Valley Forge Military Academy

College Planning Workbook

Cadet Name: __________________________________________

Valley Forge Military Academy CEEB Code

395100
Junior and senior years of high school require decisions to be made that will likely be among the most important of your lifetime: choosing a form of education and post-secondary plan. The choices that you make NOW will often impact other life choices and you should be very thoughtful and strategic about this decision.

We recognize that each cadet begins the college planning process with different goals and at different places and we hope to meet each of you where you are to best encourage and guide you. We expect YOU to take the leap into self discovery to identify the right path for you, and you can expect US to support and encourage you along the way.

This packet will provide you with resources designed to help you stay focused, on track, and prepared throughout the college application process. You are bound to have questions that may not be covered in this guide that are more specific to you and your future plans. Be your best self-advocate and be sure to see out the assistance that you need from the people who can help.

One of the major functions of the Guidance Office is to help prepare cadets for the transition from High School into their post-secondary choice. For the majority of cadets, that transition is to a 2 or 4 year College or University, but for many the next step takes them to a Career or Technical School, the Military, or into the work force. We do our best to work with cadets to help create an individualized plan that makes sense for that cadet based on his long term goals.

All of the work we do with cadets, including selecting appropriate courses, preparing for standardized tests, providing opportunities to do Personality and Career Inventories, and meeting individually with them, is part of the process of working toward that goal. This manual seeks to provide detailed information on the things that cadets need to understand and do to prepare for the transition out of High School, the resources that are available to them as they walk down that path, and the ways in which we support them through that process.

Working with students to set personal College and Career goals is one of the most rewarding things we get to do as counselors. We look forward to supporting our students through this exciting process, and are always available to answer specific questions from students and parents as they progress through High School.

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ASSISTANT TO THE GUIDANCE OFFICE
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Counselor Recommendations
Junior and Senior Seminar Leader
School Reports
Cadet Conferences
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JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE

Winter
- Junior Seminar begins. Engage in the lessons that are designed to assist you as you move through the process of mapping out your plans upon graduating from Valley Forge Military Academy.

Spring
- Fill out your Guidance Questionnaire in Naviance! Your counselor will write the letter of recommendation only after receiving the questionnaire. The questionnaire will also be shared with faculty members, so when you ask a Faculty Member to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf they will also have access to this form.
- Prepare your Resume in Naviance. This becomes a very helpful tool to YOU as well as the teachers writing letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- Take advantage of the College Search features in Naviance and with other resources that will help you find best schools for you based on your interests, accomplishments, and abilities.
- Work hard on your studies, you grades from junior year are the last full picture of your academic work that admission representatives will see. Be sure you finish STRONG!
- Decide what teachers you would like to write your recommendation letters and ask them if they can do that for you BEFORE you depart campus for the summer. After you have spoken with the teacher, enter the request into Naviance so that they have access to your request, and your Guidance Questionnaire. Typically, students ask two academic teachers to write a letter on their behalf. Some schools have specific require
- Register for and sit for either the SAT or ACT examination. Once registered, see the Dean of Cadets to register for transportation.
  - VFMA CEEB Code: 395100
  - SAT: Register online at www.collegeboard.org
  - ACT: Register online at www.actstudent.org
  - Testing location for the SAT is Archbishop Carroll High School in Radnor and the Test Center code is: 39610
  - Testing location for the ACT is Delaware County Community College and the Test Center code is: 035420
- If you hope to play Division 1 or Division 2 College Athletics, you should create your account with the clearinghouse to start the process of determining your eligibility. There are minimum GPA and Test Score requirements for both Division 1 and Division 2 which will be covered at greater length later in this packet.
  - NCAA Clearinghouse website: www.ncaa.org

Summer
- Narrow your list of potential college choices.
- Begin to research scholarship opportunities.
- Make a Common Application account on commonapp.org and fill it out. The application should be available in early August.

SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

September
- Use a planner to keep track of college-related dates (*Tracking Worksheet is available in the back of this guide as a resource*).
- Meet with your guidance counselor to finalize your list of colleges.
- Circle back with the teachers you asked to write your letters of recommendation for you. Provide them with any materials they need and let them know of any early application due dates.
- Review the list of college reps visiting Valley Forge on Naviance and make a point of introducing yourself to any reps visiting from colleges that you are interested in.
- Register for the fall SAT or ACT if you would like to improve your scores. Once registered, see the Dean of Cadets to register for transportation.
  - VFMA CEEB Code: 395100
  - SAT: Register online at www.collegeboard.org
  - ACT: Register online at www.actstudent.org
Testing location for the SAT is Archbishop Carroll High School in Radnor and the Test Center code is: 39610
Testing location for the ACT is Delaware County Community College and the Test Center code is: 035420

- Begin to fill out admissions applications.
- Continue to work on your application essays.

October/November
- Check all application deadlines and submit your materials on time. Use the College Application Tracking Worksheet to stay organized.
- Request transcripts on Naviance at least 10 days prior to any application deadlines. For November 1st deadlines, requests must be made by October 15th. For November 15th deadlines, requests must be made by November 1st.
- Follow up to make sure all early action or early decision application materials have been received.
- Remind teachers of early deadlines for applications, if applicable.
- Be sure to include any required fees with your applications.
- Make copies of all documents you send through the mail or submit online. Keep organized files.

December
- Take the SAT or ACT, if applicable.
- Remind faculty members of the deadlines for submitting your college recommendations for regular admission.
- Request transcripts for any regular decision applications. For January 1st deadlines, requests must be made by December 1st.

January/February
- Continue to meet application deadlines.
- Confirm that all of your application materials have been received by each school to which you applied.
- Write thank you notes to the teachers who wrote recommendations on your behalf.

April
- Maintain organized files of all admissions correspondence that you receive.
- Provide a copy of each decision letter of admission to the Guidance Office.
- Provide the Guidance Office with a copy of the letter received with any scholarship that you receive.
- Make sure that you accept an offer of admission before May 1st, and send in any required deposits and paperwork.

May
- Complete the Senior Exit Survey in English class.
- Be certain that the Guidance Office is aware of what college you plan to attend.

USEFUL LINKS

NAVIANCE: www.connection.naviance.com/vfma
The Common Application: www.commonapp.org
The College Board (SAT/AP): www.collegeboard.org
The ACT: www.actstudent.org
FASTWEB Scholarship Search: www.fastweb.com
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): www.fafsa.gov
CSS Profile: www.cssprofile.collegeboard.org
NCAA Clearinghouse: www.ncaa.org
SAT vs ACT

What is the difference between the ACT and the SAT? Which Test Should I Take?

SAT vs ACT. Many students and parents begin the college prep process by comparing the ACT and SAT tests. ... Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions decisions and awarding merit-based scholarships. Most colleges do not prefer one test over the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>SAT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four required separate sections</td>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>Three parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, English, Math, Scientific Reasoning;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading, Math &amp; Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPTIONAL: Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPTIONAL: Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four separate sections ranging from 35 – 60 minutes, each subject</td>
<td>FORMAT</td>
<td>Reading – 65 minutes, 52 questions; Math:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>area is completed before moving on to the next content area;</td>
<td></td>
<td>80 minutes, 58 questions; Writing &amp; Language – 35 minutes, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minute essay section at end of test is optional.</td>
<td></td>
<td>questions; Optional Essay - 50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each subtest scored 1- 36; composite score also 1 – 36 (not a strict</td>
<td>SCORING</td>
<td>Each section scored 200 – 800; both sections included in overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average of the four sections); essay also scored 1 -36 but NOT</td>
<td></td>
<td>score for a maximum possible total 1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>included in composite score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT (No Writing): $46</td>
<td>COST</td>
<td>$46 for test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Plus Writing: $62.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>$60 for test with essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Fee Waivers are available for eligible students)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Fee waivers are available for eligible students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four scores can be sent to colleges along with registration fee;</td>
<td>SENDING SCORES</td>
<td>Four scores can be sent to colleges along with registration fee;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$13 per school after fourth selection; students not obligated to</td>
<td></td>
<td>$12 per school after fourth selection; students not obligated to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send scores anywhere, but will pay an additional fee if sending</td>
<td></td>
<td>send scores anywhere, but will pay an additional fee if sending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scores after testing ($13 – $16.50 per score per school)</td>
<td></td>
<td>scores after testing ($12 per school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each individual ACT test is independent and must be sent separately</td>
<td>TEST RECORD</td>
<td>Each individual SAT test is independent and must be sent separately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to schools – scores do not accumulate on test record</td>
<td></td>
<td>to schools – scores do not accumulate on test record</td>
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Every four year school in the US accepts the ACT (with the exception of the Webb Institute in NY)

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<tr>
<th>SCORE ACCEPTANCE</th>
<th>Accepted by all four-year colleges in the US – preferred by schools outside the US</th>
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No Subject Tests or equivalent – however, some colleges allow ACT to be substituted for BOTH SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests in admission

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SUBJECT TESTS</th>
<th>One-hour multiple choice Subject Tests available in languages, sciences, math, social studies and literature – completely separate from SAT Reasoning Test. Commonly required by highly selective colleges and universities as part of the admission process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

No penalty for incorrect answers – blank and incorrect responses incur the same “points off”

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<tr>
<th>TEST STRATEGY</th>
<th>No penalty for guessing</th>
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</table>

Six times per year never on same date as SAT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>Seven times per year never on same date as ACT</th>
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</table>

www.actstudent.org

<table>
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<tr>
<th>REGISTER ONLINE</th>
<th><a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a></th>
</tr>
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</table>

**TEST PREP AND TUTORING INFORMATION**

Valley Forge Military has partnered with Kaplan and Revolution Prep to help cadets prepare for both the ACT and SAT. Both have custom tailored solutions ranging from private one-on-one access to group formats. Please contact the appropriate persons to assist with these optional programs.

**KAPLAN**

Mr. Greg Schrader

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610.314.1423

**REVOLUTION PREP**

Ms. Hope Goldberger

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267.776.4098
Naviance is an online College and Career resource that the Guidance Department uses to support cadets as they create their post-High School plan. Cadets have the ability to search through a database of over 5,000 Colleges and Universities, and can access admissions statistics on all of those schools as well as detailed information on the admissions process and the offerings at each school. This powerful resource helps cadets to create personalized list of schools that makes sense for them both in terms of the admissions requirements and in terms of their long term goals and plans.

Naviance also serves as the platform for students to request their transcripts and letters of recommendation for their college applications. Both transcripts and recommendations can be sent electronically to most schools through Naviance, eliminating the need for mailing hard copies making the process more timely and efficient.

