

Sage.edu

Ready...  
Set...

# College

Resources to help  
prepare you for  
College Admission

# An Admissions Dean's Promise:

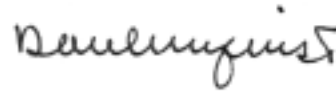
“Follow this advice and I guarantee you'll get into a great college.”

As you continue your college search, Sage is pleased to offer these resources to assist you in what will be an exciting adventure. We know that if you follow the advice contained in this booklet you will have a successful college search.

I have worked in college admissions for more than thirty years, at large Ivy League universities and small liberal arts colleges. Here is some of the best advice I can offer:

- Start early and stay ahead of the curve – you will have more options and less stress.
- Be realistic when developing a college list. Assess your interests, values, skills, and aspirations, and look for colleges that fit and feel right to you.
- Most high school students are undecided about what they want to study. Look for a college that will give you room to discover your passion and grow.
- For most students there isn't one perfect college. There are more than 3,000 colleges in the United States – you probably have the talent and flexibility to succeed at a number of colleges.
- Note: MOST colleges admit MOST students who apply, only a small number reject most.
- Note: College is expensive but it is a great investment – college grads earn significantly more over their lifetime – and there are MANY available funding sources. DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED.
- Don't be overwhelmed by all that you have to do senior year. Each step you take brings you closer to your goal.
- Note to students: you control two-thirds of the process: you chose where to apply... and then where to attend. Colleges only make admission decisions.
- Remember that the goal of the admissions officer is to get an understanding of what makes an individual candidate tick. An application presented in one's natural voice and style – be it serious, wry, or humorous – helps accomplish that goal much better than an application that has been tailored to fit the perceived confines of an application form. Use the form as your forum!
- Don't forget the “heart factor” when choosing your college. Objective criteria such as academic programs, size, location, and cost are important, but your choice also needs to make you feel that “This is home.”
- Finally, please remember that your college education begins with the search process, and keep it in perspective: though a serious process, you needn't be deadly serious about finding the right college!

The faculty and staff at Sage wish you the best of luck. Please come and visit and let us know if we can be of further assistance!



—Dan Lundquist

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# Ready...

The college search process is an opportunity for you to learn more about colleges, potential careers and yourself. To find your “best fit” college, take the time to learn more about what is important to you. Look at your interests, activities, values and personality. Take an online personality assessment that matches your personality type with professionals in various fields.

- Investigate career possibilities
- Take personality tests
- Talk with your school counselor
- Consult with parents/guardians and friends

## The Best Fit College

Generate a target list of school possibilities including both “reach” and “safety” schools.

### 1. Use the web and your counseling center to narrow down your search

- College Board: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- ACT: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- National Association of College Admission Counselors: [www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com)

### 2. Do Your Homework

- Request copies of various school publications (viewbooks, program sheets)
- Visit the school’s website
- Contact the school for more specific information regarding visit and event dates
- Meet with the admission representative at your high school or local college fair

### 3. Keep Good Notes and Get Organized

- Make timelines or lists to help keep you on track (see the Sage Junior/Senior Year Timeline on page 16)

### 4. Use the Following Sage Target List Questionnaire (see next page)

## Sage Target List Questionnaire

Make your “long list” based on the Sage Target List Questionnaire. Include as many schools as fit your needs. However, by the fall of your senior year, this list should be narrowed to a “short list” to which you plan to apply. Although there is no magic number for your “short list,” many students find 5 – 8 schools ideal.

### 1. SIZE

- Very small (under 2000)
- Medium-small (2000 – 5000)
- Medium-large (5000 – 20,000)
- Large (over 20,000)

### 2. TYPE OF AREA

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

### 3. DISTANCE FROM HOME

- Less than 1 hour
- 1 – 3 hours
- More than 3 hours

### 4. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

- Commuter (off campus options)
- Residential (on campus options)

### 5. COLLEGE SETTING

- Physical appearance/atmosphere of the college
- Buildings, green spaces, etc.
- Dorms – living conditions
- Food service
- Social life on campus
- Friendliness of student body
- Helpfulness of faculty/staff

### 6. STUDENT COMPOSITION

- Single-sex vs. coed
- Religious affiliation
- Students from a wide range of states and countries
- A campus with a good racial, ethnic mix of students
- Students with backgrounds either similar to or different than yours

### 7. COST

- In-state vs. out-of-state tuition
- Public vs. private tuition
- Financial aid and scholarship availability
- Affordability

### 8. ACADEMIC REPUTATION

- Academic rigor and pressures
- Competitiveness of student body
- Smaller teaching institution vs. larger research-based university
- Educational caliber of professors
- Prestige

### 9. MATCHING SCHOOL WITH YOUR ABILITY

- Do you match the freshman profile for GPA and SAT/ACT scores?
- What are your chances for acceptance?
- Do you consider this school a “reach” or a “safety” school?

