



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

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A Place Where I Can...

(Collegewise.com, by Kevin McMullin)

Ask many students what they're looking for in a college, or many applicants why they've decided to apply to a particular school, and they'll recite a list of features and benefits. A strong journalism program, small classes, located in a city, etc. But those expressions miss the importance of connecting your college wish list with your plans to make the most of those opportunities.

So here's a subtle change that can make you think critically about what you're looking for and how you plan to take advantage of it: Start those descriptions with, "A place where I can..."

A place where I can take my first steps toward a career as a journalist...

A place where I can interact with my professors easily and regularly...

A place where I can experience living in a city rather than just visiting one...

What you do in college will be more important than where you do it. But that will mean finding schools that pair the right opportunities with your willingness and ability to take advantage of them. Instead of focusing on just what the college will offer, focus on what you'll do to make the most of those offerings. "A place where I can" is a good place to start.

Will Trump Change the Way Colleges Seek Diversity?

("Insidehighered.com", by Scott Jaschik 7/9/18)

In July, the Trump administration rescinded guidance issued by the Obama administration on how colleges can legally consider race and ethnicity in admissions decisions.

In all, the Justice Department and Education Department withdrew seven separate documents — issued by the agencies between 2011 and 2016 — on the use of race in decisions by schools and by colleges. One key document among those rescinded was Obama administration guidance issued jointly by the Education and Justice Departments in 2011. The guidance states that diversity is an important educational goal, and that colleges should be able to use a variety of methods (including the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions) to achieve diversity.

In the immediate aftermath of the Trump administration's action, many college and university leaders were quick to say that they would not change policies on the recruitment and admission of underrepresented minority applicants. Among the institutions issuing such statements were the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Missouri System. Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York issued an open letter to the chairs of the boards of the City University of New York and the State University of New York urging them not to make any changes in policy because of the Trump administration's actions.

No college publicly announced a change of policy, but some experts believe some colleges may face new legal challenges to their policies in the years ahead, perhaps with courts less sympathetic than those in the past to diversity efforts in higher education. Michele S. Moses, professor of educational foundations and policy and associate vice provost for faculty affairs at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said she hoped that colleges would not be scared off diversity strategies by the Trump administration. "It is high time for courageous leadership in higher education. Institutions can retain their race-conscious policies and programs and operate within current law. And they can work to educate members of their community about their use of affirmative action as a principled policy response to widespread inequalities in higher education access and attainment," she said. "Campus leaders could counter the arguments claiming that affirmative action for underrepresented students is unfair to other students, as wrong — largely because they rely on ideas about merit for college admissions based primarily on test scores. Fair college admissions practices need to be based on philosophies of college access, educational opportunity, and holistic reviews of applicants' varied qualifications, and not solely or even primarily on quantitative measures of academic merit like standardized test scores."

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What's New in the 2018-19 Common Application?

(Commonapp.org)

This year, they improved **Courses & Grades** to make it even easier for those students who need to use it (and help students know when they *don't* need to fill it out). In the upcoming application, students can't enter the section unless they're applying to a member college that requires Courses & Grades.

In the **Demographics** section of the Profile tab, students identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native will be able to select the specific tribe in which they are enrolled. For those students not enrolled, they'll be able to type a short response describing their tribal descendency.

When a student chooses to include their **social security number** in the application, that number will be masked on screens, in preview, and on PDFs. If a counselor or advisor has permission to view a PDF preview of a student's application, that social security number will be masked to them.

The privacy policy is updated to reflect the new requirements of the **European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. If you're a student, school representative, recommender, or other individual located in a European Union country, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, or Switzerland, and you provide The Common Application with your personal data, you have new privacy rights under the GDPR.

Mixing and Matching Cal State Online Courses – Free

(Insidehighered.com), by Mark Lieberman)

The California State University System will now offer full-time students at all of the system's 23 institutions the option to enroll for free in one online course per semester at another Cal State institution. The goal is for students to have alternatives when required courses don't line up with their busy academic schedules, or to expand options for courses within a particular discipline.

More than 3,000 online courses, both upper and lower level, are available on the database. The option is available to students who have completed at least one semester and 12 credits; achieved a GPA of at least 2.0; and paid the full-time tuition price.