Parents can also request a Naviance log in by contacting the Academy Registrar. If any cadet or parent needs help with their log in or forgets their account information, they can contact the Academy Registrar.

Access the portal online at:

www.connection.naviance.com/vfma

REQUESTING TRANSCRIPTS

In order for the Guidance Office to send your transcripts to the Colleges and Universities you’re applying to you must request an official transcript through your Naviance account. Before you can request your transcripts, however, you must complete a number of steps. You will receive detailed instructions through both Junior and Senior Seminar lessons but can always refer to this list if needed.

- Log into your Naviance account. If you don’t know your account log in, check in with the Registrar who can assist.
- Under the colleges tab, click on the ‘colleges I’m applying to’ button.
- If you have not already done so, you will need to sign the FERPA waiver on your Common Application account. Instructions for doing this can be found on the Common Application website. You must sign the FERPA waiver, which gives us permission to send your records, before requesting any transcripts. This is one of the first topics that will be covered in Senior Seminar.
- If you’re applying to any colleges using the Common Application, you’ll need to link your Naviance Account to your Common Application account by entering the email address you used to set up your Common Application account. You’ll do this under the heading Common App Email Address on the ‘colleges I’m applying to’ page.
- Now you’re ready to put in a request. Below the blue box labeled Common App Account Matching box you’ll see a button labeled ‘request transcripts’. Click that button.
- On the request transcripts page, any schools that you added into your Common App Account will show up on the top of the page under Current Applications. If you want to request a transcript for one of those schools, just click the button that says ‘add request’ next to that school and hit ‘request transcripts’ button at the bottom of the page.
- If you want to request transcripts for any other schools, just hit the ‘lookup’ button on the right hand side of the page under the New Applications heading. Find the school you’d like your transcript to go to, click on the name of the school, and it will be added on to your list. Click the ‘request transcripts’ button at the bottom of the page.
- You’ve now requested transcripts for those schools. Please remember, the Guidance Office requires 10 school days to send transcripts, so please be sure you submit requests at least 10 days prior to your school’s deadline.
REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

After you’ve spoken with the teachers and personally requested that they write you a letter of recommendation, you will have to submit an official request through Naviance. This must happen in order for teachers to be able to send their letters electronically to the schools you are applying to. You do not have to request a letter of recommendation from your counselor as they will write one and submit it on your behalf automatically. The process for requesting letters through Naviance is below, and a more detailed description, along with instruction, will be provided through Senior Seminar.

○ Log into your Naviance account. If you don’t know your account log in, please stop into the Guidance Office and request it from the Registrar.
○ Under the colleges tab, click on the ‘colleges I’m applying to’ button.
○ Before your teachers can provide a letter, you’ll need to sign the FERPA waiver on your Common Application account. Instructions for doing this can be found on the Common Application website.
○ Now you’re ready to put in your request. Toward the bottom of the ‘colleges I’m applying to’ page, you’ll see a heading labeled Teacher Recommendations. Click the button labeled ‘add/cancel requests’.
○ Under the heading ‘Add New Requests’, choose the name of the teacher you’ve asked for a recommendation from the drop down menu. You should include a note to thank them in the request note section. Once you’ve selected the teacher(s) you’ve asked to write for you, click the button at the bottom labeled ‘Update Requests’.

Your teacher now has the ability to upload the letter they prepare on your behalf that will be sent to any schools that you’ve requested a transcript for. The letters will be sent by the Guidance Office after you have notified them that you submitted an application, and submitted a Transcript Request through Naviance.
Financial Aid

12th Grade Financial Aid Checklist
If you plan to apply for financial aid, keep this checklist handy as a guideline to keep you on track throughout your senior year to be certain that you meet all criteria and deadlines to confirm your eligibility.

September
- Research scholarship opportunities and deadlines, and request application materials, if needed. Refer to [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- Visit [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). Check whether the colleges to which you are applying use the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE and register, if applicable.
- Apply for a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Keep your ID in a safe place where you can refer to it often.

October through March
- Work with your parents or guardians to gather the financial documents and materials necessary for filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Complete and submit the FAFSA form ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or [www.studentaid.ed.gov/PDFfafsa](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/PDFfafsa) or 1-800-4-FED-AID) to apply for state, federal, and institutional grants and loans.
- After you have submitted your FAFSA, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). Check it for any errors. Return the SAR only if you need to make corrections.
- Continue to complete and submit scholarship applications.

April
- Review and compare the financial aid packages offered in the financial aid award letters sent by the colleges that accepted you.
- Identify a financial aid contact at each college where you have been accepted. Check in with that person about the status of your financial aid package.
- Organize all correspondence that you receive regarding financial aid in a safe place.

May/June
- Work with your parents or guardians to apply for Federal Direct PLUS Loans (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students) and other private loans, if necessary. If your Federal Direct PLUS application is denied, inform your college’s financial aid office.
- Visit [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov) to complete your Loan Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note for any federal loans noted on your financial aid letter.
- Review all bills for tuition, room and board as well as other correspondence from your school’s financial aid office. Follow all directions carefully and meet all deadlines.
ATHLETICS
(The NCAA Clearinghouse)

Overview and Helpful Information
Any student who is considering playing a sport in college on the Division 1 or Division 2 level must meet certain NCAA requirements in order to be eligible to compete in that sport. Students must pass a minimum number of core courses during their high school career, and must meet minimum GPA and SAT eligibility requirements. Detailed information on these requirements is available on the NCAA Eligibility website, but you will find a quick reference guide for both Division 1 and Division 2 in the resource section of this packet.

The first step for students is to create an account on the NCAA Eligibility Website at: www.ncaa.org This should be completed by the end of a student’s junior year if possible. Once you’ve created your account, you can log in to Naviance and request your transcript be sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center (instructions can be found on the Naviance tab). The NCAA also requires either SAT or ACT scores as part of the Eligibility process. Students can request those scores from the College Board or ACT website, with the NCAA Eligibility Center as the recipient.

Once students graduate, the Guidance Office will automatically submit a final transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center for any student who has registered with the NCAA. No official request is required for final transcripts, as the Guidance Office is able to run a report identifying all graduating seniors who have registered with the NCAA.
JUNIOR SEMINAR
JUNIOR SEMINAR

Creating your profile in Naviance.

The first thing you must do is log-in and complete your profile in Naviance.

www.connection.naviance.com/vfma

Your user name is the same as your log-on to cadet net.
All passwords are initially set to the word “password”

Your parents can also request to activate a parent account in Naviance so that they can monitor your progress. To do so, they will contact the Registrar, Ms. Ford, who will assist them.

In your first Junior Seminar Session you will log into Naviance and make sure that the information is detailed and accurate.

WHAT TO DO:
1. LOG IN to Naviance as outlined above.
2. Click on the “About Me” tab.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page, find “Official Things” and click on the hotlink to “profile”
4. Review the e-mail address, if you need to edit it click on the pencil to do so. Be sure that you enter an e-mail address that you use frequently so as not to miss any important information related to the college application process.
5. After reviewing and editing your e-mail address if necessary, click on “Edit”
6. Confirm that the pre-populated data is correct, and complete the rest of the information. You should enter all information accurately and fully.
7. After completing your demographic information in your profile, click on “Account”
   Change your password from “password” to something unique to you and easy to remember.
JUNIOR SEMINAR LESSON 1: Do What You Are!

DO WHAT YOU ARE!!
EXPLORING YOUR PERSONALITY

Successful completion of the assessment will generate a report that will provide you with important information about your personal characteristics. You will learn about careers that are matched to you, your personal strengths and blind spots, how you negotiate in your daily life, and a host of other useful information. Developing career goals helps to make choosing a college major and/or field of interest easier. You will be working together with your counselor to begin and enhance this process of post-secondary planning. Log in to Naviance, click on the “Careers” tab, and under “what are my interests” click on the “Do What You Are” link.

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Log into Naviance and click on “My Planner” and then click on “Tasks Assigned to Me”
2. Click on the “Complete Do What You Are” hotlink to start the task.

Complete the following after doing the assessment online to earn credit.

Seminar date: __________ Assignment due: ___________

How accurately did the Personality Profile describe YOU?

Not Accurately        Somewhat Accurately        Very Accurately

Your personality type code is: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______

List 2 strengths that you agree with that were found in your overview report:

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________

List 2 blindspots that you agree with that were found in your overview report:

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________

List the bullet point that you most strongly relate to from your personality type report:

_____________________________________________________________________

ASSIGNMENT CREDIT

☐ Assessment Complete
☐ Information entered in workbook

Checked By: __________________________  Date: ______________
JUNIOR SEMINAR LESSON 2: Building your Resume and completing the Recommendation Questionnaire

All cadets are required to complete the Recommendation Questionnaire, which is essentially a Brag Sheet that helps counselors and teachers write the best possible letter of recommendation for each of our cadets. The Recommendation Questionnaire is required before any Letters of Recommendation and Transcripts can be sent.

The resume is also required and further enhances your Questionnaire. Use this workbook to list all of your accomplishments to date to make it easier to remember everything and be sure you include it in the resume.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Log into Naviance and click on “My Planner” and then click on “Tasks Assigned to Me”
2. Click on the “Junior Recommendation Questionnaire” hotlink to start the task.
3. After completing the Recommendation Questionnaire, click on the “Build Resume” task to start working on your resume.
Resume Building

Naviance is a very useful tool for many things, including creating and keeping an up-to-date resume. ALL cadets at Valley Forge Military Academy will be required to create a resume junior year. Use this worksheet to plan out the information to include on your resume. Cadets are encouraged to update their resume on a frequent basis so nothing important goes forgotten. Your teachers will refer to your resume when writing letters of recommendation. Below is a worksheet to help you organize your academic history, accomplishments, and activities. Use this in conjunction with the Resume Builder to enter your information. Once you have it on PAPER transfer the information into the Resume Builder in Naviance.

**OBJECTIVE:** Use this space to write a brief statement about what purpose you have in writing this resume. For example:

To attend a 4 year university and earn a degree in Mechanical Engineering.
To secure a nomination to the United States Military Academy.
To obtain a scholarship to help fund my education.

My Objective: ______________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**SUMMARY:** This is not a necessary field for creating a college admission resume. If you choose to leave it blank that is acceptable. Just be sure that you UNCLICK the selection when creating a printable resume.

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** Enter any jobs you have had since beginning high school.

