

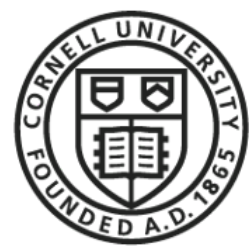
# HIGHROAD FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

## Young Audiences of WNY ARTWORKS College and Career Guidebook

July 2015

**Abigail Phillips**

**ILR '16, from East Aurora, NY  
2015 High Road Fellow  
With Young Audiences of WNY**



**ILR Buffalo Co-Lab**

The ILR Buffalo Co-Lab advances an equitable economy and democratic community, collaboratively integrating scholarly and practical understanding to strengthen civic action.

Since 1946, Cornell ILR has played a vital role in Western New York, working in partnership with businesses, unions, government, education and community organizations to build an economy that works for all.

High Road Fellowships were launched in 2009, in collaboration with community-based think-tank Partnership for the Public Good. They connect Cornell undergraduates with practitioners and creative community leaders who are driving change in the local economy.

Fellows are in Buffalo, NY for eight weeks in the summer, working on projects through their host organization.





## College and Career Guidebook

Compiled by: Abigail Philips  
High Road Fellow 2015

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## Useful Links/Websites to Check Out:

*Useful work related links/websites to definitely check out:*

What to Wear to Work, Michelle Phan, ICON

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZH0osWKcFw>

11 Items You Should Never Wear to Work—Are You Guilty, Kat Collings

- <http://www.whowhatwear.com/office-dress-codes-what-not-to-wear-to-work-outfits-fashion-2013/slide12>

10 Office Don'ts, Forbes

- <http://my.xfinity.com/slideshow/news-10officefashiondonts/2/>

Resume Samples, Monster

- <http://career-advice.monster.com/resumes-cover-letters/resume-samples/jobs.aspx>

High School Resume Examples, Alison Doyle

- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/sampleresume1/a/high-school-resume-examples.htm>

High School Student Job Search Tips: A – Z, Alison Doyle

- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/high-school/fl/high-school-student-job-search-a-z.htm>

Working Papers Information

- <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/teenstudentgrad/a/workingpaper.htm>

*Post-High School Options:*

NY Trade Schools, mikeroweWORKS Foundation

- <http://profoundlydisconnected.com/trade-resource-center/state-resources/new-york/>

Trade Schools in Buffalo, NY

- <http://tradeandvocationalschoolsinformation.com/trade-schools-buffalo-ny-new-york-vocational-schools.html>

Trade Schools in Buffalo, NY

- <http://www.yellowpages.com/buffalo-ny/trade-schools>

Army Resources

- <http://www.goarmy.com/learn.html>

College Board

- <https://www.collegeboard.org/>

### SAT Practice Questions

- <https://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-practice-questions>

### SAT Information

- <https://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests/sat-subject-tests>

*Not updated anymore but archives super useful:*

The Choice Blog- Getting into College & Paying for It, NY Times

- <http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/>

### *General Resources:*

College Admissions, Khan Academy

- <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-admissions>

College Navigator, National Center for Education Statistics

- <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

In Like Me, The College Admissions & Student Aid Resources Hub

- <http://inlikeme.com/>

College Results Online

- <http://www.collegeresults.org/>

After High School: Different Paths to Success, Victoria Scanlan Stefanakos

- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/choosing-changing-schools/leaving-high-school/after-high-school-different-paths-to-success>

Specialized Schools, Chelsea Jones, I'm First

- <http://www.imfirst.org/2014/10/specialized-schools/>

### *First Generation Students:*

First Generation Student, What it takes to get to and through college

- <http://www.firstgenerationstudent.com/>

I'm First, Online community celebration first-generation college students and support those who will be

- <http://www.imfirst.org/>

### *Fun, Culture Resources:*

Chegg, Colleges

- <https://www.chegg.com/schools?zinch=1>

### *Majors and Interests:*

College Majors 101, within every major—a universe

- <http://www.collegemajors101.com/>

College InSight, from the institute for college access and success

- <http://college-insight.org/>

Art Schools in Buffalo, NY, Hack College School Finder

- <http://www.hackcollege.com/school-finder/schools/new-york/buffalo/art/>

*Financial Aid:*

Project on Student Debt, Institute for college access and success

- <http://ticas.org/posd/home>

Unigo, Go Find You

- <https://www.unigo.com/>

Fast Web, Art Scholarships & Internships, Elizabeth Hoyt

- <http://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships/articles/art-scholarships-and-internships>

College Financial Aid Guide—Demystifying the Financial Aid Process, Kim Clark

- [http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com/articles/college-financial-aid-guide\\_11570.aspx#.VW3nPPRdU08](http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com/articles/college-financial-aid-guide_11570.aspx#.VW3nPPRdU08)

10 Tips for Getting the Most Out of Financial Aid, Victor Luckerson, TIME

- <http://business.time.com/2013/01/25/10-tips-for-getting-the-most-out-of-college-financial-aid/>

*Scholarship Search:*

Big Future's Scholarship Search, College Board

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

Scholarships, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

- <http://www.cfgb.org/for-scholarships/>

College Scholarships, Say Yes to Buffalo

- <http://sayyesbuffalo.org/college-scholarships/overview>

Buffalo Schools Scholarship Listing

- <http://www.buffaloschools.org/webpages/guidancebavpa/scholarships.cfm?subpage=47297>

Scholarships.com, You Find Money. Colleges Find You.

- <https://www.scholarships.com/>

Fastweb, Scholarships

- <http://www.fastweb.com/>

## **Work Skills:**



# 15 Best Part-Time Jobs for High School Students

## **Part-Time Jobs for High School Students**

Some students work in traditional part-time jobs, but many students take a more entrepreneurial approach to earning money. There are a number of side business ideas you can begin that take advantage of your unique skills and abilities.

### **1. Animal Shelter Worker**

If you love animals, working at an animal shelter could be a great part-time job while you are in school. Shelters hire minimum-wage employees to spend time with the animals and clean out their cages. If you want to become a veterinarian, this part-time job provides you with hands-on experience, working closely with animals. As a part-time employee, you will do some unpleasant things, like assisting in the euthanasia of sick animals. It can be a sad, messy, and heart-wrenching job, but for many people, the rewards far outweigh any uncomfortable moments. *If animal welfare is something you are truly interested in, this could be the ideal part-time job for you.*

### **2. Arts and Crafts Production and Sales**

*If you have artistic skills, there may be a market for items that you create, especially during the winter holidays. Towards the end of the year, schools and churches hold arts and crafts fairs, and eager shoppers line up to buy Christmas ornaments, wreaths, and last-minute gifts.*

Summer art festivals can also be an opportunity to sell art and handmade jewelry. Booth and table rental costs vary, but if you partner with a friend or a neighbor who also has items to sell, it won't cost as much and you can help each other out. Sales can be sporadic, and although the money can be considerable, it likely won't replace a steady income. In addition, you will have to pay for supplies, and pay rental fees for booth or table space at fairs and festivals. If you'd rather set up shop online, consider selling your arts and crafts on Etsy.

### **3. Babysitting**

Babysitters usually work Friday and Saturday evenings, leaving the week open for completing homework and participating in school-related activities.

Babysitters are paid well, and well upwards of minimum wage. Payment varies depending on the sitter's age and experience.

CPR-certified babysitters are always in high demand. The Red Cross offers an intensive course of training for babysitters. The one-day class includes first aid training, diapering and feeding techniques, and interview tips.

Word of mouth referrals, references, and recommendations are critical to obtaining new babysitting jobs. Babysitters have to be on their best behavior if they ever want to be hired again. Managing small children can be a challenge, but babysitters make their own hours and set their own pay, making this a great part-time job for students who like kids. Check out Care.com or Sittercity.com.

#### **4. Car Wash Attendant**

If you live in a warm climate, or only work during the warmer months of the year, you are almost guaranteed to stay busy. There's nothing worse than being bored at work, so that's a key perk of working for a car wash.

However, some possible downsides to working for a car wash include getting soaking wet, ruining your clothing, and working for minimum wage. On the plus side, you will make tips and you get to be outside when you are working. You can also keep your car shiny and clean, free of charge!

#### **5. Document and Photograph Archival Services**

Many people need documents and photos scanned, stored, and archived, but few people have the time to take on this considerable chore. My family has thousands of photos from the pre-digital camera era. They would love to have all of the photos scanned and safely stored online or saved to a computer file, but no one has the time to tackle this time-consuming task.

Start this part-time business by networking with your parents' friends to offer scanning, storage, and archival services for their documents and photos. Documents can be archived to Google Docs and photos can be scanned and stored on DVDs, websites, and computers.

Agree on the number of photos or documents that need to be scanned or archived, and then set a price per item based on the length of time it will take to complete the tasks. Pricing for scanning and archival services will vary, but a range might include \$0.25 per photo and \$0.35 per document page. The work can be tedious, and you'll have to handle documents and photos carefully, to ensure they aren't damaged or lost.

#### **6. Grocery Store Employee**

Grocery stores hire students throughout the year. There are many different jobs at a grocery store; workers can bag groceries, stock shelves, mop floors, or even operate a cash register. Part-time employees can expect to make minimum wage working at a grocery store. Many grocery stores have unionized cash register operators, so these jobs can pay a bit more than the other options listed here.

Some perks of working for a grocery store include short shifts, merchandise discounts, and schedule flexibility.

Some students complain about paying union dues when working at a grocery store, which will be required if the store is unionized.

### **7. Landscaper/Lawn Care**

Working as a landscaper or doing lawn care part-time lets you get outside and enjoy the sunshine, while also getting paid to work. Now, people pay a small fortune to have their lawns mowed and their hedges trimmed each week.

If you happen to live in a cold weather climate, you can transition to shoveling snow from driveways and sidewalks during the winter months. I made good money borrowing my dad's lawnmower and cutting grass when I was in high school. If your family has a lawnmower, this can be a real moneymaking opportunity for you. *Doing lawn care can be hot, boring, and buggy work, but making your schedule, choosing your clients, being outdoors, and setting your own rates makes running a lawn care service the ideal part-time business.*

### **8. Pizza Delivery**

If you have a car and a good driving record, you can get a job delivering pizzas. Delivery drivers don't get paid very much, but they do receive tips. Work typically entails driving back and forth to the pizza place, picking up pizzas and delivering them to customers.

*Students with pizza delivery jobs have a sense of autonomy, and they can listen to their own music while they are working.* Be aware, however, that pizza delivery drivers are occasionally robbed or assaulted.

### **9. Packing and Moving Services**

A la carte packing and moving services provide assistance to people who cannot afford to hire a full-service moving company for their personal possessions. Professional movers can quickly pack boxes and load furniture and boxes into a truck. Movers are bonded and insured, which is likely not an expense you'll want to take on yourself. Instead, see if any of these locally based packing and moving services can use some extra help, especially on the weekends.

The work can be grueling, especially on a hot day. The pay will be minimum wage, or slightly more than minimum wage, and tips will be split amongst the staff.

### **10. Personal Assistant Services**

Running errands, walking dogs, and wrapping gifts are just a few of the tasks performed by a personal assistant. Let the adults in your life know that you're providing personal assistant services at a reasonable price. A simple flyer, with a list of services you can provide, can be passed out to the neighbors. The services might be sporadic at first, but as you gain the trust of your customers, they will give you more and more responsibilities, which will lead to more money, too.

The amounts to charge will vary according to the services offered. Calculate the time it takes complete the tasks, and make your rates competitive; \$10 an hour would be an acceptable pay rate for a personal assistant. Disadvantages include uptight clients, and being responsible for things that are sometimes out of your control, like an unruly dog that runs away.

### **11. Restaurant Wait Staff**

The pay for professional wait staff at a restaurant will likely be well below minimum wage. The customers can be a pain, and shifts can run late into the evening, but restaurant employees also have a lot of fun at work. There is a lot of camaraderie with fellow employees, the tips can be good, and employees typically receive discounted or free meals during their shifts.

### **12. Retail Job**

*Retail jobs offer all sorts of perks, including merchandise discounts, relatively light schedules, working alongside other students, and a fun, fast-paced work environment.* The downsides include earning minimum wage, working on weekends, and dealing with unhappy customers. In general, the retail or mall job is a good first job for students in high school.

### **13. Tutor**

Parents pay good money to have their kids tutored. Whether it's tutoring an elementary school student with his or her reading, or helping a fellow classmate get those calculus questions right, tutoring is big business right now. There are a number of corporate tutoring entities, like Sylvan Learning Center, but you can offer your services as a tutor for less money, and with a more personal experience.

*Private tutors can expect to earn at least as much as babysitters, and can set their own schedule with their clients.*

### **14. Warehouse and Distribution Job**

If you don't mind using some muscle, there are part-time jobs available loading and unloading inventory in warehouses and distribution centers. The evening hours for these part-time jobs fit neatly into a student's schedule.

Expect to earn minimum wage, with some possibility of pay raises after some time has elapsed.

### **15. Web Designer**

Do you have technical skills in web design or web development? If so, you might find work designing or creating websites for customers. By working part-time out of your home you might be able to assemble a list of clients to keep you busy while you're attending school. Sure, you will be spending long hours stuck in front of a computer, but you will be setting your own schedule, earning great money for part-time work, and possibly setting up a business that continues beyond high school.

## Job Search Tips for High School Students

**Don't Be Shy.** Tell everyone you know you are looking for a job. Many jobs aren't advertised and you may be able to get a good job lead from a friend or family member.

**Start Close to Home.** One good way to get experience when you are a high school student is to start by working for friends and neighbors. Babysitting, mowing lawns, landscaping, shoveling snow, and pet sitting all can be included on your resume. In addition, the people you work for will be able to give you a reference when you apply for other jobs.

**Keep an Open Mind.** Don't limit yourself to certain types of jobs. This is a tough market and you may not be able to find a job doing what you want to do. If you need a paycheck, keep an open mind when it comes to what you'll do to earn a paycheck. The more flexibility you have, the more opportunities you'll be able to apply for. Plus, even if the job wasn't your first choice, it may turn out to be better than you expected.

**Check the Rules.** Depending on how old you are, there are only certain jobs you can do and hours you can work.

**Get Working Papers.** In some states, workers under eighteen may need to obtain working papers (officially called Employment/Age Certificates) in order to legally be able to work.

**Write a Resume.** A resume, even though employers may not require it, can help you stand out from the competition. Even though you may not have much information to include, a resume shows that you're serious about your job search.

**Check With the Guidance Office.** Your High School Guidance Office staff should be able to help you with job listings and job search advice. There may be a bulletin board with job postings, a notebook with listings, and/or an online job board.

**Job Search Online.** Check websites that list local job openings. You can use the job search engines like Indeed.com to search by keyword part-time and your location to find job listings in your city or town. Check your local Chamber of Commerce website (Google your city/town name and Chamber of Commerce to find it) to see if they list jobs.

**Apply for Lots of Jobs.** Apply for as many jobs as possible. Keep applying, rather than waiting to hear back from one before you apply for another position. Spend as much time as you can applying and follow up by calling or emailing to check on your application.

**Dress Appropriately.** When you are applying in-person for jobs and interviewing, dress appropriately. Use the "Grandma Rule" - if you're grandmother would like your interview outfit, you are dressed properly.

**Be Flexible.** Be as flexible as possible when it comes to your availability. The more flexible you are, the more likely you are to get a job offer. Also know when you're available. Bring a list of the hours you can work with you when you apply in person or go an interview.

**Volunteer.** Even though you won't get a paycheck, volunteering is a great way to add experience to your resume, which will help you find a paid position in the future. Check with your High School Guidance office and with local non-profit organizations for volunteer opportunities.

## Top 10 Tips for Teens Completing Job Applications

When you're applying for a summer job or a part-time job for during the school year, your job application can make the difference in getting hired. Not completing the application accurately or legibly can get it tossed into the reject pile. So can leaving off information.

### **Get some references lined up.**

Practice filling out an application before you start actually applying for jobs. If you're not sure about something on the application, ask for help from a family member, guidance counselor or friend. If you get it right the first time, you'll have a better chance of getting hired.

**Whenever possible take the application home** or fill it out online, so you don't have to rush while sitting in an employment office. Make a list of all the information you need to include on your application prior to filling it out. Not sure what to say when you need to pick up an application for employment? Here's [how to ask for a job application](#).

**Neatness counts.** Have a friend or parent with nice handwriting fill out your applications with you if you have sloppy handwriting. If you have access to a copy machine, make a copy of it so it will be easier to fill out the rest of your applications by copying from the one that is complete.

**Show the employer that you can follow directions** by filling in all sections of the application form. If you don't have information to put in a box you can say N/A (not applicable). Review all the questions carefully to make sure you understand what they are asking for. If you don't have formal work experience, it's fine to list jobs like babysitting or yard work on your application. Request help from a parent or guidance counselor if you need assistance responding to any confusing items.

**Check your application for spelling and grammar mistakes** and have someone else review it, as well. Put your finger on every word to make sure it is okay even if you are typing and using spell-check.

**Make sure you emphasize the job responsibilities of your past jobs which are most relevant** to your target position when completing your descriptions. For example, suppose that you only spent 15% of your time generating documents in your campus job, but it will be the primary function in a target job. List that activity first on the application when describing your campus job, so your key qualification is easily noticed.

Use [action words](#) to lead your phrases when describing past jobs.

**Employers for teen jobs value reliability**, especially in terms of attendance and punctuality. Try to incorporate references to perfect attendance and punctuality, if possible.

**Don't forget to include any honors or awards** since employers will likely think a high GPA or Honor Society membership, for example, is evidence of a strong work ethic.

**Get a list of references.** Be prepared to furnish the names, job titles and contact information for references. If you haven't held a formal job, consider asking families for whom you babysit or have done odd jobs for, as well as teachers, neighbors or coaches. Let people know if you plan to list them as a reference so they won't be surprised if they get a call or email message.

**Check your phone.** You will need to list your phone number on the application, so be sure that the voice mail message on your cell is suitable for an employer to hear. Check messages regularly so you don't miss any calls from employers.



## **What to Put on Your Resume if You Have No Work Experience**

### **RELEVANT AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

Most resumes will begin with relevant work experience (or education followed by relevant experience if you're a new grad). That becomes a problem when relevant experience isn't your strong suit. But rather than waste that prime real estate on your resume on things that will just confuse the recruiter, start instead with your relevant skills.

And don't tell me you don't have any. There must be a reason why you think you can do this job. You might have transferable abilities from a previous, unrelated experience, or maybe you developed skills while in school doing academic projects. In any case, if you're a career changer, try tying all your skills together with a summary statement at the beginning of your resume. New grads pop your skills section from the bottom of your resume to the spot right under your education.

### **RELATED SIDE AND ACADEMIC PROJECTS**

Speaking of academic projects, it's important to note that those are fair game and should definitely be included in your resume. The same goes for side projects that you've tackled outside of work or school. As long as you are clearly labeling this experience as project work, there is nothing preventing you from including it in your resume—and you absolutely should! Don't make the assumption that only full-time; paid experiences can be on your resume.