### 10. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- What majors are offered?
- Is the school known for a particular academic discipline?
- How does the school counsel “undecided” students?
- Is there a clear path into graduate school?
- Does the school offer co-ops, internships or research opportunities with professors?
- What career services are available?
- Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?

### 11. EXTRAS

- Study abroad
- Greek life
- Club sports or recreation and fitness programs
- Intercollegiate sports teams
- Volunteer and community service opportunities
- Academic support services for special-needs





**SAGE TIP #348:**

Did you know that private colleges can actually cost you less than a state school?

It's true! Because more students receive more financial aid at private colleges than at publics, most students don't pay full price. In fact, Sage costs less to most students than a SUNY college!

For more >>> [www.sage.edu/college4u](http://www.sage.edu/college4u)

◀◀ VERONICA NUNES,  
COMMUNICATIONS & SPANISH





# Set...

## It's time to hit the road and visit.

### WHY?

To help determine if a college is a good fit for you- keep asking “Do I see myself here?” There are certain “intangibles” for each school that can only be experienced through a visit. A successful college visit can also give you a competitive edge in gaining admission.

### WHO?

You and your parent(s)/ guardian

### WHEN?

The ideal time to visit a college campus is when school is in session, when all students are on campus attending classes and when school personnel are available to meet with you. Realistically, summer works best for most families and therefore most admissions offices are geared to summer visits. While the campus life will be less busy than the regular school year, you should be able to get a “feel” for the college.

### HOW MANY?

If your target schools are all close to home, visiting all is strongly encouraged. If your list ranges from California to Maine, this may be more difficult. It is all about being able to make good comparisons, so you should try to visit as many of your target schools as possible before filling out the applications.

### WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE VISIT?

Make as many arrangements in advance including:

- a campus tour and information session
- a one-on-one interview with someone in the admissions office
- meeting with someone in the financial aid office
- attending a class and meeting with a professor in your area of interest
- connecting with a coach if you are considering playing a sport in college

Make the campus visit your own: find time to informally walk around the campus to feel the “chemistry” of the school, talk with students, go to the favorite eating spot, read bulletin boards to see what’s happening on campus, take photos of the campus, etc.

### IF YOU CANNOT VISIT:

- Look at virtual tours on college websites
- Email the admissions office with your questions
- Visit with representatives of the colleges who come to your school
- Look at a video/CD produced by the college, if available

## How to Visit a College Campus: Checklist

A great way to see if you “fit in” at a college is to visit it in person. **Make a copy of this checklist** and bring it with you, so you don’t forget to see everything you should. Some general tips: (1) go with your parents, (2) visit the campus when classes are in session, so you can sit in on a couple of classes and speak with students and faculty, and (3) allow at least 3-5 hours per campus.

College: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tour Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tour Place: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Directions attached? \_\_\_\_\_  
Parking Permit needed? \_\_\_\_\_

### Places to visit and/or look for information:

- Student center/hangouts
- Library
- Classrooms
- Bulletin boards on campus
- Admissions office
- Dining facility
- Residence halls
- Career placement office
- Bookstore
- Off-campus stores
- The local community
- School/community papers
- Events calendar
- Campus map
- Places of worship
- Health center

### Academic items to evaluate:

- Classes-quality
- Classes-size
- Pressure
- Competition
- Work load
- Freshman orientation programs
- Academic advisors for students

### Library items to evaluate:

- Size
- Hours
- Study rooms/areas
- Comfort/lighting

### Housing items to evaluate:

#### Dorms:

- Quality
- Neighborhood
- Security
- Noise level

#### Off campus:

- Quality
- Neighborhood
- Security
- Noise level

#### Laundry

#### Kitchen

#### Bathrooms

### Eating items to evaluate:

- Dining hall
- Quality of food
- Cleanliness
- Nutrition
- Variety
- Special diet availability
- Local restaurants

### Facilities to evaluate:

- Health center
- Student center
- Concert hall
- Classroom size, lighting
- Fraternity/sorority houses
- Counseling services
- Placement office
- Disability access/facilities

