



Things Not to Do When Applying to College

Applying to college can be a daunting task. However, that does not mean that it cannot be done in the best way possible. Below is some information of what NOT to do when applying with some advice on how to avoid it.

- 1. Procrastination!** We've all been there. But this isn't a homework assignment you should finish the night before or wait the week before it's due. This is the next 3 to 5 years of your future you are planning for and you especially should not be doing this last minute if your dream school is impacted or has a low acceptance rate. Always apply sooner, not later.
- 2. Don't Assume.** Students will go browsing online to the college website and be in awe with the photography of the campus or reading from the college's main website. However, this is just the webpage. You should never rely on one source to tell you the whole story. It will never be the full image of the campus and will only show you the glamorous aspect that is advertised. Do research and physically visit the campus, because it's the only way you'll see the full picture of what the college is like for yourself.
- 3. When Emailing, Don't Be Informal!** First and foremost, don't have an unprofessional or outdated email address. Gr33nCatsEatSpace_08@email.com is not what you want colleges to be emailing important information to. You are representing yourself, so put your best step forward and if needed make a new email address you will use often. When emailing, the simple "Hello Dr. Mark" and "Thank you for your time" goes a long way with correct grammar and spelling.
- 4. Don't Trust Your Personal Memory on Dates.** If you've read Ryman Arts Alumna Advice, you'll already know that this was also on there. Those dates are important! Don't assume you'll remember or make a generalization that they are all due around the same time. UC's, Cal States, community colleges, private, and public colleges all have different dates. If you are struggling to find the date, call the university. The sooner, the better.
- 5. Don't Aim too High or Throw too Low.** Which means, don't only apply to expensive, low accepting Ivy League Colleges or only Community Colleges. Having a variety leaves your options open and allows you to see what colleges are best for you. Traditionally, you should be apply to 5 to 10 colleges. For example: 3 reach schools, 3 community colleges, and 3 miscellaneous colleges such as art schools, public, private, etc. Also, don't apply to colleges for reasons like, "It's close to the beach" or "My friends are going there." If it's not to your benefit as a student, those reasons won't matter when you get there.
- 6. Avoid the Stereotypical, Boring Essays.** You're one person. Each college gets over a thousand applications per day. Now imagine you had to read those thousand applications. The stereotypical essays become exhausting to hear. Avoid the "I

remember the first time I picked up the crayon, and I drew on the living room walls. “ Instead, add personal experiences since those are always more impactful and interesting to read. They can be over the span of your life, or it can be a powerful or funny moment that you feel as the author people can personally connect with. But remember, be yourself.

- 7. Don't Slack Off!** For both the ACT and SAT. Don't do it last minute or not study them at all. Try to do both, but if you only do one aim for better than your best. Also remember, if you don't like your first score, try again. Continue to strive for your best in high school and stay organized. Staying organized avoids stress and allows you to take breaks with your family and friends. Enjoy high school before that period of your life ends to begin the next chapter.
- 8. Don't Wait, Ask for those Recommendation Letters.** The more time you give your teacher to write a recommendation letter, the better the recommendation letter is. Give them a Brag Sheet (which is basically a Resume) and let them know that if they have any questions to please ask you. Teachers should be given at least 2 weeks to write your letters. If you need recommendation letters from other people, the same applies. Last minute recommendation letters are usually short or don't happen based on how the person feels about it.
- 9. Don't Blame People for Your Actions.** You are responsibly for your decisions, not your parents, friends, or anyone else. Your parents shouldn't be doing your applications, calling the college offices, or go on scholarship hunts for you. Part of getting into college is improving your accountability. Granted, if you have questions seek help, but no one should be doing it for you. Also, asking the administration office can be beneficial since it shows you have an interest to the college.
- 10. Don't Stress, the World Does Not End.** Yes, you will get rejected by a few schools. But remember, it's their loss, not yours. The world will not end and life will not get worse just because of a rejection. Applying isn't always a fair process, but as long as you tried your best you did it! Just don't forget to apply to those scholarships and get the FAFSA done before the next step in your life begins.

Here is an important final note to these 10 things you should not do: Keep in mind that actions are louder than words, meaning that it's easier for you to just breeze over this and forget it than to actually plan everything out to your best ability. If ignored, as agreed by many college students, you will commit half or more. So it's to your best interest to do your research because in the end, this is for you.