

# VALLEY CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL



# COLLEGE WORKBOOK



[vchsaz.org/academics/guidance](http://vchsaz.org/academics/guidance)

## **Introduction**

This College Planning Guidebook, is updated and reprinted annually by the Guidance Department. It is given each year to all members of the junior class in order to provide important information as students begin planning for their post-secondary education.

The booklet includes specific information on college entrance testing, financial aid, and college application procedures. Some sections are designed to raise questions about individual priorities and to offer general guidance concerning adequate high school preparation. Other parts provide information about resources available for further research

All of these sections are meant to provide initial information or raise general questions that are most useful when supplemented by the individual guidance of a student's parents and counselor. Students and parents are encouraged to contact me any time they would like assistance with post-secondary planning. All students will have a chance to discuss the issues surrounding post-secondary planning in their junior advisories meetings in the spring with seniors meeting in the fall. Parents are also encouraged to meet with me at any time. Many students and parents have a family conference with me in the spring of junior year and early fall of senior year to establish a direction for future activities and to be sure they are on track with the college admission process.

A series of evening meetings also provides an over-view of the post-secondary planning process as well as specific information on testing, admissions, financial aid and Advising Office resources and materials. Parents and students are encouraged to attend these sessions. They are all posted on our website under guidance as well.

Although there are many similarities and standard tasks for every student when considering college, each one is unique in his/her talents, interests and gifts. It is my hope that we will help each one achieve their potential and go on to pursue exciting and rewarding futures as God has prepared them. I am always willing to help serve alongside parents in any way as we guide our students into this transition, so please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

I hope you will find this variety of resources useful as you plan your educational opportunities for after high school. As always, I look forward to assisting you in any way possible.

Blessings,  
Michelle Cefola  
Director of Academic, College, and Career Advising

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# Tasks for 11th Grade

## ELEVENTH GRADE

For both students and parents, it's crucial to stay on top of college preparation during the 11th-grade year and the following summer.

### Students

To Do:

All Year

- Be sure to continue working on or set up your free college information account on AZCIS offered by Valley Christian High School (see page 7).
- Explore careers and their earning potential in Naviance and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>. For a fun interactive tool, try the U.S. Department of Labor's career search <http://www.mynextmove.org/>.
- For an interactive look at occupations, go to: [jobshadowtv.wildapricot.org/schools-ecap-cte/](http://jobshadowtv.wildapricot.org/schools-ecap-cte/). This site provides hundreds of videos that give you a glimpse of many professions and a behind the scenes look at the employees in them.
- Learn about choosing a college and find a link to a helpful free college search tool. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools>
- Take advantage of college representatives' visits on campus to learn more about their university, gather materials and ask questions.
- Go to college fairs and college-preparation presentations by college representatives. Valley Christian High School sponsors the following events to help in your college journey: Senior and Junior nights, Underclassmen night, college application workshop, CCL (college, career, life) class junior year, PSAT, ACT and SAT school day testing.
- Be sure to check out the Greater Phoenix College Fair, held in October. For more information go to: <http://www.nacacnet.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Meet with VCHS guidance counselor to explore college options and be sure you are on track with the application and admission process.

Fall

- Visit colleges of interest over fall break, throughout the year and over the summer.
- Take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). You must take the test in 11th grade to qualify for scholarships and programs associated with the National Merit Scholarship Program. This exam is mandatory for all students and Valley Christian High School offers this to you at no cost. Once you receive your results, you can connect these to Khan Academy for free individualized SAT prep classes. For more information, go to: <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>
- Once you receive the results of your PSAT, visit College board to set up a college quick start account for career exploration <https://quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp>
- Create a file/folder to manage the college search materials.
- If you are considering ROTC or any military academy, contact the guidance counselor before summer vacation. If you are interested in a ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer prior to senior year.

## Spring

- Register for and take exams for college admission. The standardized tests that many colleges require are the SAT, the SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/tests>. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require (see testing for dates).
- All juniors will take the ACT and SAT in the spring, during the school day at Valley. They must attend the pre-registration session at Valley in order to take these exams. More information is given as the test dates approach.
- Students take both the SAT and ACT for a variety of reasons. They will be able to experience both, receive scores from both and then determine if they are more suited for one over the other as well as determine if they score higher on one over the other. After receiving scores, they can decide if they want to use any preparation materials to focus on one for retesting in late summer and/or early fall.
- To register for additional ACT testing and the ACT with writing, students need to go to ACT.org. To register for additional SAT exams or to complete the SAT with writing and/or SAT subject tests, students should use their College Board account.
- Use the U.S. Department of Labor's scholarship search to find scholarships for which you might want to apply. Some deadlines fall as early as the summer between 11th and 12th grades, so prepare now to submit applications soon. (See also page: 72 for more scholarship searches.) <http://careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp?searchtype=category&nodeid=22>. Please also the section on paying for college for various other scholarship search resources.
- If needed, meet with the guidance counselor again to review progress and address any questions or issues with the college process.

## Summer before 12th Grade

- Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering attending. If you can, visit the schools that interest you.
- Go to college websites to learn about the admission process. Learn about financial aid, admission requirements, and deadlines.
- Decide whether you are going to apply under a particular college's **early decision** or **early action** program. Be sure to learn about the program deadlines and requirements.
- Use the *FAFSA4caster* <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s> financial aid estimator, and compare the results to the actual costs at the colleges to which you will apply. To supplement any aid *FAFSA4caster* estimates you might receive, be sure to apply for scholarships <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/finding-scholarships>. Your goal is to minimize the amount of loan funds you borrow.

## To Explore:

- Learn how to avoid scholarship scams and identity theft <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/scams> as you look for financial aid and then attend college.

REMEMBER: Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, see your school counselor about getting a fee waiver.

## Parents

### To Do:

- Take a look at your financial situation, and be sure you're on the right track to pay for college.

- Talk to your child about the schools he or she is considering. Ask why those schools appeal to your child, and help him or her clarify goals and priorities.
- Attend college fairs with your child, but don't take over the conversation with the college representatives. Just listen, and let your child do the talking.
- Take your child to visit college campuses, preferably when classes are in session.
- Make sure your child is looking into or already has applied for scholarships.
- Ask your employer whether scholarships are available for employees' children.

To Explore:

- Get in-depth information on the federal student aid programs <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types>.
- Learn about student and parent loans in *Your Federal Student Loans: Learn the Basics and Manage Your Debt* [https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans\\_0.pdf](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans_0.pdf).
- Find out how the federal student aid application process works <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa>.

### **Career and College Search Websites:**

Students should use Naviance to search for colleges, identify possible majors, learn about occupations and more.

The BigFuture website will help you identify colleges using criteria that are important to you like size, location, majors, sports, activities, cost, etc. [www.bigfuture.org](http://www.bigfuture.org)

SuperMatch is available for free to anyone at [www.collegeconfidential.com/college\\_search](http://www.collegeconfidential.com/college_search) although this search is similar to the BigFuture site above, it may generate additional colleges because of different search criteria available.

Campus Tours: Virtual College Tours provides virtual tours with still pictures and descriptions, webcams, campus maps and videos of hundreds of colleges throughout the United States. Provides a first look at colleges [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com).

eCampusTours.com provides virtual tours of colleges. Useful for its 360-degree views of dorm rooms and other buildings. [www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com).

The U.S. Department of Education has a search tool, College Navigator, which is similar to the BigFuture search feature. You can find it at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. This site is not as diverse as the two above but it allows you to specify SAT or ACT ranges and has an extensive list of majors to choose from. Additionally The College Navigator site contains a link to the online *Occupational Outlook Handbook* that lets you explore job prospects in different occupations as well as a link that will take you to the net price calculator of any college.

Below are various sites that may prove useful in comparing various colleges and how each one compares to each other.

- <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>
- <http://www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings.aspx>
- <http://www.forbes.com/top-colleges/>
- <http://www.petersons.com/>
- <http://www.christiancolleges.org/christian-college-and-university-rankings.html>
- <http://www.topchristiancolleges.org/>

**Let the Search Begin!**



# College Fairs

College fairs give you the chance to talk to admission officers and get the scoop on everything from what courses are offered to life on campus. Fairs can also help you rule out colleges, as well as introduce you to new ones. You find noise and crowds at most fairs, and college fairs are no different. Whether it's ten colleges in your high school gym, or hundreds at a conference center -- like the fairs sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling -- fairs can be overwhelming. So, have a plan for before, during, and after you go.

## Before the Fair

Ask your high school counselor when and where college fairs are being held in your area. Plan to attend as many as possible. Visit Valley Christian High School's website for up to date information on these fairs.

## Characteristics to Consider

Before you set out, it will help to consider what you want from a college. Write down college characteristics that are important to you. Review websites and catalogs of colleges on your list and write down questions that aren't answered in the materials. You should also ask questions about your own interests, such as activities you'd like to pursue and course requirements for the majors in which you're interested.

## What to Bring

Before you head out the door don't forget to bring a pen and small notebook, your questions, and a bag to hold all the college brochures and information you'll get. Consider printing out self-stick labels with your address, contact information, and graduation date to stick to college information cards at the fair. Use that cell phone to snap pictures of business cards and important information for safekeeping.

**During the Fair:** Navigating a college fair can be challenging. There are many booths to visit and people to talk to. Focus your visit so you can get some in-depth knowledge about the colleges that really interest you.

Review the list of colleges at the fair and plan to visit the colleges that interest you most

- If the fair provides a map showing where colleges booths will be plan out a route to avoid back-tracking
- If the fair has information sessions with experts, block out time to attend those that interest you
- After you visit a college's booth take a few minutes to jot down what you've learned

Try to leave some time at the end just to browse through some of the booths you didn't get to - you could stumble on a great college you hadn't considered.

## After the Fair

Spending the day at a college fair can be exhausting. You'll probably come home with a bag or bags full of information. Here are some post-fair dos and don'ts to keep you on track:

- DO relax when you get home. Take a break -- you've earned it!
- DON'T put the college materials in the back of your closet. Keep them on hand for when you're ready to review them.
- DO look through the materials, and your notes, within the week.
- DON'T keep everything. Weed out colleges that aren't a good fit. Research colleges that interest you. Explore websites, request more information from admissions offices, and plan to visit.

## College Fair Topics and Questions

Are you wondering how to start a conversation with a college rep? Here are some tips for conversing and getting answers to important questions. It's a good idea to write out a list of things that are important to you before you go.

Don't feel like you have strange priorities or weird questions if something off-beat is interesting to you. College reps hear the same questions all the time, so they'll be glad to hear something new.

- Start off with "Hello, how are you?" or "Hi, my name is..." for a relaxed beginning to your conversation.
- Try not to ask a vague question like "Tell me about your college," since the rep will have no idea where to start. That can be frustrating for the college rep and the student, because the conversation will have no direction.
- Be specific with questions by saying things like "Tell me about class spirit" or "Can you give me examples of some campus traditions," instead. Those types of questions will give you a sense of the atmosphere and give the rep something specific to talk about.
- Ask for a list of majors that you can take with you and look over later.
- Ask about the enrollment deadline and the recommendations for taking the SAT and ACT Plus Writing. Some colleges will need scores earlier.
- Ask if SAT Subject Tests are required or recommended.
- Ask if there are any scholarship opportunities. There are many things that differ from college to college, but the conversation doesn't always get around to this in a rushed environment like a college fair.
- You will want to know the admission requirements, of course, but you may also want to ask whether admissions officers make decisions on numbers, or if they really do consider activities. Some colleges go by scores and grades and follow a formula. Other colleges really give greater weight to activities, experience, and interests.
- Ask if a student leader can contact you to give you a student's perspective. Provide an email address for this.
- Go ahead and ask about the food. Sometimes there are many choices and other times there aren't. Remember, you'll have to live with it for four years.
- Ask how many of the students drop out, transfer away, or how many stay and graduate. College reps may cringe at this one, because student retention is a touchy issue at many colleges. A low retention rate may be a warning sign, though.
- Ask: "What's the biggest complaint from current students?"
- Is tutoring available?
- Ask for a direct phone number for an admission counselor and a financial aid counselor, to avoid getting caught up in an automated phone quagmire at some point. Smaller colleges will be happy to provide this, but larger colleges may not. It's always worth a try.
- Find out if the administration listens to student concerns. This is one of the things you might want to ask a student leader.
- Ask if you'll have to pay for parking or if you'll have to walk a million miles from parking lot to classes.

If you are very conservative or very liberal in your thinking, ask about the political/social climate. This is one of the things that could cause a feeling of discomfort or alienation down the road. It's not a silly question.

Considering a pre-major such as pre-med, pre-law, pre-physical therapy or pre-pharmacy? Be sure to ask what majors are offered for these and discuss the percentages of students being accepted into the graduate programs of their choice.

