High School Check List

Freshman:

___
Meet with your high school counselor in early fall
  • Your counselor knows how to help you get the most out of your high school career, and can help with both academic and social support
  • What are the graduation requirements from our high school and PLAN
  • Take challenging classes and a full schedule – employers and colleges look at more than just a GPA
  • Map out a 4 year course schedule

___
Create a Freshman year calendar with important dates
  • Think about what you want to be apart of in high school
  • Find out dates for activities and add them to the calendar

___
Naviance – get familiar
  • Explore what this program can offer you

___
Get to know yourself
  • List your interests, likes and dislikes, in and out of the classroom
  • Explore what you might like to do with your personality

___
Participate in extra curricular activities and/or volunteer activities
  • Academics are not everything. Explore your interests in a sport, club, music or drama group, or volunteer at your favorite organization
  • Colleges, scholarship committees, and future employers want to see you be active in the community, not just in school

___
Track your work, extra-curricular; volunteer activities ALL year!
  • Use the “Activity Chart” to keep track of your activities

___
Establish and practice strong study habits and note taking skills
  • Study skills will help you in both high school and college
  • Practice study habits, test and note taking skills, and speed-reading
  • Seek out high academic counselor or mentor if having trouble, don’t wait!

___
Visit the College and Career Center at your high school
  • Get familiar with what the C&C Center can offer you
  • Find out if your school offers college or scholarship nights

___
Save for college
  • Put money aside for college, every little bit helps

___
Explore summer opportunities
  • Look for a job, internship or volunteer position that will help you learn about a future career you might be interested in
  • Explore job shadowing
Sophomore:

- Meet with your high school counselor in early fall
  - Check into any prerequisites for advanced level junior and senior courses

- Create a Sophomore year calendar with important dates
  - List important dates of school activities you are involved in, college and scholarship nights

- Take challenging courses
  - Take Advanced Placement Program (AP) or COLLEGE NOW classes
  - Register for the AP Exams given in May

- Naviance – complete activities listed
  - Explore what this program can offer you
  - Fulfill high school graduation requirements

- Participate in extra curricular and volunteer activities
  - Academics are not everything. Explore your interests in a sport, club, music or drama group, or volunteer at your favorite organization
  - Colleges, scholarship committees, and future employers want to see you active in the community, not just in school

- Track work, extra-curricular and volunteer activities ALL year!
  - Use the "Activity Chart" to keep track of your activities. This will help you fill out scholarships, applications, resumes, and college applications

- Establish and practice strong study habits and note taking skills
  - Study skills will help you in both high school and college
  - Practice study habits, test and note taking skills, and speed-reading
  - Seek out high academic counselor or mentor if having trouble don’t wait!

- Prepare and register for the PSAT/NMSQT or PLAN
  - These are pre-tests to the SAT or ACT exams, which are required for entrance to most four-year colleges
  - Register early, they are given in October

- Create a resume
  - Use the blank resume sheet to help decide how to best describe your past accomplishments and experiences
  - You can look at Google resume templates to choose one of your own
  - Refer to your Career Center for assistance

- Practice applying for job positions
  - Print out job applications and learn how to fill them out
  - Learn what qualifications and skill set are required to apply for jobs
  - Learn how to fill out job applications
Research colleges and take campus tours
  • Take time to visit colleges in your area, even if you are not interested in attending them
  • Attend college fairs and career fairs. These often take place in the fall in your school or in the community
  • These fairs present tons of colleges and jobs opportunities.
  • Bring your resume to hand out, and take advantage of the personal time with admission officers and potential bosses

Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy?
  • If so, request a pre-candidate questionnaire from your counselor or local recruiter

Save for college
  • Put money aside for college, in a bank account if possible. Every little bit helps

Explore summer opportunities
  • Look for a job, internship or volunteer position that will help you learn about a future career you might be interested in
  • Explore job shadowing
Junior:

Start with you
- Think about what you want to study in college.
- Make a list of your skills, abilities, preferences, and personal qualities.

Meet with your high school counselor in early fall
- Talk about your classes, class schedule, concerns, SAT/ACT, colleges, college night, scholarship night and finances.

Create a junior year calendar with important dates
- List important dates of school activities you are involved in, SAT/ACT, and scholarship deadlines, etc.
- Talk with your school counselor about college nights, career fairs, college fairs, testing, and scholarship sessions.

Participate in extra curricular and volunteer activities
- Get involved in and out of school.

Track work, extra-curricular and volunteer activities ALL year!

Refine your resume
- Update your accomplishments and skills.

Register in December for the spring SAT/ACT
- Register online at: sat.collegeboard.com.
- SAT/ACT fee waivers are available if eligible. See your counselor.
- Study and take the free practice tests available on-line.

Collect materials for your academic portfolio
- Some areas of study (i.e. drama, music, art, sports, etc.) will ask for a portfolio of your past work. Start collecting and documenting.

Take challenging courses
- Take Advanced Placement Program (AP) or COLLEGE NOW classes.
- Register for the AP Exams given in May.
- Take the CLEP placement tests to earn college credit: see clep.collegeboard.org.
- Find out how to get College Now credits.

Research colleges
- Attend college fairs, Google college websites, attend financial aid seminars and general information sessions, etc.

Letters of Reference
- Think about who will write a strong letter on your behalf.
- Get to know your teachers better so they have stronger material on you.
Make a preliminary list of your top college choices
- List your top 5 choices for colleges.
- Visit them during Spring break or summer.
- Review what majors are offered, types of financial aid available, housing, sports, clubs, environment, do these match up with what you want?
- Be sure to eliminate the colleges that no longer interest you.

Prepare for college application process
- Download 3 applications.
- Check application dates – larger colleges may have early dates or rolling admission (which they accept students all year).
- Begin essays and collect writing samples. Assemble portfolios or audition tapes.

Scholarships! – Start writing your essays
- **This is important!** The more time and effort you put into applying for scholarships, you will probably spend less for college.
- Print OSAC essays and draft your practice essays.
- Research scholarships, federal and state aid, and work study programs.
- Visit the Career Center frequently.
- Get feedback from at least two mentors/teachers on your essays.
- Make it a goal to complete one scholarship essay each week.

Save for college
- Put money aside for college, in a bank if possible. Every little bit helps!

Interested in military academies or ROTC scholarships?
- Begin the application process for the four-year ROTC scholarship the summer before your senior year.

Need to improve your SAT/ACT scores?
- Register in April for the May/June SAT.
- Register in April for the June ACT.

Explore summer opportunities
- Look for a job, internships, job shadow, or volunteer opportunities.
- Do something that will help you learn about a future career.
Senior:

All Year

- Search for scholarships and write essays continuously
  - Search for scholarships and perfect essays
  - Copy and save EVERYTHING

- Challenge yourself academically
  - Take AP, College Now, or higher-level classes
  - Register for AP tests
  - Do NOT catch senioritis
  - Take MATH even if you don’t need to

- Track work, extra-curricular and volunteer activities ALL year

September

- Create a Senior calendar with important dates, which might include
  - Tests dates, fees, and registration deadlines
  - Collect college application materials and their DUE dates
  - Financial aid application forms and their deadlines
  - Scholarship deadlines
  - Request for recommendations
  - Order transcripts
  - High school graduation deadlines

- Meet with your high school counselor and CAREER CENTER
  - Look at colleges you’re applying to, due dates, scholarships, class schedule, college applications, waiver/deferral forms and finances

- Attend all college nights, financial aid nights, college visits
  - Constantly check in with the career center so they know you and you know what’s going on

- Send official SAT/ACT test scores to colleges
  - Have test scores sent by the testing agency to colleges of interest

- Do you need to improve SAT/ACT scores?
  - Register for October/November SAT or September/October ACT

- Look up early bird or decision deadlines for colleges

October

- Ask for recommendations
  - If colleges want recommendations, ask the appropriate people to write on your behalf. Give them at least three weeks before due date
• Send Thank You cards
• For each recommendation, provide the recommender a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required

College preparation
• Collect application materials for college admission and financial aid
• Application **fee waivers/deferrals** are available on financial need basis (See if your college of choice offers these)

Write first drafts of college essays, if applicable
• Ask a teacher to read over the essays
• **If applying for the early decision deadline, finish the essay and send the application**

Ask your counselor to send transcripts to colleges
• Give the counselor the proper forms at least **two weeks** before the colleges require them

**November**

Early Decision ends early November (1-15)
• Colleges may require test scores and applications before these dates

Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving

Finalize college choices
• Apply to multiple colleges (3 colleges recommended)
• Applying to too many will cost you time and money
• Mail applications in time to reach the colleges deadlines

**December**

Have official SAT/ACT test scores sent to colleges
• Have test scores sent by the testing agency to the colleges

Copy everything
• Make copies of all college application materials for your records while you finish and send them out
• Keep test score reports and other important documents
• Do not throw away anything until after your first year of college

