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## **GENOA-KINGSTON HIGH SCHOOL**

The Board of Education has specified certain requirements that must be met in order to graduate from Genoa-Kingston High School. These requirements must be successfully completed before a diploma is awarded.

All classes must earn – 25 credits plus 3.5 P.E. credits

### **REQUIRED COURSES**

English	4 credits	
Math: Algebra 1, Geometry Content	3 credits	
Science	2 credits	
Social Studies	2 credits	
• American History	1 credit	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
• American Gov./Constitution	½ credit	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade
• Geography 1	½ credit	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Health	½ credit	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Physical Education (Fresh-Senior Year)	½ credit	All Grades
Keyboarding (2012-2010 Graduates)	½ credit	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Contemp. Lit. (2013 Graduates and beyond)	½ credit	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Computer Applications 1	½ credit	9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup>
Consumer Economics	½ credit	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade

### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLEGE**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has established minimum high school subject requirements for admission to public universities and community college baccalaureate transfer programs effective in the fall quarter of 1999.

Four years of English

Three years of Social Studies

Three years of Mathematics (4 years strongly suggested)

Three years of Science (Laboratory Sciences) (4 years strongly suggested)

Two years of Foreign Languages, Music, or Art (suggested at least 2 years of foreign language). Many colleges do not require foreign language for admittance, but will require you to take foreign language to graduate.

No more than one credit (for a total of three) from the categories for Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and electives may be redistributed to any of the other five categories of coursework.

## OPORTUNITIES OTHER THAN FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Community College System (two-year colleges) is designed to meet the needs of everyone seeking further schooling after high school. Many graduates attend a community college, taking advantage of the transfer or occupational programs offered. Transfer credits are accepted at four-year schools upon completion.

Occupational/Vocational Associates Degree Program – are for the students wishing to obtain advanced occupational training and also a two-year college Associates Degree.

Certification Programs – are designed for the students who are interested in taking Technical courses needed to enter a specific field of employment.

Transfer Programs – offer courses that will transfer to a four-year college and can lead to a Bachelor’s Degree. Most students taking this type of approach to a four-year degree program (two years at a Community College) transfer as juniors. **You must know what 4-year college you are going to attend to make sure you are taking classes that will transfer!! There is a new program called the Illinois Articulation Initiative.**

**Many Illinois colleges are involved in a coordinated effort with 2 year colleges to make transferring easier. Check out their website at [www.iTransfer.org](http://www.iTransfer.org)**

### SPECIALTY SCHOOLS

There are approximately 4,000 vocational training schools in the U.S. including trade schools, fine arts schools, and business schools. Depending upon the program, your course of study may take anywhere from a few weeks to four years. Little or no general education is offered; the purpose of vocational training is to provide direct, practical training in a trade, craft, or skill. Tuition varies widely. Some sources to check are: approved lists published by state departments of education, and recommendations by the trade or professional association in the particular field.

## **Apprenticeship and On-the Job Training**

Apprenticeship is learning a skilled trade through on-the-job training and learning the related technical knowledge in a classroom. “On-the-job training” is the learning of each operation by carrying it out step-by-step under the close supervision of a skilled craftsman. Related training covers such subjects as mathematics, blueprint reading, applied English, and other technical courses needed for the specific trade and is customarily outside working hours.

The apprentice is usually a high school graduate. The length of training varies from two to six years, depending on the trade and is determined by standards adopted by the industry.

Wages paid the apprentice begin at approximately half those of the fully trained craftsman and advance at six-month intervals until the apprentice completes his/her training. Then he/she is paid the full journeyman wage. Apprenticeship programs may be conducted in three ways: by management and labor together; by management with the concurrence of an existing union; or by managements alone when workers are not organized.

For Information write or phone:

**Construction Industry Service Center**

**616 Enterprise Drive – Suite 100, Oak Brook, IL 60523**

**(630) 472-9411 [www.cisco.org](http://www.cisco.org)**

See the Guidance Office for more apprenticeship information.