## **College Representatives Visiting Our School**

The Guidance Office will host college admissions representatives who will visit to speak with students and staff.

Beginning in September, these college representatives will be available to meet with students during their lunch period or before school. This is an opportunity for the visiting representative to "sell" their school's programs. The meetings with college admissions personnel are not intended to replace a personal interview or campus visit, but should allow students the opportunity to gain a general impression of a college, ask specific questions about programs, activities or admissions at that college, or gather written information about the institution. The dates and times for these visits are announced at school and are on Valley Christian High School's website.

Students should review the following suggestions:

- Develop a few specific questions to ask the representative. Questions might include: special academic interests, particular sports, support services available, or financial aid procedures. Collect written materials if you are interested in that school.
- Sign a card provided by the college. That will put your name on a mailing list to receive more information from the school. If you have already visited a college or had an interview, a quick hello to the admissions person visiting us provides a good way to be remembered.
- Ask about the off-campus interview opportunities, if interested.
- Be open to schools that might not have been on your original investigating list but which seem interesting.
- It is never too early to meet with these representatives. Even freshmen should consider learning more about the specific universities and what they have to offer.

## **Visiting a College Campus**

A personal visit to a post-secondary institution is often the most useful step in helping students and their parents decide whether or not to apply to a particular school. Students are encouraged to make use of group tours, open house events and group information sessions as a way of obtaining first-hand impressions of schools they have previously researched.

Visits during the regular academic year provide a more accurate view of the academic and social life of a campus, but families often make use of summer vacation to visit several schools that are at a distance. Where possible, it is a good idea to avoid the distortions of registration, final exams and special campus events such as homecomings or festivals. Several high school holidays such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, and February and April vacations, allow students who visit colleges to minimize the disruption to their own academic program.

### **When Is a Good Time To Visit a College?**

Students should begin planning college visits after they have given considerable thought to their abilities, interests, and career plans. They should also consult with the college counselor and utilize the material available in the Guidance Office.

Some students begin visiting colleges during the spring of their junior year. Others visit campuses during the summer between the junior and senior year. Others prefer to wait until the fall of their senior year. By starting early, the process will feel less stressful.

### **How Do You Make Arrangements For a Campus Visit?**

Most schools offer on-line registration for their tours. Students can also write or call the admissions office of the college in which they are interested two or three weeks in advance and make arrangements for a personal interview and a tour of campus facilities. Some colleges, usually large universities will offer only group interviews. At a few colleges, typically the most competitive schools, you may need to schedule an interview several months in advance. Some schools will not be able to grant a personal interview; they rely on alumnae/alumni interviews which are arranged after an application is on file.

## Questions to Ask College Representatives

What are your strongest majors?

What are your criteria for admission?

How important are grades, strength of curriculum, test scores, personal qualities?

What is the average class size?

How accessible are the faculty members?

When do I have to declare a major?

How easy is it to change majors?

Is it more difficult to gain admission if I apply into a certain major (i.e. engineering, biology, business)?

In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your college?

What is diversity like on your campus?

What other colleges do you cross applications with?

What support services are available (tutoring, career counselors, writing labs, personal counseling, and support groups)?

How many applications does your college receive?

What is the acceptance rate?

Are courses taught by professors or teaching assistants?

What type of housing is available?

Is housing guaranteed?

What percentage of the student body lives on campus?

Do students stay on campus on the weekends?

What types of activities and sports does your college offer?

How safe is the campus?

What are the incidents of crime on campus and in the surrounding community?

What are the current issues on campus?

Can I have a car on campus?

Is a car necessary?

How do students get around town?

What kind of annual traditions do your students celebrate?

Do you have application deadlines? Financial Aid deadlines?

What type of student does well here?

Does your college have a required core curricula?

What types of internships does your college have?

Are there research opportunities for students?

What percentage of freshmen return as sophomores (retention rate)?

What constitutes a typical freshman program? Is there a way for freshman to feel a part of a community from the beginning?

Who teaches freshman courses - graduate assistants or permanent staff?

What is the average class size for freshman and introductory courses?

Which departments are the strongest?



To what extent is there interaction between faculty and students?

How good are the library facilities? What are the library hours?

What cultural opportunities are available in the community?

For what reasons did the students you see on campus choose that particular college? In their opinions, are these reasons being borne out?

What is the makeup of the student body? Are there a number of foreign students and students from all over the U.S? Does one region or class predominate?

What types of financial aid are available?

Is there a professional counseling service available for career planning and personal concerns? Faculty advisor?

What are the opportunities for participating in intercollegiate or intramural sports?

What type of housing is available to first year students?

Is campus security an area of concern to students or faculty?

**Be sure to do the following:**

Take a guided tour

Spend time in the library

Read a campus newspaper

Check out a dorm room

Visit with faculty from your majors of interest

Visit the student union

Visit the athletic facilities that interest you

Attend a group information session

Sit in on a class

Explore the nearest town and transportation options

Have lunch in the dining hall

Sit on a bench and imagine yourself on campus

Talk with students and ask them how they like the college

The following factors should be considered before beginning your college search:

Self - Exploration:

What are your interests, abilities, goals, and expectations? Students should review the course work, extra-curricular activities, or community service that they have found most interesting throughout their high school years. Academic records, standardized testing, special awards, and feedback from teachers, coaches, club advisors, and other adults can help students assess activities. Career interest inventories and other information in the Guidance Office may be useful in considering personal and career goals. Students are encouraged to meet with their guidance counselor to explore all these factors.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN THE COLLEGE YOU CHOOSE?

- Type of institution (two or four year, coed or non-coed)
- Geographic location (region, state, distance from home)
- Majors offered/curriculum (liberal arts, technical, business)
- Setting (urban, rural, suburban)
- Size of institution (small, medium, large, very large)
- Selectivity (very difficult, moderately difficult, open). Be sure to look at the average SAT/ACT score and GPA of the previous year's admitted freshmen.
- Cost (tuition, room and board, books fees, travel, financial aid)
- Diversity (race, religion, national, international, age)
- Extracurricular activities (sports, entertainment, culture, religious, educational)
- Housing (on/off campus, coed, single sex, special interest, size of room, food, meal plans, rules, roommates)
- Facilities (building, architecture, libraries, student unions, classrooms, lecture halls, labs, recreational/athletic offerings, stores, laundry, handicapped access)
- Specialized Programs (programs and services for students who are learning disabled, physically challenged, or who have English as a second language).
- Class Size (are the classes huge? in lecture halls or smaller? what is the ratio of students to faculty?)
- Honors College (Is there an honors college? honors classes? and what are the admission requirements?)
- Sports (what kind of sports are offered? varsity, club, intermural?)
- Greek Life (Are there fraternities, sorority? Do they have their own housing? What are the requirements for joining?)
- Christian or Secular (Is it a Christian or Secular school? Is chapel required? what are the faith based opportunities?)
- Parental Preference (Are your parents supportive of this decision and why?)
- Number of students on campus (percentages of students living on/off campus)
- Security (Rate of crimes and types of common crimes on campus, safety measures for students, police force availab

**Let the Testing Begin!**

## The PSAT (Preliminary SAT)

All 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students take the PSAT each fall at Valley Christian High School. This assessment provides valuable information to students, parents and our school to help students reach their potential in preparation for enrollment into college. Below are some of the benefits and uses for this tool.

- A comprehensive assessment program that measures college readiness and provides students with the tools they need to start planning for the future.
- Used by National Merit Scholarship Corporation as an initial screening of entrants in its annual competitions for recognition and college scholarships (typically, entrants are in their third year of high school).
- Measures skills in three academic areas: reading, writing and language, and math. Rigorously developed by experts and content specialists, with comprehensive reviews and analyses to ensure that test questions are fair for all students.
- An integral component of the SAT Suite of Assessments, a series of assessments that also includes the SAT® for 11th- and 12th-graders, and PSAT™ 8/9 for eighth- and ninth-graders.
- A low-cost solution for schools and districts interested in measuring performance, improving outcomes, and building a college-going culture.
- Improves teaching and learning: A consistent online reporting portal allows educators to analyze data and visualize results across all of the tests in the SAT Suite of Assessments and prescribe interventions when students are ahead or behind.
- Scores are available in specific content areas, tied to state standards and benchmarks, and indicate whether students are on target for college.
- Increases participation in the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®): The online AP Potential™ tool identifies students likely to succeed in AP, helping educators expand access to challenging courses.
- Supports college and career planning: Students receive an interactive score report with answer explanations, their projected SAT score, and feedback on their readiness for 20+ AP® courses.\*They will also connect to resources that allow them to search for colleges and explore majors and careers.
- Khan Academy: Students get free SAT® practice powered by Khan Academy. After receiving their PSAT/NMSQT scores, they will receive a unique SAT study plan based on their performance. Khan Academy practice can also be used to prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT® because of the close alignment of the tests ([khanacademy.org/sat](https://khanacademy.org/sat)).
- Provides entry into scholarship programs: The PSAT/NMSQT provides entry into the National Merit® Scholarship Program conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation and increased access to other scholarship and recognition programs.

## College Admission Testing and the SAT

Students planning to attend college after graduation should take the SAT and the ACT. The PSAT is offered once a year in October at Valley Christian High School for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Students should plan to take the SAT Reasoning Tests and, if appropriate, the SAT Subject Tests in the spring of the junior year and probably again in the fall of their senior year. All Colleges accept either the SAT or the ACT and students register for the SAT and SAT subject tests at [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org).

The SAT is a globally recognized college admission test that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. It tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math — subjects that are taught every day in high school classrooms. Students should take the SAT during their junior and senior year of high school, and almost all colleges and universities use the SAT to make admission decisions.

Taking the SAT is the first step in finding the right college for you — the place where you can further develop your skills and pursue your passions. But SAT scores are just one of many factors that colleges consider when making their admission decisions. High school grades are also very important. In fact, the combination of high school grades and SAT scores is the best predictor of your academic success in college.

**SAT Subject Tests** are required by some private colleges, usually the more competitive institutions. Those colleges that do require these often require two. It is the student's responsibility to check with each college and learn the requirements. It is not advisable to rely on books published by outside sources for this information.

Tests are offered in Literature, American History and Social Studies, World History, Mathematics Level I, Mathematics Level II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Chinese with Listening, French and French with Listening, German and German with Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese with Listening, Latin, Spanish and Spanish with Listening.

All SAT Subject tests last for one hour, and a student can take a maximum of three on a given test date. Students should confer with their counselors to determine if and when to take a specific test. For example, students should plan to take the Math I test after the Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry sequence, usually June of the junior year.

### **There are two ways to send your scores to colleges, universities, or scholarship programs:**

#### **1. During Registration**

You receive four score reports every time you register for the SAT. These four score reports must be used at the time of registration or up to nine days after the test date. We highly recommend that you take advantage of these score reports, as additional reports are subject to a fee.

#### **2. After Registration**

You can send score reports at any time from your College Board account. The time frames for score delivery vary based upon each institution's method of receiving scores. Please remember that an additional week may be needed for the score recipients to process your scores once they receive them. There is a fee for sending score reports starting ten days after the test date. However, if you are a fee-waiver-eligible student, you may have additional score report credits.

Because last minute cramming is not likely to be of much use, a student who decides to take an SAT Subject Test in a subject he or she has not studied recently should review the course material over several weeks. In addition, preparation books for specific SAT Subject Tests are commercially available in many bookstores.



Additionally, there are many opportunities for students to prepare for the SAT exam through Valley and others:

- Valley purchased an ACT and SAT prep program called Method Test Prep. To create an account and begin, please see the next page.
- Kahn Academy through College Board.
- Free online courses offered through Kaplan. To access this, students can visit [kaplanatschool.com/valleychristian](http://kaplanatschool.com/valleychristian) to sign up. In the upper right hand corner there is a box they can be clicked and the promo code is found. When the student selects the "self-paced SAT or ACT" program, they add it to their basket then enter the promo code for the cost to drop to zero.
- Courses offered at a discount by Princeton Review and Kaplan at Valley and elsewhere.
- At the ACT website, [act.org](http://act.org).
- Question of the day app for smartphones and computers.

Other ways to improve SAT/ACT scores:

- Study hard, read outside of the classroom and take challenging classes.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT. It is great practice for the SAT.
- Take advantage of the College Board's free online readiness/practice tools, which include a free official practice test, sample questions, The Official SAT Question of the Day- and other low-cost tools <http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/>
- Know that research proves that you don't need expensive test-preparation courses to prepare you to do well on the test.
- If you've already taken the SAT once, consider taking it again. There's a good chance that you'll improve your score.

Our school's College Examination Board (CEEB) High School number is 030437. Test Centers are listed on-line, and there are many in the area.

