




 college
greenlight
 by EAB

College Fit Kit

Table of Contents

PREPARE

What Sets You Apart?	3
My College Search Calendar: Junior Year	4
Your Application: Now and Then	5
My College Search Calendar: Senior Year	6

PLAN

Planning Your Campus Visits.	7
College Net Price Calculators	8
Speak the Language: College Admissions.	9
Financial Aid Vocab Cheat Sheet	10
Choosing Your Team.	11
Getting Letters of Recommendation.	12
Scholarship Application Guide.	13
The FAFSA: The Most Important Financial Aid Form You'll Ever Fill Out	14

DECIDE

Choosing Your College Priorities	15
4 Steps to Finding the Best College Deal	16
College Visit Checklist	18

APPLY

5½ Steps to Writing a College Admissions Essay	19
College Application Checklist.	20

What Sets You Apart?

Fill this out before you begin your college search to get an idea of your accomplishments and what you want out of college. Bring this to your college advisor or mentor to start a discussion.

Name	GPA	SAT Score	ACT Score
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

My Academic Strengths Are

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

How would your best friends describe you?

What adjectives would you say best describe you?

What in-school activities do you enjoy most?

What activities do you enjoy least?

What out-of-school activities do you participate in? Volunteer work? Family responsibilities?

Which talents or skills make you stand out?

Prior to graduation I hope to accomplish ...

After high school I hope to accomplish ...

College Greenlight Fit Fact: Don't panic. Seventy percent of colleges accept 70 percent of their applicants. Kick-start your college search today at bit.ly/greenlight-student. It's free and easy!

My College Search Calendar: Junior Year

Summer

Notes

JUN	Be active—participate in a pre-college program, get a job, internship, or pursue a passion	
JUL	Talk with family about your college goals and college costs	
	Start visiting college campuses	
AUG	Create your free <i>Cappex for College Greenlight</i> profile to start discovering your college matches at bit.ly/greenlight-student	

Back to School

Notes

SEP	Keep your grades up—admissions counselors look closely at your junior year grades	
OCT	Stay involved and take on leadership roles in your extracurricular activities	
NOV	Prep for the ACT or SAT, and review winter/spring test dates at actstudent.org or sat.collegeboard.org	
	Think about teachers, coaches, community members or employers you can ask for recommendations in near future	
DEC	Meet with your school’s college counselor to discuss your goals and make sure you’re on track for graduation	
	Start building your college list on bit.ly/greenlight-student	

After Winter Break

Notes

JAN	Update your college list and stay in touch with colleges through bit.ly/greenlight-student	
	Register for the ACT or SAT (or both)	
FEB	Begin your scholarship search with bit.ly/greenlight-student	
	Attend virtual or in-person college fairs	
MAR	Identify the fit factors that are most important to you—location, cost, academics, public, private, religious affiliation, social environment, etc.	
APR	Visit local college campuses, or participate in virtual visits or tours	
	Ask counselors, teachers, coaches, community members, or employers to write your recommendation in the fall	
MAY	Apply early for fly-in programs to visit college campuses over the summer and senior fall	
	End junior year strong!	

That’s a lot of steps! Simplify your college search by making a free profile on bit.ly/greenlight-student today.

Your Application: Now and Then

For Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors

Fill out the information in the left column as you are now, as if you were applying to college today.

Think about what type of college you might want to attend. What are your college goals? Then, fill in the right column as you want to be by your senior year when you will apply to college.

	As you are now	As you want to be when you apply
GPA:		
Academic honors or awards:		
Activities: extracurricular, personal, volunteer, school:		
Sports: What sports do you play now? Do you want to play varsity sports in college? Club or intramural sports?		
Art/Music/Theater: What art activities are you in now? Do you want continue those activities in college?		
Awards and honors from your activities: Do you plan to participate in any of these in college?		
Work experience: Have you had a part-time job to support your family? Has your job helped you learn about future majors or careers?		
What are the first words teachers might use to describe you:		

Now, compare the two sides. What do you need to do now to get where you want to be tomorrow? If you don't have all the answers now that's okay. Use this time to explore your interests. If you find something you like, stick with it! Keep this sheet and use it to set goals.

