Class of 2027
Senior College Packet



SENIOR PACKET
TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. "Dear Senior" Letter
2. Senior Year College Applications – How to Apply
3. College Application Deadline Worksheet
4. EDOCS Student Guide
5. College Application Communication Form
6. Naviance Info Sheet
7. College Testing – Dates, ACT and SAT, AP's
8. Suggested Timeline for taking SAT Subject Tests/ SAT and ACT Reg Info
9. Financial Aid Information and Forms
12. FairTest
14. NCAA
16. College Essay Tips & Advice
17. College Essay Supplements

* Additional forms available in the Guidance & Counseling Office and Online. Visit: ***www.whs.mtplcsd.org***

MEMORANDUM

From the Office of Westlake High School
Guidance & Counseling Department

Fall 2026

Dear Senior:

It's hard to believe that you are about to embark on one of the most important journeys of your life: the college process! We want to assist you in every way to get you to where you want to go. As mentioned in your junior conference, you have several "assignments" to do in order for the counselors to process your college applications and for you to fulfill each of your college's requirements. This booklet contains all the necessary information for you to accomplish your goals. Remember, if you follow each step we have outlined, you have a much better chance of being accepted.

Complete the Teacher Recommendation/Activity Survey in Naviance. We will use this info when writing your letters of recommendation. In addition, please read over all of the attached information re: SATs, ACTs, Naviance, FAFSA, CSS PROFILE, WHS Teacher Recommendation sheets, testing dates, etc.

The sooner that you finish all of your college applications, the better off you will ALL be. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to see your counselor ASAP. Good luck!

Mr. Nicholas P. DiPaolo
K-12 School Counseling Coordinator
School Counselor

Mrs. Lauren Cody
Ms. Cotrone
Mr. Tim O'Dwyer
School Counselors

Senior Year College Applications: How To Apply

1. Complete Teacher Recommendation Survey on Naviance. Include all School/community information, grades 9-12. Don't sell yourself short!

2. **Ask 2 academic teachers for letters of recommendation**. It is important to approach the teachers you are asking for letters in person about your request. Be advised, a teacher has the right to decline this request. Once confirmed you must login to your Naviance account and electronically request your teachers to write letters of recommendation for you. It is advised that you include a note in your Naviance electronic request. Keep in mind teachers are inundated with requests so it is important to request letters as soon as possible. If you have application deadlines, it is important for teachers to know this. Lastly, counselors are not permitted to show you a teacher's letter of recommendation.

3. Make sure your **Naviance and Common application profiles are up to date**. No applications can be processed unless this step is complete. **The only way to have your high school information sent to colleges is by using Naviance.**

4. Apply to your schools of choice using the school's online application or the Common Application. Complete all applications to the best of your ability. You can choose to review the applications with your counselor before submitting. Be sure to make an appointment for this service during your study hall and/or lunch. Be sure to carefully fill everything out. Once you have applied online, you must complete the necessary steps on your Naviance account. Please refer to the Naviance eDocs Student Guide on the **REQUIRED** steps you must take to inform your Counselor that you applied to college. These steps include indicating your applications in Naviance as well as completing a short hard copy form that gets handed directly to your Counselor. Upon receiving this form, your counselor will electronically submit your official transcript, counselor letter of recommendation, teacher letters of recommendation, school profile and related evaluation forms. If there is anything else your college requires our office to submit, please specify that to your Counselor. BE ADVISED it can take up to **ONE WEEK** to submit this information, so complete these steps well in advance of your application deadlines.

5. **FORWARD TEST SCORES TO ALL COLLEGES**. Each student is responsible for sending SAT and/or ACT scores to the colleges to which they apply. Westlake High School is **NOT** permitted to send scores or report scores on your transcript. Sending scores is easy and only takes a few moments. There is a fee associated with this. Every college-bound student in every school is required to do this. N.B. College Board (SAT) and ACT Corp both have Score Choice Option. You can choose to hide scores you do not wish to send. It can take up to two weeks for the College Board and ACT to send your scores.