Students are reminded to bring a picture I.D. with them to the test. They should also bring the admission ticket, an appropriate calculator and two, #2 pencils.

## METHOD TEST PREP

Valley Christian High School has provided, at no cost, access to Method Test Prep, an online course that helps students build their math, reading, writing, and SAT/ACT test prep skills. Additionally, teachers will have access to the student's work to be able to customize class instruction as appropriate. This program is very interactive and intuitive, following each student as they progress through the material and can be customized for each student as needed.

First, take a few minutes to get familiar with some of MTP's most important features by watching this short video found at the below link.

<http://prep.methodtestprep.com/mtp-demo>

Once you have reviewed the video, you can now set up your personalized account following the below instructions:

### **Student Signup Link:**

Students should use the following URL which is unique to Valley Christian High School's account:

<https://app.methodtestprep.com/ValleyChristianHighSchool/signup>

The referral code needed to create your account is--tkn.67362270. When entering the referral code you must include the "tkn."

Using the URLs above will bring students to a form where they will setup their accounts. They will need to enter a few pieces of information including their First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Grade Level and Referral Code. They will also need to create a Username and Password. **\*\*They must enter "tkn." as part of the referral code.** \*\*Email addresses are required to setup accounts

Once students have created an account they can log on at [www.methodtestprep.com](http://www.methodtestprep.com) using their username and password.

It is important that all Valley Christian High School students create an account using this method. Once a student creates an account, they will be assigned to the Valley Christian High School tracking reports.

**Smart Idea**--When getting started with MTP, please look at the "Resource Materials" link on the left hand navigation menu. Posted, are user guides as well as video tutorials that will explain and show all the functionality you will find inside this program.

## **SAT Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why should you take the SAT?**

The SAT is a widely used college admission test and is taken by more than two million students every year and is accepted by virtually all colleges and universities. The SAT measures knowledge of subjects learned in the classroom, including reading, writing and math - and how well you can apply that knowledge outside of the classroom. The SAT helps colleges get to know you better by giving them insight into how you think, solve problems and communicate.

### **When should I take the SAT?**

The College Board recommends that you take the SAT in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year, if you feel you can improve your score. Students receive, on average, a 40-point increase across all three sections when they take it a second time. Score increases are lower on subsequent retesting.

### **How is the SAT developed?**

Meticulous care goes into developing and evaluating each test. Test developers write the questions for the SAT, sometimes incorporating questions submitted by high school and college teachers from around the country. A test committee made up of high school and college faculty and administrators reviews each test before it is administered. To ensure that the SAT is a valid measure of the skills and knowledge specified for the tests, as well as fair to all students, the SAT Program maintains rigorous standards for administering and scoring the tests and for reporting test scores.

### **What else does the SAT provide?**

The SAT experience does not start or end with the test. The College Board is there for you at each step on your path to college. From the moment you register for the test, you can take advantage of the College Board's free online practice materials and many useful tools which helps you understand what skills are tested on the SAT; a college search tool; financial aid and scholarship information; and a profile of several careers and majors. The College Board also helps you understand the details of your scores with My Online Score Report.

### **How fair is the SAT?**

The SAT is carefully designed to be a fair test for all students. It is also the most rigorously researched and analyzed standardized test in the world. Each question on the SAT goes through an in-depth pretesting and review process to ensure that every single question is fair to all students across genders and ethnicity groups.

### **How valid is the SAT in predicting college success?**

The SAT, along with high school grades, is the best predictor of success in college. The SAT gives you an opportunity to show colleges what you know and what you know you can do. Taking the SAT is the first step in finding the right college for you -the one where you'll best succeed and discover the tools necessary to pursue your passions and achieve your career goals.

### **How many questions must I answer correctly to get an average score on the SAT?**

The average score on the SAT is about 500 on the critical reading section, and 500 on the mathematics section. Some of the questions are easy, and some are hard, but the majority are of medium difficulty. Medium difficulty questions are answered correctly by about one- third to two-thirds of students. The SAT is designed so that a student who answers about half the questions correctly will receive an average score.

# The ACT

The ACT, another standardized college admissions test, is administered by the American College Testing Service located in Iowa City, Iowa.

The ACT is composed of four 35 to 50 minute sections in English usage, mathematics usage, social studies reading, and natural science reading. The main difference between the ACT and the SAT is the ACT is a yardstick of both reasoning ability and knowledge of specific subject matter covered in classes. If students need more information about the ACT, and to register for the ACT and ACT with writing, they should go to the [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

Test			Content
English	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
Mathematics	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
Reading	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
Science	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
Optional Writing Test	1 prompt	30 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

website.

## Fee Waivers

Fee waivers are available to students who need financial assistance. Students that are granted fee waivers are also eligible for free college applications. If the cost of making application to college will be an obstacle, it is important to ask for the SAT fee waiver to ensure this benefit. Fee waivers are also available for the SAT Subject Tests.

## Test Scores and Score Reports

Students' score reports will be mailed to their home address about five weeks after the test. They are accessible on-line earlier than this. If students request that their scores be sent to colleges or scholarship programs, a report will be sent to each, usually within four weeks after the test. The high school will also receive a score report if students provide our high school code number, **030437**. For both the ACT and the SAT, students may select which scores to forward to colleges.

If it is necessary to send test scores to additional colleges, this can be handled through the ACTstudent.org site, too. This service is also available by phone at an additional charge. Requests should be made at least five weeks before the date colleges and scholarship programs need to receive a report. College and scholarship codes appear in the Registration Bulletin and on-line.

## SAT/ACT Comparison

### SAT Writing and Language/ACT English.

	SAT	ACT
<b>Time</b>	35 min	45 min
<b>Format</b>	4 passages, 11 questions each	5 passages, 15 questions each
<b>Total # of questions</b>	44 questions	75 questions
<b>Time per passage/question</b>	8 min, 45 sec/48 sec	9 min/36 sec
<b>Content</b>	<p>Standard English Conventions: 20 questions (45%), covering sentence structure, conventions of usage, and conventions of punctuation</p> <p>Expression of Ideas: 24 questions (55%), covering development, organization and effective language use</p>	<p>Usage and Mechanics: sentence structure (20-25%), grammar and usage (15-20%), and punctuation (10-15%)</p> <p>Rhetorical Skills: style (15-20%), strategy (15-20%), and organization (10-15%)</p>
<b>Key Skills</b>	Understanding grammar rules, expressing ideas clearly, connecting sentences logically	Understanding grammar rules, connecting sentences logically, recognizing overall structure and argument



## Math

	SAT	ACT
<b>Time</b>	80 min	60 min
<b>Format</b>	Divided in to two sections  No calculator: 20 questions (4 grid-ins), 25 min  With calculator: 38 questions (9 grid-ins), 55 min	1 section, all questions multiple choice
<b>Total # of questions</b>	58 questions	60 questions
<b>Time per question</b>	No calculator: 75 sec With calculator: 87 sec	1 min
<b>Content</b>	Heart of Algebra — 33% Problem Solving and Data Analysis — 28% Passport to Advanced Math — 29% Additional Topics in Math — 10%	Pre-algebra — 20-25% Elementary algebra — 15-20% Intermediate algebra — 15-20% Coordinate geometry — 15-20% Plane geometry — 20-25% Trigonometry — 5-10%
<b>Key Skills</b>	Doing simple calculations without a calculator, translating word problems, analyzing data	Memorizing formulas, translating word problems, working quickly without making errors

## Compare ACT & SAT Scores

The ACT and SAT are different tests that measure similar but distinct constructs. The ACT measures achievement related to high school curricula, while the SAT measures general verbal and quantitative reasoning.

ACT and the College Board have completed a concordance study that is designed to examine the relationship between two scores on the ACT and SAT. These concordance tables do not equate scores, but rather provide a tool for finding comparable scores.

### 2018 Concordance Tables

**Table A1:** SAT Total to ACT Composite

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1250	26	910	16
*1590	36	*1240	26	900	16
1580	36	1230	26	*890	16
1570	36	1220	25	880	16
1560	35	*1210	25	870	15
1550	35	1200	25	860	15
*1540	35	1190	24	*850	15
1530	35	*1180	24	840	15
1520	34	1170	24	830	15
1510	34	1160	24	820	14
*1500	34	1150	23	810	14
1490	34	*1140	23	*800	14
1480	33	1130	23	790	14
1470	33	1120	22	780	14
*1460	33	*1110	22	770	13
1450	33	1100	22	*760	13
1440	32	1090	21	750	13
*1430	32	*1080	21	740	13
1420	32	1070	21	730	13
1410	31	1060	21	720	12
*1400	31	1050	20	*710	12
1390	31	*1040	20	700	12
1380	30	1030	20	690	12
*1370	30	1020	19	680	11
1360	30	*1010	19	*670	11
1350	29	1000	19	660	11
*1340	29	990	19	650	11
1330	29	980	18	640	10
1320	28	*970	18	*630	10
*1310	28	960	18	620	10
1300	28	950	17	610	9
1290	27	940	17	600	9
*1280	27	*930	17	*590	9
1270	27	920	17		
1260	27				

**Table A2:** ACT Composite to SAT Total

ACT	SAT	SAT Range
36	1590	1570-1600
35	1540	1530-1560
34	1500	1490-1520
33	1460	1450-1480
32	1430	1420-1440
31	1400	1390-1410
30	1370	1360-1380
29	1340	1330-1350
28	1310	1300-1320
27	1280	1260-1290
26	1240	1230-1250
25	1210	1200-1220
24	1180	1160-1190
23	1140	1130-1150
22	1110	1100-1120
21	1080	1060-1090
20	1040	1030-1050
19	1010	990-1020
18	970	960-980
17	930	920-950
16	890	880-910
15	850	830-870
14	800	780-820
13	760	730-770
12	710	690-720
11	670	650-680
10	630	620-640
9	590	590-610

# SAT and ACT Test Dates for 2018-2019

2018-19 ACT and SAT Dates		2017-18 ACT and SAT Dates		
Test Date	Test	Registration	Late Registration	Multiple Choice Scores Available
July 14, 2018	ACT (Not Offered in CA and NY)	June 15, 2018	June 22, 2018	July 23 - August 6, 2018
August 25, 2018	SAT & Subject Tests	July 27, 2018	August 15, 2018	September 18, 2018
September 8, 2018	ACT	Aug 10, 2018	August 26, 2018	September 18 - October 2, 2018
October 6, 2018	SAT & Subject Tests	September 7, 2018	September 26, 2018	October 19 - 25, 2018
October 27, 2018	ACT	September 28, 2018	October 14, 2018	November 13 - 27, 2018
November 3, 2018	SAT & Subject Tests	October 5, 2018	October 24, 2018	November 16 - 22, 2018
December 1, 2018	SAT & Subject Tests	November 2, 2018	November 20, 2018	December 14 - 20, 2018
December 8, 2018	ACT	November 2, 2018	November 19, 2018	December 18, 2018 - January 1, 2019
February 9, 2019	ACT (Not Offered in NY)	January 11, 2019	January 18, 2019	February 19 - March 5, 2019
March 9, 2019	SAT	February 8, 2019	February 27, 2019	March 22 - 28, 2019
April 13, 2019	ACT	March 8, 2019	March 25, 2019	April 23 - May 7, 2019
May 4, 2019	SAT & Subject Tests	April 5, 2019	April 24, 2019	May 17 - 23, 2019
June 1, 2019	SAT & Subject Tests	May 3, 2019	May 22, 2019	July 10, 2019
June 8, 2019	ACT	May 3, 2019	May 20, 2019	June 18 - July 2, 2019
July 13, 2019	ACT (Not Offered in CA and NY)	June 14, 2019	June 24, 2019	July 23 - August 6, 2019

**Let the Applying Begin!**

## How Many Colleges Should I Apply To?

Four to eight colleges is a good starting number. They should all be colleges you'd be happy to attend. It's good to apply to some colleges that are a bit of a stretch for you and some that you feel will likely admit you. But most should feel like good, realistic matches.

Begin with 15 or so possible choices and narrow down your list after carefully researching schools, visiting their campuses and talking with students. Apply to those schools that are a good match for your personality, interests and career goals.

Also, be sure to apply to a selection of schools that will maximize your chances of being accepted somewhere. Look at the school profiles, and compare the admissions data to your own academic record and test scores. A wise selection of schools might look something like this:

### **2-3 Reach Schools**

These are schools with highly selective admissions. Your grades and standardized test scores are below the averages of admitted students for these schools. When you study the admissions data, you find that there's a possibility you'll get in, but it's a bit of a long shot. Be realistic here. If you got a 450 on your SAT Math and you apply to a school where 99% of applicants got over a 600, you're almost guaranteed a rejection letter. On the other side of the spectrum, if you have remarkably strong scores, you should still identify schools like Harvard, Yale and Stanford as reach schools. These top schools are so competitive that no one has a good chance of being admitted.