College Greenlight Fit Fact: There are more than 26,000 high schools in the United States. If you want to stand out to a college you've got to really stand out. Kick-start your college search today at bit.ly/greenlight-student. It's free and easy!

My College Search Calendar: Senior Year

Summer

Notes

JUN	Take part in activities that continue to enhance your college and scholarship applications; i.e., leadership, volunteering, family responsibilities, jobs	
JUL	Narrow down your college list on bit.ly/greenlight-student	
	Make college application accounts on the Common App, Coalition, Universal Application, and any college-specific application platforms	
AUG	Get to work on application essays	

Back to School as a Senior!

Notes

SEP	Take charge in your extracurricular activities and continue to demonstrate leadership	
OCT	Check in with teachers, employers, community members or coaches you've asked for recommendations – provide them with materials and deadlines	
	Make plans with your family to complete the FAFSA after it opens on October 1st. Review the CSS Profile or other college-specific financial aid applications that may be required.	
NOV	Order and send your high school transcript (and ACT or SAT scores, if applicable) to all the colleges you're applying to	
	Submit all application materials before deadlines and monitor your email or applicant portal	
DEC	Confirm materials have been received by colleges, including letters of recommendation, official test scores, transcripts, etc.	

After Winter Break

Notes

JAN	Apply to any additional colleges you're still considering	
FEB	Keep your grades up as you wait to hear decisions from schools	
MAR	Kick scholarship search into full gear using bit.ly/greenlight-student	
	Participate in virtual or in-person visits where you've been admitted to help make a final decision	
APR	Keep an eye out for financial aid award letters around April and consider appealing if your family circumstances have changed	
MAY	Decide on a college officially confirm your enrollment no later than May 1	
	Celebrate your college choice!	

Best of luck on your college search and congratulations on graduation!

Planning Your Campus Visits

Here are five considerations to help plan your campus visits!

1 WHEN?

Look through your jam-packed calendar and mark off time when you might be able to visit colleges or participate in more virtual college visits

MARCH

Spring Break

JUNE

Summer
(May not have campus activities of the normal school year)

OCTOBER

Fall

2 WHERE?

If considering visiting colleges in-person, is there a geographic "hot spot" with colleges you're interested in? Map together the schools you might want to visit that are close to one another. Discuss with your family whether taking a trip to visit colleges makes sense

College Group 1

College Group 2

College Group 3

3 WHAT?

The point of visiting schools is to experience the differences in each campus and the culture. Consider which activities you'd like to participate in during each campus visit.

Attend an Info Session

Tour Campus

Schedule an Interview

Meet With a Professor

Visit a Class

Stay Overnight in a Dorm

4 HOW?

Make the final arrangements.

Who will you go with? Travel with people who will want you to get the most out of your college visits. Where will you stay? Make arrangements ahead of time. Many colleges offer funding to visit their campus during senior year. Research whether each college offers a fly-in program or other travel reimbursements using bit.ly/fly-in-list.

5 Pack & Go!

Unable to visit colleges in person? That's ok! Most colleges offer virtual visits or tours of campus through YouVisit or YouTube. Research colleges on bit.ly/greenlight-student to see what kinds of virtual visits might be offered. You can watch virtual tours right on our site!

College Net Price Calculators

What are they and why are they important?

It's no secret that college can be expensive. But cost can be a lot more complicated than the sticker price on a college's website. Many students apply to colleges they think are in a certain price range, but are shocked when they find out how little, or how much, financial aid is offered by the schools that admit them.

One of the best ways to reduce sticker shock is by using the **Net Price Calculator** available on every college's website. These calculators allow prospective students and their families to specifically estimate their unique college cost after grants, scholarships, and financial aid are awarded.

Where can I find a college's Net Price Calculator?

Each college's net price calculator is listed directly on their admissions or financial aid website. Google "college name + net price calculator" to find it.

What information will I need to use a Net Price Calculator?

Since each college has its own Net Price Calculator, some colleges may ask more questions or different questions than others. Typically, the more questions asked, the more accurate the results are likely to be. The most common information you may be asked about includes:

- Information about your parents or legal guardians, your age, marital status, income and tax information
- Number of children in your household and how many of them are in college
- Whether your parents or siblings attended that college
- Your academic information such as standardized test scores, GPA and class rank
- Whether you plan to live on or off campus

When should I use a Net Price Calculator?

