



# College 101: The Basics

\*All you need to know about the college application process, scholarships, & more!\*

## What's in a college application?

- **Transcript**
  - Grades from all of High School
  - Request using Parchment- **set up an account NOW!**
- **Test Scores- SAT/ACT**
  - The SAT and ACT are standardized test scores that most colleges require
  - You can send schools you're applying to your scores on the SAT/ACT websites or when you take the test
  - Schools look at your highest scores or usually superscore meaning they take your highest reading and highest math scores
- **Essay**
  - Purpose is to let colleges get to learn more about you and gain insight about you beyond your grades and test scores
  - You may have to write multiple essays! Applications like the Common App and Coalition App allow you to write one personal statement and submit it to multiple schools. However, some schools may ask for additional (supplemental) essays. Schools who have their own application usually have their own essay question.
  - For Do's and Don'ts or brainstorming ideas make sure to attend an essay writing workshop!
- **Letter of Recommendation**
  - Colleges usually require 2 teacher letters of recommendation and one from your counselor
    - We suggest asking teachers from junior year
    - Ask early!
    - Doesn't have to be the class you had an A in - may choose a teacher that you connected with or a class where you worked extra hard
    - **Counselors need: 2 weeks notice and a RESUME!**
    - **Make sure teachers and counselors are aware of deadlines aka be considerate and don't wait until the last minute!**
- **Resume or List of Activities/Experiences**
  - One page that lists and describes all of your experiences from high school
  - May include: clubs, sports, awards, interest, skills, classes, GPA, volunteer work, summer experiences, camps, and jobs
  - Make sure to include your name and contact information at the top of the page

## What are the different types of college application deadlines?

- **Early Decision (ED):** An option to apply to a college before the regular deadlines (October or November) and receive an early admission decision (usually by December).

**ED is a binding contract.** If admitted, you are legally bound to attend that school if their financial aid package meets your needs. If applying ED to a school, you may not apply EA or ED to any other colleges. If admitted ED you must withdraw any other regular applications.

- **Early Action (EA):** An option to apply to a college before the regular deadlines and receive an early admission decision. **EA is not binding;** you do not have to enroll if admitted, and you have until May 1 to inform the school of your decision. EA does not restrict where else you can apply, although some highly selective private schools practice **Restrictive** or **Single Choice** Early Action, which allows you to apply EA only to them and to public schools.
- **Regular Decision:** The normal process by which students apply to college by the regular deadline. Offers of admission are typically sent out in late March or early April. These students will have until May 1 to either accept or decline their offers.
- **Rolling Admission:** An admissions system where applications are accepted, evaluated, and decided upon as they are received (from as early as September until as late as the following summer). You still have until May 1 to accept the offer. You can also apply early to any other colleges you like.
- **\*\*\*Deferred:** If you apply to a school Early Action or Early Decision, you will be either admitted, rejected, or deferred. If deferred, your application may be considered in the pool of regular applicants and you might be accepted later.
  - If you have been admitted to a college, you may ask them for a deferred admission, or permission to postpone enrolling there, usually for up to one year.

## Making a College List

- A college list is the list of schools you want to apply to- a well-rounded list of colleges is the key to success!!!
- Should apply to at least 3, but most students apply to 6-9 colleges.
- To ensure a well-rounded college list you need to think about where you fit in the schools admission requirements.
  - **Likely or Safety School:** A school you will almost certainly get into because your test scores and grades are well above the average in the school's profile. This should also be a school the student knows he or she can afford, making it a financial safety as well.
  - **Target School:** A realistic choice where your grades and GPA fit the profile of the middle 50% of students.
  - **Reach School:** A school where your class rank, GPA, or test scores might be below or barely within the mid-range for their admitted student profile. These are often highly competitive schools that admit a low percentage of applicants.
- Financial fit is just as important! - Have schools on your list you **KNOW** you can afford
- **Match & Fit**
  - Match: focuses on academics (GPA & test scores)
  - Fit: focuses on things like finances, culture, school size, majors, distance from home, greek life, campus life, location, clubs/organizations, sports, etc.
- **Research colleges using these websites:**
  - <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>
- <https://www.cappex.com/>
- <https://collegeinsight.com/>
- <https://www.collegesimply.com/>
- <https://www.gafutures.org/>