If colleges want your senior second-semester grades
• Inform your counselor to send the final transcript when your last classes have been added

If you applied for early-bird decision
• You should have your answer between now and February
• If you are accepted, follow your college's instructions for admitted students
• If the decision was deferred until spring or you are denied, submit applications for other colleges, or your safety colleges

January

FAFSA
• Apply for FAFSA between January 1st and February 15th. Finish it as soon as possible, to be eligible for first-come-first-serve Pell Grants
• Check if school offers help with filing FAFSA, or talk with you parent(s)

Ask counselor to send your transcripts to colleges
• Request that your high school counselor send you first semester grades to which you applied
• If you apply online to a college, have your transcript be sent by mail to the college of choice. It cannot be accepted digitally

February

Keep up with school, scholarships and essays

Monitor your college applications
• Be sure that all materials are received on time and that the application(s) is complete

SAR (Student Aid Report)
• You should receive your SAR within four weeks after submitting FAFSA
• Review and correct any mistakes on the SAR and return it to the FAFSA processor
• If a college has transmitted your data directly, notify the college of any changes
• If you have waited for more than four weeks, contact FAFSA office at (319) 337-5665

March

Keep up with school, scholarships and essays

April

Acceptance letters and financial aid offers come in
• Visit your final college choices before accepting
• Review your colleges and the financial aid offered
• Compare them to other schools you applied to and decide which college will be best for you
• Once decided, inform your counselor and the college of your decision
College housing
- Research how you want to live when you go to college. Look at dorms, apartments, and staying home options
- Talk with your parent(s), high school counselor, look up college's website, or call the college
- If you are moving out of state, make preparations for packing and moving your belongings before the start of the school year

May

Colleges cannot require your deposit or commitment to attend before May 1
- By May 1, you must inform every college and financial aid source from those colleges of your acceptance or rejection (Questions? Talk to you counselor and/or parent(s))

Send your deposit to your chosen college

Are you wait-listed?
- Contact the college to let them know you are still very interested in enrolling
- Keep them informed of your activities

Work with your counselor to resolve any problems
- Talk with counselor if you have any last minute graduation needs, such as paying any fees to the school, or other requirements
- Financial aid or admission problems you have come across

Re-take AP examinations, if necessary
- Request that your AP scores be sent to the college you will attend

June

Ask your counselor to send an official transcript to your college with second semester grades

Have private scholarships?
- Notify the college of any private scholarships or grants you will be receiving

CONGRATULATIONS
- Enjoy your graduation and the first steps into the your adult future

July

Look for college mail
- You will receive information about housing, orientation and course selections
- Respond promptly to all requested information
## Student Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Interests</th>
<th>Possible Colleges/Training Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use back of page to list five possible career clusters &amp; three specific careers in each</td>
<td>use back of page to list ten possible schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use back of page to list ten most interesting and/or likely possible careers</td>
<td>use back of page to list ten possible schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrow list to five possible careers</td>
<td>narrow possible schools to five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revise list to five possible careers</td>
<td>apply to three to five schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FRESHMAN: 9th year COURSES: (check semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### SOPHOMORE: 10th year COURSES: (check semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### JUNIOR: 11th year COURSES: (check semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### SENIOR: 12th year COURSES: (check semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUMULATIVE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSAT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASVAB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Interests</td>
<td>Possible Colleges/Training Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>list 5 possible career clusters &amp; 3 specific careers in each</td>
<td>list 10 possible schools or training programs; make sure they offer the degrees you want</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**use back of page to list 10 most interesting and/or likely possible careers**

**use back of page to list 10 possible schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>narrow list to 5 possible careers</th>
<th>narrow possible schools to 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**review & revise list to 5 possible careers**

**apply to 3-5 schools**

| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| Athletics (Baseball, Cheerleading, Football, Swimming, Volleyball, etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| School Events (Homecoming, Powder Puff, Canned Food Drive, Assembly Crew, etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Extracurricular Activities (Student Council, Drama Club, National Honor Society, etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Community Service (Volunteering, Bloodmobile, Park Cleanups, Candy Striper, etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Travel Experience (Record where and when, also include places you have lived) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

**Work Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOB TITLE:</th>
<th>EMPLOYER NAME:</th>
<th>DATES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DUTIES:</td>
<td>PHONE NUMBER:</td>
<td>SALARY/PAY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB TITLE:</td>
<td>EMPLOYER NAME:</td>
<td>DATES:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUTIES:</td>
<td>PHONE NUMBER:</td>
<td>SALARY/PAY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOB TITLE:</td>
<td>EMPLOYER NAME:</td>
<td>DATES:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUTIES:</td>
<td>PHONE NUMBER:</td>
<td>SALARY/PAY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>College/Scholarship Name</td>
<td>College/Scholarship Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request info/application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy all application materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply online or mail application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include application fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request high school transcript sent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send SAT or ACT scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send SAT II scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send AP scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request recommendation letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write essay(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof read essay(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have two people read your essay(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority financial aid deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular financial aid deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail institutional aid form, if applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit FAFSA online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After You Apply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm college received materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive admission letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive financial aid award letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Hiring Manager:

I. INTRODUCTION (1 paragraph)

a. Briefly introduce yourself and state your purpose for writing. ("My name is Daisy Duck and I am writing to express my interest in the Administrative Assistant position with ABCD Consultants, which was recently posted on EugeneJobs.net").

b. Mention any connections you have to the employer, if applicable ("In addition, your firm came highly recommended from my career advisor, Mr. Goofy, who has referred many high school juniors, like me, to work for you in previous years").

c. Address your primary qualifications for the job ("My experience in customer service, cashiering, and problem-solving will make me a great fit for this role").

II. BODY (1-2 paragraphs)

a. Give at least one real-life example of your skills related to the position, with an emphasis on your accomplishments. You can take bullets from your resume, but you should rewrite them in a more conversational style and take time to share background information you didn’t have space for in the resume. ("For the past two summers, I have volunteered as an organizer for my high school band's trip to Disney Land, where we have the opportunity of playing before crowds of thousands. Towards this end, I collaborate with a three others—another student, a school administrator, and a parent—to coordinate logistics for 30 students and 4 chaperones. We divvy up responsibilities that include transportation, lodging, safety measures, budgeting, and, of course, plenty of paperwork. Having previously been responsible for transportation and lodging, my responsibility this year was to work directly with the Disney personnel to coordinate a full schedule of activities for the band. This required skillful planning, as well as confident communication via phone and email—all skills I have polished and am now anxious to bring into the professional business environment of your firm").

III. CONCLUSION (1 paragraph)

a. Close your cover letter with a persuasive final statement. This can be a recap of your skills, knowledge, and experience. ("As you can see, I have the experience, passion, and drive to take on this role with ABCD Consultants.")

b. Express an interest in meeting with the employer to share your qualifications ("I would love to have the opportunity to share my background and qualifications with you in greater detail").

c. In the final sentence or two, let the employer know that you have attached your resume, tell them the best way they can contact you, and express a desire to hear back from them ("Thank you for taking the time to review my resume and consider me a candidate for Administrative Assistant. You can reach me at (541) 123-12345 or you may email me at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you soon").

Sincerely,

First & Last Name
What is a Resume?

A resume is a document that shares information about your education, experiences, skills, and accomplishments so that an employer can determine whether or not you are a good fit for their company. Think of it as your personal marketing tool, promoting you as the right fit for a job.

What Belongs on a Resume?

A resume normally includes the following sections (in this order):

- Name and Contact Information
- Objective (*optional)
- Education
- Work Experience (with the most recent experience listed first)
- Volunteer and Extracurricular Activities (*optional)
- Skills
- Interests (*optional)

---

**Daisy Duck**

123 Ford Rd, Springfield, OR 97478 • (541) 123-1945 • DaisyDuck@evomail.com

**Objective**

I am a go-getting high school student seeking a part-time job with a growing company, where I can bring my analytical skills, teamwork experience, and people-centered personality to meet the daily demands of the job.

**Education**

Springfield High School
- Expected Graduation: June 2019
- Member: Springfield High School Drama Team
- Member: DECA (marketing club)

**Experience**

Custodian Worker: November 2012—March 2013
Springfield High School Basketball (Springfield, OR)
- Greeted customers in a friendly manner and took orders with attention to detail.
- Worked in a team of four in a busy work environment to deliver prompt service to dozens of customers at a time.
- Counted and secured sales totals at the close of the concession stand.

**Volunteer & Extracurricular Activities**

Event Staff: July 2012
Willamette Park and Recreation District (Springfield, OR)
- Collaborated with a large team of 70 volunteers to carry out multiple tasks in preparation for the Springfield SummerFest.
- Identified a potential problem in the layout of both the park entrance and offered feedback to Event Coordinator, who then implemented changes that removed bottlenecks in high-traffic areas.

**Member:** September 2010—Present
DECA (Springfield, OR)
- Supported efforts to raise funds for the local chapter of DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) by reaching out to local businesses and presenting sponsorship opportunities.