### **2-3 Match Schools**

When you look at the profiles for these colleges, your academic record and standardized test scores are right in line with the averages of students who are admitted. You feel that you measure up favorably with typical applicants for the school and that you have a decent chance of being admitted. Be sure to keep in mind that identifying a school as a "match" does not mean you will be accepted. Many factors go into an admissions decision, and many qualified applicants get turned away.

### **2-3 Safety Schools**

These are schools where your academic record and standardized test scores are measurably above the average of admitted students. Realize that highly selective schools are never safety schools, even if your scores are above the averages.

### **A Final Word**

Be sure to look at the most current data available when determining which schools should be considered "match" and "safety." Because of a recent surge in the number of graduating high school students, schools that may have been a "match" a few years ago might be a "reach" today.

# Top Admission/Scholarship Factors Considered by Colleges

Colleges list the following admission factors as most important, according to The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). The order of the factors below reflects how many colleges rated the factor "Considerably Important" or "Moderately Important."

## Top Factors of Considerable Importance

**Grades in college prep courses.** Most colleges will consider your performance in college preparatory courses the strongest sign of your ability to do well in college. Even if you struggled early in high school, colleges will look favorably upon strong improvement in subsequent years. GPA in the 16 core classes can carry much more weight and importance when universities are making their admission and scholarship decisions.

**Strength of curriculum.** Colleges look for students who took the most challenging courses available to them. If your high school offers only a few college prep courses, admissions officers will take this into account.

**Admission test scores.** SAT and/or ACT scores usually count highly if the college requires them. Scores from SAT Subject Tests and AP tests can also contribute greatly.

**Grades in all courses.** Your overall GPA also serves as an indicator of your academic success in high school. The college may also look over your transcript, which lists every class that you have taken in high school and the grade you received in each class.

## Top Factors of Moderate Importance

**Extracurricular commitment.** What counts most to colleges is how long and how deeply you have been committed to one or two interests, how much time you allot to them, what leadership roles you have undertaken, and what you have accomplished.

**Letters of recommendation.** Many colleges require recommendations from your teachers, high school counselor, and possibly your principal. Colleges are looking for an honest professional opinion of your abilities and personality.

**Essay or writing sample.** Many colleges will ask you to submit an essay or personal statement. Here is your opportunity to put your personality into your application. A well-written essay can tip a decision in your favor. A poorly written one can do the opposite.

**Demonstrated interest.** Going on a college visit, talking with admission officers, or doing an enthusiastic interview can call attention to how much you really want to attend. Applying for an early decision may also make a good impression.

**Class rank.** Colleges that use this factor want to see how much competition you had to face to achieve your rank. However, fewer and fewer colleges are giving class rank much importance. In fact, fewer than half of high schools now track class rank.

## Admission Priorities Vary by Type of College

- Liberal arts colleges, which encourage students to study broadly, may give factors such as essays and demonstrated interest considerable weight.
- Highly selective colleges attract thousands of outstanding students. These colleges typically look to the "moderately important" factors to make their decisions.
- At very large universities, some admission decisions may be made solely based on GPA and test scores.

## College Application Policies

Explained below are the most common application plans students may encounter during the college admissions process. Given the variety of plans and the subtle differences between them, students should read each college's literature carefully.

### **Regular Application Deadline and the Candidate's Reply Date**

Many colleges establish an application deadline by which all applications must be received. All students are then notified of the college's decisions at a uniform response date, typically on or before April 1st.

At most colleges, May 1st is the date by which accepted applicants must indicate their intention to enroll. By use of a common reply date, students may evaluate all notices of admission and financial aid awards before deciding on any one college.

### **Early Decision**

Many colleges offer this plan to applicants who are sure they want to attend the college. This college should clearly be the applicant's first choice. Traditionally, the deadline for early decision applications has been November 1st or 15th. Colleges then render a decision by mid-December. Some colleges also have a second round of early decision (usually in January or February). These later plans have the advantage of giving students more time to think through their decision.

**If accepted under this plan, the student is under strong ethical obligation to attend the college and to withdraw or forego applications to all other colleges. Some colleges exchange lists of students accepted under this program.**

### **Early Action or Early Admission**

This program is similar to early decision, except that, if admitted, the applicant is not ethically obligated to withdraw other applications and has until May 1st to decide.

### **Rolling Admissions**

Under this program a college considers a student's application as soon as all the required credentials have been received. Notification of acceptance or rejection is mailed as soon as a decision is made. Colleges that follow this practice may make their admissions decisions continuously over several months, in contrast to the practice of other colleges who accumulate their applications until a deadline and then announce all their decisions at the same time.

### **Deferred or Delayed Admission**

Most colleges allow an accepted candidate to postpone enrollment in a college, generally for one semester or one year. Talk with your counselor about your plans and how to contact your college of choice.

### **Open Admissions**

An open admissions policy grants acceptance to all high school graduates without regard to additional qualifications.

## The Common Application

The Common Application first came into use in 1975 with only 15 member colleges; the original application was administered by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Today students can use the Common Application to apply to more than 500 member colleges and universities in the United States. Students can use one application to apply to any college within the system, therefore reducing the workload of the application process.

While the Common Application gives admissions officers an extensive look into the background of a student's academic life, it is often hard for a school to get a detailed picture of the student's full character from the application alone. Oftentimes colleges will have requirements in addition to the Common Application. This can range from a few short yes or no questions regarding alumni relations and minority status to full essays pertaining to involvement in student activities and personal thoughts on higher education.

Students are able to fill out the online version of the Common Application only once and submit it to all schools with the same information presented in each application. Students can also choose to fill out the application online and print a PDF version of it to send in by mail.

Students can send variations of the same application with edits to specific schools by using the "copy" feature on the online application. This feature is useful for items such as exam scores. Once the application is submitted to a school it cannot be edited. If a student should need to make edits to the application once it is submitted, they must contact the school directly.

The online Common Application does not allow you the opportunity for lengthy answers to questions—especially essays. Students must make their point and keep their answers brief, but intellectual.

Students must sign up for the Common Application in order to take advantage of the online features. Students can sign up for the application online at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

Colleges that accept the Common Application do so by choice. Schools are required to give equal consideration to students who submit a proprietary application or the Common Application. The Common Application is not offered to schools that do not give equal consideration to both. In addition, the Common Application encourages schools that use it to embrace a holistic approach to admissions.

For a comprehensive guide to using the Common Application, visit their toolkit at: <http://www.commonapp.org/ready> and download their app.



## Parts of the College Application

The pieces of your college application add up to give admission officers an idea of who you are. Not every college requires every one of these elements — for example, some colleges don't ask for admission test scores — but this list shows the most-common requirements. Be sure to contact the college to make sure you include all the components that are required.

**The application form:** To fill in all the blanks on the application form itself, you may have to dig up documents or get answers from your parents. Your resume will come in handy when searching for this information. Most students use online applications, but paper applications are usually available too. For colleges that accept/require it, The Common Application lets you complete one application online and submit it to several colleges. Many private universities will also waive the application fee if a student applies early in the fall as well.

**The application fee:** College application fees vary, but generally it costs from \$35 to \$50 to apply to each college. Fees are nonrefundable. Many colleges offer fee waivers (that is, they don't require the fee) to students who can't afford to pay. If you need application fee waivers, speak with your college counselor.

**Transcripts:** The record of the classes you've taken and your grades is one of the most important parts of your application. To send your transcripts from Valley Christian High School, you need to create an account on Parchment (see pages: 38-41). Once the account is created, the student can then login to request transcripts to be sent to universities, athletic organizations (NCAA, NAIA) and individual emails.

**Test Scores:** Some colleges require or recommend that you send scores from tests such as the SAT or ACT. Colleges accept scores only from the testing organizations themselves. When you register for SAT or ACT testing, you can choose to have scores sent directly to the colleges to which you are applying. Additional scores can be sent after testing by logging onto your account at these sites also. Scores requested to be sent after testing will require a fee. Some universities will "superscore" SAT and/or ACT scores. This means that they will take the highest score on a particular section from any testing and pair it with the highest score of another section from any sitting. The student must check with the admissions office of the college to determine if they superscore.

**Letters of recommendation:** Many colleges require letters of recommendation from teachers or other adults who know you well. Ask your references well in advance of the deadlines to write you a recommendation. You may want to give them a short written summary of your achievements and a copy of your resume to help them write about you. Also be sure to let them where and to what major you are applying. It is also very helpful to provide the recommenders with a self-addressed stamped envelope if the letter is not being sent electronically.

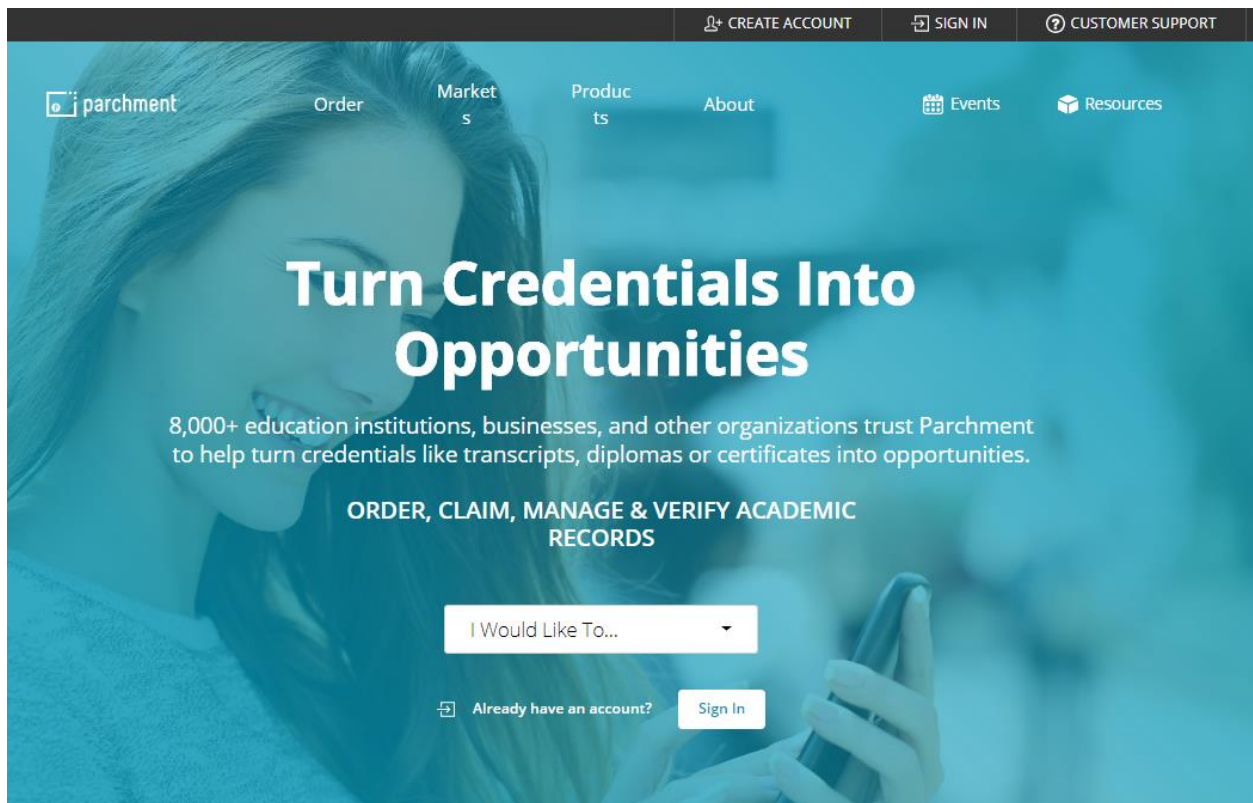
**Essays:** Your essays are a chance for you to give admission officers a better idea of your character and strengths. Remember to proofread your essays carefully before you send them and consider having a teacher review and proofread it as well.

**Auditions and portfolios:** If you're applying to music, art or theater programs, the colleges may want to see samples of your work. This means you may need to audition or send portfolios or videos showing your artistic ability as part of your application.

**Interviews:** It's a good idea to ask for an interview, even if it's not required. It shows you're serious and gives you a chance to connect with someone in the admission office. Even if a college is far away, you may be able to interview with a local alumnus or have an interview online.

