

11th Grade Individual Guidance Plan Meeting

Preparing for Post-secondary Options

Graduation Requirements

| | |
|--|------|
| Total Credits | 43.6 |
| English – Students must take an English course each semester; one course must be year-long American literature course. | 8 |
| Mathematics – Computer science courses do not count for math credits. | 6 |
| Science Science credits must be distributed as follows: 2 credits–Physical Sciences; 2 credits–Life Sciences; 2 credits–Geosciences | 6 |
| Social Studies 1 credit – American Political & Economic Systems 2 credits–World Cultures or AP Human Geography 1 credit – History of Western Cultures 2 credits – United States History | 6 |
| Health & Wellness –Students fulfill the district graduation project requirement through successful completion of a personal health project in this course. | 1 |
| Physical Education – Courses are required for students in grades 9 and 10 and are elective for students in grades 11 and 12. | 1.6 |
| Practical Arts – Course options listed in course catalog. | 1 |
| Arts or Humanities Electives – Arts include courses in Fine Arts, Technology Education, and Family & Consumer Science. In addition, Humanities include the following courses: AP European History, Anthropology, Comparative Religions, (H) European Literature, Honors International Relations, AP Psychology, Psychology, Positive Psychology, Honors Contemporary Domestic Issues, AP Human Geography (taken as an elective in 11 th or 12 th grade), Intro to Global Studies and World Language courses beyond Level 2. | 4 |
| General Electives | 10 |

KEYSTONE EXAM POLICY

- In order to be eligible for graduation, a student must demonstrate mastery on the Keystone Exams: Algebra 1, English Literature, and Biology. The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject area. This requirement will be considered a stand-alone graduation requirement and as such, will not be calculated into the final course grade.
- The statewide graduation requirement outlines in Act 6 and Act 158 take effect for the graduating class of 2022. Students are required to take the Keystone Exams for purposes of federal accountability. After the initial exam administration, students who do not pass the respective Keystone Exam (Algebra 1, Biology, or English Literature) will be provided with optional remediation. Additionally, students who do not pass an exam will take the respective exam one additional time, minimally. Act 158 of 2018, then, provides student in the graduation class of 2022 the thereafter alternative pathways to demonstrate readiness for postsecondary success. Appendix A (page 68) outlines the alternative pathways. Additional factors relating to the class of 2022 and thereafter include:
 - Students who opt out of one or more Keystone Exams must still meet state and local graduation requirements.
 - A student with a disability who satisfactorily completes a special education program developed by an individualized education program team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and 22 Pa. Code Ch. 14 (relating to special education services and programs) that does not otherwise meet the requirements outlined herein in Appendix A (page 68) shall be granted and issued a regular high school diploma.
 - The performance level demonstrated by a student on the associated Keystone Exam will not be included on a student's transcript.
- In order to be eligible for graduation, students with disabilities in the class of 2020 or 2021 will be required to pass the Keystone Exams or alternate assessments, as determined by each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.
- Should a student not demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone Exam, the student will be required to participate in a supplemental instruction program and retake the Exam up through and including the student's junior year of high school. A student, in his/her senior year, who does not score proficient on a Keystone Exam, will be eligible to complete a project-based assessment. A project-based assessment can raise a student's Keystone score to the proficient score, but not beyond it.

Course Levels

As a comprehensive high school, Mt. Lebanon offers a demanding college preparatory program supplemented with strong offerings in several elective areas. Three course levels - Academic, Honors and Advanced Placement - enable students to select courses consistent with their abilities and achievements.