**Skills**

Basic conversational Spanish
Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Word, Photoshop, and social media (Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook)

**Interests**

Cooking, Hiking, Camping, International Travel
How Can I Make My Resume Stand Out?

1. **Keep it to a Single Page**

Since employers receive dozens (sometimes hundreds!) of resumes for each job they post, most prefer your resume be no longer than one side of one page. This allows recruiters and hiring managers to quickly scan the page, identify your qualifications, and decide whether or not to invite you for an interview.

2. **Be Professional**

Your writing style should be formal, which means NO “textspeak” (lol, ftw, imho, etc.). Neither should you go wild with fancy fonts or exotic paper colors. Employers aren’t interested in how cool your resume looks. Rather, they are more interested in the substance of your resume: who you are, what you have to offer, and what you have accomplished.

3. **Have a Clear Purpose**

A clearly written Objective will help the reader to make sense of your education, experience, and skills. Start the Objective with a few adjectives describing you, followed by the kind of position you’re interested in pursuing. Close by highlighting the skills and experience you would bring to such a role. If you are submitting your resume with a university application, simply replace the “position” with the degree you wish to have.

4. **Give Tangible Examples of Your Skills & Accomplishments**

In your Experience section, write bullet points that focus on working in teams, solving problems, training and supervising others, organizing events, improving business processes, handling financial transactions, using software programs, and other “transferrable skills” (skills you can take with you from one job to another).

Here’s a good way to structure your bullet points: (a) say what you did (starting with an action verb), (b) explain how you did it, and (c) describe the results.

Use specific details to paint a vivid picture for the reader. For example, instead of writing, “Worked in a team to manage game-day operations,” dig into the details! This is much better: “Collaborated with a team of 10 to manage all aspects of game-day operations, including ticketing, concessions, and score-keeping, over a 5-month season.”

5. **Include Unpaid Activities**

You should include both paid and unpaid work activities. Did you volunteer to help out with a fundraiser? Contribute your time, energy, and ideas to a local non-profit organization? Hold a part-time summer job? Intern with a local company? Run your own business? Tell employers about it in your resume! Also, if you were a student athlete, club member, or part of an honors society, it gives them a good sense of your work ethic, team skills, and leadership abilities.

6. **Tailor Your Resume**

Want to get an interview in today’s competitive job market? The key is to “tailor” your resume by writing bullet points relevant to the qualifications of each job you apply for. Tailoring is easier than it sounds. First, build your master resume. From that point on, simply edit portions of it to reflect your “fit” for the position you want.

7. **Proofread Carefully**

Spellcheck often misses subtle mistakes in grammar and punctuation, so it is up to you to ensure that your resume is error-free. Scrutinize the formatting (do all the bullet points align?). Ensure consistency in verb use (begin each bullet with an action verb, using the past tense). Pay attention to punctuation (you can elect to use periods or not in your bullets—just make sure you are consistent!). After you’ve reviewed your resume, get a “second pair of eyes” by asking someone you trust to read it through.
Michael Mouse
2121 Disney Lane | Eugene, OR 97401 | (123) 456-7890 | mickey@mousemail.com

OBJECTIVE
I am an outgoing, self-motivated high school junior seeking a job with a local cheese company, where I can contribute my organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills to meet business goals.

EDUCATION
Diploma, expected May 2015
Walt High School (Eugene, OR)
- GPA: 3.0
- Member: Track Team
- Bass Player: Walt High School Band

EXPERIENCE
Self-Employed, June 2012 – September 2012
Mickey’s Mowing (Eugene, OR)
- Promoted lawn-mowing business by creating fliers and going house-to-house explaining the services available, resulting in the development of a loyal customer base.
- Completed projects of various sizes in a timely manner with careful attention to detail.

Volunteer, November 2011 & 2012
Food for Lane County (Eugene, OR)
- Collaborated with a team of 10 to complete food baskets for needy people, working under strict deadlines.
- Took inventory of supplies and effectively organized resources for efficient distribution.

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS
- Microsoft Word
- Basic Spanish
- Food Handlers Card, CPR Certified

INTERESTS
International Travel, Cooking, Running
Michael J. Mouse
2121 Daisy Lane • Eugene, OR 97401 • (123) 456-7890 • michael@mousemail.com

OBJECTIVE

I am an outgoing, self-motivated high school junior seeking a job with a local cheese company, where I can contribute my organizational, communication, and problem-solving skills to meet business goals.

EDUCATION

Diploma, expected May 2015
Walt High School (Eugene, OR)
- GPA: 3.0
- Member: Track Team
- Bass Player: Walt High School Band

EXPERIENCE

Self-Employed, June 2012 - September 2012
Mickey's Mowing (Eugene, OR)
- Promoted lawn-mowing business by creating flyers and going house-to-house explaining the services available, resulting in the development of a loyal customer base.
- Completed projects of various sizes in a timely manner with careful attention to detail.

Volunteer, November 2011 & 2012
Food for Lane County (Eugene, OR)
- Collaborated with a team of 10 to complete food baskets for needy people, working under strict deadlines.
- Took inventory of supplies and effectively organized resources for efficient distribution.

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

- Microsoft Word
- Basic Spanish
- Food Handlers Card, CPR Certified

INTERESTS

International Travel, Cooking, Running
ACTION VERBS

ANALYSIS & PROBLEM SOLVING
Abstracted
Analyzed
Appraised
Briefed
Clarified
Compared
Computed
Correlated
Critiqued
Debated
Defined
Determined
Diagnosed
Dissected
Evaluated
Examined
Identified
Interviewed
Investigated
Judged
Maintained
Mapped
Monitored
Observed
Perceived
Ranked
Read
Reasoned
Related
Researched
Reviewed
Screened
Scanned
Solved
Studied
Summarized
Surveyed
Synthesized
Verified
Visualized

ASSISTANCE
Advised
Bolstered
Collaborated
Contributed
Consulted
Cooperated
Enlisted
Facilitated
Fostered
Helped
Participated
Referred
Served
Strengthened
Supported
Sustained

COMMUNICATION
Addressed
Advertised
Answered
Briefed
Communicated
Corresponded
Debated
Explained
Expressed
Facilitated
Interpreted
Interviewed
Lectured
Listened
Narrated

CREATION & DEVELOPMENT
Adapted
Authorized
Bolstered
Built
Charged
Clarified
Composed
Conceived
Corrected
Created
Design
Developed
Devised
Discovered
Drafted
Eliminated
Established
Expanded
Exploited
Initiated
Innovated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Launched
Modified
Originated
Perceived
Performed
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Proposed
Recommended
Reduced
Restored
Refined
Revamped
Shaped
Simplified
Solved
Substituted
Visualized

TEACHING & COUNSELING
Adapted
Advised
Advised
Advocated
Aided
Assisted
Bolstered
Care
Charged
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Committed
Conducted
Coordinated
Demonstrated
Educated
Empathized
Enabled
Encouraged
Enlightened
Guided
Helped
Implemented
Improved
Influenced
Information
Inspired
Investigated
Observe
Perceived
Persuaded
Planned
Restored
Saved
Solved
Spoke
Stimulated
Strengthened
Substituted
Supported
Sustained
Taught
Trained
Validated

OPERATIONS
Advanced
Assured
Bolstered
Eliminated
Encouraged
Enhanced
Expanded
Facilitated
Generated
Guaranteed
Identified
Improved
Increased
Inspired
Mastered
Maximized
Motivated

NEGOTIATION
Advised
Advocated
Arbitrated
Bargained
Bargained
Bargained
Bargained
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Reconciled
Solved

ORGANIZATION
Accomplished
Arranged
Assembled
Built
Catalogued
Clarified
Classified
Coordinated
Correlated
Detected
Developed
Facilitated
Filed
Gathered
Graphed
Identified
Inspected
Located
Maintained
Manned
Matched
Solved
Spoke
Stimulated
Strengthened
Supported
Supported
Supported
Taught
Trained
Validated

OPERATIONS
Advanced
Assured
Bolstered
Eliminated
Encouraged
Enhanced
Expanded
Facilitated
Generated
Guaranteed
Identified
Improved
Increased
Inspired
Mastered
Maximized
Motivated

PERSUASION
Aided
Advertised
Auctioned
Bolstered
Enlisted
Facilitated
Helped
Improved
Led
Maintained
Motivated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Purchased
Raised
Recommended
Recruited

SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT
Administered
Allocated
Approved
Arranged
Assign
Author
Bolstered
Coached
Conducted
Decided
Delegated
Directed
Dispatched
Distributed
Educated
Encouraged
Enforced
Evaluated
Executed
Exercised
Expedited
Faced
Facilitated
Fired
Followed
(through)
Hired
Implemented
Instructed
Led
Maintained
Met (deadlines)
Monitored
Motivated
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Prepared
Regulated
Reinforced
Responded
Retained
Reviewed
Scheduled
Supervised
Taught
Trained
OBJECTIVE

Example: Diligent, outgoing high school senior seeking a part-time professional office role where I can contribute my typing, filing, and organizational skills to support business operations.

