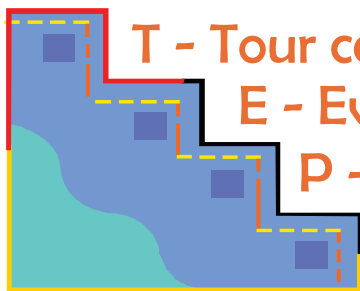


As your junior year of high school is winding down, your college search process is starting up. You are just “steps away” from completing your goal of attending a college or university. This guide is to help guide you through the college admissions process and stay organized along the way!

S - Start early, spread tasks over time



T - Tour campuses, talk to college representatives

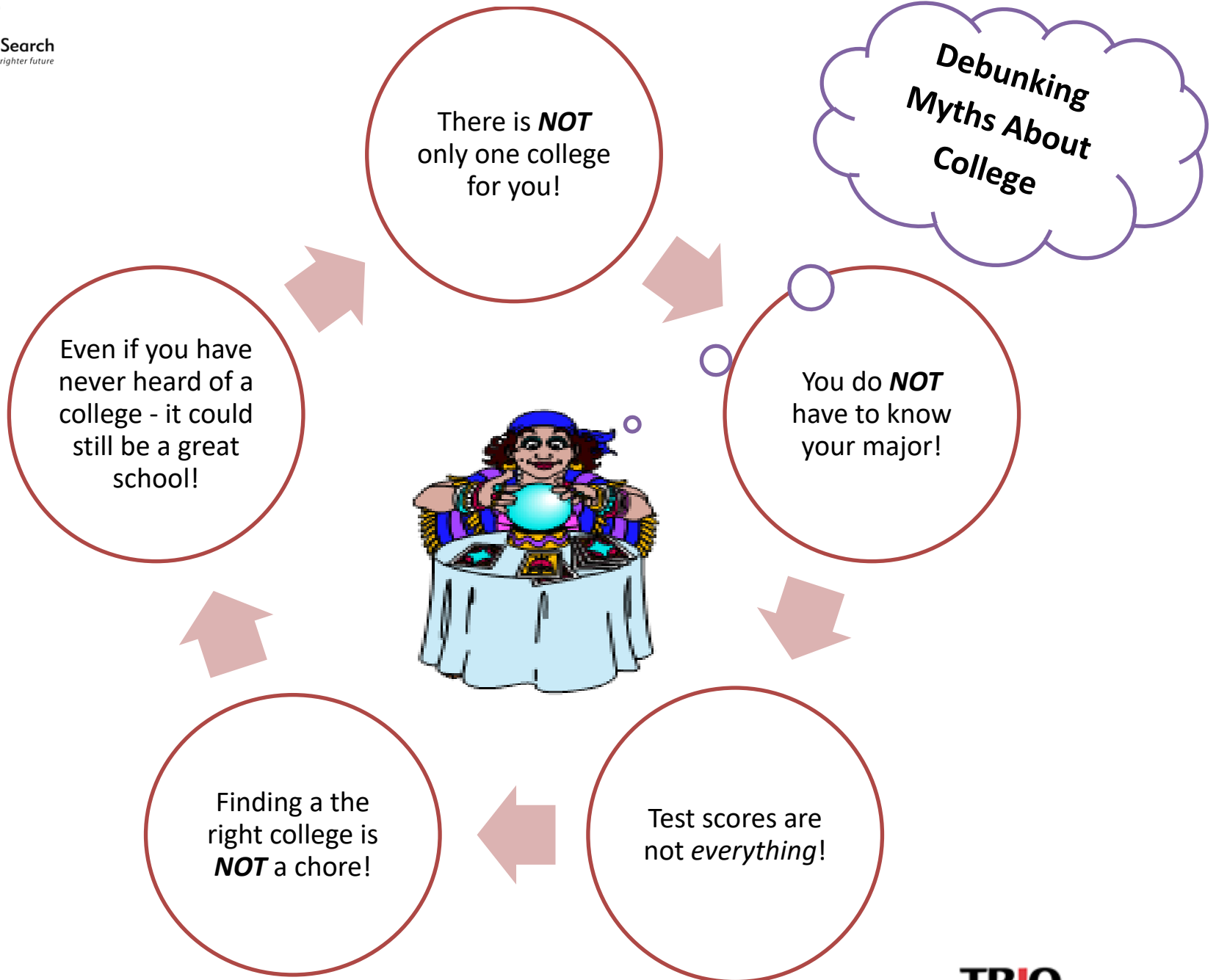
E - Evaluate options

P - Prepare applications

S - Stay on track. Consult your ETS Advisor regularly!