Four Year Planning Guide – Class of 2021

Student Name:

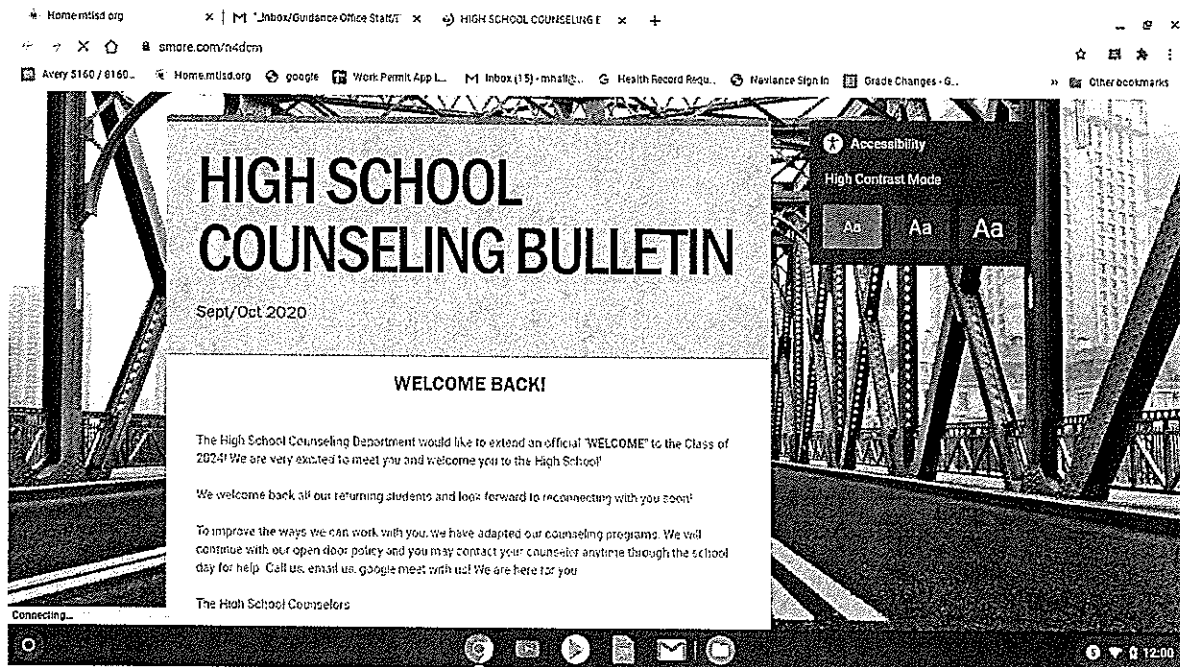
Counselor:

| SUBJECT | 9 TH GRADE | 10 TH GRADE | 11 TH GRADE | 12 TH GRADE | CREDITS |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| English | English 9 | English 10 | Amer. Lit | English 12 | 8 |
| Social Studies | | | | | 6 |
| Mathematics | | | | | 6 |
| Science | | | | | 6 |
| Arts & Humanities | | | | | 4 |
| Health | | | | | 1 |
| Electives | | | | | 10 |
| Electives | | | | | |
| Physical Education | | | | | 1.6 |
| Practical Arts | | | | | 1 |
| TOTAL CREDITS | | | | | 43.6 |
| Standardized Tests | | | | | |

Electives are courses beyond the required credits needed in any subject area and/or may include courses from foreign languages, business/computer applications, family and consumer sciences, technical education or fine arts.

Rev. 10/17

High School Counseling Bulletin



The high school counseling bulletin is used to disseminate a broad selection of information to parents and students. Please make sure your email address is added to your Dashboard account. Once you are logged in, go to My Account, and then click on the Email Address tab. You may enter 5 email addresses. If you don't remember your username and password, contact the high school secretary at 412-344-2003, ext. 5.

Parents and student email addresses are only used for Mt. Lebanon School District communication. This information is considered confidential, as is all other parent/student contact information.

Students must use CLEVER to login into NAVIANCE

NAVIGATE to www.clever.com

CLICK on "Login as a Student"

SEARCH/FIND Mt Lebanon School District - High School

CLICK on "Login with Google"


SIGN-IN with their school Google account
(username@mtlstudents.net and password)


CLICK on Naviance Icon

Naviance College Search Instructions:

From your Naviance Homepage, type the name of a school into the search bar

You can click on the name of the school to be redirected to a page with some quick facts about that school – acceptance rate, application deadlines, total enrollment, etc... - and also a link to the school's website.

If you are interested in the school, click on the outline of a heart symbol located next to the school's name 

The heart symbol outline will then be filled in to indicate that this school has been saved and added to your "College I'm Thinking About" Folder 

Click on the "Colleges" tab at the top of the page and select "Colleges I'm Thinking About" from the drop down menu to access this folder where all of your saved schools are located.

