Top Tips for Common App

Advice for those applying to college using the Common Application
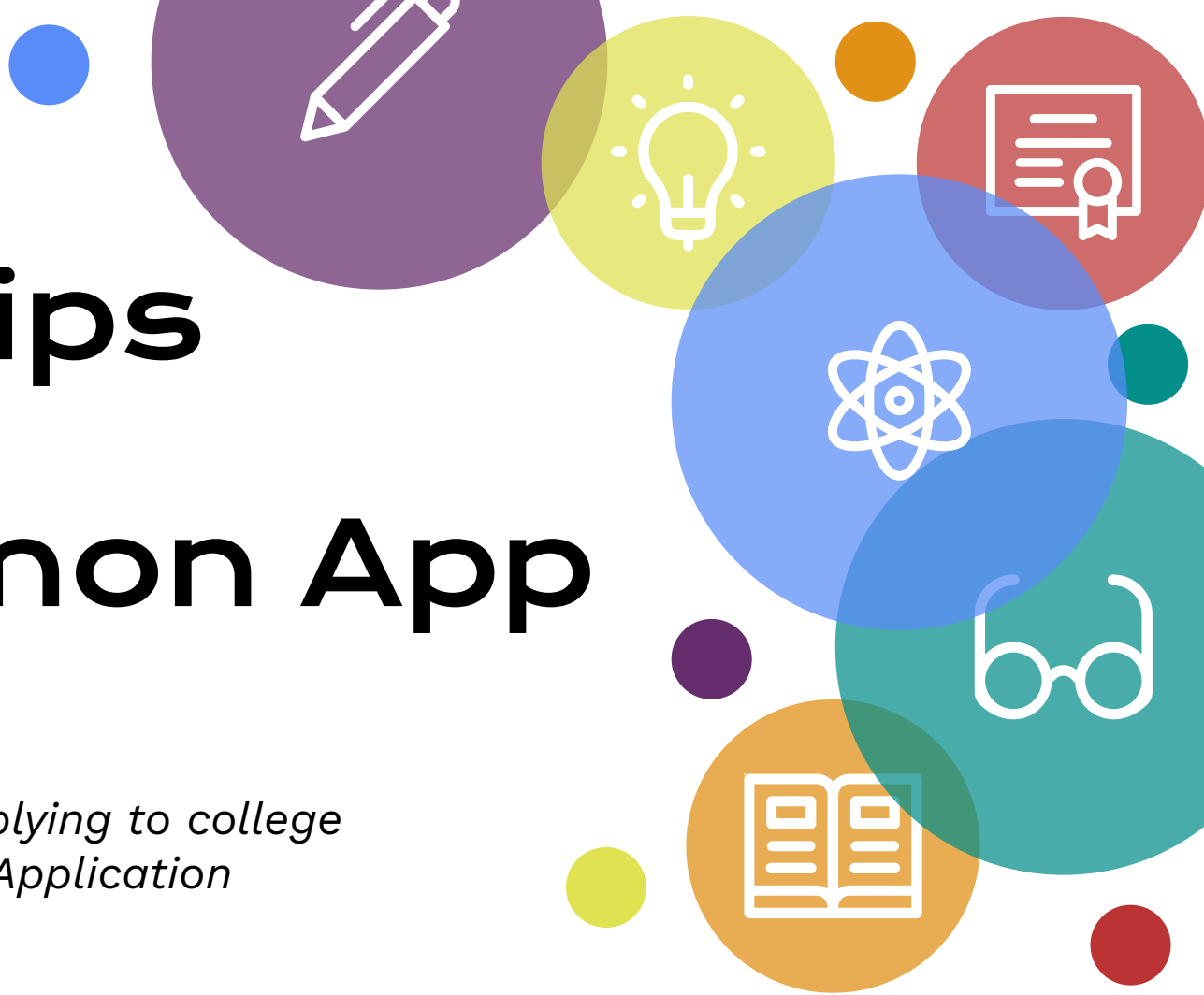
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Account

01

Account

Creating your Common App account

What is Common App?

Each year, more than 1 million students apply to more than 1,000 Common App member colleges worldwide through our online college application platform. Learn more about applying through our first-year application by following our step-by-step guide below.

Create a Common App account

If creating before August, please note...

Account rollover

The Common App launches on August 1 each year, but students don't have to wait until then.