One way to do this is to create a "Projects" section. Here, you would write about your project work the same way you would for work experience. Think about the experiences you've had that helped you realize your career interests. Was it a class project? Maybe you volunteered to help with something that ultimately sparked your newfound career goals—that's experience that you can include on your resume under a "Projects" section. Format it similarly to help the recruiter understand that this, too, is valuable experience that should be evaluated when considering your candidacy for the position you are interested in.

### **AN ENTHUSIASTIC AND SPECIFIC COVER LETTER**

Okay, this isn't technically part of your resume, but I am a firm believer of always coupling a resume with a strong cover letter. This is especially important if you have no relevant experience or a winding career path. As career expert Ryan Kahn explains, "find a way to connect your passions and life experiences with the company, then explain how that will translate into you hitting the ground running once you're hired. You'll find that link is exactly the kind of experience employers are looking for from recent grads."

This is true for career changers, too, but you also have a little bit more experience to work with. The cover letter is the perfect opportunity for you to connect the dots

between the company's needs and the skills you've built across your eclectic career. Be specific here. You want to really spell it out for hiring managers and explain why your non-traditional background might even be an asset, so that when they're done with your letter they have a good understanding of why it makes sense for them to hire you.

Breaking into a new career is hard work, especially since many entry-level jobs are now asking for two or three years of experience. The trick to overcoming this is to really tease out those details like relevant skills and related side projects, and break out of the resume "rules" that are preventing you from including them front and center on your resume. Add on a riveting cover letter and, with a combination of networking and some luck, you'll be sure to pique a hiring manager's interest soon.

## Sample Resume (Beginner):

### **Daniel Martin**

6 Bristol Street, Buffalo, NY 14201

home: 555.555.5555

cell: 566.486.2222

email: DMartin@aol.com

### **Education**

**Leonardo daVinci High School**, Buffalo, NY

*2014 - 2018*

### **Experience**

#### **Pet Sitter**

*2012 - Present*

- Provided pet sitting services including dog walking, feeding and yard care.

#### **Child Care**

*2013 - Present*

- Provided child care for several families after school, weekends and during school vacations.

### **Achievements**

- National Honor Society
- Academic Honor Roll

### **Volunteer Experience**

- Little League Coach
- Arlington Literacy Program
- Run for Life

### **Interests / Activities**

- Member of Leonardo daVinci High School Baseball Team
- Piano

### **Computer Skills**

- Proficient with Microsoft Office, Internet and Social Media

## More professional-oriented resume advice

Choose how much time you have, pick a (mini) project, and get ready for your resume to be that much more eye-catching.

### IF YOU HAVE 2 MINUTES:

1. If it's not done already, switch the font of your resume to Helvetica, Arial, or Times New Roman—in other words, make sure it's not hard to read (or stuck in Word's standard Calibri). Using a common, clean font may not make your resume the prettiest out there, but it will make it more readable (and less likely to be rejected by applicant tracking systems).
2. Remove "References Available Upon Request" (if they want references, they'll ask for them!), and use the extra space to add a detail about your abilities or accomplishments.
3. Delete the career objective. That boring boilerplate "I am a hard working professional who wants to work in [blank] industry" is a bit obvious—why else would you be submitting your resume? —And takes up valuable space.
4. Spell check (fo' serious), and correct any mistakes. WARNING: Spell check does not check capitalized text.
5. Save your resume as a PDF if it's in any other format. That way, the formatting won't get messed up when your resume is opened on a different computer.
6. Change the file name from "Resume" to "[First Name] [Last Name] Resume"—it makes things easier for hiring managers and ensures your resume doesn't get lost in the crowd.
7. Remove your address. If you're not local, recruiters might not look any further. If you are, recruiters may take your commute time into account and turn you down if they think it would be too long.
8. In its place, add a link to your LinkedIn profile, as well as any other relevant social media handles (Twitter if it's professional, Instagram or Flickr if you're applying to social media or creative positions). Caveat: Never include Facebook, no matter how clean you keep it.
9. Don't want to drop your whole ugly LinkedIn URL onto your resume? (Hint: You shouldn't.) Create a custom URL to your public profile using simply /yourname (or some similar, simple variation if somebody already has your name). LinkedIn has instructions on its website.

10. Make all of your hyperlinks live. Your resume is most likely going to be read on a computer, so making things like your email address, LinkedIn and other social profiles, and personal websites clickable makes it easier for the recruiter to learn more about you.
11. Omit any references to your birthdate, marital status, or religion. Since it's illegal for employers to consider this when looking at your application (at least in the U.S.), they can't request it (and offering it makes you look a little clueless).
12. If you're more than three years out of college, remove your graduation year. Recruiters only really want to know that you got a degree, and you don't want them to inadvertently discriminate based on your age.
13. While you're at it, do a little rearranging, and move education down below your experience. Unless you're a recent graduate, chances are your last one or two jobs are more important and relevant to you getting the job.
14. To improve readability, increase the line spacing (also called leading) to at least 120% of the font size. To do this in Word, go to Format and select Paragraph. In the pull down under Line Spacing, choose Exactly and set the spacing to two points above the size of your font (so, 12 if your font is 10 point).
15. Need a little more space to work with? Reduce your top and bottom margins to 0.5" and your side margins to no less than 0.75". This will keep your resume clean and readable but give you more room to talk about what you've got.

**IF YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES:**

1. Remove anything high school-related unless you're a year out of college or need to bulk up your resume and did something *highly* relevant (and awesome) during your high school years.
2. Update your skills section. Add any new skills you've gained, and remove anything that is a little dated (nobody wants to hear that you have Microsoft Word experience anymore—they expect it).
3. If you have lots of skills related to a position—say, foreign language, software, and leadership skills—try breaking out one of those sections and listing it on its own (“Language Skills” or “Software Skills”).
4. Double check that formatting is consistent across your resume. You want all headers to be in the same style, all indentations to line up, all bullet points to match, and the like. You don't want the styling to look sloppy!

5. Find any acronyms, and write out the full name of the title, certification, or organization. You should include both, at least the first time, to make sure the recruiter knows what you're talking about and so an applicant tracking system will pick it up no matter which format it is looking for. For example: Certified Public Accountant (CPA).
6. Unless you are a designer or are submitting a (carefully crafted) creative resume, remove any photos or visual elements. On a more traditional resume, they generally just distract from the information at hand (and can confuse applicant tracking systems).
7. If you have gaps of a few months in your work history, swap out the usual start and end dates for each position with years only (e.g., 2010-2012).
8. Swap out a couple of your boring verbs for some more powerful (and interesting) ones (check out our list if you need inspiration).
9. Swap out a couple of generic adjectives or titles (words like "detail-oriented" or "experienced" are overused and don't tell a recruiter much) with stronger language that better describes your more unique strengths.
10. Worked multiple jobs within the same organization? Learn how to list them right on your resume, then update it as such.
11. As a rule, you should only show the most recent 10-15 years of your career history and only include the experience relevant to the positions to which you are applying. So if you have anything really dated or random, remove it and use the space to bulk up other sections or add something more relevant.
12. Go through line by line and take note of any orphan words (single words left on a line by themselves). See how you can edit the previous line so they can fit—making your resume look cleaner and opening up extra lines for you to do other things with.
13. Make your document easier to skim by adding divider lines between sections. Check out section three of this great guide to resume formatting from LifeClever for instructions.
14. Include any numbers on your resume? Go through and change them all to numerical form, instead of written out (i.e., 30% instead of thirty percent). Even small numbers that are often spelled out should be written numerically—it makes them pop to the reviewer and saves space.

15. Read your resume out loud. This will not only help you catch any spelling or grammar errors, but it will also help you notice any sentences that sound awkward or that are hard to understand.

**IF YOU HAVE 10-15 MINUTES:**

1. Look at your resume “above the fold.” In other words, take a close look at the top third of your resume—the part that will show up on the screen when the hiring manager clicks “open” on that PDF. That’s what’s going to make your first impression—so make sure it serves as a hook that makes the hiring manager eager to read more.
2. Make sure you have no more than 6-7 bullet points for any given position. If you do? Cut and condense. No matter how long you’ve been in a job or how good your bullets are, the recruiter just isn’t going to get through them.
3. Give your resume to someone who doesn’t know you well to look at for 30 seconds. Then ask: What are the three most memorable things? What’s the narrative? Take this feedback and think about how you can adjust your resume to get it closer to where you want.
4. Similarly, drop your resume into a word cloud generator and see which keywords are popping out. If the most prominent ones aren’t what you want to be remembered by, or if there are important words that aren’t present, think about how you can tweak your resume to make that more clear.
5. Go through your bullet points, and add as many numbers and percentages as you can to quantify your work. How many people were impacted? By what percentage did you exceed your goals? (And, yes, it’s OK to estimate as long as you can roughly prove it.)
6. Pick a few statements to take one step further, and add in what the benefit was to your boss or your company. By doing this, you clearly communicate not only what you’re capable of, but also the direct benefit the employer will receive by hiring you.
7. Consider adding a qualifications section. (Perhaps in lieu of your now-deleted “Career Objective?”) This should be a six-sentence (or bullet pointed) section that concisely presents the crème of the crop of your achievements, major skills, and important experiences. By doing this, you’re both appeasing any applicant tracking systems with keywords and giving the hiring manager the juicy, important bits right at the top.

8. Update your resume header to make it pop. You don't have to have a ton of design knowledge to make a header that looks sleek and catches a recruiter's eye—check out this example for some simple, text-based inspiration. (Hint: Use this same header on your resume and cover letter to make your “personal brand” look really put together.)
9. Need to fill up more space on your resume, or feel like you're light on the experience? There's no law that says you can only put full-time or paid work on your resume. So, if you've participated in a major volunteer role, worked part-time, freelanced, or blogged? Add a couple of these things as their own “jobs” within your career chronology.
10. If you need more space on your resume, check and see if any of your formatting decisions are taking up unnecessary space. Does your header take up too much at the top? Do you have any extra line breaks that you don't really need? Tinker around with the formatting and see how much space you can open up (without your resume looking crowded or messy).
11. Look at each bullet point and make sure it's understandable to the average person. Remember that the first person who sees your resume might be a recruiter, an assistant, or even a high-level executive—and you want to be sure that it is readable, relevant, and interesting to all of them.
12. Make sure all of the experience on your resume is updated. Add any awards you've received, new skills you've taken on, articles you've published, or anything else awesome you've done.
13. Hop over to your LinkedIn profile, and make any updates you've just made to your resume to your summary and experience sections there.
14. Email three of your friends or professional contacts asking (nicely!) for a peek at their resumes. You might be able to get some inspiration for your own (or even help them out).
15. Get that baby out there. Find an awesome job to apply to with one of our partner companies, then get started on your cover letter with our easy-to-follow guide.



## Writing Cover Letters

To be considered for almost any position, you will need to write a letter of application. Such a letter introduces you, explains your purpose for writing, highlights a few of your experiences or skills, and requests an opportunity to meet personally with the potential employer.

Precisely because this letter is your introduction to an employer and because first impressions count, you should take great care to write an impressive and effective letter. Remember that the letter not only tells of your accomplishments but also reveals how effectively you can communicate.

The appropriate content, format, and tone for application letters vary according to the position and the personality of the applicant. Thus you will want to ask several people (if possible) who have had experience in obtaining jobs or in hiring in your field to critique a draft of your letter and to offer suggestions for revision. Despite the differences in what constitutes a good application letter, the suggestions on these pages apply generally.

### *What to include in a cover letter*

- Try to limit your letter to a single page. Be succinct.
- Assess the employer's needs and your skills. Then try to match them in the letter in a way that will appeal to the employer's self-interest.
- As much as possible, tailor your letter to each job opportunity. Demonstrate, if possible, some knowledge of the organization to which you are applying.
- Write in a style that is mature but clear; avoid long and intricate sentences and paragraphs; avoid jargon. Use action verbs and the active voice; convey confidence, optimism, and enthusiasm coupled with respect and professionalism.
- Show some personality, but avoid hard-sell, gimmicky, or unorthodox letters. Start fast; attract interest immediately.
- Arrange the points in a logical sequence; organize each paragraph around a main point.

### *How to organize a cover letter*

Below is one possible way to arrange the content of your cover letter.

#### **Opening Paragraph**

-State why you are writing.

-Establish a point of contact (advertisement in a specific place for a specific position; a particular person's suggestion that you write): give some brief idea of who you are (a Senior engineering student at UW; a recent Ph.D. in History).

#### **Paragraph(s) 2(-3)**

-Highlight a few of the most important points from your enclosed resume.

-Arouse your reader's curiosity by mentioning points that are likely to be important for the position you are seeking.

-Show how your education and experience suit the requirements of the position, and, by elaborating on a few points from your resume, explain what you could contribute to the organization.

(Your letter should complement, not restate, your resume.)

### **Closing paragraph**

-Stress action. Politely request an interview at the employer's convenience.  
-Indicate what supplementary material is being sent under separate cover and offer to provide additional information (a portfolio, a writing sample, a sample publication, a dossier, an audition tape), and explain how it can be obtained.

-Thank the reader for his/her consideration and indicate that you are looking forward to hearing from him/her.

### **Questions to guide your writing**

- Who is my audience?
- What is my objective?
- What are the objectives and needs of my audience?
- How can I best express my objective in relationship to my audience's objectives and needs?
- What specific benefits can I offer to my audience and how can I best express them?
- What opening sentence and paragraph will grab the attention of my audience in a positive manner and invite them to read further?
- How can I maintain and heighten the interest and desire of the reader throughout the letter?
- What evidence can I present of my value to my audience?
- If a resume is enclosed with the letter, how can I best make the letter advertise the resume?
- What closing sentence or paragraph will best assure the reader of my capabilities and persuade him or her to contact me for further information?
- Is the letter my best professional effort?
- Have I spent sufficient time drafting, revising, and proofreading the letter?

### **How to format a cover letter**

- Type each letter individually, or use a word processor.
- Use good quality bond paper.
- Whenever possible, address each employer by name and title.
- Each letter should be grammatically correct, properly punctuated, and perfectly spelled. It also should be immaculately clean and free of errors. Proofread carefully!
- Use conventional business correspondence form.

## Sample Cover Letter:

Dear Tech Magazine Hiring Manager,

When my literary journalism class read XXXXXXXXXXXX 2003 feature, "XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX" I was instantly captivated. Since then, I always pick up Tech Magazine first when I visit my local newsstand and frequently visit your website between issues. What keeps me coming back is Tech Magazine's ability to capture the interest of even non-technologically minded readers with its colloquial language and thorough reporting of fascinating, complex subjects in an award-winning magazine.

As the Section Editor for XXXXXXXXXXXXX Guide Book, I assembled my own 30-person writing staff and spent countless hours researching Los Angeles for restaurants, shops and things to do. I edited more than 250 reviews of Los Angeles businesses, maintained a comprehensive database of them and contributed some content myself. Further, my most recent position as a research assistant for Los Angeles Couture magazine has solidified my attention to detail, especially because my primary duties were fact-checking and research. The articles I verified ranged from store, designer and fashion blog reviews to a cover story about two up-and-coming fashion designers with Los Angeles roots. Fact-checking the latter piece two weeks before New York Fashion Week and working with the three-hour time difference significantly honed my time management and organizational skills.

I will receive my bachelors' degrees in journalism and economics from XXXXXXXXXXXX University this June. My journalism classes trained me to be meticulous, dedicated and curious, and my economics classes taught me the importance of how technology affects politics and the economy.

Additionally, researching vehicle summary updates and writing feature stories about Bluetooth, DVD and navigation systems for AllThingsAuto.com considerably piqued my interest in gadgets and technology. I know my education and experience will make me a valuable asset to your team as the research intern.

I will return to New York after my graduation on XXXXX 21, and with your permission, I would like to contact you in the next few weeks to see if we can meet in person. For your review, I have enclosed a resume and clips. Thank you for so much your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
XXXX XXXXXX

## Sample Resume (General):

### **Elena Lancheros**

6 Elm Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202  
Home: 716.655.1111 Cell: 716.444.4444  
elenalancheros@yahoo.com

#### **OBJECTIVE**

A weekend part time position in a retail store that sells music, books or sporting supplies.

#### **EDUCATION**

McKinley High School, Buffalo NY  
High School Diploma anticipated in May 2016 Junior, GPA 3.41

#### ***High School Awards and Honors***

National Honor Society: Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Spring 2014  
Middle School Academic Honor Roll: 2002, 2003  
Perfect Attendance 2006

#### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

*Bill's Lawn Care Co., Buffalo NY* *2004 to Present*

- Assisted family business to provide lawn and yard care services for 25 neighborhood homes bi-weekly.
- Created and distribute 200 flyers about lawn services using Print-to-Pretty software in the neighborhood monthly.
- Helped to stuff envelopes with invoices for monthly billing and enter payments into Quick spreadsheet software.

*Just Pizza, Buffalo NY* *Summer 2007*

- Restocked condiments, napkins and maintained a clean counter.
- Provided great customer service for more than 35 walk-in customers on each shift.
- Operated cash register, POS, and frequent guest card system.

#### **VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY**

Big Kids Society - 10 hours monthly  
Library Reading Program - 2 hours monthly  
5K Walk with family - October 2004, 2005, 2006

#### **INTERESTS & SKILLS**

-Buffalo Soccer League - Most Improved Player Award 2001  
-Bass Guitar - Indoor Marching Band 2nd Place Tournament of Bands 2008  
-Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and Internet Research

## Sample Resume (Artist):

Illustrator  
& Video Editor

### Education

**ESAD, Caldas da Rainha**  
(BA) Sound and Image  
2008 - 2011

**Duran Castaibert Fine Art School**  
**Torres Vedras, Portugal**  
Technical Drawing & Painting  
2002 - 2007

### Technical Skills

**Fine Art**  
Drawing & Painting  
Portrait  
Illustration / Digital Illustration  
Video Editing  
Photography  
Storyboard

Pencil & Paper ★★★★★  
Adobe Photoshop CS5 ★★★★★  
Adobe Illustrator CS5 ★★★★★  
Final Cut Pro ★★★★★  
Adobe Premiere ★★★★★  
After Effects ★★★★★  
Logic Pro ★★★★★  
Adobe SoundBooth ★★★★★

### Work Experience

**HOW . Multimedia**  
**Torres Vedras, Portugal**  
Full-Time Video Editor  
Mar. 2011 - Aug. 2011

**Caran d'Ache (Scriptus)**  
Freelancer  
Promotor & Product Demonstrator  
Jan. 2007 - Dec. 2010

**Duran Castaibert Fine Art School**  
Fine Art & Illustration Tutor  
Part Time & Full-Time  
Sep. 2005 - Jan. 2008

### Contacts

**Phone** 0753 1672 321  
**Email** [sssmog@gmail.com](mailto:sssmog@gmail.com)  
**Web** <http://cargocollective.com/smog>  
<http://vimeo.com/monicagomes>

# Mónica Gomes

I'm a portuguese illustrator highly motivated and passionate about art in general. I have a fine art background that took me into illustration, which later on, with the use of technology also took me to work with Digital Illustration. Later on I decided to join the University doing a (BA) in Sound & Image, working side by side with artists from different areas. I also have as interests books, art & fashion magazines and Photography.

