

# THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

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## COMMON APP LAUNCHES MORE INCLUSIVE APPLICATION FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

*(commonapp.org)*

Common App, the non-profit membership organization that serves over 1 million aspiring college students every year, launched its 2021-2022 application on Sunday, August 1.

The new application, which will enable students to apply to more than 950 colleges and universities across the globe, includes updated questions and tools designed to both expand access and facilitate a more equitable, inclusive college application process.

Used by more than three million applicants, teachers, and counselors across the United States and around the world each year, the Common App platform streamlines the college application process for students.

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## WHAT IS ROLLING ADMISSION?

*(Princetonreview.com)*

Rolling admission and regular admission look a lot alike with one key difference. Colleges with rolling admissions evaluate applications as they are received versus waiting to evaluate all applications after a hard deadline. Schools will continue to evaluate applications until they've filled all the slots for their incoming class.

Unlike early action and early decision, rolling admission isn't an option you choose. It's the way certain colleges run their admission process. Here's what you need to know.

### Advantages of Rolling Admission

You're putting together your college list and notice that your dream school accepts applications on a "rolling basis." Here's how rolling admission can be good for you:

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## EARLY ACTION VS EARLY DECISION

*(Bestcolleges.com)*

Early action and early decision allow students to apply to their first-choice schools earlier than regular applicants and to receive admissions decisions before regularly admitted students. While the timeline varies, most colleges and universities set November deadlines and send out results as early as mid-December. This guide provides details about the differences between early action and early decision so that you can pick the option that best suits your needs.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS

### UNIGO SHOUT IT OUT SCHOLARSHIP

The "loudest" applicant will receive the \$1,500 Shout It Out Scholarship reward. The application must a short, original, previously unpublished written response to the scholarship topic, "If you could say one thing to the entire world at once, what would it be and why?" The written response must not exceed 250 words. Deadline: September 30, 2021



### DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE SCHOLARSHIP

The top 10 applications will be selected as finalists and be asked to write an essay (500 to 1,000 words) about texting while driving. The \$1,000 scholarship winner will be selected based on the content and creativity. Deadline: September 30, 2021



### ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION MOST VALUABLE STUDENT AWARD

Applicant must be a high school senior who is a citizen of the United States. Selection is based upon scholarship, leadership, and financial need. \$15,000 scholarship. Applicants do not need to be related to a member of the Elks. Deadline is November 15th




### TOP TEN LIST SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship gives you the chance to show what's truly special and different about you for a chance to win a \$1,500 scholarship.

Deadline: December 31, 2021



## SENIOR CHECKLIST

-  Attend virtual college meetings
-  Keep your grades up
-  Register for the SAT or ACT
-  Start working on your admissions essays
-  Research scholarships
-  Early Decision Deadline is November 1st
-  Register for the Common Application
-  Check out the newer Coalition Application

### URBAN OUTFITTERS & FUJIFILM SCHOLARSHIP

53 people will win prizes including up to \$20,000 in Scholarships. Applicants should submit two essays about their passion and inspiration guiding their college experience.

Deadline to apply is October 16, 2021



### Fun Fact:

One of the smartest decisions that students can make when applying to elite colleges is to apply early decision (ED) or early action (EA).

## HOW TO WRITE COMMON APP ESSAYS

(Collegeessayadvisors.com)

### **Prompt #1: The Background Essay**

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.

Focus on the key words, “background,” “identity,” “interest,” and “talent,” and use them as launch points for your brainstorming. What about your history, personality, hobbies, or accomplishments might be worth highlighting for an admissions officer?

### **Prompt #2: The Setback Essay**

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?

**Prompt #3: The Challenger Essay** This remains one of the most challenging prompts of the Common App’s selection, even though it has become slightly friendlier with the addition of the option to discuss a time you *questioned* an idea instead of challenged one. This prompt requires a student to speak passionately about beliefs and ideology, which are often onerous subjects that can be difficult to mold into compact stories.

### **Prompt #4: The Gratitude Essay**

This question is meant to offer students the opportunity to reflect on the role gratitude plays in their lives, as well as how the practice of giving thanks and acknowledging life’s gifts motivates and inspires them. Students should think about times when they have felt acknowledged, heard, and seen. Think creatively about what you appreciate in your life.

### **Prompt #5: The Accomplishment Essay**

Keep in mind that the words “accomplishment” and “event” leave themselves open to interpretation; thus, an essay inspired by this question can tackle anything from a formal event to a very small occurrence. A formal event or accomplishment might include anything from obvious landmarks like birthdays or weddings to achievements like earning an award or receiving a promotion. More informal examples might include something as simple as meeting a special person in your life, taking a car ride, or eating a particularly meaningful meal.

