College Applications: Essays & Interviews

When your child applies to college, he or she will need to complete an essay as part of the application and might be asked to be interviewed. These are opportunities for your child to show admissions officers who he or she is and to provide information that didn’t fit in other areas of the application.

The essay also reveals what your teen can do with time to think and work on a writing project. The number one piece of advice from admissions officers about this essay is “Be yourself.” The number two suggestion is “Start early.” Encourage your teen to check out these other tips so he or she knows what to expect.

The college interview is another possible part of the college application process. Not all colleges have them. If your teen’s college does, encourage meeting in person to talk with the admissions office, a current student or a graduate of the college. Or perhaps, they will have a video interview, often via Skype.

The interview is rarely the deciding factor in whether the college will accept your teen, but it can give a representative from the college a chance to get to know a student better. And the interview gives students a chance to:

− Show an interest in the college.
− Share information beyond what’s listed on a transcript.
− Bring up anything in a record that you’d like to explain, like a temporary drop in your grades.
− Discuss goals and the reasons to attend the college.
− Ask questions about the college.

Learn how to prepare and find tips at Big Future.

Did You Know?

A wide range of scholarships are available to Washington students. Although scholarship application processes are competitive, many are targeted to students based on their interests, desired campus or major, or their background. Students should register on theWashBoard.org to be matched to scholarships in WA. Of the nearly 500 scholarships listed on theWashBoard.org, only one out of ten required a GPA higher than 3.0.
Myth Buster

**MYTH:** College application essays don’t really matter.

**REALITY:** The essay is an incredible opportunity for students to say something positive and memorable about themselves. Yet most kids waste the opportunity of the essay.

Lots of students think the objective is to write about something that will “impress” the admissions office. In part, that is true, but what impresses an admissions officer is an essay that conveys something positive about the applicant. This allows the committee to get to know the student a bit better than what grades and test scores can show.

The essay is an opportunity to provide a different perspective about the applicant, a reason to accept a student. This is an opportunity your sophomore won’t want to waste.

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Upcoming Events & Announcements

- **Family Event:**

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Student Checklist

- Continue extracurricular activities since admissions officers will look at your extracurricular activities when considering you for admissions.
- Try to make a list about what matters to you in a college (i.e., the location, size, programs or classes they offer, or extracurricular activities like athletics).
- Visit two college websites.

Family Checklist

- Make a college wish list together. Talk with your sophomore about qualities he or she may want in a college in terms of location, size, majors offered and so on. Check out How to Find a College That Fits You to learn more about deciding on college must-haves.

Visit readysetgrad.org to learn more and access resources to help your child make a plan.