Currently I am living in Central London and looking forward to start working with people that share my love for illustration & Video. Thank you for reading my résumé, hope to hear from you soon.

## First Job Interview Tips

Even though you're probably going to be really nervous when you go on your first job interview, the key to a successful first interview is to prepare for the interview, practice interviewing, dress appropriately and try to stay calm.

Remember, your interviewer is mostly likely used to interviewing first time job seekers. Plus, everyone has a first interview in their work history. After interviewing the first time, it will get much easier.

### ~~Before Your First Job Interview~~

**Research the Company.** Take some time to research the company so you are familiar with how they operate. There is a lot of company information available online.

**Learn About the Job.** Learn about the job you are looking to get. Ask yourself, "Why am I the best person for the job?" Do you know someone else who works at the company? Ask them about the job, the interview process, and the company.

**Watch a Job Interview Video.** Watch interview videos that offer tips to really be prepared.

**Practice Interviewing.** Review typical teen interview questions and answers and practice your responses before you go. Ask a family member or friend to ask you some questions, so you can practice your answers.

**Dress Appropriately.** Choose simple and appropriate attire for the position you are interviewing for. If you're not sure what to wear ask an adult family member, teacher, or guidance counselor. Take a look at the following sections of what you should and shouldn't wear.

**Write a Resume.** A resume will make a good impression on the interviewer. Bring a copy of your resume, if you have one, and a pen and paper ready to take along for notes.

**Get Directions and a Ride.** If you need a ride to the interview, line it up ahead of time. Make sure you know where you are going for the interview so that you do not get lost and are on time.

### ~~During Your First Job Interview~~

- If you're under 18 and your state requires teens to have working papers, bring your working papers with you.
- Try to stay cool, calm, and collected. Staying as calm as possible, will help you focus on the interviewer.

- If you feel flustered, pause and take a few deep breathes to gather your thoughts.
- Be confident in your skills and abilities when you are talking to the interviewer. Remember this is a first job and you aren't expected to have a lot of experience.
- Try to incorporate what you know about the company looking to hire you.
- Be honest. If you have sports or other activities that may conflict with your work schedule, tell the interviewer.
- Make eye contact and avoid distractions.
- Listen and take notes. Have a question ready to ask at the end of the interview. *(see Sample Appropriate Questions below)*
- At the end of the interview thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you.

## **~~After Your First Job Interview~~**

**Send a thank you note immediately after the interview. Remind them about how interested you are in the position they are looking to fill. Send a note to each person that interviewed you. (see following pages)**

### **Sample Post-Interview Appropriate Questions to ask:**

1. How has this position evolved since it was created?
2. What have past employees done to succeed in this position?
3. What have you enjoyed most about working here?
4. What is the top priority for the person in this position over the next three months?
5. What are the qualities of successful managers in this company?
6. If offered the position, can you give me examples of ways I would collaborate with my manager?
7. What are some challenges that will face the person filling this position?
8. Do you have any hesitations about my qualifications?

## Sample Thank You Note & Email:

### Note:

*Your street address  
Your City, State and Zip Code*

*Date of the letter*

*Name of the Recipient  
Job Title of the Recipient  
Name of the Employer  
Employer's Street Address  
Employer's City, State and Zip Code*

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the position of *[job title]* yesterday *[or today, if appropriate]*. I enjoyed speaking with you, meeting other members of the staff, and the opportunity to learn more about this position. I am very interested in this position and the opportunity to join your team.

This job feels like a very good match between my skills and experience and the requirements of this job. As we discussed, you need someone with strong *[whatever]* skills, and I have extensive experience with *[whatever technology or tool that is important to the job and that you have experience using]*. In addition, in my current *[or former]* job as *[names or type of employer in your past]* has provided the opportunity to polish my skills in *[whatever]* and *[whatever]* needed for your *[job title]* position.

Again, thank you for considering me for this wonderful opportunity. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns or need more information. I look forward to hearing from you next week *[or whenever they said they would be in touch]* and hope to join your staff soon.

Best regards,

*[your name]  
[ Your tagline, like "eCommerce Customer Support Specialist"]  
[Your job search email address]*



## **Email:**

Subject: Thank you for the *[Job Title]* position interview on *[date]*

Dear *[Mr./Ms. Last Name]*:

Thank you very much for your time today *[or yesterday or the date]* to interview me for the position of *[job title]*. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about this job, to meet you and *[names of other interviewers]*, and to see your facility *[or offices, location, whatever is appropriate]*.

*[Reference anything you said that seemed important to the interviewer, like: As we discussed, I find the technology related to using cloud computing fascinating and an amazing opportunity for the future, but security is also a major concern. Keeping XYZ Company's information safe would be a top priority for the person in this job, and I would love to dig deeply into the protective technologies, as well as the threats, to avoid future problems.]*

*[Reference the "connection" you may have made, like: I enjoyed finding someone else who attended XYZ College and also roots for the hockey team. Hope they make the NCAA Division finals next year!]*

As we discussed, I have *[months or years]* of experience with *[technology, tools, or qualification you have that seemed most important in the interview]*. With my background and experience, I believe that I could become a contributor to your team very quickly.

I am excited about this opportunity to join *[organization name]*. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

I look forward to hearing from you *[whenever they said they would be in touch or in 10 days if they didn't give you a date]*.

Best regards,

*[Your name]*

*[ Your job title or tagline, like "eCommerce Customer Support Specialist"]*

*[LinkedIn Profile URL]*

*[Phone number -- **not** your work number if you are employed]*

## **Job Interview Strategies for Teens: Expert Tips for During and After the Interview**

- **Punctuality and reliability are a matter of show and tell.** Obviously, you can show your punctuality by arriving 5 to 15 minutes early for the interview. But you can also tell about your punctuality and reliability based on your performance in previous jobs. "If someone's gotten up at 6 a.m. since she was 10 to deliver newspapers, I know that she's probably not going to be late in the mornings coming to work," observes Maureen Hentz, who formerly hired teens for specific jobs at the New England Aquarium. Similarly, if you have a stellar attendance record in school, you can cite that.
- **"Remember you are making an impression from the first moment you walk in the door,"** cautions Amy Brenengen, youth program/GirlVenture manager for WomenVenture in St. Paul, MN. "Chances are the receptionist or the first person you see will tell the hiring manager if your behavior before the interview isn't as respectful and optimistic as when you meet the manager for the interview."
- **Don't chew gum.** Gum chewing is a major turnoff for employers, as it was for photographer Jeanie Collins when she interviewed a young woman for a campus job while in grad school. "When she opened her mouth to respond to my first question," Collins recalls, "a bright pink piece of bubble gum flew out of her mouth and hit my notepad."
- **Don't downplay your previous experience, no matter how lowly it seems.** "I'm amazed by the number of teens who say 'well, I've never really worked before, other than babysitting or being a camp counselor or mowing lawns,'" notes Maureen Hentz. "These are jobs where promptness and responsibility are key. If she's been babysitting for the same family every Saturday night for three years, this tells me that she does a good job, has built rapport with the kids, and is trusted by the family. If she's gotten a babysitting certificate from the Red Cross, I know that she is interested in learning more about her job. All of these are transferable experiences. Transferable skills from any of these jobs could include being flexible, creative, a good communicator, promptness, handling money, responding to customer feedback, setting and keeping a schedule, as well as balancing schoolwork with other activities." Echoes Amy Brenengen: Volunteer work, babysitting, and working at Mom's, Dad's, auntie's, or a neighbor's office all count as work history when you are applying for a job.
- **Avoid peppering interviews with "um" and "like."** The best way to get past overusing these "pause words" is practice. As you conduct practice interviews with friends and family, have them flag you if you start inserting too many "um's" and "like's" into your interview responses.

- **Make eye contact.** It's extremely important for connecting with your interviewer. When asked a question, don't look up at walls and ceiling as if searching for answers. Don't cast your eyes downward. *One expert, recognizing that eye contact is hard to maintain in a one-on-one situation, says to look at interviewer's nose.*
- **Be yourself.** Emily Hamvay remembers how her trademark wackiness and humor paid off for her when she interviewed for a job as a hostess at a restaurant. "The interviewer asked me why I wanted to work at the restaurant," Hamvay recalls. "Without even a blink of eye I retorted with, 'Sir, I have a terrible addiction'... pause ... a look of bewilderment came across his face ... 'I just can't get enough of the chicken Marsala at this place. I figure, I better start working here or take out a loan.' After a few more chuckles, he hired me on the spot."
- **Be memorable.** Hamvay's humor certainly made her memorable, but Jeanie Collins offers another trick for sticking in the interviewer's consciousness. "Always have a visual trademark. I always used to wear a conservative suit with a lapel pin in the shape of a dragonfly. You could find a pin that represents a hobby you have, such as a sailboat or a tennis racket. Then, when the interviewer asks what kinds of pastimes you enjoy, you can link the pin into the conversation. Later, when the interviewer is narrowing down the herd, you are sure to stand out."
- **Show your enthusiasm.** Employers list lack of enthusiasm as their No. 1 turnoff in interviewees. The best way to show enthusiasm? A big smile throughout the interview. But, as Hamvay puts it, "not one of those psycho smiles, but one that looks like you are singing Christmas carols at a home for the elderly."
- **Project confidence.** The scary world of job interviewing is new to teens, but overcoming the fear and appearing confident is a great way to stand out. Teen girls are especially vulnerable to appearing timid in interviews because they sometimes lapse into "little girl" voices. One of the best ways to show confidence is with a strong, forceful voice. No matter how shaky you may feel inside, try your best to show a confident attitude. "A strong, confident, charming young woman can often win over everyone, both men and women alike," notes law student Trinity Hundredmark Fitzpatrick.
- **Ask questions.** Interviewers almost always invite you at the end of the interview to ask questions. Asking questions shows your enthusiasm for the job, so have a couple prepared, but don't ask about things like salary or vacation time. Recent college graduate Colleen Holuk suggests asking questions like: How long have you been working here? What's the best part of your job?
- **Close the sale.** If you want the job, say so. Conclude the interview by thanking the interviewer and making a statement that conveys your enthusiasm for the position. You could also ask if the interviewer has any questions or concerns about your ability to do the job. If the interviewer expresses any reservations, you can address them and try to ease the employer's qualms. Gail Fox, assistant director of career

services, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, further suggests that you always find out when the employer will be making a hiring decision and how the hiring manager will communicate that to you -- or if you need to follow up.

### **Expert Tips for Teens... After the Job Interview**

- **Write a thank-you note. It's just common courtesy to thank people for their time, and since very few teens exercise this little gesture, you'll stand out if you do it. If the interviewer has a business card, ask for one to ensure you spell his or her name correctly. One teen job-seeker we know interviewed for a job at Kmart. As soon as she got home, she wrote a thank-you note and turned right around and went back to Kmart to hand-deliver it. She got the job.**
- If you haven't heard a hiring decision by the time you expected to, call the interviewer to check on your status. Don't make a pest of yourself, but do follow up.

## **How To Dress for Work:**

### *~~CASUAL ENVIRONMENT~~*

Your Company's objective in establishing a relaxed, casual, and informal work dress code is to enable our employees to work comfortably in the workplace. Yet, certain standards are established so employees are not confused about the meaning of the terms: relaxed, casual, and informal dress. Because no customers or clients are served in person at our company location, our chief concern is the comfort of our employees.

#### **Casual Dress Code Guidelines**

Because all casual clothing is not suitable for the office, these guidelines will help you determine what is appropriate to wear to work. Clothing that works well for the beach, yard work, dance clubs, exercise sessions, and sports contests may not be appropriate for a professional, casual appearance at work.

Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, your back, your chest, your stomach or your underwear is not appropriate for a place of business. In our work environment, clothing should be pressed and never wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable.

#### **Casual Business Attire Recommendations**

In a casual work setting, employees should wear clothing that is comfortable and practical for work, but not distracting or offensive to others. Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other employees is unacceptable. Clothing that has the company logo is encouraged. Sports team, university, and fashion brand names on clothing are generally acceptable.

#### **Makeup, Perfume, and Cologne**

Remember that some employees are allergic to the chemicals in perfumes and makeup, so wear these substances with restraint.

#### **Dress Code for Travel, Client Interaction, and Trade Shows**

While the office setting can be casual because customers don't visit, traveling to see customers, exhibiting at or attending trade shows, and representing the company in the business community, requires different decisions about attire. Business casual dress is the minimum standard that must be observed when you are representing the company or interacting with customers or potential customers.

Before visiting a customer or potential customer ascertain the accepted dress code and match it in your attire. This is especially important when you are traveling globally representing the company as customs and dress may differ from those observed in the United States.

Additionally, some community events, when you are representing the company, might require formal dress. These might include Chamber of Commerce and other civic or business development meetings, luncheons, and dinners. Take your cue from other employees who have attended and be observant at the event. Certainly, if you are a speaker at a business event, consider wearing formal dress.

Finally, on the occasions when a customer or a business partner does visit the office, the employee groups with whom the visitor is interacting, should adhere to business casual standards.

### **Conclusion**

No dress code can cover all contingencies so employees must exert a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear to work. If you experience uncertainty about acceptable casual attire for work, please ask your supervisor or your Human Resources staff.

If clothing fails to meet these standards, as determined by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources staff, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again. If the problem persists, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. All other policies about personal time use will apply. Progressive disciplinary action will be applied if dress code violations continue.

### *~~Business Casual Environment~~*

Here's a sample dress code for a business casual work environment. Use these guidelines as you dress for work or prepare your own work dress code. Employees appreciate knowing your expectations - if they exist.

### **A Business Casual Dress Code**

Your Company's objective in establishing a business casual dress code is to allow our employees to work comfortably in the workplace. Yet, we still need our employees to project a professional image for our customers, potential employees, and community visitors.

Business casual dress is the standard for this dress code.

Because all casual clothing is not suitable for the office, these guidelines will help you determine what is appropriate to wear to work. Clothing that works well for the beach, yard work, dance clubs, exercise sessions, and sports contests may not be appropriate for a professional appearance at work.

Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, your back, your chest, your feet, your stomach or your underwear is not appropriate for a place of business, even in a business casual setting.

Even in a business casual work environment, clothing should be pressed and never wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable. All seams must be finished. Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other employees is unacceptable. Clothing that has the company logo is encouraged. Sports team, university, and fashion brand names on clothing are generally acceptable.

Certain days can be declared dress down days, generally Fridays.

On these days, jeans and other more casual clothing, although never clothing potentially offensive to others, are allowed.

### **Guide to Business Casual Dressing for Work**

This is a general overview of appropriate business casual attire. Items that are not appropriate for the office are listed, too. Neither list is all-inclusive and both are open to change. The lists tell you what is generally acceptable as business casual attire and what is generally not acceptable as business casual attire.

No dress code can cover all contingencies so employees must exert a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear to work. If you experience uncertainty about acceptable, professional business casual attire for work, please ask your supervisor or your Human Resources staff.

### **Slacks, Pants, and Suit Pants**

Slacks that are similar to Dockers and other makers of cotton or synthetic material pants, wool pants, flannel pants, dressy capris, and nice looking dress synthetic pants are acceptable. Inappropriate slacks or pants include jeans, sweatpants, exercise pants, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, shorts, bib overalls, leggings, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants such as people wear for biking.

### **Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits**

Casual dresses and skirts, and skirts that are split at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public. Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. Mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate for the office.

### **Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets**

Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, golf-type shirts, and turtlenecks are acceptable attire for work. Most suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire for the office, if they violate none of the listed guidelines. Inappropriate attire for work includes tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans; halter-tops; tops with bare shoulders; sweatshirts, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress.

### **Shoes and Footwear**

Conservative athletic or walking shoes, loafers, clogs, sneakers, boots, flats, dress heels, and leather deck-type shoes are acceptable for work. Wearing no stockings is acceptable in warm weather. Flashy athletic shoes, thongs, flip-flops, slippers, and any shoe with an open toe are not acceptable in the office. Closed toe and closed heel shoes are required in the manufacturing operation area.

### **Jewelry, Makeup, Perfume, and Cologne**

Should be in good taste, with limited visible body piercing. Remember, that some employees are allergic to the chemicals in perfumes and make-up, so wear these substances with restraint.

### **Hats and Head Covering**

Hats are not appropriate in the office. Head Covers that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition are allowed.

### **Conclusion**

If clothing fails to meet these standards, as determined by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources staff, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again.

If the problem persists, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. All other policies about personal time use will apply. Progressive disciplinary action will be applied if dress code violations continue.

### *~~Business Formal Environment~~*

Your Company's objective in establishing a formal work dress code is to enable our employees to project the professional image that is in keeping with the needs of our clients and customers to trust us.

Because our industry requires the appearance of trusted business professionals and we serve clients at our site on a daily basis, a more formal dress code is necessary for our employees. You must project the image of a trustworthy, knowledgeable business professional for the clients who seek our guidance, input, and professional services.

### **Formal Dress Code Guidelines**

In a formal business environment, the standard of dressing for men and women is a suit, a jacket and pants or a skirt, or a dress paired with appropriate accessories.

Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, your back, your chest, your feet, your stomach or your underwear is not appropriate for a place of business. In our work environment, clothing should be pressed and never wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable. All seams must be finished. Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to other employees is unacceptable.



### **Dress Down Days**

Certain days can be declared dress down days, generally Fridays. On these days, business casual clothing, although never clothing potentially offensive to others, is allowed. Clothing that has the company logo is encouraged. Sports team, university, and fashion brand names on clothing are generally acceptable.

You might want to keep a jacket in your office for the days when a client unexpectedly appears on a dress down day, especially if the client is wearing a suit.

### **Formal Business Attire Recommendations**

This is an overview of appropriate formal business attire. The lists tell you what is generally acceptable as formal business attire and what is generally not acceptable as formal business attire.

No dress code can cover all contingencies so employees must exert a certain amount of judgment in their choice of clothing to wear to work. If you experience uncertainty about acceptable, professional formal business attire for work, please ask your supervisor or your Human Resources staff.

### **Slacks, Pants, and Suit Pants**

Slacks that are similar to Dockers and other makers of cotton or synthetic material pants, wool pants, flannel pants, pants that match a suit jacket, and nice looking dress synthetic pants are acceptable. Inappropriate slacks or pants include any that are too informal.

This includes jeans, sweatpants, exercise pants, Bermuda shorts, short shorts, shorts, bib overalls, leggings, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants such as people wear for exercise or biking.

### **Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits**

Dresses, skirts, skirts with jackets, dressy two-piece knit suits or sets, and skirts that are split at or below the knee are acceptable. Dress and skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public. Short, tight skirts that ride halfway up the thigh are inappropriate for work. Mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate for the office.