### **Prompt #6: The Passion Essay**

This is a window into your brain: how you process information, how you seek out new sources of content and inspiration. How resourceful are you when your curiosity is piqued to the fullest? The answer to this prompt should also reveal something to admissions about the breadth or depth of your interests. For example, if you’re interested in studying astrophysics, you might choose to discuss a concept that shows how far your exploration of the sciences truly reaches. How consumed are you by this passion you are choosing to pursue academically?

### **Prompt #7: Topic of Your Choice**

For years, students have been treating Prompt #1 (which asks about your background, etc.) as topic of your

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**COLLEGE NEWS**

**Walmart** announces plan to pay 100% of college tuition and books for its associates who participate in its Live Better U education program.

**California governor Gavin Newsom** signed legislation in July implementing a series of measures to make college more accessible as a part of the state’s COVID-19 recovery efforts.

**Wharton’s** incoming MBA class is more than 50% women for the first time in school history

Seven **Stanford University** students who were fully vaccinated against the coronavirus tested positive for COVID-19, offering a reminder that breakthrough infections are possible as case counts trend upward across the country and contagious variants spread.

The **University of Oregon** is settling a gender pay disparity lawsuit with a psychology professor for \$450,000. The lawsuit alleged that U of Oregon paid the professor thousands of dollars less annually than professors who were men of equal rank and seniority.

Rather than spend \$25,000 on school swag, The **University of Puget Sound** is donating the amount to several local charitable organizations in honor of admitted students.

**UC Regents** approved a tuition increase that will go into effect for Fall 2022. There was no mention of how the recently approved state budget (with significant increase in UC funding) played a role in the tuition increase.

**COCA COLA SCHOLARS PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP**

\$20,000 achievement-based scholarship awarded to graduating high school seniors. Students are recognized for their capacity to lead and serve, as well as their commitment to making a significant impact on their schools and communities. Deadline is October 31, 2021

**APPLY HERE**

**EDUCATION MATTERS SCHOLARSHIP**

The Education Matters Scholarship is giving you the chance to state why education matters. One applicant will be awarded \$5,000 scholarship. Deadline: November 30, 2021

**APPLY HERE**

**JUNIOR CHECKLIST**



ACT - Next test date is October 17. You must register by September 23. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo



SAT - Next test date is October 3. You must register by September 2

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY COMPETITION**

The National Audio Essay Scholarship open to high school students grades 9th - 12th. It consists of a 3-5 minute audio CD/flash drive recorded essay on the 2018-19 theme “Why My Vote Matters”. Each state winner is provided with a five day all-expenses paid trip to Washington D.C., plus the opportunity to compete for National Scholarships totaling more than \$130,000. Deadline: October 31, 2021



**ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE SCHOLARSHIP**

This Zombie Apocalypse Scholarship committee wants to know your plan to avoid the zombies, where you’d hide, and the top-five things you’d bring to stay alive. They’re giving one successful survivor \$2,000 toward his or her college education. Deadline: October 31, 2021



## WHAT IS ROLLING ADMISSION?

(Continued from page 1)

### 1. It reduces college stress

The rolling admission process is quick. The earlier you apply, the sooner you get your answer, which could be as soon as 4-6 weeks after submitting your application. Many students can even begin senior year with a college acceptance in the bag!

### 2. It gives you a potential leg-up

The application process can be less competitive if you apply on the early side of the admission window. Colleges still have their whole incoming class to fill and won't be comparing you to already accepted students. (This is not to say that you still don't need a strong GPA, great test scores, and stellar college essays!).

### 3. It allows you to be flexible

Rolling admission decisions aren't binding like early action decisions. You'll have up until the school's deadline to decide whether you will attend. Rolling admissions schools often have long admission windows, meaning you could still apply after other schools' regular decision deadlines have passed.

### How to Reap the Benefits of Rolling Admission

#### 1. Do your research

As you're putting together your college list, pay attention to deadlines and requirements. Some schools will accept applications on a rolling basis throughout the year, but others will have a specific admission window.

#### 2. Submit rolling applications first

Rolling admission colleges begin taking applications as early as July and continue as late as April. Your chances of admission will be much stronger early on when there are more spaces left to fill, so it's a smart idea to submit your rolling applications before working on your regular decision apps. The results (acceptance, waitlist, or rejection) could change the rest of your admission strategy.