- As a general rule, the closer you are to enrolling in a particular college, the more accurate the Net Price Calculator results will typically be.
- You may choose to use it before you apply to colleges, as you are deciding between the colleges that have admitted you, or both.
- The most important thing to keep in mind is that this tool is meant to provide an **estimate**. Until you receive an official financial aid package from a college, there's no way to know exactly what it will cost.

Did you know that typically more than 66% of undergraduate students receive some form of financial aid? Go to bit.ly/greenlight-student to find your scholarship matches, merit aid opportunities and easy-to-use tools to help you estimate the financial aid you may receive.

Speak the Language: College Admissions

If you're not familiar with the college admissions process, it probably seems like it has a language all its own. To help you learn the lingo, here are definitions of some common college admission terms.

- ▶ **Acceptance Rate:** The percentage of applicants a college accepts for admission.
- ▶ **Accreditation:** Certification that a college meets the standards of a state, regional, or national association.
- ▶ **Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA):** This agreement, sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, states that in order to allow students to consider all their college options, students have until May 1 to accept any college's offer of admission.
- ▶ **Common Application:** Standardized application forms accepted by many colleges. After you fill out the Common, Coalition, or Universal Application, you can send it to any college that accepts it as the institution's own application.
- ▶ **Competitive College:** A college with a rigorous, highly selective admissions process. Competitive colleges typically admit fewer than 25 percent of applicants.
- ▶ **Deferred Admission:** A student's option to defer an offer of admission for one or more terms.
- ▶ **Fit Factor:** A desired characteristic of the college experience that you are seeking; a characteristic you wish to research as you assess potential colleges.
- ▶ **Holistic Admissions:** A qualitative and quantitative selection process that relies on context from the student's family, educational, geographic, and other experiences.
- ▶ **Personal Statement:** Sometimes referred to as a college application essay, personal statements are essays that give admissions officers insights into your character, personality, and motivation.
- ▶ **Reach School:** Schools that typically accept students with higher GPAs or stronger academic rigor.
- ▶ **Retention Rate:** The percentage of students who return to a college for their sophomore year. An indicator of student satisfaction and success.
- ▶ **Likely School:** Schools that you're excited about and feel confident in your chance of admission.
- ▶ **Student-Faculty Ratio:** The number of students at a college compared to the number of faculty. Some colleges see this as an indicator of class size and professor accessibility, but a lower ratio doesn't guarantee either. For a true indication of class size and professor accessibility, speak with students and professors at that college.
- ▶ **Supplemental Material:** Items you include with your college application to provide more information about your talents, experiences, and goals. Materials could include work samples, additional essays, or art portfolios. Verify if a college welcomes (or requests) these materials before sending.
- ▶ **Target School:** Schools with students whose GPA and rigor of high school courses are similar to yours. A bit more competitive institution where you are possibly admissible.
- ▶ **Transcript:** A record of classes you have taken and the grades you received. Usually, you must provide an official high school transcript with your college application.
- ▶ **Waitlist:** A list of students a college may eventually decide to admit if space becomes available.

College Greenlight Fit Fact: More than half of all students enrolling said a "very important reason" for going to college was "to find my purpose in life." Go to bit.ly/greenlight-student today to see which colleges match your fit factors. It's free and easy!

Financial Aid Vocab Cheat Sheet

Financial aid has a language all its own—one with lots of acronyms and industry-specific terms that can sound intimidating. This glossary will take some of the mystery out of these terms and help you make the best decisions about your financial aid awards.

