that students with school-based testing accommodations must apply to the College Board approximately 7 weeks in advance of testing for approval of accommodations.
- _____ Attend college admissions representative visits during the school day at SHS (grade 11-12 students only)

October

- _____ Students registered for the **PSAT** take the Saturday exam.
- _____ Attend the **Northern Westchester College Fair**

December

- _____ Attend **College Night for Juniors at SHS.**
- _____ Review your PSAT (if taken) score report online through the code sent to student e-mail accounts. If an e-mail address was not provided at the time of testing, you can view a score summary through your Naviance account.

January

- _____ Discuss with your teachers appropriate course selections for senior year.
- _____ Attend your **Junior/Parent Counselor Conference.** Students and parents are invited to schedule appointments where senior year courses will be chosen, and initial post-HS plans will be discussed.
- _____ Plan your spring standardized testing schedule (SAT or ACT.)
- _____ Begin your Junior College Planning Survey in Naviance.
- _____ If interested, attend the Gap Year Fair at Scarsdale HS.
- _____ **Attend Curriculum Night at SHS.**

February

- _____ Register for spring standardized tests.
- _____ Consider visiting one or two college campuses over winter break. (One public and one private)

March - June

- _____ Take SAT and/or ACT. Note that not all colleges require standardized testing, but it is good to have the option to send scores if you do well or if a college you're considering requires it.
- _____ Continue to consider what you need from a college, research options, visit campuses and discuss the degree to which student and parent priorities align.
- _____ Memorize your social security number for tests, employment, college applications and financial aid.
- _____ Parents and students attend the **Regional College Fair at PNW BOCES** (April)
- _____ Students sign up for **Mock College Interview Night**
- _____ Ask two current teachers if they would be willing to write college letters of recommendation on your behalf. Check Naviance to see how many teacher letters colleges you're considering require.

Grade 12 (Beginning July 1 after grade 11)

July/August

- _____ Check your transcript in the Campus Backpack.
- _____ Complete as much of the Common Application as possible. Attend a Common App Workshop offered through the College and Career Center in August for individualized help.
- _____ Work on your college essay and any short answer essays. If possible, attend the PTSA Essay Workshop.
- _____ Continue to research and visit colleges and universities.
- _____ Begin scholarship searches. (See scholarship search links on page 20.)
- _____ If not already completed, finish your Junior College Planning Survey in Naviance
- _____ Plan any final standardized testing for the fall of senior year.

September - October

- _____ Attend **Senior College Night** at SHS.
- _____ Schedule your individual senior conference with your counselor.
- _____ Schedule an application plan review in the College and Career Center.
- _____ Attend college admissions representative visits during the school day at SHS (grade 11-12 students only).
- _____ Attend the Northern Westchester College Fair.
- _____ By mid-October, finalize Early Action, Early Decision or Rolling Admissions (see definitions on page 22). applications, submit **Official Transcript Request form** to counselor and submit **formal teacher letter of recommendation** requests through Naviance **at least 10 working days prior to your first deadline**. This will ensure you meet early November deadlines and have rolling applications submitted to receive earlier responses.

November

- _____ Complete the FAFSA. (Although the FAFSA opens in October, financial aid professionals routinely advise waiting a few weeks to allow the “kinks” to be worked out in the new year’s application.
- _____ Check with colleges to ensure they’ve received all necessary application materials. Colleges will frequently send automated notices about missing materials. Check directly with your college via a call to admissions and/or through their online portal.

December - January

- _____ Early admissions responses are typically communicated via email during the first two weeks of December. Be sure to inform your counselor of any results you receive.
- _____ Many Early Decision II deadlines fall in mid-December, while many regular admissions deadlines fall in January.

March - April

- _____ Conduct final visits to colleges to which you have been accepted. Final admissions decisions typically arrive in the first week of April.

May

- _____ Submit enrollment deposit by the universal deposit deadline of 5/1.

College Search Questions

Answering these questions will require gathering information from trusted resources, college admissions staff, and students on campus. As with anything, be mindful of your sources for your answers.

ACADEMICS

- What majors are most popular on the campus? Are they majors that fit your areas of interest? What majors proclaim to be the strongest? How many students are in these programs of study?
- If you change your educational goals, are there other programs available that you may be interested? How easy is it to change your proposed major?
- Is there a typical freshman program? Are there General Education requirements that need to be met before graduation?
- What are the average class sizes? What about the sizes in your major or area of interest?
- What percentage of students return after the freshman year? What percentage graduate in four years? In five years?
- How intense is the academic rigor on campus? How many hours do students spend studying each week? Where do students study? The library? Computer labs?
- Are members of the faculty easily accessible? Are their office hours sufficient for students to meet with faculty members?
- How many students study abroad? What percentage goes on to graduate school?
- Are Advanced Placement courses transferred as college credit? What grades need to be obtained?

