

GOING TO COLLEGE

Consider each of the suggested reasons for going to college. Highlight your reasons. Now rank your reasons in order of importance to you.

- To study subjects I have never studied
- To make new friends and have new experiences
- To avoid going to work immediately
- To serve mankind
- To be on my own
- To prepare for a career
- To climb the social ladder
- To date, socialize, and have fun
- To delay making a career choice
- To please my parents
- To go because all my friends are going
- To understand myself better

Can you achieve the above without going through a two- or four-year college program? If yes, how?

COLLEGE CHECKLIST

ITEM	COMPLETED	DATE
1. Contact your college early in your senior year and request a college catalog, an application for admission, and information on financial aid.	Y N	
2. If you are an accomplished musician, artist, athlete, or have a high GPA and plan to major in engineering, math, science, etc., contact the department at the college you plan to attend for information on scholarships they may have available. Some departments award their scholarships directly!	Y N	
3. Take the ACT or SAT late in your junior year or early in your senior year. Some scholarships will have earlier deadlines and will require an ACT or SAT test score.	Y N	
4. VISIT COLLEGE CAMPUSES!	Y N	
5. Apply for admission to the college by completing your application for admission during the first semester of your senior year. You may apply for admission to as many colleges as you wish and decide later which college you plan to attend.	Y N	
6. Complete your FAFSA as soon after Jan. 1 of your senior year as possible. Any college financial aid officer will assist you in completing the FAFSA, even if you do not plan to attend that college. Financial aid officers are specialists in completing these forms. Delays in correcting the FAFSA can be costly.	Y N	
7. Apply for financial aid to your college by completing your application for admission and financial aid forms. Contact the financial aid office at your college to see if they have a special application.	Y N	
8. Research and apply for other sources of financial aid.	Y N	
9. Keep a college folder with photocopies of everything mailed to colleges and financial aid offices. The small amount of time and money spent in doing this will help you remember exactly what you have done and when. When talking by phone, record time, date, person you spoke with, and topic.	Y N	
10. CHECK THE COUNSELOR SECTION OF THE KCHS WEBSITE!!	Y N	

Deciding which colleges to apply to, much less which to attend, is a significant life choice which will affect you for years. What are your values? What kind of environment do you want to live in? Other questions are sure to pop up. You can use this list as a guide as you visit schools and complete the rest of the application process.

Location

- How far away from home would you like to go to school?

Size of College

- Would you prefer to attend a school with a large enrollment (say, 30,000 students) or a small one (1,500), or something in the middle?
- How large would you like the physical size of the campus to be?

Environment

- Would you rather attend a community college or other 2-year institution, or a 4-year university?
- Do you prefer an urban school or a rural one?
- Is the location and size of the nearest city important to you?
- Do you prefer a co-ed or single-sex school?
- Does the school's religious affiliation make a difference to you?

Admissions Requirements

- At what schools do you have a high enough GPA, class ranking, and/or test scores to be admitted?

Academics

- Which schools offer the major(s) you are considering?
- What kind of student-faculty ratio and typical class size are you looking for, and which schools offer them?

College Expenses

- How expensive a school can you afford to attend? (Consider tuition, room and board, and other expenses including the application fee and other deposits.)

Financial Aid

- How readily available is financial aid through the schools you are considering? (Note: Although this is an important factor, don't rule out any school based only on the financial aid situation.)

Housing

- Would you rather live on campus in a dorm or commute to school from home?

Facilities

- What type of academic and recreational facilities should your college have?

Activities

- What kinds of clubs and organizations do you want your college to offer?
- What types of athletic activities (including intramural teams) should be offered by the school you choose to attend?

When You Write Your Essay

Do start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite.

Do read the directions carefully. Answer the question as directly as possible and follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and clearly as possible.

Do tell the truth about yourself.

Do focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalizations.

Do feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it is good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.

Do tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this school can do for you. Your essay can have different slants for different schools.

Do speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.

Do write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them!

But. . .

Do not repeat information given elsewhere on your application.

Do not write on general, impersonal topics. The college wants to know about you.

Do not use the personal statement to excuse your shortcomings. It would give them additional attention.

Do not use clichés.

Do not go to extremes: too witty, too opinionated, or too “intellectual.”

IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN...

...I'd have to learn to sleep with the lights on, the radio blaring, and the phone ringing.

...my old car takes twice as much money and time to keep running away from home and that it is not so bad to walk sometimes.