My Jobs: Dates:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**EDUCATION:** If you have been at Valley Forge Military Academy since 9th grade, it is the only school you need to list. If you have transferred to VFMA from another school, you will want to list all schools you have attended from grade 9 forward. If you are listing multiple schools, you can indicate what grade you studied in the “Degree/grade level” field. If you have been at VFMA since grade 9, you can leave that section blank. Click the box “to present” rather than entering a date in the End Date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>LOCATION/DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VOLUNTEER SERVICE: List any volunteer activities you have participated in both INSIDE and OUTSIDE of Valley Forge Military Academy from grade 9 forward. This includes volunteer programs that you participated in during your summer vacations. For “Position Title” you can enter your title, if you had one, or just enter “volunteer”. For each, consider the amount of time you gave to the program each week, and for how many weeks you participated. For example, if you spent an entire summer volunteering at your local library as a page for 10 hours each week, you would enter “Library Page” in the title, your library’s name for “organization”, the town and state of the library in “location” appropriate months and years for start and end, “8” in the “average hours per week” field, and “80” in the total hours field. You can enter a brief sentence summarizing your duties in the description/comments field.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLUB</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: List any clubs that you are or have been involved in both inside and outside of Valley Forge Military Academy from grade 9 forward.

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<th>CLUB</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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Within these clubs, did you have any leadership roles? Note them here as you will refer to them later in your resume building process.

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<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Leadership position</th>
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AWARDS/CERTIFICATES: List your academic and tactical awards and medals here. Be sure to explain what the award is, and how it is earned as people outside of the VFMA environment will not understand what a “Harvey Medal” is.

SKILLS/ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS: Are you a member of the NJHS or NHS? If so, this is the place to list this. This is also the place to list any academic certificates you have received, if applicable. For example, did you participate in an education program that resulted in a certificate or any sort? (The answer to this question for most is no, so unless you are a member of the NJHS or NHS, you may leave this section blank.)
MUSIC/ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS: List if you have any. If you do not, you may leave this section blank.

LEADERSHIP: This is the area to list your rank information. You may have multiple ranks to include. Please list the RANK in all caps, followed by a (:) after which you will enter a brief sentence explaining what that Rank means, and what your duties are. For example:

STAFF SERGEANT: Squad Leader, responsible for the training of Plebes and Cadets in my squad.

**ADDING THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR RESUME**

1. **Click on the pull-down menu titled “add a new entry.” Choose a category from the list.** (It’s usually easier to skip the objective and summary entries until you know who you are writing the resume for, a college, an employer or scholarship committee.)

2. **Read the “Tips” on the right side of the page, then start writing/adding your information in the boxes.** (BE CAREFUL about your spelling because these boxes don’t mark misspelled words. If you are not a good speller, open MS Word and write your entries in Word and copy/paste into the Naviance Resume Builder after you’ve spell-checked them.)

3. **Click “Add to Resume” when you are finished with that entry item.**

4. **Go back to step #1 and add another entry.** (You can and should add entries to this resume file anytime you remember or earn another activity, job, award, etc. that you don’t want to forget about.) Must people update their resume at least once a year.)
WHEN YOU ARE READY TO PUT YOUR RESUME TOGETHER

First check your profile to be sure that your current address, phone, and email are all correct. From the “About Me” tab, click on “profile” in the “official things” category.

1. Go back to your resume and click on the “Customize Your Printable Resumes” tab.
2. Click “create a new print format.”
3. Name your resume in a way that makes sense to you. You might call it “College”, or “Scholarships”, this is an excellent feature because you can create multiple resumes with the information you have entered quickly and easily. This is particularly helpful if you want to use a different objective for different purposes. For example, if you are sending the resume with a scholarship application you would probably generate a different objective than if you were sending the resume to a college admission representative.
4. Choose the format and references style that is appropriate for your audience. (IF you open a “view example” format style, click the X in the corner of the screen when you are ready to return to the customize page.)
5. Decide what entries you want on this particular resume by clicking a checkmark into the box on the left of each entry. Click specific boxes under each category box or they will not print.
6. Choose the order you want your entries to appear on your resume by clicking and dragging the compass-arrows in the upper right-hand corner of the box you want to move up or down. (Choose the order based on what you think is most important to your audience. The most important items should go first on your resume)
7. Save and Close your resume.

NOTES:

Date this lesson was presented: ________________
Date the Questionnaire must be completed by: ________________
Date the Resume must be completed by: ________________

ASSIGNMENT CREDIT

- Questionnaire Complete
- Information entered in workbook
- Resume complete with at least 1 printable format saved

Checked By: __________________________

Date: ________________
Name: ________________________________________________  Co: ___________

Rank: ________________________________________________  Years at VFMA: ____________

Are you planning to apply to one of the US Service Academies?  YES  NO

If you have not been at VFMA since 9th grade, where else did you attend High School?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What three words would you use to describe yourself?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What three words do you think your teachers would use to describe you?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What has been your favorite subject/class in school and why?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

If you had the chance to tell a college admissions officer one thing about yourself (that wouldn’t be found on your application or resume), what would it be?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Do you feel the grades you have earned during your high school career are an accurate reflection of your academic ability? Why or why not?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Please list all participation/accomplishments in the following areas:

Sports: Please include all JV, Varsity, and intramural sports played, plus position, achievements, awards, etc.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Leadership: Please include all leadership positions held anytime during your high school career, such as class officer, rank, sports team captain, etc.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Awards and Honors: Please include items such as stars list, honor roll, dean’s list, etc.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Memberships: Please include involvement in any clubs and/or organizations during your high school career.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Community Service: Please include any volunteer work, JROTC, active church involvement, etc.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. All information provided will help your counselor and/or teachers write a descriptive, accurate, and unique letter of recommendation for you. If you think there is information about you that your counselor might not know, and was not outlined on this form, please describe it here:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________


JUNIOR SEMINAR LESSON 3:  Super Match College Search

Alternate Lesson: Enlistment Options

If you plan to Enlist in the Military upon graduation from Valley Forge Military Academy, please use the time while your peers are working on college searches to complete the “Enlistment Options” found following the Super Match instructions. Even if you do not plan to attend college immediately, you may want to in the future so it would also be prudent to complete a college search to see what schools are well suited to your interests and skill sets.

USING THE SUPERMATCH SEARCH

SuperMatch lets you search for your best college match based on 23 criteria. Click on a search option, such as "Tuition and Fees," to enter your preferences.

For a more accurate match, identify how important the criteria are to your search by clicking the appropriate radio buttons.

Results update in real time as you enter your preferences, showing a percentage match for each school. You don't have to fill in every search option, but the more you thorough you are, the more accurate your results will be. This also means that the more discriminate you are, the more constricted your list well become. If your developing list becomes TOO small, go back and modify some of the less important factors.

To learn more about a school, click its name. The expanded view will explain the percentage score and also provide ways to connect with the school.
Data about ME!!

My Cumulative GPA  ________ (Find this in Naviance)
My CURRENT GPA  ________ (Find this in PowerSchool)
My PSAT Scores  ________ (TOTAL) (Review your report or find in Naviance)

EBRW  Reading  Writing  Mathematics  Math Test
THINK ABOUT IT! What is important to you?
Of the options listed on the LEFT side of your screen when you look open the SuperMatch, which are most important to you?

PRIORITIES!

We recommend FIRST that you enter your own test scores and grades to help you develop your “Best Fit” schools, those who admit a large percentage of students whose academic profiles are very similar to yours. It is also important to search by major if you have already identified a major you are interested in pursuing.

MY TOP FIVE

Of the preferences on the left, the 5 that are most important to me are:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

When entering choices for these 5 preferences, you are encouraged to click “Must Have” on the question about how important this item is to you. If you find that it restricts your list too much, you may go back and modify the selection.

You will be able to save MULTIPLE lists. Perhaps you want to generate lists focused on Majors, some on Locations, some on how easy you think it will be for you to get in....the idea is to find as many options as you can that are particularly tailored to your skill set and interests.

As your list begins to populate, “pin” the schools that you are interested in learning more about. You will then be able to compare your pinned schools side by side.

When your list has been narrowed down to ideally 40-50 schools, save your search as “Initial Junior Seminar Search”.

List the 10 schools that are most attractive to you from that list here:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 

What do you think the following terms mean:

**SAFE SCHOOL:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**GOOD FIT SCHOOL:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**REACH SCHOOL:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
ENLISTMENT OPTIONS

Complete this section if your primary interest is enlisting in the Military after graduating from Valley Forge Military Academy

Visit this website:

What factors and considerations have influenced your decision to pursue a military career in lieu of college

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Define and describe the differences between and ENLISTED MEMBER of the military, and an OFFICER in the military.

What is an Enlisted Member of the military?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What is an Officer in the military?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
How does one become an Enlisted Member of the military?

What is an NCO?

How does one become an NCO?

Research the information and options on this website:
http://todaysmilitary.com/joining/entrance-requirements

What are the physical requirements one must meet in order to enlist in the military?

What is the MEPS?
Where is your local MEPS?

What BRANCH are you hoping to enlist with and why?

Who is your local recruiter?

Have you already been in contact with your recruiter?
  □ Yes  □ No

What is the ASVAB (What does the Acronym represent, and what IS it?)
Define the multi-step process of enlistment:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What is the common term used to describe Basic Training?

________________________________________________________________________

Describe the two distinct forms of training an enlisted member of the military will engage in:

1.____________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2.____________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What is the ECP Program?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Have you considered the ECP Program at Valley Forge Military College?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Who would you need to contact at Valley Forge Military College to obtain more information about the ECP program and determine whether or not you qualify?

What are the 4 paths that one could take in order to become an Officer in the US Military?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 
YOUR SELECTED BRANCH IS: 

Use the rest of your time to research your selected branch history. Future assignments will be provided that correlate to the work your collegebound peers will be doing throughout the course of the Junior Seminar.
Colleges I’m THINKING ABOUT

Now that you have learned how to execute a college search, and thought about what your perfect school looks like, it is time to research schools in Naviance and add them to your “Colleges I’m Thinking About” list!

Look at the lists that you have generated through the Super Match College Search. Click on the links to each of the schools and surf around both on Naviance and the schools’ websites to help you identify which schools are best suited to you! You will notice that when you are looking at the list, there is a link for “Add to colleges I’m Thinking about” - CLICK THERE to add that particular school to your list. You will be able to add and remove as many schools as you wish. In Senior Seminar, we will move colleges from your “Thinking About” list to your final list of schools you want to actually apply to!
JUNIOR SEMINAR LESSON 5: Test Registration

For most colleges and universities, either the SAT or ACT is required as part of your application packet.

Review the differences between the two tests presented earlier in this packet and select which test you would like to take. Some cadets choose to take both.

