

✓ The Only College Checklist You'll Ever Need ✓

There's no doubt about it, the college admissions process includes a TON of moving parts. Lucky for you, "The Only College Checklist You'll Ever Need" will help you get through it. Stay on track during the admissions process.

Save or print this checklist and step through what you need to do!

Transcript

- I don't have any "gaps" in my educational history and will officially graduate from high school.
- There are no grades on my transcript that require additional explanation.
- I only attended one high school.
- If any of the above boxes are not checked, I will provide an explanation in the "Additional Information" essay and/or talk to my college counselor about explaining it in their letter of recommendation.

Standardized Tests

- I have taken the SAT or ACT.
- I have taken necessary SAT Subject Tests (if I might apply to colleges that require them).
- If I don't love my SAT or ACT scores, I have considered test-optional and test-flexible colleges and universities. Check out FairTest for a list of great colleges that don't require testing: <https://bit.ly/1xywX8M>.

Resume + Activities

- I have included all of my activities and outside-of-school involvement on a resume and/or activities list, including volunteering, jobs, family responsibilities, and even independent projects.
- When describing my involvement, I have focused on details that are specific, measurable, and focused on my individual impact.
- If I create an optional resume, it is well-organized and formatted. (Tip: Google Docs has some great, free resume templates: <https://bit.ly/2zxfhD2>).

Money

- I have had an honest conversation with my parents about the cost of college and what is “affordable” for my family.
- If the cost of college is a concern, I have completed the Net Price Calculator for every college or university that I am considering. You can find the Net Price Calculator here: <https://bit.ly/32ID91I>.
- I have had a conversation with my parents about my potential student loan burden and what that will look like as far as monthly student loan payments.
- I have researched merit scholarship opportunities at each college on my list.
- I am actively applying for outside scholarships.
- I have considered creative ways to save money on college tuition, such as attending community college for two years or graduating a semester or two early. For other ideas, check out our Medium post: <https://bit.ly/2Oawjif>.
- I have created a list of all of the various financial aid and scholarship deadlines for the colleges I am applying to. Almost all colleges will require the Free Application For Student Aid, (<https://bit.ly/1PQd4Dk>), and many will also require the CSS Profile application (<https://bit.ly/2Art0ax>).

College List

- I have researched potential colleges according to the most important metrics that matter. Use this Story2 college planner to help you: <https://bit.ly/32HAHbC>
- I have visited at least 2-3 college campuses with a focus on “categories” of colleges and universities, (for instance, a rural liberal arts college, a large public university, and a very urban college).
- If I have any learning differences, health issues, or need specific support, I have researched the resources at each college on my list. Usually, there are specific college offices dedicated to student academic, wellness, and emotional support.
- I have a final list of 10-15 colleges.
- I have 2-3 “Likely” colleges where my GPA and test scores are well above the average for admitted students.
- I have 3-4 “Reach” colleges where my GPA and test scores are below the average for admitted students.
- I have 5-8 “Target” colleges where my GPA and test scores are around the average for admitted students.
- I have researched both Early Decision and Early Action application options. For more information, check out this Story2 blog post: <https://bit.ly/2Z3y9T5>.
- I have considered other “x-factors” in the admissions process such as legacy status and demonstrated interest. For more information on demonstrated interest, read this Story2 blog post: <https://bit.ly/2GzTWdV>.
- If I am not admitted to my Early Decision option, I have considered colleges that offer Early Decision 2, (which has a later deadline, usually in January).
- If I am deferred from any Early Decision or Early Action colleges, I have written a “letter of continued interest” to update the admissions office of new developments, and also reiterate my interest in attending their institution.

Letters of Recommendation

- I have identified two teachers who know me best as a student in the classroom. Recommendations should ideally be from junior year teachers. Senior year teachers may be okay but remember that the teacher will only know you a few months before having to write your recommendation. Your recommendations should not be from freshman or sophomore teachers, or from teachers who taught you outside of the “core 5” subjects, (English, foreign language, math, science, and social science).
- My recommendations are in two different disciplines. Balance is always best as far as recommendations!
- I have scheduled a brief meeting to ask if a teacher is willing to write a recommendation for me. It is best to frame it as a question in case the teacher is unable to write one for you.
- I wrote a thank-you note to my teachers after they submit their recommendations (bonus points for a hand-written card).
- I will keep my teachers up to date regarding the colleges that I am accepted to! They will be excited to hear about your successes!

Athletic or Creative Supplements

- If I hope to play a varsity sport in college, I have completed a recruitment questionnaire or reached out to the appropriate coach, (note that most colleges will be very proactive as far as reaching out to talented athletes early in the process).
- If I want to showcase my creative talents in art, music, theater, film, writing, etc., I have created a portfolio of work. Note that individual colleges may have specific requirements as far as creative portfolio submission.
- If I want to showcase my creative talents in art, music, theater, film, writing, etc., I have also investigated specific talent scholarships offered by colleges.

Applications

- After reviewing my college list, I have identified the specific applications I need to complete, including Common Application, Coalition Application, UC Application, etc.
- I have created a list with my college deadline dates so I can stay on top of upcoming deadlines and prioritize earlier deadlines.
- I have clarified any questions I am unsure of with my parents and Guidance counselor. The application requires information from many sources, so don't be shy about asking for additional help!
- I have submitted my college applications by the appropriate deadline date.

Essays

- I have created a StoryBuilder account to get started with my essays: <https://www.story2.com/storybuilder> StoryBuilder is a patented storytelling engine and writing platform created by Story2. It uses the science of storytelling to teach spoken and written communication.
- I have copied all of my supplemental essay prompts into a Google Doc so I can stay organized.
- I invited an additional essay editor, such as a guidance counselor, teacher, sibling, mentor, or parent), to review my essays.
- I have also copied all of my potential scholarship essays into a separate Google Doc. Don't forget to continue to work on scholarship applications!.
- Before I submit my essays, I have proofread them, read them out loud, and asked a second person to review them, too.

Interviews

- I have researched possible interview options at each college or university.
- I have prepared two or three stories to use in my interviews that relate to my academic interests, an extracurricular passion, or why I am interested in the college or university.
- I have requested interviews at every college that offers them. While on-campus interviews are ideal, not all colleges offer them, and it is okay if you can't visit a college that is far away to interview.
- I have prepped for my college interview by preparing 2-3 questions to ask the interviewer that I can't find the answer to through a simple search (such as the majors offered at the college).
- After my interviews, I sent a "thank you" e-mail or note to the person who interviewed me.

Uncollege

- I have considered doing a gap year to travel, work, or learn before starting my formal college education.
- I have considered one of the many college alternatives or "bootcamps" that provide career-focused training in web development, data science, product design, and other areas!
- Want more help with the college admissions process? Visit story2.com to learn how to write winning essays, download other free resources, and more.