A few adjectives describing you what kind of job you are seeking strengths you bring to a job

EDUCATION

high school city, state expected graduation date

- GPA [if 3.0 or higher]:
- Affiliations [extracurricular activities]:

EXPERIENCE

For each bullet point below, pick a duty, skill, or accomplishment related to this particular job. Use the following outline: (a) say what you did, (b) explain how you did it, and (c) describe the results.

Example: Served dozens of customers each hour in a friendly, helpful manner by multitasking to fill orders promptly, leading to satisfied return customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job #1</th>
<th>title</th>
<th>organization</th>
<th>city, state</th>
<th>start date–end date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action verb &gt; what you did</td>
<td>how you did it (by/through)</td>
<td>the results (outcome)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action verb &gt; what you did</td>
<td>how you did it (by/through)</td>
<td>the results (outcome)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job #2</th>
<th>title</th>
<th>organization</th>
<th>city, state</th>
<th>start date–end date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action verb &gt; what you did</td>
<td>how you did it (by/through)</td>
<td>the results (outcome)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action verb &gt; what you did</td>
<td>how you did it (by/through)</td>
<td>the results (outcome)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SKILLS

[you may include software, social media, cashiering, typing speed, a second language, etc.]

Career & Advising Services | Department of Economics | University of Oregon
HOW TO SPEED READ

7 TECHNIQUES TO LEARN TO SPEED READ EASILY

THE HAND PACING TECHNIQUE

This simple technique involves something many of us learned as school children, but mostly discarded as we got older: the pointer method. This method, invented by the pioneer of speed reading, Evelyn Wood, involves sliding the index finger across the page below the sentence you are reading, which can greatly increase your focus and reading pace.

SCANNING AND PREVIEWING STRATEGIES

This how-to-speed-read technique enables you to quickly identify the main idea and important information of what you are reading. You can learn to scan for trigger words, names, or numbers, and also to speedily identify important key sentences.

By scanning such items as titles, subheadings, indexes, and lists, you can quickly garner the gist of a body of work, before you get into the details.
READING SPEED TEST

Remember to read at your normal speed, to get the most accurate results. Additionally, choosing paragraphs on several different pages of your book will give you a more accurate time gauge. Use these results as your starter time comparison to measure your improvement rate as you try other techniques.

To be able to judge which techniques work best for you, you will first need a basis of comparison. There's a simple way to do this yourself, manually. You can also find tests online, however in this post we'll examine the manual test.

To test manually, simply use a stopwatch with a second hand, and time how quickly you read certain material. For example:

- take a book and choose a paragraph
- time yourself to see how long it takes you to completely read it
- count the number of words you have just read

REVERSE BAD READING HABITS

This is a very important thing to learn, in order to increase your reading efficiency. As we develop, many of us can pick up bad reading habits that slow us down when it comes to our speed of reading, processing, and comprehending text.

Some things are easier to overcome, such as skipping back (rereading passages without need), reading in an unsuitable environment (one that is loud or distracting, or that has poor lighting), or reading while tired.

Other habits, such as loss of attention or vocalization/sub-vocalization (pronouncing words orally or mentally) can be overcome, but take time and practice to be effectively dampered.
WORD GROUP READING TECHNIQUES

For many people, this is the most beneficial of techniques, but also hardest one when learning how to speed read.

Word group reading involves skipping single, individual word reading in favor of processing larger groupings of words, and minimizing the number of "stops" your eyes perform as you read.

This quicker reading of word groupings leads to an increase in the comprehension of compound ideas, and thus, to being able to grasp the meaning of what you are reading with greater speed.

RELAX AND TRAIN YOUR EYE MUSCLES

Just like an athlete needs constant training to develop and define the muscles used in their sport, so too does the speed reader need their eye muscles to be in top form. As with any of the body's muscles, the muscles of the eye will benefit from proper care and training.

Your eye muscles can tire quickly, making reading more difficult, so it is important to give the eye plenty of rest in between intensive reading sessions, so as not to strain the muscles. With time and training, you can develop these muscles to not tire as rapidly.
Bad reading habits simply stand for less efficient reading techniques. Some will be easy to change; some require more training and time.

Common bad reading habits are:
- One word at a time. Reading word by word resulting in too many focus stops
- Vocalisation. Moving lips or pronouncing words while reading
- Subvocalisation. Silent speech or pronouncing words in your head
- Skipping back. Re-reading of passages without need
- Skipping preparation steps such as previewing to get the main idea
- Lack of comprehension, e.g. little knowledge about the topic
- Loss of attention. Wandering mind, reading with little attention and concentration
- Environment. Reading when tired, in stressful or low light environments
- Individual Behaviour. Sceptical attitude against fast reading

Bad reading habits that need little effort to change

1. **Attitude.** Develop a positive attitude towards speed reading. I regularly use positive affirmations or simply visualise to read very fast. I visualise skimming material, reading chunks of words or transforming words into pictures. I visualise all the techniques and tell my mind on what to focus.

2. **Convenient environment.** A work space or room with bright light conditions will benefit your reading experience and also protect your eyes. You can speed read everywhere, however, noises and any kind of distraction tend to decrease your reading efficiency. Keep distractions on a manageable level.

3. **Attention and concentration.** I still experience my mind wandering off and thinking about subjects that have just sparked my interest. You probably know this kind of stuff when you had to prepare for exams. Concentration is just about discipline unless you are very tired. If I lose attention I will simply refocus and go back to the task or reading. If I lose attention again I will refocus again.

Bad reading habits that need some effort to change

4. **Word group reading.** These habits may require some time to break them. For example, you will need to invest some time to learn reading in groups of words. Once your brain has managed to do so, you'll actually have learned a powerful speed reading technique. Single words can hold an idea; four, five or six words can carry a lot more of information. This technique will increase reading speeds, decrease focus stops per line and also save your eyes from tiring.
5. **Previewing.** One of the first steps of speed reading is to preview material. It's a useful technique, because as a reader you want to know specifically what the main topic is about. Find relevant information before reading page by page; determine whether the text is of value or should go back on to the shelf. Previewing techniques include first sentence reading, name, number or overview scans. Places to look at are the content page, the back page, graphs, images, diagrams or headlines. To extract information quickly ask yourself six simple questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

6. **Subvocalisation.** Do you speak the word in your head as you read it. This is called subvocalisation and (almost) everyone does it. Unfortunately, it slows down your reading speed as you cannot read faster than you are able to speak. You can lessen this process by learning how to read groups of words. Another method is to conceptualise words as objects so that when you read them, the associated meaning will instantly come into mind without having to vocalise it.

7. **Skipping back.** I already have mentioned a sceptical attitude towards reading techniques as a way to slow down reading speeds. You may have also experienced going back in text, because you think you have missed something. Skipping back in text along with unconscious re-focusing are probably the most common habits that keep readers from performing faster. **Note:** This is simply discipline. Stop going back! If you do so get aware of it and simply continue reading. It is the same method as with refocusing when losing attention. Stop it! Over the time you will realise you actually have not missed anything and even if skip back occasionally you will get on track in the next paragraph.

**Conclusion**

Bad reading habits are not as bad as the words may imply. They actually point out where to improve your fast reading skills. Get started with an introduction about speed reading. Learn techniques such as skimming, previewing, word group reading or using a pointer and you will actively turn these "bad" habits into good reading skills. Enjoy!
Note Taking Tips

✓ If the instructor writes something on the chalkboard/overhead or repeats an idea then it is usually a key point and you should write it down.

✓ Try to use a three-ring binder, it allows for more flexibility in rearranging your notes and any handouts that you may receive.

✓ Try to sit towards the front and center of the class where you’ll be less distracted and can hear the professor the best and have a good angle on any visual aids that may be shown.

✓ Don’t rely on someone else’s notes, you may not understand everything that they write down and you’ll learn the best by taking your own notes.

✓ If your instructor talks fast, it may help to bring an audio recorder and record the lecture while taking notes. After the lecture is over you can replay the lecture and fill in any parts that you missed in your notes.

✓ Do reading assignments or homework questions before class, it is easier to take notes when you know what the instructor is talking about.

✓ Date your notes. Add titles and subtitles when you move onto a new topic for easy referencing.

✓ Write down any terminology along with the definition that the instructor may present.

✓ Make sure that you write legibly, if you can’t read them later, they’ll be useless. If you have sloppy handwriting it may be wise to type your notes so that they are easier to read.

✓ If you missed what the instructor said, ask them to repeat it or go to the instructor after class and ask for clarification. If you are in a rush, ask the instructor at the beginning of the next class or try to find the answer from a friend or the text.

✓ Compare notes with a classmate to make sure you didn’t miss any important points.
Study Tips

✓ Everyone is different. Different methods work for different people and the following are only suggestions on improving upon your current studying techniques.