### Sports items to evaluate:

- Gym
- Pool
- Track(s)-Indoor/Outdoor
- Stadium
- Skating/Hockey Rink
- Open spaces for jogging, frisbee, etc.
- Tennis courts

- Intramural sports
- Intercollegiate sports

### Community/Area to evaluate:

- Overall impression
- Cleanliness
- Presence of crime
- Local entertainment
- Shopping
- Activities/entertainment
- Relationship with college
- Transportation to/from campus
- Unusual weather conditions
- Other colleges nearby

### Computer facilities to evaluate:

- Number of PC's
- Hours accessible
- Software available
- Knowledgeable assistance
- Number of printers
- Quality of printers
- Network availability
- Fees for computer use

### Impression of students:

- Academic attitudes
- Backgrounds/ethnic mix
- Results from conversations

### Impression of faculty:

- Accessible
- Teaching styles
- Dedication
- Openness

### My overall reaction to this college:

- Better than before I visited
- About the same as before I visited
- Not as good as before I visited

# AFFORDING COLLEGE: LOOK BEYOND PRICE, INVESTIGATE TRUE COST, AND CHOOSE VALUE

DAN LUNDQUIST, Vice President For Enrollment, The Sage Colleges

In these uncertain times, concerns about college affordability have never been more pronounced. People from across the economic spectrum are more worried about how to help their children attain a college experience. At The Sage Colleges, we are committed to supporting sustained affordability; financial aid is our partnership investment with families in student access and success.

## THE MYTH OF UN-AFFORDABILITY

Now more than ever, it is critical to understand the difference between a college's price tag and its cost to you.

A college's price is its stated cost of attendance, its "sticker price." That is the amount someone pays if they don't receive financial aid and, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, most students do receive financial aid. At private four-year colleges, 89 percent of students received an average of \$16,265, and at public four-year colleges 76 percent of students received an average of \$8,735, according to NCES.

So most students don't pay full price; their cost—what the family pays—is substantially lower. And more students receive substantially more financial aid at private colleges than publics.

In fact, most undergraduate students at Sage pay less than they would at a SUNY college!

## RULE ONE: EXPLORE FINANCIAL AID

The majority of financial aid is awarded based on a family's "need," which is based on their financial resources. Each family fills out a financial aid form, which estimates what that family can reasonably be expected to pay for a child's college education that year.

A family's resources, not any college's sticker price, determine each family's cost. That is why we see more students receiving more financial aid from the "expensive" private colleges: They are paying less.

At The Sage Colleges, for example, most students receive financial aid. And well over half the students' assistance comes in the form of grant aid, thus reducing cost as a barrier to a quality private education.

## RULE TWO: UNDERSTAND VALUE

Value is the relationship between cost and quality. As legendary investor Warren Buffet says, "Price is what you pay. Value is what you get."

Value questions to ask NOW:

### 1) Can I afford this college?

Sage is affordable and predictable: We meet financial need and have a 0 percent tuition increase.

### 2) Will my professors know me?

At Sage our student-faculty ratio is 12-1.

### 3) What about opportunities out of class?

As a small university, Sage offers excellent access to libraries, labs, studios, and athletic facilities. You can get involved freshman year.

### 4) Can I graduate in four years?

You can graduate in four years and you can "fast track" to a master's degree! And Russell Sage has introduced a three year degree program.

### 5) Will I get a job?

98 percent of Sage grads are employed or in graduate school within months!

## RULE THREE: SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS

A college education is an investment in a student's future. The right college program—not just the right price—is what will make a difference in the long run. Start by finding colleges that are the right match and then investigate the bottom line affordability. Ask questions, you will be glad you did. The most important things are worth finding a way to do—and Sage is prepared to help you.

## The College Interview

Most college interviews will take place at the time of your college visit. Some schools require interviews while others make it optional. Be sure to know the policy of the schools to which you are applying.

### BEFORE

Preparation is essential: familiarize yourself with the college, be prepared to explain why you are interested in the school. Do your research!

- Prepare good questions.
- Obtain a unofficial copy of your transcript and a copy of your resume.
- Be prepared to discuss who you are: strengths/weaknesses, likes/dislikes, major accomplishments, turning points in your life, influential people.
- Dress appropriately and comfortably. First impressions do count.
- Arrive on time. Be prepared to complete a questionnaire before the interview.
- Greet the representative with a firm handshake and smile. Introduce yourself and your parent(s)/guardian.

### DURING

Try to remember that an interview is actually a conversation – you are interviewing the college counselor about the school as much as they are interviewing you.

