



COMPONENTS OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Components of the College Application	Description
A Completed Application	Every college requires students to complete an application, which collects personal and household information, college-specific responses and other components listed below. CSS students typically complete their applications via the Common Application for private, SUNY (public State University of NY), and out-of-state public institutions and the CUNY application for the public City University of NY.
High School Transcript College Transcript (CU or College Now, if applicable)	<p>Your high school academic performance is generally considered to be the best predictor of college success. For this reason, your transcript is the most important component of your application.</p> <p>The transcript shows how well you have performed in classes, the rigor of your course load, and your improvement over time. Counselors submit transcripts. Request college transcripts and discuss with your counselor if they should be sent to your schools.</p>
Standardized Test Scores (SAT & ACT)	<p>Test scores provide colleges with a baseline for comparing students across different schools with different grading policies. A growing number of colleges do not require any standardized testing; these schools are referred to as “test optional.”</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the student/family to send test scores to colleges.</p>
College Essay (also called “Personal Statement”/ “Common App Essay”)	<p>Every student writes a personal essay of no more than 650 words responding to one of several prompts provided by the Common Application. Colleges use this to understand the student’s personality, character, special qualities, history and/or background, and writing strength. The 2019-2020 prompts are listed on the back of this sheet.</p>
Letters of Recommendation	<p>2 Letters from CSS Teachers; 1 Letter from Counselor. Most CSS students should plan to request letters from two teachers. Their assigned college counselor will write the counselor letter. Students must fill out teacher and counselor letter of recommendation request forms in order to have letters written on their behalf.</p>
Extracurricular Activities	<p>Colleges are looking for engaged students who will contribute to their college communities. Activities both in and out of school (garden, musical, athletics, student government, volunteering), jobs, internships, and home responsibilities are all considered part of a student’s profile. Depth of involvement is more important than number of activities! Students are encouraged to ask advisors and mentors from these activities to write a paragraph of recommendation to be included in the counselor letter. These individuals should email the paragraph to the college counselor directly.</p>



Components of the Application/Factors Considered

School Profile	Every college to which students apply will receive a copy of our CSS School Profile , which details our curriculum and provides information on our student body. Counselors prepare and submit this document to colleges.
Other Factors & Considerations	
Interviews	Many colleges offer interviews with admissions officers or alumni. These are a great opportunity to show you are interested in the school and to let your personality shine. Check with each school if interviews are required, optional or not offered. Optional means strongly recommended and we encourage you to interview.
Supplemental Essays	Many colleges require students to write additional responses/essays , often specific to the school (e.g. "Why do you want to attend x college?"). These are referred to as "supplements." Many schools require multiple supplements and this should be considered as students build their college list. Additional essays are also required for scholarship applications and opportunity programs.
Demonstrated Interest	Ways to demonstrate interest in a college include interviewing, visiting the college, keeping in contact with admissions officers via email, attending a Rep Visit at CSS, and attending events in the city. At some schools, demonstrated interest is a very important component of your application.
Other Factors	Institutional priorities may include recruited athletes, parents who are alumni, or other personal factors like racial or ethnic background, first in the family to attend college, geographic location, compelling personal story, unusual life circumstances.

2019-2020 Common Application Essay

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.