To Register
- SAT and SAT Subject Tests: www.collegeboard.org
- ACT: www.act.org

To Prepare:
- Practice on Khan Academy: This site will allow you to link to your College Board Account to get free, tailored SAT practice.
- Take a Prep Course: There are options while you are here at Valley Forge and cadets are also encouraged to take a Summer Prep course local to their home.
- Sign up for the “SAT Question of the Day” on the College Board Website.

To Send Scores:
- Scores must be sent by the testing agency (College Board or ACT). Requests to have scores sent to different colleges can be processed online. Students can send scores to four schools for free if they request to send the scores during registration or within a week of the test.
SUMMER TIME TO-DO LIST

Best activities to engage in during the summer between Junior and Senior year

1. **Narrow down colleges** - Selecting a college is likely one of the biggest decisions you will have to make in the next year. By the time you return to Valley Forge Military Academy, you should have narrowed down your list of realistic prospective colleges. When you view a college profile in Naviance, the program will provide you with a visual comparison of how your cadet profile compares how your qualifications compare to that particular school's current freshman class.

2. **Consider a change in testing strategy** - Perhaps you didn’t do as well you would have liked on the spring SAT or ACT? Summer is the time to take a practice test and switch gears if needed. There will be at least one rainy/gloomy/too-hot-to-go-outside day in every summer vacation.

3. **Visit some of the colleges on your list** - Summer is a good time to make some visits to the schools you may be interested in to help you narrow down your list and visiting college campuses should be a part of your summer plans.

4. **Get a JOB** - Gaining valuable work experience contributes to your overall experience in many ways, helping to save money, learning about responsibility and time management, building upon your resume, and demonstrating a strong work ethic to admission counselors. Employment of any kind is good, but working in a leadership position, an academic area, or in a job related to what you hope to major in would be ideal.

5. **Volunteer** - Community service is an excellent way to demonstrate valuable work and leadership experience. Nonprofits are always looking for volunteers, so it shouldn’t be difficult to find a volunteer organization near you that could use an extra pair of hands for a few hours a week during the summer. Maximize the potential impact by choosing a field that is related to what you are interested in Majoring in when you get to college. For example - are you interested in medical school? Volunteer at a Hospital. Are you interested in Education? Volunteer at a Library. Are you interested in Politics? Volunteer for a local congressman.

6. **Summer Enrichment** - Consider an academic program at a local university to keep your mind sharp!

7. **Polish up your College Essay** - Become familiar with the Essay’s that you will be asked to write as each colleges admission process and start working on them! Take advantage of the opportunity to express your individuality. The essay should help the reader understand who you are and what’s important to you and fill in the blanks between between the data: GPA, test scores, extracurricular activities, and letters of recommendation. Tell YOUR story!

Colleges look for students who are dedicated to academics but they want to build a well-rounded incoming freshman class. Admission officers look for those who demonstrate interesting and diverse qualities, not just those who spend 100 percent of their time studying. Colleges need and want students who are committed to activities that they are passionate about.

The summer creates opportunities for students to demonstrate this quality, whether it’s in a structured summer program for teenagers, or individually. The last thing you want to communicate is that you are lazy, spending two months on the couch watching television and playing video games. Colleges don’t offer admission to unmotivated students but to those who are strong academically and demonstrate a commitment to activities outside the classroom. Summer is the best time to show colleges that YOU are more than your GPA or your SAT score.
College visits are probably the most fun part of the college application process. When it comes to researching potential schools, there’s no better substitute for figuring out if a campus will feel like home. No website, guidebook, or testimonial will give you a better feel for a school than you'll get by seeing it for yourself. Many students change their minds after a campus visit. This is obviously preferable to changing your mind after you enroll! Get the most out of your time on campus with our college visit checklist:

1. **Mind the calendar.**
   Schedule your visit while school is in session. You won't get a realistic idea of student life in August (or if you attend during a special event like Spring Fling).

2. **Meet the experts.**
   Talk to the current students—they may soon be your peers. If they have a problem or complaint, they will probably share it with you. If they love their school, they won't be shy about it either. Come prepared with some questions to ask—specific ones will get you more interesting (and helpful) answers.

3. **Meet the other experts.**
   Stop by the admissions office and introduce yourself. Let them know what interests you about the school so they can direct you to the best place for further investigation. Collect contact information and send a brief, friendly e-mail thanking them for taking the time to talk to you.
   If there is a sign–up sheet, add your name! Colleges do keep track of which applicants have demonstrated genuine interest in the school. A visit is a great way to demonstrate your interest.

4. **Take the campus tour...**
   While it's the most obvious thing to do, the official campus tour is worth your while. (Find out if you need to register to get a spot.) It gives the school a chance to show off its best features, like the newly-built theater or their rooftop planetarium. While you're walking around, check out the flyers and bulletin boards and pick up a school newspaper to get a sense of what's going on.

5. **...then venture out on your own.**
   The official tour will probably steer you clear of the school’s less attractive features, like the shoddy dining hall or the tiny gymnasium. Take your own un-official tour by wandering around campus. If there are any facilities that are important to you, find them and have a look for yourself. Make sure your destinations include the library and the first-year dorms.

6. **Be a student for a day (or night).**
   Some schools sponsor overnight programs in which you can stay with a current student. This is a great opportunity to get a deeper sense of campus life and interact with your potential future friends and roommates. Even if you don’t stay over, most schools will allow you to sit in on lectures. Browse the course catalogue before you arrive, or ask the admissions office what classes are in session that day.
7. Save the best for last.
You'll get better at visiting colleges with practice. As you compare schools, you pick up on the aspects you like and the aspects you're not so fond of. You also figure out the right questions to ask, as well as the best campus spots to gauge student life. For that reason, visit your favorite schools last, so you'll be in the best position to make comparisons to the others on your list.

8. Keep a record of every college visit.
If you visit many schools, your memories of them are bound to overlap. Use a note-taking or voice-recording app on your phone, or plain old notebook and pen, to keep track of the details you like and the stuff that you don't like. When more questions arise (as they most definitely will), you can fire off an email for an answer rather than visiting a second time.

9. Don't rush to judgment.
Try not to base your opinion of a school on bad weather or one boring class. There are bound to be sunny days and more interesting classes. Same goes for overnight visits—you might end up staying with a student who has very different interests than you do.
At the same time, trust your gut. Sometimes it's love at first sight. Other times, something feels wrong (even if you can't put your finger on it).

List the schools you would like to visit here:

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
I get this question quite a bit because I recruit all over the United States. It is all about the fit and the match. Students need to understand that attending college is quite an investment in time and effort, and they need to account for their academic fit as well as their social fit. By academic fit, you need to figure out if a college or university has all of the academic programs that you might be interested in – and will that be available to you. Given the fact that perhaps you might have many areas of interest, such as athletics, it is very critical to account for your academic fit.

Students need to ask: who will teach you and how will they teach you? As far as social fit, we expect young people to have a great time. We want students to understand what is available from a student development standpoint, from an activities co-curricular standpoint, and determine if all the activities they might want to engage in are available to them as well. This is very critical.

There are also some practical things I want young people to think about. There are no guarantees. College is at least four years, so you want to be happy wherever you go. Account for the retention rate. Account for the graduation rate. And account for student outcomes. When looking at retention rate, students need to ask, "Are students returning as sophomores, as juniors, as seniors?" Because if they are, I would argue that they are satisfied and happy with their experiences. When I think about graduation rate, there are no guarantees – in most cases, nationally, we actually track a six-year graduation rate. You want to know the answer to the question, what is the graduation rate in four years? Four years. Lastly, what are the outcomes? Ask what students are doing after graduation, within six months, and within a year. If you answer all of those things, then you’re accounting for your fit.

**About the Author**

Gil Villanueva serves as University of Richmond’s Associate Vice President and Dean of Admission. He is also Chair of the Board of Directors for The Common Application. Mr. Villanueva has more than 20 years of experience in admissions, working at Bucknell University, Harvey Mudd College, and Brandeis University before coming to Richmond in 2009.
I usually tell my students, remember when you were in class, and be honest with yourself about what you did in that class. Look over the comments that you had on your report card, and let that guide your decision about which teacher to ask. You want to pick someone who has known you a long time. You want to pick someone who can talk about how you are as a student inside and outside the classroom. This should be someone with whom you’ve had a really good relationship. Maybe they have been a mentor to you, taught you something new, or taught you something about yourself and how to expand your own knowledge. The one key thing is to pick someone who will say both good things and maybe the areas where you could improve. Always choose somebody who knows you well and will be honest about what they think about you. Students should be honest with themselves about what kind of student they were for that teacher before asking them. Also, make sure to let teachers know at least two weeks in advance about writing a recommendation - don’t spring it on them at the last minute.

Teachers to ask:

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<th>Teacher</th>
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<th>Received/In Naviance</th>
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About the Author

Keo Oura Kounlavong-Sabath
After graduating from Ursinus College in 2000, Keo Oura Kounlavong-Sabath found herself teaching English in Japan and briefly working as a legislative reporter for a non-profit agency.
Quick Guide to the College Admission Interview

Relax, prepare and get ready to enter into a great conversation with your interviewer! Take advantage of the opportunity to help your prospective college’s admission team know YOU a little better!

BE PREPARED!!!

- **Know the School!** Learn as much about the institution as possible before you go in. Learn as much as you can through Naviance and/or the school’s website.

- **Practice some generic and specific questions.** There are a few basic questions you can probably count on hearing: Why do you want to go to this college? What do you expect to gain from the college experience? What do you plan to major in and why? You don’t need to memorize your answers, but think through the issues ahead of time so you’ll have some ideas to discuss. You’ll also want to prepare for questions that ask you to identify key topics or experiences that are important to you. Think in advance about some of your favorite experiences, activities or plans. If you’ve identified your own “hit list,” you’ll find them easier to recall when asked.

- **Prepare some questions to ask.** This is really important! Show your interest in the school by asking specific questions, such as, how would you describe the student body? What are the most popular majors (and why)? What are the school’s strengths? Where does the school need to improve?

- **Review your application materials (if you have already applied).** If you have already applied to the school, it is likely that the interviewers may use your application materials to strike up a conversation with you. Review your application essay so it’s fresh in your mind when you interview.

DAY OF YOUR INTERVIEW

- Dress appropriately and sharply. Because you attend a Military School, it would be a very good idea to dress in your Full Dress, many cadets report that interviewers are impressed by the uniform and it is often a strong prompt for an easy conversation about your experiences at Valley Forge.

- Plan to arrive early. The extra time may come in handy if you encounter delays, and arriving early will let you take a few moments to relax and prepare yourself mentally. Call in advance and ask for directions if you’re unsure, and schedule enough time get there.