6. If your school requires a **CSS profile** (most private schools do) you must fill this out as close to October 1st as possible. See your counselor for details.

7. **FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid**. This is a necessary process to obtain financial aid and/or student loans. This must be filled out as close to October 1st as possible. There is a very, very helpful Financial Aid workshop in September for your parents to attend. Please see the District Calendar for a specific date/time/place. Also visit www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information on FAFSA.

8. All applications should be submitted electronically two weeks before the deadline. This will ensure that all of your supporting materials are sent in before the deadline. It will also give you ample time to confirm everything was received by the college. Westlake HS asks that all of your applications are submitted by **Dec 1st** in an effort to wrap up the college application season before the holiday break.

Important Follow-up Information...

- It is good to call the admissions office to each school you apply to, to ensure they received all necessary materials.
- Mid-year and Final transcripts will automatically be sent to the schools you apply to (Midyear) and the school which you attend (final).
- Inform your counselor every time a college admits, waitlists or denies you.

When in doubt, ask your counselor! *Updated August 2026*

College Application Deadline Worksheet

Name:_____

Grade: 11 12

COLLEGE	APP. DEADLINE	APP. TYPE EA, ED, RD, Rolling

Counselor: Cody Cotrone DiPaolo O'Dwyer

WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

Using eDOCS through NAVIANCE Family Connection powered by NAVIANCE …A Student's Guide

Below is a step-by-step guide on how students can utilize the extremely fast and seamless eDocs program to process their college applications.

Requesting teacher recommendations…

- Sign in to your Naviance account. http://connection.naviance.com/westlakehs
- Next, click the "Colleges" tab, then go to "Apply to Colleges."
- Next, click where it says "letters of recommendation."
- Next, click on "Request Recommendation."
- **1)** From the drop down menu, first select "Teacher" then select the teacher who you are requesting a letter from, **2)** select the "open" request button and **3)** Be sure to fill out the "Additional Details" section as it is considered poor etiquette to simply request a letter. It is recommended you opt to send a personal note asking the teacher if they would be interested in writing a letter on your behalf.
- Once complete, click the "submit" button. This will send an email to the teacher inquiring about their interest in writing a letter for you.
- Be sure to also complete the **WHS Teacher Recommendation/Activity Survey** (available on your Naviance account, under the "About Me" tab, then click "Surveys From Your School"). It is required and extremely important that you complete the above survey. Without this info, your teacher will NOT write a letter of recommendation for you. Please know: a teacher has the right to decline your request for a letter.

  ****** Please note, if this page does not load according to the instructions above, you must clear your browsing history. It is recommended you use Chrome for this application.***

Notifying your Counselor you've applied to college…

- Once you submit **ANY** college application, be sure to immediately complete a College Application Communication Form and hand it directly to your counselor or the Guidance Secretary. (N.B. You **MUST** do this each time you apply to colleges.)

***** IMPORTANT *****

- The College Application Communication Form (CACF) is used to let your counselor know that you applied to a college and to send your transcript, letters of recommendation, and related application materials. Copies of the CACF can be found on our website and in the Guidance & Counseling Department Office. ***Do NOT forget to hand this form in!***

—Wait, you're not done yet!—

Be sure to include your applications on Naviance as well.

1. Click on the "Colleges" tab, then "Colleges I am applying to."
2. Next, click the "+" button and enter the name of the college and using the drop down menu, select the application type (regular decision, early action, etc.).
3. Next, click on how you applied (via Common App, etc.).
4. Last, check the box, "I've submitted my application" and click, "Add and Request Transcript (initial).

Now, you're done!

If you have any questions at any time, feel free to contact your counselor.

Revised: 09/2026

**** IMPORTANT****

College Application Communication Form

Students ***MUST*** complete this form to let the Guidance & Counseling Dept. know of the colleges applied to.

(Hand deliver this form directly to your counselor or Mrs. Pezzuti.)