Username and password
remain the same.

What rolls over?
- A student's college list
- Answers to questions on the Common App tab
  - Profile
  - Family
  - Education
  - Testing
  - Activities
  - Writing
  - Courses & Grades
- Advisor invitations

What does NOT roll over?
Anything on the My Colleges tab, including:

- College-specific questions
- FERPA release authorization
- Recommender invitations (counselors, teachers, other recommenders)

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Only work on the sections that will ROLL OVER!

Applying

02

Applying

Information you will need when filling out the application.

Education Section	
Class Size	330
Class Rank Reporting	None
GPA Scale	4.0
Cumulative GPA	Enter directly from your transcript
GPA Weighting	Mark "**Weighted**" if you have ever taken any honors or AP classes. Otherwise, mark "Unweighted."

Applying

Information you will need when filling out the application.

Entering Resume Items (What you are balancing on your plate?)	
Activities Section	List up to 10 activities you are involved with outside of the classroom (in the order of their importance to you). Be sure to include commitments you have outside of PCH (employment, community/family), as well.
Educational Honors & Awards	List up to 5 honors related to academic achievements. This could include things like membership in **honor societies** or success in **academic competitions** (ie math, Speech/Debate, FBLA/DECA), earning your **seal of biliteracy**, or being named a **scholar athlete**.

Applying

Information you will need when filling out the application.

Courses & Grades Section	
Grading Scale	A-F scale
Schedule	Semesters
Semester Grades	List as indicated on your transcript (including the +/-'s) in the semester they were earned. Any "**H**" grades earned in 9th grade should be reported as "A+". ****The *Final* Semester grade column should be left blank!***
Semester Credits	List all credits earned as 0.5 in the semester they were earned. ****The *Final* Semester credit column should be left blank!***

Courses & Grades Example

Transcript #1 - Parkway Central High School

School Name *	School Year *	Grading Scale *	Schedule *
Parkway Central High School	2021-22	A-F	Semesters

Subject *	Course Name *	Course Level *	Semester Grades *			Semester Credits *			N/A
			S1	S2	Final	S1	S2	Final	
English	+Honors English 1	Honors	B-	A-		0.5	0.5		☐
Geometry	+Geometry	Honors	A	A+		0.5	0.5		☐ ✖
Physical Education/Hea...	Phys Fitness Concepts	Regular/Standard	A			0.5			☐ ✖
Other/Elective	Intro to Business	Regular/Standard		A-			0.5		☐ ✖

Essays

03

Essay Requirments

Common App Personal Essay

Add all colleges to your Common App Dashboard and then on the Common App tab, click on "Writing" to see if any of your colleges require the personal essay. If so, you will choose one prompt and paste your answer for submission.

*THIS IS AVAILABLE **BEFORE** AUGUST 1.

College-Specific Essays

Add all colleges to your Common App Dashboard and then click on "My Colleges" to see if school-specific short answer or essay questions are included. Those prompts could be in either the "Questions" <u>or</u> "Writing Supplements" sections.

*THIS IS AVAILABLE **AFTER** AUGUST 1.

Common App Personal Essay Prompt Options

If your college <u>requires</u> the personal essay, you will have the option to choose **one** of the following prompts:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then 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. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
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 that 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.

Resources for Essays

Need essay help? Check out these sites:

- College Essay Guy - Resource Hub

- Free Essay Editing Services

- Free 4-Day Essay Writing Course

Rec Letters

04

Recommendation Letters

Teacher Recommendation(s)

- Verify requirements for each college
  - Some accept **ZERO**, others might take 1-3
- Use core teachers
  - Eng, Math, Sci, SS, WL
- Request at least 2-3 weeks before your earliest deadline
- Provide reminders (some will upload just prior to deadlines)
- Show appreciation for their help

Counselor Forms/Recommendation

- **ALL** colleges in Common App require a School Report
- If a **counselor** recommendation letter is also required or desired, you must initiate this request with either Mrs. Prange, Dr. Flagg, Ms. Lange, Mr. Hussmann or Mrs. Greenwood.
- The counselor may ask you to complete a survey before they write.
- Show appreciation for their help

Need more help?
Click on any option below!

① common app   ② PCH Counseling   ③ Appt with Mrs. Prange

(During school year only)

Good Luck!