

## The Note You Send Every College-Bound Senior Before the Application Deadline

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Completing a college application is an exciting experience, but it's important to make sure the excitement is a positive excitement, not a panicked one. To reach that goal, students will want to keep the following points in mind as they plan their time to complete and submit their college applications:

**You may be the person applying to college, but you aren't the only person completing your application.** Most college applications require a completed form from the student, a signed form from your counselor, a transcript from our registrar, and a processing check from your parents. Many other colleges also want letters of recommendation from teachers, and a letter from your counselor, as well as official copies of test scores. That's a lot of information coming from many different busy, caring people, and each of those people works at a different pace, and has a different schedule.

**346 other students are applying to college, too.** Many of the people supporting your college applications are also supporting the applications of other seniors, and they want to do a good job with each one. Some of the other applications may require more of their time than yours will, and some may require less, but they will all require some time—and they can't work on everyone's application at the same time.

**It helps you when others have time to do their job well.** Most teachers write better letters of recommendation when they have a chance to work on two or three drafts for each letter—and they can only work on letters when they aren't teaching, coaching, or checking papers. Colleges wouldn't ask for these letters if they weren't important, so you ask teachers to write them who know you well, and you want those teachers to write the best letters they possibly can, so you ask them weeks before the letter is actually due. (Same for counselors.)

**Computers don't always work.** You found this out when you waited until morning to print the History paper you'd written the night before, and it was gone. It isn't a great feeling, but it happens—and sometimes it happens with the school's computer that holds your transcript, the counselor's computer that holds your secondary school report, or your teacher's computer that holds your letter of recommendation. All of that information can be found or reproduced, but only if there's some extra time built in between the time you ask for the information, and when it has to be submitted. (Keep this in mind when you work on your college essays and save them.)

**There's no such thing as a college counseling emergency.** The teachers and counselors supporting your college application have been helping students make good college choices for a combined 243 years, and none of us has ever encountered a deadline or request from a college that required a response the day the request was first made—and none of those requests ever asked for information to be sent on Christmas Eve. If you've lost track of what's due when, everyone will do their best to submit materials on time, but no one can turn the clock back on a deadline that's passed, and no one can give quality work less time than it deserves.

Applying to college is a sign you want to embrace a larger understanding of who you are and how you relate to the world. Part of that larger role requires growth in supporting and thanking the people who support you. Accept that challenge, as you lead the team that will help you build a brighter future.