✓ It is best to review the material right after class when it is still fresh in your memory.

✓ Do not try to do all your studying the night before the test. Instead space out your studying, review class materials at least several times a week, focusing on one topic at a time.

✓ Have all of your study material in front of you: lecture notes, course textbooks, study guides and any other relevant material.

✓ Find a comfortable and quiet place to study with good lighting and little distractions. Avoid your own bed. It is very tempting to just lie down and take a nap.

✓ Start out by studying the most important information.

✓ Learn the general concepts first and do not worry about learning the details until you have learned the main ideas.

✓ Take notes and write down a summary of the important ideas as you read through your study material.

✓ Take short breaks frequently. Your memory retains the information that you study at the beginning and the end better than what you study in the middle.

✓ Space out your studying, you will learn more by studying a little every day instead of waiting to cram at the last minute. By studying every day, the material will stay in your long-term memory but if you try to study at the last moment, the material will only reside in your short-term memory that you’ll easily forget.

✓ Make sure that you understand the material well, do not just read through the material and try to memorize everything.

✓ If you choose to study in a group, only study with others who are serious about the test.

✓ Test yourself or have someone test you on the material to find out what your weak and strong areas are. You can use the review questions at the end of each chapter, practice tests that the teacher may give out or other pertinent materials.

✓ Listening to relaxing music such as classical or jazz on a low volume can relieve some of the boredom of studying.

✓ Do not study later than the time you usually go to sleep, you may fall asleep or be tempted to go to sleep, instead try studying in the afternoon or early evening. If you are a morning person try studying in the morning.
Pre-Test Tips

✓ Preparation for your first test should begin on the first day of class; this includes paying attention during class, taking good notes, studying, completing homework assignments and reviewing study materials on a regular basis.

✓ Budget your time, make sure you have sufficient time to study so that you are well prepared for the test.

✓ Go to review sessions, pay attention to hints that the instructor may give about the test. Take notes and ask questions about items you may be confused about.

✓ Ask the instructor to specify the areas that will be emphasized on the test.

✓ Make sure you go to the class right before the test. It is another prime time for the instructor to give out more hints or the format of the test.

✓ Go over any material from practice tests, homework, sample problems, review material, the textbook, class notes, etc.

✓ Eat before a test. Having food in your stomach will give you energy and help you focus but avoid heavy foods, which can make you groggy.

✓ Do not try to pull an all nighter. Get at least 3 hours of sleep before the test (normally 8 hours of sleep a night is recommended but if you are short on time, get at least 3 hours so that you will be well rested enough to focus during the test).

✓ Put the main ideas, information, and formulas onto a sheet that can be quickly reviewed many times, this makes it easier to retain the key concepts that will be on the test.

✓ Try to show up at least 5 minutes before the test will start.

✓ Set your alarm and have a backup alarm set as well.

✓ Go to the bathroom before walking into the exam room. You do not want to waste anytime worrying about your bodily needs during the test.
The Test Tips

✓ Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, a calculator with enough batteries and any other resources that your instructor allows you to.
✓ Bring a watch to the test so that you can better pace yourself.

✓ Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test and try to stay relaxed. If you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths to relax.

✓ Keep your eyes on your own paper, you don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.

✓ When you first receive your test, do a quick survey of the entire test so that you know how to efficiently budget your time.

✓ Do the easiest problems first. Don't stay on a problem that you are stuck on, especially when time is a factor.

✓ Do the problems that have the greatest point values first.

✓ Pace yourself, do not rush. Read the entire question and pay attention to the details.

✓ Ask the instructor for clarification if you don't understand what they are asking for on the test.

✓ Write legibly. If the grader can't read what you wrote, they'll most likely mark it wrong.

✓ Always read the whole question carefully. Don't make assumptions about what the question might be.

✓ If you don't know an answer, skip it. Go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later. Other parts of the test may have some information that will help you out with that question.

✓ Don't worry if others finish before you. Focus on the test in front of you.

✓ If you have time left when you are finished, look over your test. Check for any errors, misunderstandings, etc.
Tips to Reduce Test Anxiety

1. Remember to take care of yourself first
   - Eat healthy foods
   - Get enough sleep
   - Engage in physical activity or exercise to reduce body tension

2. Perform a “brain dump”
   - Before starting a test write on a scrap piece of paper any facts or key points you are afraid of forgetting. This will help you feel less anxious

3. Preview the test
   - Look over the test first and find out which sections take more time and are worth more points then others
   - Budget your time wisely on each section, and don’t give too much time on sections that give you the least amount of points

4. Multiple-Choice
   - It is very rare that there is a ‘pattern’ in answers on multiple-choice questions
   - Instead, rely on your knowledge you have and study hard
   - Answer questions that are easy first and skip the hard ones that might take up time. Once finished, go back through to the harder questions
   - Don’t rush!
   - Scratch out answers you know to be wrong and use a knowledgeable guess

5. Essay Questions
   - Underline key terms and read through each question carefully
   - Look for words such as: compare, contrast, discuss, and summarize and understand them so you can answer the question correctly
   - Organize your thoughts on a scratch piece of paper before starting the essay
   - Write neatly, it likely that if the teacher cannot read your handwriting they will count it wrong

6. Double Check
   - If you have time after finishing your test, double-check your tests
   - Make sure you understood what each question was asking
   - Re-read each written response to see if you were as clear as possible
College Matters — for Life

The College Board's mission is connecting students to college opportunity and success. This mission has driven the development of BigFuture™, a free comprehensive website from the College Board that improves the college planning process for students, families, and educators.

A college education is the gateway to success in today's knowledge-based, global economy. It's an investment in each student's future.

- Individuals who have a college degree earn an average of $22,000 more per year than those with only a high school diploma.

- A college education gives a person more job security. People with a high school diploma are more than twice as likely to be unemployed.

- For most students who go to college, the increase in lifetime earnings far outweighs the cost of their education.

- College is more than just a classroom. It's an important time in life to learn and grow as a person while gaining independence and life skills.

- Statistics show that a college education impacts health, family and community involvement.
  - Young adults with a college degree are much less likely to be obese than those with only a high school diploma.
  - Children of parents with a college degree are much more likely to be read to every day than children of parents with only a high school diploma.
  - Individuals with a college degree are more than twice as likely to volunteer as those with only a high school diploma.

(Source: Five Ways Ed Pays. Copyright 2011, The College Board)

College Board is a registered trademark of the College Board. BigFuture is a trademark owned by the College Board.

GO bigfuture.org
Create a Solid Academic Portfolio

Your course schedule may seem like a random selection of classes to you, but college admission officers see it as the blueprint of your high school education. They're looking for a solid foundation of learning that you can build on in college.

Take at least five solid academic classes every semester. The following subjects and classes are standard fare for success in high school and beyond, whether you plan to attend a four-year, two-year or technical school.

**English (Language Arts)**

Take English every year. Traditional courses such as American and English literature help you improve your writing skills, reading comprehension and vocabulary.
- Literature
- Writing/composition and/or speech

**Math**

In college math classes and in most careers, you need algebra and geometry. Take them early on, and you'll be able to enroll in advanced science and math in high school — and you'll show colleges you're ready for higher-level work.
- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Trigonometry and/or calculus

**Science**

Science teaches you to think analytically and apply theories to observations of the natural world. Laboratory classes let you test what you've learned through hands-on work. Six semesters are recommended.
- Biology
- Chemistry and/or physics
- Earth/space sciences, advanced biology, advanced chemistry or physics

**Social Studies**

Understand local and world events that are happening now by studying the culture and history that have shaped them. Social sciences round out your core curriculum.
- Two semesters of U.S. history
- One semester of U.S. government
- One semester of economics
- One semester of world history or geography
- One additional semester of these or other areas

**Foreign Languages**

Solid foreign language study shows colleges you're willing to stretch beyond the basics. Many colleges require at least two years of foreign language study, and some prefer more.

**The Arts**

Research indicates that students who participate in the arts often do better in school and on standardized tests. The arts help you recognize patterns, discern differences and similarities, and exercise your mind in unique ways, often outside of a traditional classroom setting.

**Computer Courses**

More and more college courses and jobs require at least a basic knowledge of computers. Computer skills also can help you do research and schoolwork better and faster.

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit BigFuture.org.

Source: The College Board.
# College application checklist

Use this checklist to help you stay on top of your application tasks, paperwork and deadlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request info/application forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early application deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request high school transcript sent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request midyear grade reports sent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Scores</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send SAT* and/or ACT scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send SAT Subject Test scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send AP* scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letters of Recommendation</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send thank-you notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write essay(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof essay(s) for spelling and grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have two people read essay(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview at college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send thank-you note(s) to Interviewer(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send and Track Your Application</td>
<td>COLLEGE 1</td>
<td>COLLEGE 2</td>
<td>COLLEGE 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make copies of all application materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include application fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm receipt of application materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send supplemental material, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Aid Forms</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority financial aid deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular financial aid deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail FAFSA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE*, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail institutional aid form, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail state aid form, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After You Send Your Application</th>
<th>COLLEGE 1</th>
<th>COLLEGE 2</th>
<th>COLLEGE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive admission letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive financial aid award letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send deposit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send final transcript</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit bigfuture.org.

