

## **FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**



When researching colleges, how do you sort through the overwhelming amount of information on the internet? This bibliography contains a carefully curated list of articles, videos, websites, and other resources selected from thousands of information available, sorted into the following categories:

- I. Finding a College for Me – Where Do I Start?
- II. Hitting the Numbers: The Importance of ACT/SAT Tests and How to Prepare for Them
- III. What Colleges are Looking for on Your Transcript
- IV. The Common App and Other Application
- V. Writing a Polished Essay
- VI. Creating Your Activities List
- VII. Getting Great Teacher Recommendations
- VIII. The All-Important College Visit
- IX. And Finally, Financial Aid

Find a category, select a resource, dig in, and take notes in an app like Evernote or OneNote so you can refer back to these references as needed.

### **I. FINDING A GREAT COLLEGE FOR ME – WHERE DO I START?**

With nearly 8,000 two- and four-year colleges to choose from in the US alone, how do you find the ones that you can get in and are also a good fit for you – somewhere you will thrive all four years and beyond? Here are tools to get started, including an article on why not to take the US News and World Report rankings too seriously. Finding a Great College is the longest list, because identifying the best fit is the most important step to college success.

- Academics Aside: 10 Factors to Consider in Choosing a College. (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2018, from <https://www.fastweb.com/college-search/articles/academics-aside-10-factors-to-consider-in-choosing-a-college>
- Antonoff, S. R. (2017). *College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You* (13 edition). EDUconsultingMedia.
- Cappex.com. (n.d.). College Fit Kit. Retrieved from <https://my.cappex.com/media/fitkit.pdf>
- Chronicle of Higher Education. (n.d.). *The Importance of a Good College Match*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1rczqqcS0M>
- College Atlas. (n.d.). Top 10 Factors to Consider When Choosing A College. Retrieved October 25, 2018, from <https://www.collegeatlas.org/factors-choosing-a-college.html>
- College Board. (2018). Big Future - College Search - Find colleges and universities by major, location, type, more. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- College Board. (2018). Find College - College Planning Step by Step Guide. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>
- College Bound Sports. (2005). *The High School Athlete's Guide to College Sports*. Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing.
- College Data (n.d.) Explore Colleges - College Match. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.collegedata.com/cs/search/college/college\\_search\\_tmpl.jhtml](https://www.collegedata.com/cs/search/college/college_search_tmpl.jhtml)
- College Mapper (2018). Guided tasks, college search, admissions chance, and more. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://www.collegemapper.com/>
- College Scorecard. (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2018, from <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>
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- College Vine (2017, May 9). What Does It Mean to “Fit” With A College? Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/what-does-it-mean-to-fit-with-a-college/>
- Dix, W. (2016, May 9). What College “Match” And “Fit” Are All About. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/willarddix/2016/05/09/what-college-match-and-fit-are-all-about/>
- Gladwell, M. (2011, February 7). The Trouble with College Rankings. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/14/the-order-of-things>
- Kingsbury, K. (2009, January 9). Dirty Secrets of College Admissions. *The Daily Beast*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2009/01/09/dirty-secrets-of-college-admissions>
- Kiplinger. (n.d.). Find the Best College for You. Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://www.kiplinger.com/tool/college/T014-S001-find-best-colleges-value-rankings/index.php>
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- myOptions. (n.d.). Retrieved November 11, 2018, from <https://myoptions.org/>
- NACAC (2018). Find the College That’s Right for You. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://www.nacacfairs.org/>
- NACAC. (2016). Guide for Families in the College Admissions Process. Retrieved from <https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/guideforfamilies.pdf>
- NACAC. (n.d.). *State of College Admission 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/soca17final.pdf>
- Rubin. (2016, September 13). College Admissions Deans, Counselors Talk How to Get In. *US News & World*