## Transcript Requests

It is the student's responsibility to see that deadlines for applications are met and the correct materials are identified to be sent to each college to which they are applying. Valley Christian High School transcripts are ordered by the student through Parchment. Students can access Parchment from Valley Christian High School's website under the student tab. Once they click on Parchment from there, they will see:



Simply click the create account on the top tab and create an account. You must create an account before sending a transcript. Once the account is set up, you only have to login with your username/password and then you are ready to send transcripts. Just be sure that you enter Valley Christian High School (Chandler) when it asks where is the transcript that you want to send.

## Teacher Recommendations and Teacher Recommendation Forms

Although college requirements vary with respect to teacher recommendations, it is suggested that you get two academic teacher references. Colleges prefer recommendations from teachers of courses taken in the junior or senior years. Once you identify those teachers you wish to ask, you should do the following:

1. Provide each teacher with information such as a written summary of activities (a resume), names of colleges to which you are applying, and your personal goals in order to assist the teacher in writing the recommendation.
2. Be sure you allow your teachers two to four weeks to complete your recommendation.
3. If not uploading the recommendation to the Common Application, Be sure to notify the teacher that they will be receiving an email to invite them to upload their recommendation directly to the common application.

If a college application you are completing contains its own Teacher Recommendation Form(s), we suggest the following:

1. Provide each teacher with information such as a written summary of activities (a resume), names of colleges to which you are applying, and your personal goals in order to assist the teacher in writing the recommendation.
2. Fill out the personal information section on the college's teacher form, then give it to the teacher with the materials listed. **If you request the letter before you are sure of which colleges you are applying to, provide those materials to the teacher as soon as possible.**
3. Provide the recommender with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.
4. If the recommender will be asked to submit their letter electronically, be sure to notify the person ahead of time to ensure that he/she will write one and to be alert for the email request, before giving out his/her email address.

### Secondary School Report Forms

If a college application contains a Secondary School Report Form, complete the personal information section on the form and submit it to the Advising Office for return.

## Resumes

Valley Christian High School students can build and save a resume utilizing Naviance.

### **Why do colleges require a resume?**

Sometimes the format of a typical college application does not allow the candidate to highlight his or her strong points. A resume is basically a brief, at-a-glance brag sheet that you can use to draw attention to all of the accomplishments you feel are important to define who you are, but that didn't quite make it into your personal statement.

### **How should the resume be structured?**

Professional resumes will generally lead with work experience and discuss an individual's professional career. Colleges are not interested in you as a worker so much as they are interested in you as a scholar. As such, many of the typical rules for resume structure do not apply to college applicants. In general, following this format will work for you:

- Heading:** Make sure to include a heading on the top that states your name and any other important identifying information such as address, email and telephone number. Many colleges will identify you with your social security number, so putting this information in the heading is helpful. A university may also assign you a special applicant number that can be used in lieu of your social security number.

- Overview:** Take approximately 3 short sentences to write a mini biography about yourself. If you speak more than one language, mention it. If you're the science fair champion four years running, mention it. If you have the highest GPA at your school, mention it. Highlight your strongest features. Imagine yourself as a news reporter that needs to capture the readers' attention in only a few lines. Make the admissions officer want to read more about you. Naturally, anything you include in the overview should also appear in one of the later sections.

- Education:** After the heading, lead with educational information. The name of your high school and its address will go here. Follow that with your GPA. Any sort of academic distinction may be placed here as well. Do not list your academic awards here, however, as those will come later.

- Activities:** Any clubs, programs, community service organizations, sports, or other activities you were a part of during high school should go here. You should try to limit the list to only about 8 entries, so if you have more than that, choose only your most important 8. If you have less than 4, try to think of some organized event you participated in to include. Remember, it does not have to necessarily be a school-sponsored program; activities through your church, community center, or of your own personal drive (bands, etc.) may be included. Each activity should have a short, one sentence description using strong, active verbs. For example, rather than just saying "Band", say, "Marching Band First Trumpet 3 years, performing in 57 school games and in two regional competitions."

- Special Projects:** Something that you did once or twice but that could not necessarily be considered an 'activity' may go here. Participation in a science fair, history day project, one-time volunteer effort, or other special events may be included. Describing the Bible senior project in this section would be appropriate. This category is not vital, so if you cannot think of any special project you participated in, you may omit this section. You should limit your list to 3 entries and provide a bit more detail about each than you would have in the Activities section (about 2-3 short sentences). If you have held a steady job during high school, feel free to add your position here with a few descriptive sentences. You should also change this section's title to something like "Experiences".

- Awards:** Don't limit yourself here. This section can be a simple laundry list (though you should explain any awards that do not have an obvious title) or may include more detailed descriptions depending on the amount

of awards you have received. Feel free to overlap in this section with other sections (for example, you may mention the science fair in Special Projects, and then also mention that you got first place here), but avoid listing too many awards for the same event. Mentioning your placement in each of the three years you went to History Day is fine, but outlining each of your 67 Speech and Debate victories is too much. Remember that many accomplishments may fit in this category even if you never received a trophy, medal, or certificate.

You don't have to limit yourself to just these sections. If you have a special, extraordinary experience that warrants its own section, feel free to include it. Look around on the Internet for other student resumes and see the kinds of things they include for some ideas for what you might want on your own resume.

### **How long can the resume be?**

Don't listen to the old rule that a resume cannot be longer than a single page. Feel free to go up to 2 pages if you need the room. Keep in mind that a resume is more like an outline than an essay; it should not be dense with information, but rather be an easy-to-follow bulleted list. If you simply have too many activities and awards to keep yourself limited to one page, do not cut information out. Instead, expand onto a second page without worry (unless, of course, the application guidelines tell you to use only one page).

Should I include stuff from before high school?

Generally no, unless the activity continued into high school (such as playing in the middle school band and in the high school band). Colleges are generally not interested in your pre-high school experiences.

## **The College Application/Scholarship Essay**

The **college essay** is one part of the application process that gives students the opportunity to inform admissions officials about their special abilities, interests, and qualities, or about any significant factors that might set them apart from a large number of qualified applicants. As many colleges begin to doubt the usefulness of standardized test scores, college essays are being given more weight than ever in the admissions process. While a superb essay will not cancel out a poor high school record, a well-written essay can make a student with a good record stand out from the other applicants. Even if the application does not require an essay for admission, most scholarship applications will require one.

Colleges that ask students to write essays really do want to know the person behind the numbers. A good essay can present the student as an interesting and valuable person who is worth knowing, who is genuine, thoughtful, engaging, and able to handle what he or she has set out to do. An essay can also comment on any setbacks the student has suffered or explain any gaps in the academic record. Universities are looking for what makes this student unique and how the student can uniquely contribute to the institution and student body.

In general, essays are evaluated on three basic criteria:

**The student's ability to use standard written English** that is correctly written, punctuated, and contains correct grammar, usage, and syntax.

**The content, substance, and depth of insight** which reflects the student's ability to think about him/herself and to convey authentic feelings or opinions about a topic.

**Creativity and originality** which shows an individual who would bring qualities such as **intellect**, initiative, energy, and a fresh viewpoint to the college community.

Students writing college essays would do well to **avoid the following**:

Inflating experiences, trying too hard to impress, or adopting a pompous or overly intellectual tone.

Expressions of anger or hostility toward others.

Mere repetition of information that is available elsewhere in the application.

Undue influence by parents or other adults in the writing of the essay. The voice of an adult can easily come through an essay too strongly and drown out the authentic voice of the student writer.

General statements and clichés that make the essay unremarkable from hundreds of similar essays which admissions officials read. Telling details and specifics make the essay "live."

Being overcautious or too eager to please the admissions committee. A mediocre essay won't hurt the applicant much, but a truly good one can help immensely.

## Examples of College Admission/Scholarship Essay Questions

The questions below are typical examples of those which frequently appear in college applications and/or scholarship applications:

1. Describe your most significant personal experience. Why was it significant and how has it influenced you?
2. Identify and discuss a significant problem facing your generation.
3. What have you read that has a special significance for you? Explain why.
4. Describe a person or experience of particular importance to you.
5. Please describe the reasons that influenced you in selecting your intended field of study.
6. If you could travel through time and interview a prominent figure in the arts, politics, religion, or science, for example, whom would you choose and why?
7. Describe your experience in living in a racially, culturally, or ethnically diverse environment; what do you expect to need to know to live successfully in the multicultural society in the future?
8. Make up a question, state it clearly, and answer it. Feel free to use your imagination, recognizing that those who read it will not mind being entertained.
9. Please use the space provided to indicate what you consider your best qualities to be, and describe how your college education will be of assistance to you in sharing these qualities and accomplishments with others.
10. Please describe why you want to attend x university and how you feel you can contribute uniquely to the institution.

## Ten Tips for Writing a College Application/Scholarship Essay

1. Realize that **what** you write and **how** you write are being evaluated. While the essay's content is important, you should also spend a great deal of time discussing your writing skills irrespective of the topic. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation matter.
2. Don't be aimless. Tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end.
3. The admission's application gives a great deal of information. Your essay should add something new that can't already be found in the file; or at least takes something in your application and gives it more context.
4. Great topics for a personal essay: afterschool jobs, travel, volunteering, quirky hobbies, and experiences that made you learn something new about yourself.
5. Rarely is an essay about run ins with the law, breaking school rules, or being mean to other people a good idea. Even if by the end of the essay you make a life changing revelation, you have already put a negative idea in our head and that's tough to shake.
6. Have one idea and work it. Don't try to pack too much information into 500 ish words.
7. Your essay should not be one long excuse for academic issues. If you have a rough academic record, quickly tell what happened and then explain why things are changing. Tell the solution, not just the problem.
8. If you are a recruited athlete, don't write about your sport. Use the essay to show something different about your character. Write about your love of poetry or why the Girl Scouts have changed your life.
9. The personal essay is your opportunity to inject your voice into the admissions process (assuming you can't interview). Make it count and do your best to convey your personality.
10. Remember the essay is just one part of the application. Rarely will it make or break your chances of admissions. It's the essay in the context of your academic record that is principally debated in committee. Essays for scholarship and/or honors college consideration carry more weight in the decision process and can impact the outcome greatly.



## College Admission/Scholarship Interviews

**Evaluative interviews** are those for which notes taken during an interview become part of the evaluation of your application.

**Informational interviews** allow students to ask questions about the college, but the conversation never becomes a formal part of the admission process.

**Alumni interviews** can either be evaluative or informational. These interviews enable students to interview with alumni near their home town. It is important that students remember that the alum's experience of the college may be very different than what the university offers currently.

### Why do colleges offer interviews?

If you prepare well, interviews can be a very positive experience. It allows the admission reviewer to know you beyond your transcript, and it allows you to know the college better. When possible, interview with an admissions counselor and always interview on campus, in a public place, or at Valley Christian High School.

### How should I prepare?

Know yourself, know the college, and know what to ask and what may be asked of you. See list of sample questions on pages 50-51. Colleges anticipate a certain level of nervousness, but try to relax and be yourself.

Arrive at the interview fifteen minutes before the scheduled appointment.

Talk to your peers who have experienced the interview-process to gain valuable tips. College Counselors, Guidance Counselors, and family members can also help you prepare. Bring a copy of your unofficial transcript and resume. Dress professionally and be sure to maintain appropriate eye contact.

Be yourself! There are very few wrong answers - college representatives want to see how you think on your feet and want to see your personality come through. Remember, though, that interviewers are not your friends, so use appropriate language and manners at all times.

### Who will be my interviewer?

You will usually meet with an admissions officer, but it may be a student, alum or professional interviewer. Treat each with respect - whether it is the Director of Admission or a student. Be relaxed, but don't be too informal, even if you are meeting with a student.

### What do I do when I get to the interview site?

Check in with the receptionist yourself (do not have a sibling or parent do so). Wait to be called. Meet the interviewer with a firm handshake and introduce your parents. Be prepared for an interview that could last as little as fifteen minutes and as long as an hour. Parents are usually asked to wait outside but may have an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions.

### How should I answer questions?

There are no "right" answers - be honest and positive. THINK before answering, take your time-listen carefully. Speak confidently without boasting. Phrase your comments in terms of accomplishments that mean the most to you. Also be willing to initiate conversation about your achievements if the interviewer fails to do so. Be an advocate for yourself. If you know that the school is a reach school or if you have determined a weakness in your application, talk honestly and frame your conversation in a positive light. Watch your language and avoid using too much slang. Use your best vocabulary while still sounding like yourself. Know that colleges are hoping to find a good fit in you - they want you to succeed!

**What do I say when they ask me if I have questions for them?**

This is a very important part of the interview. It will indicate to the interviewer how much time and preparation you have put into the college selection process. Don't ask what is already stated in the literature, unless you need clarification. Ask questions that allow you to bring up your accomplishments/talents.

**What do I do when the interview is over?**

Thank the interviewer and ask for his/her business card.

Send a thank you note to the interviewer - it can be typed or hand-written.