****** Remember to also enter your applications in Naviance ******

Student Name: _____

School Counselor: Cody Cotrone DiPaolo O'Dwyer

College Name	Date Applied	Application Deadline Date	Application Type (Regular, ED, EA etc..)	Method (via Common App, school app etc)

** By submitting this form, you hereby give permission to release your records to the colleges you indicated above

Office Use Only:

Date Form received:_____ Initials: _____

Introducing Naviance from the Westlake High School Guidance Department



A Quick Guide for Students and Parents to Sign into Family Connection

What is Family Connection?

- An On-line Resource for Students and Parents for Post High School Planning & Advising
- A web-based resource for students and parents that encourages and supports post high school career and college planning.
- Family Connection is specific to your school
- Family Connection is linked with Naviance Succeed, a service that is used in the counseling office

What Can Students And Parents Do Using Family Connection?

- View guidance news bulletins
- Create a résumé
- View college visits and sign up
- Complete a college search
- Develop a prospective college list
- Provide access to scholarship search engines; over a hundred national
- scholarships are available
- Maintain journal entries
- Game Plan Survey
- Complete surveys
- Compare colleges
- Links to selected third party resources
  (i.e., College Board, Financial Aid, College Athletics, College searches, etc.)
- Track deadlines

How Do Students and Parents Register for a Family Connection Account?

- Students receive a registration code
- Parents receive a separate registration code
- Registration codes are used to create accounts
- Codes are random and alphanumeric for security reasons
- **Codes can be used only once**
- On your first visit, enter the code in the New User box, then follow on-screen instructions to create a username and password
- **Your school will provide you with a password**
- On subsequent visits, sign in using the Returning User box

URL: **http://connection.naviance.com/westlakehs**

COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM FOR 2026 – 2027

General Information

1. Registration for **SAT I** and **ACT** are done online at collegeboard.com or act.org
2. Consult websites for the nearest test location.
3. Westlake High School's SCHOOL CODE is: **3 3 5 5 6 3**.

+ Different tests are required by different colleges; in addition, specific tests may be more beneficial to certain students than others. For assistance in determining what test to take please contact your counselor.

American College Testing (ACT)

2026- 2027 TESTING DATES

September	**19**	**2026**
October	**17**	**2026**
December	**12**	**2026**
February	**27**	**2027**
April	**10**	**2027**
June	**12**	**2027**
July	**10**	**2027**

Explanation of Tests: (+)

ACT – American College Test for juniors & seniors.

PSAT I – Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test for sophomores and juniors.

SAT I – Scholastic Assessment Test for juniors & seniors.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

2026 – 2027 TESTING DATES

August	**22**	**2025**
September	**12**	**2025**
October	**3**	**2025**
November	**7**	**2025**
December	**5**	**2025**
March	**6**	**2026**
May	**1**	**2026**
June	**5**	**2026**

Additional Testing Information

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)
Testing date is **Saturday, October 17, 2026,** here at Westlake High School.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations: ***May 3-7 and 10-14, 2027***

TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TOEFL) *– See your Counselor.*
These tests are administered at National Sylvan Testing Centers and can be taken at any time during the year. This is a computer-based testing program. Information bulletins are available in the Guidance Office or online at www.ets.org/toefl.

ALL IDENTIFIED JUNIORS & SENIORS: *The SAT and ACT with special accommodations are available at Westlake. See your Counselor and Resource Room Teacher for details.*

COLLEGEBOARD.COM

REGISTERING

Register Online – It's Fast and Easy!

- Register for the SAT
- Print Your SAT Admission Ticket
- View Your SAT Scores
- Send Your SAT Scores

One of the following credit cards is required to complete your SAT registration:
Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express.

View and Send Scores

To view or send your scores on the Web, click the View and Send Scores button below and sign in to visit your SAT Registration and Scores page. You must have a username and password to use this feature.

Standby Registration is available if you miss the late registration deadline. An additional fee applies, and admission to a test center cannot be guaranteed.