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- Shaevitz, M. (2016). College Selection Questionnaire. Retrieved from <http://admissionpossible.com/pdfs/collegequest.pdf>
- Shaevitz, M. H. (2013, August 19). Five Biggest Mistakes Applicants Make When Putting Together Their College Lists. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/college-application-lists\\_b\\_3762599.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/college-application-lists_b_3762599.html)
- Shaevitz, M. H. (2013, February 12). Sevens Steps to Putting Together a Great College List. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/sevens-steps-to-putting-t\\_b\\_2663997.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/sevens-steps-to-putting-t_b_2663997.html)
- Unigo (n.d.) College Matching and School Reviews. Your Guide to College. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://www.unigo.com/#/fromcampusdiscovery>
- Washington College Access Network. (n.d.). College fit toolkit: Finding your fit factor practitioner's guide. Retrieved October 25, 2018, from <https://www.wcan.org/>

## **II. HITTING THE NUMBERS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SAT/SAT TESTS AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR THEM**

GPA, standardized tests, and other scores are an important part of finding the right fit and having more colleges to choose from. These are our two favorite books on how to prepare for your ACT/SAT test to increase your chances of getting into the college(s) of your dreams.

- Barrett, M., & Barrett, P. (2017). *SAT Prep Black Book: The Most Effective SAT Strategies Ever Published* (2 edition). ACT Prep Books.
- Barrett, M., & Barrett, P. (2018). *ACT Prep Black Book: The Most Effective ACT Strategies Ever Published* (2 edition). ACT Prep Books.

## **III. WHAT COLLEGES ARE LOOKING FOR ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT**

AP courses? IB? Dual credit? This section explores what colleges are looking for on your transcript to show you made the best possible uses of the resources available to you.

- College Board. (2018). High School Classes Colleges Look For. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record/high-school-classes-colleges-look-for>
- College Board. (2018). How to Take Your High School Classes to the Next Level - College Planning. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/how-to-take-your-classes-to-the-next-level>
- LaScala, E. (2017). Top Ten Factors Influencing College Admissions. Retrieved October 25, 2018, from <http://www.doingcollege.com/resources/top-ten-factors-influencing-college-admissions/>

## **IV. THE COMMON APPLICATION AND OTHER APPLICATION PROCESSES**

Many colleges allow you to fill out one application that can be sent to several colleges. Here's an explanation of the Common App, one of the most popular admissions tools, and the overall application process.

- ACT. (2018). College Planning: Top 10 College Application Mistakes. Retrieved August 24, 2018, from <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/act-profile/college-planning.html>
- College Board. (2018). College Application Checklist. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-checklist>
- Common App. (2015, June 17). The Common Application. Retrieved May 15, 2018, from <http://www.commonapp.org/welcome>
- NACAC. (n.d.). *Guide to the College Admission Process*. Retrieved from <https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/gcap.pdf>

## V. WRITING A POLISHED ESSAY

Yes, the essay is important. Yes, you have to write it yourself. The more selective the college, the more important the fit – and your essay is critical to helping admissions officers see you as a good fit. Here are some pointers to writing an essay that will stand out in a crowd.

- College Board. (n.d.). College Application Essays. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>
- College Vine (2018, July 19). How to Write the Common App Essays 2018-2019 —With Examples. Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/how-to-write-the-common-application-essays-2018-2019/>
- Johns Hopkins University. (2018). Essays That Worked | Undergraduate Admissions | Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://apply.jhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/>
- NACAC. (2018). Top 10 Tips for Writing a College Essay. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://www.nacacfairs.org/learn/apply/EssayTips/>
- Sawyer, E. (n.d.). College Essay Guy: Step-by-step guides, courses and resources for writing amazing college essays. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>
- Sawyer, E. (n.d.). The Free Guide to Writing a Personal Statement. Retrieved October 14, 2018, from <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/the-free-guide/>
- Shaevitz, M. H. (2012, July 31). Dos and Don'ts in Writing College Application Essays. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/college-essay-tips-\\_b\\_1719862.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/college-essay-tips-_b_1719862.html)

## VI. CREATING YOUR ACTIVITIES LIST

Colleges uniformly want to see a shorter list of high-quality, in-depth activities you have been involved with, and not a long list of superficial items. Here's how to choose, prioritize, and portray your outside activities.

