College Applications 101

Where do we start?
Right here!

HCS Scholars Academy High School
Spring, 2025

Starting the College Application Process

- **Choose the colleges you are going to apply to**

- **Determine what application platform you will use to apply to each college**

- **Identify deadlines**

- **Prioritize tasks**

WHICH COLLEGES SHOULD I APPLY TO?

- **Research Colleges**
  Naviance Career Guidance Tool/Big Future

- **Colleges Visits–Submit the Form prior to the visit and turn in proof of attendance to Mrs. Holland**
  [College Visit Approval Form](#)
  (also available outside of Mrs. Williams office and Guidance Webpage)

- **Schedule and attend your IGP meeting this summer or early fall.**
  [IGP Scheduling Link](#)

How Many Schools Should I Apply To?

- Reach/Target/Safety Schools
- Consider Application Fees
- Time to Work on the Applications

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS & FEE WAIVERS

- Most students will take the SAT or ACT **two to three times**.

- You should evaluate your scores and consider a college's application profile when you are considering **Test Optional.** If you do consider this route ensure the other components of your application are strong.

- Speak with Mrs. Williams if you believe you may qualify for a test fee waiver. If you qualify you may also be able to receive application fee waivers as well.

Link to Apply Directly to College Board for Fee Waiver

Starting the College Application Process

- **Common App opens for application submission August 1st**

  Common App Link

- **Questbridge National College Match Application opens August 1st**

  Questbridge Information and FAQ

  Questbridge Match Application Link

- **Individual College Applications**

Early Decision vs. Early Action

Application Deadlines

Early Action—Non Binding

Most deadlines are early November with admissions response by March 1.

Early Decision—Binding
Most deadlines are early November with admissions response by March 1.

Regular Decision
Deadlines are usually in December/January/February or Rolling Admissions.

SC Colleges Early Action Deadlines
October 15 Clemson & USC (Non-Binding)
October 22 Clemson Honors College
November 15 USC Honors College
November 15 CCU Early Action (Non-Binding)
December 15 College of Charleston (Non-Binding)

Information Needed for Applications

Demographics

Basic information -- Social Security #, Driver's License # if applicable, in-state colleges may ask for items to prove residency, etc.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Clubs, Sports, Community Organizations or Affiliations, Summer or Part-time Job Information

Honors or Awards/Recognition Received

List of awards or recognition while in high school for both school and community recognition.

Test Scores

Don't wait to complete application trying for a higher score.

Transcripts
https://www.parchment.com/

Application Fees or Fee Waivers

The Common App essay prompts for the 2025–2026 application cycle will remain the same as last year. You can start early using the current prompts. The only change is to the 'Additional Information' section, now called 'Challenges and Circumstances,' with a reduced word limit of 300 words.

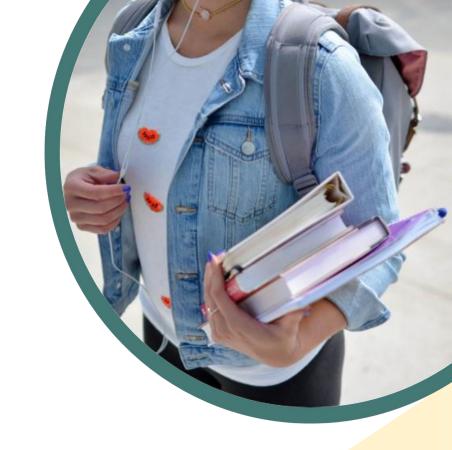2025-26 Common-App-essay-pompts

Resources

Writing a strong college essay--Khan Academy

How to Hook Your Reader and Write Better College Essay Openings

Brainstorming your college essay topic

Email Dr. Rabon to schedule an appointment for help planning and writing your essay.

College Essays

Letters of Recommendation

Scholars Academy Letter of Recommendation Form

Scholars Academy Staff

- Complete the Google Form for SAHS Staff.
- Make sure each teacher, counselor, and administrator is aware of your request, and the deadline.
- Give them as much notice ahead of a deadline as possible, but **NO LESS THAN 10 BUSINESS DAYS.**

Community Recommenders

- Make them aware of the deadlines and instructions on where or how they should submit their recommendation.
- Give them as much notice ahead of a deadline as possible, but **NO LESS THAN 10 BUSINESS DAYS.**

It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with a recommender regarding deadlines and send a thank you note or email.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

We will have a guest speaker during your grade level meeting in the fall for updates on FAFSA.

FAFSA/CSS PROFILE

GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS

Guidance Google Classroom Code
csf5be4l

Guidance Webpage
https://scholars.horrycountyschools.net/guidance

Guidance Email
gwilliams006@horrycountyschools.net

Guidance Resources

Additional Questions