

Going to college

1 Reading

How do you apply for college in your country? What are the steps and things you have to do?

Do you know anything about the system in the U.S.?

Read the text and find out about the application system in the U.S.

Headed for college? Here's how to get there

1 You are 17 years old and about to enter your senior year of high school. What are you going to do after you graduate? If you are thinking of college, you need to start the application process as soon as you can, as it can take time. Here is a step-by-step guide to help you get it right.

The first thing you need to do is think about what you want to study, and where. You probably have an idea of which subjects you enjoy in school, and may even already have an idea of a possible future career. For example, if you enjoy English and writing, and you like watching TV, reading newspapers, and take an interest in the media, you may be thinking about a career in journalism. You need to look at which colleges offer majors in journalism, media studies, digital media, etc. You will also need to consider what program you want. Some colleges emphasize a vocational or business curriculum, while others specialize in liberal arts. You can find out more from college websites or your school counselor.

The next step is to decide where you want to go to college. There are lots of things to consider here, including the reputation and ranking of the school, and whether it will suit you. You also need to consider the costs of attending the college or university you like. Many private universities and public ones offer financial assistance to students who need it, and applying for scholarship packages can make a big difference to the cost. However, public schools are usually less expensive, and can therefore be more competitive. If you can, it is a good idea to

visit the colleges you are considering. You will get a sense of whether you will enjoy studying there, and, if you do decide to apply to a college, the fact that you visited will show that you have a serious interest.

When you have chosen a number of schools, the next step is to start the application process. This usually begins in the fall, but an increasing number of students, especially those who are sure which college they want to attend, are choosing to apply early, with an expectation of receiving an offer by the end of the year, rather than in the spring. If you are interested in a number of schools, regular admission is a good choice. You need to apply separately to each college you are interested in; sometimes this could be up to 10 or 15 schools. Colleges and universities often have their own application forms, but some use the Common Application. As well as filling out a form, you have to write a personal essay, provide details of your grades and scores, and provide information about interests outside of school. The personal essay is very important. In it, you should talk about your academic work, your ideas and experiences, and highlight your talents. It is your chance to make your application stand out from the others.

Colleges will look at all the applications they receive. If they are interested in you, they will send an acceptance – usually by April – and details of any financial aid package. You can then decide which college you will go to. Congratulations!



2 Comprehension

Read the text again. Number these steps in the order they take place when applying for a college place in the U.S.

- a Choose which colleges you are interested in.
- b Complete an application.
- c Visit colleges.
- d Decide what to study.
- e Receive an acceptance.

Read the sentences and write *T* (True) or *F* (False).

- 1 There are many different courses in the same subject area.
- 2 Most colleges offer a liberal arts program.
- 3 Private universities don't offer financial aid.
- 4 If you apply early, you can expect to receive an offer by December.
- 5 Most colleges use the Common Application form.
- 6 You have to go to the first college that sends an acceptance.

3 Vocabulary

Match the words (1–9) with the synonyms (a–i).

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|--------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 graduate | — | a main subject |
| 2 career | — | b complete your studies |
| 3 major | | c course |
| 4 consider | | d good name |
| 5 program | | e job |
| 6 reputation | | f be noticeable |
| 7 ranking | | g position on a list |
| 8 assistance | | h think about |
| 9 stand out | | i help |

4 Speaking

Work in groups and discuss these questions.

- 1 What would you like to study in college? Why?
- 2 Is the process for applying for college in your country similar to the one used in the U.S.?
- 3 What is the process in your country? Can you describe it?

5 Writing

Write a letter to a friend who wants to study at a university in your country. Explain what the process is, and what they should do to be successful.