Source: The College Board.

© 2012 The College Board. College Board, AP, CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, SAT and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of the College Board. BigFuture is a trademark owned by the College Board. All other products and services may be trademarks of their respective owners. Visit the College Board on the Web: www.collegeboard.org.
Sample Aid Packages

This New York City student is one of two children of a single parent whose income is $16,000. The family does not own a home or have much savings.

Total Budget: $48,800
(Including $150 Travel and $2,000 for books and personal expenses.)

Resources:

- Parental Contribution: $0
- Student Savings: $0
- Minimum Student Earnings: $600
- Total Family Contribution: $600

Financial Need: $44,200

Financial Aid Award:

- Scholarships & Grants: $42,650
- Campus Job: $1,550

Total Financial Aid Award: $44,200

Financial Aid Award for Jane Doe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition/Fees</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>21,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room and Meals</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/Miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Estimated Family Contribution</td>
<td>$3,200</td>
<td>$3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equals Need - Eligibility for Financial Aid</td>
<td>$12,800</td>
<td>$28,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial Aid Offer (Package):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Grants</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>4,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grants</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grant/Scholarship</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Stafford Loan</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Work Study</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Financial Aid Package</td>
<td>$12,800</td>
<td>$26,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Loan and Work</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Grant</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Need Met</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan

- College A: $3,400
- College B: $2,000
Should I take the SAT or ACT?

**ACT**

- Take PLAN in 10th Grade
- Apply in early March to test in April
  Apply in early May to test in June
- Administered on Saturday’s at
  Churchill, Sheldon, Marist, South
  Eugene, and sometimes UO
- Approximately 3 – 4 hours
- Curriculum based test, with an
  *optional* writing section
- Achievement test, measuring what a
  student has learned in school
- 5 components: English, Mathematics,
  Reading, Science, and a writing
  section
- Do the writing section if required by
  college(s) you’re applying to
- Score based on the number of correct
  answers with NO penalty for guessing
- Focus more towards career planning,
  and has an evaluation form for their
  interests in various career options
- Test companies provide: study tips,
  practice tests, and give you Official
  Question of the Day
- www.actstudent.org
- **FEE waiver available if eligible for**
  free-or-reduced lunches
  **Talk to counselor**

**SAT**

- Take PSAT in 10th Grade
- Apply in early April to test in May
  Apply in early May to test in June
- Administered on Saturday’s at
  Churchill, Sheldon, Marist, South
  Eugene, and sometimes UO
- Approximately 3 – 4 hours
- Reasoning test, with a *mandatory*
  writing section
- Aptitude test, testing reasoning and
  verbal abilities
- 3 components: Critical Reasoning,
  Mathematics, and a writing section
- Optional Test: SAT Subject Tests
  Used to demonstrate you have extra
  knowledge in particular subjects
- Score based on the number of correct
  answers WITH penalty for guessing
- Focus more towards colleges,
  financial aid, and more
- Test companies provide: study tips,
  practice tests, and give you Official
  Question of the Day
- www.collegeboard.org
- **FEE waiver available if eligible for**
  free-or-reduced lunches.
  **Talk to counselor**
Tips for the SAT Writing Test

Here are five SAT essay secrets (ok, they're not that secret) to help you earn a great score:

Keep It Tidy
Handwriting is becoming a lost art. Unfortunately, this is one occasion where your skill with a pencil matters.

Graders read tons of essays each day. If they cannot decipher your script, they will lower your score. Do yourself a favor and write legibly.

Size Does Matter
You know the maxim "quality not quantity?" Well, ETS hasn't heard that one. Their graders like long essays. There are 45 lines to fill–get as close to that as possible.

But ramblers beware: your essay should end when the page does. You won't get an extra sheet of paper!

(Indented) Paragraphs Are Your Friend
Remember the basic essay structure you learned in school: introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and a conclusion? The graders love it!

Make sure your introduction includes a thesis that clearly states the main argument of your essay. Next, include two to three paragraphs that support your thesis. Finally, write a conclusion that briefly summarizes your points. Indent your paragraphs!

Follow this format and graders will see your essay as logical and complete.

For Example...
Use your body paragraphs to back up your thesis statement by citing specific examples. You can draw on your literature and history classes for inspiration. You can even use examples from your own life. Don't waste time worrying whether you've found the perfect examples. Just make sure they support your thesis.

Use Big Words (Yes, We're Serious)
A few well–placed big words can have a strong impact on the graders of your SAT essay. We suggest a light pepperling in the introduction or conclusion; they might be lost in the body. Don't go overboard, and don't misuse a word!
Tips for Taking the SAT

- Expect easy questions at the beginning of each set of sentence completion questions and math questions.

- Earn as many points as you can on easy questions (For each correct answer you receive one point, no matter how hard or easy the question is).

- You don’t have to answer every question. You can do well even if you omit some questions.

- Work Steadily. Don’t waste time on a question that’s too hard for you. If you can’t answer the question, mark it in your test book and go on. You can go back to it later on if you have time.

- Mark your answers in the correct row of ovals on the answer sheet. Be especially careful if you skip questions.

- Try guessing. When you can, eliminate at least one answer to a multiple-choice question.

About guessing

Educated guessing means guessing an answer whenever one or more of the choices can be eliminated as definitely wrong. Encourage students to use educated guessing.

Because ¼ of a point is deducted for a wrong answer to multiple-choice questions, random guessing is not recommended. Advise students to leave that question blank and move on to the next one.

* Students can earn an above-average score by getting only half the questions right and omitting answers for the rest of the questions.
Tips for the ACT Writing Test

- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.
- Do some planning before writing the essay; you will be instructed to do your prewriting in your Writing Test booklet. You can refer to these notes as you write the essay on the lined pages in your answer folder.
- Do not skip lines and do not write in the margins. Write your essay legibly, in English, with a No. 2 pencil. Do not use ink, a mechanical pencil, or correction fluid.
  - **Carefully consider the prompt** and make sure you understand the issue—reread it if you aren't sure.
  - **Decide what perspective you want** to take on the issue.
  - **Then jot down your ideas**: this might simply be a list of reasons and examples that you will use to explain your point of view on the issue.
  - **Write down what you think** others might say in opposition to your point of view and think about how you would refute their arguments.
  - **Think of how best to organize** your essay.
- At the beginning of your essay, make sure readers will see that you understand the issue. Explain your point of view in a clear and logical way.
- Stay focused on the topic.
- Discuss the issue in a broader context or evaluate the implications or complications of the issue.
- Address what others might say to refute your point of view and present a counterargument.
- Use specific examples.
- Vary the structure of your sentences, and use varied and precise word choices.
- Make logical relationships clear by using transitional words and phrases.
- End with a strong conclusion that summarizes or reinforces your position.
- If possible, before time is called, recheck your work:
  - Correct any mistakes in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
  - If you find any words that are hard to read, recopy them so your readers can read them easily.
  - Make any corrections and revisions neatly, between the lines (but not in the margins).
Tips for Taking the ACT

- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.

- Read the directions for each test carefully.

- Read each question carefully.

- Pace yourself—don't spend too much time on a single passage or question.

- Pay attention to the announcement of five minutes remaining on each test.

- Use a soft lead No. 2 pencil with a good eraser. Do not use a mechanical pencil or ink pen; if you do, your answer document cannot be scored accurately.

- Answer the easy questions first, then go back and answer the more difficult ones if you have time remaining on that test.

- On difficult questions, eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess among those remaining.

- Answer every question. Your scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.

- If you complete a test before time is called, recheck your work on that test.

- Mark your answers properly. Erase any mark completely and cleanly without smudging.

- Do not mark or alter any ovals on a test or continue writing the essay after time has been called. If you do, you will be dismissed and your answer document will not be scored.
Financial aid checklist
for students and parents

Use this checklist as a personal record and as a reminder of the steps to take to obtain financial aid. Check off each step as you complete it.

For you and your parents
If you are in doubt as to whether or not to apply for aid, apply!

Do not wait for college acceptance letters before filing for aid. File in January or February — the earlier the better. You do not need to have completed your tax returns prior to filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® (PROFILE). An estimate of income and/or income tax information is adequate. You cannot file the FAFSA until after Jan. 1, but complete it before Feb. 1 if at all possible.

☐ Complete FAFSA on the Web. Get worksheets to fill out prior to filing the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Filing online is much faster than by mail, and the website has prompts that help you avoid making mistakes. You and your parents will both need a PIN, or electronic password, before completing the form — available at www.pin.ed.gov. It’s a good idea to get your PIN in advance of the deadline, although PINs can still be obtained during the FAFSA sign-up process.