THE ACT

Register Online at: www.actstudent.org

1. Select Sign up now. (You can take up to 72 hours to complete and submit your record.)
2. Start your registration

With online registration you:

- can complete your registration 24/7
- get your admission ticket sooner
- have access to the most up-to-date list of locations so you can get the best choice of test centers.

Financial Aid Fact Sheet

CONTACT EACH COLLEGE TO FIND OUT WHAT FORMS THEY REQUIRE AND THEIR DEADLINES
ALSO ASK FOR THEIR 6 DIGIT FEDERAL SCHOOL CODE (needed for FAFSA)

FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid (required by all colleges) - www.studentaid.gov

FAFSA Estimator - https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator
CSS PROFILE - Only required by some colleges - check with schools - www.collegeboard.com
NYS Aid Application - www.hesc.ny.gov

I. **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

A. Pell Grant

1 - Based on all monies coming into home, taxable and non-taxable income, parental and student
2 - Interest income, pensions, and other assets are also counted
   a. Pre-tax contribution to tax-deferred accounts (401k, 403B, etc.)
3 - The amount of the grants depends on cost of the school and #s 1 and 2 above
4 - Award is maximum $7,395 (for 2024-25)
5 - Can be used at any eligible school in the United States (and some abroad)
6 - No repayment

B. **SEOG (Supplementary Education Opportunity Grant)**

1 - Federal money distributed by colleges for Pell eligible students

HOW TO APPLY: FAFSA

II. STATE GOVERNMENT

A. **New York** - money can only be used in NYS by NYS residents

1 - **TAP**
   a. Based on your student/parent NYS net taxable income (must be below $125,000) and school's tuition rate
   b. Award is from $1,000-$5,665 (for 2024-25). Higher Education Services Corp. (HESC) determines the actual award
   c. No repayment

2 - **Additional Academic-based Scholarships** - see Guidance Counselor or go to www.hesc.ny.gov

HOW TO APPLY: TAP Form at www.hesc.ny.gov

3 - **Excelsior Scholarship** - For students whose parents earn less than $125,000 - up to full tuition at SUNY/CUNY only

4 - **Enhanced Tuition Award (ETA)** - For students whose parents earn less than $125,000 - up to $6,000 per year after other NYS awards to attend a private college/university that participates in the program

III. **COLLEGES**

A. **Academic Scholarships**

1 - Usually based on GPA and SAT/ACT scores
2 - No repayment (check conditions and length)
3 - Ask each school - Do you give them?

B. **Grant-in-Aid**

1 - Based solely on financial need as determined by the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile
2 - No repayment

C. **Work Study** (could also be considered federal student aid)

1 - Student is eligible to work to help pay for indirect college expenses
2 - Student earns these funds through employment
3 - Does not pay for direct costs/reduce bill

HOW TO APPLY: Use FAFSA form and for some schools the CSS Profile

Financial Aid Fact Sheet

IV. LOANS

A. Federal Direct Loans

1 - Student may borrow $3,500 (1st year); $4,500 (2nd year) and $5,500 (3rd and 4th year)
2 - Subsidized - need-based: loan is interest free while in school
3 - Unsubsidized - interest must be paid while student is in school – students eligible for $2,000 per year in addition to the amounts listed in item #1
4 - Interest rate - for 2024-25 – 6.53%
5 - Student pays it back. No parental obligation
6 - The origination fee is 1.057%
7 - You must file a FAFSA to get a Direct Loan

HOW TO APPLY: FAFSA

B. Direct Parent Loan (PLUS)

1 - Credit-based loan
2 - Parents can borrow if there is a difference between total cost of attendance and financial aid awarded
3 - Can defer principle payment until six months after student graduates or falls below half-time
4 - Interest rate for 2024-25 is 9.08% with a 4.228% loan origination fee
5 - If parents are credit denied they can seek a co-signer or the student becomes eligible for an additional unsubsidized loan - $4,000 for 1st and 2nd year; $5,000 for 3rd and 4th year