### **Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets**

Shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, and turtlenecks are acceptable attire for work if they contribute to the appearance of formal, professional dress. Most suit jackets or sport coats are also desirable attire for the office. Inappropriate attire for work includes tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans; halter-tops; tops with bare shoulders or plunging necklines; golf-type shirts; sweatshirts; and t-shirts.

### **Shoes and Footwear**

Conservative walking shoes, dress shoes, oxfords, loafers, boots, flats, dress heels, and backless shoes are acceptable for work. Not wearing stockings or socks is

inappropriate. Athletic shoes, tennis shoes, thongs, flip-flops, slippers, and any casual shoe with an open toe are not acceptable in the office.

### **Accessories and Jewelry**

Tasteful, professional ties, scarves, belts, and jewelry are encouraged. Jewelry should be worn in good taste, with limited visible body piercing.

### **Makeup, Perfume, and Cologne**

A professional appearance is encouraged and excessive makeup is unprofessional. Remember that some employees are allergic to the chemicals in perfumes and makeup, so wear these substances with restraint.

### **Hats and Head Covering**

Hats are not appropriate in the office. Head Covers that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural tradition are allowed.

### **Conclusion**

If clothing fails to meet these standards, as determined by the employee's supervisor and Human Resources staff, the employee will be asked not to wear the inappropriate item to work again. If the problem persists, the employee may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. All other policies about personal time use will apply. Progressive disciplinary action will be applied if dress code violations continue.

## **Workplace Etiquette:**

When you move to a new workplace, always err on the side of caution and use those first few days to casually observe your fellow colleagues and to try to establish what's considered 'reasonable' behavior and what isn't. If you're unsure about certain things such as if it's acceptable to have your mobile phone on, for example, or the specifics of the dress code, ask a colleague. However, there are a number of workplace 'dos and don'ts' that are commonly accepted by most companies.

### **Workplace Don'ts**

Often, it's a simple matter of using your common sense and behaving in a manner that shows courtesy and respect for others but there are numerous things that you should obviously not get involved with or encourage. Here's a list of some of the most commonly cited examples of behavior that is often frowned upon and even not tolerated by most companies, regardless of type. Disregarding these, it can often, at best, make you unpopular or, at worst, might even get you fired. Things you shouldn't do at work include:

- Don't engage in idle gossip about other colleagues or your boss or 'bad mouth' them
- Don't get involved in any banter which might have sexual or racial overtones
- Be modest and don't harp on about any of your previous achievements or be an attention seeker
- Don't try to court favor with your boss or immediate supervisors. Just doing your job in the best way you can is the most productive way of impressing those higher up the ladder than you
- Don't assume something is acceptable practice in either conversations you might have or actions you might consider taking. A good example of this is assuming that it's OK to leave your mobile phone on silent or vibrate, yet still respond to text messages, for example. Establish the position on that and other things you're not sure about first such as eating at your desk or workstation, which is another good example where people often do the wrong thing.

### **Workplace Dos**

There are a number of things that you should do if you want to be seen as a valuable member of the team and to be considered a valued colleague. These can include:

- Being respectful and courteous towards others - even if you don't necessarily like a particular person
- Keep your voice at an acceptable level. A loud voice which is noticeable in a particular work environment can not only be counterproductive for others who are trying to get on with their work but can be extremely annoying
- Offer to help others if there's anything you might be able to do to assist them and make their job easier if you've time to do so

- Dress appropriately and adopt a similar degree of formality/informality once you've established the acceptable 'code of conduct'
- Make sure you understand the rules surrounding e-mail etiquette and the use of your mobile phone
- Remember you're being paid to work so keep idle chit-chat and other things that may take your attention away from what you've been employed to do to a minimum.
- Stay positive and upbeat and...smile!

These are just simple dos and don'ts which reflect general workplace etiquette in most workplaces and are often as much about using your own common sense as anything else. However, this entire website contains more specific articles which may be of more relevance to a particular situation you're faced with at work in terms of what you should and shouldn't be doing or saying.

## How to Send a Business/Formal Email:

### STEP 1:

**Use a neutral Email address.** Your Email address should be a variation of your real name, not a username or nickname. Use periods, hyphens, or underscores to secure an e-mail address that's just your name, without extra numbers or letters, if you can. Never use an unprofessional email address. No one will take you seriously if your reply-to is monsignor.harry.manback@slip'nslides.net.

### STEP 2:

**Use a short and accurate subject header.**

Avoid saying too much in the subject header, but make sure it reflects the content of your Email to a person unfamiliar with you. If possible, include a keyword that will make the Email content easier to remember and/or search for in a crowded inbox. For example, "Meeting on March 12th" is specific enough that the email topic won't be mistaken for anything else but not so specific as to be distracting (ex. "Schedule, Guest List, Lunch Requests, and Meeting Overview for March 12th").

### STEP 3:

**Use a proper salutation.** Addressing the recipient by name is preferred. Use the person's title (Mr. Mrs. Ms. or Dr.) with their last name, followed by a comma or a colon. Optionally, you can precede the salutation with "Dear..." (but "Hello..." is acceptable as well). Using a last name is more formal and should be used unless you are on first-name terms with the recipient. If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to (but you really should try and find one) use "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Sir or Madam" followed by a colon.

### STEP 4:

**Introduce yourself in the first paragraph (if necessary).** Also include why you're writing, and how you found that person's Email address, or the opportunity you're writing about. Example:

- *My name is Earl Rivers. I'm contacting you to apply for the administrative assistant position listed on CareerXYZ.com.*
- *My name is Arlene Rivers. I am writing about the traffic citation I received on December 31, 2009. I obtained your Email address from the Westchester County Clerk website.*

### STEP 5:

**Write the actual message.** Be sure to get your point across without rambling; if it's fluffed up, the reader may glance over the important details. Try to break up the message into paragraphs by topic to make your message more logical and digestible.

- The email should be no more than 5 paragraphs long and each paragraph should be no more than 5 sentences long.
- Insert a line break between each paragraph; indenting isn't necessary and will likely be lost during the email transfer anyway.
- Be sure to avoid informal writing.

**STEP 6:**

**Use the correct form of leave-taking.** This will depend on your level of intimacy with the recipient. Examples include:

- *Yours sincerely,*
- *Yours cordially,*
- *Respectfully,*
- *Best,*

**STEP 7:**

**Sign with your full name.** If you have a job title, include that in the line after your name, and write the company name or website in the line after that. If you do not have a job title but you have your own blog or website related to the content of the e-mail, include a link to that below your name. If the e-mail is about a job, only include a career-related website or blog, not hobbies or interests.

**STEP 8:**

**Proofread your message for content.** Make sure you haven't omitted any important details (or repeated yourself). Reading your email aloud or asking someone to proofread it is a great way to get a different perspective on what you've written.

**STEP 9:**

**Proofread your message for spelling and grammar.** If your email provider doesn't already provide spelling and grammar options for you, copy and paste your email into a word processor, revise it if necessary, and copy and paste it back into your email.

## How to Quit Your Job Professionally and Graciously:

Leaving a job is a process filled with questions of professional courtesy: Should you give two weeks' notice? Do you have to tell your boss in person? Should you notify your co-workers? A slighted employee may decide to sacrifice the stellar reputation he or she has built in exchange for a grudging departure that violates professional etiquette.

*But tossing aside proper protocol could cost you the respect of colleagues and remove your boss from your reference list.* Follow the steps below to ensure your exit is a smooth one.

**1. Notify your boss in person.** The type of organization you work for and position you hold may dictate a different approach to how you break the news, says Sue Fox, author of "Business Etiquette for Dummies." But generally, it's best to schedule a meeting and let your boss know in person. "It just makes a better impression," Fox says, adding that it "shows respect, self-confidence and that you have strong interpersonal skills."

**2. Give plenty of notice.** Giving a two-week notice is the recognized norm. It's also a positive way to jumpstart the transition process, says Ian Ide, president of search divisions at Winter Wyman, a Massachusetts-based recruiting firm.

For employees with a position that requires a specialized skill set, it's recommended to give more advanced warning. "In some cases, they may be the only ones with the knowledge of the area they're handling, and if they give a little more notice, they might be able to transition that knowledge before departing," Ide says.

**3. Don't feel obligated to explain your reason for leaving.** Barring a non-compete clause in your contract or a counteroffer situation, you don't have to give the company detailed reasons for your departure, Ide says.

But if you have a chummy relationship with your boss, you may want to offer constructive criticism on what the organization can do to improve or retain employees. However, if the comments could cause backlash, it's best to avoid specifics, Ide says.

**4. Avoid emotional outbursts.** Launching into a tirade against your boss may provide some momentary bliss, but it can haunt you later. His or her endorsement may be critical in helping you land future jobs. Also, it's possible you could work for him or her again in the future, Fox says.

**5. Don't leave your employer in a bind.** You may be eager to start your new job in two weeks, but with a company project in the final stages and your boss in need of your expertise, you may need to stay longer.

Early in the courting process, let prospective employers know you may need more time before starting. "It's always much better to be upfront in the beginning ... of the interview process," Ide says, especially when many companies have the expectation that new hires only need two weeks before jumping ship.

**6. You want everyone to be a positive reference.** Satisfied that your listed reference from the company holds you in high regard, you may become unconcerned with the opinions of other colleagues, disregarding office protocol on matters such as arriving on time or preparing for meetings. But it's important to leave a good impression behind with everyone you interact with. Employers can use avenues like social media to find non-listed references "because they expect that a supplied reference is always going to give them a positive [endorsement]," Ide says. And based on your lackluster performance during the final weeks, he or she may paint an unflattering portrait.

**7. Keep colleagues in the loop.** Co-workers you've known for years merit a heads up about your decision rather than the sight of an empty desk and days of speculating about what happened to their colleague. In an announcement email, write about your positive experiences working for the company and avoid trashing it. "Always take the high road, and be as positive as a possible" when constructing the email.

**8. Show gratitude toward the most influential.** While you may have worked well with everyone, one or two individuals may have been instrumental in helping you achieve success. Verbally thank them or write a personal note describing how the working relationship positively benefited you, Fox says.

If the relationship between you and your boss was strained, pen a note that finds the silver lining. "Even if it wasn't the most ideal situation or a fabulous boss, just be positive in the letter," Fox says. "You don't need to lie or go overboard, but show your appreciation."





## **Post High School Options:**

## **Trade Schools in Buffalo, NY**

If you want an education that leads to an amazing career, a Trade School in Buffalo is the place for you. One of the things I'm sure you want to know before you become fully trained is whether or not there will actually be a job waiting for you when you graduate. As you know, the economy is going through a bit of a rough patch and some career choices do not show long-term trends for growth.

Luckily, by going through a trade school you will find cosmetology, business, tech, diving, culinary schools, and much more. So you're not limited to just one specific career and have a wide range of options to choose from.

Consequently, this confirms that you are definitely on the right track by searching for **trade schools in Buffalo NY**.

The purpose of this article is to present you with an overview of trade schools in Buffalo NY, explaining how these schools differ from traditional four-year colleges and why they can make an excellent choice if you're looking to break into the industry as soon as possible.

If you're a high school graduate considering the possibility of attending trade school in the near future, and you want to know what benefits such a decision could offer, read this article to find out more.

### **What are Trade Schools?**

Trade schools, also known as vocational schools, are post-secondary schools – meaning that students usually enroll after graduating from high school or obtaining their GEDs – that teach the skills necessary to help students acquire jobs in specific industries.

Some of the most common careers for graduates of these schools include:

- Construction Worker
- Electrician
- Auto or Diesel Mechanic
- Welder
- HRVAC Technician

In addition, some schools also offer programs in health care, culinary arts, and computer technology.

### **How Do Trade Schools in Buffalo NY Differ from Traditional Colleges?**

The biggest difference between trade school and traditional college is the amount of time students need to complete their education. Most vocational schools in Buffalo offer programs that students can complete in about one year. Students attending traditional colleges often take four to five years to complete their education.

Traditional colleges also require students to complete a liberal arts education; they must enroll in a broad range of courses that are not necessarily related to their area of study. Vocational schools only require students to enroll in classes that pertain to their particular trades.

### **Who is the Best Candidate for a Trade School Education?**

There really is no “best candidate” for a vocational school education. However, individuals who enroll often fit into one of the following categories:

- They are attempting to gain experience to enter a new industry.
- They want to shorten the amount of time needed for training.
- They have decided to experiment in an industry before jumping into the job market.
- They need to decide what career they’re most interested in.

Similarly, some students who enroll are attending classes as part of their industry apprenticeship or as part of their on-the-job training in a particular career field.

### **How Do Students Succeed in Trade Schools?**

The formula for success as a trade school student is very simple. Simply follow these three steps:

- Attend classes
- Ask Questions
- Complete assignments on time
- Pass exams

If you can follow these steps, you’re almost guaranteed to be awarded your certificate or diploma after completing your program.

### **Recommended Trade Schools in New York**

The programs featured below are offered by excellent, accredited trade/vocational schools and are recommended as potential options for most students.

#### **Lincoln Tech**

**Visit <http://www.lincolntech-usa.com/>**

Get a hands-on education at Lincoln Tech. Designed for today’s tough job market, our in-depth programs cover many fields including: Health Sciences, Business and Information Technology, Hospitality, Automotive Technology, HVAC Technology and Electrical Systems Technology. Financial Aid is available for those who qualify.

Programs vary by campus.

Programs:

- Automotive Technology
- Electrical

**Locations: Union**

#### **Universal Technical Institute**

Put your career in gear with Universal Technical Institute's campus in Glendale Heights, Illinois, an ASE/NATEF Master Certified provider of post-secondary technical education training.

Programs:

- Automotive Technology
- Diesel

**Locations: Norwood**

### **New York Automotive & Diesel Institute**

Welcome to New York Automotive & Diesel Institute. We're known exclusively for training students to become Master Automotive, Diesel & Collision Technicians - knowledgeable in all aspects of repair and service of cars, trucks and diesel engines.

Programs:

- Certified Automotive Technician
- Master Certified Automotive Technician
- Master Certified Collision Repair Technician
- And more...

**Locations: Jamaica**

### **WyoTech**

The career-focused programs at WyoTech can give you the hands-on training you need to succeed. Program areas include mechanics, technician training, and technology.

Programs:

- Advanced Automotive Diagnostics
- Automotive Technology
- Collision/Refinishing Technology
- And more...

**Locations: Blairsville**

### **Penn Foster**

Penn Foster offers affordable, self-paced career-focused distance education programs in fields like business, criminal justice, health services, technology, engineering, paralegal studies and more.

Programs:

- Auto Repair Technician
- HVACR Technician
- Motorcycle Repair Technician
- And more...

### **Ridley-Lowell Business & Technical Institute**

Get hands-on training with Ridley-Lowell Business & Technical Institute. Our campuses in New York and Connecticut can help give you career training in a wide variety of fields, including accounting, cosmetology, criminal justice, electrical systems technology, HVAC, IT, legal assisting, massage therapy, allied health, office administration, and more.

Programs:

- HVAC Installation Technician - Eve

- HVAC Installation Technician - Day
- Electrical Systems Technician - Day
- And more...

**Locations: Poughkeepsie**

**New England Institute of Technology**

**New England Institute of Technology** is a private, non-profit, co-educational technical college offering over 30 Associate in Science, Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degree programs. As a leader in Technical Career Education in southern New England, New England Tech is committed to providing hands-on technological programs that prepare graduates for positions of leadership in the technical, industrial, business, and allied health communities. Most of our associate degree programs can be completed in as little as 18 months, and bachelor's degree programs in as little as three years.

Programs:

- Associate in Science in Automotive High Performance
- Associate in Science in Automotive Technology
- Associate in Science in Refrigeration / Air Conditioning Technology
- And more...

**Locations: Warwick**

**Branford Hall Career Institute**

Branford Hall Career Institute offers career-focused education that gives you the job skills you need to make the leap into some of today's hottest careers.

Programs:

- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Service Technology

**Locations: Bohemia**

**Fortis Institute**

**Visit [www.fortis.edu](http://www.fortis.edu)**

Fortis Institute can give you the skills you need to train for a career in the healthcare field.

\* Programs vary by location

\* Please contact each individual campus for accreditation information

Programs:

- HVAC

**Locations: Erie**

**How Do I Know If I've Chosen the Right Trade School to Attend?**

To figure out if the vocational school you've chosen is going to help you succeed, there are five things you should consider:

- Job placement rate
- Graduation rate
- Facilities
- Student services

- Tuition and fees

A good trade school will have a high job placement and graduation rate. This indicates that students find the classes enjoyable and are going straight into the workforce as soon as they complete their program.

You also want to attend a school whose facilities are up-to-date to ensure that you are learning the latest technologies that apply to your field.

Schools that offer numerous student services show they are invested in students' futures and will strive to help them succeed.

Lastly, when reviewing a school's tuition and fees, make sure there aren't any hidden expenses that you will not be able to afford. A good school will not hide this information from prospective students.

### **Do Trade Schools Offer Online Courses?**

Many trade schools do offer students the option of taking online courses. These courses allow students to complete coursework around their own schedules from the comfort of their home.

While online courses might work for students seeking careers in health care or computer technology, those students who are interested in careers that require hands-on training should enroll in schools that offer in-class instruction.

You can't learn how to be an electrician or welder by staring at a computer screen. You need to get in the classroom and learn how to work with the tools of your trade and gain the real life experience you'll need to succeed in your field.

Furthermore, many online schools do not offer students the same services as those that provide in-class instruction. So, you have to ask yourself if it's worth giving up services such as job placement to be able to attend school in your pajamas.

### **What are the Benefits of a Trade School Education?**

A trade school education offers many benefits to students, including:

- Teaches essential job-related skills
- Offers hands-on training
- Requires less time to graduate than traditional college
- Provides easy transition from classroom to the workforce
- Increases job security

Employers also prefer to hire individuals who have received job-related training before entering the industry. Vocational schools will provide you with this training to help you become more appealing to future employers.

**How Much Does It Cost to Attend Trade School?**

Depending upon the school you choose and the classes you enroll in, the cost can vary. You should verify any costs with your particular school before you begin classes.

If you think you won't be able to afford your education, don't forget to review available financing options. Some schools may offer scholarships to certain students, and other grants and student loans may also be available.



## Visual Arts and Design Majors and Potential Careers

### *Apparel/Textiles*

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This major prepares students for careers in the design, production, distribution, and marketing of apparel and textile products. Textile design is the art of changing the appearance of natural and/or synthetic surfaces by applying traditional, stylized, digitized or illusionary techniques to embellish a product. Textile and surface design is also the art of changing the structure of a surface by applying 3D techniques, including weaving, knitting, embroidery, lace, beading, and embossing. In order to prepare students for this fast-paced and demanding profession, programs will introduce them to a wide variety of surfaces and fabrics such as prints, knits, upholstery fabric, wall coverings, drapery, glassware, and paper products.

