What can I do this summer to prepare for college applications in the fall?







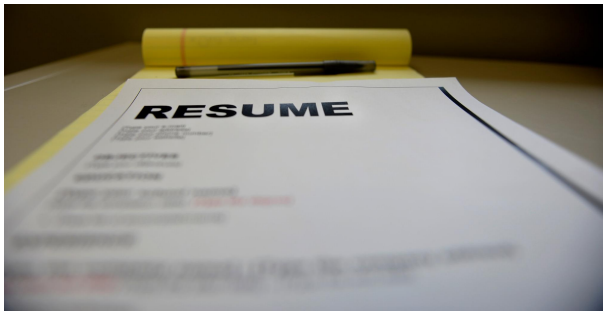
Create your short list of schools you will apply to....

- Visit prospective colleges
  - Visiting allows you to know if it “feels right”
- Narrow college list to 3-5 schools
  - These include your reach school, match school, and fall back school
- Some in person visits results in an application fee waivers
  - Visiting narrows down your selection, potentially saving on application fees
- Start a spreadsheet or list of potential colleges or calendar
  - Include deadlines, # of recommendations needed, priority FAFSA deadlines

Get your resume and activities list together....

- Create a google doc of everything you have done in past high school years
  - Include any volunteer activities, leadership positions, and work experiences.
  - Make sure to include # hours spent on each activity, or how long the activity was
  - Include a section of awards including athletic, academic, Kiwanis

This helps your recommendation letter writers know all of your background



Create a “brag sheet”

- Complete this brag sheet
  - Name, email address, cell number
  - Activities: List the activities in and out of school that have been most important to you. Tell us how long you have participated in each and what you have learned from your participation.
  - List any awards and honors you have received, in and out of school. Tell us which are most important to you and why.
  - Tell us what your friends would say are your three best or most admirable qualities. Explain each in several sentences or give examples of how you have demonstrated those qualities.
  - Describe the academic experience that has most strongly influenced you in high school.
  - In 3 or 4 adjectives, how would you describe yourself?
  - Describe the best advice you have ever received from anyone.
  - Describe a situation where you have been a leader. Give examples of how you demonstrated leadership.
  - Tell us what you hope to accomplish in your future.
    - Consider your career and / or college goals as well as broader goals.

This will assist your counselors/teachers to write letters of recommendation

Take or retake your ACT or SAT....

- June 13th ACT is at MVHS on paper.
  - Regular registration ended May 8th. You can register with a late fee until May 29th.
- July 11th ACT but it is not at MVHS.
  - Pick the closest location when you register. www.act.org
- June 6th SAT.
  - Register by May 22 www.collegeboard.org
- October ACT is the last date you want to test

- Scores from ACT and College Board take a couple weeks to process
- You will want to request your scores to be sent to your colleges directly from ACT or College Board
- November 1 is a deadline that you want to fulfill

ACT®

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SAT®

Continue your activities this summer….

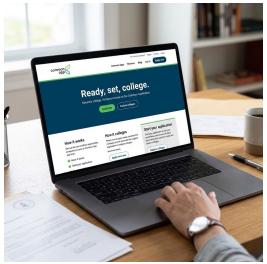


- Keep volunteering
- Keep attending your meetings for your clubs
- Keep putting yourself out there
- If interested, do a summer academic camp

These items help you figure out what you want to do and where and help you stand out.



Start your college essay....



Common App Essay Prompts 2026–2027

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design

Word Limit: The personal statement must be between 250 and 650 words, with a hard cutoff at 650

Playing college sports?



- Make sure you register at eligibility center for NCAA at the end of your Junior year.

NCAA website: www.ncaa.org

NAIA website: https://play.mynaia.org/

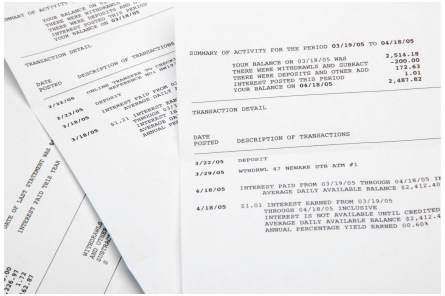
Make sure you let your coach and Mr. Sanford know if this is your plan.

Plan who you will have write your letters of recommendation....

- All colleges are different as to if they need letters of recommendation or not. Most state schools don't require any but will take one or two. Most branches (Newark Mansfield, ATI) do not require any. Most selective schools require between 1 and three.
- A good rule of thumb is to pick a teacher that you have had recently that knows you well. If you plan to go into mathematics, pick a math teacher. If you plan to go into science, pick a science teacher. Make sure it is someone that will say nice things about you. Do NOT have a family member write one for you.
- Give them enough notice and a copy of your activities sheet / resume. Do not expect them to turn it out in a couple days. It will not be a thoughtful letter.

Check your transcript....

- Make sure all of your classes are on there, including summer classes, and middle school classes taken for high school credit. You want to make sure the transcript you send to colleges is accurate.
- Get your PE Waivers turned in.



Decide if you need to use the Common Application or not

- The Common Application is one website that you use to fill out an application and then send it to all your schools that accept common app. If you are only applying to one school, sometimes not using the common app is easier. If you plan to apply to 5 schools and they all use Common App, use the Common App as it would be easier.

- If you are not using The Common App, you will be applying “direct to institution” which just means you will go to the college’s website and click “apply” and use their application.

Common Application doesn't open until August 1st

- Do not start your common app before August 1st. That is when it becomes active for Fall applications. You can create your account ahead of time.
- Colleges will require you to submit a transcript with your initial application. They will want it to have your current senior year classes on it. These usually aren't available until September.
- What to do after you apply will be covered at your senior class meeting. These are usually held the first couple weeks of school! Please come!

Questions?

Counselors work two weeks after teachers and come back two weeks before. Reach out if you need anything.

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