

Why You Should Start College Applications Now (and Avoid the Headaches)



It's the beginning of the end of high school; those deadlines are months away. No need to start now, right? WRONG! Avoid baggy-eyes, caffeine-induced freak-outs, and eminent doom—stop monkeying around and get those applications in as soon as possible.

- **You've Got Extra Competition** – Thanks to the internet, you can now apply to several different schools with a single application...and so can everyone else. The result: bigger applicant pools and plummeting acceptance rates. Quality and originality let you stand out from the mob, so give your application extra oomph with extra time.

- **You'll Get Top-of-the-Pile Advantage** – Have you ever collected sea shells? When you first hit the shore, you'll snatch up any shell with a little shimmer. However, once your bag starts weighing you down, only

the biggest and glitziest shells will do. College admissions is kind of like that: The later the admissions officer sees your file, the more likely it'll get tossed back in the sea (metaphorically of course). Luckily, you can ensure your application shines by applying early. You'll have access to a larger pool of financial aid and less-intense competition. If you sign up for early-action,* you'll even get your decision earlier. Also, does your first-choice U have rolling admission? Find out now, schools like that review your applications as soon as you click 'submit', making the top-of-the pile advantage doubly important.

**Beware of Early-Decision: while it looks like Early-Action and will significantly increase your odds of acceptance, it's binding—if you get in, you've gotta go.*

- **You're Not That Busy Right Now** – Remember that junior year stress? You probably spent your summer recovering from all-nighters studying AP Quantum Mechanics and Honors Post-Freudian Ontological Philosophy. Assuming you enjoy eight-hours of sleep, you probably want to avoid a second round of craziness. Do future-you a favor and start college apps now. After all, you don't have to worry about mid terms or finals, speeches or papers. Not to mention, your greatest application tool, the Common App, is now open!

- **Cut Down Human Error, Avoid Crisis** – Between recommendations from counselors and teachers, official transcripts from administration, US mail and admissions departments, each part of your application will change hands...a lot. Each of those exchanges is an opportunity for something to go wrong. Due dates get forgotten, forms get lost, wording gets overlooked. Sometimes, through no fault of your own, your application may end up looking like the Death Star circa *The Empire Strikes Back*. Don't worry, you can decimate your chances of disaster by submitting these forms before counselors, admissions officers and teachers get swamped. If you still encounter problems, you'll have plenty of time to correct them before those final due dates.