Not Sure Where to Start? Complete a Super Match!


From your Naviance Homepage, click on the "Colleges" tab at the top of the page and select "Colleges Home" from the drop down menu

From this screen select the first link in the "Find Your Fit" window titled "SuperMatch" with a small magnifying glass icon next to it

Click "Select Criteria to Start" and work your way through the various criteria and indicate some characteristics you think you would like out of a college – location, school size, possible majors, acceptance rates, etc...

When you have finished, the SuperMatch will provide you with a list of schools that would be a good fit for you based on your selected criteria and a "Fit Score" percentage indicating how much of a match a school may be based on your selected criteria

Focus on schools with a high percentage for a match and click on the name of the school to explore some quick facts or click the "Why" button under the Fit Score to see how the Fit Score was determined

You can "favorite" schools you feel may be a good fit by clicking the  icon and saving it to your "Colleges I'm Thinking About" folder

You can also save your SuperMatch or start a new one via the "Save Search" or "Start Over" buttons at the top of the page

TO REGISTER FOR COLLEGE VISITS

1. Log into Naviance Student
2. Click the college tab
3. Click College/Home
4. Scroll Down and to College Visits and click Show More
5. Click Register Now on the right

TO JOIN A COLLEGE MEETING

At the meeting time just click the Virtual Visit Link as show in the graphic.

The screenshot displays the 'College Visits' section of the Naviance Student interface. At the top, there is a search bar labeled 'Search for colleges'. Below this, three college visit events are listed:

| Date & Time | College Name | Location | Actions |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| JUNE Wed 10 09:00AM | Miami University-Oxford | Career Center | Virtual Visit Link (highlighted with a box and arrow), Register Now , View Details |
| JUNE Wed 10 10:42AM | Duke University | Career Center | View Details (Note: DEADLINE PASSED) |
| JUNE Fri 12 09:00AM | Miami University-Oxford | Virtual Visit (Link available at visit time) | Register Now , View Details |

MT. LEBANON HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

| 9 th Grade | 10 th Grade | 11 th Grade | 12 th Grade |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>The best preparation for future college entrance exams is to take as rigorous a curriculum as possible.</p> <p>SAT Subject (Subject Area Tests)</p> <p>Freshmen considering the more highly competitive colleges may plan to take this. Colleges that require them usually require two subject tests. All are one hour long.</p> <p>Freshmen who are doing exceptionally well in a 9th grade class, i.e., Honors Chemistry, may consider taking the subject test in Chemistry in May or June. It can be used by any student to highlight good performance to college admissions officers.</p> | <p>PSAT (Practice SAT)</p> <p>Although it is not appropriate for all, sophomores should strongly consider taking the PSAT. The test is designed as a junior year test but the practice is beneficial. The student receives his or her test booklet back with a detailed scoring summary. Students can then determine areas of weakness that need to be worked on before taking the SAT Reasoning in 11th grade.</p> <p>SAT Subject (Subject Area Tests)</p> <p>Sophomores considering the more highly competitive colleges may plan to take this. Colleges that require them usually require two subject tests. All are one hour long.</p> <p>Sophomores who are doing exceptionally well in a 10th grade class, i.e., Honors Biology, may consider taking the Biology subject test in May or June. It can be used by any student to highlight good performance to college admissions officers.</p> | <p>(Practice SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) All juniors planning on attending a four year college should take this exam. The test is administered in October.</p> <p>PSAT/NMSQT</p> <p>SAT Reasoning and/or ACT</p> <p>All students planning for college should take one or both during the latter part of 11th grade. It may be advantageous to sit for the test in December or March of junior year to get scores back in a timely fashion to decide on future tests.</p> <p>For those planning on taking SAT Subject tests, an early sitting may be needed to allow sufficient testing dates to take all SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject tests needed. Always see your counselor to help determine the best time frame for you.</p> <p>ACT</p> <p>Students tested in four areas-English, Reading, Mathematics, and Science. A score is received in each area along with a composite score.</p> <p>SAT Reasoning and Subject December, March, May, June</p> <p>SAT Reasoning Only March</p> <p>SAT Subject</p> <p>Subject Area tests (see Grade 10) may need to be taken if planning to apply to highly competitive colleges. Colleges that require them usually require two. Each subject test is one hour. Students can take up to three in one sitting.</p> <p>ACT December, February, April, June, July</p> | <p>SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject, and ACT</p> <p>Offered in late summer and early fall for seniors who feel scores need to be improved for admission or scholarship considerations.</p> <p>SAT August, October, November, December</p> <p>SAT Subject Area Test Offered in the fall for seniors who may need to fulfill admission requirements or improve earlier scores.</p> <p>ACT September, October, December</p> |