10 Tips to Inspire College Essays

(USNews.com), by Ilana Kowarski)

- **Brainstorm First**

Make a list of your major strengths, key accomplishments and dreams for your future. Then jot down personal and educational experiences that are significant to you, your favorite memories, and people who have made a difference in your life. By the end of these exercises, you'll have several potential topics to choose from.

- **Give Yourself Options**

List as many potential essay topics as you can imagine. Choosing the wrong prompt can lead to writer's block. If you're stuck, try a new prompt that gives you an abundance of material to talk about.

- **Think Small**

There's no need to fit your entire life story into your college essay. A wiser approach is to describe a single formative experience. It isn't a movie you're making, but a Nike ad. The time it takes to read 500 words is about the same as it takes to watch a Nike ad.

- **Describe Your Goals**

Applicants who don't feel comfortable discussing their past can instead write about their personal motivation and their hopes for the future.

- **Target Your Audience**

Your dream school's academic niche should inform what you write in your personal statement for that school. Visit the school's website, find the buzzwords it uses on its admissions site, then try to come up with an essay that focuses on showcasing your ability to offer these qualities.

- **Avoid Bragging**

Bragging can backfire. A behind-the-scenes glimpse into who you are, how you think, or what you stand for is far more compelling.

- **Tell A Story**

Experts say that college essays with anecdotes tend to be the most engaging. Reminisce about your most meaningful experiences and consider using one of those experiences as fodder for an essay.

- **Show Your Personality**

Admissions officers say that they understand that most teenagers have not had dramatic life experiences. The best college essays are great not because they describe an exciting event but because they convey an interesting way of looking at the world.

- **Consult a Mentor**

Think of three personal statement topic ideas, even if you think they are not that great and then share them with a teacher, counselor, or a mentor. This will start a conversation and get ideas flowing.

- **Take Needed Breaks**

Applicant often struggle with their college admissions essays due to a lack of confidence and excess stress. You should take long walks, listen to calming music, or work out to relax.

Senior Checklist for September

- Narrow your list of colleges to 6-8. Consider fall campus visits.
- Attend college visitation meetings at your school
- Work hard to keep your grades up. College admissions counselors will closely review the first semester of your senior year
- Make a list of test names, dates, fees and registration deadlines and college application deadlines, financial aid application deadlines and scholarship deadlines.
- Prepare your resume and listings of strengths, interests and goals to give to teachers, counselors and employers for letters of recommendations.
- College bound athletes applying to Division I or II schools need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center for Certification in order to play college athletics. Use the website www.eligibilitycenter.org
- Register for the SAT or ACT at www.collegeboard.org and www.actstudent.org, if you mark code 9999 as one of your college or scholarship codes, your scores will be sent automatically to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Watch out for the registration deadlines!
- Start working on the first draft of your admissions essays
- Research local, state and national scholarships. Check out the scholarships and grants section of this newsletter.
- If you are applying Early Decision, these deadlines begin November 1st. Know the difference between Early Decision and Early Action.
- Register for the Common Application at www.commonapp.org to see the list of 700+ schools that now accept the common application.
- Checkout the newer Coalition Application at www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org to see the list of 90+ schools that now accept the coalition application.

Colleges Are No Match for American Poverty

(*"www.theatlantic.com", by Marcella Bombardieri*)

Russell Lowery-Hart is the president of Amarillo College, a community college on the Texas Panhandle, strives to provide support to their students who are at high risk of struggling academically due to financial and circumstantial hardships. In addition to running a food pantry for its students, Amarillo College has an emergency fund that can cut a check within hours to cover the car-repair or water bill that could push a student to drop a class—or quit school for good.

What separates Amarillo College from most of its peers is not any particular program, but how much it focuses on addressing the effects of poverty. The school and Lowery-Hart are being watched by college leaders all over the country, because finding realistic solutions for student poverty could be transformative for the U.S. higher-education system.

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The **University of Chicago** announced that it was dropping the requirement that all undergraduate applicants submit SAT or ACT scores. The test-optional policy applies to all students from the United States. The university also announced an expansion of financial aid and other new policies designed to attract more low-income and first-generation students. For colleges that use the SAT or ACT, a major challenge has been study after study showing that wealthier students generally fare better than do less wealthy students. And white and Asian students, on average, perform much better than do black and Latino students.