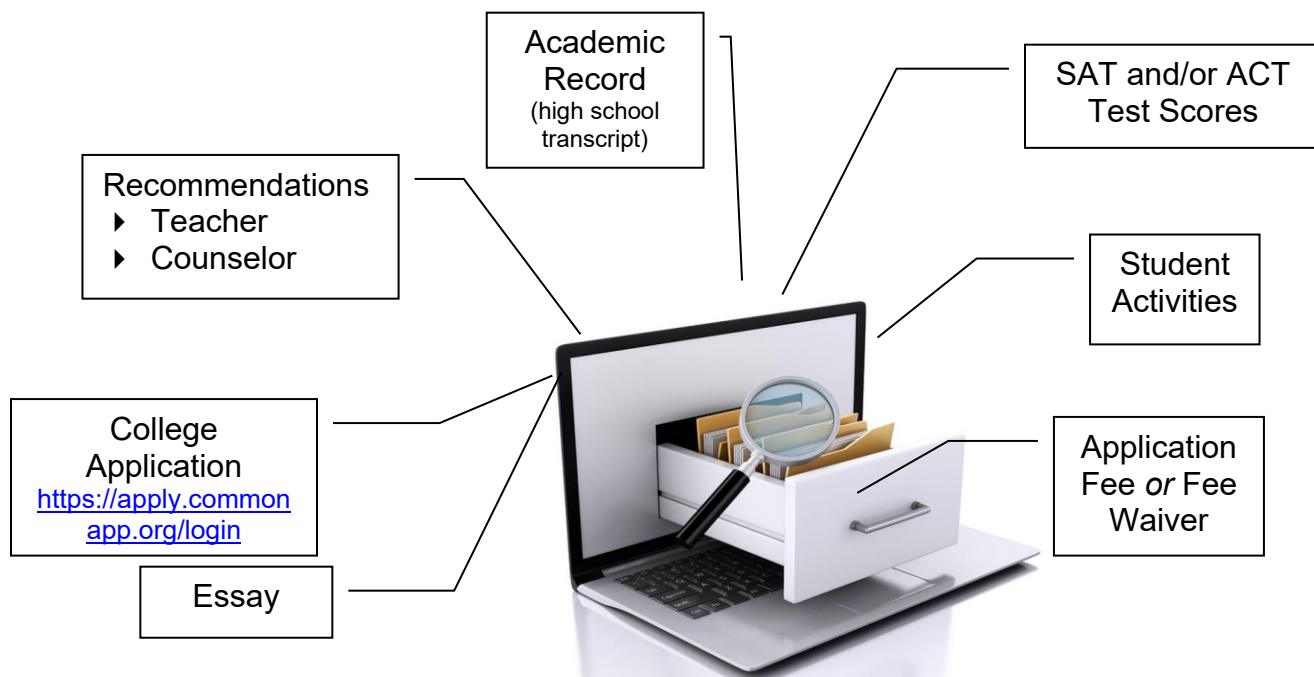
Educational Talent Search
Preparing students for college and a brighter future





The College Admissions Folder: What's inside?

When a student applies to college, the college admission office collects a folder of information to consider as it makes a decision about the application. Students should be aware of the parts of an applicant's "folder".



Awaiting the Results

When the application has been reviewed by the college or university, a number of possible responses can come back to the student:



- ▶ Admit
- ▶ Deny
- ▶ Conditional Admit
- ▶ Wait List



Each college has their own unique requirements for the number of teacher recommendations that they require and/or allow. Some colleges require 0, and some require as many as 3. Students are able to decide what teachers they would like to request recommendations from. **In general, it is best to pick “core subject” teachers (math, science, english, social studies) AND teachers who know you well.**

In addition to teacher recommendations, **your guidance counselor must write you a recommendation.**

Of course, you want good recommendations- which is why ETS emphasizes academic achievement AND making positive connections with teachers both in class and through extra curriculars!