SAT, AP, AND ACT TEST DATES

2020-21

SAT

Register: www.collegeboard.org

| TEST DATES | | REGULAR REGISTRATION DEADLINE | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE (for registrations made online or by phone) <i>Additional fee required</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | August 29 | July 31 | August 11 |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | September 26 | | |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | October 3 | September 4 | September 15 |
| <i>Not offered at MTLHS</i> | | | |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | November 7 | October 7 | October 20 |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | December 5 | November 5 | November 17 |
| SAT Reasoning ONLY | March 13 | February 12 | March 2 |
| <i>Not offered at MTLHS</i> | | | |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | May 8 | April 8 | April 20 |
| SAT Reasoning SAT Subject | June 5 | May 6 | May 18 |

ACT

Register: www.act.org

| TEST DATES | REGULAR REGISTRATION DEADLINE | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE <i>Additional fee required</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--|
| September 12 | August 14 | August 15-28 |
| October 24 | September 18 | September 19—October 2 |
| December 12 | November 6 | November 7-20 |
| February 6 | January 8 | January 9-15 |
| April 17 | March 12 | March 13-26 |
| June 12 | May 7 | May 8-21 |
| July 17 | June 18 | June 19-25 |

PSAT

ADVANCED PLACEMENT TESTS

January 26, 2021

May 3-7, 2021 & May 10-14, 2021

Understanding Standardized Tests for Juniors and Seniors

PSAT/NMSQT and PreACT Tests: You may have already taken the PreACT and/or the PSAT 10 (Preliminary SAT) as a sophomore. Ideally, all students should take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall of junior year. Taking the test as a junior may qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant. Reviewing the results of the PreACT and PSAT/NMSQT will help you to prepare for the ACT and SAT respectively. The results of these tests aren't reported to colleges. They are for your benefit only.

| | SAT | ACT |
|--|--|--|
| When is it administered? | Seven times per year | Six times per year |
| What is the test structure? | Five-section exam: two Evidence-Based Reading and Writing tests (Reading Test and a Writing and Language Test), two math sections (calculator and no calculator tests), and the optional essay | Four-section exam: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An optional writing assessment is also available. |
| What is the test content? | Reading: context, command of evidence, extended reasoning, literal comprehension, interpreting informational graphics Writing/Language: context, command of evidence, expression of ideas, and conventions Math: algebra, data analysis, statistics Essay: analysis, evidence drawn from text | English: usage, mechanics, rhetorical skills Math: pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, trig Reading: long or short prose covering arts, literature, social studies, natural sciences Science: interpretation, analysis, reasoning Writing: evaluate multiple perspectives on complex issue (one prompt) |
| Is there a penalty for wrong answers? | No | No |
| How is the test scored? | 200-800 per section. A 1600 is the highest total score. Essay scores range from 2-8 on each of three dimensions (Reading, Analysis, and Writing). The Essay results are reported separately. | 1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score. Optional writing score isn't factored into composite score. |
| Are all scores sent to schools? | No. There is a "Score Choice" option. Students can choose which scores to send (by test date) to colleges in accordance with an institution's stated score-use practice. | No. There is a "Score Choice" option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores AND which scores the schools will see. |
| Are there other uses for the exams? | Scholarship purposes. Some colleges may use scores for placement. | Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs. Some colleges use scores for placement. |
| Best time to register? | At least six weeks before the test date. The earlier the better. | Registration deadline is five weeks before the test date. Register at least six weeks before the test date. |
| How to contact? | SAT Customer Service: 866-756-7346 or sat.collegeboard.org/contact | ACT, Inc. www.actstudent.org |