#### 3. Plan ahead for SAT/ACT prep

Most students end up taking the SAT or ACT more than once. If you're aiming to submit a rolling admission application in early fall, it's a good idea to take the test for the first time in October of your junior year (which gives you the option to take the test again in the spring, if needed). Check out our ACT and SAT Testing timelines to help you figure out when to start your prep.

#### 4. Take care with your application

Your competitive advantage will be erased by a slapdash application. Give the same time and attention to your rolling decision applications as you would with your regular decision applications.

## TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- **Rolling Admission** - admission decisions are made until the class is full
- **Early Decision - Binding Contract**, if admitted, you must attend, can only apply to one
- **Early Action** - also known as Priority, apply by Nov. 1, admitted in December, not binding
- **Restricted Early Action** - Single choice early action. Admitted early, still have until May 1 to confirm
- **Regular Admission** - Deadline to apply is between Sept and March. Admitted by March 31.

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## EARLY ACTION VS EARLY DECISION

(Continued from page 1)

### What Is Early Action?

Early action is a non-binding process that allows you to apply, and potentially gain admission, to one or more schools earlier than regular applicants. As an early action applicant, you usually have until November 1 or 15 to submit admissions materials. Early action schools send out decisions in January or February and allow prospective students until May 1 (the national response date) to formally reply to their offers.

### What Is Early Decision?

Unlike early action, early decision is a binding agreement, and you can apply to only one school using this process. Early decision normally benefits top-performing students who know their first-choice college, and since it's a binding agreement, the institution requires signatures from you, your family, and a school counselor.

Through this accelerated admissions process, you receive notice in December and must enroll if you get accepted. Once accepted, the school offers a financial aid package tailored to your family's financial situation.

### The Differences Between Early Action and Early Decision

- Early action does not require you to commit to the college. You may apply early or pursue regular admissions with other schools.
- Early decision binds you to one institution, but sends the strongest message to the admission committee that the school is your top choice.
- Early action enables you to compare financial aid packages among several colleges and universities before accepting or declining the offer by May 1.
- Early decision applicants receive answers as early as December and must attend the school if accepted with enough financial support.
- Most higher education institutions offer either early action or early decision, effectively making the choice of accelerated admission for you.

### Benefits of Early Action and Early Decision

By applying early, you alleviate the stress that comes with compounding regular admissions deadlines. Early action gives you more time to decide whether or not you want to attend that school. Lastly, both early decision and action signals to the school that you are serious about enrolling there, which may boost your chances of acceptance.

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## HOW TO WRITE COMMON APP ESSAYS

(Continued from page 3)

choice \*light\*—it wasn't exactly the delicious, full-freedom version students were looking for, but they were able to make it work in a pinch. Applicants around the world likely let out a big exhale when they saw they could still serve up a big scoop of Prompt #7 to admissions in previous seasons. And this year will be no different.

## WHAT IS ROLLING ADMISSION?

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### 5. Don't forget about financial aid!

As with your regular decision applications, it's important to be on top of your financial aid applications and scholarship search. We recommend filling out the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1. If you're applying to college later in the rolling admission window, you run the risk that school aid funds and scholarship will have been awarded to those students who were accepted before you. Research each school's procedures for applying for aid, and have these docs ready to go.

Here are some popular universities with rolling admissions:

- [Arizona State University](#)
- [Indiana University Bloomington](#)
- [Michigan State University\\*](#)
- [Pennsylvania State University \(Penn State\)\\*](#)
- [University of Alabama](#)
- [University of Maine](#)
- [University of Pittsburgh](#)
- [Azusa Pacific University](#)
- [California State University Schools](#)
- [California Maritime Academy](#)
- [Central Washington University](#)
- [City University of Seattle](#)
- [Dixie State College](#)
- [Eastern Oregon University](#)
- [George Fox University](#)
- [Purdue University](#)
- [Humboldt State University](#)
- [Idaho State University](#)
- [San Jose State University](#)
- [Rutgers University](#)

## HOW TO WRITE A STANDOUT EXTRACURRICULAR SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY

(Internationalcollegeessays.com)

Many students have taken advantage of the summer months to get a head start on their personal statements (aka Common App essays) as well as the numerous supplemental essays and short-answer questions. Historically, the supplemental essay prompts have ranged from straightforward to a little offbeat (University of Chicago, we're looking at you!)

