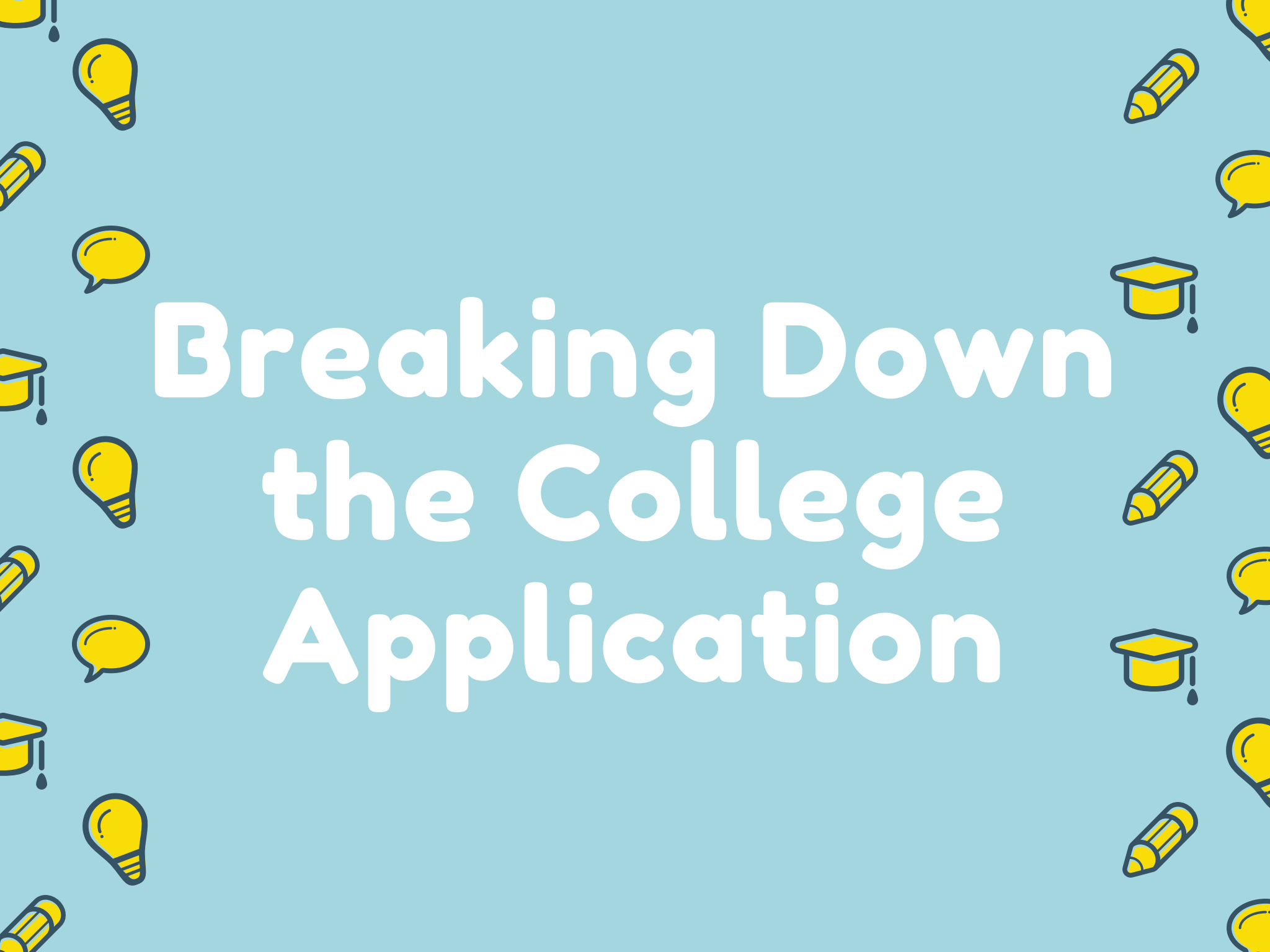


# Breaking Down the College Application





# The College Application

There are many elements that go into a college application, and each school is likely to have their own requirements. Each of these components is a chance to paint a picture for admissions officers about who you are and how you will fit onto their campus.

It's important to review each school's requirements and speak with your counselor about how to submit these materials.

# Application



- Every school you are applying to will require you to fill out a form with general information about you and your family.
- These questions can range from general questions, like where you went to high school, to more personal questions, such as your family's income.
- Admissions offices use this information to put the rest of your application in perspective as they aim to build a diverse profile of admitted students.
- To answer some of these questions, you'll most likely need to have personal documents on hand or ask your parents for information.
- Most importantly, make sure to answer each question thoroughly and honestly!