## Where to Apply:

- Common App- <https://www.commonapp.org/>
  - Fill out your information once, write one personal statement, and apply to 900 schools with the Common App! It's as easy as checking a box
  - \* You still must pay an application fee for each school you apply to unless you have a fee waiver
- Coalition App- <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>
  - Over 140 schools accept the Coalition App
  - Many of the colleges and universities that accept the Coalition application require you to submit at least one essay as part of your application.
- College Websites
- Common Black College Application- <https://commonblackcollegeapp.com/>
  - Used to apply to a variety of HBCU's

## FAQ/Terms to know:

- **Hope/Zell Miller Scholarships**
  - **How do you get the scholarship:**
    - Hope Scholarship: Earn 3.0 High School HOPE GPA (core classes only)
    - Zell Miller Scholarship: Earn 3.7 high school HOPE GPA (core classes only), score a 1200 on the SAT or 26 on ACT
  - **How do you keep the scholarship:**
    - Hope Scholarship: Maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in college
    - Zell Miller Scholarship: Maintain a 3.3 cumulative GPA in college
  - **Award Amount**
    - Hope Scholarship
      - Public Colleges/University in GA: About 90% of tuition is paid during the school year
      - Private Colleges: \$2,152/semester
    - Zell Miller Scholarship:
      - Public Colleges: 100% of tuition is paid. No fee award.
      - Private Colleges: \$2,808/semester
- **HOPE/Zell Miller Grant**
  - **HOPE Grant:** an award available to Georgia residents who are pursuing a certificate or diploma at a two-year school. Recipients must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA to remain eligible. The grant provides tuition assistance to students enrolled at a HOPE Grant-eligible college or university in Georgia.
  - **Zell Miller Grant:** A merit-based program available to Georgia residents pursuing a certificate or diploma, usually at a two-year school. A Zell Miller grant recipient must maintain a minimum of a 3.5 cumulative GPA to remain eligible. Recipients



receive full-standard tuition assistance while enrolled at a Zell Miller Grant-eligible school in Georgia.

- **Types of Colleges:**

- **Liberal Arts Colleges:** Typically smaller institutions with few, if any, graduate programs and/or graduate students. Liberal Arts colleges focus on the undergraduate experience and foster a strong sense of community on campus. The traditional core curriculum on liberal arts includes literature, language, history, philosophy, math, psychology, and science.
- **Mid Sized Research Universities:** Student populations of roughly 3,000 to 8,000. These college fall between large state schools and liberal arts colleges, and usually offer many of the amenities of both.
- **Private Colleges:** Run by non-profit organizations, not by the government. The “sticker price” is usually higher than at state schools, but private colleges often have large endowments that can allow them to offer great scholarships.
- **Public Colleges (also called state schools):** These schools have large student populations of over 10,000 and receive the majority of their funding from the state government. These institutions offer many opportunities to students across an array of disciplines. They often feature vibrant Greek life, Division 1 sports, and large spacious campuses. They have two different prices: the lower one for students who live in-state, and the higher for students who live out-of-state.
- **HBCU:** (historically Black college or university): a college or university that was originally founded to educate students of African-American descent.
- **Community Colleges:** Two-year colleges that award Associate’s degrees. Some students attend a community college before transferring to a four-year college. This option tends to be more affordable, and also helps students who may not be socially or academically ready for a four-year college.
- **Honors Programs/Colleges:** These are small schools within a larger school that typically offer smaller class sizes, priority for housing, easier access to student research, internships, and other learning opportunities. Most honors colleges have an early deadline, have higher academic qualifications for admittance, and require a supplemental application.
- **Institutes of Technology or “polytechnic” colleges:** Colleges with strong programs in math, science, and engineering
- **Ivy League:** A collection of eight colleges in the Northeast including Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale.

- **FERPA- Letter of Recommendations**

- What is FERPA? Ferpa gives you the option of legally waiving your right (or not waiving it) to read your college recommendation letters once you’ve been accepted into a particular college
- To waive your rights means: Colleges can release your information to other parties they deem fit
- You will never be able to read what your recommenders say about you in their letters
- Should you waive your rights?
  - YES!!! Colleges like to know that your recommenders were 100% honest in their recommendations because they KNOW that you will never read



what they write in their letters. This gives their letters more WEIGHT in the application process.