- Speak directly to the representative and make eye contact.
- Elaborate during the interview. Do not use one word answers.
- Relax and be yourself. Most admission representatives know that students are more than what appears on paper. Give the representative the whole picture; talk about your family, goals and outside activities.
- Remember to breathe! A good deep breath will help you relax and think clearly.

### Questions you might be asked in an interview:

- Why are you interested in our college?
- Who/what has influenced you?
- What are your educational/career/academic/extracurricular/personal goals?
- What are you looking for in a college?
- Why are you interested in the field of study in which you wish to major?
- What kinds of jobs have you held? Which were most interesting to you?
- What would you do next year if you didn't attend college?
- What do you consider to be your biggest accomplishment to date?
- What do you expect a college education to do for you?
- As a student, what would you change about your study habits?
- How do you think you would manage your time while attending class?
- How do you explain your high/low grades in \_\_\_\_\_?
- What can you contribute to our college?
- What are your favorite subjects of study? Least favorite? Why?
- Why should we accept you?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What do you want me to remember about you?

**Questions you might ask in an interview:**

- What makes your school different/special? What are the students like?
- What is the philosophy, mission, or purpose of the institution?
- What is the average class size in your freshman year? Overall?
- What are the smallest class sizes? The largest?
- Do graduate students teach undergraduates?
- What are the most popular majors?
- What is the farthest distance between academic buildings?
- How are students advised about which courses to take?
- How far is the campus from the nearest airport? Train station? Bus station?
- Do you provide transportation locally? To where? How much does it cost?
- What percentage of your students live on-campus? Off-campus?
- How are students assigned to a room? To a roommate?
- Are there coed residence halls? Do they all live on one floor? Share bathrooms?
- What services are provided in the resident halls? Laundry area? Kitchen? Air conditioning? Wireless?
- Are freshmen required to live on-campus? In separate residence halls?
- What kind of food service do you offer?
- What kinds of meal plans are available? How many meals are offered each day?
- Is there a salad bar? Choice of entrees? Vegetarian options?
- Is financial aid need or merit based?
- What types of scholarships are available? How many students receive financial aid?
- What are the financial aid procedures and deadlines?

**AFTER**

Since visiting several schools in a short period of time may cause confusion, what happens after your visit is essential.

- Jot down important notes.
- Review photographs you took on campus (or the college's virtual tour) to help jog your memory.
- Follow up immediately with a thank you note to the interviewer which references specifics from the interview.



**SAGE TIP #261:**

Giving thought to what you want to do will help you figure out where to go.

Take time to assess your interests, skills, and aspirations, and explore career options that match. Then find a school that will prepare you for your career of interest – or let you explore your areas of interest.

For more >>> [www.sage.edu/college4u](http://www.sage.edu/college4u)



SIRAJ BAH,  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION





# College

## The Application Process

### OBTAIN THE APPLICATION

- Electronic application via the individual college's website.
- Paper application from the college directly, from a College representative who visits school in the fall, at college fairs or your guidance office.
- Note: Over 315 schools accept the Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)). The Common Application is a single application that can be completed, copied, and sent to numerous colleges

### MIND THE TIMING

Deadlines vary from as early as September for some competitive programs to as late as July at rolling admissions schools. Regardless, your application should be submitted two weeks prior to any deadline date.

### UNDERSTAND THE VOCABULARY

- **Early Decision:** By applying early decision, a student commits to attend that college if accepted and does not apply to any other school or withdraws applications to other schools. Application deadline is usually November 1st and notification of decision is often early January. Not every school has an Early Decision option.

It is important to discuss the advantages and disadvantages before going Early Decision. Remember that lots of things can change for you in your senior year.

- **Early Action:** Although there is an early deadline and early notification of decision, there is no early commitment. Early Action also does not limit applications to other schools. Not every school has an Early Action option.
- **Standard Deadline:** Many schools publish a February 1st priority deadline for applications and then offer notification by April 15th. However, every school is different, so it is best to note the date.
- **Rolling Admissions:** Applications are reviewed as they arrive and applicants are generally notified within 6 to 8 weeks. Places in the incoming class may be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Some schools with rolling admission suggest submitting applications in September.

## The Application Components

### 1. HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

- Courses taken, grades earned
- Cumulative GPA
- Balance and strength of curriculum
- Consistency of performance

### 2. SAT/ACT TEST RESULTS

- Not all schools require standardized tests.
- Most schools have a minimum test score, but the test results are generally viewed in combination with other factors.
- Compatibility of the test scores with high school achievement.
- Most only look at your best scores on the ACT/SAT.
- Each test has a different format so consider taking both!
- Test dates are already posted online (SAT offers tests 7 times a year and ACT offers 5 test dates per year).
- Have your official scores sent directly to colleges of interest.