## **ARMED FORCES**

Besides being the largest employer in the nation, employing 1.8 million enlisted men and women, the military offers the widest choice of career training and job opportunities. Over 75 percent of all military occupations have counterparts in the civilian workforce. Members of the Armed Services receive the technical and skilled training needed to perform the required tasks. Add the practical experience a young man or woman gets and you have a highly qualified and well-trained individual re-entering the civilian workforce. Young men and women who qualify for military training may choose to serve tours of duty lasting two to six years. These enlistments will vary according to the service and the specialty training offered.

**U.S. Army Recruiting**

**901 Lucinda Avenue**

**Dekalb, IL 60115**

**815-756-7557**

To be eligible for enlistment a young man or woman must:

1. Be between 17 and 35 years of age.
2. Be a United States citizen.
3. Be in good health and meet the minimum standards of height, weight and vision.
4. Be a high school graduate.
5. Meet the minimum entry score on the ASVAB test.
6. Meet standards of moral character (standards cover court convictions, juvenile delinquency, arrests, and drug use).

Each service sets its own enlistment requirements. See your counselor for more information.

## **SERVICE ACADEMIES**

A young man or woman wishing to attend one of five Service Academies will find that they offer a sound college education as well as military training. Besides offering a student professional military subjects, cadets now may choose from many areas of study, including engineering, mathematics, history, oceanography, economics, and political science. A vast majority of cadets major in some form of engineering.

Each candidate must meet eligibility requirements as to citizenship, age, character, and marital status. In the selection of candidates, the academies take into account the quality of the secondary school record, additional study, SAT and ACT scores, extra-curricular activities, athletics honors and awards, and employment outside of school hours.

Candidates must obtain a nomination from their Senator, Representative, Vice President or President before they may be considered for appointment. It is prudent to apply for nomination at least one year prior to the desired date of entry. You may apply as early as 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of your junior year.

The Five Service Academies are listed on page 5.

## **Military Service Academies**

Here is how to contact the Armed Forces Service Academies:

### [United States Military Academy](#)

ATTN: Public Affairs Office  
Taylor Hall, Bldg 600  
West Point, NY 10996-1788  
(845) 938-2006 or (845) 938-3808

### [United States Naval Academy](#)

ATTN: Public Affairs Office  
121 Blake Road  
Annapolis, MD 21402-5000  
(410) 293-2291 or 293-2292  
[www.usn9.edu](http://www.usn9.edu)

### [United States Air Force Academy](#)

ATTN: Public Affairs Office  
HQ USAFA/PA  
2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 3100  
U.S. Air Force Academy, CO 80840-5016  
Phone: (719) 333-7731  
Fax: (719) 333-4094  
[www.usafa.af.mil/](http://www.usafa.af.mil/)

### [United States Coast Guard Academy\\*](#)

ATTN: Public Affairs Office  
15 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320-4195  
(860) 444-8270  
[www.cga.edu](http://www.cga.edu)

### [U.S. Merchant Marine](#)

300 Steamboat Rd.  
Kings Point, NY 11024  
(516) 773-5000  
[www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)

# COLLEGE EXPLORATION AND PLANNING

## SELECTING A COLLEGE

Selecting the right college to meet your abilities and ambitions is one of the most important decisions you will make as a young adult. Your attention will first need to be focused on narrowing your choice of colleges available that will meet your needs. Therefore, selecting the college which is just right for you can be an overwhelming task unless you study the differences between colleges and set priorities which are important to you. The following are resources available to answer questions.

### RESOURCES FOR EXPLORING COLLEGE CHOICES

#### Printed Material:

The resources available in the Guidance Office & Learning Center are:

- Catalogs, CD's or Virtual Tours on the Internet
- College Pamphlets
- College Guides
- Testing Information and Registration Material
- Listings of Scholarships, Financial Aid
- Information, and Application Forms
- Listings of Summer Workshops on College Campuses
- Internet

#### College Representatives:

Each year college representatives visit Genoa-Kingston High School to talk to prospective students. These visits will be announced in the daily bulletin and posted on the bulletin board in the hallway outside of the Guidance Office.

