

## October 2018

10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students—  
Review test materials & take  
PSAT

6<sup>th</sup> — SAT Reasoning  
and Subject Tests

27<sup>th</sup> — ACT and ACT plus  
Writing (late registration until  
10/14)

Attend area college fairs and  
meetings

Meet with college reps visiting  
high school

Seniors - Continue work on  
college applications; complete  
Early Decision/Early Action  
applications

Complete CSS Profile if  
required by colleges

FAFSA available October 1st

## November 2018

3<sup>rd</sup>—SAT Reasoning and  
Subject Tests

(register by 10/5 - late  
registration 10/16)

Seniors – File Early Decision/  
Early Action applications

Work on remaining college  
applications

## 7 College Admissions Blunders To Avoid

College admission can feel confusing, stressful and complicated at times, but for most students, things ultimately work out well. However, your journey to college will likely go smoother if you avoid making these seven common mistakes.

### Lying on your college applications.

When you're worried about getting into college, it can sometimes be tempting to stretch the truth on your applications. Maybe add a few extracurriculars that you haven't really actively participated in, or exaggerate a bit in your essay to make it sound like you've faced more challenges or accomplished more than you have. Or, go even further, as one student did, and create a false homeschool transcript to overcome your poor academic history.

**There is no bigger mistake you can make than to lie, stretch the truth, or exaggerate on your college applications.** Admission officers are masters at spotting half-truths and things that don't add up on applications. And, all colleges reserve the right to rescind admission offers and expel enrolled students when lies are discovered. *Don't risk it.* Be absolutely honest in all of your college application materials.

**Forgetting to build a safety net into your college list.** Many students (and parents) over-estimate their (or their child's) chances of being admitted to a particular school or group of colleges. The truth is that even superstar applicants can be rejected, especially at highly competitive schools. So, every college list needs a safety net: a school or two that you love just as much as the others on your list but where your chances of being admitted are excellent. At the same time, don't let fear

stop you from applying to schools with lower acceptance rates if your grades and test scores are in the ballpark. The only sure way to *not* get in is to not apply in the first place. If you have a good safety net built into your list, taking a chance on some more selective schools is fine.

### Applying to a college without an estimate of what it might actually cost your family.

The published prices on college websites can be both scary and overwhelming. However, the *published* price may not be what your family will actually pay after financial aid and scholarships are deducted. Before scratching any college off of your list because it seems too expensive, use the college's Net Price Calculator (found in the financial aid section of every college website) to get an estimate of the cost based on your family's financial circumstances. At the same time, avoid the "apply and hope for the best" syndrome. If the net price estimate is a small amount more than your family can afford, there may be room for negotiation if you're admitted. But, if it is wildly off, a miracle is unlikely to happen after you're admitted.

### Failing to do your own homework on every college you apply to.

Solicitations from colleges offering "free," "easy" or "priority" applications might seem attractive, but there is no sense applying to any college if you haven't done at least some basic research on your own to see if it is a good fit. For every college that makes your final list, you should at least be aware of each college's academic programs, likely net price, and unique characteristics. Don't waste your time applying to colleges that you don't know anything about. By the same token, (article continues on p. 3)

## Careers for Geology Majors

Engineering Geologist  
Environmental Geologist  
Environmental Lawyer  
Field Geologist  
Geophysicist  
Geochemist  
Hydrologist  
Mineralogist  
Paleontologist  
Petroleum Geologist  
Science Writer/Editor  
Sedimentologist  
Volcanologist



## Resources

**The American Geosciences Institute:**  
[www.americangeosciences.org](http://www.americangeosciences.org)

**The Geological Society of America**  
[www.geosociety.org](http://www.geosociety.org)

## Focus on Majors: Geology

Geology is the study of the earth and the forces that act upon it. Students choosing to study geology to better understand our planet will find that the major combines biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Geology is an interdisciplinary science that involves not only a study of the physical makeup and history of the earth, but also how humans and other life forms are affected by the earth. Students pursuing a major in geology should be good at math, critical writing, spatial thinking, working with a team, and analyzing data. They should also enjoy field work.

The introductory courses in a geology major focus on the basics of physical and historical geology. Students learn about plate tectonics, the geological time scale, how landforms change, and the rudiments of rock, mineral, and fossil identification. Most courses have three to four-hour laboratories about once a week and may include field trips of varying lengths. The major requires courses in chemistry, biology, physics, and math to acquire the necessary skills for geology.

Geology majors are fieldwork heavy. Colleges often require students to take a summer or semester-long fieldwork course. Since deadlines for projects are usually farther apart than in other majors, students must be disciplined and manage their time well.

After the introductory courses in historical and physical geology, students usually focus on a more specific field of study. Students who would like a more hands-on approach to geology may prefer environmental geology, hydrogeology, exploration seismology, and petroleum geology. These fields concentrate on applying science to fix real-world problems. Students who prefer an academic core might pursue upper-level courses that focus on mineralogy, petrology, paleontology, or tectonics.

For high school students interested in majoring in geology, it is a good idea to get fieldwork experience prior to college. There are many summer opportunities to volunteer to work alongside geologists in certain fields. [www.pathwaytoscience.org](http://www.pathwaytoscience.org) provides a list of such opportunities for high school students. Most geological camps in the United States are located in Arizona, Texas, and Colorado, but it is possible to find opportunities throughout the U.S.