### 3. ESSAYS / PERSONAL STATEMENTS

- Use the essay as an opportunity to give your application more depth.
- Not all schools require an essay or personal statement.
- Colleges will look at content, style, mechanics, and creativity.
- There are three types of essays: Creative, About You and Why Us?
- Approach the essay like you would an English assignment. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to work on the statement (brainstorm, write, re-write and edit). Check that your writing is organized and that it sticks to a theme.
- Ask someone you trust to review the final document.
- Remember that admission counselors are reading hundreds of these; longer does not mean better. Your essay should be in your voice and not in the vocabulary structure of British literature.

### 4. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Colleges use letters to discover student contributions to school and community, to learn more about student's personal traits, and to get to know the student better. If your application is borderline, this can push it in the positive direction.
- Give your recommenders plenty of lead time – they often have many letters to write in a short amount of time.

### 5. RESUME

- Attach a resume that includes school and community activities.
- Don't use abbreviations for clubs.
- Neatness, organization and spelling count.
- Be sure to post your name at the top of the resume.
- Colleges look for quality of activities; not quantity; depth of involvement rather than breadth; evidence that an applicant knows the value of perseverance and investment in a goal; demonstration of leadership; and balance in activities.

### 6. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- Portfolio reviews for Art majors
- Creative writing pieces for English majors
- Laboratory reports for Science majors
- Auditions for Music and/or Drama majors

## TIPS FOR COMPLETING APPLICATIONS

- Before doing anything else, carefully read all directions.
- Make a checklist of everything that is required for each school (some schools do this for you.)
- NEATNESS COUNTS! Most colleges offer an electronic application which enables you to type the application. If you do not want to send an application online, you may be able to download the application, complete it on the computer, print it, and mail it.
- If doing applications by hand, PRINT (don't write) and use BLACK INK.
- Do not have scratch outs or write over mistakes. USE WHITE OUT to make corrections.
- Do not hand write the essay or personal statement unless specifically asked. Generate it on the computer and attach to the application.
- PROOFREAD – there is no excuse for spelling or grammatical errors.
- BE COMPLETE – fill in all the blanks. If a question is not relevant, use N/A. If you attach a resume or personal statement, say, "See attached."
- Make sure you complete all parts. Some departments have extra forms or special applications. Most have a form to be given to your counselor; turn this in with the application. If there is a form to be completed by the teacher, give this to him/her early.
- PHOTOCOPY the completed application for your record.

### Resources:

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)  
[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)  
[www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com)



## Write Your Way to Acceptance

The college application essay is your opportunity to speak directly to the Admissions Committee and help them understand you as a person. Other than an interview, this is your only opportunity to convey your thoughts, opinions, and outlook on life. It also gives you a chance to highlight your accomplishments or obstacles that you have overcome. Keep in mind that Admissions Offices use this piece to evaluate your communication and writing skills, so take the time to do a good job.

### Three Steps to Writing Your Essay

**1. Prewriting-** To begin, you must first collect and organize potential ideas for your essay's focus. Since all college essay questions are attempts to learn about you, begin with yourself. Use the self-analysis worksheet provided on page 13 of your packet to help you brainstorm ideas and discover your strengths. This will also help you discover patterns and connections in different parts of your life.

**2. Drafting-** The next step is to decide what type of essay you would like to write. There are three basic styles you should consider: standard essay, less-is-more essay, or narrative essay.

**Standard Essay:** Take two or three points from your self-analysis, dedicate a paragraph to each, and make sure you provide plenty of evidence. Choose things not apparent from the rest of your application or elaborate on some of the activities already included.

**Less-is-More Essay:** Focus on a single interesting point about yourself. This format works well for brief essays of a paragraph or half a page.

**Narrative Essay:** Tell a short and vivid story. Go straight to the body of the essay, write one or two narrative paragraphs that grab and engage the reader's attention, then explain what this little story reveals about you.

**3. Editing-** Now that you have a good draft, it is time to make improvements. Read it over yourself to find and fix any errors. Then have someone else do the same. Get feedback and make sure the reader understands the message you are trying to convey.

### Sample Essay Questions

#### “You” Questions:

- Tell us about a person who has had a significant influence on you.
- Evaluate an experience or a risk that you have taken.



### **“Why us” Questions:**

- Why is Sage a good college choice for you?
- Tell us about your career goals and how Sage can help you achieve those goals.