### Virtual Tours:

Most Colleges have virtual tours you can watch on their web sites. You can also go to [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com) or [www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com)

### College Night at Kishwaukee College:

In past years, over 75 colleges have been represented. This evening (held in the Fall\*) will provide you with an excellent opportunity to visit with representatives and pick up material from a wide variety of colleges as well as the military.

**\*Wednesday, November 2, 2011 from 6:30-8:00 p.m.**  
**A Financial Aid Presentation will be held at 6:00 p.m.**

### Special Abilities:

Students seeking colleges aimed toward a special interest or ability (i.e., art, drama, music, aviation, etc.), have several resources available to aid in their search. They are as follows:

- College and career information in the Guidance Office
- Illinois Work Info Web Site
- Talking with professionals in the specific field of interest
- Internet

These schools may have unique admissions requirements. For example, an art school may require a portfolio, while a music school may request an audition.

### Chicago National College Fair

Saturday, October 10, 2011 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Navy Pier

## **LIST, COMPARE, AND VISIT COLLEGES**

- I. Compile information from several resources:
  - College catalogs, bulletins, Internet
  - College representatives and college fairs
  - Counselors and teachers
  - Parents, students, and alumni
  - Directories and ACT score report
- II. Prepare a college comparison checklist
- III. Weigh advantages and disadvantages
- IV. Contact the admissions office
- V. Schedule appointments for your campus visits

## CHECKLIST FOR A CAMPUS VISIT

1. Meet with an Admissions Counselor.
2. Verify admission requirements (tests & high school preparation).
3. Determine actual college costs.
4. Ask about financial aid opportunities and scholarships, as well as deadlines, forms required, etc. It is suggested that you make an appointment ahead of time with a Financial Aid Counselor.
5. Take a campus tour.
6. Attend a class and talk to students.
7. Talk with students and faculty. Ask about job placement record for graduates in your field of study, career planning services, activities, clubs, and organizations on campus.
8. Investigate your academic program(s). Ask if your major is accredited.
9. Investigate transportation options.
10. Discuss your chances for success:
  - a. Admission into your program of study.
  - b. Graduating in four years.
  - c. Placement in a job upon graduation.

## COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

<b>COLLEGE NAME</b>			
<b>LOCATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance from home</li> </ul>			
<b>SIZE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Physical size of campus</li> </ul>			
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of school (2 yr, 4 yr)</li> <li>• School setting (urban, rural)</li> <li>• Location &amp; size of nearest city</li> <li>• Co-ed, male, female</li> <li>• Religious affiliation</li> </ul>			
<b>ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Tests required</li> <li>• Average test scores, GPA, Rank</li> <li>• Special requirements Notification</li> </ul>			
<b>ACADEMICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your major offered</li> <li>• Special requirements</li> <li>• Accreditation</li> <li>• Student-faculty ratio</li> <li>• Typical class size</li> <li>• Job Placement Ratio upon graduation</li> </ul>			
<b>COLLEGE EXPENSES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition, room &amp; board</li> <li>• Estimated total budget</li> <li>• Application fee, deposits</li> </ul>			
<b>FINANCIAL AID</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline</li> <li>• Require forms</li> <li>• % receiving aid</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> </ul>			
<b>HOUSING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residence hall requirement</li> <li>• Availability</li> <li>• Types and sizes of rooms</li> <li>• Food plans available &amp; cost</li> </ul>			
<b>FACILITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>			
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clubs, organizations</li> <li>• Greek life</li> <li>• Athletics, intramurals</li> <li>• other</li> </ul>			
<b>CAMPUS VISIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When</li> <li>• Special opportunities</li> </ul>	10		

## APPLY FOR ADMISSION AND OBSERVE DEADLINES

- Narrow your choices
- Review college admissions test requirements
- **Type or use black pen on applications**
- Know application fees and deadlines
- Submit application materials
  - Application for admission
  - High school transcript
  - Recommendations
  - Admissions test results

### Advantages of Applying Early to College –

1. Many public universities close at the end of the semester. **Check applications for deadlines.**
2. Colleges with rolling admissions will notify you within weeks.
3. Early application provides more advantages for scholarship and financial aid opportunities.
4. Colleges can evaluate your transcript for entrance requirements and possible deficiencies. This may allow you to take classes to correct any problems.