- College Board. (2018). Character Counts: What Are Colleges Looking For? Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/character-counts-what-are-colleges-looking-for>
- College Vine (2016, August 14). How to Fill Out the Common App Activities Section. Retrieved August 24, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/how-to-fill-out-the-common-app-activities-section/>
- Shaevitz, M. H. (2015, September 21). Activities Resumes: A Surprising First Step to Having a Successful College Application Experience. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/activities-resumes-a-surp\\_b\\_8167570.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/activities-resumes-a-surp_b_8167570.html)

Shaevitz, M. (2013, June 11). What College Admissions Offices Look for in Extracurricular Activities | HuffPost. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/extra-curricular-activities-college-admission\\_b\\_3040217.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/extra-curricular-activities-college-admission_b_3040217.html)

## VII. GETTING GREAT TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Spring of junior year is the time to ask your teachers for letters of recommendation. Here's what you need to know to get stellar letters.

College Admissions. (2014). *Requesting letters of recommendation*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDGVAYx-xQ>

College Board. (n.d.). How to Get a Great Letter of Recommendation. Retrieved June 21, 2018, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record/how-to-get-a-great-letter-of-recommendation>

Khan Academy. (n.d.). Sample note to provide to recommending teachers. Retrieved October 15, 2018, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/applying-to-college/letters-of-recommendation/a/sample-note-to-provide-to-recommending-teachers>

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Safier, R. (2018, June 1). Four Amazing Recommendation Letter Samples for Students. Retrieved October 14, 2018, from <https://blog.prepscholar.com/4-amazing-recommendation-letter-samples>

Safier, R. (2018, April 12). How to Ask For a Letter of Recommendation: Complete Guide. Retrieved October 14, 2018, from <https://blog.prepscholar.com/how-to-request-a-letter-of-recommendation>

Simmons, A. (2014, February 24). The Art of the College Recommendation Letter. Retrieved October 14, 2018, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/02/the-art-of-the-college-recommendation-letter/284019/>

## VIII. THE ALL-IMPORTANT COLLEGE VISIT

Visiting a college before you commit to attending is one of the most important investments you can make in your college career. Here's how to get the most out of a visit. And what to do if you can't visit in person.

CampusTours (n.d.). Interactive Virtual Tours and Campus Maps. Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://www.campustours.com/>

College Vine (2016, July 15). College Visits: When (and If) to Make Them. Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/college-visits-when-and-if-to-make-them/>

College Vine (2017, June 30). Figuring Out a School's Culture Without Visiting the Campus. Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/how-can-i-figure-out-a-schools-culture-without-visiting-the-campus/>

College Vine (2016, November 1). How to Make the Most of a College Fair. Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://blog.collegevine.com/how-to-make-the-most-of-a-college-fair/>

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Kowarski, I. (2018, June 4). 10 Key Places to See on College Tours. Retrieved June 22, 2018, from <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2018-06-04/10-key-places-to-see-on-college-tours?int=-rec>

O'Shaughnessy, L. (2010, October 19). 36 Questions to Ask on a College Visit | Best Colleges | US News.

Retrieved June 22, 2018, from <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/the-college-solution/2010/10/19/36-questions-to-ask-on-a-college-visit>

Thoughtco (n.d.). Eight Tips for Making the Most of a College Visit. (n.d.). Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/tips-for-successful-college-visit-786980>

Van Zinderen, G. (n.d.). Four Tips to Getting the Most Out of a College Visit. Retrieved April 20, 2018, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/tips-getting-most-out-college-visit-gary-van-zinderen/>

## **IX. AND FINALLY, FINANCIAL AID**

This section comes last because the cost of college should be one of your last concerns rather than your first. There are a great number of scholarship and grant opportunities available at all levels of college without incurring heavy student debt. Here are some places to look, including for specialty items such as athletes, women, STEM, international students, and more.

Cappex (n.d.). College Search & Scholarships: College Decision Resource. Retrieved November 11, 2018, from <https://www.cappex.com/>

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We hope you have enjoyed this resource. If you come across other resources you think we should add to this list, please pass them along. You are welcome to share this list with others. Please send comments, corrections, and updates to [kkelly@yourcollegeconsultant.com](mailto:kkelly@yourcollegeconsultant.com). Thank you!