Search for a four-year college on Google, and you'll now be presented with data on admission rates, graduation rates and tuition costs, in addition to the usual link to Wikipedia. Google said the addition of more information to college search results would make it easier for prospective students to choose the right institution for them.

Columbia University was identified as the number one U.S. college offering the largest financial aid packages to students in need with an average financial aid package of \$55,521. **Yale** came in a second with their average financial aid package of \$52,894. All 50 U.S. colleges listed are private colleges or universities, and all Ivy League Schools made the list.

This fall incoming international undergraduate students at **Eastern Michigan University** will pay the same tuition rate as everyone else, including Michigan residents who enroll at the public university. Another institution that charges a flat tuition rate for all students — in-state and out-of-state domestic and international — is **Minot State University**, in North Dakota, which received approval for its one-rate tuition policy in 2008.

University of California, Los Angeles is beta testing their new mobile app, BruinXperience hopes to provide a more complete picture of UCLA's campus climate. The app sends a notification to students' smartphones every two weeks to

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(Continued from page 3)

ask them what they're thinking, how they're feeling and what they're experiencing on campus. Assuming a successful rollout in the fall, BruinX plans to expand the app to include UCLA faculty and staff.

Navy veteran and U.S. postal worker, Jason Washington, was shot and killed by **Portland State University** campus police outside of a campus sports bar. Witnesses stated that he was attempting to break up a fight between two other men and was shot while moving to pick up a handgun that had fallen from his holster. Washington had a concealed-carry permit for the weapon. The Portland State officers involved in the shooting have been placed on administrative leave while the Portland Police Bureau investigates the situation.

The ACT benefits students who can read rapidly and efficiently – more passages means more information to review and analyze. Meanwhile, the SAT benefits students who prefer to work more slowly but also more analytically. However, it is important to note that the ACT English section is not devoid of analysis. Consider what type of reader you are before deciding on the ACT or the SAT.

Hendrix College is touting Career Term as the first initiative in the country that uses the college winter break to coach students in job training. It works like this: for a couple of days during winter break, the college brought back almost 50 of its second-year students and gave them workshops on base-level career-search skills — résumé writing and job interviewing, dressing professionally and finding an internship.

While only serving part of its sophomore class this year, the college intends to offer the program to the entire class by January 2020.

The **University of California** released new admissions statistics last week for the class that will be entering in the fall. The shift this year is that — reflecting a series of new initiatives — the system admitted a record number of transfer students, the vast majority of them from the state's community colleges. While many elite private colleges admit only a dozen or so transfer students, the UC system admitted 28,750 transfer applicants for the fall.

Does AP Still Have Admissions Cachet?

(*Insidehighered.com*, by Scott Jaschik)

Eight elite private high schools in the Washington area announced that they were dropping out of the Advanced Placement program. The schools said that they could design advanced courses that would be better for their students. A statement the schools issued said that AP has become so popular that it is no longer “noteworthy.” Further, “we have been assured by admissions officers that this change will have no adverse impact on our students. The real question for colleges is not whether applicants have taken AP courses, but whether they have availed themselves of their high schools' most demanding classes.”

Most admissions deans and other experts agreed that the students at Sidwell Friends, St. Albans and the other private schools that make this move don't need to worry. Their schools are so well-known that colleges will assume the new advanced courses being created will have rigor and depth. A lack of AP courses on those students' transcripts probably won't make a difference. But leave the rarefied environment of elite private high schools, they said, and the situation may be different.

According to Seth Allen, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid at Pomona College, while AP “is considered rigorous,” so are many non-AP courses. What matters is students taking some of the most rigorous courses offered. The advantage of AP, he said, is that colleges have a sense of what it means. Schools that want to offer alternatives need to be sure they explain how rigorous the courses are. “AP still works for many schools where it might be hard to know how rigorous the curriculum is without the AP designation,” Allen said.

Enrollment Boost from Summer Pell

(*www.insidehighered.com*, by Andrew Kreighbaum)

Colleges are seeing the payoffs of a decision by Congress to restore year-round Pell Grants in a budget deal last year after eliminating the grant aid in 2011. Students attending summer classes previously could only use whatever grant aid they had not used in the fall and spring semesters. The change allowed Pell recipients access to the full grant amount for a typical semester. The additional grant aid isn't just making summer classes more accessible for students.