STUDENT BODY

- What do students say are the strengths and the problems that are found at the college? What was done to help freshmen as they assimilate to campus life?
- What special clubs, organizations, teams and publications are available for both joining and for observing that would be of interest to you?
- Where are the students from? Other states? Other countries? Other local schools? What is the ethnic and racial make-up of the student body?
- Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What percentage of students belongs to the Greek system? Are social gatherings open to non-Greek students?

- How are advisors determined? Is your freshman advisor the same person that you will work with while attending college, or can you change advisors according to your academic interest?
- What is the overall social environment on the campus? Is it centered on athletics? Intellectually and culturally alive?

HOUSING

- What percentage of students live in dorms? Are there co-ed dorms, single sex dorms, special interest dorms, etc.?
- Do all freshmen live in the dorms? Is housing available/required for all four years?
- How many students are assigned to rooms? What process is there to determine roommates? How many students live in one room?
- What percentage of students go home on weekends?
- What activities are available on the weekends? Do dorms sponsor activities?

CAMPUS SETTING

- Where is the campus located? In the village or city? In a rural area? How accessible is the local community? Are cars needed to go to local stores or restaurants?
- What method of transportation is needed to spend four years on the campus? Can you walk, need to drive, bike or ride buses to class and to activities?
- Is it safe to walk around after dark? What is the campus setting like compared to your own sense of security?
- What are the pluses and minuses of the college's location?
- What is the appearance of the campus? Clean, modern, well-kept?

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

- Are athletics available to only recruited athletes or are there programs that you can participate in while attending college?
- Is there a place to seek tutoring or special help if needed that you could see yourself utilizing?
- Are there activities that meet your interests or educational goals? Newspaper, yearbook, drama, music, art, etc.

College Campus Visit Tips

If getting started on college visits is difficult, go see whatever is most convenient.

You can start locally by seeing a private school and a state school to gain perspective and begin to understand what you're looking for. There are a variety of colleges an hour or less away. Many high school students have never stepped foot on a college campus, so gaining some exposure is key. Don't make decisions about the type of campus that will work before experiencing it firsthand.

Plan your campus visit around something else in the area – anything.

If the sole purpose of your trip is to see the college, it can be a far more stressful and less interesting trip. If you can't find anything that appeals to you on campus, in the town or on the way there, that should tell you something.

Know yourself.

Are you high maintenance or low maintenance? Do you need the campus to have a very specific look and feel, or will you be good just about anywhere that seems like it's holding up? One way isn't better than the other. This is about who you are and what you need.

Will you attend the 500 seat lecture hall and can you learn that way, or do you need a more intimate academic setting? (Keep in mind that lectures are generally supplemented by discussions led by TAs.)

Are these students you see while on campus people you could see yourself going to class with, engaging with socially and creating bonds?

Take pictures and take notes

The college campuses you visit will become a blur after you've seen a few, and your likelihood of remembering the distinguishing features is similar to the likelihood of you remembering that different online password you set up that you didn't need to write down, because you'll never forget it.

Talk to students on the campus about their experience there.

If students don't ask the questions, parents will need to, regardless of how embarrassed the applicant might be. If someone were trying to sell you a car for \$200,000, would you be embarrassed to check under the hood? Get over it. You need to hear directly from students, and you need to hear from multiple students to filter out responses from students who may just be unhappy with everything.

Sample the dining hall food.

Food is important.

Find out what student supports are available on campus, and how easy they are to access.

College can be stressful, and for many students the supports that existed in high school are suddenly far away. Even if you think you've got it all under control now, it's still smart to know what you're getting for your money, and you never really know what you or a friend is going to need until you're there.

See the inside of a dorm room.

Try to see one other than the "model" room that's part of the tour. Ask about all the different options for freshmen housing. Ask what percent of students dorm on campus and how many commute. Is it a "suitcase school", meaning that students pack their suitcases to go home on the weekends? Answers to those two questions will tell you a lot about a college; but don't actually use the term "suitcase school" with the college when asking. It's not a compliment.

Don't judge the college by your tour guide.

How well a tour guide walks backwards shouldn't be part of your decision-making process, nor should you assume everyone on campus is just like him or her (for better or worse).