SAT/ACT REVIEW COURSES

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| AXIOS TUTORING | http://www.axiostutoring.com/ | 412-833-6060 |
| ABSOLUTE VALUE TUTORING | Search on Facebook Or email: info@absval.net | 412-206-7010 |
| College NANNIES & TUTORS | https://www.collegenanniesandtutors.com/southhillspa/ | 412-346-1444 |
| COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY | https://www.ccac.edu/ Type "SAT" in Search | 412-369-3701 |
| EATON PREP | www.eatonprep.com | 412-551-4095 |
| HUNTINGTON LEARNING CENTER | www.huntingtonlearning.com | 800-226-5327 or 724-942-1290 |
| KAPLAN | www.kaptest.com | 800-KAPTEST |
| KHAN ACADEMY | www.khanacademy.org or go to www.collegeboard.org for links to Khan Academy | |
| MATHNASIUM | www.mathnasium.com | 412-213-8696 Mt. Lebanon |
| MT. LEBANON ACADEMY | www.mtleboacademy.com | 412-563-1413 |
| MT. LEBANON EVENING PROGRAM (ADULT EDUCATION) | www.mtisd.org (click on Community and Continuing Education) | 412-344-2020 Call Monday-Thursday, 6:30 -9:00pm |
| THE PRINCETON REVIEW | http://www.princetonreview.com/ | 800-273-8439 |
| TOTAL LEARNING CENTER | www.totallearningcenter.com | 724-940-1090 |
| SYLVAN LEARNING | www.sylvanlearning.com | 412-283-9047 |

OTHER RESOURCES

The Khan Academy for the SAT and the ACT Academy for the ACT

Two free programs that are available for your use. Links to each site are included below.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Khan Academy for SAT | https://www.khanacademy.org/sat |
| ACT Academy | https://academy.act.org |

Mt. Lebanon School District does not endorse specific testing preparation options or providers. This list is provided for informational purposes only.

Different Admission Plans

There are two main categories of admission options: **non-restrictive** and **restrictive**.

Non-restrictive application plans don't restrict students from applying to other institutions. You'll have until May 1 to consider your options and confirm enrollment. There are three application plans under non-restrictive:

- Regular Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Early Action.

Regular Decision means that you turn in your application by the college's deadline and they let you know by a specified date.

For **Rolling Admission**, schools review applications as they're submitted and make decisions throughout the admission cycle (usually within four to six weeks of submission of the application). It is usually wise to send your application as soon as possible since some colleges fill their classes by early winter.

With **Early Action**, you send your application by the early deadline and the college sends you its decision earlier. Some colleges do have additional restrictions on their early action programs, so make sure to read carefully the instructions from each college.

There are two types of restrictive application plans:

- Early Decision
- Restrictive Early Action.

When you decide to apply **Early Decision**, you are committing yourself to going to that school. Early Decision is for those early-bird students who already have a clear first-choice college. If you're still comparing colleges and don't want to limit your choices yet, Early Decision isn't for you. Why? Early Decision is a contract between you and the college. You agree that if the college accepts you, you'll withdraw all other college applications and attend the early decision college. Because of this commitment, you can apply Early Decision to only one college.

The other restrictive option is **Restrictive Early Action**. This means that you apply to your school of choice and get a decision early. Be aware, though, that some schools restrict applicants from applying to any other early plans at other schools. If you go this way, you'll have until May 1 to confirm that you'll attend.

These early options can be confusing—some schools even have more than one of these options—so talk to your school counselor if there's anything you don't understand.

Colleges respond to early applications in one of three ways: acceptance, rejection, or deferring applications over to regular decision.

Parts of a College Application

What Could Be Included

Official Transcript: Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. 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.

Standardized Test Scores: The majority of colleges require one of the two admission tests, the SAT or the ACT. They could also require results from SAT Subject Tests, Advanced Placement Exams, and the TOEFL. Many colleges and universities give applicants the option of reporting scores from either of the two testing programs. Students should weigh the advantages of taking both or either test. Retakes may be needed in the senior year, because students don't always receive their highest score from their first testing. For students who meet low-income standards, testing fee waivers are available.

