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# College 101

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# What can I do this spring?

- **Testing - SAT and/or ACT**

*You may have heard of the digital SAT. Doesn't apply to the class of 2024. Starts this fall with PSAT for class of 2025. All AISD juniors tested on March 22nd*

*Sign up for practice test offered: ex: **ACT Practice Exam** Saturday, April 15, 2023. Register here:*  
<https://www.revolutionprep.com/partners/5850/>

- **Research College Options**

*Naviance College Match, College Board Big Future, Niche.com, SCOIR*

- *Search by your major, location, size, extra-curricular, etc*
- *Resources: collegexpress.com (Lists and Rankings), unigo.com, Niche, and Naviance (of course!)*
- *Freshman retention rate*
- *Average class size*
- *Type of school*
- *Attend College Fairs: CTCL fair is typically held in August*
- *Visit Colleges*

- **Build Your College List**

*Most students apply to 6-8-10 schools. Apply to a couple of likely schools (you are pretty sure you can get in), a couple of probable schools (50% chance), Reach schools and at least one Wildcard! You'll never know if you don't try!*

# Academics

- Does the college offer the student's intended major(s)?
- How difficult would it be to change majors?
- Will the school and the student body match the student intellectually?
- Does the school offer opportunities for internships and undergraduate research?
- How accessible are faculty members?

# College Life

- Does the college offer extracurricular activities of interest?
- How is freshman housing addressed?
- What about fraternities and sororities?
- Does the college offer intercollegiate and/or intramural athletics?
- How friendly and happy do the students appear to be?
- How diverse is the student population?

## What Admission is...

- A personal journey. This is your search so own it.
- An invitation to explore identity and purpose. This will not happen overnight.
- Imperfect. It is a human process, so expect “user error.”
- About engagement, so lean in.
- Exciting. The minute it becomes a chore stop and check yourself. Enjoy the ride.
- Full of choice, so be open and consider all of your options.

## What Admission is NOT...

- A value judgment on whether you are “good enough”.
- Fair
- One size fits all.
- A passive experience. You are in control so assert it.
- Linear. There are many pathways to your future, so consider them all.
- A search for perfection. There is not one “right” college.

- Brennan Barnard

There is more than one orange



TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin




Bucknell  
UNIVERSITY



# The Application

Read the instructions carefully to check for requirements such as essays, resumes, recommendation letters, or other supplemental materials. Verify on college website



Make sure you have the required materials



Check your deadlines:  
**Postmark or Received by**



Pay application fee  
**SUBMIT**

[ApplyTexas.org](https://www.applytexas.org) is the application for all public universities in Texas and select private schools.

[CommonApp.org](https://www.commonapp.org) is the application for over 900 public and private schools across the country.

[Coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org) is a fairly new one. Over 200 colleges use this application

*Institution- specific applications* - a application that applies to that state's or individual colleges ((MIT, Georgetown, UC system)

*Most schools will require you to create an account for applying and/or for checking your application status. DO NOT LOSE this info! You'll need it later!*

# Application Checklist

- College Application
- Application Fee or Fee waiver
  - Check each schools fee waiver policy
- SAT and/or ACT Test Scores if required\*
  - Test Optional

TSI (Texas Success Initiative-required by public institutions in Texas)

## College Essay

- Varies by institution
- Resume only if needed
- Letters of Recommendation only if needed
- Transcript
  - Request via Naviance under the college tab

### General Advice

*Items can come in at different time, however I would recommend requesting the transcript last.*

*You must request a transcript to each school that you apply to through Naviance*

*\*Not every institution requires an SAT or ACT*

*Not every institution requires an essay or resume*

*You may be able to self-report test scores/academic transcript (SRAR)*



# When Making Accounts

*Keep track of all your usernames and passwords. You'll need it later!*

## Deadlines

*Pay attention to ALL application deadlines. These are NOT flexible.*

- *Most early deadlines are November 1*
- *UT and A&M have a hard deadline of December 1*
- *Most regular decision deadlines are around January 1*

# ESSAY

- Pre-write your essay somewhere other than the application
- Be creative, but answer the question.
  - 25% is the story, 75% is YOU
- Essays, in general, should be no more than 500-650 words
- Proofread : Have a select few read your essay

*Someone who knows you, English teacher, Counselor*

**Most importantly - BE YOU! Let your voice be heard.**

# Apply Texas Essay Prompts

Essay A: Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?

