



COMMON APP READY

Completing the Common App

COMPLETING THE COMMON APP AGENDA

- Layout & Features
- Profile Section
- Family Section
- Education Section
- Testing Section
- Activities Section
- Writing Section

LAYOUT & FEATURES

Completing and navigating your application will be a breeze with these tips.

Common Application

- Profile
- Family
- Education
- Testing
- Activities
- Writing

Profile

Preview

[View Profile Tutorial](#)

▼ Personal Information

First/given name *

Penelope

Middle name

Last/family/surname *

Peters

Suffix

Select ▼

Preferred name (nickname)

Have you ever used any other names? *

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

Sex assigned at birth *

The Common App tab is where you will complete the main sections of your application.

Profile

Preview

 [View Profile Tutorial](#)

▶ Personal Information

▶ Address

▶ Contact Details

▶ Demographics 

▶ Geography

▼ Language

Number of languages you are proficient in *

Select

[Back](#)

Continue

▶ Citizenship

▶ Scholarship Information 

▶ Common App Fee Waiver

Instructions and Help **First language**

For the first language question, you should choose the language you spoke when you first began spea ... [+]

[\[more\]](#) **Proficiency**

Proficiency in a language is about how comfortable you are using another language as a form of comm ... [+]

[\[more\]](#) **Language is not listed**

The Common Application lists approximately 171 of the most commonly spoken languages in the world. ... [+]

[\[more\]](#) 

- Click the Preview button to review each section in PDF.
- Video tutorials help you navigate each section.
- The Instructions and Help will display FAQs related to the page you're on and will take you to our Solutions Center, where you can contact us with questions.
- Green check marks indicate you've completed a section.
- Red asterisks indicate a response is required.
- Click Continue to move from one section to the next.

THE PROFILE SECTION

In the Profile section you will provide some more detailed information about yourself.

The Profile section is one of the most critically important areas of the application as it provides us with the basic essentials of contact and personal information. Your name, phone number, and email address are our only avenues to contact you directly, so any errors here could result in our inability to reach you with important updates...potentially even your acceptance letter!

- Champlain College (Burlington, VT)

The Profile section is what we use to reach out to and notify you of your acceptance or scholarships! Make sure you are accurate in this section and provide updates if anything changes.

- Binghamton University (Binghamton, NY)

There are nine sections within the Profile section to complete.

Profile

Preview

 [View Profile Tutorial](#)

- ▶ Personal Information
- ▶ Address
- ▶ Contact Details
- ▶ Demographics 
- ▶ Geography
- ▶ Language
- ▶ Citizenship
- ▶ Scholarship Information 
- ▶ Common App Fee Waiver

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- Use your legal name so that colleges can match your application with standardized test scores and other documents.
- You will have the opportunity to share more about your gender identity.
- Make sure the email address you enter is one you check regularly.

SCHOLAR SNAPP

Scholar Snapp connects you with scholarships to help pay for college.

If you are interested in learning more about Scholar Snapp, select “Yes”.

▼ Scholarship Information

The Common Application has partnered with Scholar Snapp, a technology developed by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, to connect students with scholarships to help pay for college. If you are interested in participating in this free pilot program, please indicate below.

I would like to receive information from Scholar Snapp about college scholarships and financial aid:

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

[Back](#)

[Continue](#)

Our member colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student who wishes to apply for admission. Do you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver? *

Yes (selected)
No

Clear

You must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need to qualify for an application fee waiver. Select all that apply: *

- I have received or am eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver
I am enrolled in or am eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL)
My annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service
I am enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound)
My family receives public assistance
I live in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or am homeless
I am a ward of the state or an orphan
I can provide a supporting statement from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader

I certify that I understand and meet the eligibility requirements to request an admission application fee waiver. I also understand if I am a first year student my counselor will be asked to verify my eligibility.

Fee Waiver signature: *
[Signature field]

THE COMMON APP FEE WAIVER

- Indicate whether you feel you qualify for an application waiver
Select the indicator(s) that best apply to you
Provide your signature



STRIVE FOR COLLEGE

Students who qualify for a fee waiver are invited to connect with a Strive for College mentor.



The Common Application has partnered with Strive for College to connect students with free virtual mentoring to provide additional support in the admission and financial aid application process. First-year applicants interested in connecting with a mentor, please indicate below.

Transfer applicants, click here for resources specific to the transfer application process.

I would like to receive information from Strive for College

Yes (selected)
No

Clear

THE FAMILY SECTION

The Family section of the Common App provides you with the opportunity to share information about your family.

We look at family information to get a full understanding of who the student is, where they are coming from and what background and foundation they have that brought them to the point of applying to our school.

- Nazareth College (Rochester, NY)

The Family section gives us insight into a student's current community at home and how that may have shaped his/her experiences. Beyond the basic pieces, we will also consider legacy – if a family member attended our institution – as some part of our evaluation. Whether it's a parent, guardian, or sibling, we like to be aware if someone who has had direct experience with our school and culture is connected to a student's candidacy.

- Champlain College (Burlington, VT)

There are four sections to complete within the Family section.

Family

Preview

 [View Family Tutorial](#)

- ▶ Household ✓
- ▶ Parent 1 ✓
- ▶ Parent 2 ✓
- ▶ Sibling ✓

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- You can list up to 5 siblings in the Family section (you can list additional siblings in the Additional Information section located in the Writing section).
- For Parent 1 you have the option to indicate that you have limited information about this parent, which will make the resulting fields for that parent not required.
- The options for Parent 2 also include the ability to indicate that you do not have another parent to list.

THE EDUCATION SECTION

In the Education section you'll share information about your current school and coursework.