HOW TO APPLY: Varies by school, but student must file FAFSA

C. Private Education Loans (also called Alternative loans)

1 - Loans in the student or parent/sponsor's name that require a co-signer from a private lender
2 - Can borrow the difference between the total cost of attendance minus financial aid - usually used instead of the Parent Loan
3 - School must certify the loan

HOW TO APPLY: Student applies with lender of choice

V. OUTSIDE SOURCES

1 - **Outside Scholarships**
- A - Check with Guidance Office about scholarships from local civic organizations, ROTC scholarships, GATES millennium
- B - Do not pay anyone to search for you and follow the simple rule - *"If it seems too good to be true, it probably is."*

2 - **Athletic Scholarships**
- A - Register with NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org) - this will provide student with requirements needed to participate in collegiate athletics
- B - Speak to high school and college coaches - a verbal commitment is not binding

VI. GENERAL RULES

1 - **APPLY EARLY** - check with each school for deadlines
2 - **FERPA** - Once student is enrolled, they must authorize the school to discuss information with parent or other persons
3 - Use each school's Net Price Calculator to help estimate actual cost
4 - FAFSA application can be completed as of October 1 of the senior year of high school*
5 - **All forms must be re-filed every year**
6 - When in doubt call the College Financial Aid Office for an appointment

**2025-26 Delayed until December 2024*

Rev. 09/2024

PACE UNIVERSITY

FINANCIAL AID TIPS

- Student and parents should get their FSA ID that used to sign the FAFSA and other documents – www.fsaid.ed.gov
- **File your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as soon after **October 1*** of your senior year of high school
    - ***2025-26 FAFSA will not be available until December 2024 for most students**
- **FAFSA estimator** - https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/
- **CSS Profile** – Not a free application. Available in October. Used primarily by more selective schools. It asks for more personal financial information than FAFSA. Visit the College Board website for more information and deadlines - www.collegeboard.com. Many schools have deadlines as early as November
- **New York State Aid Application** - The FAFSA will allow you to link to the state site (www.hesc.ny.gov for New York residents) if you list at least one school within your state of legal residence
- Research outside scholarships using free and reputable search engines such as www.fastweb.com, www.collegeboard.com, www.tuitionfundingsources.com Be aware of the numerous scams that will ask for money to assist you in getting free money
- Speak with the Financial Aid representative when visiting schools
- Refer to a school's **Net Price Calculator** to determine estimated out-of-pocket cost
- Call the Financial Aid office (or check websites) at the schools you are interested in to find out if they require any additional forms such as the CSS Profile or campus-based form and to check for filing deadline dates
- DO NOT pay someone to help you file the FAFSA – it is a free form that is not as daunting as it may seem. If you have any questions, call a Financial Aid office and they can assist you free of charge.

FAIRTEST

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing

A new survey finds that a growing number of colleges and universities do not require applicants to submit scores from either exam. According to the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest), 730 accredited, bachelor-degree granting institutions now have test score optional policies.

FairTest Public Education Director Robert Schaeffer explained, "In the past several months, seven more selective schools have dropped their test score requirements. A number of others are reviewing their admissions rules. We expect the ACT/SAT optional list to continue growing as more institutions recognize that the tests remain biased, coachable, educationally damaging and irrelevant to sound admissions practices. As leaders of the new test-optional campuses have eloquently stated, dropping ACT and SAT score requirements will enhance diversity and academic quality."

Among the schools recently eliminating the ACT and SAT are Chatham College, the College of the Holy Cross, Drew University, Knox College, Lawrence University, St. Lawrence University, and Susquehanna University. Excerpts from the strong statements released are included below.

The full FairTest score optional directory is accessible for no cost on the web at www.fairtest.org/optinit.htm. It is available in both alphabetical and state-by-state order.