- Introduce yourself and greet the interviewers with a solid handshake, smile, and positive attitude.

- Remember that this is a conversation, and that the interview wants to know about you. Be yourself and be honest in your answers.

- Elaborate on questions, provide more than a “yes” or “no” answer to keep your answers as conversational and personal as possible. Try to find specifics that naturally support the answers.

- Be spontaneous. Though you should practice answering some basic questions, answer honestly, naturally and spontaneously in the interview.

- Be positive. Highlight the good things from your academic past and put a positive “spin” on your background.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW IS OVER

- Send a thank-you note or thank-you email shortly after the interview. Showing interest and appreciation goes a long way.
Quick Guide to Applications

Most schools have a variety of types of applications that are offered to potential students. The type of plan you select can impact the timing of submission, so it is very important to understand which plan you plan to take advantage of and any timeline associated with it. This quick guide serves as a generalization for each of the terms you may here, but please always be sure to check the actual deadlines related to each plan at the schools you intend to apply to.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS

When a school uses a Rolling Admission plan, they generally begin accepting applications almost as soon as they open the application window and continue to make decisions on an on-going or “rolling” basis. While these schools will accept applications as late as spring of the senior year, it is important to submit your applications as soon as possible to maximize your admission potential. Because these schools fill their incoming spots over time and continue until seats are filled, the longer you wait to submit an application, fewer seats will be available making the standard for admission more difficult.

REGULAR or DEADLINE BASED ADMISSIONS

Many schools have a deadline that they set for which an application must be submitted in order to be considered for the incoming class. The deadline is USUALLY January 1st or January 15, but some schools may set a different date. With a school that has a Deadline Date, all application materials must be present in the admissions office before the date that they set. NO decisions will be made on any applications until AFTER the deadline has passed and the admissions office has had an opportunity to review all of the applications that were submitted. In this case, WHEN you submit your application is of no consequence to your admission potential (assuming you had all materials in by the deadline). For this reason, when prioritizing your applications, you should focus on any schools with a Rolling or Early Decision plan BEFORE your Deadline based schools, being certain that you leave yourself enough time to meet the deadline. Generally speaking, these schools will send admission decisions out in the early spring. (March or April time frame)

EARLY DECISION (ED)

When a college or university offers an Early Decision option, the Deadlines are usually early, Usually November 1st or 15th. Some schools will have 2 rounds of Early Decision (EDI and EDII with Deadlines typically in November for I and December for II). The benefit of applying ED is that decisions are usually made early, in Mid-December or January. It is important to note that Early Decision acceptances are BINDING. This means that you are agreeing that if you are accepted, you will withdraw any other applications and ATTEND the school you were accepted to. As part of the ED agreement, applicants must submit an Early Decision agreement form that is signed by the applicant, his parents, and his guidance counselor and servers as a contract to this effect. For this reason, it is very important that you only apply ED if you are certain that this the best school for you and that you want to go there. You should only submit ONE Early Decision application.

EARLY ACTION (EA)

Some schools offer Early Action as an admission option, which provides the same timelines and benefits of an ED application without the binding contract. Students are not required to attend the school if they are accepted, and may submit multiple applications under the plan. Some schools offer a Restricted Early Action plan, which essentially requires that the prospect refrains from applying to other schools during the period between application submission and decision notification, but they are free to submit other applications once a decision is made, even if they decision was favorable. It is very important to carefully read all of the restrictions that a particular school may put on this plan if they offer it before deciding whether or not it is appropriate for you.
THE COMMON APPLICATION

Many cadets will be able to take advantage of the Common Application to apply to schools on their list. It streamlines the process by allowing you to complete your demographic information ONE TIME and sharing that information with all of the schools that access the common application when you choose to apply to them.

You will be able to create your account online with the Common Application after August 1st. If you would like to do that while you are on summer vacation, the Guidance Department encourages you to do so. It will be one of the first things we do when Senior Seminar gets started.

STEPS TO COMPLETING YOUR COMMON APPLICATION

As presented on the Common Application Website

1. Create your Application
All you’ll need is some basic profile information – like your name, date of birth, address and phone number. And of course, you’ll need to provide a valid email address.
Note: Your email address will become your username and the Common App’s primary method of sending you updates and reminders, so make sure that you provide an email address that you check on a regular basis.

2. Add Schools to your list
The Common App presents you with the opportunity to search from more than 700 schools (private, public, large and small), find the ones that meet your needs, and then add them to your My Colleges list – an all-in-one convenient place to track the work ahead of you.

Once you log in, simply click on the College Search tab to find schools based on their name, location, deadline, or distance from your home. You might discover a terrific school you would’ve otherwise never known about, and the Common App will connect you to the institution to apply directly.

3. Understand Your Schools' Specific Requirements
Just like every student is unique, so is every school. We know it sounds cliché, but it’s true. No two schools will have the exact same requirements – therefore your application process will vary for each school on your list.

4. Gather Your General Application Information
While every school has a different list of college-specific requirements, the general application information (for the Common App) will remain constant for all schools on your list. You’ll be asked to list your high school grades and courses, along with your activities, entrance exam scores and exam dates, and parent or legal guardian information. Get a head start and save yourself time by collecting this information before you fill out the application. You’ll be glad you did.

- A copy of your high school transcript
- A list of your extracurricular activities both inside and outside of school
- Test scores and test dates from your college entrance exams (SATs, ACTs, SAT Subject Tests)
- Parent / legal guardian information (educational background, occupational information, employer information, etc.)
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. 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 that is 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 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.

The most popular essay prompt of the 2017-2018 application year (through January 5, 2018) is "Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth..." (23.6%), followed by the topic of your choice option (22.5%), and "Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful..." (21.4%).

"Through the Common App essay prompts, we want to give all applicants - regardless of background or access to counseling - the opportunity to share their voice with colleges. Every applicant has a unique story. The essay helps bring that story to life," said Meredith Lombardi, Associate Director, Outreach and Education, for The Common Application.
Welcome BACK!

NAVIANCE REFRESHER

www.connection.naviance.com/vfma

Your user name is the same as your log-on to cadet net.

You should have changed your password at the first Junior Seminar. If you do not remember what that password is, you should be able to click the “forgot password” link to have an e-mail sent to reset it.

WHAT TO DO:

1. LOG IN to Naviance as outlined above.
2. Click on the “About Me” tab.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page, find “Official Things” and click into your profile.
4. Verify that all of the information is complete correct. (Home address and phone, etc.)
5. Click on “Colleges”, and then “Colleges I’m Thinking About” and review the list, making any necessary additions or deletions.
6. Click on “My Planner” followed by “Tasks Assigned to Me”. If you have any remaining tasks that are incomplete, please take care of them now!

If your Naviance is in good shape - you are ready to work on your Common Application.
Guide to Completing the Common Application

www.commonapp.org

What is the Common App?
The Common App is a single application that is accepted by a large number of colleges and universities throughout the United States and even some abroad. The Common Application is web-based, and users submit it directly to the associated colleges that they choose to apply to. Look at your college list on Naviance (Family Connection) to see which of your schools use the Common App. They are identified by a little computer screen icon with the letters “CA” inside the screen in red.

Accessing the Common Application
The Common App is online at www.commonapp.org. Logging in and beginning the registration process does not take any preparation, and everything you enter can be edited at a later date.

Creating your account
1. “Create an Account” Enter your email address - being sure to use one that you check frequently and select a password and click “continue”
2. Enter your “Registration Information” – identify yourself as a “first-year student” and an “applicant planning to enroll within the next 12 months”
3. Check both boxes indicating that you agree to the terms and click “Create”

Once you register, you will see 4 tabs at the top of your page:

DASHBOARD
The Dashboard will display all of your colleges and the status of your work for each major application component including deadlines and a quick overview of your progress

MY COLLEGES
Following this tab will provide a list of the colleges you have selected to apply to in the left hand column and indicates college information such as phone numbers, deadlines, fees, and requirements. This is also where you will complete any college specific questions including additional writing supplements.

COMMON APP
This is the actual application itself where you complete your general biographical information that is consistent and will be submitted to all of your colleges. This information should be completed FIRST

COLLEGE SEARCH
This is where you search for and add different colleges to your Dashboard.
**Where do I start?**

You should begin by completing the information in the “Common App” tab. Fields with a red * are required. Fill out the application sections with total completeness and accuracy. When you complete a section, click the “Continue” button to save your information and advance to the next screen. When a section is complete, you will notice that it has a Green √ (You can click “Preview“ at the top of each section to review your work on that section.)

You should gather the following documents and information before starting the process, as you will need it to complete some sections of your profile.

- Your parents’ educational history (school and degree) and current employment details.
- Your transcript(s) for grades 9, 10, and 11 (The guidance department can provide you with this).
- Your cumulative GPA (The guidance department can provide you with this).
- A list of all of your extracurricular involvements and awards both inside and outside of school.
- A copy of the Resume you created in Naviance

- **Profile** – includes your personal information, address, contact details, demographics, geography, language, and citizenship.
- **Family** – indicate the individuals that make up your household including your parent/guardian information and siblings. Here is where you will need to input your parents’ education; if you do not know this information, please ask your family.
- **Education** – focuses on your high school experience. You will be prompted to “look up” your high school name. After selecting Valley Forge Military Academy, the application will auto-populate the address and CEEB Code (395100)

For Counselor information, please enter the information for your counselor:

Mrs. Megan Sullivan  
Dean of Academics  
msullivan@vfmac.edu  
610-989-1384

- Grades: Class rank reporting – indicate “none”
- Graduating class size – (you will be given this number at Senior Seminar)
- Cumulative GPA – leave this blank
- GPA scale – 4.0
- GPA weighting – Weighted
- Current Year Courses: be sure to include all senior year courses (first and second semester). Full year courses have a credit value of 1 and semester courses have a credit value of 0.5 If your course is not honors or AP, leave the Course Level blank Check PowerSchool or with the Guidance Department for official course names - for example, English 12 is World Literature at VFMA
- Testing – indicate whether or not you wish to self-report your standardized test scores (We recommend you do not self-report scores on the Common App) Remember, even when self-reporting, you must still request an official score report from the testing agency (ACT and/or College Board for the SAT) and send scores only to schools that you want to receive them.
- International students: click “No” for the second question.
• Activities – use your resume to help you complete the fields in this area in order of most important to least important (to you). You are limited to 10 activities and there is a limit of 50 characters for each field (details, honors, accomplishments). Take advantage of the additional information section to include anything that will not fit in the Activities section should you need to. You will only be allowed to attach a resume if your college asks for it (you would upload the resume within the member questions area).
  ○ Within each activity, include your position/title and the organization’s name in the first blank
  ○ Describe what you actually did for this activity
  ○ Enter your best guesstimate of hours per week and weeks per year in the appropriate fields

• Writing – this will be for your FINAL essay only; do not enter drafts here!
  ○ Once you are confident in your essay (after review by a college counselor or English teacher), you will be able to enter it into the required field and indicate the prompt used. Please remember, your essay must be between 250 – 650 words. Fewer or more will not be accepted We strongly suggest that you actually TYPE your essay into the box because if you copy and paste the browser might not properly transfer formatting and the product may appear jumbled when downloaded by the colleges it is sent to. You will be able to preview your work in the “print preview” when you get to the submission process.