### **Creative Questions:**

- Describe a fictional character, historical figure, or creative work that has had an influence on you.
- Do you believe there is a generation gap? If so, describe the differences between your generation and the others. If not, explain why not.

### **Examples of Good Introductions**

I am the colors of my art. I am the brush that strokes every inch of the paper, designing a masterpiece. When my heart beats, the colors pink, blue, red, and black are formed. My emotions create a self portrait that expresses the essence of me. A brush dabs into sienna paint and then yellow ochre. With the first stroke, I create my face and see a mother. I see a strong black woman who works everyday to support her family. Her eyes are bold and wholesome. I paint soft skin to look like roasted almonds and color the lips a soft pink. Two more strokes accentuate the high cheek bones that bring about our shared smile.

“Ask the question why,” my theatre teacher always insists. “Ask why things are the way they are.” In my Theatre of the Oppressed class, we benefit from many discussions on racism, poverty, and authority. On the subject of poverty, I began to think of some of the people in my neighborhood who are enslaved by life’s pressures.

Poetry is the single most free-falling feeling next to cliff jumping. Trust me, I’ve tried cliff jumping. Poetry sends me into a dream world, where the only thing that matters is the way I feel. I can draw pictures with my words, make sounds with my syllables, and create tastes with my descriptions. I feel free with poetry.

### **Examples of Bad Introductions**

To learn a lot about nutrition science, and to get the best possible education there is from your college, and to explore the many opportunities offered. For my mother, who continues to find away to make it with the health insurance issues everyday, whether it be the doctors, the prescriptions, medical bills, etc...

My main concern in the community is the lack of knowledge about headphones and how dangerous they can be. My little sister uses iPod headphones which are commonly used today; the proper term is ear buds head phones. She started using them around mid year last year, since then her hearing has not been the same. At first I thought she was just ignoring me but then soon I realize that she really couldn’t here me, sometimes she would rub her ears for a long period after she took the headphones out of her ears. I’m doing a quality of life research project on headphones, and how they cause loss of hearing, right now I am sending in my work into the “New York Times” and “Daily News.” I want to get my point across so manufacturers

### **Examples of Good Opening Sentences**

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.” Winston Churchill’s quote summarizes my whole high school career in one simple statement. I have big feet. I always thought they were cumbersome and far from feminine. Through the years though, they have become my biggest ally.

I pulled my bright green t-shirt over my head and began to lace up my cleats for the day’s soccer practice. Reading the logo on my shirt, a teammate asked curiously, “Why are you MAD?”

## Word Usage

- Do not use contractions (would've, you're, can't, etc.).
- Do not use "this," "that," or "these" unless followed by a noun.
- Do not start a sentence with "it" or "as if."
- Do not use back-to back infinitives such as "to go to" or "to run to."
- Do not use the following words, since they are too general. Dig deeper!

you	thing	get	every	bad
seemed	some	your	stuff	got
everybody	good	saw	someone	fun
gotten	everything	nice	looked	something
getting	very	walked	sometime	

## Dos and Don'ts



### Do:

- answer the question given or title your essay if there is no specific topic
- keep your focus narrow and personal
- be original and be yourself
- brainstorm before you begin writing
- develop your main idea with vivid and specific facts, events, examples, and details
- spend a bulk of your time on the introduction, but make sure your conclusion is just as powerful
- allow many people to read it and proofread over and over again



### Do not:

- put down other people or colleges
- plagiarize another person's essay (it HAS to be about you!)
- wait until the last minute to get started (even if your topic is about procrastination)
- use big words to sound smart, since you may use a word incorrectly
- forget to change the name of the school if you are using the same essay for multiple colleges

## More Tips

Be aware of your audience. If you are applying to a school that is well known for your major (Physical Therapy, Engineering, etc.), they could be tired of hearing the same topic over and over again. No matter how well written your essay is, avoid giving them reasons to think, "Oh no, not another essay about..."

Take responsibility for your actions. There is a fine line between defending a bad grade on your transcript and not taking responsibility. Have someone else read your essay and ask if it comes off in a negative tone.

Stay positive. Even if it's a heart-wrenching story, tie it together with a positive spin in the end. Explain how this experience has motivated you or helped you grow as a person.

Do not simply write your resumé. Tell the admissions committee something about yourself that they have not already read in your application. Set yourself apart from the rest of the applicants.

Do not forget to proofread. Read it yourself and have others do the same over and over again. Spell-check will not catch all mistakes.