It's also helping them progress more quickly toward their degrees.

Anatomy of a College Application - Things to Avoid

(*www.collegechoice.net*, by Jeremy Shanealder)

- Don't miss deadlines.
- Check every application for typos or misspellings.
- Don't forget to sign your applications, digitally or physically, lest they sit in admissions labeled “incomplete.”
- Get a professional-sounding email address that includes part of your name. Don't apply using “spanky1234@yahoo.com.”
- Don't let your parents or friends write your applications or essays for you.
- Delete inappropriate social media comments or photos (but remember, they may still be out there).

SCHOLARSHIPS & CONTEST LISTINGS

COLLEGE JUMPSTART SCHOLARSHIP: An annual, merit-based competition - financial need is not considered - open to 10th -12th graders, college students and non-traditional students. The main requirement is that you are committed to going to school and can express your goals for getting a higher education. The first place prize is \$1,000 scholarship to help cover educational expenses. Deadline: October 17, 2018. Website: www.jumpstart-scholarship.net

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY COMPETITION: The National Audio Essay Scholarship open to high school students grades 9th -12th. It consists of a 3-5 minute audio CD/flash drive recorded essay on the 2018-19 theme "Why My Vote Matters". Each state winner is provided with a five-day all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. plus the opportunity to compete for National Scholarships totaling more than \$130,000. Entry must be sent to the local participating VFW post. Deadline: November 1, 2018. Website: www.vfw.org/VOD Click "Find A Post" at the top of the page.

UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM: High School Juniors and Seniors who are actively serving in leadership positions for the entire 2018-19 school year. They must be nominated to apply by their high school principal or designated school official. Two student leaders from each state will spend a week in Washington DC experiencing their national government in action. All transportation, hotel and meal expenses will be provided. Each delegate will also be awarded a \$5,000-\$10,000 college scholarship depending on the state. State-specific Deadlines; Alaska: November 5, 2018, California: October 5, 2018, Oregon: October 12, 2018, Washington: August 30, 2018. Website: www.usenateyouth.org

RON BROWN SCHOLAR PROGRAM - Offers four-year renewable awards for \$10,000 per year to African American high school seniors who plan to attend college full-time. Scholarship is based on financial need, academic achievement, essay, extracurricular activities, leadership experience, community service and recommendations. Deadline: November 1, 2018. Website: www.ronbrown.org Click on Apply to be a scholar

NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION - Young Arts is a national program to recognize the achievements of high school seniors and other young artists ages 15-18 in areas of dance, classical music, jazz, theater, visual arts photography, film & video, voice and writing. Award amounts vary, but can be as high as \$10,000. Deadline: 8:59 p.m. PST on October 12, 2018. Website: www.youngarts.org/apply Pay the \$35 per discipline fee to receive a required ARTS ID#.

UNIGO SHOUT IT OUT SCHOLARSHIP - Let your keyboard be your megaphone, and shout out your message. This unique scholarship gives you the platform to speak up - and cash in. The "loudest" applicant will receive the \$1,500 Shout It Out Scholarship reward. The application must include name and contact information, background details, academic details, and a short, original, previously unpublished written response to the scholarship topic, "If you could say one thing to the entire world at once, what would it be and why?" The written response must be in English, with correct spelling and grammar, and must not exceed 250 words. Deadline: 8:59 p.m. PST September 30, 2018. Website: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/shout-it-out-scholarship>

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE SCHOLARSHIP - Did binge re-watching "The Walking Dead" get you thinking about what you'd do if the streets were filled with flesh-eating zombies? Our Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship committee wants to know your plan to avoid the zombies, where you'd hide, and the top-five things you'd bring to stay alive.