Make sure the admissions office knows you were there.

Whether you have an on-campus interview, are part of a formal tour group or are conducting your own tour, be sure to leave your contact info with the admissions office. Many campuses will track visits to try to judge the likelihood of someone attending if offered admission.

And if you really want to step up your campus tour game...**Speak with a few professors in your intended area of study.**

This isn't rocket science – you've got it. Talking to a college professor should be no different than talking to a high school teacher. You're assessing this person's interest and ability to connect to you as a person and as a student. If the professor doesn't seem interested in speaking with you, you could be at a school or in a department where professors are more interested in their research than in teaching. While this isn't a good sign, don't assume every professor is the same until you've spoken to a few.

Visit the area of town where most off campus housing is found.

On many college campuses upper class students move off campus to local housing typically rented out to students. Seeing what those areas are like will give you a good idea of what the future could have in store for you at that college. Similarly, if you're thinking of joining a fraternity or sorority, don't hesitate to drive by to see what some of their houses look like.

Speak with club or activity organizers or student government officers.

Just like in high school, being a student in college means being involved outside of the classroom as well, and where you'll meet students with similar interests. While meeting with athletic coaches usually follows the recruitment process, if you're interested in continuing athletics, but not at such a high level, be sure to ask about the intramural athletic programs they offer.

Identify campus mental health supports.

We are collectively becoming smarter in recognizing the need to acknowledge and support mental health challenges. This doesn't stop in college. The many supports students have at SHS will no longer be present, but colleges are improving these services to provide students with greater access at this much needed time in their lives. Stop by the campus' student support center (or other name they give it), and get a sense of the professional support offered. Note how accessible the services are, and what students would need to do to begin utilizing them.

Remember to go into each visit with an open mind and a confident attitude. By mid-April of senior year, you'll realize that the hardest part is deciding which college to attend. If you take these tips seriously and apply them on your visits, you'll be in a much better position to make a decision that's right for you.

Topics For Getting Unstuck *(From the Fiske-Guide)*

Choose one of the following prompts and write an essay in response. Feel free to take the essay in any direction you choose.

- 1) Many people have a beloved t-shirt, a favorite sweater, or a well-worn pair of shoes. Write an essay in which you reflect on a favorite article of clothing, your experiences with it, and how it represents a part of you. For example, one student wrote about all the shoes in her closet, and how each pair represented a different facet of her personality.
- 2) Describe your relationship with a pet. Which of its personality traits are your favorites? What traits in your personality does the pet bring out? Describe an irrational or comical situation you have found yourself in with your pet. Imagine what goes through the pet's mind. How do you explain your bond with your pet? What does the relationship say about you?
- 3) Describe a process related to an activity, hobby, or interest that you have repeated many times. Possibilities are endless and include hitting a baseball, warming up for a concert, putting on make-up, and preparing for a lab. What are the skills necessary? Why is the process significant or meaningful to you?
- 4) Think of a family tradition or activity that has been meaningful in your life. Possibilities include an annual trip to a favorite vacation destination, family dinners, a holiday gathering with extended family, or some other often-repeated activity. Describe the dynamics of the activity and the interaction of the personalities. How might an outsider see this occasion? Are there funny or quirky tales to be told?
- 5) Describe a place that is part of your daily life. It might be your walk or ride to school, your neighborhood, an athletic field, or the grounds of your school. Talk about particular areas within the place and their significance. Describe the people and their turf. Sketch the personalities you see. How have the people and the place helped shape you?
- 6) Think of a view you hold that is not typically shared by people your age, or that differs from the view(s) of your friends or family. It may be as silly as not liking peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, or as serious as not believing in the death penalty. Is there an anecdote that illustrates why you hold the belief that you do? Any reasons why you are uncomfortable or have mixed feelings about holding this view? Explain.
- 7) Identify your favorite academic subject, independent of any teachers you may like or dislike. Explain why you like the subject based on what you "do" when studying it. What have you learned about yourself – skills/abilities, likes/dislikes, your place in the universe – from studying the subject?
- 8) Think of all your favorite hang-out places in the world – in school, your neighborhood, your yard and house, vacation spots, relatives' homes, etc. Choose one and describe why it has such good vibes. Any stories come to mind? How does the place make you feel? What does it make you think about? Have your feelings/perceptions evolved as you have gotten older?