## **What Questions Might You Be Asked During An Interview?**

Anticipating what questions might be asked during a college interview and being prepared to answer them is highly recommended. Always be prepared to answer the "WHY" that goes with each of these questions.

How are you unique?

What do you do best?

What is the last book you read?

Who is your favorite author?

Who is your favorite character?

Who is your favorite teacher?

What person has influenced you the most?

What event has influenced you the most?

What makes you who you are?

What are your best traits?

What are your faults?

What is your family like?

Tell me about yourself.

Why do you want to go to college?

What made you select this particular College or University?

What do you think you will add to University XYZ?

What do you consider to be your greatest asset?

What do you consider to be your greatest fault?

What are you looking for in an education at our school?

To which other colleges are you applying?

What books NOT required by the school have you read recently?

Where do you picture yourself ten years from now?

What television shows do you watch?

What magazines and/or newspapers do you read regularly?

How do you spend a typical afternoon after school? A typical evening, weekend?

Do you have any heroes, contemporary or historical?

What have you liked, and what have you disliked about high school?

We have your application, your transcript, your test scores and recommendations. What else do you want us to know about you?

Describe your school.

What have you liked/disliked about your school?

What has been your most/least favorite academic subject and why?

How would your best friend/favorite teacher/parent describe you?

What are your strengths?

What would you like to improve about yourself?

What majors are you considering at this point?

What has led to that interest?

What courses are you taking in your senior year and why?

What other colleges are you considering and why?

What are you looking for in a college and why?

How did you become interested in our university?

What activity has meant the most to you during high school and why?

What issues in the news do you care about?

What significant contribution have you made to your school/community?

What can you contribute to our university?

## **Service Academies and ROTC**

If you are considering attending a Service Academy, speak with your College Counselor, family, and teachers to get a full understanding of the commitment it requires. Be sure that a Service Academy is a good fit for you personally, academically, physically, and vocationally. Every fall, valley will post information sessions for students and families considering academies held in the community by the various armed services. Be sure to check the guidance page for notifications.

### **Application Process**

You must receive a nomination from your senator or congressperson. Also, an evaluation of academic credentials, personal character and physical examination are considered in the application review. Consider taking the SAT/ACT plus Writing early in the second semester of your junior year. The application is extensive and it is essential that you meet with your College Counselor early in your junior year to begin the process.

### **Academic Programs**

Math, engineering, and the physical sciences continue to be strong at the Service Academies. Consider applying for summer programs at the academy of your choice in December or January of your junior year in order to better explore the option of attending a Service Academy.

### **Obligations**

The Service Academy requires a change in lifestyle. It is very different from the traditional undergraduate experience. Investigate and comprehend the magnitude of the change and whether you are ready to fully embrace it on a daily basis. As a Service Academy graduate, you are obligated to give at least six years of military service in return for your free education. Determine whether this obligation is reasonable to you.

### **Starting the Application Process**

Request and submit a pre-candidate questionnaire during your junior year. You may obtain a Questionnaire from one of the service academies or a senator or congressperson. Meet with your College Counselor and indicate your interest. Listed below are the addresses for the Service Academies:

Candidate Guidance Office United States Naval Academy

117 Decatur Road

Annapolis, MD 21402-5018

(410) 293-4361

[www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu)

U.S. Military Academy Director of Admissions

West Point, NY 10996 (845) 938-4041

[www.usma.edu](http://www.usma.edu)

U.S. Air Force Academy Director of Admissions USAF Academy

Colorado Springs, CO 80840 (800) 443-9266

[www.usafa.edu](http://www.usafa.edu)

## Nomination Process

You must be nominated in order to apply to a service academy. Write to each of your senators and your congressperson to ask if they would consider you as one of their nominees. The letter must include the following information: your name, address, phone number, date of birth, Social Security number, secondary school, year of graduation, name of your parents, and your first, second, third and fourth choices for academies. In turn, the senator or congressperson will contact you by letter with instructions on what to do next. The U.S. Coast Guard does not require a nomination by a senator or congressperson, although the evaluation process does use the same selection criteria as the other Service Academies.

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Director of Admissions

15 Mohegan Avenue

New London, CT 06320 (800) 883-8724

[www.uscga.edu](http://www.uscga.edu)

### **Complete Service Academy Application**

Write to the individual service academy for an application.

### **Complete Fitness Exam**

You will be sent information about how to complete your physical examination upon initial inquiry.

### **ROTC Scholarships**

You must begin this process by the end of your junior year. If you are interested in a ROTC scholarship, contact the Navy ROTC, Army ROTC, and/or Air Force ROTC at the following telephone numbers for more information. You might also consider meeting with local ROTC personnel at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, Grand Canyon University, or Northern Arizona University to get a better understanding of the commitment ROTC programs require.

Navy –ROTC (800) USA-NAVY

Army ROTC (800) USA-ROTC

Air Force ROTC (866) 423-7682

Marine ROTC (800) MARINES

ROTC will provide a booklet that indicates what majors at particular colleges/universities they will sponsor. Upon graduation from college with a ROTC scholarship, you will be responsible to serve in the military for up to eight years (active duty and/or Reserves).

## Athletics and the NCAA

If you are considering, even remotely, in competing in college level athletics, it is important that you follow the guidelines set forth by the NCAA. Every year, there are a few students who earn Division I athletic scholarships. However, there are also many opportunities to compete at either the Division II or Division III levels. Keep your options open and do your research. It is important that you find a school that is the right fit for you academically, personally, and athletically. Although most colleges and universities are part of the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association), there are a handful of smaller athletic conferences.

### Timeline

For many student-athletes, the admission timeline may be accelerated, as coaches start their recruiting early. Coaches may request unofficial transcripts as early as your sophomore year of high school.

Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at <https://webl.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common> the summer after sophomore year. Part of this process is providing the NCAA Clearinghouse with official transcripts. You will need to print out forms at the end of your on-line registration to bring to your College Counselor. You will also need to send official test scores. To compete at the Division I level, students are required to have at least 16 core classes on their transcripts. If you are concerned about your transcript, please see your College Counselor before you begin your senior year.

Some athletes being recruited by Division I athletic programs might be encouraged to "sign" with a college early in the senior year. This signed "letter of intent" serves as a binding agreement between the student athlete and the university, similar to that of an Early Decision agreement. Students need to be sure that the college, as well as the athletic program, is the best fit for them before signing.

### Interest from College Coaches

The relationship between coaches and student athletes is often very positive. In some cases, though, college coaches make strong statements that lead a student to believe that they have a guaranteed place on an athletic roster and that they will be admitted to the university. Although coaches often play a vital role in admission decisions, it is important to maintain proper perspective and realize that the interest of the coach may waiver based on the status of other recruits. Ultimately, all admission decisions rest with the admission committee.

It is always advised that students identify a few back-up schools to apply to, even if a coach convinces you that an offer of admission to a particular school is a "sure thing".

### Tips

If you are determined to play college level sports and are currently an athlete at Valley Christian High School, you are encouraged to explore options of college-level play. However, knowing that a limited amount of scholarships are offered, you need to be open to exploring any division at any school in the country-not just the "big name" schools.

Ask your coach for help/guidance with the college recruiting process. They may have direct contact with college coaches and can provide you with options and advice. Your coach may also be able to provide you with an honest assessment of your potential to participate in college athletics.

Check college websites for online inquiry forms, contact information, as well as team and roster data. Compile a resume of your athletic and academic accomplishments.

Send your resume and a letter of inquiry to the coaches at the colleges in which you are interested. Coaches are impressed when you take initiative! Consider strongly in recording your games/matches and sending copies to the coaches.

Utilize [www.ncaastudent.org](http://www.ncaastudent.org) and <https://webl.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common> as references. These websites provide essential information on college athletics, including division requirements.

Follow the rules set forth by the NCAA on high school athletic recruiting.

When visiting a college campus, meet with both the coach and members of the team. After all, if you choose to go there, you will be spending a great deal of time with them, whether you are playing Division I, II, or III.



## **Before Registering with the NCAA and NAIA**

Many high school athletes are under the impression that registering with the NCAA or NAIA eligibility center early will get them recruited to play college sports. Unfortunately, this is not the case. High school athletes will need to put in a lot more effort in getting recruited besides meeting initial eligibility.

Valley Christian High School's website contains comprehensive information on the NCAA and NAIA. To find this information, go to the athletics tab and choose college recruiting.

For Information about Registering with either the NCAA or the NAIA eligibility centers, please visit the following site: <http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/ncaa-eligibility-center.htm> Registering is a process in which potential student-athletes must go through in order to be ELIGIBLE to participate in college sports at those levels. The NCAA, NAIA and individual college institutions want to make sure their future student-athletes have what it takes to play at the college level and to meet academic standards at or above the rest of the student body population.

### **Why you need to be eligible**

The NCAA, NAIA and individual colleges require athletes to continue meeting eligibility requirements throughout their college career. Keep in mind student-athletes are students first and athletes second. College student-athletes will be required to work on meeting their degree requirement's each semester. Athletes must be able to perform in the classroom along with on the court in order to keep their athletic scholarship and remain eligible to continuing playing on the team.

Why you will not need to register with the eligibility center:

Student-athletes often hear from their current coaches or a friend-of-a-friend who tells them; in order to play college sports you need to register with the clearinghouse/eligibility center. This is true if you are planning to play at the NCAA division I or NCAA division II level; however there are more college levels available to student-athletes looking to compete. Other college levels such as NCAA division III and NJCAA (junior colleges) do not require athletes to register with an eligibility center. The NAIA also has its own eligibility center where athletes must register in order to compete at that level. Be sure you know which organization the college is affiliated with and register with it/both (NCAA/NAIA).

Why you will not get recruited once you meet initial eligibility:

Because the NAIA and NCAA (division I and division II) levels offer student-athletes funding in terms of athletic scholarships they need to ensure student-athletes are prepared for college both academically and athletically. The eligibility process assists college coaches by making sure athletes they are interested in; meet general requirements to play at the college level.

Athletes need to be aware of what it means to register with the NAIA and NCAA eligibility center:

Registering with the NAIA or NCAA eligibility center does not mean an athlete's information will automatically be viewed by college coaches. College coaches do not even access potential student-athletes information until they are serious about recruiting them. Thousands of students each year register with the NCAA eligibility and their information is never fully processed because college coaches are not interested in recruiting them; most likely because coaches do not know anything about the player.

### **The NAIA eligibility center has some extra options:**

During the eligibility process for the NAIA there are added options, where potential student-athletes will be able to send their sports resume and eligibility registration to 5 NAIA coaches they choose. This is a great tool which may spark conversations between athletes and coaches. It's not recommended for athletes to rely solely on this type of communication, but it can help with the recruiting process.

For more information on College sports scholarship and recruiting tips and insights, visit: <http://www.athletic-scholarships.net/>

What Makes A Student-Athlete Athletically Ineligible With The NCAA?

### **Keeping Your Amateur Status:**

When trying to figure out what you need to do to be eligible to play for a D1 or D2 school you need to take a lot of your past and present into consideration. Of course you have academics and your grades but another thing that you need to be aware of is your amateur status.

### **Stay Out of Hot Water:**

Receiving money, goods or services while an athlete can get you into a lot of hot water with the NCAA. All student-athletes playing in the NCAA need to be certified as an amateur athlete. Whether you are a domestic or international athlete you still need to abide by the NCAA amateur requirements.

### **Your Athletic History:**

In order to check your amateur status you will have to fill out an online questionnaire that asks questions about your past athletic history. The questionnaire will cover topics like:

- Contracts with professional teams
- Salary for participating in athletics
- Prize money
- Playing with professionals
- Tryouts, practice or competition with a professional team
- Benefits from an agent or prospective agent
- Agreement to be represented by an agent
- Any delay in initial full-time collegiate enrollment to participate in organized sports competition

### **Don't Let Your Guard Down**

These may seem like very simple things to stay away from but most athletes don't get in trouble as a high-school player—it is most often when they are being recruited or already in college when these rules come to bite them. Many student-athletes let their guard down since they are already in college and playing for a school, but the NCAA rules apply to you during your entire tenure there, not just before you get there.

## **A Common Trap**

Becoming a college athlete will bring some notoriety, especially if you play a revenue sport for a big school. Some local business will want to give you discounts or perks if you are an athlete—they think they are doing you a favor or being nice.

Even though it is done out of kindness, the NCAA won't look at it that way so make sure you stay clear of any perks you receive for your "athlete status". There have been many business, athletic programs and athletes that have been penalized for special treatment.

It's hard to keep track of your athletic performance, grades and all the social obstacles out there. Keep your head on straight, ask for guidance from a trusted adult, and you should be just fine.