- ▶ **Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The amount that the federal government believes your family can contribute to one year of college. Colleges use this, among other things, to determine your financial need.
- ▶ **Cost of Attendance (COA):** An estimate of how much it costs to attend a college. The COA includes the price of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and other expenses associated with attending that school.
- ▶ **Financial Need:** The difference between Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and a college's Cost of Attendance (COA).
- ▶ **Net Price:** How much it will cost you to attend a college for one year after your scholarships and grants, loans, and work-study are subtracted from the COA.
- ▶ **Student Aid Report (SAR):** This report shows you what data is on your FAFSA, some information about the aid for which you're eligible, and your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). [See a sample SAR here.](#)
- ▶ **Subsidized Loan:** A need-based loan which is interest-free while you're in school.
- ▶ **Unsubsidized Loan:** A loan for which you don't have to demonstrate financial need, but on which interest will accrue while you are in school. You are not required to make payments while you are enrolled, but you may choose to do so.
- ▶ **Scholarship/Grant:** A monetary gift that doesn't have to be repaid. It is provided by the federal or state government, the institution, and/or private organizations. It can be one-time or renewable, and based on grades, talents, or other criteria.
- ▶ **Work-study:** A part-time job for students with financial need. [Find out more about federal work-study.](#)

For additional terms you'll see throughout the financial aid process, [check out this glossary](#) from the Department of Education.

If you have any questions about financial aid, need help filling out the FAFSA or encounter special financial circumstances your family is experiencing, please reach out to your CBO advisor, school counselor, or Financial Aid Office.

Choosing Your Team

Getting into college is a team effort. You are the captain of your application team, but you will need to surround yourself with individuals who can help make your college application shine. Like any good team, you need members with different skills. Your team should include:

Counselors/Advisors/Mentors

They should bring: College information. Counselors are great sources of information and can open your eyes to college possibilities. Don't be afraid to pick their brains about potential schools and if you might be a good fit. Nobody knows more about this subject than your counselor.

Family Members

They should bring: Support and guidance. The best thing your family can do is help you complete your application, make sure you hit deadlines, and offer the encouragement you need. They should be collaborators in your college decision and support the choice that you make.

They should avoid: Running your college search. The right school for another family member (parent, sibling, cousin, etc.) may not be the right place for you. Family members should not attend your interview or write your essays. They may want to help, but they should stick to a behind the scenes role.

Friends

They should bring: Support. Applying to college can be stressful. Lean on your friends for support, understanding, and stress relief because they're probably going through the same process. They can help you check applications and essays for errors, or just be there for a coffee run when you get bleary-eyed from writing your essay. Be cautious of turning too much of your search over to friends.

They should avoid: Running your college search. The best college for your best friend may not be a good fit for you. Keep your college search about you.

Recommenders

They should bring: The ability to positively speak not just about your accomplishments, but about your passions and potential. These can be teachers or other adults who know you well. A reference might be someone you worked with on a volunteer project, an employer or church leader. They should be willing to contact a potential college on your behalf. Most colleges require letters of recommendation from at least one teacher, so it's wise to be in good standing. Do you have a class you like or a teacher who is particularly engaging? A good relationship with a teacher can lead to a good recommendation, and this can help open college doors for you.

My Team

Counselor/Advisor/Mentor

Recommenders

Friends & Family

Don't forget:

Send thank you notes to everyone on your team!

College Greenlight Fit Fact: Get to know your teachers. If you know your teachers they will be better equipped to write your recommendations. Now, find out which colleges want you at bit.ly/greenlight-student. It's free and easy!

Getting Letters of Recommendation

Get to know your teachers. If you know your teachers, they will be better equipped to write your recommendations. Some colleges request one or two teacher recommendations to understand your academic strengths, approach to learning, and areas of growth.

1 Ask the Right Teacher

Take the "Am I Asking the Right Teacher?" True or False Quiz! Fill each box with a "T" or "F":

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher has taught me in junior or senior year. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher agreed to write my letter of recommendation without hesitation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher can reflect on my intellectual growth. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher knows me outside the classroom. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher has taught me in a core academic subject. | <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher can assess my academic and personal achievements and potential. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This teacher would be able to tell a good story about me. | |

Did you have more than 3 "F's"? You may want to ask a different teacher who passes this test.

2 Make the Request Early

You can ask as early as junior year!