We're giving one successful survivor \$2,000 towards his or her college education. Applicants must at least 13 years old, U.S. citizens and plan to enroll in an accredited post-secondary institution of higher education by fall of 2024. Deadline: October 31, 2018. Website: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/zombie-apocalypse-scholarship>

EDUCATION MATTERS SCHOLARSHIP - As a scholarship seeker, you're probably already well-aware of the importance of an education. But, what about the naysayers? Have you come across someone who's tried to talk you out of college, saying that it's not worth it? Our Education Matters Scholarship is giving you the chance to state why education matters. Why does education matter to you? What is the value you hope to receive from college? What would you do to convince the college cynics? Speaking up for education could lead to helping you pay for your own. One applicant will be awarded our \$5,000 Education Matters Scholarship. Applicants must be at least 13 years old, U.S. citizen and enroll in an accredited post-secondary institution of higher education. Deadline: November 30, 2018. Website: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/education-matters-scholarship>

SCHOLARSHIPS & CONTEST LISTINGS

TOP TEN LIST SCHOLARSHIP - Inspired by David Letterman and his top ten lists, we created the Top Ten List Scholarship. With so many awards based on grades and extracurricular activities, this unique scholarship gives you the chance to show us what's truly special and different about you. Get creative, be serious, or tug at our heart strings. Whatever you do, you only have ten reasons to convince us, so make each one count.

Need a number one reason to apply? How about the chance to win a \$1,500 scholarship? Our Top Ten List Scholarship can only have one winner, so start narrowing down your own list and apply today! Applicant must be at least 13 years old, a US citizen and apply to an accredited post-secondary institution of higher education by 2024. Deadline: December 31, 2018 Website: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/top-ten-list-scholarship>

UNIGO 10K SCHOLARSHIP - Imagine a historical figure is brought back to life. Who is it? What's their favorite mobile app? Answer the question in 250 words or less. Applicants must be thirteen (13) years of age or older at the time of application, be legal residents of the fifty (50) United States or the District of Columbia, be currently enrolled (or enroll no later than the fall of 2024) in an accredited post-secondary institution of higher education. Deadline: December 31, 2018 Website: <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/unigo-10k-scholarship/application>

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY COMPETITION - The national first-place winner receives a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. A complete list of other national scholarships range from \$1,000-\$16,000, and the first-place winner from each VFW Department (state) wins a minimum scholarship of \$1,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Deadline: October 31, 2018. Website: <https://vfworg-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/Youth-and-Education/Voice-of-Democracy-Rules-and-Eligibility.pdf> and here is the entry form and brochure: <https://vfworg-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/VFWSite/Files/Community/Youth-and-Education/Voice-of-Democracy-Student-Entry-Form-and-Brochure.pdf>

Don't trust your friends' advice on getting into college — and other tips from admissions experts

(*"Washingtonpost.com"*, by Valerie Strauss)

Here is some straightforward advice from college admissions counselors and deans about how best to approach the college search.

"Stop worrying about what your friends think! This is your college search and your education. You need to discover for yourself whether a school is a match."

"It's OK to admit you don't know what you want. In fact, you probably shouldn't know what you want. Everyone around you who says they wished they had been more directed and goal-oriented when they applied to college has forgotten what it was like to be a senior in high school."

"College admissions is not fair, and there is nothing you can do to change this. Some of the decisions being made about your application have little/nothing to do with you — it has to do with institutional priorities, who else is in the applicant pool, and what the board of that particular college is telling the admission office it wants/needs. College admission is also not an indication of your self-worth as a human being. You are more than the bumper sticker your parent will put on his/her car. Challenge yourself to learn about at least one or two new colleges every month of your search."

"It doesn't matter what school you go to; what matters is what you do once you're there. Pick a place where you'd be happy to wake up every day, where you'll enjoy yourself, and where you'll be confident instead of stressed out."

"I encourage you to have a top group of colleges — not a 'top choice.' When someone asks where you want to go to college, tell them 'I don't know, but if I'm admitted to any of these five I know I'll be happy.' Announcing to the world your one dream school before you've been admitted raises the stakes to an unhealthy height. If it's a reach school, the chances of you being admitted might be slim, and you risk characterizing the school you do end up attending — one you'll probably love — as a disappointment."

"Be your own self-advocate, don't expect your parents or guidance counselor to remember things and do everything for you."

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Be True to Your Academic Fingerprint

(*Bestcollegetit.com*, by Peter Van Buskirk 7/19/18)

While your educational needs can be met at many places, it would be a mistake to assume they will be met in the same manner—or, more importantly, in a manner that is well suited to your learning style. This is perhaps the most underestimated element of the college selection process.

Identify places that provide the academic program you need and a style of instruction that is most comfortable for you. Just as students possess unique learning styles—they each process information differently—colleges offer different styles of instruction.