College Essay Do's and Don'ts (From the Fiske-Guide)

WHAT TO DO

- 1) Be Likable, Not Impressive. Too many essay writers sound like the people who introduce themselves by quoting their SAT scores. Your activity list is the place to brag. The essay is the place to be genuine.
- 2) The Best Essays Are About Nothing. That is, they are about nothing but you. Recounting a big experience – like how you dove and caught the ball in the bottom of the ninth inning -- shrinks the space available to show what makes you unique.
- 3) Think Metaphorically. If your life seems mundane, make an analogy to bigger things. Is your school career like the travels of Odysseus? Is Facebook a metaphor for your generation? Maybe not, but think about how small things in your life could represent larger things.
- 4) Circle Your Verbs. Are they concrete and specific? Do they sparkle? Impressive adjectives make for a static essay. Verbs pack punch.
- 5) Wrestle With Uncertainty. The most interesting issues are often the ones with which you are still grappling, and for which you have no easy answer.

WHAT TO AVOID

- 1) A Life-Changing Experience. Did you learn a valuable lesson from losing the big game? Have you been a different person ever since? Probably not – so don't try to convince others that you are.
- 2) Making Everything Peachy Keen. Avoid telling how you encountered a problem, found a solution, and lived happily ever after. It sounds fake and self-serving.
- 3) Social Problem of the Year Bandwagon. Last year, it was the Virginia Tech massacre. This year, it could be global warming. It is generally better to focus on your own problems than those of the world.
- 4) Melodrama. Straining for the dramatic always ends badly. Your life is important to you, and it can be interesting to others, but it is easy to sound self-important when describing your experiences.
- 5) The Person Whom You Admire. If you write about such a person, make sure the essay is about you and not about him or her.

Fiske Real College Essays That Work

Editing Checklist

My essay...

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Couldn't have been written by anyone else</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gets into real stuff – how the author thinks and feels</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has a unifying idea or theme</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tells a story and/or includes concrete anecdotes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is written in a voice that sounds like the author</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has a well-crafted opening line/paragraph</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has active, specific verbs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoids awkward repetition of words or phrasing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Uses varied sentence structure (simple, compound, complex)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Uses “I” where appropriate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoids cynicism, negativity, and self-congratulation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't take itself too seriously</p> |
|--|--|

Where do I begin???

“Structured reflection is important.”

In an excerpt from Business Week, the Director of Admissions for Stanford's Business School, Derrick Bolton, helped to clarify the direction an essay should take:

Q: *More than 5,800 applied to Stanford's full-time MBA program this year. The school accepted 8%. What set those 8% of applicants apart from those who were rejected or wait-listed?*

A: *I really struggle with how to articulate this. What it comes down to is that someone who views the application process as an experience that has value in and of itself typically produces the strongest application.*

Structured reflection is important. But people—and I'm guilty of this—rarely dedicate time to it. So the application process is a rare opportunity in life. Applicants shouldn't just go through it with the goal of getting into a school but with the mindset that they want to learn more about themselves—learn more about their values, crystallize their aspirations, and identify the experiences that they need to make an impact on the world. And those experiences may or may not be business school.

That attitude manifests itself through the consonance of the application. By that, I mean that applicants are able to relate their values to their actions or see the connection between their aspirations and their responsibilities. There's a sense of harmony in the application when we review it. In those cases, the person we get to know in the essays is the person we expect to meet based on their activities, recommendations, and interview. That's extremely powerful.

The best part of any college essay is the point at which it becomes less about admission to college and more of a reflection and appreciation of who you're becoming. Appreciating yourself and your own experiences and honestly writing about that is the challenge. Are you up for it?

Information for Students with Learning Differences

It is important to note that when applying to college, students with documented learning differences who carry either an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) or 504 Plan are generally reviewed under the same admissions criteria as other applicants. Support service offices are separate and distinct from admissions unless specifically noted. Colleges and universities offer a wide variety of levels of supports for students, with costs that vary as well. Many programs are also tailored to address specific learning needs. Similar to other special interest areas, in addition to researching the general academic program, students with specific learning differences must investigate each individual college for their support services program to determine eligibility and personal fit. To help in that search, SHS has compiled a resource of [Specialized College Support Programs for Students with Learning Differences](#).