☐ If you are applying to colleges that require PROFILE, file that form as early as possible — as soon as you can estimate your and your parents’ income tax information, keeping in mind your college’s deadline. If you are applying under an early decision plan, complete your PROFILE in late November or early December.

☐ Complete income tax forms as soon as possible in order to provide accurate data on financial aid forms. Some colleges have early February deadlines.

☐ Make a list of the financial aid priority dates and deadlines at the colleges to which you are applying. Ask each college if it requires supplemental forms, and obtain them as needed.

☐ Apply for federal and state funds by answering the appropriate questions on the FAFSA.

☐ Check for scholarships for which you might be eligible:
  ☐ Each college/postsecondary institution (your best source)
  ☐ Those posted in the counseling office
  ☐ Local and state scholarships
Details to remember

☐ In all written communications to financial aid offices, put your name, address and date of birth on every page.

☐ Keep your financial aid worksheets. Always make photocopies of your financial aid forms for your records.

☐ If you have questions about an item, do not guess. See your counselor or speak with the college financial aid officer directly.

☐ Do not leave blank spaces on the forms. Use zeros instead.

☐ Proofread! And again, make photocopies of everything!

After you've filed the forms

☐ If you properly complete the FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that will provide your eligibility index for federal and state aid.

☐ If there are errors or incorrect information on the SAR, you can make corrections online.

☐ Financial aid offers are sent by colleges either with, or shortly after you receive, a letter of acceptance. You will be asked to sign an acceptance of the amount received, and the money will be sent to the college/postsecondary institution.

☐ Ask your counselor for assistance if you have general questions. Specific questions, including those about uncommon situations, should be directed to the college financial aid officers.

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit BigFuture.org.
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Do not start your FAFSA until January 1st,
but get it filed as soon as possible afterwards.

Grants are distributed on a first-come-first-serve basis.

If you or your parent(s) have not filed FAFSA by January 10th then request assistance if needed.

Who needs to file?

You and your parent(s) need to file. If you are not sure which parent(s) will be required to file with you, ask your counselor.
A rule-of-thumb the parent that should file is the one who provides 50% or more of your living.

Things to bring for both YOU and YOUR PARENT (S):

- Social Security cards (if you do not have one obtain one as soon as possible)
- Driver’s License (if any)
- Final pay stubs for 2012
- Federal Income Tax Return for 2011
- Untaxed income records
- Current bank statements
- Current business and investment mortgage information, business, and farm records, stock, bond, and other investment records
- Alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a US citizen)

You will be asked to make a FAFSA PIN. This is your password for FAFSA.

¡Do not share your FAFSA PIN or INFORMATION!

FAFSA on the Web will guide you through the questions that you must answer, and if necessary you can save your application and return to it later if you do not immediately have the information you need to answer any of the questions.

Or call FAFSA through: 1-800-433-3243 or 319-337-5665
For the hearing impaired call: 1-800-730-8913

Or e-mail FAFSA through: FederalStateAidCustomerService@ed.gov
To claim yourself as an Independent

Depending on the student’s situation there are multiple avenues you can take to claim yourself as an independent.

**FAFSA**

When a student starts filling out the FAFSA, they will come to a section called “Dependency Status”. They can say they “are unable to provide parental information”. A representative from the FAFSA office said that if a student were to choose this option then the student would have to sign a “dependency override form” from the university they want to attend. *These universities may or may not have these documents.*

**University of Oregon** -

The Financial Aid and Scholarship office said that the University of Oregon does not have such a form. They recommend that the student fill out the FAFSA as usual. Then the student must write out a letter explaining their circumstance with additional documents to support their explanation via high school counselor, United States legal guardian, parent’s explanation from another country or living in US, etc. Each document needs to be hand signed and all of these documents should be mailed to the Financial Aid and Scholarship office. When the Financial Aid and Scholarship office receives the student’s FAFSA, a committee will look over the documents and deem if the student is an independent or not.

*Mail documents to:*

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

1278 University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403-1278

**If the parent(s) is illegal:**

If the student does decide to use their parent(s) information then the parent’s Social Security Number will be all 0’s. By the end of the form, the student or parent would have to print a signature sheet and sign it by hand and then mail it into the FAFSA office, which the address should be printed on this signature sheet.

If the student is a legal guardian of a child or meets other requirements then the student is automatically considered an independent and do not need their parent’s information.

**If a child is illegal they cannot file the FAFSA form**
Para reclamar a sí mismo como independiente

Depende de la situación del estudiante, hay varias opciones para reclamarse independiente.

**FAFSA**

Cuando el estudiante este llenando FAFSA van a ver una sección que dice “Dependency Status”. Después el estudiante va a decir “are unable to provide parental information”. Si un estudiante escoje esta opción, el estudiante va a firmar el “dependency override form” para la universidad que quieren ir.

*Las universidades pueden o no pueden tener estas formas.*

**Universidad de Oregon**

Según a las oficinas de ayuda financier y becas no tiene etsa forma. Ellos recomendaron que el estudiante llene FAFSA normale. Después el estudiante debe escribir una carta de su situación, también un documento soportando la explicación del consejero de la preparatoria, el guardián, explicación de los padres, si ellos están en otro país fuera de los Estados Unidos. Todos los documentos deben de tener firma echa a mano también mandados a la oficina de ayuda financiera y becas. Cuando llegue la carta un grupo de personas van a revisar los documentos par aver si es independiente el estudiante.

**Mandar documentos a:**

Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarship

1278 University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403

**Si los padres son residentes temporales**

Si el estudiante decide no usar la información de los padres su numero de seguro social será 0’s. Al final el estudiante o padres van a tener que imprimir para firmar el papel y mandarlo a las oficinas de FAFSA la dirreción debe que estar donde firmaron.

Si el estudiante es un guardián de un niño o tiene todos los requisites el estudiante ya esta considido como independiente y no necesita la información de los padres.

**Si el estudiante no era nacido aquí no puede llenar FAFSA.**
The student should speak to the school's financial aid office directly if there will be a significant change in the family's income for the present year or other special circumstances that cannot be reported on the FAFSA or SAR.

Dependency Status and Overrides
Most students entering a postsecondary school straight from high school are considered financially dependent on their parents. This means their parents must provide information on the FAFSA (see Part 3 of this handbook). In unusual circumstances, a student who would normally be considered dependent can be considered independent. The financial aid administrator at a school can make a special determination of independence and override the student's dependency status on the FAFSA. Students who believe that they have compelling and unique reasons to be considered independent should contact the financial aid office at the school they are planning to attend.

NOTE:
Students should be aware that the school is not required to perform dependency overrides, and if the financial aid administrator determines that an override is not appropriate, the decision cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

Dependency Overrides and Special Circumstances

Dependency status is determined by specific criteria and can be changed by a financial aid administrator (FAA) only in unusual circumstances. A student cannot be determined to be independent just because:

- the parents don't want to provide information on the FAFSA due to privacy concerns;
- the parents don't feel it's their responsibility to provide financial assistance for college;
- the parents no longer claim the student as a dependent on their taxes; or
- the student no longer lives at home.

The student should contact the FAA at his or her college to discuss dependency status if he or she

- has no contact with the parents and does not know where they are (and the student has not been adopted by someone else); or
- has left home due to an abusive situation.

In special circumstances, the FAA may choose to make adjustments to certain items on the FAFSA to account for financial difficulties. The student should contact the FAA at his or her college to discuss special circumstances if:

- the family has unusually large medical bills that are not covered by insurance;
- the family is paying unusually high elementary or secondary school tuition; or
- the student or a parent has recently lost his or her job.

The lists above are examples and are not to be taken as complete and definitive. An FAA is required to assess situations on a case-by-case basis and then make a decision whether to make adjustments to the FAFSA based upon special circumstances that the student can appropriately document.

The best thing you can do to help a student who believes he or she should be considered independent or who has special financial circumstances is to encourage the student to gather as much written evidence as possible and to provide it to the financial aid office at the school he or she plans to attend. Documentation to support a request for independent status could include a letter from a third party (such as a member of the clergy) who knows the student's situation. Special financial circumstances might be demonstrated with items such as medical or child care bills or with proof of the loss of employment of a family member.

Please make it clear to students that the FAA is not required to adjust dependency status or financial elements on the FAFSA. The FAA's decision is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

To help students understand dependency status and whose information to report on the FAFSA, give them copies of "Am I Dependent or Independent?" and "Who Is My 'Parent' When I Fill Out the FAFSA?" from Appendix E of this handbook.
INDEPENDENT for financial aid consideration (which means that the custodial parents’ income and asset information is not considered in determining a student’s financial aid, and therefore not required on the FAFSA).