• Legal/Discipline - If you think you have something to report here, please talk to your college counselor so that we can help you with this section.

• Additional Information - You are given an “additional information” space. This text box will take up to 650 words. Most students will leave this blank, but if you think you have something else to mention (extended illness, unusual circumstances that affected your academic or extracurricular performance, etc.) you can use this space.

Adding Colleges
Once you have finalized your college application list, you should start to enter specific colleges into the “My Colleges” area using the “College Search.” You are limited to a very generous 20 colleges in your “Dashboard” (Ideally, you will submit 5-8 applications!). You should only enter colleges that you are confident you will be submitting an application to for next fall. Under each college name in the “My Colleges” tab, you will find details about the application fee, deadlines, and requirements.

Member Questions and Supplements
Most colleges will ask additional questions, such as your application plan (Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.), your intended field of study, and whether or not you have any relatives who attended the college. Answer all required questions in these sections. Some colleges will also ask for additional essays either in the Member Questions or in the Writing Supplement. These may be long essays or short-answer questions. Either way, you should take as much care with these essays as you do with your main essay – DO A GOOD JOB ON THESE ESSAYS!

FERPA
Completing the FERPA section is a two-fold function. First, it provides VFMA with the necessary permissions to allow us to send your academic records to the schools that you choose. Second, it allows you to “MATCH” your Naviance and Common Application accounts so that the information can be shared and transferred across both platforms. In order to match your Common App account to your Naviance account, you’ll need to complete the FERPA Release Authorization in the Common Application.
• Click on the “Recommenders and FERPA” link under “My Colleges,” review the statement on the first screen (and check the box to acknowledge it) and then, on the second screen, indicate whether or not you waive your right to access your recommendation letters. You will complete this agreement one time and your selection will be applied to all schools to which you apply using the Common App. Do not complete any other recommender assignments in the Common App and do not print out the forms on this screen.

• Once you have completed the FERPA Release Authorization, log in to your Naviance account, click on the Colleges tab, then click on “Colleges I’m Applying To.” You will be prompted to use your email address to match your Common App to your Naviance account.

**Submitting Your Application**
There is a preview option available in the Common Application when you proceed through the submission menu. A PDF preview will be available at this time and show exactly what the colleges will see upon submission. If you are not satisfied with your PDF, click the X in the top right corner to close the preview and abandon the submission. The application will not be submitted until you sign, date, and click submit in Step 3.

**What’s next?**
Once you have submitted the application to one college, it is possible to return to the application and edit it for future submissions to other colleges; however, you may not edit your application to a college after you submit it.

You can track the status of each application in the “Dashboard” section of the Common Application.
Green √ = Submitted  Grey – = Not Applicable  Red – = Not Required  Yellow ● = Pending

The dashboard allows you to view and sort by deadline. It will also indicate when a college application deadline is approaching or has passed. You can remove any colleges from the list by clicking on the trash can in the right hand column.
FERPA

**What is it?**
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

FERPA gives you the right to review confidential letters of recommendation under certain circumstances and when you submit an application through the common application you will be asked if you want to waive this right.

Why would you want to do that?

- Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.

What does Valley Forge Military Academy send to Colleges when I apply?

- An official copy of your transcript from Valley Forge Military Academy
- A copy of your transcript from prior schools, IF we are in possession of it.
  - Please note that some schools will require that you have a transcript sent directly from the institution where the credit was earned, even if we have sent a copy on your behalf.
- Letters of Recommendation written on your behalf.
- A school report and Counselor recommendation.
- A copy of the School Profile
SENIOR SEMINAR LESSON 1:
Creating a Common Application account and completing FERPA.

Follow this checklist to update your Naviance Account, create a Common Application Account, and complete the FERPA release authorization.

Date Assigned: ______________________________

- Update your Naviance Account completing any remaining open tasks. Review your list of Colleges you are “Thinking About” and move the appropriate ones to your final application list.
- Create a Common Application account following the steps highlighted in the guidelines for completing the Common Application
- Complete the FERPA release authorization within the Common Application
  - You will need to indicate that you currently attend Valley Forge Military Academy in the EDUCATION section of your Common Application Profile and add at least one college to your My College list in order to complete this step.
- MATCH your Common Application to your Naviance account.
  - From your Family Connection, Click on “Colleges”
  - Click on “Colleges I’m Applying To”
  - Enter the E-Mail associated with your Common Application Account, and verify your birthdate.
  - Click “Match”!

Date Completed: _________________
Confirmed by Guidance Department: ___________________________
SENIOR SEMINAR LESSON 2:

Requesting Transcripts and Letters of Recommendation

In order for the Guidance Office to send your transcripts to the Colleges and Universities you’re applying to, you must request an official transcript through your Naviance account. Follow these steps:

- Log into your Naviance account, and click on the “Colleges” Tab.
- Click on the link for “Colleges I’m Applying To”
- Confirm that you have completed the FERPA Waiver
- Below the blue box beneath the Common Application Account Matching box, you will see a link labeled “request transcripts” - click that link!

When you are done, you will see a list of colleges you are applying to. Here is a breakdown of the steps you need to take:

- Schools that you moved to the “Colleges I’m applying to” list, or that you have entered into your Common App Account will show up on the top of the page under Current Applications. If you want to request a transcript for one of those schools, just click the button that says ‘add request’ next to that school and hit ‘request transcripts’ button at the bottom of the page.
- If you want to request transcripts for any other schools, just hit the ‘lookup’ button on the right hand side of the page under the New Applications heading. Find the school you’d like your transcript to go to, click on the name of the school, and it will be added on to your list. Then just hit the ‘request transcripts’ button at the bottom of the page.
- You’ve now requested transcripts for those schools. Please remember, the Guidance Office requires 10 school days to send transcripts, so please be sure you submit requests at least 10 days prior to your school’s deadline.
- PLEASE NOTE that it is best practice NOT to have your transcript sent until you have actually submitted an application to a school. Your application is what prompts a file creation at the Admission Offices, and if they receive a transcript for which there is no application it is very easy for the file to be mishandled or lost and you don’t want that to happen!

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

After you’ve requested in person for teachers to write you a letter of recommendation, you then have to put in an official request through Naviance. This **MUST** happen in order for teachers to be able to send their letters electronically to the schools you are applying to. Follow these steps:

- Log into your Naviance account and navigate to the Colleges I’m applying to page.
- Toward the bottom of the ‘colleges I’m applying to’ page, you’ll see a heading labeled Teacher Recommendations. Click the button labeled ‘add/cancel requests’.
- Under the heading ‘Add New Requests’, choose the name of the teacher you’ve asked for a recommendation from the drop down menu. It is suggested that you add a brief note to thank them for supporting your application
- After selecting the teacher(s) you’ve asked to write for you, click the button at the bottom labeled ‘Update Requests’.

Your teacher now has the ability to upload the letter that they have written on your behalf that will be sent to the schools that you have requested a transcript be sent to.
The college essay is the part of the application process that provides you with an opportunity to share information about your special abilities, interests, qualities, or any other significant things unique to you that may not have had a chance to shine in any other part of the application and may set you apart from the large pool of applicants. There will always be another prospect who looks very similar to you on paper: same GPA, same test scores, same activities......the essay is where you tell the admissions personnel WHO you are! What makes you different? What makes you special? While a well crafted essay will not cancel out a poor high school transcript, a strong essay can make you stand out from the other applicants.

If a college asks applicants for an essay, they really do want to know the person - the who, what, where, when and why of what makes you YOU. The essay helps the admissions officer know and understand you in a way that four years of statistics and grades will not. A good essay can present you as an interesting and valuable person, one who is worth knowing, who is genuine, thoughtful, engaging, and capable. This is your most powerful tool to tell them why they want YOU on their campus.

**CRITERIA used by the Admissions Officers when reviewing your essay:**
1. Your ability to use standard written English that is correctly written, punctuated, and contains correct grammar and syntax.
2. The content, substance, and depth of insight reflecting your ability to think about yourself and to convey authentic feelings or opinions about a topic.
3. Creativity and originality demonstrating an individual who would bring qualities such as intellect, initiative, energy, and a fresh viewpoint to their college community.

**QUICK TIPS for writing your essay**
- Show rather than tell! Make the admissions committee feel as though they were there by giving examples and illustrating an idea.
- Write in your own voice.
- Be natural.
- Use humor judiciously and creativity freely.
- Write about something you know well.
- The easiest topic to write about is yourself-- Nobody knows you better than you! Self-revelation is the most important issue.
- Use complete sentences and good command of grammar.
- Proofread!! Always read your work aloud to yourself and to others.

**ADVICE from the experts on writing a memorable essay!**
- “A thoughtful, well written essay can affect, in a very positive way, the final decision - especially for those borderline students.”
- “It’s a rare opportunity - it’s the chance to speak directly to the admissions committee to help them see you as a thinking, feeling person rather than a set of statistics.”
- “The college essay can make or break your chance for admission.”
- “This is your opportunity to convey your maturity and outlook on life.”
- “It is the piece that creates the individual.”
- “This is another important piece, which is added to the puzzle that can set you apart from dozens of other applicants.”
- “When choosing to write about something objective, like literature, avoid focusing on theme and style. I assume you have read the piece if you chose to write about it. Rather than focusing on knowledge of the piece, share what effect the work had on you and why. Help me understand your intellectual, political, and social views.”
On your Mark,

Get Set,

GO . . .

You are now armed with all of the tools that you need, and are ready to work on those applications!

IT’S GO TIME!!!

What are Admissions Offices considering when they review applications?

- Course rigor and final grade in each course
- Cumulative GPA
- Test Scores (SAT and/or ACT)
- Extra-curricular activities (including leadership roles)
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essay (if required)
- Interview (if required)

TIPS for completing your applications:

- READ all instructions carefully and follow them closely.
- KNOW the deadlines.
- Include all of your extra-curricular activities both inside and outside of VFMA.
- List any part-time and summer jobs you have had.
- Have your English teacher review your essay before you submit it.