*Brag sheets are a way for you to help your counselor and teachers write letters of recommendation. These forms give them more insight into who you are outside of school and your interests. Fill out a brag sheet and share them with your counselor and teachers when you ask them for a letter of recommendation either this spring or **EARLY** in the fall of senior year.*

The links below are two different brag sheet templates; however, your school might have its own template that they want you to use:

[Generic Brag Sheet](#)
[Common App Brag Sheet \(for teachers\)](#)
[Common App Brag Sheet \(for counselors\)](#)

"Moving forward, we want to learn more about who is choosing certain prompts to see if there are any noteworthy differences among student populations."

Meredith Lombardi, Director, Education and Training, Common App

Students who are ready to start exploring the application can create their Common App account prior to August 1. With [account rollover](#), we will retain any responses to questions on the Common App tab, including the personal essay. Below is the full set of essay prompts for 2023-2024.

[Video from Common App reviewing each essay prompt](#)

Below is the full set of Common App essay prompts for 2023-2024

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

We will retain the [optional community disruption](#) question within the Writing section.

TYPES OF AID

Need help paying for college or career school? Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education, may be able to help you get the financial aid you need for college. We provide more than \$150 billion in financial aid every year.

Federal Student Aid offers three types of financial aid.

1



Financial aid that generally doesn't have to be repaid.

Federal Pell Grant:

- For undergraduates with financial need.



Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG):

- For undergraduates with exceptional financial need at participating schools.

Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant:

- For undergraduates and graduate students who are going to school to become elementary or secondary school teacher.
- A student must agree to teach in a high-need field at a low-income school for at least four years within eight years after graduation.
- Failure to live up to this agreement means that the grant is converted to a loan and must be repaid.



Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant:

- For students with a parent or guardian who died after the events of 9/11 as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- To qualify, a student must have been under the age of 24 at the time of his or her parent or guardian's death or enrolled in college or career school at least part-time.



2



Borrowed money for college or career school; your loans must be repaid with interest.

Direct Subsidized Loan:

- For undergraduates.
- Interest is paid by the U.S. Department of Education while the student is in school and during periods of deferment.

Direct Unsubsidized Loan:

- For undergraduates and graduate students.
- Borrower is responsible for all interest.

Direct PLUS Loan:

- For graduate and professional students and for parents of dependent undergraduates.
- Borrower is responsible for all interest.

Federal Perkins Loan:

- For undergraduate and graduate students.
- Loan made by participating school.
- No interest accrues while the student is in school or in a grace period and during periods of deferment.

WHY GET FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS?

Loans are an investment in your future and can be a great way to pay for school. Compared to private student loans, federal student loans often have

- lower fixed interest rates,
- flexible repayment options, and
- many benefits that you won't find elsewhere.

3



A federal work program through which undergraduates and graduate students at participating schools earn money to help pay for school.



OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

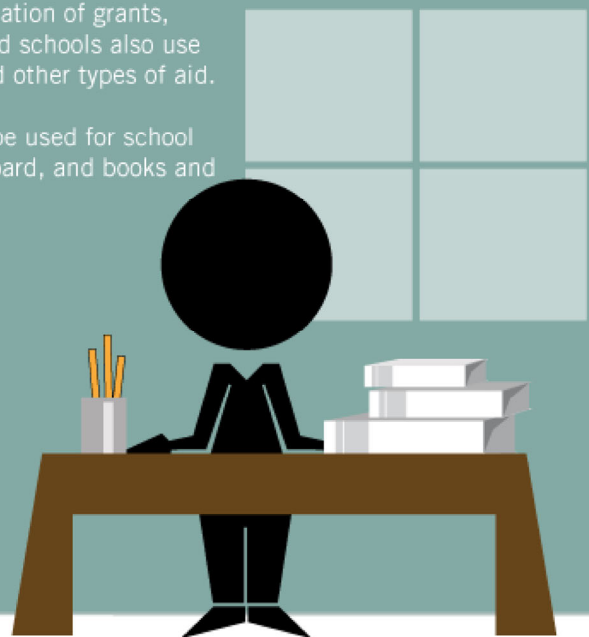
You also may be eligible for financial aid from

- other government agencies,
- the state where you live,
- the college you attend, or
- a nonprofit or private organization.

Learn more about these options at StudentAid.gov/types.

To apply for financial aid from the federal government, complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSASM) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Your school will use information from your FAFSASM to compile your financial aid offer, which may include a combination of grants, loans, and work-study. Many states and schools also use information from the FAFSASM to award other types of aid.

Remember, federal student aid must be used for school expenses such as tuition, room and board, and books and supplies.



If you have questions or need any assistance, contact the financial aid office at your college or career school or visit StudentAid.gov.