Regardless of how much support a student actually receives from his or her parents, he or she is still considered a DEPENDENT student for financial aid purposes UNLESS at least one of the following criteria is met:

1. For the 2013-14 school year, the student was born before January 1, 1990; or
2. the student is married; or
3. the student has a child or children who receive more than half their support from the student; or
4. the student has dependents (other than a child or spouse) who receive more than half their support from the student, and who also live with the student; or
5. the student is enrolled as a graduate or professional student (pursuing a master’s degree or doctoral degree); or
6. the student is a qualified veteran of the U.S. military, or currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training; or
7. the student is an orphan (both parents deceased) or ward of the court or in foster care at any time after turning age 13, or was a ward of the court until age 18; or
8. the student is/was in legal guardianship; or
9. the student is/was an emancipated minor; or
10. the student was an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless on or after July 1, 2012; or
11. the student has special and unusual extenuating circumstances that can be documented for his or her college financial aid administrators, who may then request a “dependency override” on the FAFSA application. (Note: Exceptions are granted very rarely and only in extreme cases.) Students should contact the financial aid office at the school they will be attending for additional information.

IMPORTANT:
Many students feel that they should be able to declare INDEPENDENT status because they live on their own, file their own taxes, or receive no support from their parents. Unfortunately, the Department of Education is extremely strict with regard to determining dependency status.

If you are considered a DEPENDENT student (do not meet the criteria listed above) and do not provide your parents’ information on your FAFSA, your application WILL BE REJECTED.
Special Circumstances

Important: You told us that you think you have a special circumstance and are unable to provide parental information. Before we allow you to proceed and skip the parental section of your FAFSA we must advise you of the following:

Under Federal law to the extent your family is able, they are primarily responsible for paying for your college expenses. To determine how much your family can afford to pay towards your college expenses, we must collect your financial information and your parents' financial information.

However, Federal law allows for some exceptions, if you have a special circumstance. The following are examples of some special circumstances where you may submit your FAFSA without providing parental information:

- Your parents are incarcerated; or
- You have left home due to an abusive family environment; or
- You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have not been adopted).

But not all situations are considered a special circumstance. The following are situations that would not be considered a special circumstance:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information on your FAFSA; or
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses; or
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes; or
- You do not live with your parents.

Now that you have reviewed the information above, select one of the following options and click Next to continue.

- I will provide parental information
- I have a special circumstance and I am unable to provide parental information
- I do not have a special circumstance but I am unable to provide parental information
Scholarship Guidelines

The procedure to apply for scholarships is simple

1. The scholarship list is published once per month in the senior newsletter and is on the scholarship bulletin board in the Counseling Center. Here you will find posted up-to-date information on scholarships currently available.

2. After identifying scholarships for which you may qualify for, see the file drawer in the Counseling Center that contains applications for the current scholarships listed. Take one, complete all instructions and mail in.

It's as easy as this!

To be successful in the pursuit of scholarships, below are some guidelines that may help you win money for college:

1. Meet or beat the applications deadline.

2. Type your application whenever possible.

3. Give teachers and counselor AT LEAST TWO WEEKS lead time when you ask for a recommendation.

4. Make copies of all recommendations written for you and keep them in a special file.

5. List all your accomplishments. Activities and community service often make the difference.

6. Accept or decline, in writing, all scholarships offered to you.

7. Write a personal “THANK YOU” to any organization or person from whom you receive a scholarship.

8. Let your counselor know of your awards so that you can receive acknowledgement at the year-end activities.
Scholarship Tips

Start Research Early: The more time you can put into researching scholarships the more options there are.

Read Eligibility Requirements Carefully: If you have questions about eligibility for a scholarship, contact the scholarship sponsor.

Organize All Scholarship Material: Create a separate section for EACH scholarship and file by application date. Keep a calendar to when these scholarships are due, and any follow-up appointments.

Many scholarships ask for:
- Transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Financial Aid Forms (FAFSA or CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE)
- Parent’s financial information, including tax returns
- One or more essays
- One or more letters of recommendation
- Proof of eligibility (e.g., membership credentials)
- Interviews or Auditions
- Portfolios

Be completely honest: Scholarship sponsors like to see students who have come out of hard circumstances. If they are asking for situations that have affected you, they WANT to know. If you are debating on revealing such information, remember they take such experiences seriously.

Proofread Applications Carefully: Use the computer’s spell and grammar check. Have teacher or family members read your essays.

Don’t Leave Items Blank: Contact the scholarship sponsor if you’re not sure how to fill out any part of the application.

Follow Instructions to the Letter: Reach the required length to an essay, not over or under. If they require an essay in Spanish, write it in Spanish. Do not send any supporting material that is not requested.

Make sure the Application is Legible: If you lack penmanship it is recommended that you type and/or print forms and essays.

Make copies of Everything! If the application material is lost, having copies on hand make it much easier to resend the application quickly.

Double-Check the Application: If you are reusing materials (recommendations, cover letters, essays, etc.) from another scholarship, carefully check to make sure no incorrect information is left in.

Get Applications in Early: Consider using certified mail or request a return receipt to confirm your application made it to its destination.
Avoiding Scholarship Scams

In the news, you may find stories of the “untold millions” of scholarship dollars that supposedly go unclaimed each year. These claims are exaggerated and are often used to get you to pay for things that you can do for free, such as searching for scholarships and completing applications. Every year, unscrupulous con artists bilk unsuspecting students and their families out of their college savings to the tune of about $5 million.

How can you prevent these scams and apply for legitimate scholarships?

TIP #1: The Federal Trade Commission cautions students to look for tell-tale lines like:
- "The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."
- "You can't get this information anywhere else."
- "I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."
- "We'll do all the work."
- "The scholarship will cost some money for processing."
- "You've been selected by a 'national foundation' to receive a scholarship" or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered.

TIP #2 DO NOT PAY for financial aid advice or scholarship applications!
- Free financial aid and scholarship advice is available from numerous entities including colleges, high schools, the federal government and the Oregon Student Assistance Commission.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for FREE at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You'll automatically be considered for federal, state and most campus-based aid.
- Apply for more than 400 scholarships administered by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission on a single application at www.GetCollegeFunds.org.

TIP #3 Note the Differences among scholarship search services
- You do not have to pay for search services. Many websites such as www.fastweb.org and www.finaid.org offer this for free.
- Some organizations or individuals provide services for a fee. Investigate before paying for help by talking to a guidance counselor or financial aid advisor. Legitimate companies never guarantee or promise scholarships or grants.

TIP #4 Beware of claims and promises
- If it sounds too good to be true—it probably is! Avoid high-pressure sales pitches that require you to buy now or risk losing out on the opportunity. Solid opportunities are not sold through intimidating tactics.
- Organizations may rent a room at a school for a presentation but are not endorsed by the school. They may be selling a service you don’t need.
- Some websites will look like they are official but have slightly different names from legitimate sources of help—be careful!
TIP #5 Be cautious about websites that request your personal information
- Review the website for pertinent information about the organization. If not much information is provided about the organization, stay away!
- Do not provide personal information such as your Social Security Number or a credit card number unless you are sure of the site. Scam organizations may sell your personal information or name to others for marketing or sales purposes.

TIP #6 Look for the reputable scholarship sources
- There are many types of scholarships available for students of all types.
- Some scholarships reward academic achievement or special talents while others also consider financial need.
- There are even scholarships to assist “average” students who are not at the top of their classes. You’ll never know how much you qualify to receive unless you apply.
- Apply for more than 400 scholarships administered by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission on a single application at www.GetCollegeFunds.org.

OSAC Websites:
www.OSAC.state.or.us
http://www.GetCollegeFunds.org/capp.html
https://secure.osac.state.or.us/list2Scholarships.aspx
www.GetCollegeFunds.org

More information about Scholarship Scams:
http://www.ftc.gov/scholarships scams

The Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) administers a variety of state, federal, and privately funded student financial aid programs, including grants and scholarships, for the benefit of Oregonians attending institutions of postsecondary education. The agency helps over 50,000 Oregon students work toward their educational goals each year.
Sample only: This is for informational and practice purposes only. DO NOT SUBMIT.

Let your Personal Statements tell your story. Donors are looking for reasons why they should choose you for their scholarship award. Show the “unique you” in your Personal Statements and use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Don’t repeat information already included in your application, such as that your greatest accomplishment is your GPA. Focus on something unique about yourself! For all Personal Statements, pay attention to the topic and any length requirements.

Word Limit: 1,000 character limit for each statement. You can copy and paste your statements from this practice sheet directly into the Personal Statements section of your OSAC Scholarship Application.

Please note: The Personal Statements section of your scholarship application has a limited data entry field for each of the four questions and will truncate your entry if it exceeds the 1,000 character limit.

1: Explain your career aspirations and your educational plan to meet these goals.

2: Explain how you have helped your family or made your community a better place to live. Please provide specific examples.

3: Describe a personal accomplishment and the strengths and skills you used to achieve it.

4: Describe a significant change or experience that has occurred in your life. How did you respond and what did you learn about yourself?