Common Application Tips

Before beginning the process of completing the Common Application, it is important that you have done your research! Be aware of the application requirements for each of the colleges or universities you are applying to. Things like testing requirements, letters of recommendations, evaluation forms, and deadlines vary from school to school.

Below are some "section-by-section" hints and tips for completing the Common Application. Remember that your application will be read thoroughly by college admissions representatives. Be sure that you are making a good impression by using correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation and that you are highlighting your strengths allowing colleges to see all that you have to offer!

Training
    *There is an Application Guide for First Time Students, available using this link:
Link to Commonapp

    There are also Tutorials available for each section of the Common Application.

A note about setting up your Common Application Account:
The name you use to set up your account must be the name that is consistent with your transcript and other official documents (Social Security card).

Do not use your Chatham e-mail address. This address will not allow colleges to reach you. Instead, please us another personal, but "professional" e-mail address.

Tabs

Dashboard
The Dashboard allows you to track application requirements, deadlines, and the completion status for each school. Add the colleges to which you intend to apply to your Dashboard by using the College Search Tab.

My Colleges
College Information:
    For each school, you will find application requirements and deadlines.

Questions:
    Many schools will have additional questions that must be answered. These are usually college-specific.

Recommenders and FERPA:
    The first time through, you must read and complete a privacy statement (FERPA Release Authorization).
* Read the statements carefully. The choice to have access to your evaluations is yours. Generally, colleges prefer for students to not have required access.

*Check the appropriate box, type your signature, and enter the date in the required format.

After you have completed the Education portion of the Common App, use the FERPA and Recommenders section to identify the school counselor and teachers (and possibly outside people) who will provide recommendations.

Adding recommenders is a two-step process:

Step 1: Invite your counselor and teacher(s) to be recommenders by entering their names and email addresses.

Step 2: You must also Assign teachers and other recommenders to each of your colleges. To do so, click on the college name, and assign the teacher(s) whose recommendations you will provide for that school. You must assign teachers to each individual college. Your counselor will remain the same throughout.

Teachers cannot submit recommendations until they are both *invited* **and** *assigned.*

*Summary: *Steps for requesting Recommendations**

1. Well in advance of your application deadlines, verbally request a recommendation from your counselor and the teachers you have selected. Provide each recommender with a copy of your resume.
2. Enter the names and e-mail addresses of the recommenders on the My Colleges tab of your Common Application. Teacher e-mail addresses can be found at www.chathamcentralschools.com.
3. Click on the name of each of your colleges and Assign the teachers who will be providing recommendations. The recommenders may be different for different colleges. The School Counselor will be the same for each of your colleges.

Review and Submit:

Visit this section of the My Colleges tab once you have completed your application. Here, you will read over your app as admissions reps will see it. When you are ready, you will pay the application fees and submit from this section.

College Search

Add the colleges to which you intend to apply to your Dashboard by using the College Search Tab. Search for the college(s) and click "+" to add to your list.

Common App

This is the application information itself. The app is divided into sections. Be sure to check out the training information referenced on the first page of this guide. Basic tips for each section are below:

Common Application Tabs
Profile

*When entering contact information, provide your **mailing** address, **not** a physical address if different

Family

*Here you will need to know specific information about your parents' education. For example, you will need to enter if/where they attended college, what type of degree they earned, and when.

Education

*You will need to enter your counselor's information:

 Title: School Counselor

Phone: 518-392-1575   Fax: 518-392-0879

Enter your counselor's information:

 Jim Lombardi   lombardij@chatham.k12.ny.us

Amanda Carroll   carrolla@chatham.k12.ny.us

*Also enter this information:

Graduating Class Size: 66

GPA Scale: 100

GPA Weighting: Select weighted or unweighted, depending upon which of your calculated GPA's you have entered. Both GPA's are found on your transcript.

*Graduation Date: June 26, 2020

*Current Year Courses: Organize your list of classes that you are taking this year in order of rigor, with the more rigorous first. Also, be sure to enter the level (Regents, AP, Pre-AP, dual-enrollment.) and credit value for each.

*Under "Colleges & Universities" enter information if you have received or plan to receive college credits for U. Albany, SUNY ESF, RIT or CGCC while at Chatham High School.

*Honors & Awards: List your top honors first (example: National Honor Society). Other examples of honors include Honor/High Honor Roll, Student of the Quarter, and Highest Average awards.

Testing   *Common App gives you the option of self-reporting your college testing (SAT, Subject Tests, ACT and/or AP) scores. You can choose to report any number of these you wish.*

Remember that if you are not submitting test scores to some test optional schools, do not self-report scores on your application.

*ACT & SAT: List tests that you have completed or that you plan to complete.

*Reminder – You MUST request that your test scores be sent to the colleges that require them directly from the College Board or ACT. To do this, log into your account at the appropriate website (Link to Collegeboard or Link to ACT) and request that your scores be sent. Please note that you will be charged a fee for this service.

*TOEFL: This section is to be completed by students for whom English is a second language.

*AP/IB/SAT Subject Tests: Enter your scores for the appropriate

exams.

Activities
*This listing should contain the activities/work that are the most important to you and that you have spent the most time doing. Be sure to list your activities in order of importance to you.
*You are able to add up to ten activities, which should be enough to give college representatives a good indication of your involvement.
*Be sure to highlight your leadership roles (example: team captain, lead role in a play, yearbook editor, etc.).

Writing
**Personal Essay: Your essay (650 words maximum) can be either typed directly into the space provided, copied/cut/pasted from a Word document, or uploaded from Google Drive. Please have it proofread for content and grammar well in advance of your application deadlines. College application essays often go through several revisions before they are ready! The essay should help you stand out from the crowd, so take your time, be creative, and do your best!
**Check the formatting of your essay in Preview

Other Helpful Tips
Explanations
**Disciplinary History: You are required to acknowledge any suspensions or crimes. Your counselor is required to respond to a similar statement about you on the School Report form.

Additional Information
*Use this space to provide information about relevant circumstances or qualifications that are not reflected elsewhere in the application.

Payments
**Your applications will not be processed by colleges until payment is made.

Review & Submit A CRITICAL Step!
You will need to review completed portions of the application. Read the .pdf carefully; this how admissions reps will view your submitted application. Check for capitalization, punctuation, spelling and clarity.

One Last Step…Request Your Transcript!
Although counselors should get an email invitation to upload your transcript, it's a good idea to check with Mr. Lombardi or Mrs. Carroll to make sure that email was received.

And always remember…when in doubt, see your counselor! We are here to help, so feel free to see us regarding any questions that come up.