The Application Form: The student is responsible for locating the application, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept standardized college applications, such as the Coalition Application, The Common Application, or the Universal 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; and 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, short answer and/or a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application Fee (many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from the counseling office)
- Signature
- For certain majors, students may be required to audition or asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work

Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This isn't 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.

Midyear Report Form: This form isn't 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.

Final Report Form: This form isn't required by all colleges. If this form is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of this form is to inform the college of any grade changes, course changes, and/or disciplinary actions since the Midyear Report.

Teacher Recommendation Form: Not required by all colleges, but the teacher or college counselor 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. Colleges aren't only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

If in doubt, consult your counselor or call the college admission office to confirm application requirements.



Mt. Lebanon High School Teacher / Counselor Letter of Recommendation Process

The first step is to make sure that your colleges require teacher (or counselor) recommendations. You do this by carefully reading the application requirements.

Some schools may require teacher recommendations, but not a counselor recommendation. Be sure you know the difference and consult with your school counselor if you are unsure.

If recommendations are required, be sure to pay attention to deadlines. Most schools accept electronic letters of recommendation. For Mt. Lebanon teachers and your counselor, this process is always completed through Naviance.

Think of the teachers who know you best and would be enthusiastic about writing a recommendation for you. At least one of these teachers should be from a core subject (English, math, science, social studies) and preferably from junior year. Teachers whom you have had for more than one class are often good choices.

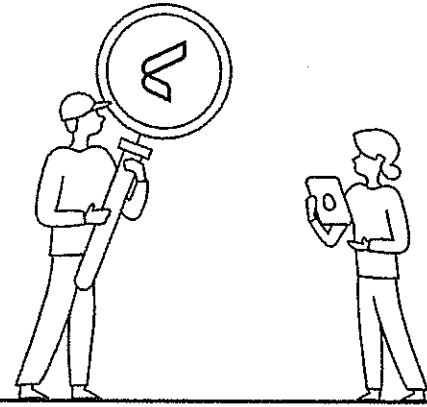
We advise making an "unofficial" verbal request to teachers toward the end of your junior year and then following up with them early in the Fall of your senior year and providing them with any additional information they may require to write you a letter. You will then put the "official" request into Naviance as well.

Always send teachers who write you a letter a personalized "thank you" note!

Counselor letters are handled somewhat differently. We will be distributing the "Student Personal Analysis" Form via our Google Classroom for you to complete this Spring. Please complete it before the end of junior year!



What is Common App



Common App is a non-profit college access organization that helps students apply to college every year. Common App's free college application tool is designed to make applying to college faster and easier. With Common App you only need to use one system to apply to multiple colleges and universities. There are two main parts you fill out: a set of common questions and each college's own specific questions. The best part is you only have to fill out the common questions one time!

Common App at a glance

- Almost 900 colleges and universities use Common App
- 204 public colleges and universities
- 62 international universities in 18 countries
- 12 HBCUs
- More than 325 without app fee
- Nearly 250 test optional/flexible

Common App is a place for you to learn about the college admissions process, understand how to plan and apply to college, and discover all that different colleges have to offer. It's a hub of information that can guide you through each step of the application journey. It's a resource that connects you with financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

Whatever questions you might have, we're here to help

Application guides to give you step-by-step instructions on completing your application.

A college roadmap designed to guide you toward your next destination — no matter where you start.

An application dictionary to help you understand the terminology related to college applications.

A library of FAQs and video tutorials to answer any question you may have, and a support team that's available 24/7/365.

What's Next

Visit commonapp.org to create your Common App account and start exploring colleges.

Common App has announced that the 2020-2021 essay prompts will remain the same as the 2019–2020 essay prompts.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, 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. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma — anything of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
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 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.