# Self Analysis

Family members who have influenced you:	People outside of your family that have influenced you:
Dreams and goals that you have:	Meaningful events in your life:
Obstacles that you have overcome:	Interests that you have:
Places that you have been:	Music, books, internet sites that you enjoy:
Work experiences you have had:	My family would say I was...
My friends would say I was...	My teachers would say I was...



**SAGE TIP #158:**

It's never too early to start looking- you'll have more options and less stress!

Start early and stay ahead of the curve. Use resources that help walk you through the process one step at a time, so you won't be overwhelmed late in your senior year.

For more >>> [www.sage.edu/college4u](http://www.sage.edu/college4u)

◀◀ TESS CARSTENSEN,  
NURSING





## Essay Example #1

Not reveille, but the thunderous crack of a head colliding with wood woke me one early July morning. Big Mike, an eight-year old, overweight, asthmatic ball of energy had shot up like a catapult, only to receive a face full of top bunk from the overlying bed. With glossy eyes and a confused head, Big Mike incoherently shifted his weight and rose to his feet. I watched curiously as the class clown of my cabin unconsciously staggered over to his seedy secondhand suitcase at the foot of his bed. The frigid air coated Big Mike's skin with a layer of goose bumps as he defied all convention by dropping his boxers and turning his open suitcase into a portable urinal. The nine glasses of bug juice he drank during lunch evacuated his body and soaked the suitcase's contents. I froze, mystified and yet thoroughly amused. Should I wake him and risk his embarrassment? Or should I let him finish and deal with the situation in the morning? I decided to wait. Big Mike hoisted his boxers and dreamily returned to his bunk.

Cool morning dew blended unceremoniously with the warm stench radiating off the musty suitcase. The aroma wafted towards my bed and hit me harder than Big Mike had hit the top bunk. As I attempted to fall back asleep, the bugle echoed throughout camp. Morning music blared and kids were getting dressed when Big Mike shouted, "Yo Dane, somebody peed in my suitcase!" I told Big Mike and the other guys how I had mistakenly left the cabin door open last night. "A raccoon must've got in; I'm sorry dude, that's my fault." Big Mike and the rest of my oblivious campers ate breakfast as I spent the morning doing laundry.

Eight years ago I joined my second family. At Camp Minikani I, too, wet the bed and idolized wacky counselors I only dreamt of one day becoming. Now I am the wacky counselor, an unexplainable role model in worn out tennis shoes and a beat up baseball cap. I am an extraordinary combination of doctor, lawyer, and teacher. Each week of the summer, eighteen parents – some doubtful, other relieved – leave their most prized possessions with me; a liable, loud, long haired lunatic. I am a blender full of coach, referee and teammate. I build trust between ten complete strangers, myself included. I help reveal hidden confidence at the rock wall. I am a guide in social adjustment while I undergo my own self-discovery. Together we construct unforgettable memories just as my counselors once did for me.

Minikani's effect on me has expanded far beyond just the summer camp. It has molded me into an outgoing, mature, and effective leader year round. The positive atmosphere at camp has inspired me to give back to my own community through peer tutoring and freshman advisory. My group presence and style of creative encouragement have made me an inspiring team captain both on the soccer field and on the ice rink. I have learned that a cabin of eight year-olds can enlighten me with imaginative ideas about outer space as much as a physics teacher can. I know I would be an asset to your school because I am a well-rounded leader who thrives in a community environment. I look forward to the incredible learning opportunities as well as giving back to the campus through my extracurricular involvement and leadership.

Big Mike, my other campers, and the rest of my Minikani family have influenced my life as much as I hope to have impacted theirs. Our learning together has helped me develop into the person I am today. Camp Manikani has taught me many life skills. I have learned to trust, to respect, to receive, to give back, to love, and of course, how to do laundry.



## Essay Example #2

I am in front of a crowd with hundreds of people focusing on me. They're waiting to hear me mess up, crack under pressure. They don't know who I am, or my journey; they only know that I am here and supposed to play well. I am sitting on my bench, pressing those keys in a nervous rage. My palms are sweaty, my face beet red, and I cannot hear the music I am playing: C, D, F flat – a blank. My fingers stop. I turn around to face the crowd, their eyes like those of lions in the night, ready to attack their prey, and I, that awkward zebra, walked right into the lion's den.

This was my first piano recital and at the time, I thought it would be my last. I could not believe that all those months of training and preparation for this moment were ruined because of one note. It took me awhile to realize that I messed up. Still, I was okay with my defeat. I was not permanently traumatized by what happened. It taught me that courage is more than entering a lion's den.