3 Give Your Teacher Some Direction

A. Provide a Clear Deadline: The colleges you're applying to might have different deadlines, so give your teacher one deadline:

If X = _____, then _____ is the deadline you give your teachers.
(your earliest application deadline) (a couple weeks before X)

B. Giving your teacher a bit of guidance on what they should express about you to admissions officers will only make their job easier. Name three qualities of yours that you'd want your recommendation to express:

--	--	--

For each quality, provide some proof! Remind your teacher with examples of how you exhibited these qualities. You can cite projects, papers, awards, honors, or other accomplishments in or out of the classroom. Write your examples below each quality:

C. Write Your Own Letter: In a thoughtful and concise letter to your teacher include what you brainstormed in section B and a brief summary of why you want to attend the colleges you're applying to.

4 Package it Nicely

After a teacher has agreed to write your recommendation, provide them with an organized list or email that includes

- A list of all the colleges that need recommendations
- Your letter from section 3C
- Any recommendation forms from the college or confirmation that you've sent the request to them online.
- A note with the deadline

5 Extra Tips Checklist

- Send a thank you note to your teacher.
- Double, triple and quadruple check the letter of recommendation guidelines for each application.
- To increase the credibility of the recommendation, waive your right to view the letter.

Scholarship Application Guide

4 steps to successfully find and win money for college



Plan to Win

The key to winning scholarships is having a strategy and staying organized! Make sure you understand what the scholarship committee is looking for and give yourself plenty of time to prepare.



Do Your Research

Search for a range of scholarships at the local and national level that align with your interests and background. Check their websites for criteria, required materials, and stories about previous winners.



Save the Date(s)

Add each deadline (with reminders) to your calendar or scholarship tracker, so you can prep your materials. Finalizing your essays and resume may take longer than you think!



Read, Write, Review

Read (and re-read) each essay prompt. It's okay to use similar essays, but make sure you fully answer the question! Schedule enough time to fill out applications, write essays tailored to the topic/program, and have them proofread.



Submit Early

If any academic or financial documents are needed, ask your school and your family early. Give them plenty of time to help you while you work on other materials. With this plan, you're ready to submit a strong app!

Apply for scholarships you can win! Create your account at bit.ly/greenlight-student.

The FAFSA: The Most Important Financial Aid Form

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is used by colleges and the federal government to determine your eligibility for grants, need-based scholarships, loans, and work-study programs.

The FAFSA becomes available each year in October of the year you apply to college. To be eligible for the maximum financial aid, you should complete it before your state or school's priority deadline. [Look up your state's deadline here.](#)

Get Filing!

Here's a checklist of everything you and your parent/guardian need to fill out, sign, and submit the FAFSA:

- An [FSA ID](#). Your FSA ID allows you to log in to your account, sign the FAFSA, and make changes or add schools. You and your parent must create separate FSA IDs. Create this first!
- You and your parent's Social Security number. Here's what to do [if your parent doesn't have a Social Security number.](#)
- Driver's license (if you have one)
- Your and your parent's federal income tax returns and W-2s from 2020 (you can use the [IRS Data Retrieval Tool](#) to import this data!)
- Bank statement
- If applicable, other records of money earned and records of investments and untaxed income

Don't worry if you can't find these materials right away. You can start the FAFSA and come back as many times as you need to update information or add schools. The important thing is to get started!

Get Ready!

Filing the FAFSA isn't as complicated or time-consuming as it sounds—a little preparation will help make the process go smoothly. Use [this worksheet](#) to get a sneak preview of what the form looks like and the questions it asks! Before you can submit your FAFSA, you'll need to [create your FSA ID](#). You'll need an FSA ID to log in to your account, sign the FAFSA and make changes, or add schools. You and your parent must create separate FSA IDs.

Get Help

Don't worry about getting stuck while you're filling out the FAFSA—lots of help is available, starting with your school's financial aid office. They'll help you with any questions you have at any step of the process. On the FAFSA app and website, there are tooltips next to each question, detailed help pages, and a chat option. There's also an 800 number to call (1-800-4FED-AID). The FAFSA even has its own YouTube channel! [Check it out](#) for step-by-step instructions on creating an FSA ID and filling out the form, help understanding different types of aid, and more.

If you have any questions about financial aid, need help filling out the FAFSA or encounter special financial circumstances your family is experiencing, please reach out to your CBO advisor, school counselor, or Financial Aid Office.