☐ I have developed a list in Naviance of the colleges I am applying to. I have at least one “Slam Dunk” school that I know I meet all criteria for.
☐ I have written a thoughtful and reflective essay that I am ready to share with college admission officers!
☐ I have sat for at least one SAT or ACT exam
☐ I have registered for at least one SAT or ACT exam
☐ I have asked at least 2 faculty members to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf.
RESOURCES
Designed to assist you through your High School Experience
and
The College Application Process
# USER NAMES AND PASSWORDS

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College Advice: How I Read An Application

Chris Teare, CONTRIBUTOR

There's no point in ordering more food than you can eat, and no point in more academic challenge than you can handle.

I want your voice in my ear as I make my recommendation to our committee.

At this time of year, college admissions officers like me are bleary-eyed from weeks of reading applications. Many of us are now in committee sessions, determining which applicants will receive offers of admission. At the very few super-selective, single-digit-percentage-acceptance places, the process is Darwinian.

Admissions officers at the vast majority of places, however, those of us that accept more than half of our applicants, are spending more time trying to strengthen relationships with students who have been or will be admitted, in order to get them to accept our offers and enroll. These efforts to yield the best possible class are the main business of most offices in March, and they are the absolute business of all offices in April, before deposits are due May 1.

As I move into the stretch run of my second season on the university admissions side (after decades on the secondary school counseling side), I want to share how I read an application. This protocol is my own; others read differently. I offer my thoughts particularly for Juniors who will be preparing to apply over the next six to nine months — though they may also be of value to Seniors who are presently waiting to learn their fates.

I always start with the School Profile and Transcript:

- First question: What percentage of graduates go on to four-year colleges or universities? The higher the percentage of college goers, the more likely
curriculum is strong and challenging. The farther south of that percentage, the greater my concern about the “speed of the pool” and the quality of preparation for college work.

- Second question: From the Profile I also learn what is on the school’s Curricular Menu: International Baccalaureate? Advanced Placement? Honors? Dual Enrollment? I want to know what challenges the applicant had available; then evaluate what the candidate “ordered from the menu.”

- Next, did the student “clean his or her plate?” There’s no point in ordering more food than you can eat, and no point in more academic challenge than you can handle.

- When required (at Drew University only for our top merit scholarship), I look at standardized testing, to see if it corroborates, or leads me to question, classroom performance. (Those who underachieve their testing do not impress me.)

- If the student does not attend a school that prepares students well for college, fails to challenge him or herself, fails to meet the challenge selected, and/or underperforms ability, our consideration of this candidacy is probably over. You have to be able to succeed in the academic program, or you need to look elsewhere. If you have done enough to demonstrate that threshold academic capacity, you get a closer look.

I read the Recommendations next:

- I like to get a sense of what the Counselor and Teachers have to say about the student. I read for key descriptive words and phrases, also for anecdotes that show the student in action. Curiosity, energy, humor, tenacity, grit, resilience, and the qualities of someone I would like to invite into our 24/7 residential community are what I seek.

- If I find evidence of immaturity, insensitivity, laziness, or a lack of personal responsibility/accountability, the applicant may be done—or at least have sustained mortal injury—before I get to the Application itself.

- I emphasize this point in particular, because many school counselors urge Juniors to make their “asks” before the end of 11th grade, enabling over-burdened teachers to do some, most, or all of their recommendation writing over the summer.

- Juniors are well-advised to be careful about whom to ask for a letter of support. Ideally it is someone who is excited about the prospect of doing additional work for no additional pay for a student who may or may not remember to say Thank You once admitted to the college of his or her choice.

Finally, if I like what I’ve seen on the Profile and Transcript, and what I’ve read in the
Recommendations, I spend time on the Application itself:

- I note citizenship, ethnicity, family system, educational background of the parents. Then I reach the resume of Activities. Having demonstrated via Transcript and Recs that the student can be successful in our program and is a quality human being, I now read for what he or she will add to campus life.

- I look for length of commitment and significance of impact. Grades 9, 10, 11, 12 says a lot to me about duration of commitment as it might benefit my college. Those who dabble, with a bit here and a bit there, do not impress me.

- After Activities, it's time for the Essay. I have read many fabulous ones this year, some predictable ones, and a few poor efforts. The last are quite sad: short, with little insight, and sometimes with glaring flaws in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. If I have gotten this far in your application, don't disappoint me with avoidable errors.

- My advice on essays: Be yourself, sound like a teenager, and tell me the story you'd share if we were in an Uber together for a brief ride across my home island of Manhattan. You want me leaving the car wanting to stay in touch with you; I want your voice in my ear as I make my recommendation to our committee.

A final note: if you'd like to see a two-minute video of my advice to Juniors and their parents at a wonderful independent school in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, check this YouTube link:

Conducting a Thoughtful Search: https://youtu.be/-ytJjbuQcvo

After three decades in secondary education in the United States, Caribbean and Europe, Chris Teare is now Senior Associate Director of Admissions at Drew University in Madison, NJ.
You’ve got this.

You may not realize it, but you have been preparing to take the ACT® test for years. The ACT has always been about what students learn in high school.

There are many reasons to take the ACT test.

The ACT . . .

- Is accepted by all US colleges and universities
- Has an optional writing test
- Is the nation’s most taken college entrance exam
- Includes an educational and career planning component
- Provides four free score reports*
- Is scored based on correct answers only

*If ordered at time of registration

The ACT®
Based on what you learn in school

The ACT test has always been about what you learn in high school core courses. Every day you attend class you're preparing for the ACT. Students frequently tell us that they feel more comfortable taking the ACT since it is directly related to what they learn in most of their high school courses.

Accepted by all US colleges

ACT scores are accepted by all four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

Optional Writing Test

Since not all colleges and universities require a writing test for admission, ACT offers students the choice to take the writing test—it's optional. Check to see if the schools you are interested in require the ACT with writing by visiting: www.actstudent.org/writing.

More than an admissions exam

In addition to being a college admissions exam, the ACT includes a profile and education/career planning section to help you plan for life after high school. You will receive personalized career information and develop a comprehensive profile that tells colleges about your work in high school and future plans. You can also see your strengths and weaknesses in the subject areas tested to help direct your future education.

No penalty for guessing

Your ACT scores are based on the number of correct answers, with no deductions for incorrect answers. Do your best, and be sure to mark an answer to every question.

You choose which scores to send

If you take the ACT more than once, you can select which test date results you would like to send to the schools of your choice. Scores are only sent for the test dates you select. When registering for the ACT, you can select up to four colleges to send your scores to for free.

A good value

Preparing for college can be expensive. The ACT is a good value because it offers a college admissions test, college course placement, and a career planning component for one modest fee. And you can make yourself visible to colleges and scholarship agencies across the country by taking the ACT. It's a complete package of services to help you get ready for life beyond high school.
How to Build a College List

The next step in your academic career is deciding where to apply to and attend college. By applying to a range of colleges, you can expand your opportunities and increase your likelihood of success. We can help.

1 CREATE A FREE COLLEGE BOARD ACCOUNT
   Visit bigfuture.org and sign up for an account. You can register for exams, get test scores, find colleges, and learn about financial aid and more with this account.

2 CLICK THE SEARCH BUTTON

3 CHOOSE A FILTER TO GET STARTED
   Start with one that’s important to you—from type of school, test scores, location, majors, cost/financial aid, sports, or any other popular category.
4 SELECT YOUR PREFERENCES AND GET GUIDANCE ON EVERY STEP

Review your options and answer the questions. You’ll get tips and advice as well as videos from college planning experts and college students to help you understand your choices.

5 GET INSTANT COLLEGE MATCHES

As you make your selections, the number of matches is updated. The more options you select, the more refined your list of matches, which appears behind the question window, becomes. Your preferences are summarized to the left of your list, so you always know what you’re searching.

6 PRIORITIZE YOUR PREFERENCES

Start with the preferences that are important to you—from type of school, test scores, location, majors, cost/financial aid, sports, or any other popular category.

7 CHOOSE A COLLEGE TO EXPLORE

Click on a college to learn more about the school. On the “At a Glance” page, you’ll get an overview of the school and a map showing its location. The box to the right shows you whether the college matches your college preferences. If there’s a check mark, the college matches.
8 GET MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Browse the topics on the left menu—such as "Majors & Learning Environment," "Paying," or "Campus Life." Tabs within each section offer even more specific information.

9 SEE IF YOU'RE ACADEMICALLY ON TRACK FOR THE COLLEGE

Click on the "Applying" section and the "Academics" tab. It shows the high school coursework required by this college. Enter the years of each subject you've taken, and the chart will instantly update to show if you're academically on track or need to adjust your plan. Also in the "Applying" section, you can see how your grades, class rank, and test scores stack up against those of students accepted at this school.

10 ADD THE COLLEGE TO YOUR FAVORITES LIST

Click the "Add to My College List" button located near the college name.
Be sure to apply to at least four colleges.

**Why Apply to 4 or More?**

1. **It can save you money.**
   
   Every college offers different scholarships and financial aid packages that can help you pay for college. Apply to at least four colleges so that you can compare and determine which is the best option for you.

2. **It increases your odds of getting in.**
   
   If you apply to only one or two colleges, you risk not getting into either school. If you apply to at least four, you have a much better chance of being admitted.

**A good fit makes a difference.**

Students who apply to at least four colleges increase their chances of finding a good academic, social, and financial fit. And a good fit matters because it will influence your overall college experience.

Don’t forget that the **FAFSA opens Oct. 1.**

You’ll need to complete this form to apply for financial aid.

Visit [bigfuture.org](http://bigfuture.org) for more information.
College Admissions Officers Are Reading Your Tweets | Admission

...and your Instagram captions and your Facebook posts and the Tumblr you abandoned three years ago. Social media is a powerful platform to present your unique personality and interests to colleges, coaches, and other gatekeepers for jobs and internships. What does your online presence tell that audience about you?

The internet is a public place, even inside a “private” social media group. Before you post your dankest meme, take a moment to consider what it might look like to someone outside your online tribe. In recent years, students have faced disciplinary consequences for using offensive language and images in private group chats—including having admissions decisions reversed.

Social Media Tips for College Applicants

Delete your account. (Just kidding, but you might want to clean it up following the steps below.)

1. Watch the name

Whether it’s your email address or your Twitter handle, your username is your key identifier—keep it simple and professional.

