Early Action/ Early Decision

- Students apply early in the fall in order to know as soon as possible whether they have been accepted or not. Some of these applications are ***binding***, which means that if accepted, a student is required to attend the school. The binding type of early action or decision is generally employed by private schools, and has a more competitive applicant pool. Students may only apply to one school in this manner.
- ***Non-binding*** early action or decision is more common and is used by public and private colleges and universities, with no commitment to attend on the part of the student. Often, these applications will be given the earliest consideration for scholarships as well.

The Common Application

- The Common Application is a universal application that is accepted by more than 270 private colleges and universities nationwide. For students applying to more than one private school, this is definitely the way to go since they only have to fill out the application once and then make copies for each additional school. For a list of participating schools and application forms, go to commonapp.org.
- Also, some schools may have supplemental materials that must be submitted in addition to the Common Application. To determine if a school requires supplemental forms, check with the school or the Common Application website.

Application Options

- Most schools now prefer online applications over paper, and some schools will waive the application fee if a student applies online. However, it is important that students have current and correct information on this from each school or its website before they proceed.
- There are distinct advantages to applying online. Most applications cannot be submitted if they are missing key information. That is not to say a school's computer system will know if the information is correct, so always review your application carefully before you submit it. Another positive to online application is that the student will receive confirmation it was received and can print out this confirmation. Also, processing time is much quicker. All application sites are different. Don't expect that what one site does another site will also do, so save your application regularly and print a copy of the finished application before you submit it.
- It is important to read all directions before you begin. Using a site improperly can create an error in your application, causing you to possibly lose what you have already done, submitting an incomplete application, or an application with incorrect information. If you do not receive an electronic confirmation after submission, contact the school to confirm they have received it.

Filling It Out

- Students should begin by printing a blank copy of the application and submission instructions and reviewing them thoroughly.
- They should then complete the form longhand, and enter the data into the online application, but should not submit it until it is reviewed by one or two trusted adults for spelling and grammar.
- They should also check the admissions package for completeness and accuracy.
- Once any revisions have been made, the final online draft should be prepared and checked one last time.
- Finally, it should be signed and submitted.

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