❖ ❖ ❖ How to Nail the College Essay ❖ ❖ ❖

The following advice has been compiled from interviews with college admissions counselors, books by people who make money privately assisting students in the application process, student feedback, and your Writing Clinician's experiences. **Sign up with Mrs. Shine in room 521B today for more help.**

Choosing a prompt/topic

- ★ If given a series of questions, as with the common application or the ever-notable University of Chicago, choose the question that pops out at you first.
- ★ If answering "why us," as in why do you and that college or university make a good match, think of your content as a sort of dating profile where you literally match up the school's offerings with your skills and/or goals. Actually research course titles, summer experiences, and internship opportunities to highlight this compatibility.
- ★ You **must** be the center of your essay. If you write about someone else, it can only be in a way that highlights your magnificence.
- ★ If your high school experience includes any red flags (e.g. drop in grades, frequent absences/tardies, withdrawal of courses), consider using your essay to explain how you rebounded from the situation.
- ★ Remember that whatever you write about should somehow show the essence of you. Think of your topic choice as a symbol and tease out how that topic symbolizes you.

Narrative when possible

- ★ Telling stories tells much about us, so tell one of your best.
- ★ Good stories require detail. Use some. All of that teacher lecturing about showing and not telling was for a purpose.
- ★ Your story need not be earth-shattering or wildly unique, but it should be specific to you.
- ★ If you have something earth-shattering, or gut-wrenching, or wildly unique, write about it.
- ★ Highlight your personality.
- ★ Be passionate about the story you tell. Evoke emotion.
- ★ Do not fabricate events. Readers can tell. You will sound inauthentic.
- ★ Start in the middle of the story to create reader intrigue from the get-go.

Logistics

- ★ Do not exceed the word limit.
- ★ Be sure to answer the question, especially if you chose it.
- ★ The number of paragraphs doesn't matter. Avoid the rigidity of a typical academic essay.
- ★ Edit. Have others edit for you. Edit again until you are tired of looking at your essay. Your essay **must** be error free.
- ★ You may feel like you are bragging, but the college essay is no place for humility. Show off your best traits without being pretentious or cliché. However, you should also avoid over-exaggerating.

WHAT is federal student aid?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government—specifically, the U.S. Department of Education. It's money that helps a student pay for higher education expenses (i.e., college, career school, or graduate school expenses).

Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation.

There are three main categories of federal student aid: grants, work-study funds, and loans. Check with your school's financial aid office to find out which programs the school participates in.

WHO gets federal student aid?

Some of the most basic eligibility requirements for students are that you must

- demonstrate financial need (for most programs—to learn more about financial need, visit [StudentAid.gov/how-calculated](https://studentaid.gov/how-calculated));
- be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen;
- have a valid Social Security number;
- be registered with Selective Service, if you're a male (you must register between the ages of 18 and 25);
- be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an eligible degree or certificate program;
- be enrolled at least half-time (for most programs);
- maintain satisfactory academic progress in college, career school, or graduate school; and
- show you're qualified to obtain a college or career school education by
 - having a high school diploma or a state-recognized equivalent (for example, the General Educational Development [GED] certificate);
 - completing a high school education in a home-school setting approved under state law; or
 - enrolling in an eligible career pathways program.

See the full list of eligibility requirements at StudentAid.gov/eligibility.

HOW do you apply for federal student aid?

1. **To apply for federal student aid, you must complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)* form at fafsa.gov.** The FAFSA® form is available every Oct. 1 for the next school year. If you plan to attend college from July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021, submit a 2020–21 FAFSA® form. Fill it out as soon as possible to meet school and state deadlines. Schools and states often use FAFSA® information to award nonfederal aid, but their deadlines vary. Check with the schools that you're interested in for their deadlines, and find state and federal FAFSA® deadlines at StudentAid.gov/fafsa#deadlines.
2. **Students and parents are required to use an FSA ID (a username and password combination) to sign their FAFSA® form online and to access information about their financial aid on U.S. Department of Education websites.** Your FSA ID is used to confirm your identity and electronically sign your federal student aid documents. Your FSA ID has the same legal status as a written signature. Don't give your FSA ID to anyone or allow anyone to create an FSA ID for you. To create an FSA ID, visit StudentAid.gov/fsaid.
3. **After you apply, you'll receive a *Student Aid Report, or SAR*.** Your SAR contains the information reported on your FAFSA form and usually includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is a number (not a dollar amount) used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR information to make sure it's correct. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA® form will get your SAR data electronically.
4. **Contact the schools you might attend.** Make sure the financial aid office at each school you're interested in has all the information needed to determine your eligibility. If you're eligible, each school's financial aid office will send you an aid offer showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the school will offer you. You can compare the aid offers you received and see which school is the most affordable once financial aid is taken into account.