One of the more common supplemental essay questions revolves around a student's activities. Vanderbilt and Georgetown are just two schools that ask students to elaborate on an activity or experience that is meaningful to them. Sounds straightforward enough, but this question can be tricky! Colleges ask this question to get a better idea of you and your interests and how you might contribute to the campus community. Below you will find our top tips for crafting a strong student activity essay that will not only answer the question, but will also demonstrate to the admissions committee why you are a good fit for their school and vice versa (a necessary piece for every admissions essay).

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**HOW TO WRITE A STANDOUT EXTRACURRICULAR SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY***Continued from page 7***1) Read the prompt carefully.**

Many students are eager to showcase all their many talents and activities in order to appear well-rounded. However, you should follow directions: be sure to answer the prompt. If a school asks you to highlight ONE activity or experience, do not provide an exhaustive list.

**2) Pick your topic.**

Choose an activity or experience that is meaningful to you. If you are passionate about something you did, you will have an easier time writing about it. Make sure this activity is not expanded upon elsewhere, such as in your personal statement. So, while you can mention the same activity twice, do not repeat the information about it. Make sure you reflect personal significance, your best character traits, and your potential to succeed at the college or university. Some ideas of activities to write about:

**3) Structure your essay around a story.**

Pick an anecdote that illustrates why the experience or activity is meaningful to you, how you made an impact, and what you got out of the experience. Perhaps you choose the time you were asked to spearhead a project at your internship, or when you presented your research after months in the lab. Whatever the story may be, do not try to cram your whole academic career into the word count allotted. Be judicious about the details you share—each detail should advance your story. The details should also demonstrate your positive traits such as initiative, leadership, problem solving, teamwork, or one or more of dozens of others.

**4) Mention leadership positions and quantify your impact where applicable.**

If you held a leadership position or were involved with the oversight of a major project, large group of people, etc., write about what you did, and as importantly, why you were motivated and how you were shaped by your actions. If your participation helped you grow or develop, let the college know. Moreover, if you can quantify your contributions, this will make your response really stand out. For instance, if you ran social media for a company over the summer and increased the following or brand exposure, try to put that into numbers, but only if the numbers are impressive. This helps to “prove” the contribution you made. Think of these details as the cherry on top.

**5) Connect your activity to the school community.**

While the “elaborate on an activity or experience” essay is not, on the surface, a “why” question, schools want to see how your activity and passion will lead to your participation in the school community once you arrive on campus. This is a great opportunity to mention student clubs and organizations that you would take advantage of and what you would bring to the table. This shows a school you want to be there!

As you write the supplemental essays, remember that this is your time to provide the admission readers with information that may not otherwise be reflected in your application. Omit details already shared in your personal statement. Demonstrate your dedication and commitment to your chosen activity or experience—and don’t be afraid to think outside the box.



## COMMON APP LAUNCHES MORE INCLUSIVE APPLICATION FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

*Continued from page 1*

In addition to providing a single, online application and 24/7/365 support for all students applying to member colleges and universities, the Common App connects applicants to a mobile app, financial aid and scholarship information, virtual mentors, online portfolios, and a vast library of counselor resources available in English and Spanish.

**The new application will include several significant changes announced by Common App over the last year that took effect on August 1, including:**

- 1. The removal of the school discipline question**
- 2. The removal of the military discharge question**
- 3. Revisions to the citizenship, family, and geography questions**
- 4. Revisions to the sex/gender questions**
- 5. The removal of the religious preference question**

“We want all students to feel supported by Common App regardless of where they are on their path to education attainment. This is about providing the tools and resources needed to meet more students where they are and help them navigate the path to and through college. Our hope is that the incremental changes we’ve made on the application this year will be a critical step in our collective effort to reduce barriers for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds.” Jenny Rickard, President & CEO, Common App

The 2021-2022 application includes the same prompts as last year plus a new essay prompt: “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?” The new prompt is inspired by scientific research on gratitude and kindness, specifically the benefits of writing about the positive influence of other people in our lives.

### How to Complete the Common Application

- Go to [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org) and click on the "Start your application" button to get details about how to create an account and log in. Additionally, students can download the Common App's mobile app to keep track of deadlines, invite recommenders and set reminders.
- Choose the first-year student or transfer student option.
- Add user information such as name, email, phone number, address, date of birth and prospective enrollment year.
- Fill out the user profile with requested details on education, extracurriculars, demographic data, household information and more.
- Add collaborators such as teachers, counselors and others providing letters of recommendation or other supporting documents.
- Search for and add schools to "My Colleges."
- Get familiar with each college's application requirements and follow those accordingly when applying.