...college is not all fun and games. It is hard work and takes a lot of self-discipline.

...I would need an iron and the know-how to use one.

...everybody is human and I would have to learn to live with different kinds of people.

- ..there would be no one to tell me to do my homework before I turned on the TV.
- ..to be more aware of current events so I would not sound so stupid at discussion sessions.
- ..it is not so hard as I thought it would be because it's interesting.
- ..to be really open to new, controversial ideas, not necessarily to accept them but to evaluate them.
- ..not to go over to the student union for a study break because if I manage to get back to my books, I will not be in the mood to study anymore. A 5-10 minute walk around the building is better.
- ..that my prejudices would come out, even though I thought I did not have any. I have to admit them and get rid of them.
- ..not to get so busy that I do not have time for people.
- ..that I will not be afraid to ask questions.
- ..that getting used to a roommate is like getting married without being engaged. It takes a great deal of compromise and lots of give and take to live constantly with one person. I might let those minor irritations go by, but if something really important bothers me, I will talk it over with my roommate.
- ..that one of the main purposes of college education is to teach me to express myself well on essay exams, in class, in clubs, or at discussion sessions.
- ..that there is no little brother or sister to get mad at when things go wrong.
- ..that the best way to study is without any form of distraction.
- ..how to make the best use of my time—what things are the most important and, therefore, need to be done first.
- ..that college is not as hard as everyone makes it out to be.
- ..that everyone complains about the food, but it is really pretty good.
- ..that I do not go everywhere and do everything with my roommate, or we will soon be at each other's throats.

- ...that if I keep up with my reading, I can avoid the last minute panic.
- ...that the way to remember is review, review, review whenever possible.
- ...to expect loneliness. It takes time to get past superficial relationships and form close friendships.
- ...that the people I thought at first would be great friends may not turn out to be.
- ...not to judge people by their looks or reject them for what they say, but be ready to accept differences.
- ...that I could save a lot of money by buying used books from other kids.

I WISH I HAD KNOWN...

- ...to read more in high school and learn to read faster.
- ...that if you wait until vacation to catch up on your school work and sleep, you will get neither done and will ruin your vacation to boot.
- ...what it is like to be completely on my own, making all my own decisions.
- ...to take it as it comes. That I do not get uptight before I even know what is going on. Play it cool.
- ...that it is terribly easy to become apathetic or, on the other hand, that it is easy to take up every cause because it's the 'in' thing to do.
- ...that there is more to learning than just what happens in the classroom or while I have my nose in a book. Learning comes from what happens in the classroom, outside the classroom, or even in the Middle East.
- ...that I would need so much more money than I expected. All the little things that you usually forget about add up quickly.
- ...that I need to take advantage of campus events like concerts, clubs, and discussions groups. Not only does it round out my personality and make me a more interesting person, but there is also the chance of getting a date with someone I meet there.
- ...that the best education comes from getting to know people, not from books.

. . .that the most important thing I need to try to learn is to think and solve problems and get to know myself, accepting myself as I am.

WHEN YOU INTERVIEW

Go prepared!

You need to do plenty of advance study on yourself and the college. "Lack of preparation" is the #1 complaint of college staff. Be prepared to discuss intelligently exactly why you are serious about this school. Always state multiple reasons for wanting to attend. Do not be cute.

Set yourself an interview strategy.

There are some things you will want to know about the school and some things you will want the school to know about you. The strategy that you adopt should be consistent with the rest of your application.

Wait to be invited to sit down.

Do not move any of the furniture. Keep your hands away from your face and your fingers out of your mouth.

Sit up straight.

Do not fidget with your hair. If you do not know what to do with your hands, keep them in your lap. It is okay to cross your legs at the ankles or the knees, but make sure you are sitting erect when you do so.

Take your lead from the interviewer.

Expect 'Tell me about yourself' or 'Why do you want to go to college' or 'What do you expect to be doing ten years from now' or 'What do you think about . . .' or 'How would your friends describe you.'

Give concise, detailed answers.

Provide your interviewer with complete responses. Be as concise as possible when the interviewer is simply trying to clarify a point. The dialogue should flow naturally. The best interviews are really just conversations.

Open up.

Pose questions and do a fair amount of talking. You should carry about half of the conversation.

Avoid saying that you do not enjoy reading.

Reading and college are practically synonymous terms. If you enjoy science fiction, admit it. Be careful with escapist romance novels; they are hardly serious literature. You will be doing extensive reading in college. Get used to it in high school!