For Help in building your recruiting profile, to connect with more than 35,000 college coaches and to see where you stand with college coaches, visit the following web sites:

For Students: <http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/athletesform.htm>

For Parents: <http://www.collegesportsscholarships.com/parentsform.htm>

## Fine Arts

### Juniors

Make time to communicate with your College Counselor, your arts teachers and your parents about your interest in continuing your involvement in the arts, your goals and your plans.

Research types of degrees and programs available at specific schools. Ask lots of questions such as: Does the visual art program have a concentration in your desired media? Can you participate in the program without majoring? Is the program's acceptance based on auditions or academics, or both?

With your College Counselor, teachers and parents, create a list of targeted colleges/programs and/or professors and their addresses and emails.

Begin work on your resume. Present your history, including all information related to your art. For example, camps attended, private lessons, curricular and co-curricular activities, repertoire list, exhibition summary, accomplishments and awards, if any. Be sure to record your teachers' and private instructors' names and email addresses. Have your teachers look over your resume to get their suggestions on presentation and what should be included.

Write generic letters of interest to the colleges on your list, asking for information. Include your resume. Be ready to provide additional information upon request.

If possible, visit the schools you are most interested in and talk with the teachers there. Try to schedule a lesson or a class visit before you go.

Depending on what type of degree you are pursuing and which schools you will be applying to, you may need to have a DVD or CD made, create a portfolio, or obtain a head shot.

If you will be producing a DVD or CD, have a parent or friend videotape or record the shows, concerts, contests, and recitals you are in, including your original choreography, if applicable.

At the end of your junior year, register for the Young Arts program of the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts and begin preparing your submission.

### Seniors

Early in your senior year submit your materials to the Young Arts program of the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, if you are seeking this recognition.

If you are asking your arts teachers to write recommendations, please make your requests early in the year.

Keep communicating with your College Counselor, your arts teachers and your parents about your plans, especially if they change.

Keep an open dialogue with the colleges in which you continue to have an interest.

Update your resume, DVD, CD or portfolio as needed.

Many students pursuing an arts degree will be required to complete the Arts Supplement to the admissions application. This is where your DVD, CD, or portfolio will come in handy. Other applicants may choose to submit the Arts Supplement (even though it is optional for their school's admissions process) in order to provide a more complete profile of the student.

Investigate deadlines of school conservatories. Sometimes these deadlines are earlier than the regular application deadlines.

Schedule auditions/portfolio reviews, if required by your targeted schools' admissions offices. Most auditions take place from January to March of your senior year.

Be sure to apply to some schools in which you are a strong candidate regardless of your visual and/or performing arts interests.

Schedule extra time to work with teachers and/or private instructors as needed for audition and portfolio preparations.

## Information for Students with Learning Differences

Students with identified learning differences may want to investigate the programs and services that are specifically designed to meet their post-secondary educational needs. Within a four-year college there are often special support services necessary for the student to succeed in regular classes. These programs also frequently provide non-credit courses which help the student identify her or his learning style and develop appropriate compensatory skills. There is often a separate admissions process to enter a Learning Differences program.

Even in colleges with programs for those with learning differences, individuals without learning differences may take advantage of tutorial or other support services. Students with documented learning differences may request appropriate modifications such as extended time testing and taping of lectures.

As students explore post-secondary options, they should raise questions about the availability of support services, the presence of trained learning specialists, and the provision for classroom modification, if necessary. In most instances, students should indicate in the application process the nature of the learning services they have received in high school, and the nature of accommodations that will be necessary in college, if any. If the school has a special learning support program, the student should also be in contact with the director of that program during the admissions process. Colleges that have a program for students with learning differences frequently require professional assessments that document and identify the specific learning disability of the student who is applying.

**Students with documented hearing, learning, physical or visual differences which might impact their performance on college entrance examinations may be able to receive special accommodations for testing.** These accommodations, for eligible students only, can include additional time to take the tests, large type test booklets and answers sheets, a sign-language interpreter or a reader. These accommodations are available during specific periods of the academic year and do not cover all regularly scheduled test dates.

To be eligible for these special accommodations a student needs to either have an Individualized Educational Plan that identifies the need for these testing conditions, a "504 Plan" in force, or documentation which provides independent verification of the existence and nature of the difference signed by an appropriate licensed or certified professional. In either case, to qualify for modifications, a student also needs to be currently receiving ***in school*** those modifications for instruction and assessment that they would receive on the tests. The SAT and/or ACT companies will review all materials and determine which, if any, accommodations they will allow. Information about non-standard admissions testing is available from the Guidance Office. Registration deadlines apply to non-standardized testing

# Tasks for 12th Grade

## TWELFTH GRADE

12th grade is the time to apply for admission to college and then to apply for **federal student aid** by filling out the **FAFSA**<sup>SM</sup> which is available starting October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Here's what students and parents should be doing throughout the year to stay on track at this busy time—including learning how to manage federal student aid.

### Students

To Do:

All Year

- Work hard all year—second-semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/grants-scholarships/finding-scholarships>.
- Stay involved in after-school activities, and seek leadership roles if possible.
- Continue to utilize Naviance provided by Valley Christian High School.

Fall

- Starting in the fall of 2016, parents will now be allowed to submit the FAFSA in October, using their tax return information from two years prior. Complete and submit your *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), along with any other financial aid applications your school(s) of choice may require. You can complete the FAFSA online or on paper, but completing the application online is faster and easier. You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa>
- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements and to be sure you are on track for admission. The guidance counselor meets with all seniors starting the second week of school.
- If you haven't done so already, register for and take the standardized required for college admission tests (see pages: 36-37 for dates). Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/tests>
- Apply to the colleges you have chosen <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/applying>. Prepare your applications carefully. Follow the instructions, and PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!
- Well before your application deadlines, ask your counselor and teachers to submit required documents (e.g., transcript, letters of recommendation) to the colleges to which you're applying.
- Complete the CSS financial aid profile if the college(s) you are applying to require it. <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

Winter

- Encourage your parent(s) to complete income tax forms early. <http://www.irs.gov/Forms-&-Pubs>. If your parent(s) has (have) not completed tax forms, you can provide estimated information on your **federal student aid** application, but remember to make any necessary changes later.
- If you have not already done so, complete and submit your *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), along with any other financial aid applications your school(s) of choice may require. You can complete the FAFSA online or on paper, but completing the application online is faster and easier. You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa>
- After you submit the FAFSA, you should receive your *Student Aid Report* (SAR) within three days to three weeks. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/student-aid-report>. Quickly make any necessary



corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/correct-updates>.

- Complete any last scholarship applications.

#### Spring

- Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll.
- Review your college acceptances and compare the colleges' financial aid offers <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/next-steps/comparing-aid-offers>.
- Contact a school's financial aid office if you have questions about the aid that school has offered you. In fact, getting to know your financial aid staff early is a good idea no matter what—they can tell you about deadlines, other aid for which you might wish to apply, and important paperwork you might need to submit.
- When you decide which school you want to attend, notify that school of your commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Many schools require this notification and deposit by May 1.
- If you applied on time, you will hear of financial aid packets/awards in April.

#### To Explore:

- Refer to *Funding Your Education: The Guide to Federal Student Aid* for information about financial aid as you work through the FAFSA process <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2012-13-funding-your-education.pdf>
- Make informed decisions about student loans; the following resources are important at this point:
  - Federal Versus Private Loans <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/loans/federal-vs-private>
  - *Your Federal Student Loans: Learn the Basics and Manage Your Debt*, especially the sections headed "PREPARE" (including "How are federal student loans different from private loans?") and "RECEIVE" [https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans\\_0.pdf](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans_0.pdf)

REMEMBER: Register for all tests in advance and be sure to give yourself time to prepare appropriately! If you have difficulty paying a registration fee, see your school counselor about getting a fee waiver.

#### Parents

##### To Do:

- Work with your child on filling out the FAFSA <https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out>.

##### To Explore:

- Make sure your child's personal information is safe when he or she applies for financial aid. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/scams#save-your-identity>. For tips, read "Student Aid and Identity Theft." <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/student-aid-and-identity-theft.pdf>
- Read *IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education*, to see how you might benefit from federal income tax credits for education expenses. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/student-aid-and-identity-theft.pdf>
- Understand the benefits of federal student loans. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/types/loans/federal-vs-privates>.
- Help your child learn about the responsibilities involved in accepting a student loan by reviewing *Your Federal Student Loans: Learn the Basics and Manage Your Deb*. [https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans\\_0.pdf](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/your-federal-student-loans_0.pdf)
- Look at communications from schools to which your child sent FAFSA information. If a school has offered Direct PLUS Loans, the *Direct Loan Basics for Parents* brochure might be useful to you. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/direct-loan-basics-parents.pdf>

**Ready, Set...PAY!**

## Financial Aid Glossary

**Award Letter:** A document notifying admitted students of the financial aid being offered by the college. The award letter provides information on the types and amounts of aid offered, as well as the student's responsibilities and the conditions governing the awards.

**Cost of Attendance:** The combined expenses of attending college, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and living expenses. The cost of attendance is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's need for financial aid.

**Net Price:** Net price is what undergraduate students pay after grants and scholarships (financial aid the student does not have to pay back). Colleges provide net price information on their websites and also offer net price calculators for students.

**CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE:** a Web-based financial aid application provided by the College Board and used by some colleges and private scholarship programs to award their private financial aid funds.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** The form that must be completed by everyone applying for federal financial aid. It can be completed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

**Financial aid package:** The total financial aid offered to a student by a college, including all loans, grants, Scholarships and work-study opportunities.

**Financial Need:** The difference between the total cost of attending a college and a student's expected family contribution (EFC).

**Grant:** A monetary aid award given to a student that does not have to be paid back. The terms "grant" and "scholarship" are often used interchangeably, but grants tend to be awarded solely on the basis of financial need while scholarships may require the student to demonstrate merit.

**Independent student:** Students that are either age 24 or older, married, a veteran, an orphan, or have legal dependents. Independent students do not need to provide parental information to be considered for federal financial aid programs. However, private institutions may require independent students to provide parental information in order to be considered for nonfederal funding.

**Merit aid:** Financial aid awarded on the basis of academic qualifications, artistic or athletic talent, leadership qualities, or similar attributes. Most merit aid comes in the form of scholarships. The student does not repay Merit aid.

**Need-based aid:** Financial aid given to students who have demonstrated financial need calculated by subtracting the student's expected family contribution from a college's total cost of attendance

**Subsidized loan:** A need based loan where the entity awarding the loan pays the borrower's interest-while he or she is in college at least half-time, thereby subsidizing the loan.

**Work-Study:** An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education and internships) or simply a means of paying for college

## Financial Aid: Sources and Programs

Financial aid programs are designed to assist those who, without such assistance, would be unable to meet the costs of a post-secondary education. Financial aid comes from several different sources: The federal and state government, colleges and universities, local private organizations and scholarship programs, and banks.

In general, eligibility for financial aid is based on need. Some financial assistance is awarded not on the basis of need, but for scholastic excellence, athletics, or other specialized talents. Much of the financial aid awarded, however, is need-based. Need will vary from college to college according to the cost of attending the school and how much the student/family is expected to contribute to the student's education. Need is not one set dollar amount.

The family's Expected Financial Contribution (**EFC**) is an amount determined by a formula established by Congress that indicates how much of a student's family's financial resources should be available to pay for school. Student/family financial information is collected in two ways:

1. The CSS (College Scholarship Service) Financial Aid **PROFILE** form
2. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**)

While the **FAFSA** is used to apply for most federal and state aid, the **PROFILE** is the form used by many private institutions to dispense their own funds. The Profile is operated by College Board and can be found at <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>. Colleges may also require students to fill out financial aid forms specific to their given institution. In determining the financial aid package, private colleges are not bound by the analysis of need presented in the FAFSA.

A student eligible for aid will likely be offered a financial aid package composed of the following components: self-aid (loans and work study), and gift aid (grants and scholarships which do not have to be repaid). Some schools vary the proportion of each kind of aid based on the student's academic performance or other factors.

To calculate need-based aid from the federal government, subtract the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the cost of attendance. To calculate the non-need based aid from the federal government, subtract financial aid awarded so far (This includes aid from all sources, such as the school, private scholarships, etc.) from the cost of attendance.

Some common financial aid programs and resources are listed below. The amounts of each program may vary from year to year depending on federal funding for financial aid.

Financial aid is money to help pay for college or career school. Aid can come from

- the [U.S. federal government](#),

Aid and Other Resources from the Federal Government

The federal government offers a number of financial aid programs. Besides aid from the U.S. Department of Education (discussed below), you also might get

- [aid for serving in the military or for being the spouse or child of a veteran](#),
- [tax benefits for education](#),
- [Education Award for community service with AmeriCorps](#),
- [Educational and Training Vouchers for current and former foster care youth](#), and/or

- scholarships and loan repayment through the Department of Health and Human Services' [Indian Health Service](#), [National Institutes of Health](#), and [National Health Service Corps](#).