Other important points to be aware of:

- A student may not receive the same accommodations in college as he/she received in high school. High schools are governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), while colleges are governed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.) It is up to the individual college or university to determine a student's accommodations.
- Students with disabilities seeking testing accommodations on standardized tests such as the PSAT, SAT or ACT, must complete the corresponding applications for accommodations through College Board and/or ACT (separate applications).
- The student determines whether or not to disclose a disability (legal term) to the college or university to which he or she is applying.
- A student's disability is not indicated on the student transcript or any standardized testing reports.
- If disclosing a disability, it is advisable that the student be prepared to speak to the nature of their specific disability and learned strategies for success.
- A college or university may not discriminate on the basis of a student's disability.
- A student must disclose his/her disability in order to receive accommodations.
- Students with disabilities should complete an ACCES-VR (Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation) application in order to determine eligibility for services and supports, including potential financial supports for college.

For specific information on colleges for students with disabilities, check out The Princeton Review's: *K&W Guide to Colleges for the Learning Disabled*; also visit <https://www.petersons.com/blog/20-great-colleges-for-students-with-learning-disabilities/>



Initial-Eligibility Standards

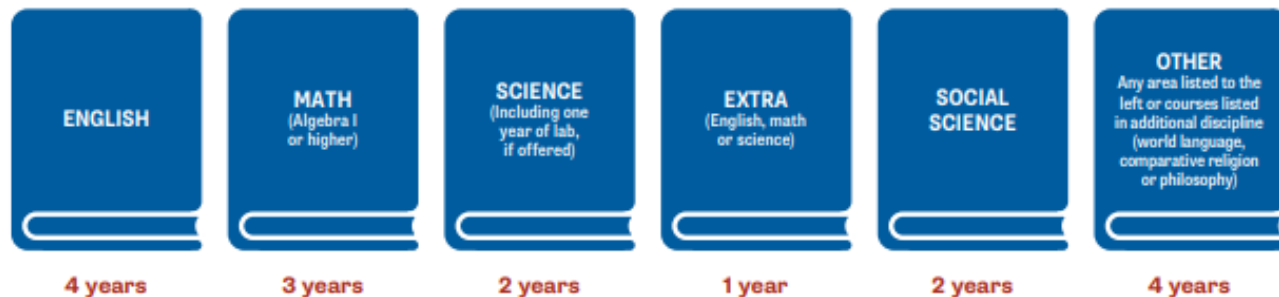
If you want to compete in NCAA sports, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org. Plan to register before your freshman year of high school. For more information on registration, visit on.ncaa.com/RegChecklist.

Academic Requirements

Division I and II schools require you to meet academic standards. To be eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in your first year of full-time enrollment, you must meet the following requirements:

Division I

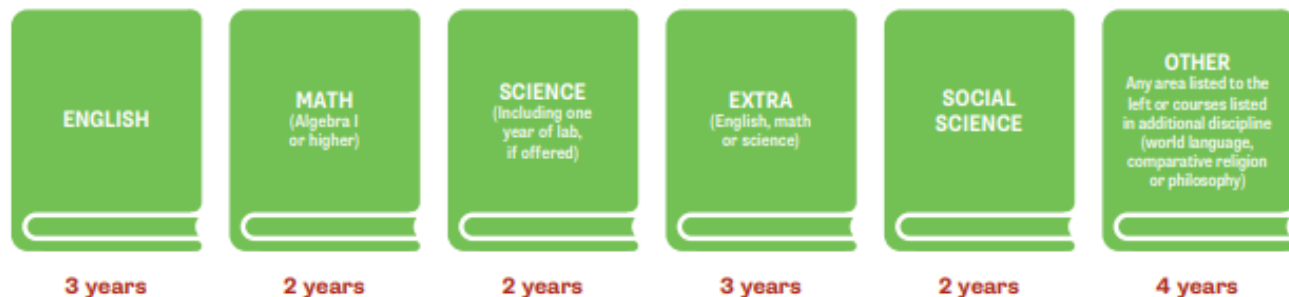
1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:



2. Complete your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in eight academic semesters or four consecutive academic years from the start of ninth grade. If you graduate from high school early, you still must meet core-course requirements.
3. Complete 10 of your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits, including seven in English, math or science, before the start of your seventh semester. Once you begin your seventh semester, any course needed to meet the 10/7 requirement cannot be replaced or repeated.
4. Earn a minimum 2.3 **core-course GPA**.
5. Ask your high school counselor to upload your **final official transcript** with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

Division II

1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:



2. Earn a minimum 2.2 **core-course GPA**.
3. Ask your high school counselor to upload your **final official transcript** with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

Division III

While **Division III schools** set their own admissions and academic requirements, **international student-athletes** (first-year enrollees and transfers) who are enrolling at a Division III school after Aug. 1, 2023, must be certified as an amateur by the Eligibility Center. Contact the Division III school you plan to attend for more information about its academic requirements.