Avoid asking mundane questions.

Put yourself behind the interviewer's desk. Would you want to hear the same questions 30 times a week: "How many students do you have on campus? How many books in your library? Can I major in political science?" All this information is available in the school's catalog; read it beforehand!

Be genuinely enthusiastic about particular activities.

Beware of a bragging tone. There is a definite distinction between enthusiasm and cockiness. If offered the opportunity, discuss those activities that fall near the top of your activity sheet.

Avoid coming on too strong or appearing overanxious to impress.

Remember that 'playing it cool' is almost always the preferred style. Do not try to impress the interviewer with your family or friends. The fact that your father is a noted surgeon, author, etc., may be important, but this is not the time to bring it up. To a skilled interviewer, you are the important one.

Tell your host about the dedication and steadfastness you have developed on the playing field.

Tell how this has benefited you in life. However, if the academics suffered a bit, admit it at once but stress the importance of the 'total learning experience'—on the field and in the classroom.

Avoid getting yourself caught in a heated political debate.

A well-informed discussion of current events with your interviewer may win you a few points. One never knows when one might be asked about a recent Washington appointment. If you don't know something, say so. Sometimes difficult questions are raised just to test reactions.

Do not knock your high school too much.

You can be somewhat critical, but be mostly supportive. Telling your interviewer that your high school education was boring, the teachers uncaring, the students nerds, will only get you labeled as pessimistic.

Do not play games.

Understand that on occasion your interviewer could be totally honest and propose that this school is not the right one for you.

Do not try to extend the conference unnecessarily.

The length of a session is not a measure of its success.

Avoid judging the college by the interviewer.

Small Schools vs. Large Schools

SMALL SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:

- ✓ Students feel a sense of belonging—a sense of community
- ✓ More individualized instruction time
- ✓ Greater interaction among students
- ✓ More opportunity for leadership and athletics
- ✓ Tougher to 'do your own thing'
- ✓ Limited variety of campus activities
- ✓ Course offerings not as extensive
- ✓ Limited number of professors teaching core subjects

LARGE SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS:

- ✓ Alive, vibrant, surprising
- ✓ Endless social contact possibilities

- ✓ Big smorgasbord of course offerings
- ✓ Large intercollegiate and intramural athletic programs
- ✓ Easier to 'do your own thing'
- ✓ Can meet cross section of students from all over the US
- ✓ Heading to Sociology 105, you have passed 249 people and don't know one of them. .
.How does it feel?
- ✓ Can have a class with 400 people you don't know
- ✓ Lots of students vying for the same position
- ✓ Graduate assistants teach many of the classes
- ✓ Can be purposeful but cold

Planning a Campus Visit

One of the best ways to learn about the universities on your list is through a campus visit. Seeing the campus first-hand, meeting professors, and talking with students can give you the insight you need to choose a college that will help you attain your goals.

When you visit a college campus, be sure to ask the following questions:

1. Can I take courses from more than one academic division?
2. What is the workload like?
3. What kinds of scholarships are available?
4. Will I be able to work with professors on research projects?
5. Are there internship opportunities?
6. Can I study abroad?
7. Is there a career center on campus? If so, what services are provided?
8. Should I buy a computer before I get to campus?
9. How will my roommate be chosen?
10. Is there a wide variety of food to choose from on campus?
11. What are the athletic facilities like? Pools? Training rooms? Fitness equipment?
12. Are there a lot of student organizations?
13. Is it a friendly campus?
14. Is the student body diverse?



JUST DO IT!!!

WHEN YOU VISIT. . .

Take a formal tour if possible. Make certain that you get to see a “typical” freshman dorm.

Off tour, stop several students and ask them why they selected the school and how their expectations have been met. What do they see as the school’s strengths and weaknesses? Their perspective is not to be overlooked. Do not be bashful!!

Try to have a meal on campus.

When shown the student center, carefully check out its décor, physical condition, and facilities.

Pay attention to such telling things as posters, notices, and graffiti. Take home a copy of the campus newspaper, and then read it. This is a great way to get to know about current campus social, political, and intellectual issues.

Stop by the counseling and placement office and see if you can pick up some placement brochures. Such literature can give you insight into student preparation for a career or graduate school.

If you know the discipline in which you want to major, you will want to visit that department and facility, especially if it was not part of the tour. Many departments are in fact housed in their own buildings. There just might be a department professor available to meet with you. You might even want to attend a class or two. Note the culture on the campus, including rapport between students and professors.