A few months after the recital, I went to visit my grandparents in upstate New York. My grandmother is a great piano player and was so happy to hear that I was continuing in her footsteps. That trip changed my perspective of the piano forever. My grandmother brought down a dusty old box from the attic. Hidden inside was a history of family talent. "This is the piano music played by my mother and my mother's mother and her mother before her," she said. I had not known that the piano was such a large part of my family's history. The music in that box dated back to 1912 and it was incredible. My grandma gave me a few of her favorite pieces and I felt so honored to keep the talent in my family alive.

Christmas was just around the corner and now I had the perfect gift for my grandmother. I would play "Melody in F" for her, a song that her mother used to play to her when she was growing up. I got together with my piano teacher, Mrs. Williams, and began learning the music. In the back of my mind, there was always doubt: What if she didn't like it, or it made her sad, since my great-grandmother had passed away the year before? My greatest worry, however, was playing in front of people, something I hadn't done since my first, and only, recital. Many times while learning the song – which was by far the hardest I had ever learned – I wanted to quit and just buy her a sweater or something frivolous. But I kept telling myself that I could do it. So I continued on my quest to know the song by Christmas.

Christmas time at my grandparents' house is my favorite time of year. This year, I was more nervous than excited for presents. I had the song memorized. It would take five minutes to play and involved some of the trickiest chords I had ever seen. Memories of my first piano recital came back to haunt me as the hours turned into minutes before I would play. Then it was time.

I sat down on that bench and prepared to mess up once again. However, this time, instead of playing in a nervous rage, I played with all of my heart. I played and played for five minutes without one mistake. When I finished, I turned around to face my family, and their eyes were filled with amazement. They had never heard me play a song with so much love and passion. My grandma gave me the biggest hug and kiss and we were both crying with joy. That Christmas changed my outlook on what I can and cannot do.

The experience brought forth in me a new quality: never giving up on something that you can't go a day without thinking about. When I really want something, I do everything I can to attain it. Even when the odds are against me and I start to doubt my own capabilities, I push through until the very end. After playing that piece for my grandmother, I have been in many other piano recitals and have messed up in a few. Still, I continue onward without intimidation from the lion's eyes because I know that as long as I believe in myself, even a zebra can be king of the jungle.



## Sage Junior/Senior Year Timeline for College Preparation

### Junior Year

1. Keep track of all potential SAT/ACT test dates that will work with your schedule and register for the test dates. (Remember to eliminate conflicts with sports, family obligations, etc.).
2. Establish a profile list of potential schools and begin researching those options (use the Sage Target List Questionnaire).
3. Request information from the colleges so that you begin to receive notices about upcoming campus events.
4. Begin scheduling your campus visits and attend spring open houses.
5. USE THE SUMMER TO VISIT! While you won't get the full idea of what the school is like, this is a good time to get admission interviews out of the way!

### Senior Year

1. Keep narrowing down your school list and be sure that you are requesting financial aid and scholarship information for all the schools.
2. Keep your counselor, guardian or parents aware of what schools you are considering so that they can help you in meeting deadlines.
3. Make a calendar of application deadlines and financial aid filing deadlines.
4. Request your letters of recommendation early from your teachers- a lot of students often ask the same teachers.
5. If you haven't taken the tests, don't wait any longer. Even if you are scared, it is better to have them than not. If you didn't do well on one, consider taking an alternative test.
6. Visit college fairs to meet the college reps for the schools you are interested in and ask questions.
7. Work on your ESSAYS- they can help make or break your application!
8. Complete and mail your applications on time.
9. Apply online after January 1st for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You and your guardians are going to need pins. Start filling out the scholarship applications.
10. Schedule auditions, portfolio reviews or interviews.
11. Be sure to keep your counselors in the loop and request that they send all your materials directly to the colleges. Incomplete applications will delay your decision.
12. DON'T SLACK OFF SENIOR YEAR! Admission counselors will look at first semester grades.
13. Review your acceptances, compare award letters and make the best decision for you.
14. Request a final transcript be sent to your college of choice at the end of the year because your financial aid will be pulled if you don't show proof of graduation.
15. Get ready for a whole new world.



**SAGE TIP #324:**

Research scholarships at your school, community groups, and colleges of interest.

There are many funding sources to help you pay for college. Be creative about where you look, apply for everything you can, and remember that there are plenty of types of financial aid to help with the rest.

For more >>> [www.sage.edu/college4u](http://www.sage.edu/college4u)



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