Financial Aid Basics

- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will be available on October 1st of the senior year (using the prior year's tax returns). Applying online is recommended: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- Both student and parent/guardian must establish an FSA (Federal Student Aid) ID to apply online. This replaces the old FAFSA PIN.
- The [CSS Profile](#) is required by many private colleges, and deadlines are generally near the end of October. Please check your deadlines.
- Never assume your eligibility/ ineligibility for aid.
- The FAFSA must be completed in order to secure a student loan.
- Log on to <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/> for an early estimate of your financial aid eligibility. This will also expedite your process for applying in senior year.
- Visit any of your prospective colleges' [Net Price Calculator](#) to get the most specific financial aid estimate from a particular school.
- Begin scholarship searches at <http://www.scholarships.com/> , <http://www.fastweb.com/> or <http://www.meritaid.com/>
- Be sure that your list of colleges includes varied financial options. In addition to any private or out of state public schools, be sure to include some NY public and/or private colleges and universities.
- Get a true handle on the cost of your education and payments required at <https://mappingyourfuture.org/pay-for-college/>
- Beware of scholarship scams. Any organization requiring fees for financial aid should be disregarded. For further information on scholarship scams, visit: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/index.shtml>
- **DON'T MISS ANY DEADLINES!!**

Types of student loans

- **Subsidized Stafford Loans:** Federal loan for students who qualify based on need, using the FAFSA. Interest does not accrue while student is in school.
- **Unsubsidized Stafford Loans:** Federal loans available to any student, regardless of need, with which interest accrues while the student is in school.
- **Perkins Loans:** Federal student loans based on need, in which the school is the lender.
- **Parent Loans:** The Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students, or PLUS loans, cover any costs not already covered by the student's financial aid package. Parents are responsible for payment.
- **Consolidation Loans:** These loans combine several federal student or parent loans into one bigger loan from a single lender.
- **Private student loans:** These loans are offered by private lenders. They can help students who do not qualify for federal loans or who do not receive enough funding to cover the cost of college.
- **State Loans:** Student loans offered by the recipient's home state.
- **Institution loans:** Student loans offered by the college being attended.

Develop a Long-Term Outlook: Questions to ask before taking on a loan

- Is there a chance I will also be going to graduate school (more expensive per credit than undergrad)?
- How will this debt affect my future career choices?
- How will this debt affect my ability to live the lifestyle I would like to live (car, home, social life, family, etc.)?
- Do I have strong coping skills to manage the stress of financial debt?

College Application Terms

Associate's degree	A two-year degree. Students may apply credits from a two-year program to a four-year program.
Bachelor's degree	A four-year, undergraduate degree.
Binding decision	If you are accepted, you must attend that college (ED only.)
The Coalition Application	An application that over 100 college subscribe to, which is filled out once and submitted to multiple colleges. It is less widely accepted than the Common Application.
The Common Application	An application that about 900 colleges subscribe to which is filled out once and submitted to multiple colleges.
CSS Profile	A financial aid application (more detailed than the FAFSA) for private colleges, available in October of senior year.
Deferral	An EA or ED application may be deferred for review to the regular applicant pool.
Deposit	This is your non-refundable fee that is paid to <u>one</u> college by May 1 st to acknowledge that you will be attending.
Early Action (EA)	An application deadline as early as November 1 st , which will generally provide a non-binding response from the college by December 15. Students may apply to multiple EA colleges. Exceptions to this rule are Single Choice, or Restrictive EA plans, which allow only one EA application (Boston College, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale.)
Early Decision (ED)	An application deadline as early as November 1 st , which will generally provide a binding response from the college by December 15. Students may only apply to one college ED. ED II is a later round of ED.
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid, available in October of the senior year at https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa . Beware of sites ending in .com, or .org, or programs that charge fees (scams.)
NCAA Clearinghouse	Organization that determines student athletic eligibility for Division I and Division II programs.
Official Testing	Standardized testing (SAT's or ACT's) which students must request to request to be sent directly from the College Board or ACT to colleges.
Regular decision	This application deadline ranges from 1/1 to 3/1. Decisions will generally arrive home in the first week of April.
Rolling admissions	Rolling applications are typically reviewed according to the date by which they are received. State schools, (SUNY and out of state, state colleges), generally follow this practice. It is recommended to submit any rolling applications on the same time line as EA or ED applications.
Wait list	A regular applicant who cannot be offered acceptance at decision time, but may be offered admission at a later date can be placed on this list.