### *Education*

Students will start with courses in subjects designed to prepare them for the many facets of this industry: marketing, product design, drawing, psychology, sociology, and economics. Students will then progress to course work that studies the textile industry and apparel design, in addition to consumer product development. Given the nature of the work, students can expect an internship or co-op program to be an important part of this major. Classes include economics, psychology, sociology, art history, drawing, 3D design, organizational behavior, marketing, apparel and textile industry, aesthetics of apparel and textiles, and history of fashion.

### *Possible careers*

- buyer
- decorative design
- department/store manager
- designer
- fashion coordinator
- quality assurance tech
- product development
- technical designer
- illustrator
- operations manager
- pattern maker

### *Cinematography/Media Production*

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Cinematography is the study of the creation of motion pictures. As a major, it is concerned with all aspects of the production of films and video rather than with film criticism or film history, though the study of these areas is incorporated into the curriculum. The digital aspects of this major are developing rapidly, so computer work is far more prominent in this field today.

### *Education*

It is important for students in this major to begin with a strong liberal arts program, as well as introductory courses in media and communications. Because production techniques are changing rapidly in this field, course work is likewise changing to capture the evolving nature of film, video, and digital production. It goes without saying that most media production courses involve substantial project work. Classes include film theory and technique; cinema writing; film direction and production; set design, building, and lighting; digital production and editing; screenwriting; animation and special effects; and film history.

### *Possible careers*

- camera operator
- cartoonist
- cinematographer
- college professor
- communications specialist
- film director or producer
- film inspector
- film producer
- photographer
- screen writer
- stage manager
- technical writer

### *Fashion Merchandising*

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Fashion merchandising is the study of all aspects of the business of marketing and distributing clothing and accessories to wholesale and retail outlets. Most often offered as a two-year associate degree program, it is available at a few four-year institutions and may lead to a bachelor of professional studies degree. As a four-year offering, the major requires course work in fashion design. The field can be considered a highly competitive one, with many young people seeking this area as a glamorous career. Be cautioned, however, that it takes a highly motivated, creative, and aggressive individual to find success in this field.

### *Education*

The plan of study includes core courses in fashion, design and merchandising; business administration courses such as marketing, sales, and distribution; electives in communication arts and fine arts; selected liberal arts, math, and science. Classes include fashion design, fashion layout, fashion model drawing, fashion merchandising, fashion writing, pattern making, internships, history of fashion, mass marketing, product development, computer aided design.

### *Possible careers*

- buyer
- college professor
- consultant
- fashion designer

- manager
- market researcher
- merchandise manager
- product demonstrator
- purchasing agent
- sales representative
- small business owner
- technical writer

### *Film/Cinema Studies*

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This field of study involves the critical examination of mass media, popular culture, and the film and television industries. In this major, students explore the social, political, economic, and aesthetic impact of film. It is a major that looks forward to new methods of communication and artistic expression, while also developing an appreciation for past masters to offer definitions of excellence of expression that have stood the test of time. This is not necessarily the major for the film maker (see Cinematography), but rather for one who wishes to study, analyze, and critique the films being made today. Like in so many of the arts fields, the competition for jobs is great.

#### *Education*

In the case of this major, a liberal arts background is essential. Since film is a medium that can move into and through virtually any kind of human endeavor, it is important for film studies students to be widely conversant in many art forms and modes of expression. Beyond general classes, students will take courses that show them how to analyze cinematic images. Classes include history of film; film criticism; film theory; film studies, culture, technology, and communication; race, gender, and class in film; and film making techniques.

#### *Possible careers*

- film critic
- film librarian/archivist
- major studio administrator
- university professor
- screen writer

### *Fine/Studio Arts*

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This major is for the student who wants to create art. Fine arts concentrations include ceramics, drawing and painting, photography, and sculpture. In schools devoted exclusively to fine arts, such specialties as graphic illustration, industrial design, jewelry making, or architecture also may be found. Admission to this major is contingent upon the presentation of a portfolio of work of sufficient quality and diversity to demonstrate talent. It will be important to choose between a course of study at a conservatory or art school or in the context of a liberal arts program. In

either location, extensive studio time will be required. The visual arts field is extremely competitive.

#### *Education*

Studies usually begin with a core curriculum of liberal arts and at least one year of a foundation art class, in which the student is exposed to different media. Later, students choose an area of concentration and focus on studies such as use of color, advanced aesthetics, perception, and/or a specific medium such as watercolor, sculpture, or printmaking. The collection and evaluation of a portfolio is frequently a graduation requirement. Classes include use of color, design techniques, the figure, supervised individual projects, art seminars, and portfolio development.

#### *Possible careers*

- art director
- art therapist
- cartoonist
- commercial artist
- costume designer
- display artist
- glass designer
- graphic designer
- illustrator
- jeweler
- lithographer
- museum curator
- painter
- photographer
- sculptor
- studio artist
- teacher

### *Interior Design*

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The design of building interiors has evolved from surface decoration and furniture selection to a multi-faceted enterprise concerned with the design of total environments that satisfy client needs, understand building technology, and ensure safety. Along with the academic study of the history and theory of interior design, students have the chance to collaborate on projects with professional interior designers, lighting and graphic designers, and architects. Office spaces, waiting rooms, conference halls, and nearly any indoor area where people gather receive the attention of the designer. The growing awareness of the effects of the design of indoor spaces on human productivity, morale, buying habits, and even health make job prospects in this field promising.

#### *Education*

The interior design major stresses design function in both two- and three-dimensional forms, as well as technical drawing, modeling of interior spaces, use of color to achieve mood or size effects, and related topics. Introductory studio art, art

history, and other core art courses are integral. Finally, one or more semesters may be spent working in a designer's studio as part of an internship or co-op experience. Many courses will be project-based, and significant group work is a key feature of this course of study. Classes include technical drawing, color in space, art history, lighting design, furniture and product design, historical preservation, communications, and applied math.

*Possible careers*

- college professor
- color theory consultant
- commercial designer
- consultant
- display manager
- facilities planner
- historical preservationist
- industrial designer
- interior designer
- manufacturing
- museum curator
- museum technician
- production designer
- set designer
- technical illustrator

### *Landscape Architecture*

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This major is the study of the planning, design, and construction of landscape features around homes, schools, public and commercial buildings, as well as parks and recreation areas. Landscape architecture includes not only the aesthetic placement of flowers, plants, and shrubs, but may also entail determining the location of roads and parking areas and caring for the environmental impact of such construction.

*Education*

The plan of study includes courses in botany, plant ecology, architectural drafting, college algebra, and introduction to computer programming. Upper-division course work is required in areas including landscape architecture, site research, site analysis, and landscape design studio. In some colleges, the program is a five-year study, which includes a mandatory off-campus work experience. Classes include plant materials, city and regional planning, site grading, aerial photography interpretation, graphic communications, technical writing, and applied math.

*Possible careers*

- civil service
- energy conservation
- environmental policy management
- historic preservation

- landscape architect
- regional designer
- small business owner
- urban designer

### *Photography*

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This major, found in the school of fine arts or visual arts, trains the student to use cameras and digital equipment to make images for landscape, fashion, journalistic, or fine arts photography. Students are not only taught the techniques of the production of images, but they are also expected to be able to articulate the artistic vision that lies behind the work that they do. There are jobs available for students in photojournalism or commercial photography, though attempting to be fine arts photographer is as difficult as any other kind of visual fine artist.

#### *Education*

Photography, as a visual art major, requires an extensive amount of time learning through doing. Expect a good amount of time in the field shooting film, in the darkroom, or at a computer. The production of digital images is an artistic field that is growing rapidly, and students will have ample opportunity to explore the many applications possible in this area. Classes include photo technology, black and white printing, color printing, photo critique, the history of photography, digital imaging.

#### *Possible careers*

- art director
- commercial photographer
- museum curator
- photo critic
- photo editor
- photograph collector
- photojournalist
- portrait photographer
- visual artist

### *Theater Design and Technology*

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This course of study prepares students for work in the professional theater design. It provides students with the artistic, analytical, and research skills required to develop designs for period and contemporary theatrical productions. It also can give students craft skills in one or more areas of design to support theatrical productions. Finally, it prepares students for further graduate training or professional work by helping develop a comprehensive and representative portfolio of creative work. As in any performing arts profession, jobs in design are not plentiful.

### *Education*

Studies include theatrical history and literature and design theory and history. They will be trained in crafts and skills such as construction, cutting and draping, drawing and rendering, drafting, electronics, hydraulics, model-making, and properties.

Working on theater productions in a variety of genres while engaged in this major in college allows students to use and hone their skills. Students are advised to pursue design opportunities in summer stock or reparatory companies while in college.

Classes include stagecraft, dramatic structure, stage lighting, improvisation, costume production, technical direction, and digital imagining techniques.

### *Possible careers*

- costume designer
- lighting designer
- scene designer
- set designer
- stage manager
- stagecraft designer
- theater director

## Your College Search: By the Numbers

### Can I Get In?

Admissions Rate – The lower a school’s admission rate, the more competitive the school is considered to be to get into. For example, many selective schools have admissions rates below ten percent—only one out of ten students who apply will be admitted. It’s good to aim high and apply to some schools where the odds are you may not be admitted, but also apply to some schools where the admissions rate is in your favor.

Average GPA, SAT and ACT Range – Looking at the standardized test scores and average grade point averages of admitted applicants is a good way to evaluate the academic ability of the student body. Compare your test scores to the school’s median test scores—the 25th to 75th percentile of admitted students—to get the best idea of your odds of getting accepted.

### Is It Affordable?

Financial Aid – Financial aid is money you get to make up the difference between the cost of attending a college and your family’s ability to pay. Look for schools that have need-blind admissions, through which students are admitted regardless of their ability to pay for tuition on their own.

Average Loan Debt – Some schools may appear to have great financial aid, but they may be providing much of this support through loans which must be paid back. Looking at the average loan debt will give you a sense of the financial burden you’ll have to shoulder once you graduate.

### Are Students Successful Here?

First-Year Retention Rate – This percentage describes the number of enrolled freshmen who return as sophomores the following year. Be cautious if a high percentage of the student body doesn’t return for their second year. Clearly the school is not providing students something they want or need.

Six-year graduation rate – Whether students failed to graduate from a school because they transferred, dropped out, or failed to complete requirements, *this is one of the most important clues to understanding whether or not students are successful. If this percentage is low, the school is not adequately supporting students to ensure graduation.* Look at the graduation rate for underrepresented minority students as well. If students of color are graduating at significantly lower rates, that should ring warning bells. You can find a full breakdown of graduation rates by race, gender, and other factors at [www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org).

Remember that college is an investment. you invest your money in getting a quality education, which will, in turn, allow you to have access to better jobs. But if a school



has a high loan debt and a low graduation rate, maybe it is not the wisest investment for you.

Don't just fall into a college because you didn't do enough research. I'm enormously thankful that I put in the time and hard work to research, identify and gain admittance to my dream school—a liberal arts college in upstate New York that none of my family or friends had ever heard of but which was perfect for me. Don't settle on a college just because you are unaware of what else is out there. Use the numbers to help you find a college that fits your interests and needs. You won't regret it!

## ***Making Your List of Colleges***

Once you've made a list of colleges you're interested in, the next step is to narrow down the list to colleges you'll apply to. Most counselors recommend that students apply to five to eight colleges — more than that usually doesn't make sense. Here's how to make your college list manageable.

### **Narrow Down Your List**

If you're at this point in the process, you've probably already looked into things such as location, size and majors offered. Here are some other things to research:

- Variety of academic programs offered
- Special programs, such as study abroad
- Clubs and activities on campus
- Housing options
- Available facilities, such as labs, theaters and gyms

A great way to narrow your list is to start making college visits, if possible.

### **Sort Your List**

Once you have a list of colleges you think you will be satisfied attending, sort it into three categories:

**Safeties:** These are colleges that you feel you have a very good chance of getting into and that you think you can afford to attend. They should also be colleges you would be happy to attend.

**Good matches:** These are colleges that you feel you have a good chance of getting into and that are good matches for you overall.

**Reaches:** These are colleges that you think may be more of a challenge to get into. Getting in is not a sure thing, but it's realistic enough to be worth the effort of applying.

### **Balance Your List**

From your sorted list, you should choose:

- One to two safeties
- Two to four good matches
- One to two reaches

Think before you apply to more than eight colleges. It's probably not necessary and could be a waste of effort. With college applications, quality is better than quantity. You must complete each section of an application carefully, and admission officers can tell if you're not serious about their school. In fact, they look for students who seem to really want to go to their school.

If you have successfully identified one good safety school on your list, you should feel confident that you will receive at least one acceptance letter.

### **Use Your Support Network**

You don't have to go through this process alone. Your parents, school counselor and teachers can help you think about your decisions and choose which schools to apply to.

Remember, there will be more than one school that's right for you. What you're doing now is narrowing down your options to good possibilities. After this step, you should be able to choose again — from those colleges that offer you a place in their freshman class.

## List of Say Yes Schools:

Name	Location	Private/Public	Details
Brown University	Providence, RI	Private	
<b>Bryant &amp; Stratton College</b>	<b>Buffalo, Southtowns, Amherst, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	
<b>Canisius College</b>	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>10 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly</b>
Clarkson University	Potsdam, NY	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Colgate University	Hamilton, NY	Private	Transfer students not eligible, will consider family assets as well
Colorado College	Colorado Springs, CO	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Columbia University	Manhattan, New York, NY	Private	
Cooper Union	New York, NY	Private	
Cornell University	Ithaca, NY	Private/Public	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Crouse Hospital College of Nursing	Syracuse, NY	Private	At least 2 Say Yes Buffalo scholarships per year
<b>D'Youville College</b>	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>10 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly</b>
<b>Daeman College</b>	<b>Amherst, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>3 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly</b>
Dartmouth College	Hanover, NH	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Davidson College	Davidson, NC	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Denison University	Granville, OH	Private	
Drexel University	Philadelphia, PA	Private	5 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly
Duke University	Durham, NC	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Franklin & Marshall College	Lancaster, PA	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Georgetown University	Washington DC	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Hamilton College	Hamilton, NY	Private	
Harvard University	Cambridge, MA	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Hilbert College	Hamburg, NY	Private	1 Say Yes Scholarship Available Yearly
Houghton College	Houghton, NY	Private	At least 3 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly
Kenyon College	Gambier, OH	Private	
Lesley University	Cambridge, MA	Private	1 Say Yes Scholarship Available Yearly
Lycoming College	Williamsport, PA	Private	Will consider family assets as well
Marist College	Poughkeepsie, NY	Private	
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	Cambridge, MA	Private	
<b>Medaille College</b>	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	
Monroe College	Bronx and Westchester County, NY	Private	
Muhlenberg College	Allentown, PA	Private	
Niagara University	Lewiston, NY	Private	3 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly
Northeastern University	Boston, MA	Private	
Occidental College	Los Angeles, CA	Private	
Paul Smith's College of the Adirondacks	Paul Smiths, NY	Private	
Pitzer College	Claremont, CA	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Pomona College	Claremont, CA	Private	
Princeton University	Princeton, NJ	Private	
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Troy, NY	Private	
Rhodes College	Memphis, TN	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)	Rochester, NY	Private	10 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly
Rice University	Houston, TX	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
St. Bonaventure University	Allegany, NY	Private	At least 4 Say Yes Scholarships available yearly
St. Joseph's College of Nursing	Syracuse, NY	Private	At least 2 Say Yes Buffalo scholarships per year
Sewanee: The University of the South	Sewanee, TN	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books

Smith College	Northampton, MA	Private	
Stanford University	Stanford, CA	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Syracuse University	Syracuse, NY	Private	Tuition scholarships available to students with family incomes below \$100,000/year
Texas Christian University	Fort Worth, TX	Private	
Trinity College	Hartford, CN	Private	
<b>Trocaire College</b>	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	<b>12 Say Yes Scholarships Available Yearly</b>
Tufts University	Medford, MA	Private	Will consider family assets as well
Tulane University	New Orleans, LA	Private	
University of Notre Dame	South Bend, IN	Private	
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	Private	
University of Rochester	Rochester, NY	Private	Tuition scholarships available to students with family incomes below \$100,000/year
The University of Southern California (USC)	Los Angeles, CA	Private	Considers family assets as well, provides financial aid for books, room and board as well
Vanderbilt University	Nashville, TN	Private	May provide financial aid packages that cover more than tuition costs, i.e. room & board, books
Vassar College	Poughkeepsie, NY	Private	
<b>Villa Maria College</b>	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>Private</b>	
Washington University	St. Louis, MO	Private	
Williams University	Williamstown, MA	Private	
Yale University	New Haven, CT	Private	
Baruch College	Manhattan, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Brooklyn College	Brooklyn, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
City College	Harlem, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
College of Staten Island	Staten Island, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Hunter College	Manhattan, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
John Jay College of Criminal Justice	Manhattan, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Lehman College	The Bronx, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Medgar Evers College	Brooklyn, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
New York City College of Technology	Brooklyn, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education	Manhattan, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Queens College	Queens, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
York College	Queens, New York, NY	City University of New York (CUNY) Senior Colleges	
Borough of Manhattan Community College	Manhattan, New York, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
Bronx Community College	The Bronx, New York, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
Hostos Community College	South Bronx, New York, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
Kingsborough Community College	Brooklyn, New York, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
LaGuardia Community College	Long Island City, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
Queensborough Community College	Queens, New York, NY	CUNY Community Colleges	
Binghamton University	Binghamton, NY	State University of New York (SUNY) University Centers	
Stony Brook University	Stony Brook, NY	State University of New York (SUNY) University Centers	
University at Albany	Albany, NY	State University of New York (SUNY) University Centers	
<b>University at Buffalo</b>	<b>Buffalo and Amherst, NY</b>	<b>State University of New York (SUNY) University Centers</b>	
Alfred State, College of Technology	Alfred, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
Delhi	Delhi, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
Farmingdale State College	Farmingdale, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
Maritime College	Bronx, New York, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
Morrisville State College	Morrisville, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
SUNY Canton	Canton, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
SUNY Cobleskill	Cobleskill, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry	Syracuse, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
SUNY IT (Institute of Technology)	Utica, NY	SUNY Technology Colleges	
Buffalo State College	<b>Buffalo, NY</b>	<b>SUNY University Colleges</b>	
Oswego	Oswego, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
Plattsburgh	Plattsburgh, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
Potsdam	Potsdam, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
Purchase College	Purchase, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY College at Old Westbury	Old Westbury, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY College at Oneonta	Oneonta, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY Cortland	Cortland, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY Fredonia	Fredonia, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY Geneseo	Geneseo, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
SUNY New Paltz	New Paltz, NY	SUNY University Colleges	
The College at Brockport	Brockport, NY	SUNY University Colleges	

<i>Adirondack Community College</i>	<i>Queensbury, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Broome Community College</i>	<i>Broome County, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Cayuga Community College</i>	<i>Auburn, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Clinton Community College</i>	<i>Plattsburgh, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Columbia-Greene Count Community College</i>	<i>Hudson, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Corning Community College</i>	<i>Corning, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Dutchess Community College</i>	<i>Poughkeepsie, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<b>Erie Community College</b>	<b>Buffalo, Williamsville, Orchard Park, NY</b>	<b>SUNY Community Colleges</b>	
<i>Fashion Institute of Technology</i>	<i>Manhattan, New York, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Finger Lakes Community College</i>	<i>Canandaigua, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Fulton-Montgomery Community College</i>	<i>Johnstown, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Genesee Community College</i>	<i>Batavia, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Herkimer County Community College</i>	<i>Herkimer, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Hudson Valley Community College</i>	<i>Troy, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Jamestown Community College</i>	<i>Jamestown, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Jefferson Community College</i>	<i>Watertown, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Mohawk Valley Community College</i>	<i>Utica, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Monroe Community College</i>	<i>Rochester, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Nassau Community College</i>	<i>Garden City, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Niagara County Community College</i>	<i>Sanborn, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>North Country Community College</i>	<i>Saranac Lake, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Onondaga Community College</i>	<i>Syracuse, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Orange County Community College</i>	<i>Middletown and Newburgh, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Rockland Community College</i>	<i>Suffern, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Schenectady County Community College</i>	<i>Schenectady, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Suffolk Country Community College</i>	<i>Selden, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Sullivan Country Community College</i>	<i>Loch Sheldrake, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Tompkins Cortland Community College</i>	<i>Dryden, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Ulster Country Community College</i>	<i>Stone Ridge, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	
<i>Westchester Community College</i>	<i>Valhalla, NY</i>	<i>SUNY Community Colleges</i>	



**The Common Application:**



## Hacking the Common App Essay Prompts

**1. Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.**

**The Approach:** Students determined to write the classic "personal" essay need look no further. This prompt's chief advantage is that it enables students to tell stories - on any topic - from their own lives. "Central" is vague enough that the response does not have to be earth-shattering or melodramatic. It's up to the writer to determine what "central" means and to explain the story's importance in the context of the student's life, passions, values, and intellect. The story can be anything from pyrotechnic to quietly important.

