

APPLICATION TIPS

- Spellchecking is not enough! **Proofread** and have someone else double check your proofreading.
- Don't wait until the last minute to complete applications. Computer systems are notorious for crashing under heavy traffic on the day before a deadline.
- Consider waiving your right to access your file.
- Spell your major correctly! Common misspellings are: pyschology, psichology, psychology, buisness
- **Casual language, poor grammar and avoiding proper use of capital letters make you**
- Don't include "hanging out with friends" or "talking on the phone" as an extracurricular activity.
- In your essay, don't blame your teacher for bad grades.
- **Avoid first draft essays.** Check for spelling, grammar, and wording. Show you put some time into it.
- Don't mix up "country" and "county."
- Many students who have jobs do not mention them on applications. Often, these jobs impact the time they have available for activities; they should include this information to paint a fuller picture of how they spend their time
- Make sure you include the correct college's name on the application and in the essay.
- **Request transcripts, school reports, and other documentation from the high school and meet deadlines!**
- **You must request that your test scores be sent from the testing agency to the college. This is your responsibility.**
- Don't leave questions unanswered.
- Be careful not to slip with the mouse and clicking on the wrong item in a drop-down list (Many students indicate they are from Afghanistan, which is usually right after the United States on drop-down lists).
- **Read the instructions carefully** – especially the length of the essay and the prompt. This is the single most frequent mistake students make.
- Complete the college's supplement if there is one when using the Common Application.
- Don't write a generic essay. Write details that are unique to you, and that only you could have written.
- **"Show" don't "tell" in your essay.**
- Your essay should not repeat other parts of the application.
- Avoid substituting thesaurus words for more natural words.
- Parents don't realize that 17 year olds do not write like 45 year olds.
- Avoid using **unprofessional or offensive email addresses.** Make sure you have entered your email address correctly!
- **Check your email regularly** for mail from the colleges you have applied to. This is crucial!

SPECIAL NOTES FOR UC AND CSU APPLICATIONS

Students can answer most of the questions asked on applications. However, there are a few questions you might want to verify with their parents ahead of time to make the application process smoother. Those questions are:

- What is the date you first lived in California?
- How long have your parents resided in California? What date did they move here?
- What is the city and state where you were born?
- What is your parents' highest level of formal education? Know this for both mother and father.
- What are your parent's current and former occupations (go back 10 years) and what is the number of years that they had these jobs?
- You may be asked for your parent's income and your income in order to determine if you are eligible for a fee waiver. Once you enter this information you cannot go back to edit it.
- Are either of your parents an employee of the University of California?
- Are you a US citizen; do you have dual citizenship; are you a US permanent resident with a visa?
- What math did you take in 7th and 8th grades? If it was algebra or geometry, were your grades a C or better?
- What language did you take in 7th and 8th grades? Were your grades a C or better?
- If you are applying to UC San Diego, you will be asked to rank your college preferences from 1-6. Look at the UC San Diego website to understand the differences between the six colleges.
- What is your intended major for each campus to which you are applying? Alternate major? For most campuses, "undeclared" is a selection.
- If you are Eligible in the Local Context (ELC) for UC, what is your ELC number?
- If your parents went to college, know where they went, how long they were there, if they received a degree, and the name of any degrees they received.

ONLINE APPLICATION "DOS AND DON'TS"

Do... take the online tour. Before you start your application, walk through each step of the application on "a virtual tour".

Do... create a user name and password that you'll remember easily. Record it and keep it in a safe place. If you lose your password, some colleges allow you to create a new one, but if you forget your user name, you may have to start a new application.

Do... follow directions and complete all steps. On each page be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page and the bottom of each pop-up to avoid missing any information.

Don't... forget to save your work. You usually have no more than 40 minutes per page before you'll be timed out. Whenever you save an entry or move to a new page, your work is usually automatically stored, but if you plan to leave your application for any length of time - to go grab a snack or answer the phone - use the save/logout feature to store your application.

Don't... compose your personal statement online. Take time to compose it in a word-processing application and then copy and paste it into the appropriate boxes online.

Do... carefully review the summary page.

Don't... be afraid to ask for help. If you have technical difficulties, don't be afraid to ask the "Help Desk," "Technical Support," or use the "Contact" links.

Do... click "Submit Application" when you've finished. Your application won't be sent to the University until you do.

Do... print out a copy of the application and your receipt and keep it! You will have a record of your application ID number and a complete summary of your application.

Do... expect a confirming email from the college indicating that they have received your application and follow up with them if you don't receive it within a week for submitting it.

COMMON APPLICATION – COMMON MISTAKES

Provided by the folks at The Common Application

Students don't read the instructions. It's the single most important thing that keeps you from doing this flawlessly. It is recommended that students print the directions out and read them before they start typing.

Waiting until the last minute.

Not entering a valid e-mail address. Later on you wonder why you haven't heard from the college or got a confirmation message.

Not checking each individual college's requirements and deadlines.

In the "MY COLLEGES" section, students are **not accurately selecting and saving the colleges** they want to apply to. They often select the right school, but forget to save.

Students forget to save their data and log out.

Not thoroughly reviewing the application for errors and truncated text.

Not using the checklist to ensure they have completed all the requirements for their selected colleges. There is another tab that will tell them which colleges accept credit cards and which colleges only accept checks.

Not verifying they have completed the submission process before logging out.

Not following up with fees and supplemental documents.

Not sending hardcopy to member colleges that don't accept the electronic version of the common application.