Choosing Your College Priorities

Regardless of how prestigious a college is or how much it costs, college success is all about finding the right college fit. It won't matter if your parents graduated from there, or all of your high school friends plan to enroll, if the college isn't a good fit for you. Find a college that offers what you need in terms of academics, location, campus and social life. If these factors don't fit you, then little else will matter.

The chart below contains many college fit factors. Select the five that are the most important to you. What do you need most to be comfortable and succeed? Then, select five that are the least important to you. These are factors that don't matter as much to you if your other needs are met. Prioritizing what matters to you will help you add or eliminate potential schools from your college search.

Location	Academics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance from home • Weather • Off-campus setting • Geography: beaches, mountains, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majors offered • Academic reputation • Teaching style • Classes outside your major • Class size
Campus	Social Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size • Atmosphere • Dorms • Diversity • Cost (tuition, room, board, fees) • Financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs, sports and recreational opportunities • Art scene • Greek life • Going to college with friends from high school

What is MOST important to me in a college?

What is LEAST important to me in a college?

Don't miss out on colleges that want you. Go to bit.ly/greenlight-student to find your matches. It's free and easy!

4 Steps to Finding the Best College Deal

Step 1 Determine your cost of attendance.

Identify what it will cost you to attend the school based on your financial aid award letters and the school's website. There are direct costs, such as tuition and fees, and indirect ones, such as travel, personal expenses, and books. Your indirect costs might be different from what the school's estimate is. For example, if you live off campus, your rent would be an indirect cost (but you wouldn't need to consider room and board), or if you plan to rent used textbooks instead of buying new ones, their estimate for books might be higher. Be sure you include any extra fees that go along with certain courses, like lab fees or art supplies.

Write that amount next to **Cost of Attendance** on the following chart (pg. 19).

Step 2 Subtract your gift aid.

Now calculate your total amount of "gift aid." This is money you don't have to pay back—scholarships and grants awarded to you by the college or outside sources, such as Pell Grants or scholarships you won. Pay special attention to whether these gifts are guaranteed. Find out if you'll need to meet specific requirements to keep them from year to year, such as a minimum GPA or enrollment in an academic, artistic, or athletic program.

Write **your Gift Aid** on the chart. Subtract this amount from your **Cost of Attendance**. What's left is your **Remaining Cost**. Write that on the chart (pg. 19).

Step 3 Subtract your family support.

Your family support is any money your parents/guardians or you plan to contribute, such as savings from a job.

Write your **Family Support** on the chart. Subtract this amount from your **Remaining Cost**. What's left is your **Out-of-Pocket Cost**. Write that on the chart (pg. 19).

Step 4 Look at your loans.

Here's where your loans come in. We've saved them for last because you might not need any or all of them. You should only borrow what you need, because you'll have to pay it back with interest. Write the amount of your loans in the line labeled **Loans**. Subtract the amount of your loans from **your Out-of-Pocket Cost**. This is your **Total Left to Pay** (it might be zero!)

If the amount of your loans is greater than your Out-of-Pocket Cost, you're covered! Your Total Left to Pay is 0. Remember to accept only the loans you need to cover your Out-of-Pocket Cost.

If your Out-of-Pocket Cost is greater than the amount of your loans, you'll need to find additional funding to attend that college. You could talk with the college's financial aid office—they are there to help! Taking out a parent PLUS loan or a private loan should be your last option.

No matter how much you and your family decide to borrow, be a well-informed borrower! Use a [student loan repayment calculator like this](#) to figure out what your monthly payments will be, and review salary information for your chosen career. Borrowing for college is an investment in you. It's an important financial decision and you'll want to avoid surprises down the road.

4 Steps to Finding the Best College Deal

Follow the steps on the previous page for each of your financial aid awards to see how they stack up! Keep in mind that just because a college is the “cheapest” option or gives you the most scholarship money doesn’t mean it’s the best one for you. If you wouldn’t be happy there, it’s not the best deal!

	College name Sample U.	College Name #1	College Name #2	College Name #3
Cost of Attendance	20,000			
subtract Gift Aid	15,000			
to get Remaining Cost	5,000			
subtract Family Support	2,000			
to get Out-of-Pocket Cost	3,000			
subtract Loans	7,000			
to get Total Left to Pay	(\$4,000)			

* You would only need to accept \$3,000 in loans to pay for Sample U.