The inclusion of "background" creates more opportunities than would a prompt that permitted only first-person narratives. Students can choose any part of their backgrounds--family, religion, nationality, culture, or even location--and write about their role in, or relationship with, that background without requiring students to narrate a discrete story.

**Traps:**

1) Students may be tempted to imbue stories with more meaning than they deserve. They should avoid this temptation. A story about saving puppies might, on occasion, reflect a genuine dedication to animal rights or reverence for the philosopher Peter Singer; usually, though, it's just a cute story.

2) There's a long, inglorious tradition in which students write loving tales about their parents or grandparents; "background" should not be viewed as an invitation to do so here.

**The Hack:** An essay that focuses on a story can still include analysis and discussion of abstract ideas. Many of the best anecdotal essays include explanations that place the narrative in a larger context of the writer's life or of the world at large. For instance, a tale about running for class office could illustrate a student's thoughts on democracy. A story about a Boy Scout campout could lead to a discussion of nature. These larger themes are what connect a dispassionate reader to the otherwise irrelevant life of a faraway teenager.

**2. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?**

**The Approach:** A mainstay of business school applications, failure narratives rely on tension and uncertainty, and they're often naturally compelling narratives. They therefore can make great essays. Students shouldn't be afraid to be vulnerable and to honestly describe how and why they failed. Generally, readers will be more impressed by their candor than they will be turned off by whatever lack of skill, unfortunate circumstances, or poor judgment the student is describing.

Students should ensure, though, that their stories describe true failures. As a veteran college counselor recently told me, "disappointment is not the same thing as failure." Losing a soccer game or debate round may be disappointing, but they're rarely failures. (The same could be said for any other formal competition.) True failure revolves around deliberate bad choices when a solution may have been clear but an individual or a team chose not to cooperate or put forth sufficient effort. Disappointment can suggest arrogance -- as if you just *expected* to win the soccer game.

**Traps:**

1) The second sentence of this prompt invites melodrama and false sagacity. Students may be tempted to claim everything from devastation to unbridled inspiration from their "failures." They may also want to proclaim that they've learned how never to fail again. They should avoid doing so. One firm warning: never start a sentence with any version of, "The lesson I learned is..." or "I had never realized..."

2) There's a limit to candor: Students must be careful about failures of character. Some moral dilemmas make for incredible essays. But a student who admits to lying or cheating without airtight justification will not elicit a reader's sympathy.

**The Hack:** The prompt refers to an incident and the experience of failure. It does not mean that the writer must have caused or even participated in the failure. The writer could have simply witnessed failure - be it her dad's attempt at making meatloaf or his boss' meltdown upon losing an important customer - and have something intelligent to say about it.

**3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?**

**The Approach:** This is the prompt for everyone who has ever run for office, volunteered for a campaign, written an editorial, or led an uprising on campus. As with No. 2, the fun in this essay stems from tension. But, unlike No. 2 (and No. 5) it offers a more natural opportunity to reveal personal or intellectual growth. Students are implicitly asked to tell story and explicitly asked to analyze ("reflect on") it. That's a great, time-honored approach to personal essay writing.

**Traps:** This prompt has too many parts. The first sentence alone should be enough to get a writer going. I fear that, as phrased, this prompt is going to result in some formulaic essays that respond to each element one-by-one, possibly with obvious topic sentences like, "I acted because...." There's also a troubling contradiction. "Challenge" does not necessarily entail action. Beliefs can be challenged verbally, and they can be contemplated inwardly. These challenges may or may not lead to "decisions" in any proactive sense -- even though they can absolutely be worth writing about. Finally, students shouldn't merely

"reflect" on the incident -- they need to narrate enough of the story so that an intelligent, but unfamiliar, reader knows what the writer is talking about.

**The Hack:** Just as the hack for No. 3 notes that the "failure" doesn't have to be first-person, in this prompt, the belief or idea being challenged doesn't have to belong to someone else. Students may write about reflexive challenges to their own ideas. This prompt may therefore offer the best chance to write about an academic topic -- a chance that the authors of the Common App have unforgivably omitted (as if a student's intellectual life can be neither a significant part of his personality nor a matter of any concern to his prospective colleges). Students who want to emphasize their intellectual lives can write about a research project, favorite author, or abstract idea with which they have wrestled internally.

**The Super-Hack:** Begin your essay with this sentence: "For the next 625 words I will be challenging the idea that a good essay must necessarily respond directly to a particular prompt." Then write the essay you really want to write.

#### **4. Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?**

**The Approach:** I don't know where I'm *most* content, but I know one of the places where I'm *least* content: anyplace where I'm reading this prompt.

I fear a torrent of mawkish pleasantries:

"I'm content....

...in my mother's arms.

...on roller coasters.

...in a field of daises.

...at the abattoir, after midnight, with cleaver in hand and a fresh herd on the hoof."

Writers who choose this prompt will, ideally, create their own tension, or at least try get beyond the blandness of "contentment." The best of these essays will describe someplace unexpected or who describe an unusual version of contentment.

Students might be content in the library, where they're conducting original research, or they might be content at their menial job, because the job exposes them to fascinating co-workers. They might also contemplate a world that may be going to hell in a handbasket, and then explain and how their contentment contrasts with challenges in the world around them. These stories must be written with a very steady hand so as not to fall into vague musings on "meaningfulness."

**Traps:** This whole prompt is a trap.

In particular, responses about fantasy worlds and euphoric protestations will be particularly abrasive for readers who are cooped up in offices amid towers of applications. That goes double for essays about travel.

What's wrong with pleasantries? Think of it this way: How many happy novels are in the literary canon? The reason that everyone from Shakespeare to Plath to Hemingway shied away from happiness is that happiness isn't interesting. Tension is interesting. Conflict is interesting. Transformation is interesting. Reading about

contentment is like waiting at a baggage carousel watching other people's luggage go by.

And *perfect* contentment? Who are they kidding?

**The Hack:** The most useful thing about this prompt is that it refers to a place. Everything happens somewhere, so almost any real-life story you want to tell that involves a place can be tweaked to fit this prompt. Even if the anecdote doesn't involve obvious contentment, such as my example above of the menial job, contentment can still lie in the student's reflection on the challenged faced, the idea learned, or the job well done.

**5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.**

**The Approach:** This prompt bears an odd resemblance to Prompt No. 1, with a few potentially useful differences. The explicit reference to culture and community opens up worlds of possibility. Students can reflect on an ethnic background or analyze the ways that they go about life in their hometowns. Some of the best essays are those in which students acknowledge the world around them -- often through mention of current events, politics, or social issues -- and offer analysis thereof.

Students need to take care not to create caricatured versions of their families' cultural practices, such that they would fail to describe a genuine connection to (or critique of) those practices. I've read many a spiritless essay on Indian dance and Moon Festivals. Students from minority and/or immigrant backgrounds also must realize that any application reader is already familiar with most, if not all, of the major ethnic groups in the United States. Students must discuss their *personal* experiences and not dwell on the generic experience.

**Traps:** This one has three big traps: family, childhood, and adulthood. Essays about family often commit the error of what I call asymmetrical importance. What is important to the writer (his mom, dad, siblings, pets) often holds zero meaning for the detached reader. Students who want to write about family must make sure that they have a unique story to tell and that they, not the sagacious uncle or patient mother, are the focus of the essay.

In the annals of college applications, fixation on childhood has undermined many a promising essay. It's tempting for students to chart their personal development by starting at the beginning of time. We get cute stories of Legos, princess costumes, and imaginary friends. But, students are not applying to college as six-year-olds, or even as 16-year-olds: they're applying on the cusp of adulthood, and the most compelling essays are those that tell colleges what a student's personality, intellect, and character are like in the here and now.

My biggest fear, though, is that students are going to proclaim their maturity in grandiose terms. Most 18-year-olds are still kids -- and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm long past age 18, and I still have no idea what adulthood is. Most of my friends would say the same. Adulthood has infinite changing definitions. Kids who are truly mature should demonstrate their maturity through stories and examples, not through assertions.

**The Hack:**

- 1) I'm always on the hunt for ways that students can discuss their intellectual development. What better way to distinguish adulthood from childhood than a discussion of ideas?
  
- 2) As with Prompt 3, the "event" does not have to involve the writer directly. Students can write about an event that they witnessed or contemplated and explain

## **Bulletproof Your Common App**

**Tips and tricks to give your Common Application the ultimate edge. Read on to discover things you didn't know (but should) about applying to college with the Common App.**

### **Apply Early Action or Early Decision**

It usually helps. (See Tip #2 for the exceptions). EA makes you look on your game and more interested than the average student. ED makes you really attractive because the college knows they can count on you to enroll, which protects their "yield" rate at the end of application season. Write to me on the Forum if you want to know more about "yield".

### **If your GPA or test scores are low, think before you apply Early Action/Decision**

Call your admissions rep at that college and ask very politely if you should apply Early. Tell them your exact GPA and scores. At some schools, applying Early with low scores can help you because you are showing strong interest. At some schools it can hurt you because it can put you in a stronger pool of applicants. I recently heard a panel of Admissions Deans say the early pool is NOT always stronger, so call and ask what you should do. If the school is your top choice, be sure to tell them that. Do not say that if it's not the case. (Be honest!)

### **Should I check the box for "Financial Aid"?**

If you need it, yes. This is how you get it. Review the school's policy; if they are need-blind, checking this box will not hurt you. If the school is need-aware, then it will be easier for them to admit students who do not need aid. Kids with high GPA's and test scores are the kids who get merit money, typically, though many schools will offer you something if they are trying to attract you because, for instance, you are an out-of state kid for them and would be bringing diversity, or if you are an athlete who can play on one of their sports teams. If you really want to go to a certain "need-aware" school and you don't really need the aid (or if you don't mind loans) then you might not want to check the box for financial aid.

### **Should I check the box for "Merit Based Scholarships"?**

YES. EVERYBODY. No matter WHAT your GPA and test scores are. Merit based scholarships go to students the college wants to attract, for whatever reason. Merit means "you deserve it". You need to let the colleges decide who gets this or not. Don't take yourself out of the running for free money (always a bad idea...)

### **Avoid checking "Undecided" for a major**

It just looks "unexcited". No one is going to hold you to the majors you express an interest in on your applications, so this is a chance for you to tell about some things that might intrigue you.

**Don't be afraid to pick just one major if your mind is totally made up.**

When you know, you know, and that's great. Be sure to write about this major in some available essay spot, and if none is offered, try to be sure to mention your sincere interest to your admissions rep.

**Don't be afraid to pick 2-3 really different majors if they really interest you; the majors don't have to be similar.**

For a lot of schools these days, interdisciplinary learning is really attractive, so having widely disparate interests that you will somehow tie together in your career is a plus. Everyone likes a creative thinker who sees solutions and possibilities across disciplines. Think outside the box!

**Make sure the college offers those majors**

Check the college's website to see if they have the major before you choose it on the Common App. And, if the drop down list from the Common App doesn't display the EXACT name of the major, then check "other" and write the exact name of the major in the box that pops up. This shows that you did your homework and it makes you look like you really do care about that college.

**Should I check the religion box on the Common App?**

This is totally your call. If your religion is not well known, then I certainly would declare it because you will be looked at as someone who will bring diversity. If you are applying to a school that has any sort of religious affiliation then it is usually good for you to check the box if you share that same affiliation. If you are applying to a very liberal place and you check a conservative Christian faith, then you might be viewed as someone who would bring diversity. The one religious caution I would offer is for the very actively Christian kid: be sure that your essays make it clear that you get along with and respect all types of people, and for non-Christian colleges, avoid talking about personal, spiritual matters in essays. You have no idea who will be reading these, and religion and politics are typically not safe topics for college essays. You don't want to seem one-dimensional to colleges who have to think about roommate happiness and classroom discussions. Think of this as a job interview and be professional.

**Enter the truth about your parent data**

If your situation is tough or untraditional or even maybe embarrassing, it's ok. You don't need to be shy on college applications because college admissions personnel are just like high school teachers: they love working with teenagers. These people are here to help place you in the right college, the place where you will be happy and successful. They understand that students come from all sorts of backgrounds, so it's ok if yours needs some explaining. You don't need to be shy about your family situation. And if your parents did not graduate from college—that helps you! You are what's known as a "first-generation college student" and everyone will be interested in helping you get to college.

**If you have a special situation, like a disciplinary action or a change of schools, attach an explanation**

Make it brief and well-written, and have a trusted teacher or counselor look at it for you. Tell the truth about the situation, and focus on what you learned. Teenagers sometimes have situations that are beyond their control, or sometimes they make dumb choices—admissions officers understand that. Be brief in your explanation, don't whine, don't blame, and don't tell every gory detail. Keep it professional, and don't skip this opportunity to state your side of the situation.

**Don't enter low/bad test scores if you don't have to**

If it isn't required, and if it doesn't help you, then leave it out.

**The Honors section is for academic awards, not athletic or community service**

Most kids don't have much to put here because many high schools don't give awards and those that do often give them out at the end of Senior year. So don't panic if you don't have things to put here. Most kids don't either. Things you can put here include: Honor Roll, Scholar Athlete, Student of the Month, NHS, National Merit, AP Scholar, etc.

**DO list tests that you plan to take this year**

Just leave the score part blank and then send the official scores when you have them.

**You may list up to 10 activities on the Activities page**

Don't be shy about listing hobbies and jobs. Jobs are awesome!

**Print Preview the Activities Page**

This page cuts text off no matter what it lets you put in the boxes, so print preview it. And when you do print it, look at all that white space! Fill it up!! You will need to edit this page at least 5 times before submitting it because it needs to look good and wow, is it a beast.

**Don't forget to put your activities in order of their importance to you**

This is part of the instructions, so the colleges can see your priorities. Use the arrows to move things up and down, and feel really sorry for the kids even two years ago who did not have the luxury of the cool new arrows for moving entries up and down if they changed their minds...

**Check that you DO plan to participate for at least some things in college**

Kids often forget this one. Colleges want to know what you'll want to do when you get to their campus, so clue them in.

**Do NOT compose your small activity essay right in the box.**

Do this as a Word doc that you will start working on NOW, and edit it many times before you copy and paste the final version into that little box.



### **1000 characters maximum ALWAYS means WITH spaces**

Character limits are different from word limits. A character is a letter, a space and a punctuation mark. Words are words... For college essays with character limits, always count the number of characters WITH spaces.

### **The Additional Info section is a great place for your resume**

You can also upload a response here if you have a special situation that you need to share with the colleges. If you would like to upload both your resume and a special explanation, then attach one to the other in one Word doc and upload that.

### **Should I check the box for a disciplinary violation on the Common App?**

If you have one, yep. Check it. Be honest. If it was minor or dweebie, then explain it and tell what you learned. Kids make mistakes. That is always forgivable if you are humble and you learned your lesson (like not to start food-fights, not to toilet paper the school, etc etc). Your counselor or teachers might mention this in their letters, so you should, too. Honesty is always in style.

### **Print Preview each supplement before you submit it**

Sometimes info is cut off, even though the boxes allowed you to type it in. Beware.

### **Select teachers for EACH college on the School Forms pages**

First you "Invite" your two teachers and one counselor on the School Forms page, but then on that same page you have to go college by college and manually "Select" which teachers' letters you would like each college to receive. If you are applying to 6 Common App schools then you will need to do this step 6 times, etc. Some colleges accept one letter, some accept two, and a few accept three. Some don't want any! And \*always\* check the college's policy on extra letters before sending one in the mail...

### **You have to do THREE things to apply to EACH college**

Each time you are ready to submit an application you have to submit the Supplement page for that college (if required), then the Signature page for that college, and the Payment for that college. Some colleges want you to pay before submitting the Signature page, some allow you to pay after submitting the Signature page (it would be easier if they would all standardize this!). The Signature page is where you submit the actual Common App. The Supplement page is just one page that goes to that particular college when you submit it. Many students make the mistake of submitting the Supplement page and then thinking they have applied to that college, which they have not. Remember: you must submit all three for each college:

1. Supplement (if required)
2. Signature
3. Payment (post in the Forum for info on fee waivers if you need them)

## Top 5 Common Application Essay Tips

Parents and students often ask us for our most valuable Common Application essay tips, so our savvy team of advisors compiled a list of simple, effective tricks to use as guidelines while you navigate the tricky waters of college essay writing. Try to use them for good and not for evil.

**1. Think small:** When writing the Common Application essay, too many students feel compelled to try and squeeze their entire life story into 650 words. This, friends, is impossible. It is almost always better to think small first. Find a story or event in your life that really meant something to you. Did you win a competition at the last second? Was your family stranded on vacation with no power for five days? Have you read something recently that blew your mind? Now ask yourself — are any of these stories representative of my larger, most valuable qualities? The perfect essay topic showcases your personality, passions and/or ambitions without trying to do too much at once. Talking about your family’s adoption of a three-legged dog and how your pet’s perseverance and quirky attitude influenced the way you live your life, will make a better essay than a super general diatribe on why you like dogs, for example. If you find yourself getting lost while writing, ask: what am I trying to say about myself, and am I using a specific, compelling example to tell my story?