# Application



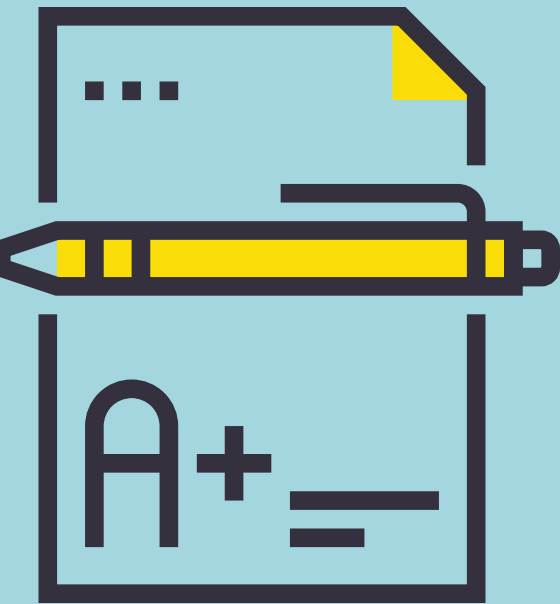
- It's also important to become familiar with the application format beforehand, as each school's policy may differ.
- Many colleges and universities will have their applications available through universal platforms, such as the Common Application and Coalition Application.
  - These platforms help simplify the application process by allowing students to submit one application to multiple participating schools. Each school will likely still have their own supplemental requirements, so be sure to review those beforehand.
- In addition to the application form, each school will require an application fee with your submission.
  - These are nonrefundable fees used to cover the cost it takes to review each application.
  - Application fees can typically range from \$25-90, with most schools offering fee waivers to qualifying students. You can speak with your counselor on how to obtain these.

# Transcript



- Your high school transcript, of course, is one of the most important parts of your college application. A transcript is an official record of the classes you have taken and the grades received in each class.
- Admissions officers will use this record to assess how your performance in high school will translate into college-level courses. A good record, especially in challenging classes like Honors, AP/IB, and Dual-Enrollment, will help show that you're ready to perform at the college level.
- College admissions offices will only accept copies of your official high school transcript, meaning they come directly from your school administrators.

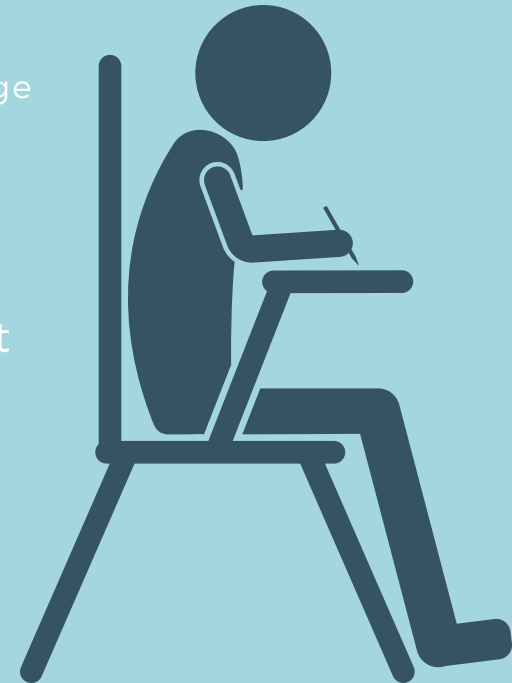
# Transcript



- Your school counselor will likely be the one to send an official copy of your transcript to the admissions office at each school you apply to.
  - It is imperative that you confirm with your counselor and the school you are applying to ensure your transcripts have arrived. Colleges will not review your application with a copy of your official transcript.
- At the end of your senior year, your counselor will then send a copy of your final high school transcript to the school you plan on attending. This will have a copy of your final grades and confirm you received a high school diploma.
  - Admissions officers will check your final transcript to make sure you kept your grades up through the end of high school, so it's important to make sure you don't use your last semester as a chance to slack off!