Your financial aid office can work with you to ensure you have access to resources you need to pay for college. Their goal is to make sure every incoming student can invest in an education at their school.

College Visit Checklist

To help you find the right college, fill out one of these forms each time you visit a school.

College Name

City State Size Tuition Room/Board Financial Aid Options

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Admissions Contact

Name	Email	Phone
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

To-Do Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour campus | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to professors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the library | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit student housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to students | <input type="checkbox"/> Read bulletin boards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in on a class | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out recreational facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at a cafeteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out computer labs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to an admissions counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Tour the city around campus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read the college newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at an off-campus student hang-out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture yourself living here |

Rate it

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the best, rate the following:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Classes | <input type="text"/> |
| People | <input type="text"/> |
| Social Life | <input type="text"/> |
| Residence Halls | <input type="text"/> |
| Food | <input type="text"/> |
| Community | <input type="text"/> |
| Off-Campus | <input type="text"/> |

Ask a Student

What is the best part about this college?

What is the worst part?

What is a typical day like?

What do the students do on the weekends?

How are classes structured?

Why did you choose this college?

The Best Part About My Visit

The Worst Part About My Visit

5½ Steps to Writing a College Admissions Essay

1 Write in Your Own Voice

No matter what the essay question is, you can express who you are by answering in your authentic voice. Avoid trying to sound overly intellectual. Simply showing that you can write well, follow directions, and articulate who you are will be more helpful.

1½

Know What Your Voice Is

Your voice is distinctly yours. Recognize the qualities that distinguish you from others.

What are three qualities that make you stand out from others?

2 Don't Be Repetitive

Your essay should tell admission representatives something they haven't already read in your application. **What are three things the admission representatives won't know about you until they read your essay?**

If any of these three things match the qualities in section 1½, that should tell you what you need to share with the admission representative in your essay!

3 Give Yourself Enough Time to Write, Revise and Repeat

The writing process takes time, so give yourself plenty of it. Before you start writing, just brainstorm ideas. From there, create an outline, and then you can start a rough draft. Have a parent, teacher, or friend review your essay. Make your editor's suggestions and rework the piece before you submit it. Here's a checklist for writing your college admission essay:

 Brainstorm

 Outline

 Draft

 Edit

 Revise

4 Are You Answering the Right Question?

With the stress of writing an essay, it can be easy to lose the main point. Remember, you need to fully answer the question that the college asked. You may have the most beautifully written essay on your abilities, but are you sure it answers the question? For every essay you write, re-read the question and double check that you have provided an appropriate response.

5 Get Some Mileage Out of It

Essay questions may be different for each school, but in many cases, you can re-purpose part of what you already have written to answer another question. It's not as simple as copy and paste, but your initial ideas may make sense for multiple essay questions. Still, remember section 4! Be sure that your repurposed essay answers the question. Greenlight tip: Avoid accidentally leaving the wrong college's name in your essay!

All of these steps take time. Do yourself a favor and start your essays early!

College Application Checklist

To help you find the right college, fill out one of these checklists each time you visit a school.

College Name

Admissions Contact

Name

Email

Phone

Application

Application Deadline

Application Fee

Fee waiver available? Yes No

Date Application Submitted

Cost

Tuition

Room & board

+

Financial aid

-

Total

\$

Application Materials

- Transcript sent
- Activity list/Resume
- Application proofread
- Essay(s) written
- Essay(s) proofread
- Essay(s) proofread again
- Test scores sent
- Application copied and filed

Pre-Application

- Discussed with family
- Discussed with advisor
- Visited campus

School Type

- Likely
- Target
- Reach

Financial Aid/Scholarships

FORM	DEADLINE	COMPLETED
FAFSA	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CSS Profile	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Financial Document	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Letters of Recommendation

REQUESTED FROM	DATE	SUBMITTED
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Information

- Portfolio (if required)
- Supplement
- Interview

Application Portal Information

Don't miss out on colleges that want you. Go to bit.ly/greenlight-student to find your matches. It's free and easy!