**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITIES  
2011-2012 ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

**Applications to state universities in Illinois should be made to the university as a whole, except the University of Illinois where the application is made to a specific college within the university. The following requirements are subject to change each year and are listed here as a guideline. Each family/student should check with individual college admission offices for current guidelines.**

Name of University	Class Rank	ACT Score
Eastern Illinois Charleston, 61920-3099 Admissions – (877) 581-2348 or (217) 581-2223 www.eiu.edu/admissions Enrollment – 12,349	NO specifics given. In the past it has been: 3.0 & Upper ¼ 2.5 or Upper ½ 2.25 or Upper ¾	A sliding scale for admissions is used. Average ACT Score for incoming freshmen is 22. Students with a G.P.A. below a 2.0 are not considered.
Illinois State University Normal, 61790-2200 Admissions – 800-366-2478 www.IllinoisState.edu/admissions Enrollment as of 2009 - 20,856	90% of students accepted are in the top ½ of their graduating class. Average G.P.A. for 2009-2010 was 3.49-4.0	½ of enrolled students had an ACT composite score of 23-27 ¼ of students scored 28 and up ¼ of students scored between 18-22
Northern Illinois University DeKalb, 60115-2857 Admissions – 800-892-3050 www.admissions.niu.edu Enrollment - 25,313	2.75 or Upper ½ 2.5 or Upper ¾	19 23
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 62901 Admissions – 618-536-4405 www.siuc.edu/admissions/ Enrollment – 21,003	72% of enrolled students are in the upper 50% of their graduating class.	The average range is an A.C.T. score is 20-25.
University of Illinois- U-C Urbana, 61801 Admissions – 217-333-0302 www.uiuc.edu Enrollment – 41,342	See University of Illinois Application or the specific requirements of each school.	
University of IL –Chicago Chicago, 60680 Admissions – 312-996-4350 www.uic.edu/depts/oar/ Enrollment – 24,200	See University of Illinois Application or the specific requirements of each school. No longer have Athletic Training or PE	
Western Illinois University Macomb, 61455-1390 Admissions – 877-742-5948 www.admissions.wiu.edu Enrollment – 13,602	2.5 or higher Lower than 2.5  Alternative Admission = 2.2	20 Higher than 20  16 or higher

**Don't forget to find out what specific high school course work  
is required to apply to the college of your choice.  
COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Step 1 – Student Responsibilities**

1. Obtain appropriate applications.
2. Fill out all information on the application and sign in the appropriate space. (on-line applications are preferred)
3. Carefully complete college application.
  - a. Attach application fee (if requested).
  - b. Enclose essay (if required).
  - c. Include addressed and stamped envelope (give to counselor).
4. Recommendations require more time.
  - a. Deliver to counselor and/or teacher. **Make sure you give them at least 1 week to complete a recommendation for you.** Brag sheets are available in the Guidance Office for you to fill out. Brag sheets are information sheets about yourself that you give the person writing your recommendation letter.
5. Sign a final transcript release form before graduation.

**STEP 2 – COUNSELOR**

1. Review student application material.
2. Write recommendations (if necessary).
3. Sign application.
4. Check for students –
  - a. Signature
  - b. Courses in progress
  - c. Send completed application in student-provided envelope

## HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE

Entrance requirements vary from college to college and can even vary on the same campus depending upon the subject in which you plan to major. However, all colleges focus on the strength and quality of your high school curriculum.

### College Admissions Testing

The **PSAT (Pre-SAT)** is recommended for **Juniors** who plan to continue their education as well as seeking recognition and financial assistance through scholarship programs administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (**NMSQT**). Juniors who wish to be considered for the NMST administered scholarships to be awarded should take the PSAT/NMSQT.