Completing and submitting the FAFSA® form is free and quick, and it gives you access to the largest sources of financial aid to pay for college or career school—federal, state, and school sources. If you need a print-out of the FAFSA® PDF, call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or 334-523-2691 (TTY for the deaf or hard of hearing 1-800-730-8913).

Federal
Student
Aid

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HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact or visit the following:

- StudentAid.gov
- a college financial aid office
- studentaid@ed.gov
- 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) toll-free
- 1-800-730-8913 (toll-free TTY for the deaf or hard of hearing)

FEDERAL STUDENT AID AT A GLANCE

| Program and Type of Aid | Program Information | Annual Award Amount (subject to change) |
|---|--|---|
| Federal Pell Grant Grant: does not have to be repaid | For undergraduates with financial need who have not earned bachelor's or professional degrees. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/pell-grant . | Amounts can change annually. For 2019–20 (July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020), the award amount is up to \$6,195. |
| Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) Grant: does not have to be repaid | For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; Federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at school. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/fseog . | Up to \$4,000. |
| Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Grant: does not have to be repaid unless converted to a Direct Unsubsidized Loan for failure to carry out teaching service obligation as promised | For undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, and graduate students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching. To receive a TEACH Grant, a student must agree to teach for four years in a high-need field at an elementary school, secondary school, or educational service agency that serves low-income families. If a student doesn't complete the teaching service requirement, all TEACH Grants the student received will be converted to a Direct Unsubsidized Loan that must be repaid, with interest. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/teach . | Up to \$4,000. |
| Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant Grant: does not have to be repaid | For undergraduate students who are not Pell-eligible and whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/iraq-afghanistan . | The grant award can be equal to the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount (see above) but cannot exceed your cost of attending school. |
| Federal Work-Study Work-Study: money is earned through a job and doesn't have to be repaid | For undergraduate and graduate students; part-time jobs can be on campus or off campus. Money is earned while attending school. Your total work-study award depends on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when you apply, • your level of financial need, and • your school's funding level. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/workstudy . | No annual minimum or maximum amounts. |
| Direct Subsidized Loan Loan: must be repaid with interest | For undergraduate students who have financial need; U.S. Department of Education generally pays interest while the student is in school and during certain other periods; a student must be enrolled at least half-time. Interest rates for new Direct Subsidized Loans can change every year. Loans made to undergraduate students during the 2019–20 award year have the rate fixed at 4.53% for the life of the loan. | Up to \$5,500 depending on grade level and dependency status. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub . |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan Loan: must be repaid with interest | For undergraduate and graduate or professional students; the borrower is responsible for interest during all periods; a student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need is not required. For undergraduate students: Interest rates for new Direct Unsubsidized Loans can change every year. Loans made to undergraduate students during the 2019–20 award year have the rate fixed at 4.53% for the life of the loan. For graduate or professional students: Interest rates for new Direct Unsubsidized Loans can change every year. Loans made to graduate or professional students during the 2019–20 award year have the rate fixed at 6.08% for the life of the loan. | Up to \$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for same period), depending on grade level and dependency status. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub . |
| Direct PLUS Loan Loan: must be repaid with interest | For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students; the borrower is responsible for interest during all periods; a student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need is not required; the borrower must not have an adverse credit history. Interest rates for new Direct PLUS Loans can change every year. Loans made during the 2019–20 award year have the rate fixed at 7.08% for the life of the loan. | Maximum amount is the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received. For details and updates, visit StudentAid.gov/plus . |

STUDENT NAME _____

TO PARENT:

Please write a comment or two about your son/daughter; something you wish to communicate to your child's counselor. Parent comments are very helpful as we compose our letters of recommendation. If you prefer, you may email this information directly to the counselor.