The information that's provided in the Education section – such as education interruptions, college courses, and/or college assistance programs – provides insight into aspects of a student's education that can't be explained by the transcript alone.

- Merrimack College (North Andover, MA)

While we take a holistic approach to our admissions review, the most critical piece of information about an applicant is their educational background and transcript. The Common Application provides students with an opportunity to showcase their academic achievements. This is not a time to be shy; tell us about your honors and awards. We enjoy seeing the perfect attendance or honor roll awards as they show how dedicated you are to school!

- Binghamton University (Binghamton, NY)

There are nine sections to complete within the Education section.

Education

Preview

 [View Education Tutorial](#)

- ▶ Current or Most Recent School ✓
- ▶ Other School ✓
- ▶ Community-Based Organizations ✓
- ▶ Education Interruption ✓
- ▶ College & Universities ✓
- ▶ Grades ✓
- ▶ Current or Most Recent Year Courses ✓
- ▶ Honors ✓
- ▶ Future Plans ✓

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- Ask your counselor for an unofficial copy of your transcript to help with filling out the Education section.
- Selecting the correct high school ensures that the correct path is followed for your recommendation letter submissions.
- If you are homeschooled, you can search for your homeschool program or association or manually enter the name.
- It's okay to select "Other" or "Undecided" for your Future Plans and Career Interests.

THE TESTING SECTION

In the Testing section you have the option to self-report any scores or future test dates for standardized test you have taken.

If a student is planning to submit official scores to us, seeing the dates of when a student has taken different tests – or if the student has planned future test dates – is extremely helpful because we can compare if we have all of the results from their tests in order to make a decision.

- Nazareth College (Rochester, NY)

This section allows us inside knowledge of an applicant's intentions. We are purposeful about referencing this section to determine if an applicant has divulged information about future testing dates or planned exams. This becomes particularly important for applicants who wish to have future tests considered as part of their application portfolio. Without this knowledge, we can only assume that an applicant has submitted a complete portfolio that is ready for review.

- Adelphi University (Garden City, NY)

In the Testing section you can self-report scores from a variety of standardized tests.

International applicants may also report standard leaving examinations.

 [View Testing Tutorial](#)

▼ Tests Taken

In addition to sending official score reports as required by colleges, do you wish to self-report scores or future test dates for any of the following standardized tests: ACT, SAT/SAT Subject, AP, IB, TOEFL, PTE Academic, and IELTS? *

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

International applicants: Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board? (Students studying in the US typically answer no to this question.)

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

[Back](#)

[Continue](#)

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- The testing section allows you to list tests you plan to take in the future.
- If you are an international applicant and are required to take senior secondary leaving examinations for graduation, you will be able to add actual or predicted scores.
- If you do not want to self-report scores to a school, you can change your answer to say you have no scores you wish to report. By clicking “No”, your tests and scores will disappear. Change it back to “Yes”, and they reappear.
- While the Testing section allows you to self-report your scores, you must also send official score reports from the testing agencies to each college you are applying to.

THE ACTIVITIES SECTION

The Activities section gives you the opportunity to share with colleges any activities you participated in throughout high school.

The Activities section is one of our team's favorite sections of the application. Activities add persona to an application; they demonstrate an applicant's interests outside of the classroom and allow us a glimpse into that applicant's passions, further demonstrating how that individual may enhance our student community.

- Adelphi University (Garden City, NY)

A student's activities outside of the classroom give us insight as to what they're interested in and how they choose to spend their time. This type of context can mean a world of difference for an applicant to our school. It's helpful to know if a student is a captain of a varsity sport, a volunteer in their community, or if they work part-time to provide for their family. Each of these activities demonstrate valuable characteristics for a college's potential community members.

- Willamette University (Salem, OR)

You can report up to ten activities within the Activities section.

Activities

Preview

 [View Activities Tutorial](#)

▼ Activities

Reporting activities can help a college better understand your life outside of the classroom. Your activities may include arts, athletics, clubs, employment, personal commitments, and other pursuits. Do you have any activities that you wish to report? *

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

[Back](#)

Continue

TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- You can change the display order by using the up and down arrows on each activity.
- While you can add up to 10 activities, but you should not feel obligated to list 10 activities.
- You can also list family responsibilities and jobs within this section.
- If you wish to delete an activity, move it to the bottom of your activity list. Once it is the last activity listed, you will see the icon to delete it.

THE WRITING SECTION

The Writing section contains the Common App personal essay, as well as your disciplinary history and any additional information you may want to provide to colleges.

The Writing section is the student's opportunity to shine. In every other section of the Common Application, there's a specified format, with boxes to check and numbers to enter. The Writing section gives each student the creative freedom to express her/himself in an authentic and insightful manner. It gives us something that we wouldn't glean from the other parts of the application: a depth of personal character. To expect students to come to us as fully formed human beings is antithetical to the mission of higher education. Often, the best writing sections showcase a student's willingness to be challenged to become a more engaged learner and citizen.

- Ursinus College (Collegeville, PA)

There are three sections to complete within the Writing section.

Writing

Preview

 [View Writing Tutorial](#)

▶ Personal Essay



▶ Disciplinary History



▶ Additional Information



TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- You may submit the Personal Essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college.
- Carefully review each prompt before selecting one.
- Proofread your essay before submitting your application.
- If you are unsure how to answer the Disciplinary History questions, talk to your parents or counselor.
- Use the Additional Information section to share information about yourself that is not captured elsewhere in your application.

LEARN MORE



GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

Important information you'll need for your application.



A QUICK GUIDE TO THE APPLICATION

This quick guide will help you organize all the information you need to complete.



COMMON APP TOUR

Learn how to navigate the Common App.