2. Check your privacy settings

Monitor your privacy settings so that you know who can look you up, see your wall,
tag you in pictures, and more. (There are a lot of options, so make sure you're thorough.) Even if you're over Facebook, take a look at groups you might have joined way back when. Most are probably fine, but some may not give the best impression. A few clicks can remove them.

3. Curate your online photo libraries

A picture is worth a thousand words. So make sure you're okay with what those words might be! Maybe "you had to be there," but remember that the college admissions staff wasn't. While you're at it, check what photos your friends have tagged you in. Any sort of illegal or objectionable behavior deserves a delete!

4. Google yourself

Search for your name on Google—you might be surprised what shows up on the first few pages. Maybe you've made a comment on a blog that you'd rather not have show up, or a friend has tagged you in an unflattering photo. While you can't always delete the results, you can be proactive about what you post online. (For tips on how to do this, read on!)

Ways to Shine Online

Keep in mind, social media can also help you. Here are four ways to give yourself an admissions boost online.

1. Join LinkedIn

Joining this professional network demonstrates you're serious about your future. Make a point to connect with teachers, employers, your parents' friends and colleagues, and others who know you. You could even direct admissions teams to your LinkedIn profile by including the address in your application.

2. Participate in online groups related to colleges that interest you

Follow the Twitter, Instagram and Facebook pages of your target schools. This is a great way to learn more about prospective colleges. Plus, by commenting and asking great questions you can raise your name recognition and improve your digital footprint.

Read More: Learn the Right Way to Communicate with Colleges

3. Keep it positive

Post your successes on your social media sites just in case someone from admissions takes a peek. Link to the editorial you've written for your school paper, upload a video of your cello recital, or post a photo of your soccer team after a big win. Share articles that underscore your interest in history or your love of modern dance.
4. Find out if your prospective colleges use ZeeMee

ZeeMee is a new social media platform geared toward college admissions. College-bound students can set up a free profile and then upload photos and videos, list their study interests, or expound on a favorite extracurricular activity. Colleges that partner with ZeeMee provide a place to include your profile link on their applications.

5. Not happy with your Google results? Change the story.

If you’re not thrilled with what shows up about you online, there are ways to fix it. Social media accounts are usually some of the top returns, so cleaning up those profiles goes a long way. School activity is likely to show high up as well from writing an article for the school paper to participating in an extracurricular activity or club that’s on the high school website. Try starting your own foodie blog or commenting on online news stories from your local paper or even the New York Times to boost your online presence. Just make sure your comments are positive.

The bottom line is that social media is yet another opportunity to show college who you really are beyond grades and test scores. While colleges may not officially evaluate your Twitter feed as part of the decision process, you have to assume that a curious admissions officer could take a look.

Looking for strategic college advice?

Get one-on-one help from former Ivy League and top tier admission officers. Our College Admission Counselors will help you find, apply, and get accepted to your dream school.

Learn More

About Rob Franek

Rob Franek, Editor-in-Chief at The Princeton Review, is the company’s primary authority on higher education. Over his 24-year career, he has served as a college admissions administrator, test prep teacher, author, publisher, and lecturer. Read more and follow Rob on Twitter: @RobFranek
NCAA Division I Initial-Eligibility Requirements

Core Courses: (16)
- Initial full-time collegiate enrollment before August 1, 2016:
  - Sixteen (16) core courses are required (see chart below for subject-area requirements).
- Initial full-time collegiate enrollment on or after August 1, 2016:
  - Sixteen (16) core courses are required (see chart below for subject-area requirements).
    - Ten (10) core courses completed before the seventh semester; seven (7) of the 10 must be in English, math or natural/physical science.
    - These courses/grades are "locked in" at start of the seventh semester (cannot be repeated for grade-point average [GPA] improvement to meet initial-eligibility requirements for competition).
  - Students who do not meet core-course progression requirements may still be eligible to receive athletics aid and practice in the initial year of enrollment by meeting academic redshirt requirements (see below).

Test Scores: (ACT/SAT)
- Students must present a corresponding test score and core-course GPA on the sliding scale (see Page No. 2).
  - SAT: critical reading and math sections.
    - Best subscore from each section is used to determine the SAT combined score for initial eligibility.
  - ACT: English, math, reading and science sections.
    - Best subscore from each section is used to determine the ACT sum score for initial eligibility.
- All ACT and SAT attempts before initial full-time collegiate enrollment may be used for initial eligibility.
- Enter 9999 during ACT or SAT registration to ensure the testing agency reports your score directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Test scores on transcripts will not be used.

Core Grade-Point Average:
- Only core courses that appear on the high school's List of NCAA Courses on the NCAA Eligibility Center's website (www.eligibilitycenter.org) will be used to calculate your core-course GPA. Use this list as a guide.
- Initial full-time collegiate enrollment before August 1, 2016:
  - Students must present a corresponding test score (ACT sum score or SAT combined score) and core-course GPA (minimum 2.000) on Sliding Scale A (see Page No. 2).
  - Core-course GPA is calculated using the best 16 core courses that meet subject-area requirements.
- Initial full-time collegiate enrollment on or after August 1, 2016:
  - Students must present a corresponding test score (ACT sum score or SAT combined score) and core-course GPA (minimum 2.300) on Sliding Scale B (see Page No. 2).
  - Core-course GPA is calculated using the best 16 core courses that meet both progression (10 before seventh semester; seven in English, math or science; "locked in") and subject-area requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISION I Core-Course Requirement (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 years of English</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 years of natural/physical science</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year of lab, English, math or natural/physical science</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 years of social science</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 years of additional courses (any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy)</td>
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<th>DIVISION I – 2016 Qualifier Requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Athletics aid, practice, and competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 core courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ten (10) core courses completed before the start of seventh semester. Seven (7) of the 10 must be in English, math or natural/physical science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- &quot;Locked in&quot; for core-course GPA calculation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corresponding test score (ACT sum score or SAT combined score) and core-course GPA (minimum 2.000) on Sliding Scale B (see Page No. 2).</td>
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<td>Graduate from high school.</td>
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<th>DIVISION I – 2016 Academic Redshirt Requirements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Athletics aid and practice (no competition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 core courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>- No grades/credits &quot;locked in&quot; (repeated courses after the seventh semester begins may be used for initial eligibility).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Corresponding test score (ACT sum score or SAT combined score) and core-course GPA (minimum 2.000) on Sliding Scale B (see Page No. 2).</td>
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<td>Graduate from high school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core GPA</td>
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For more information, visit [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) or [www.2point3.org](http://www.2point3.org).
Division II Initial-Eligibility Requirements

Core Courses

- **Division II currently requires 16 core courses.** See the chart below.
- **Beginning August 1, 2018,** to become a full or partial qualifier for Division II, all college-bound student-athletes must complete the 16 core-course requirement.

Test Scores

- **Division II currently requires a minimum SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.**
- **Beginning August 1, 2018,** Division II will use a sliding scale to match test scores and core-course grade-point averages (GPA). The sliding scale for those requirements is shown on Page No. 2 of this sheet.
- The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes only the critical reading and math sections. The writing section of the SAT is not used.
- The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a sum of the following four sections: English, mathematics, reading and science.
- **When you register for the SAT or ACT,** use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999 to ensure all SAT and ACT scores are reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used.

Grade-Point Average

- Be sure to look at your high school's List of NCAA Courses on the NCAA Eligibility Center's website ([www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)). Only courses that appear on your school's approved List of NCAA Courses will be used in the calculation of the core GPA. Use the list as a guide.
- The current **Division II core GPA requirement is a minimum of 2.000.** Division II core GPA required to be eligible for competition on or after August 1, 2018, is 2.000 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on the Sliding Scale on Page No. 2 of this sheet).
- The minimum **Division II core GPA required to receive athletics aid and practice as a partial qualifier on or after August 1, 2018,** is 2.000 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on the Sliding Scale on Page No. 2 of this sheet).
- Remember, the NCAA core GPA is calculated using NCAA core courses only.

![DIVISION II
16 Core Courses
3 years of English.
2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
3 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
2 years of social science.
4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy).](image)
### DIVISION II
**COMPETITION SLIDING SCALE**
*Use for Division II beginning August 1, 2018*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Core GPA</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>ACT Sum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.800 &amp; above</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>840 &amp; above</td>
<td>70 &amp; above</td>
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### DIVISION II
**PARTIAL QUALIFIER SLIDING SCALE**
*Use for Division II beginning August 1, 2018*

<table>
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For more information, visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).
APPLICATION TRACKING

Use the following pages to help you keep track of your college applications. The College Tracking Sheet is reproduced a few times to give you ample room to track all of the schools that you apply to.

Please remember that the Guidance Office tracks all decisions and scholarship awards, so please be sure to keep the Guidance Office informed of any decisions on admission and scholarships as you receive them.

Generic Tracking for ALL Applications

- Updated NAVIANCE - all profile information accurate and complete
- Created Common Application Account
- Completed FERPA in the Common Application
- MATCHED Common App account to my NAVIANCE account
- Verbally asked teachers for letters of recommendation:
  _____________________________________________
  _____________________________________________
  _____________________________________________
- Entered requested Letters of Recommendation in NAVIANCE
- Registered for ACT or SAT
- Wrote College Essay
# COLLEGE APPLICATION TRACKING SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPLICATION DETAILS</strong></td>
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<td>Common Application or Institutional</td>
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<td>Application Submitted (Enter Date)</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>TRACKING YOUR APPLICATION</td>
<td>DECISIONS and SCHOLARSHIPS</td>
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| Interview at college  
(List date of interview) | Materials Received  
Materials Needed | Decision Made  
Choice: Accepted  
Declined  
Waitlisted |
| Interview with Alumnus  
(List date of interview) | Materials Requested  
Date Submitted | Scholarship Received?  
Name of Award(s)  
Amount of Award(s)  
Per Year  One Time |
| Send THANK YOU Note to Interviewer  
(List date note sent) | Materials Requested  
Date Submitted | Scholarship Received?  
Name of Award(s)  
Amount of Award(s)  
Per Year  One Time |
| TRACKING YOUR APPLICATION  
Most schools will provide you with an online portal where you can check the status of your application | Materials Received  
Materials Needed | Scholarship Received?  
Name of Award(s)  
Amount of Award(s)  
Per Year  One Time |

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### NAVIANCE

- Added to “Colleges I’m Applying To” (Enter Date)
- Updated “Have you Applied”
- Requested TRANSCRIPT (enter date)

### TEST SCORES

- **SAT**
  (List date requested scores be SENT)
- **ACT**
  (List date requested scores be SENT)
- **TOEFL**
  (List date requested scores be SENT)
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**TRACKING YOUR APPLICATION**

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107
All other Notes: