

EA College Counseling: COMMON APP



The Common Application (Common App) is a standardized college application platform used by hundreds of colleges and universities across the United States and internationally. The Common Application streamlines the college application process by allowing students to complete one application form and submit it to multiple colleges.

SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT: *A Step-by-Step Guide*

- 1 Visit apply.commonapp.org**
- 2 Choose Account Type** Select "First-Year Student."
- 3 Provide Basic Information** Fill out required fields. Use your EA email address. Check your email regularly as this will be the primary mode of communication for your account.
- 4 Create a Password** Choose a strong password. **Pro Tip:** Create a password library document easily accessible on your phone and computer. You will soon manage credentials with each application portal, Common App, Collegeboard, ACT, and FAFSA.
- 5 Confirm Your Email Address** Check your inbox and click the Common App verification link provided.
- 6 Complete Profile Information** Once your email address is confirmed, you'll be directed to complete your profile information. This includes additional personal details such as your address, phone number, high school information, and more.
- 7 Final Steps** Read through and agree to the Terms and Conditions. Double-check all the information you've entered to ensure accuracy. Click "Submit" or "Create Account."
- 8 Check Your Email** Follow any additional instructions in the confirmation email sent by Common App.
- 9 Begin the Application Process** Once your account is created, you can start exploring colleges, adding them to your "My Colleges" list, and working on your applications.

That's it! You can now begin your college applications. Remember to keep your login credentials secure and accessible, as you'll need them throughout your college application journey.

NAVIGATING YOUR ACCOUNT

Common App's six main tabs facilitate different stages in your college search and application submission.

DASHBOARD

The main landing page of your account provides an overview of your application progress, including any tasks that need attention, upcoming deadlines, and notifications from colleges or universities. You can access sections of your application from the Dashboard and keep track of your overall progress.

MY COLLEGES

Here, you manage the list of colleges and universities you're interested in applying to. Search or add colleges to your list, and track application requirements and deadlines specific to each institution. You can also monitor the status of your applications and any communication from colleges on your list.

COMMON APP

Complete and submit your actual application forms for the colleges on your list. This tab includes the different sections of the application. You'll provide detailed information about yourself, academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and write essays or personal statements required by the colleges.

COLLEGE SEARCH

Explore and discover colleges and universities that match your preferences and criteria. Filter schools based on factors like location, size, majors offered, application deadlines, and more. You'll get detailed information about each college, including admission requirements, campus life, and programs.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS

Some colleges simplify the college application process by extending admissions offers to qualified students before they apply. Participating colleges set eligibility criteria and then Common App identifies students who meet those criteria based on their Common App responses. If you receive an offer, you'll get a notification in this section.

FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES

This section supports you in navigating the financial aspects of your college education. Access guides, articles, and tools to help you understand the financial aid process, estimate college costs, search for scholarships, and learn about different types of financial aid available to students.

SUBMITTING THE COMMON APP

Broken into numerous sections, the Common App (in the **Common App** tab) provides an overview of your academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, personal background, and writing abilities. Here's an overview of each section:

1 PROFILE

PERSONAL INFORMATION: Submit demographic details like name, address, phone, email, date of birth, and more.

FAMILY INFORMATION: Provide information about your family, including parents' educational background, employment status, and any siblings attending college.

Note: You must include institutions attended by your parents, degrees earned, and year of graduation.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION: Provide details about your high school, graduation year, GPA, class rank, standardized test scores (SAT, ACT), and academic honors or awards.

Ask your EA college counselor which honors and awards to highlight! This is a great opportunity to share, especially if awards are at the regional, state, or national level. *For example: PJAS placements, National Merit, Scholastic Awards, national recognition awards from Collegeboard, Coca Cola Scholars, etc. Honors unique to EA include departmental or book awards, or standard bearer.*

Academic Information Quick Tips:

- Remember, EA does not rank. Leave class rank blank.
- Enter your cumulative, unweighted GPA from the end of junior year.
- Total senior year courses depend on how many yearlong or semester classes you're taking. Count each course as "1" when figuring out the total number. *Example: Government (1 course), English (1 course), etc.*
- Unless you are submitting your score to all of your schools, leave the testing section blank. Select **NO** for both questions.
- EA college counselors will help you decide when to submit your ACT, SAT, and AP scores to individual schools.

EDUCATION HISTORY: List high school courses, grades, and any college courses you've completed. If you transferred schools or completed a semester abroad, include that information. You will need to craft a short explanation about changing high schools. Your EA counselors are here to help.

Under **Semester**, add senior courses from both semesters. Indicate course levels (College Prep, Honors, or AP), and select which semester the course is in (yearlong for both semesters). If you have taken any classes for credit outside of EA, this is where you will include those courses.

2 ACTIVITIES

List your extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, volunteer work, part-time jobs, internships, and other activities you've participated in during high school.

- If you're responsible for caring for a family member (sibling or elderly relative), you may include it here.
- You may enter only 10 activities (no, you don't need to fill all 10), so prioritize activities in order of importance to you, leadership experience, and/or time commitment.

For each activity, provide details such as position/role, organization name, participation dates, hours per week, and weeks per year.

- Be thoughtful and concise - there are limits to number of activities (10) and characters (150).
- Full sentences are not required, but be consistent with punctuation, capitalization, and grammar.
- Not all schools will review your resume, so this will be the only section they see of your extracurriculars.

Activities Section Quick Tip:

Create a resume to use as a guide for the activity section. While some colleges will not accept your resume as an additional document, it is good to have one ready for alumni interviews, internships, job applications, and scholarships.

ADDING COLLEGES

In the **College Search** tab, type the college name, and the school will pop up. Click the plus sign to add.

Don't worry - adding schools here does not mean you have to submit an application. You may remove colleges at any time!

RIGHT THIS WAY:

Essays, recommendations, and submitting the Common App! 

SUBMITTING THE COMMON APP, *continued*

3 WRITING

PERSONAL STATEMENT/ESSAY: This is the main essay required by Common App. Choose one of several prompts, and write a 650-word essay sharing a meaningful personal story, experience, or reflection.

Essay Quick Tips:

- Check with your EA college counselor for help copying and pasting your college essay into Common App.
- Warning: Common App will automatically bold text when you paste, so you'll want to fix that!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: You have the option to provide explanations for any aspects of your application, such as gaps in academic records or special circumstances. This is an excellent opportunity to briefly provide context and/or to humbly brag about a particular component of your application. We encourage students to chat with their college counselor about any content you might include in this section.

4 SUPPLEMENTAL SECTIONS *(if applicable)*

Many colleges require students to complete supplemental questions or essays in addition to the main Common App essay. These supplements are specific to each college and may include questions about why you're interested in that particular school, specific academic or extracurricular interests, or additional personal statements.

Supplemental Sections Quick Tips:

- Each college has a **member page**. On this tab, you will find supplemental essays and questions unique to that particular college. Your responses should be similarly unique. Do not copy and paste between schools. Your responses should connect you to that college.
- Here's a rule of thumb for supplemental essays: If it states *optional*, consider it required. Discuss with your EA college counselor what might actually be considered optional.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, students can invite teachers, counselors, or other recommenders to submit letters of recommendation through the Common App.

Recommendations Sections Quick Tips:

- If you are requesting any outside recommendations, this is where you will add those people. Do **not** add EA faculty!
- Do list your college counselor as an advisor (scroll down the the bottom of the page to find this tab) and click "enable preview."

6 SUBMISSION

Once all sections of the Common App are completed, you must review their application for accuracy and completeness. Then, submit the application electronically to the colleges of your choice.

Submission Section Quick Tips:

- Utilize the **Preview** option to thoroughly proofread your application.
- By clicking **Preview** and downloading your completed Common App, you will have a chance to proofread your work and make sure everything is completed properly. The **Preview** option will show you what your college admission readers will see!

KEEP IN MIND

The EA College Counseling team is here to help at **any step in the application process!** If you get stuck or wonder how to input any piece of information, do not hesitate to reach out.

Always **double-check for typos and final edits before sending your application** to any school! Your EA college counselor will be happy to review your entire Common App before submitting.

*Good luck, students!
You've got this!*

REACH OUT.

The EA College Counseling team is always here to help. If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to your EA college counselor!