QUOTES FROM LEADERS OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WHICH RECENTLY DROPPED ACT AND SAT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

"We are increasingly concerned with the inherent racial and socioeconomic bias in standardized testing – as well as the fact that no test can communicate a student's passions, interests, motivations, and achievements."
- Frank Vellaccio, Senior Vice President
The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

"We live in a world increasingly obsessed with testing at all levels of education. And 'teaching to a test' has become more important than actually learning something…The current industry of costly test preparation courses is, in effect, a barrier to colleges for the students who cannot afford them."
- Roger Taylor, President
Knox College, Galesburg, IL

"We are confident that our holistic review process will continue to allow us to assess each student's academic ability and potential for success at St. Lawrence, regardless of whether scores from the ACT or SAT are part of the academic record."
- Terry Cowdrey, Vice President
St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY

"Academic performance in high school really seems to be the best predictor of academic success in college…our most successful students tend to be those who've challenged themselves by pursuing a rigorous high school curriculum."
- Chris Markle, Director of Admissions
Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA

"Standardized tests only reveal verbal and mathematical ability within a very controlled environment, but Chatham also considers qualities like creativity, ingenuity, leadership or reasoning that better indicate a successful college student."
- Michael Poll, Vice President for Admissions
Chatham College, Pittsburgh, PA

"We are making SAT scores optional because we believe this action will help Drew increase its selectivity, improve its diversity, and enhance overall student quality. We feel this action will encourage students to focus more on what a liberal arts education has to offer them and less on test scores.
- Robert Weisbuch, President
Drew University, Madison, NJ

ONE OPPORTUNITY. LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES.

If you want to play NCAA sports at a Division I or II school, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org. If you plan to compete at a Division III school or currently are not sure in which division you want to compete, create a free Profile Page account.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

To play sports at a Division I or II school, you must complete a total of 16 NCAA-approved core courses, earn a corresponding test score* that matches your core-course GPA and submit proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.

CORE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Complete a total of 16 core courses in the following areas:

Division I



To study and compete at a Division I school, you must complete 10 of your 16 core courses, including seven in English, math or natural/physical science, before the start of your seventh semester.

Division II



GRADE-POINT AVERAGE

The NCAA Eligibility Center calculates your core-course grade-point average based only on the grades you earn in NCAA-approved core courses.

» Division I requires a minimum 2.3 GPA.

» Division II requires a minimum 2.2 GPA.

SLIDING SCALE

Divisions I and II use sliding scales to match test scores and GPAs to determine eligibility. The sliding scale balances your test score with your GPA. If you have a low test score, you need a higher GPA to be eligible. Find more information about sliding scales at ncaa.org/test-scores.

TEST SCORES

Every time you register for the SAT or ACT, use code 9999 to send your scores directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. You may take the SAT or ACT an unlimited number of times before you enroll full time in university. If you take either test more than once, the best subscores from each test are used for the academic certification process.

**More information regarding the impact of COVID-19 and test scores can be found at on.ncaa.com/COVID19_Spring2023.*

HIGH SCHOOL TIMELINE

GRADE 9

Freshman Year: Register

- *Start planning now!* Take NCAA-approved courses and earn the best grades possible.
- Find your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses at **eligibilitycenter.org/courselist**.
- Register for a free Profile Page account at **eligibilitycenter.org** for information on NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.

GRADE 10

Sophomore Year: Plan

- If you fall behind academically, ask your counselor for help finding approved courses you can take.
- If you are being actively recruited by an NCAA school and have a Profile Page account, **transition** it to a **Certification account**.
- Monitor the task list in your Eligibility Center account for next steps.
- At the end of the school year, ask your counselor from each high school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.

GRADE 11

Junior Year: Study

- Check with your counselor to make sure you are on track to complete the required number of NCAA-approved **core courses** and graduate on time with your class.
- Take the **SAT**/**ACT** and submit your scores to the Eligibility Center using code 9999.*
- Ensure your sports participation information is correct in your Eligibility Center account.
- At the end of the school year, ask your counselor from each high school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.