- **Achieve Atlanta:** A scholarship that awards up to \$5,000/year for APS students pursuing a 4-year college/university degree OR a 2-year college/technical degree.
  - Scholarship Awards:
    - 4-year college/university: \$5,000/year (renewable up to 4 years of school)
    - 2-year college & technical: \$1,500/year (renewable for up to 2 years of school)
  - How it Works (eligibility):
    - Be an APS student for at least the last 2 school years prior to graduation
    - Graduate with a cumulative GPA of at least a 75 (2.0) if you're going to a 2-year college
    - Graduate with a cumulative GPA of at least an 80 (2.5) if you're going to a 4-year college/university
    - Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
    - Demonstrate financial need through an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0-\$8,000 on FAFSA student aid report
    - Enroll full-time in an accredited, non-profit college or technical program by the fall after you graduate
  - Where it Works:
    - Can be used at accredited, non-profit schools in the state of Georgia
    - To use the scholarship outside of Georgia, you must attend a school that has a graduation rate of 44% or higher
    - Your scholarship award can be used to pay for tuition, room, board & fees, and is distributed directly to the college you attend
- **GPA's (grade point average)**
  - WeightedGPA: A weighted GPA is a GPA that takes the difficulty of your classes into account along with your grades (honors & AP). Difficult classes are assigned a higher value.
  - UnweightedGPA: Unweighted GPA is measured on a scale of 0 to 4.0. It doesn't take the difficulty of a student's coursework into account.
  - HOPEGPA: Earn 3.0 high school GPA in core classes (math, science, english, social studies, foreign language) to qualify for HOPE
- **FAFSA (free application for Federal Student Aid): OPENS OCTOBER 1**
  - A form that allows a student to apply for federal aid and many other financial aid programs.
  - There are three types of federal student aid:
    - **Grants**- financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund)
    - **Work study**- a work program through which you earn money to help you pay for school
    - **Loans**- borrowed money for college or career school; you must repay your loans, with interest
      - Subsidized government helps pay interest
      - Unsubsidized- you are responsible for paying the interest on the loan starting the first day you receive the loan. If you can't make the payments on the loan, that interest is added to the total



amount, and any interest that goes unpaid will slowly build over time.

- In addition, many states and colleges use your FAFSA information to determine your eligibility for state and school aid, and some private financial aid providers use your FAFSA information to determine whether you qualify for their aid.
  - Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid also can help pay for other related expenses, such as a computer and dependent care.
  - **EVERYONE WILL NEED TO COMPLETE FAFSA**
- **Types of Aid:**
    - **Merit Aid:** Financial assistance awarded by the college based on a student's academic and/or personal achievements. This is a grant or scholarship and does not need to be repaid.
    - **Need Based-Aid:** Financial assistance awarded by the college based on a family and/or student's ability to meet the costs of education. May include a combination of grants, loans, and work-study.
    - **Loans:** Can be provided by the government or by private institutions. Government loans generally have more favorable terms than private loans.





## SAMPLE RESUME

See CCC website or Google UGA Resume Template for template and resume tips. A resume is nothing more than a place to organize your high school experiences.

Susan Smith

Henry W. Grady High School, Class of 2020  
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### ACADEMICS

- GPA: 3.5
- Member of National Honor Society
- Honors and AP course work in English Literature, American Literature, American History, World History, and French

### HONORS AND AWARDS

- State 2nd place finalist, Lincoln-Douglas Debate (12), Honor roll ,9-12, Beta Club

### SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- *The Southerner*, award-winning student newspaper
  - Staff Writer and Photographer (10, 11, 12)
- Tennis Team
  - JV (9, 10), Varsity (11, 12)
- Grady Jesters, debate team, (9 -12)

### OUT-OF-SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULARS

- Founded Tennis for Tots
  - Taught grade school children weekly and organized tournaments (10-12)
- Vacation Bible School, teen leader, Atlanta Church (summers, 9-11)

### SUMMER EXPERIENCE

- Central Georgia Youth Tennis 5-Week Summer Intensive (11)
- Participated with "Volunteens," a Zoo Atlanta internship (10)

### WORK EXPERIENCE

- Hostess, Osteria Pizzeria, 10 hours per week during the school year and 20 hours per week during summer (11 to present)
- Babysitter for two pre-school children, 6 hours per week during the school year and 20 hours per week in summers (10-12)