Essay B: Most students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. Tell us about yourself.

Essay C: You've got a ticket in your hand – Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?

# Common App Essay Prompts

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.

# Activity List (Resume)

Most applications provide a format for reporting activities and accomplishments. There is also a template in Naviance!

Students should carefully complete activity section of application. Elaborate!

Don't use acronyms or assume that the college knows about an organization or the duties of a particular position.

Students can send a separate, more complete resume to the school if needed.

Same format should be followed.

# Letters of Recommendation

## WHO? WHEN? HOW?

Before adding a teacher recommendation request in Naviance, students should first ask that teacher in person if they will write the recommendation on their behalf. Students should plan to ask teachers early in the fall semester of their senior year. Two steps for teacher recs -asking & adding!

Counselors must be asked and given counselor packet. Naviance will not notify them of a request. They will add your name and dates to their spreadsheet once you ask.

**Be sure to ask at least three weeks in advance of your first application deadline!**  
**Show appreciation both before and after the letter is written.**

*Written note or gesture*

*Updates on Acceptances! We love hearing from you!*

# Letters of Recommendation

Most Common App schools will require one or more recommendations from teachers and one from your counselor.

Recommendations are not typically required by any of the public universities for admission purposes. Some may ask for them.

Counselors write the recommendation letter for the Common App's Secondary School report.

*Counselors require a recommendation packet which can be found in document resources.*

*(parents have a brag sheet to fill out as well)*

Choose a core (English, math science, social studies or language) teacher for one letter. Second letter may be from outside the core area, but check the school website to confirm required source.

Many Scholarships ask for at least one recommendation letter.

Student will request teachers in Naviance which will allow \*most letters to be submitted electronically

*\*For colleges with a stamp icon by their name, student will need to provide stamped, addressed envelopes to all recommendation letter writers.*

**Ask the \*‘‘recommendation writer’’ in person first.**

# Transcripts

**Request a transcript online through Naviance. Your application isn't complete until they have received ALL of the required documents**

- The first 10 transcripts are free. ANY additional transcripts will be \$3. This includes NCAA and scholarship transcripts.
- Add your colleges into Naviance under “Colleges I’m Applying To”
- You must indicate what type of application you are using (Common App or not)
- If you are using Common App you MUST complete the **Counselor Recommendation** packet located in Naviance's document resource and meet with your counselor. Your transcript will not be sent to Common App schools until this happens.
- Allow 2 school days for processing.
- Pay attention to deadlines. If a transcript is due Jan. 1, please request it the first week of Dec. (Jan. 1 transcripts won't include the 1st semester grades, those grades will be included on Mid Year Reports in mid January.)
- You will be notified via email when to request mid-year transcripts.



# Consider Cost of Attendance

**Cost of Attendance Includes:** tuition and fees, room and board (meals),\_books, transportation, misc

Complete the **FAFSA** October 1- Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)

Scholarships and Grants vs Need Based aid

What can you afford to pay for your college education?

Money Magazine's great college values <https://money.com/best-colleges/>

Have a family discussion NOW. Net Price Calculators available on college's financial aid site.

# Scholarship Opportunity

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org](http://www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org)

<https://www.collegegreenlight.com/>

College Board Opportunity Scholarship : <https://opportunity.collegeboard.org/>

Don't forget about **scholarship search in Naviance** . A lot of the local and regional awards go unclaimed because students don't apply.

**Studentaid.gov Opens October 1st**

# Reminders

- Naviance—use it.
- Find the “right fit” college
- **College Visitations:** 2 days are allowed during senior year for visits. A letter from the university on university letterhead must be turned into the attendance office.
- Apply Early
- Check your deadlines/status
- Send ACT/SAT test scores if not deciding to go test optional
- Communicate with college admissions counselors
- Apply for Financial aid and scholarships
- **FAFSA opens October 1, 2023**
- Have Fun