GRADE 12

Senior Year: Graduate

- Complete your final NCAA-approved **core courses** as you prepare for graduation.
- Take the **SAT**/**ACT** again, if necessary, and submit your scores to the Eligibility Center using code 9999.*
- Request your final amateurism certification beginning April 1 (fall enrollees) or Oct. 1 (winter/spring enrollees) in your Eligibility Center account at **eligibilitycenter.org**.
- After you graduate, ask your counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.
- ***Reminder:*** Only students on an NCAA Division I or II school's **institutional request list** will receive a certification.

How to plan your high school courses to meet the 16 core-course requirement: 4 x 4 = 16

9TH GRADE	10TH GRADE	11TH GRADE	12TH GRADE
(1) English	(1) English	(1) English	(1) English
(1) Math	(1) Math	(1) Math	(1) Math
(1) Science	(1) Science	(1) Science	(1) Science
(1) Social Science and/or additional	(1) Social Science and/or additional	(1) Social Science and/or additional	(1) Social Science and/or additional
4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES

SEARCH FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ncaa.org/studentfaq **Follow us:** @ncaaec @playcollegesports @ncaaec

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College Essay Tips & Advice

- **Treat it as an opportunity,** not a burden. The essay is one of the few things that you've got complete control over in the application process, especially by the time you're in your senior year. Use it to tell us a part of your story.
- **Take the time to go beyond the obvious.** Especially if you're recounting an event, take it beyond the chronological storytelling. Include some opinion or reflection.
- **Don't try to take on too much.** Focus on *one* event, *one* activity, or *one* "most influential person." Tackling too much tends to make your essay too watered down or disjointed.
- **Brainstorm the things that matter to you.** Don't be afraid to reveal yourself in your writing. We want to know who you are and how you think.
- **Write thoughtfully and with authenticity.** It'll be clear who believes in what they are saying versus those who are simply saying what they think we want to hear.
- **Be comfortable showing your vulnerability.** We don't expect you to be perfect. Feel free to tell us about a time you stumbled, and what happened next.
- **Answer the prompt.** We're most interested in the story you're telling, but it's important to follow directions, too. Be sure you are addressing the essay prompt.
- **Be yourself.** If you are funny, write a funny essay; if you are serious, write a serious essay. Don't start reinventing yourself with the essay.
- **Ignore the urge for perfection.** There's no such thing as the perfect college essay. Just be yourself and write the best way you know how.
- **Tell us something different** from what we'll read on your list of extracurricular activities or transcript.
- **Proofread, proofread, *proofread*.** *Their's* a difference between "tutoring children" and "torturing children" and *you're* spell-checker won't catch that.
- **Keep it concise**.
- **Limit the number of people** who review your essay. Too much input usually means your voice is lost in the writing style.
- **Appearances count.** Formatting and presentation cannot replace substance, but they can certainly enhance the value of an already well-written essay.

Essay Topics/Prompts

The below essay prompts are used on the Common Application. Students are asked to write their main college essay addressing one of the prompts. Keep in mind, one of the prompts is, "Topic of Your Choice" so in the end, any topic will suffice as long as it follows the advice we gave in the previous section about writing your essay.

Main college essays for the Common Application must be no longer than 650 words.

Below is the full set of Common App essay prompts:

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.

1. 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?
2. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
3. 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?
4. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
5. 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?
6. 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.

College Essay Supplements

In addition to the college essay, there are other written tasks on most applications. They can be in the form of supplements – which are questions specific to each college. The college essay tends to be a broad topic that anyone can answer, with endless topics to choose from. Supplemental essays are **specific to each college** so they usually want to know your opinions about their school… such as…"why do you want to attend Providence College?" and/or "Tell us why you have chosen your major?" Always have some **background info** on the schools to which you are applying so you can give well-informed answers. You do not want to be among the thousands of students writing… *the campus is beautiful.* Know specifics about the school and major to which you are applying. It will make for a stronger supplemental essay.

Supplements are usually short in length, which means you need to get your point across briefly. It is very important that supplements and short answer questions are well thought out and written grammatically correct as well.