The American Indian Summer Institute in Earth System Science (AISI ESS) is one such program. It is offered through the University of California, Irvine, for two weeks over the summer. Students spend one week on an Indian reservation in San Diego and another week on the UC Irvine campus. An application is necessary. Yosemite National Park hosts a 14-day expedition that allows students to create and carry out their own research project in the field of environmental science. This would be ideal for students interested in the environmental side of geological studies.

Geology majors tend to work in either the energy sector or the environmental sector. Mud loggers, wellsite geologists and geophysicists typically work for oil and drilling companies to determine the best places to retrieve oil. Environmental hydrogeologists and engineering geologists usually work for environmental agencies. Geochemists can work for either oil or environmental companies.

Other geology majors become educators or find work as a museum curator. Still others pursue careers in town planning or consulting. Many geology careers require advanced degrees beyond the Bachelor's degree. Want to know more? Check out the Bureau of Labor Statistics at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

## Financial Matters: The CSS Profile



The bulk of college financial aid money comes from the federal government; this aid is distributed by colleges using information supplied by families when they complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), available on October 1st. About 400 colleges, universities and scholarship programs, however, use an additional form, the *CSS Profile*, to gather more information in order to award their own institutional funds to deserving students. Students applying to college should check to see if

this form is required by schools on their list. Some scholarship programs also utilize the CSS Profile. It, too, becomes available on October 1st each year.

The *Profile* provides a more complete picture of your family's finances; it also provides a way for you to describe special circumstances right on your application. Begin by logging on to the College Board website at <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>.

Use your College Board student account and password to begin the Profile process. Alternatively, parents can create a separate account, since sensitive financial information will be collected. The first step after logging in to your account is to register for the correct year (2019-20 for this year's senior class). Now, complete the application—as you answer questions, the

application will be tailored to your family's financial situation.

The application may be completed in one sitting or you can save information and come back to complete. You will need a number of financial documents, so get these ready before beginning the application. You will find a list of the needed documents once you sign in. Answer all questions carefully; answers are saved as you change screens. Unlike the FAFSA, there is a processing and reporting fee for this application. After an initial \$25 registration fee (includes one school report), you will be charged \$16 for each report required. After submitting, you will receive an acknowledgement and instructions for making any needed revisions or adding additional colleges. Submit your Profile no later than two weeks before the earliest priority filing date for your college.

## 7 College Admissions Blunders To Avoid (continued from p.1)

don't apply to a college *just* because someone tells you it's a good school; do your own research and make your own determination. After all, you're the person who will be spending the next four years of your life attending that college.

**Waiting until the last minute.** While filling out college applications isn't exactly as difficult as conducting neurosurgery, a good, complete application does take time and thought. If the deadline is tomorrow, and you're just starting the application at 9 p.m. the night before, it's likely you won't do the best job. Strong essays also require thought, editing, and proofreading. So, give yourself more time than you think you need, and get down to work as early as possible.

**Making your recommendation writ-**

**ers' jobs tougher.** Teachers and counselors are busy people, and often have dozens – if not more – letters of recommendation to write in the Fall. If they agree to write a letter for you, they want to do the best job they can. But students often make writing recommendations harder than they have to be. When you request a recommendation, ask the person who will be writing it what additional information about you might be helpful and then provide it in a timely manner. Be clear about your application deadlines and what the recommendation writers need to do to submit their recommendations. Politely check in with your chosen teachers and counselor to see if any questions or problems have cropped up, and help your recommenders get answers, if necessary. The easier you make the process for the people writing your letters of recommendation, the more time

they'll have to craft letters that sing your praises to admission!

**Relying on the advice of strangers on the internet.** The internet is an invaluable tool when it comes to gathering information about colleges. However, some internet resources are better sources of information than others. Social media sites and college discussion forums in particular are ripe with inaccurate information. Strangers on the internet do not know you, haven't seen your transcript, and probably don't know as much about how admission works at colleges as they claim. When in doubt, It's always better to rely on the advice of your independent educational consultant and your school counselor than it is to trust what strangers on the internet say about your chances of admission. This goes for both students *and* parents.



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## Show Them Some Love

“Demonstrated interest”, an indication that an applicant is truly interested in attending a particular college, has long played a small role in college admission, but with the rise of enrollment management and big data, demonstrated interest is gaining new importance. Applicants traditionally showed interest by initiating contact with a university. Talking to an admission representative at a college fair, visiting a campus, meeting with the college rep at your local school, or maintaining contact with an admission officer through occasional e-mails are all examples of demonstrating interest. Taking advantage of the offer of an alumni interview or participating in an on-campus interview are other signs that a college ranks high on the applicant’s list. Admission officers know that the more interest a student shows in these ways, the more likely he is to attend. Therefore, most selective colleges now track the number and type of contacts with students, and use this information to choose between two applicants with similar profiles.

More recently, however, colleges have started using highly sophisticated enrollment management programs to make more refined predictions about the appli-

cant’s interest in that institution. These programs track all of the contacts described above, but also look to see if the applicant has been active on the college’s Facebook page or is following their Twitter feed. The more visits you make to their social media pages, the more interest the college believes you are showing. Demonstrating interest is not just for those applying to college this year; underclassmen should begin showing interest in colleges that excite them through all the means above.

Seniors can also demonstrate their interest in a school through the statements they make on their application. Research your college choices carefully; look for programs that particularly interest you and that are unique to that college. Be sure that your responses to application questions reflect your understanding of that college’s special qualities, and why these are a good fit for you. If a college is your first choice, say so.

Through both your responses to application questions and your actions (numerous meaningful contacts with that college), you can influence your chances of acceptance at your top college choices.