The U.S. Department of Education awards about \$150 billion a year in grants, work-study funds, and low-interest loans to more than 15 million students. *Federal student aid* covers such expenses as tuition and fees, *room and board*, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid also can help pay for other related expenses, such as a computer and dependent care. Thousands of schools across the country participate in the *federal student aid programs*; ask the schools you're interested in whether they do!

Federal student aid includes:

- **Grants**—financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund)

A *Federal Pell Grant*, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Federal Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. (In some cases, however, a student enrolled in a *postbaccalaureate teacher certification program* might receive a Federal Pell Grant.) You are not eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant [if you are incarcerated](#) in a federal or state penal institution or are subject to an involuntary civil commitment upon completion of a period of incarceration for a forcible or nonforcible sexual offense.

A *Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)* is a grant for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need. To get an FSEOG, you must fill out the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#) so your college can determine how much financial need you have. Students who will receive [Federal Pell Grants](#) and have the most financial need will receive FSEOGs first. The FSEOG does not need to be repaid.

A *Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH)* Grant is different from other federal student grants because it requires you to take certain kinds of classes in order to get the grant, and then do a certain kind of job to keep the grant from turning into a loan.

Like other federal grants, *Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants* provide money to college or career school students to help pay their education expenses. However, Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants have special eligibility criteria

- **Loans**—borrowed money for college or career school; you must repay your loans, with interest

The U.S. Department of Education has two federal student loan programs:

The *William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan)* Program is the largest federal student loan program. Under this program, the U.S. Department of Education is your lender. There are four types of Direct Loans available:

*Direct Subsidized Loans* are loans made to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need to help cover the costs of higher education at a college or career school.

*Direct Unsubsidized Loans* are loans made to eligible undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, but in this case, the student does not have to demonstrate financial need to be eligible for the loan.

*Direct PLUS Loans* are loans made to graduate or professional students and parents of dependent undergraduate students to help pay for education expenses not covered by other financial aid.

*Direct Consolidation Loans* allow you to combine all of your eligible federal student loans into a single loan with a single loan servicer.

*The Federal Perkins Loan Program* is a school-based loan program for undergraduates and graduate students with exceptional financial need. Under this program, the school is lender

- [Work-Study](#)—a work program through which you earn money to help you pay for school

*Federal Work-Study* provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with *financial need*, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study.

- Use [FAFSA4caster](#) to get an estimate of how much aid you might receive from the U.S. Department of Education.

Apply for federal student aid using the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#). And remember, the first F in "FAFSA" stands for "free"—[you shouldn't pay to fill out the FAFSA!](#)

- the [state where you live](#),

Even if you're not eligible for federal aid, you might be eligible for financial aid from your state. Contact your [state grant agency](#) for more information.

- the [college you attend](#),

Many colleges offer financial aid from their own funds. Find out what might be available to you:

Visit your school's financial aid page on its website, or ask someone in the financial aid office.

Ask at the department that offers your course of study; they might have a scholarship for students in your major.

Fill out any applications the school requires for its own aid, and meet the deadlines.

- a [nonprofit or private organization](#)

There are thousands of scholarships, from all kinds of organizations, and they're not hard to find. You might be able to get a *scholarship* for being a good student, a great basketball player, or a member of a certain church, or because your parent works for a particular company, or for some other reason. Find out more about [finding and applying for scholarships](#). You'll also want to be careful and [avoid scholarship scams](#).

Besides financial aid, you also should think about what you can do to [lower your costs when you go to college](#).

## Financial Aid Checklist for Students and Parents

## For you and your parents or guardian

- If you are in doubt as to whether or not to apply for aid, apply! Even if you don't think you are eligible for various financial aid, be sure to apply anyway because universities will use this information in their determination of awards also.
- Obtain a social security number if you do not have one.
- Do not wait for college acceptance letters before filing for aid. File, starting in October of senior year—the earlier, the better. You do not have to have completed your tax returns prior to filling out the FAFSA or the PROFILE. An estimate of income is adequate.
- Fill the FAFSA out online. Get worksheets to fill out prior to filing the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Filing online is much faster than by mail, and the website has prompts that help you avoid making mistakes. You will need a PIN, or electronic password, before completing the form—available at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Get your PIN well in advance of your deadline because it must be assigned and emailed back to you before you can begin.
- If you are applying to colleges that require CSS/PROFILE, try to file that form in late November or early December—as soon as you know the colleges to which you plan to apply. If you are applying under an early decision plan, complete your PROFILE in October or early November.
- Income tax forms should be filed as soon as possible (preferably in January) in order to provide accurate date on financial aid forms. Some colleges have early February deadlines.
- Inform each college about your interest in applying for aid. Make a list of the financial aid priority dates and deadlines at the colleges to which you are applying. Ask each college if it requires supplemental forms, and obtain them as needed.
- Apply for federal and state funds by completing the appropriate questions of the FAFSA.
- Check for scholarships for which you might be eligible.
  - Each college/postsecondary institution (your best source)
  - Those posted on the Valley Christian High School website
  - Local and state scholarships
  - Scholarships offered through parents' place of employment
  - Through websites such as:
    - CollegeBoard: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>
    - CollegeNET: <https://www.collegenet.com/elect/app/app>
    - Scholarship.com: <https://www.scholarships.com/about-us/>
    - Scholarship Monkey: <http://www.scholarshipmonkey.com/>
    - U.S. Department of Labor's scholarship search: <http://careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp?searchtype=category&noideid=22>,
    - Fast web: <http://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships>,
    - My College Dollars: <http://mycollegedollars.hyfnrsx1.com/>

Scholarship Experts: <https://www.scholarshipexperts.com/>,

Scholly (an app is available for Scholly): <https://myscholly.com/>

Student scholarships: [www.studentscholarships.org](http://www.studentscholarships.org).

Some deadlines fall as early as the summer between 11th and 12th grades, so prepare now to submit applications soon.

### **Details to remember**

- In all written communications to financial aid offices, put the student's name and Social Security number on every page.
- Keep your financial aid worksheets. Always make photocopies for your records.
- If you have questions about an item, do not guess. See your counselor or an accountant, or speak with the college financial aid officer directly.
- Do not leave blank spaces on the forms. Use zeroes instead.
- Proofread! And again, make copies of everything.

### **After you have filed the forms**

- If you properly complete the FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that will give you your eligibility index for federal and state aid.
- If there are errors or incorrect information on the SAR, you can make corrections online.
- Financial aid offers are sent by colleges either with, or shortly after you receive, a letter of acceptance. You will be asked to sign an acceptance of the amount received, and the money will be sent to the college/postsecondary institution.
- Ask your counselor for assistance if you have general questions. Specific questions should be directed to the college financial aid officers.

## **What You Should Know About the FAFSA (The Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**



### **Read the form**

Many questions on the FAFSA are straightforward, such as asking for your social security number or your date of birth. But many require you to read the instructions to make sure you answer the question correctly. Words like *household*, *investments* and even *parent* all have common meanings but are specifically defined for purposes of student financial aid. So be sure to read the instructions. If you have a special family situation, you may have additional questions. You should ask for clarification from a financial aid administrator at a college you wish to attend.

### **Apply early**

Deadlines for aid from your state, school and private sources tend to be much earlier than deadlines for federal aid. To make sure that any financial aid package your school offers you will contain aid from as many sources as possible, apply as soon as you can starting October of your senior year or the year you apply to college.

The U.S. Department of Education will process your FAFSA right up until June 30 of the year you will enroll in college. However, for you to actually receive aid, your high school must have your correct, complete information before your last day of enrollment as a high school student. So it is important to apply early to make sure you leave enough time for your high school to receive your information and make any necessary corrections.

### **Your family doesn't need to file a tax return before you submit your FAFSA**

Filling out a tax return first will make completing the FAFSA easier, but don't miss any college deadlines because your parents haven't done their taxes yet. Use estimates from W2s or pay stubs, and previous year(s)' tax returns. After you submit the FAFSA, you will be able to correct the estimated figures later.

### **You can file your FAFSA online**

The fastest way to apply for financial aid is to fill out and submit a FAFSA online. Also, your information is edited before you submit it, so if you made errors or left out any information, you can make the necessary corrections before you submit the form. This reduces the chance that your data will be rejected and makes it less likely that you will have to correct your information later.

To submit your application using FAFSA on the Web, go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

# FAFSA Application Process

## Step 1:

Get a PIN, a personal identification number. A PIN lets you apply, “sign” your online FAFSA, make corrections to your application information and more—all online.

## Step 2:

Collect these documents needed to apply, including income tax returns and W-2 forms (and other records of income).

1. Social Security Number
2. Driver’s license, if any
3. W-2 forms for the previous year and other records of money earned
4. Most recent Federal Income Tax Return—IRS form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or 1040Telefile.
5. Records of child support paid (if applicable)
6. Records of taxable earning from federal work-study or other need-based work programs.
7. Records of any grants, scholarships, and fellowship aid that was included in your or your parents’ adjusted gross income (AGI)
8. Current bank statements
9. Current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stock, bond, and other investment records.
10. Documentation of U.S. permanent resident or other eligible noncitizen.

## Step 3:

Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible starting October of senior year in order to meet school deadlines.

## Step 4:

Once you receive your Student Aid Report, review it and make any changes needed online. This report will contain your expected family contribution—the number used to determine your federal student aid eligibility.

## Step 5:

If you are selected for verification, your school’s financial aid office will ask you to submit tax returns and other documents, as appropriate. Be sure to meet the school’s deadline, or you will not be able to get federal student aid.

## Step 6:

Whether you’re selected for verification or not, make sure the financial aid office of the school has all the information needed to determine your eligibility.

## Step 7:

**All Students:** Contact the financial aid office if you have any questions about the aid being offered.

**First-time applicants:** Review award letters from schools to compare amounts and types of aid being offered. Decide which school to attend based on a combination of (a) how well the school suits your needs and (b) its affordability after all aid is taken into account.

## **Twenty Questions to Ask a Financial Aid Officer**

1. What's the average total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, travel, and other personal expenses)? Do any of these costs vary by program?
2. What are the ranges of costs for the different housing options and meal plans?
3. By how much should I expect my costs to increase each year? (A three- to five-year history of cost increases should be available.)
4. Does financial need have an impact on admission decisions?
5. How is financial aid affected if I apply via an Early Decision or Early Action program?
6. Does the school offer scholarships or other types of aid that aren't based on financial need?
7. What forms are required to apply for financial aid?
8. What is the priority deadline to apply for financial aid?
9. When will I be notified about financial aid award decisions?
10. Will the financial aid offer take into account the full cost of attending, including books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses?
11. What percentage of need does this college attempt to meet on average?
12. Will the financial aid office provide me with an explanation of how my financial need and award package were determined?
13. What financing options are available to help us pay our share of the costs?
14. What is the average amount of student loan debt incurred by graduates?
15. If the financial aid package isn't enough, can I appeal? Under what conditions, if any, will the aid office reconsider the offer?
16. How will the aid package change from year to year? What will happen if my enrollment status or my family's financial situation changes?
17. What are the academic requirements or other conditions for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
18. When can I expect to receive bills from the college? Is there an option to spread the yearly payment over equal monthly installments?
19. How much money will I need during the first week of school for books, supplies and other initial expenses? Can these expenses be charged to my account?
20. Regarding student employment, including the Federal Work-Study Program: How are jobs assigned? How many hours per week are students expected or allowed to work? How often and in what manner are they paid?

# **Arizona Universities Admission Requirements\***

\*All following information was taken from the respective universities websites.



Follow this link for step by step instructions on how to apply to ASU:  
<https://admission.asu.edu/freshman/apply>

Follow this link to learn about admission requirements:  
<https://admission.asu.edu/freshman/competency-requirements>



Follow this link for step by step instructions on how to apply to UA and their admission requirements:  
<https://admissions.arizona.edu/how-to-apply/freshman>



Follow this link for step by step instructions on how to apply to NAU and their admission requirements:  
<https://nau.edu/admission/freshman-admission/>



To learn about the application process visit:

<https://www.gcu.edu/admissions/requirements/undergraduate-admissions.php>

To learn about the admission requirements visit:

<https://www.gcu.edu/admissions/requirements.php>



Follow this link for step by step instructions on how to apply to ERAU and their admission requirements:

<https://prescott.erau.edu/admissions/undergraduate>



Follow this link for step by step instructions on how to apply to ACU and their admission requirements:

<https://arizonachristian.edu/admissions/>