**2. Write first, edit later:** When it comes to writing, we are almost always our own worst critics. So many students want and expect themselves to produce pure, uninhibited brilliance the first time their fingers hit the keys, but that is almost never the way good essay writing works. Writing a compelling essay is a process, and the best writing can often be plucked from our stream-of-consciousness efforts. Don’t edit yourself before you allow your creativity to warm up and pour onto the page. Never judge your writing until you have a few paragraphs written down first. You can always cut what doesn’t work and it is much easier to work with an overabundance of words and ideas than nothing at all.

**3. Kill those clichés:** We’re not going to *beat around the bush* here: clichés really *get our goats*. When you take that *trip down memory lane*, telling us about the time you were a *mover and a shaker* putting your *nose to the grindstone* it makes our *blood boil*. We’re content and grammar snobs, so we find clichés to be extra unappealing, but we also have enough confidence in your creativity to know that you can do better. Admissions essay readers know it too, and expect you to *think out of the box* without using phrases like “think out of the box.” So strike those tired sentences from your essay and do it now. *Never put off tomorrow what you can do today*. It actually hurt us to write that.

**4. It’s all in the details:** What is the difference between these two sentences? 1. My favorite activities included fishing and cooking my daily catch. 2. My friends and I woke up early every morning to catch bass on Lake Michigan, cooking our spoils with herbs picked from a local farm. In the first sentence, we understand that you enjoyed certain activities. In the second, yes, we know you like fishing but we also

understand your commitment to an activity you engaged in every day and recognize that your fishing trips are a social effort. There is a sense of time and place — we can see the setting, smell the herbs. With a few extra words, sentence two tells us much more about your fishing experience. Many students have a tendency to skew generic in the telling of their personal stories. What makes an essay memorable is often the sum of the little things. If you can paint a clear picture for your reader by providing details, you are much more likely to lodge a marker in their memories.

**5. If Nothing Else, Entertain:** Imagine you're a college essay reader at an upstanding academic institution and it is your job to read dozens of essays a day, every day, for weeks on end. Ninety percent of the essays that pass your desk are stone-cold boring, and maybe ten percent break through the fuzz and force you to pay attention. As an applicant, you want your essay to shine a bright light in the face of that oft-bored reader. No matter what your subject, serious, uplifting, sentimental or pithy, your essay should aim to entertain. This will require many elements working together in harmony. You will need a compelling subject, a direct and powerful narrative, impeccable grammar and a memorable style. A little laughter never hurts either. It is often hard to know whether an essay is truly entertaining until the end stages of writing, but when you are reading over your drafts, the question should always be in the back of your mind: Is this essay fun to read? Some students achieve entertainment value by being controversial. Others load their pieces with comic relief. Some are able to describe events in such detail that a reader simply must get to the end of the essay. No matter what tactics you end up using, your goal should be effortless and compelling readability.

**6. Brand yourself:** In order for your essay to be truly effective, a reader should be able to summarize your subject in a simple sentence. You accomplish this self-branding by choosing a creative topic (or a creative twist on a common topic), and writing about it with enough detail to burn an image of yourself in the reader's brain. When it comes down to you and another similarly qualified candidate, you want an admissions officer to be able to stand up with your application in his/her hand and say, "I like the girl who performed trapeze in the circus," or "How about the girl who saved her grandfather's life?" It will be much harder to remember "the girl who practiced the trapeze, and was also good at riding bikes, and who got an A on every test and who generally worked very hard," or "the girl who really loved her late grandfather and who feels like she embodies a lot of his core characteristics." Focus your story. When you finish writing your first draft, do a branding test — try to label yourself based on your essay and see what you come up with. If you can't easily narrow it down to a punchy description, you probably need to alter or simplify your essay.

**Other Relevant College Resources:**

## **SAT AND ACT FAQs**

### ***What is the SAT? What is the ACT?***

SAT stands for Scholastic Aptitude Test.

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. Most students take the SAT during their junior or senior year of high school, and almost all colleges and universities use the SAT to make admission decisions.

ACT stands for American College Testing.

The ACT is an achievement test, measuring what a student has learned in school. It has up to 5 components: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing Test. ACT continues to offer its well-established test, plus an optional writing test. You take the ACT Writing Test only if required or requested by the college(s) you're applying to. The ACT is scored based on the number of correct answers with no penalty for guessing. Lastly, the ACT has an Interest Inventory that allows students to evaluate their interests in various career options.

### ***Which test should I take?***

Check the schools that interest you. If they have no preference, consider taking both the ACT and SAT to see which shows the higher score. The formats are different, so you may find yourself more comfortable with one over the other and do better. See which works better for you.

### ***When do I take the test?***

You should take the PSAT (preliminary SAT) or the PLAN (pre-ACT) to practice for the real exams. You should take these tests your sophomore year or early in your junior year. This test is often offered directly through your high school. Check with your counselor for dates.

The SAT and ACT are offered several times a year.

You can take the tests more than once. Take them the first time early in your junior year. This gives you time to take them again and try to improve your test scores.

### ***What do the scores mean?***

Your test scores are important but they're just one part of your admissions. Your high school transcript is most important, including your grades, the classes you took and the extracurricular activities you were involved in.

Check with your schools of interest to see what the typical scores are for students they accept.

The SAT has three sections: math, critical reading and writing. Each of the three sections is scored out of 800, or a total of 2400. The national average is 1500, or about 500 on each section. A low score is considered to be 1100 or below.

The ACT has four sections: English, math, reading and science, and an optional writing section. (Check with the colleges to see if they want you take the writing section.) The ACT is scored out of 36. The average score is 20 or 21. A low score is considered to be 15 or below.

### ***How do colleges count the scores?***

If you have taken the SAT or ACT more than once, colleges generally account only the highest score for each section.

For example, say you took the SAT twice and there are your scores:

October:

Math 520

**Critical Reading 535**

**Writing 540**

Total 1595

January:

**Math 550**

Critical Reading 520

Writing 530

Total 1600

**Total of all highest scores is 1625.**

When you submit your scores, colleges will count the math score from January exam and the critical reading and writing scores from the October exam.

### ***What if I scored low?***

You can take the tests more than once to try to improve your scores. Keep in mind that colleges will just look at the highest score in each section.

### ***How do I study for them?***

The sooner you start preparing for the tests, the more prepared you will be when you take them.

There are many ways to prepare for the ACT or SAT, including books and study guides free online, practice tests and registration for emailed questions of the day. Many high schools offer prep classes. Check with your counselor.

SAT and ACT prep courses are available through private prep companies, including Sylvan Learning, Princeton Review and Kaplan Test Prep, but these charge a fee. Explore the free study help offered by the test administrators before considering choosing study aides.

*FREE Prep for the SATs:*

To start, visit <http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/>. You can register for a daily test question, review sample practice questions in math, reading, writing and SAT Subject Tests, or take a free practice test.

There are SAT study guides that can be purchased online or at your local bookstore. Before you buy any study guides, check with your school counselor, school library and local library to see if they have any copies you can borrow.

*FREE prep for the ACT:*

To start, visit <http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html>. You can try some practice test questions, review the ACT question of the day and download or print a free student preparation booklet.

### ***Do I have to pay for the SAT and ACT?***

Yes, there is a registration fee. You can pay by credit card, check or money order. You will not get your money back if you don't take the tests for whatever reason. You may be eligible to receive a waiver that would allow you take the tests for free. If you feel you can't afford the test fee, contact your high school counselor. [You can review Guidelines for Student and Families here.](#)

### ***How do I register?***

The easiest and fastest way is online:

- SAT – <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/>
- ACT – <http://www.actstudent.org>

You can also register by mail. You must register by mail if you are paying by check or money order. To register by mail, ask your guidance counselor for the SAT Paper Registration Guide or ACT registration packet.

For help filling out the registration forms, or if you have questions or special circumstances, go to <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/how-to-register> (SAT) or <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html> (ACT).

### ***Should I take the SAT or ACT?***

Check with the colleges you want to apply to and see if they have a preference.

If your college will accept either the SAT or ACT, take both preliminary tests (PSAT and PLAN) your sophomore year or early in your junior year. Get the feeling for both tests.

SAT	vs.	ACT
Math, writing and critical reading Reasoning skills and problem-solving abilities Essay is required Deducts points for wrong answers Math is 1/3 of your final score		Science, Math, English and reading Focuses on what you've learned in high school Essay is optional No penalties for wrong answers Math is 1/4 of your final score

***Is there extra help if I have special needs?***

You may be eligible to have adjustments made to your test setting if you have a documented disability. This may mean wheelchair accessibility, seating where you can hear best or lip-read, a printed copy of spoken directions or access to a snack due to a medical condition.

Ask your counselor to work with you in completing a Student Eligibility Form before you register for the SAT. For more information, visit <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/for-students-with-disabilities>. You can also request special accommodations to be made while taking the ACT. Ask your high school counselor or visit <http://www.act.org/aap/disab/>.



## 7 Cheap Ways to Study for the ACT and the SAT

- 1. Khan Academy.** Millions of people, including Bill Gates's children, have watched this popular site's online tutorials. Using videos, Khan Academy provides the answers and explanations for every math problem in the first edition of the College Board's official SAT guide, which was published in 2004. This book is out of print, but you can find many used copies on Amazon for as little as \$2.96. Don't worry that your child will be studying old material. The nature of the math questions haven't changed.
- 2. PWN the SAT.** Want your teen to ace the math section of the SAT? Try PWN the SAT. (PWN is a video-gaming term that means "own.") At this blog, a math tutor in Manhattan shares his vast knowledge of the SAT math section. This isn't just a site for students who need math help -- it's also a valuable resource for ambitious students who want to earn a perfect math score.
- 3. College Board.** Buy a copy of what test-prep insiders call the "Blue Book," which is the College Board's own thick SAT guide. The latest version is called "The Official SAT Study Guide DVD Edition" or "The Official SAT Study Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition." Buy the book and your teen will have access to the College Board's online site for the book owners.
- 4. ACT.** An inexpensive way to study for the ACT is to buy "The Real ACT Prep Guide," which includes five retired ACT tests. Your teenager can also study online at the ACT site for \$21.95 for a year.
- 5. The Critical Reader.** It's difficult to improve upon the reading score of the SAT, but this site, courtesy of another test-prep tutor, can help. The Critical Reader is the site of Erica Meltzer, who provides a great deal of free advice via her test-prep blog on the critical reading and writing portion of the SAT test. You'll also find free study guides on her site. Including the "Complete SAT Grammar Rules" and the "Complete ACT Punctuation Rules." You can get even more advice by reading her book, "The Ultimate Guide to SAT Grammar."
- 6. Number2.com.** Students can study for the SAT and ACT at this site, and one of the best parts is that parents can track the time that their teens spend on it, as well as their progress. No need to rely on your children to tell you if they've actually been studying.
- 7. EriktheRed.** This helpful site belongs to Erik Jacobsen, an East Coast math and physics tutor who helps students prepare for the math section of the SAT and ACT. Students will find lots of free materials to download for the SAT test, including quizzes, formulas and exam strategies.

## *Your college cheat sheet*

### *Earn discounted course credits*

#### **THE PROBLEM**

College tuition costs too much

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Earn discounted credits through creative new classes and programs

#### **TIP**

Take free online classes, then enroll in college with up to two years of credit

Yes, college has become insanely expensive. The average cost of a year at a private, four-year university is more than \$40,000, and a record 40 million Americans now have at least one outstanding student loan.

Thankfully, there are also a growing number of creative ways to bring college costs down.

Resourceful students can cobble together a full transcript of credits from a variety of less-expensive sources -- not just the college from which they graduate -- or enroll in flexible programs that let them graduate in less than four years.

The American Council on Education helps adults earn college credits through relevant life experiences such as apprenticeships, professional training and military service -- a process known as Prior Learning Assessment. To prove their proficiency, students must pass an exam or have their portfolio reviewed by a council-approved faculty member, then ask a university to accept their credits.

This month, the council announced an initiative, funded by a \$1.8 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to create a pool of low-cost or free general-education online courses in more than 20 subjects.

In turn, 40 colleges and universities have agreed to accept transfer credit for the courses and allow students to enroll with up to two years of credit toward a four-year degree.

"This generous investment will ... promote a more flexible and cost-efficient way for more Americans to earn the high-quality postsecondary degrees and credentials needed in today's global economy," says Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education.

At the same time, more schools are embracing something called competency-based education, which allows students to advance toward college degrees in less than four years as they demonstrate mastery of subjects. By letting people learn skills at their own pace --regardless of traditional timetables -- these flexible programs can save students time and money.

Dan Fitch took advantage of such a program at the University of Wisconsin to complete 33 credits in a single three-month subscription period, saving an estimated \$7,500 in tuition and about nine months' time.

"I don't even want to think about what that would cost me through another program," Fitch says. "I wouldn't have been able to do this any other way. If I had to do it with normal online classes, this would take me more than five years."

Then there are dual-enrollment programs, which let you earn college credit while still in high school. And classes from online providers such as Coursera can also yield transferrable college credits at a discount over on-campus courses.

"We're all looking for new, lower-cost models," says Cathy Sandeen, vice president for education attainment and innovation at the American Council on Education.

She sees universities becoming increasingly open to new ways of helping students earning credits. "How students are learning is less important than are they learning?"

### ***Be smart about the admissions process***

#### **THE PROBLEM**

Getting into a top college can be tough

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Be strategic about where and how you apply

#### **TIP**

Make sure your favorite school knows who you are before you send your application

Technology puts more information than ever at college applicants' fingertips. But experts say the best advice for tackling the application process and getting into a top university is about as old-fashioned as it comes: Do your homework.

"You will actually improve your odds of admission if you're applying to a school for the right reasons," says college consultant Michele Hernandez.

That means doing research to find out schools' strengths, and also getting to know their weaknesses, says Hernandez, who was an assistant director of admissions at Dartmouth College before starting a college counseling firm.

If a school is known for its cutting-edge science program, for example, a student with a humanities background actually might have a better shot at getting in, she says.

"You can only have so many computer scientists and engineers in a school," Hernandez says.

The nation's top universities get more selective every year, but that doesn't mean you're out of luck, says John Katzman, founder of The Princeton Review, Noodle Education and 2U. The total number of slots at top schools have increased, he says.

"Any one great school is wildly harder to get into than it used to be, but it's wildly easier than it used to be to get into one of the great schools," Katzman told an audience last year at a TEDx Talk in Boston.

Katzman advises students to come up with a strong list of 14 colleges they'd want to attend rather than setting their sights on just one dream school.

"If you think about this process smart," he says, "you change the game."

But experts warn that there's a flip side to how simple it is to send out applications to a long list of colleges, particularly when using the Common Application, the online form that more than 500 schools use as part of their admissions process.

"There's something called being a 'phantom' applicant, where the school has never heard of you until you've submitted an application. That's a really dangerous place to be," says Helen Adler founder of South Florida-based International College Counselors.

Visit college campuses, reach out to admissions officers and if a representative from the admissions office comes to your school, show up, says Adler, co-author of "From Public School to the Ivy League: How to Get into a Top School Without Top Dollar Resources."

Then tailor applications to show you know about the school, and why it's the right match for your skills and interests.

"Colleges are really concerned about fit ... because it's really easy to apply to a range of schools," Adler says. "I would want to go out of my way to make sure they know that I'm not just clicking the button."

### **Find a better roommate**

#### **THE PROBLEM**

A bad roommate can ruin your freshman year of college

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Apps that let incoming students choose their roommates

#### **TIP**

Some universities still randomly match freshman roommates. Check first before applying

Sharing a dorm room with someone is a key part of the college experience, but incoming freshmen traditionally have had little say in choosing roommates.

Many universities paired roommates randomly for years in the belief that interacting with different types of people promoted students' personal growth. Others sent incoming students a brief questionnaire ("Do you smoke? Are you a night owl or an early riser?") and matched roommates based on a handful of responses.

But technology is changing all that. Colleges and students alike are increasingly turning to new digital tools that let freshmen-to-be scour online profiles to find better matches and select their own roommates.

"It's very much in line with the rise of social media, especially Facebook," says Robert Castellucci, co-founder and CEO of RoomSync an app that helps students make their own living arrangements. "With social media, people expect more of a choice."

The creators of Roomsurf, a similar service, got the idea to build the site after hearing stories about their friends' horrible roommate experiences.

"One guy just sat in bed all day and night watching the Game Show Network," says Dan Thibodeau, who co-founded Roomsurf with classmate Justin Gaither at the University of Miami. "The guy never left the room. His roommate had no privacy." Because most colleges allow students to request roommates mutually if they can identify each other, apps such as RoomSync, Roomsurf and Compatibility work by applying online-dating principles to roommate selection. After students fill out profiles and answer surveys about their study habits and lifestyles, the apps generate potential matches.

RoomSync now partners with housing offices at 60 universities, including the universities of Florida, Maryland and Wisconsin. Roomsurf's 560,000 users find matches on their own, then submit roommate requests to the college they'll be attending. It's then up to the university to make the final call.

"Students like the idea of knowing who they're going to room with before they arrive on campus," says Mark D'Arienzo, a senior associate director of university housing at Northwestern University, which has used RoomSync for three years. "It makes them feel comfortable, and it makes the transition to college life easier."

Research has shown a bad roommate can affect a student's academic performance. More than 5% of undergraduates said roommate problems hampered their studies, according to a 2013 report by the American College Health Association. And a 2011 study by Michigan State University determined that roommate conflicts were a top reason why students drop out of school.

Northwestern's D'Arienzo says apps like RoomSync have eased the burden on college housing offices to match compatible roommates and reduced the rate of room-transfer requests.

"We want to make the process transparent and let the technology do the work for you," he says. "It's worked well (so far). There's been a real paradigm shift."

### ***Get your employer to pay tuition***

#### **THE PROBLEM**

The problem: A full-time job can be a disincentive to finish school

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Work for a company that provides scholarships to its employees

#### **TIP**

Starbucks employees get discounts for online classes at Arizona State

Before ever taking a college tour or picking up an application, there's something you can do to help cover the hefty price tag of an advanced degree: Work for a company that will pay you to learn.

We're not talking about tuition-reimbursement programs for professionals looking to hone academic skills related to their job.

Instead, these are scholarships and grants available solely to a company's employees (or dependents of employees) to study whatever floats their boat. And they're offered by lots of big companies, including Wal-Mart, Kroger, and Chick-fil-A.

Chick-fil-A for example, provides \$1.6 million a year to help its employees attend the colleges of their choice, according to its website. Over the life of its grant program, the company says it has donated more than \$30 million to help more than 30,000 employees go to college.

In June, Starbucks launched its College Achievement Plan, a partnership with Arizona State University that assists employees who want to earn bachelor's degrees.

The company asked employees last year what incentives they needed aside from health care, equity in the company and other existing perks. Workers

overwhelmingly said they wanted help finishing school, says spokeswoman Laurel Harper. She added that 70% of the Starbucks workforce are “aspiring students.”

