COMMON APPLICATION SENIOR CHEAT SHEET

A quick-reference guide to help you navigate your college applications. Review this with your counselors!

1. The 7 Core Sections of the 'Common App' Tab

Fill these out **once**; they go to every college you apply to via Common App:

- **Profile:** Your personal details, address, language fluency, and geography.
- **Family:** Parents'/guardians' details, occupation, and educational background.
- **Education:** High school info, GPA scale (usually 4.0 weighted/unweighted), and current senior courses.
- **Testing:** Self-reported SAT/ACT scores (check if your colleges are test-optional before submitting).
- **Activities:** Space for up to 10 extracurriculars. Order them by importance to you!
- **Writing:** The primary 650-word personal statement. (Answer 1 of the 7 official prompts).
- **Courses & Grades:** Only required by certain colleges. Have a copy of your unofficial transcript ready.

2. Key Application Timelines

Deadline Type	What It Means	Key Dates
Early Decision (ED)	**Binding Contract.** You must attend if accepted. Only apply ED to your absolute top choice.	Nov 1 / Nov 15
Early Action (EA)	**Non-binding.** You apply early and get an answer early, but can choose where to go until May.	Nov 1 / Nov 15
Regular Decision	Standard non-binding deadline. Results usually come out in March.	Jan 1 / Jan 15
Rolling Admission	Colleges evaluate apps as they arrive. Spots fill up fast—apply early!	Fall - Spring

3. Recommenders and School Specifics

Go to the **My Colleges** tab, select a school, and click on **'Recommenders and FERPA'**:

- **FERPA Release Authorization:** You must waive your right to review your recommendation letters. Colleges trust letters much more when they are confidential.
- **Invite Recommenders:** You will invite your **school counselors** and teachers using their exact school email addresses. Always ask them in person *before* sending the digital invite!

4. Quick Pro-Tips for Success

- **Track Supplementals:** Many colleges require extra writing prompts. Find them under the individual college tabs.
- **Check Application Fees:** Fees typically range from $50–$90 per school. If you qualify for free/reduced lunch, select the **Fee Waiver request** in your profile.
- **Review the PDF Preview:** Before hitting submit, look over the full application preview to catch formatting or typing errors.