In order to find the learning environments that make the most sense for you, take stock of your learning style. How do you like to be engaged with learning? Who or what inspires you? Under what circumstances are you most likely to produce your best work? The more you know about how you like to learn, the easier it will be to make critical distinctions among the learning environments of different colleges.

Consider the following questions as you try to get your arms around your learning style. Be particularly attentive to the “why” part of each question.

- Who is your favorite teacher—and why?
- What is your favorite class right now—and why?
- In which type of classroom setting (i.e. large group lectures, seminars, etc.) are you most comfortable—and why?
- With what kinds of people and personalities do you enjoy exchanging ideas—and why?
- If you had to choose between a test, a paper and a project to receive a grade for the entire year, what would you choose—and why?

As you reflect on your answers—especially the “whys”—you come to better understand the characteristics of a learning environment that would be the most appropriate for you in college. The next step is to look for colleges that mirror these characteristics.

Admissions Officers Discuss 3 Common Essay Topics

(*USNews.com*, by Kelly Mae Ross)

“It’s not just about the topic, but why it’s important to you and how you can showcase who you are as a student and an individual through that topic,” says Jennifer Gayles, director of admission at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Here are three examples of common college application essay topics that admissions officials say are fine for students to write about – as long as they do so thoughtfully.

The big game

Many high school students play sports, so it’s understandable that athletics comes up fairly often in college essays. One pitfall of a sports-focused essay is that students may spend too much time describing what happened in the game, meet or competition and less on how it affected them personally

Service-based activities

College essays about service to others, either at home or abroad, can be moving to read but difficult to effectively write, given the short amount of space students are allotted for a college essay. A student’s motivation for choosing this topic also matters. If applicants choose to write about service, they should do so because their experience has led to thought and reflection, not because they feel like this is a topic admissions officers expect them to write about.

An important relationship

Students can reflect on something from their day-to-day life that they find meaningful. For some students, this may mean writing about a relationship with a parent, grandparent or other key figure in their life. These can be great essays if the student is keeping top of mind that at the end of the essay we should know something about them as a person and how that relationship has affected and shaped them; not just the great things about their grandma.

National Portfolio Day

The National Portfolio Day Association has announced the schedule for the 2018-19 season. This year’s schedule includes 38 undergraduate events located in 31 states from September - January.

National Portfolio Day is an event specifically for visual artists and designers. It is an opportunity for those who wish to pursue an education in the visual and related arts to meet with representatives from colleges accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. Representatives will be available to review your artwork, discuss their programs and answer questions about professional careers in art. High school students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors and college transfer students are encouraged to attend. Website: <https://nationalportfolioday.org/undergraduate-events/>

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5 Ways College Application Essays and High School Essays Are Different

www.princetonreview.com

- **Understand Purpose**
A high school essay generally demonstrates to your teacher what you know, while an application essay should demonstrate who you are. Colleges want to find out what you're passionate about, and what you would add to the campus community.
- **Know your Audience**
When your English teacher grades your essays, she puts them into the context of every interaction she's ever had with you. Your personal statement is your one chance to speak directly to the admissions committee and demonstrate who you are beyond grades and test scores. Help colleges learn something about you that they cannot discover when reading the rest of your application.
- **Show, Don't Summarize**
College essay topics are often open-ended. ("Recount a time when you experienced failure.") But at heart, all college essays are asking you to demonstrate the same things: your ability to reflect and think critically. Summaries are fine for book reports, but when writing your college essay take the opportunity to really examine how an experience taught you something you didn't previously know about yourself, got you out of your comfort zone, or forced you to grow.
- **Authenticity is Key**
On a high school essay, it's generally not appropriate to use the first-person. Not only is it fine to make "I" statements in your application essays, but colleges expect your essays to *sound* like you, too! Always be yourself in your application, not the candidate you think admissions committees want to see.
- **Originality Counts**
When your teacher asks you to analyze the causes of the Civil War, he is going to receive a lot of essays that sound basically the same. But your college essay should be unique and individual to you. College admissions officers tell us that they see many essays about eye-opening travel experiences, the death of a loved one, or "The Big Game." You can still write about these experiences, but the trick is in the details. No one sees the world quite the way you do, so let your personality shine through.

THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

CREATE HEALTHY FAMILIES

P.O. Box 90414

San Diego, CA 92169