“There are a lot of factors that are against not just our partners but (many of) those who are wanting to finish their education, so our goal with this program with ASU is to focus on completion,” Harper says.

The program isn’t a simple grant or scholarship. It requires that eligible employees take classes through ASU’s online program, which offers 40 academic majors. The company reimburses a percentage of tuition costs and provides financial counselors to help employees find other sources for the rest of the money.

Harper says Starbucks received a flood of interest after announcing the program, and 4,000 employees have applied so far. Those who take advantage of the program aren’t obligated to work for Starbucks after graduation.

But even if you don’t find an after-school job with a company that offers scholarships -- and if your parents don’t work for one -- it pays to look around.

The scholarship money available for undergraduates in the U.S. has surged from \$2.7 billion in 2007-2008 to \$6.2 billion in 2011-2012, the most recent year for which figures are available, according to Edvisors.com, which helps students search for merit aid.

Shanice Miller graduated from high school in 2007 with no savings and no clear way to pay for college. Thanks to her aggressive approach to earning scholarships, she had a degree in dental hygiene from the University of Maryland four years later - - and, she says, no student loans to repay.

“I didn’t have to pay anything. I ended up getting money back,” says Miller, who now works as a consultant helping students get scholarships.

Miller successfully applied for several merit, state and local scholarships that paid her entire bill and even sent her refund checks. The paperwork was daunting at first, but got easier with every new application, she says.

### ***Be a college entrepreneur***

#### **THE PROBLEM**

College students feel like they must graduate before starting business careers

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Launch a startup while still in school

#### **TIP**

Some universities provide funding, mentors and office space for student

As a college rugby player, Anthony Gonzales was shaking off a big hit he had taken, as rugby players are prone to do.

“I said I was fine,” says Gonzales, who played at Arizona State, “until I lined up for the ball on the side with the other team.”

And that, says Gonzales, was the beginning of FITguard, the product of a startup he co-founded while working on his master's degree at ASU.

FITGuard is a mouthpiece designed to warn athletes, and their coaches, when they've taken a blow to the head that may have caused a concussion, like the one Gonzales suffered that day.

Using the same kind of accelerometers and gyroscopes that measure movement and speed in many smart phones, the mouthpiece lights up with green, yellow or red lights when a player's head is hit. It also sends data via Bluetooth to a mobile app so coaches or medical professionals can see what happened.

"We're the brain's 'check engine' light," says Gonzales, who said the guard could also be used in sports like skiing and horseback riding, where head trauma might not be so obvious.

The concept of the college entrepreneur has become the stuff of legend in the startup age, with the origin stories of multibillion-dollar companies like Facebook and Snapchat set squarely in dorm rooms and even fraternity houses.

Increasingly, students like Gonzales are choosing "CEO" as a college job and making real money with their own businesses. He's one of five nominees for Entrepreneur magazine's College Entrepreneur of the Year, alongside the creators of products like an app that lets parents remotely monitor their children's temperature with a smartphone and a social networking site that links users working toward common goals.

Now 25, Gonzales returned to Arizona State for his MBA in 2013. That's when he started working in earnest on FITguard, balancing his studies with research and development, as well as forming a company, Force Impact Technologies.

He says he took advantage of the resources available to him at the university, and urges other students interested in getting an early start as entrepreneurs to do the same.

### **Save money with open-source textbooks**

#### **THE PROBLEM**

College textbooks are ridiculously expensive

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Online course materials that are much cheaper and even free

#### **TIP**

Some schools let students request open-source textbooks for their courses

It's hardly a secret that the price of new college textbooks has risen 82% in the last decade, forcing students to find cheaper alternatives or forego course materials altogether.

Rentals, buybacks and used textbooks are part of the solution, but they still involve textbooks from the three major publishers that control the market. Experts say the next disruptive force in the textbook market could cut out these "big three" altogether.

Instead of traditional bound textbooks, some schools and educators are assigning open textbooks, or digital course materials accessible online free of charge or at significantly cheaper rates. The idea was inspired by the open-source movement, which favors free software that's available for anybody to use or modify.

The first decade of open-source textbooks was focused on creating content and getting it online under a Creative Commons license so anyone could use it as they wished. Now that the material is out there, the focus has shifted to encouraging

schools to use open-source books on a widespread basis, says David Wiley, co-founder of Lumen Learning, which helps schools adopt open educational resources.

Some educators build their own course materials from scratch from articles and videos available on the Web. The most common open textbooks are developed by digital publishers that make them available to individuals and schools for free or comparably low prices.

OpenStax, one of those publishers, makes nine introductory level textbooks used by about 140,000 students at more than 850 institutions. OpenStax is funded by grants, which allow it to offer digital books that students can download and print for free. Students also have the option of requesting a hardcopy (\$30 to \$50) or an iBooks version for \$4.99.

“Students really are looking for ways to get better access to high-quality learning materials,” says OpenStax creator Richard Baraniuk.

This year OpenStax launched partnerships with libraries at Virginia Tech, Ohio State, Auburn, the University of Oklahoma and UMass Amherst. The schools make the texts available for review to students so they can share them with professors and request them for their courses.

Boundless is another major open textbook publisher that offers intro-level textbooks in more than 20 subjects, from algebra to world history. Art history textbooks often retail for more than \$100, for example, but Boundless sells its open-source versions for \$20.

Like OpenStax, the Boundless platform allows educators to edit and customize material to suit their course needs.

After all, educators are the ones who choose course materials. And research shows they often make those decisions without cost in mind.

“We want educators to feel comfortable using Boundless because they’re the ones who set the agenda,” says Boundless creator Ariel Diaz. “They’re the ones who can help students drive down their costs.”

### **Study smarter, not harder**

#### **THE PROBLEM**

Many students can’t find enough time to study

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Apps that help you maximize time and share study materials

#### **TIP**

Students can use their phones to study during down time, such as waiting for the bus

It's a simple fact of college and life: There are only so many hours in the day. Between classes, work, family and fun, finding the time to study can be tough. But, if you want to do well and graduate, you'll have to hit the books.

Enter: help.

There's a new wave of resources for students looking to make the most of their study time -- from apps that manage your schedule to techniques proven to boost long-term retention.

Let's start with the technological gizmos.



As we know, the Internet can cut both ways. It's hard to imagine life without it, but it can also be a major distraction.

To limit interruptions while you're studying, try an app like SelfControl, which allows you to block certain websites for a period of time. Your friends' Facebook status updates can wait.

For keeping track of your assignments, schedule and grades, use an app like iStudiezPro. It's your basic planner on steroids.

To connect with your peers, try StudyBlue, a crowd-source app that allows you to create and share study materials like flashcards.

The app covers everything from bartending to biology and includes a library of some 250 million entries. It can track your progress, helping you to hone in on what's hardest.

It's about "being prepared, so that when you do dedicate time to study, you have the right material," says StudyBlue CEO and founder Chris Klundt.

Even if you just have a few minutes, maybe waiting for a bus -- he says -- you can pull out the app and study. It's an idea that was echoed by Katherine Rawson, a professor of psychology at Kent State University. She says if she could give students a single piece of study advice, it would be to space out their learning.

Last year, Rawson co-authored a paper that looked at various study techniques.

Simply put: "The worst strategies are the ones students use the most and the best strategies are the ones they use the least," she says.

Cramming, re-reading and highlighting are not good for long-term retention, Rawson found, while using flashcards or other memory prompts can help cement whatever you're trying to learn.

As time is limited, she advocates those techniques that give students the most "bang for their buck." Speaking of which, study break is over! Go hit those books.

### **Learn a trade instead**

#### **THE PROBLEM**

Skilled technicians are in demand in many industries that don't require college degrees

#### **THE SOLUTION**

Apprenticeship programs that will train people for specific trades

#### **TIP**

Enroll at a community college, which offers two-year training programs

You know the college deal: Four years of schooling. A varied set of courses. Graduation. Job search.

But is that really the ONLY deal?

If you want to pursue a specific trade, there are other options, says Danine Tomlin.

Tomlin is executive director of the Automotive Manufacturing Technical Education Collaborative (AMTEC), a collaboration between members of the auto industry and more than three dozen community colleges in 18 states. The program is designed to train and improve students with an eye towards channeling them into manufacturing – and there are jobs available for those who fulfill the program's requirements.

“The demand for a multi-skilled technician is needed in several of the trades,” she says.

It’s not just the heavy manufacturing epitomized by the auto business, either. Health care – a rapidly growing field, especially given the aging of the population and the need for improved services – has a number of businesses looking to [train and hire people] for such specialties as pharmacy technicians and elder care.

The food-and-beverage business needs people to oversee the making of products. The electricians, plumbing and climate-control industries all have a demand for well-trained workers. Many of these training programs are offered through community colleges, and some take just two years to complete.

In some ways these programs are throwbacks. Decades ago, established businesses and professionals would take on newcomers as apprentices, teaching them skills in classic on-the-job “earn and learn” arrangements. Though “apprenticeship” has a specific definition these days that includes requirements set by the U.S. Department of Labor, the model is still greatly successful in providing training and work for willing students.

Ironically, however, finding those students has been a challenge, says Tim McGhee, dean of the engineering technical division at Chattanooga State Community College in Tennessee. The college has a partnership with Volkswagen called the Volkswagen Academy, where students balance five semesters of academic training with four semesters of paid, on-the-job training, according to its website.

In a national environment that prizes the four-year baccalaureate degree, the idea of a trade school, community college or apprenticeship has been a hard sell, McGhee says.

“That’s an embedded stigma in this country and we’ll always be fighting that,” he says.

Nevertheless, the training is tremendously flexible, he says. The Volkswagen Academy’s “automation mechatronics” training, which combines electrical and mechanical skills, “would transfer to 99% of any manufacturing plant in this country,” says McGhee.

“At the end of the day, you’re going to have pumps, dials, motors, controls, electronics, automation that has to be maintained, repaired and programmed, and these folks can do that anywhere.”

Like the four-year university setting, apprenticeships and community colleges aren’t for everybody. It helps to have a specific career goal, and applicants often have to be willing to start working right away.

But if you’ve got that focus, it might be the way to go.

“Most of my friends don’t have a clue about their futures,” says one AMTEC student. “I do.”

## **College Application Fee Waiver FAQs**

Beginning in the 2014-15 academic year, every income-eligible senior who takes the SAT or SAT Subject Test using a fee waiver will receive four college application fee waivers from the College Board. These waivers will be delivered online to eligible students starting in late August. Below are some frequently asked questions about college application fee waivers.

### **Why did I receive college application fee waivers?**

The College Board distributes college application fee waivers to make the college application process more affordable for eligible students. If you previously registered for and took the SAT® or one of the SAT Subject Tests™ using a fee waiver, you are automatically eligible to receive four college application fee waivers.

### **I have registered and taken the SAT using a fee waiver. When can I expect to receive my college application fee waivers?**

If you are a senior and eligible for college application fee waivers, you will receive them when you get your SAT score. If you are a junior and eligible, you will receive them in the fall of your senior year. In the meantime, search for colleges that accept application fee waivers.

### **If I am applying to colleges using the Common Application, can I still use these fee waivers?**

The Common Application has a specific process for students who apply using a fee waiver. If you have received (or are eligible to receive) an SAT fee waiver, you may apply to any Common App college without a fee.

You will be asked on the application whether your financial circumstances qualify you for a fee waiver; if you received an SAT fee waiver, you should indicate that in response to this question. Your high school counselor will be asked to verify your eligibility.

In addition, some colleges may also ask you to enter the unique code found on your fee waiver, or upload an electronic copy of your fee waiver. There is no need to send a hard copy of your fee waiver unless you are instructed to do so.

It is important to note that this process is unique to Common Application colleges and does not extend to other institutions. You may use up to four of these college application fee waivers with colleges who do not participate in the Common Application.

### **How many of these college application fee waivers am I allowed to use?**

You may use up to four of these college application fee waivers.

**Do I need to have my college application fee waivers verified or signed by my school counselor?**

No. Because students who take the SAT using a fee waiver have already had their eligibility verified by their counselor, these college application fee waivers do not require counselor approval.

**Can I share college application fee waivers with my friends?**

No. Your college application fee waivers are for you only. If your friends think they might be eligible for college application fee waivers, they should speak to their school counselor.

**What's the difference between a college application fee waiver and an SAT fee waiver?**

An SAT fee waiver allows you to register for the SAT or an SAT Subject Test free of charge. A college application fee waiver allows you to apply to college without paying an application fee. If you registered for the SAT or an SAT Subject Test using an SAT fee waiver, you're automatically eligible to receive four college application fee waivers.

**Do all colleges accept application fee waivers?**

No, not all colleges accept application fee waivers. Search colleges that accept application fee waivers.

**I don't have access to a printer. What should I do?**

If you are unable to print your college application fee waivers at home, please ask your counselor for help printing them at school.

**Can I get more college application fee waivers?**

If you need more than the four college application fee waivers that have been provided to you, reach out to your high school guidance counselor to see if you are eligible for other, similar programs. You can also request an application fee waiver directly from the college you're applying to. Using a fee waiver is a common part of the application process, and most colleges have information about fee waivers on their websites.

**Will the College Board share my personal information with anyone?**

Yes, although any personal information you share is securely managed and protected. School counselors may be informed that you have received college application fee waivers so that they can provide support throughout your college application process. However, your personal information is not shared with any other third parties without your permission. For more information, please review the College Board website's Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

**My address listed on the college application fee waivers has changed. How do I update my contact information?**

If your contact information is out of date, please log into your College Board account and make the necessary updates. Then you can print out your college application fee waivers, and your updated contact information should display.

If you have further questions, please contact us.

Counselors can call the SAT Educator Help Line at 888-SAT-HELP (888-728-4357) for more information about college application fee waivers.

## Visiting the College(s):

Visiting colleges is a great way to get a feel for what college is like. And when the time comes, it can help you decide if a specific college is right for you. Exploring campuses is well worth your while. You don't have to travel far — visiting local colleges is just as valuable.

### *Arrange a Visit*

All colleges have **admission offices** that can help you plan your visit. Your high school may organize **group tours** of nearby colleges. And you can plan **your own informal visit** to a college campus. Take these important first steps:

- Contact the college admission office through the college's website or by email or phone to get details and make a reservation.
- Talk to your counselor about joining an organized tour of campuses you might not get to visit otherwise.
- Schedule time to be on your own. Walk around the public areas of the college and don't be shy about asking students questions.

### What to Expect

Campus visits can range from a quick hour to an overnight stay, from a casual guided tour to a formal presentation. Be sure to ask how long the whole visit will take so you can be prepared.

### *Most campus visits will include the following:*

- **An information session.** An admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour.
- **A campus tour.** These are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions.

At many colleges, you can also arrange to do the following:

- Attend a class.
- Meet with a professor.
- Meet with an admission officer.
- Meet with a financial aid officer.
- Attend a club meeting or a sports practice session.
- Eat in the dining hall.
- Spend the night in a dorm.

### *Get Ready*

#### *Before your visit, you should get prepared:*

- Explore the college's official website and review any materials the college has sent you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that college.
- Make a list of questions to ask both staff and students. You can use the Campus Visit Checklist as a starting point.
- Get a map of the college campus and check where the admission office is. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit.

## Applying to College Checklist:

Application Checklist	College: _
Get the application	
Make a note of the regular application deadline	
Make a note of the early application deadline	
Request high school transcript sent	
Request midyear grade report sent	
Find out if an admission test is required	
Take an admission test, if required	
Take other required or recommended tests (e.g., SAT Subject Tests, AP Exams, IB exams)	
Send admission-test scores	
Send other test scores	
Request recommendation letters	
Send thank-you notes to recommendation writers	
Draft initial essay	
Proofread essay for spelling and grammar	
Have two people read your essay	
Revise your essay	
Proofread your revision	
Interview at college campus	
Have an alumni interview	
Send thank-you note to interviewer(s)	
Complete college application	
Make copies of all application materials	
Pay application fee	
Sign and send application	
Confirm receipt of application materials	
Send additional material, if needed	
Tell school counselor that you applied	
Make a note of the priority financial aid deadline	
Make a note of the regular financial aid deadline	
Submit FAFSA	
Submit PROFILE, if needed	
Submit college aid form, if needed	
Submit state aid form, if needed	
Receive letter from office of admission	
Receive financial aid award letter	
Meet deadline to accept admission and send deposit	
Accept financial aid offer	
Notify the colleges you will not attend	

## **During College: Money Saving Tips:**

1. Buy or rent used textbooks and sell last semester's books back.
2. Don't make impulse purchases.
3. Never go grocery shopping when you're hungry.
4. Limit the number of times you eat out monthly.
5. Cut out vices – smoking, drug use, and binge drinking are terrible for you *and* expensive.
6. Always pay bills on time to avoid late fees.
7. If you have a credit card, pay it off as quickly as possible. (It's good to establish credit, but a bad credit score follows you everywhere.)
8. Walk, use public transportation or ride a bike instead of having a car.
9. Live with others so you can split rent and utilities.
10. Cut out expensive cable packages you don't need.
11. Consider more basic phone packages and plans or plans that include unlimited texting with free incoming calls
12. Don't buy the most expensive college meal plans. Figure out what you actually consume and get the correlating package.
13. Shop where they offer student discounts. There are so many places that offer discounts to students with a school ID.
14. Look into a campus gym versus a gym in town. Many colleges offer memberships for free or at a reduced rate for students.
15. When planning meals, make dinner with friends and split the cost of groceries. Often times, you'll be cooking too much for one person anyway!
16. Sell what you no longer use or need. There are plenty of stores and web sites, like Poshmark and Craigslist where you can sell your used clothing, furniture or tech items.
17. Don't buy unnecessary school supplies. Why buy cumbersome notebooks when you can type on your laptop? It's better for the earth anyway!



- 18.** Don't buy books you will only need for a short period of time – check them out from the library instead.
- 19.** Take advantage of what your campus has to offer in terms of activities, rather than spending money on going out. Many campuses have an array of museums; offer movie nights and other social events for cheaper or, sometimes, for free.
- 20.** Skip expensive Spring break and summer trips – look into alternatives, like volunteering, instead.
- 21.** Wait to get a pet until after college – a pet can become very expensive. Not only do you have another mouth to feed, but veterinary bills are costly. If you love animals, there are plenty of shelters that need volunteers.
- 22.** Go to class. You're paying for it and skipping is like throwing money out the window!
- 23.** Drink water. It's free and better for you, anyway.
- 24.** Make your own coffee. While coffee shops are convenient, they charge hefty prices that really add up over time.
- 25.** Open a savings account that earns interest. Credit unions have fewer fees and are great for students.
- 26.** Use a free tool, like FinAid's Student Budget Calculator or the one offered by Mint.com to keep track of your finances. It's harder to be frivolous when you see where your money is going.
- 27.** Never take out a loan for anything that's unrelated to your education.
- 28.** Don't buy music. Use free services like Spotify or Pandora.
- 29.** Look into class requirements and the options for testing out of classes. Why pay for a class you could easily test out of?
- 30.** Consider becoming a resident advisor. Many get free room and board.

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