

5

SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

PART TWO: COLLEGE ADMISSION AND THE APPLICATION

ACTIVITY #4: FILLING OUT AN APPLICATION

Opening discussion:

Begin a discussion on the application process with an interactive question and answer session. Here are some questions and themes to consider:

- How difficult do you think it is to be admitted to college?
- Did you know that some colleges practice “Open Admission,” while others are considered to be highly-selective? Some colleges only consider SAT scores and GPA while most will look at many other factors before making a decision. (Remember the “Great Sorting Game?”)
- Referring back the viewbooks and other colleges that have been discussed, see if you can determine schools that are “selective” in their admission policies.
- How do you think those colleges would view you as an applicant, considering your résumés and curriculum plans (courses taken, GPA, activities)? Let the students know that typically students will apply to several colleges and will try to include at least one “realistic” college that they and their school counselor think they could get into.
- Are you thinking about playing a sport in college? Playing a musical instrument? Majoring in painting or theatre? If so, you should know the following:

- **For the athlete:**

- Talk to your coaches early and often.
- Don’t be lured into college athletic search companies.
- Be open to all options: Division I, Division II, Division III; NAIA; Club and Intramural Teams.
- Keep your grades up because colleges are looking for student-athletes, not just athletes.
- If possible, go to the NCAA website (www.ncaa.org) to learn about eligibility and recruiting rules for all sports. Two other good websites are: www.CampusChamps.org and www.athleticaid.com.

- **For the artists, musicians and actors:**

- Discuss your plans with your teachers/instructors.
- Keep your work: portfolios for artists, lists of parts in plays for actors and, when possible, recordings of your music for musicians.
- Auditions for musicians and actors are often part of the admission process for those planning to continue to study their art.

5

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CONTINUED ACTIVITY #4: FILLING OUT AN APPLICATION

Activity/Handout:

Parts of a College Application

Instructions:

1. Give each student a copy of “Parts of a College Application.”
2. “Walk” the students through the parts of the application using the handout and sample application. There will not be time for them to complete the whole application at this time, but respond to any questions they have so they could do that when they get home. Emphasize that it is valuable to draft applications before they submit a “real” one. Here are the sections to focus on:
 - Activities section: Point out that when they completed the “Activities Résumé” in Session IV; the students compiled most of the information they will need for this section. What they will need to do is put that information in the format required by each individual application (often they are asked to list activities in order of importance). Give them time to begin doing that.
 - Secondary School Report Form: Explain that this is the type of form that someone at their high school, probably their counselor, will complete. For colleges that request it, it accompanies the transcript. Ask students what surprises them about this form. Ask them about their relationship with their counselor.
 - Mid-Year Report Form: Explain that this is sent after the fall semester of senior year. Explain to students that changes in their senior year curriculum have to be reported to colleges. SENIOR YEAR MATTERS!
 - Teacher Evaluation Form: Ask students what surprises them about this form. Stress that the purpose of the teacher recommendation is to write about them as a student in that teacher’s classroom. Ask students to identify at least two teachers who they could ask to write a recommendation and ask them to jot down several adjectives they think those teachers would use when describing them. Stress that if they can’t think of any teachers now, they should try to build a relationship with a teacher before senior year.
3. Conclude the session with a reminder that by beginning the college search early and by knowing the components of an application, the students are much better prepared to apply to college when the time comes in their senior year. Encourage them to keep all of the materials/handouts in a folder or binder.



PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- You, the student, are responsible for sending your actual application and some additional documentation. Your high school is responsible for sending the transcript and a secondary school report (if required). If a teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, that teacher is responsible for submitting it. BUT you, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. Know what you are expected to do!
- Listed below is everything that *could* be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. *For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.*

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

A. Official Transcript: Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. This is the information you should have on the curriculum planner you completed in Session III. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

B. Standardized Test Scores

C. The Application Form: The student is responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept standardized college applications, such as The Common Application or The Universal Application. No matter what school or what application, these are important components:

- Personal and Educational Data (i.e., name, address, phone number, email, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
- Honors and Awards
- Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities
- Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (some colleges allow you to submit a résumé in addition to the activity section of their application)
- Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application Fee (many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from the guidance office)
- Signature
- For certain majors, students may be required to audition or asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.



D. Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college. However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your school's procedures.

TIP: Usually the person at your school (probably your counselor) completing this form asks for information from students and parents ahead of time. If possible, meet with this person before he or she writes a letter of recommendation.

E. Mid-Year Report Form: This form is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.

F. Teacher Recommendation Form: Not required by all colleges, but the teacher is responsible for sending this form. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges are not only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature and motivation to learn.