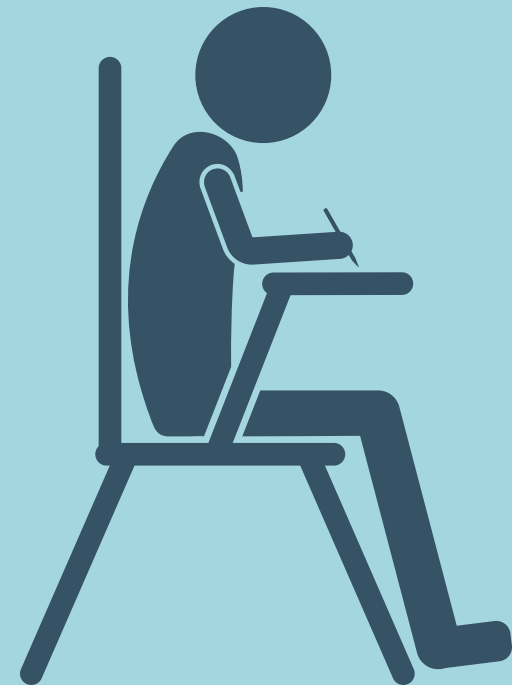
# Test Scores

- Most schools will require you to submit scores from standardized college entrance exams such as the SAT or the ACT.
- These tests are designed to assess a student's knowledge of skills they'll need at the college level, such as algebra, grammar, and reading comprehension.
  - The main advantage of these exams is that it helps gauge students' college preparedness on a standardized, universal level. Admissions officers can compare student scores from New York to Wyoming to Beijing, and know they're being tested on the same material.
- The majority of schools that require test scores will accept a student's SAT or ACT scores equally. Students are encouraged to submit the test scores they feel they did best on.



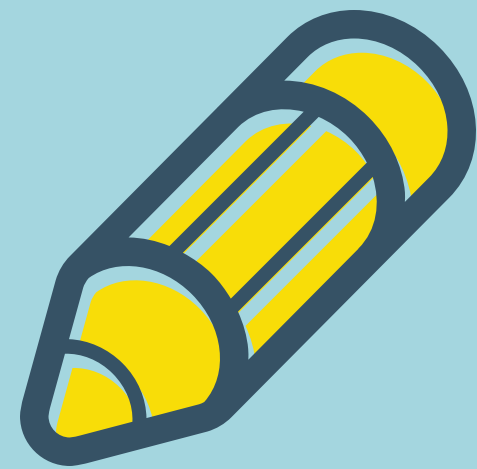
# Test Scores

- However, today, more and more colleges and universities are choosing to be **test-optional**, meaning students can choose not to submit their SAT or ACT scores, in an effort to level the playing field for all applicants.
  - The list of test-optional schools currently includes: University of Chicago, Bowdoin College, Wake Forest University, Bates College, Wesleyan University, Smith College, Bryn Mawr College, Pitzer College, Franklin & Marshall College, George Washington University
  - While submitting test scores are optional at these schools, applicants should recognize that admissions officers will place more substantial weight on the rest of your application.
- Some colleges, or specific programs you may be applying to, will require or recommend that students to take specific **SAT Subject Tests**. These tests will test your proficiency in a specific subject.
  - There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics and science.





# Essays

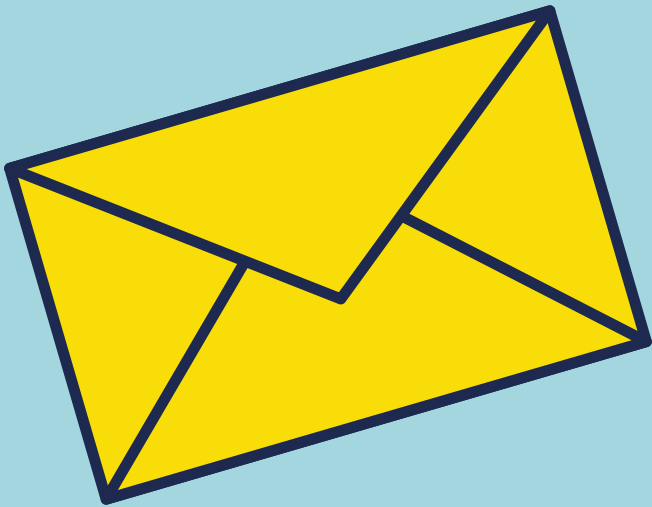


- College application essays are the most important tool for admissions officers to gain insight into who you are and if you'd be a right fit for their campus.
- In these essays, applicants can express their goals, their values, their voice, and tell their story.
- There are three main types of essays you'll submit with your college application:
  - **Personal Statement:** This is the main college application essay designed to get to know the applicant on a more personal level. Admissions officers will use the story you tell in this essay to get to know you, and a strong personal statement can make all the difference in your application.
  - **Supplemental Essays:** Colleges have the option to include their own unique questions or essays. These questions are meant to get to know you more beyond your application.
  - **"Why This College?" Essay:** These essays let admissions officers know that the applicant is serious about attending their school and helps explain why you'd be a good fit into a school's campus, culture, and community.

# Letters of Recommendation



- Some colleges will require you to submit a letter of recommendation, either from a teacher or school counselor, that will help them get a better sense of your character in and outside of the classroom.
- Make sure you ask for letters of recommendation from people who know you well. These should be people who can speak honestly and earnestly about your character and your accomplishments.



- Letters of recommendation are important because they reveal the things your transcript and test scores can't.