**SAT I** (New Scholastic Aptitude Test)  
(For Juniors and Seniors)-

The SAT is a three-hour multiple choice test that measures developed verbal and reasoning abilities that are related to successful performance in college. It is intended to supplement the secondary school record and other information about the student in assessing readiness for college level work. The SAT I is usually reviewed by selective private colleges. This test should be taken in October or November of the senior year.

The **PLAN** Test is a Pre-Act assessment for Sophomores to give the student a chance to see what the ACT will be like and to see what they need to study to get the highest score possible on the ACT during their Junior year. All students enrolled at Genoa-Kingston High School will be given the PLAN Test in the Fall of their Sophomore year.

American College Testing (ACT) (For Juniors and Seniors)

The **ACT** Assessment Program contains four curriculum-based tests that measure academic achievement in the areas of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Natural Sciences. This test is given to Juniors with the Prairie State Exam in April. The number of test items and time allowed is:

English	75 items	45 minutes
Mathematics	60 items	60 minutes
Reading	40 items	35 minutes
Science Reasoning	40 items	35 minutes
Writing Test (optional)		30 minutes

**ACT Optional Writing Test** – Many colleges now expect or recommend students to take this optional writing test. Check the ACT website to see what your college(s) say about the writing test: [www.actstudent.org/writing/index.html](http://www.actstudent.org/writing/index.html)

## **SAT II**

(Formerly Achievements Test) –

SAT II is designed to measure knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in specific subject areas, unlike the SAT I which measures more general abilities. There are fifteen (15) different achievement tests. Students may take up to three (3) examinations on any one-test date. Many selective colleges will require the SAT II tests. It is your responsibility to check the requirements of the colleges you are interested in before deciding which test you need to take. It is best to take the SAT II in June of the junior year.

## **Advanced Placement Exams** –

The Advanced Placement Program is a cooperative effort between the College Entrance Examination Board and high schools to offer college level courses and exams for secondary students. This college level learning experience will take a full academic year. At the conclusion of the course, students may opt to take a three-hour examination administered by the high school in May. The Advanced Placement Exam may be of benefit to you in the following ways:

1. Your college or university may exempt you from beginning courses.
2. Your college may grant academic credit for your exam and you will have fewer requirements to complete for graduation. Generally, credit is only given for a score of 3 or higher. Check your college(s)/universities web site for their information regarding AP Test scores.
3. You may save time and money by being granted credit and Sophomore standing for three (3) or four (4) Advanced Placement exams.

Genoa-Kingston High School students interested in taking the AP Exams will sign up by March in the Guidance Office to take the exams at Genoa-Kingston High School in May.

## **WORKKEYS** –

A national system designed to improve workplace skills and to help individuals equate learning with earning. WorkKeys measures work place skills, relates those skills to specific jobs, and helps individuals acquire the levels of skills needed for the jobs they want.

## COLLEGE ADMISSION TERMINOLOGY

### Candidate Reply Date -

The date by which the student must notify the college of their enrollment intention.

### Deferred admission –

The practice of some colleges of allowing accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

### Early Decision -

An early application process means that you are giving a binding commitment to attend. Student and a parent must sign agreement that, if accepted, the student will matriculate unless aid award is inadequate. The colleges share early decision lists; so if accepted, you must withdraw all other applications. Students not admitted under Early Decisions are reconsidered with the regular decision applicants.

### Early Admission or Action -

Admitting students of superior ability in to college courses and programs before they have completed the standard high school program.

### Open Admissions –

The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission scores.

### Regular decision –

The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision with a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Rolling Admission -

A procedure whereby a college, in accepting applicants for admission, accepts or rejects them shortly after the student's application folder is complete. Most colleges use this system in selecting their incoming freshman class.

### Wait List -

A term used by institutions to describe a process in which the institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future.

## FINANCIAL AID

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)  
Every college-bound senior applying for financial aid:

- FAFSA Night will be held at Kishwaukee Community College on 3 dates in February. **February 15, 21, and 23, 2012.**  
Parents will have a short presentation and then be brought into the computer lab in groups to actually fill out the FAFSA on-line with professional help. Make sure to bring all needed documents and have your pin number with you.
- Will fill out the FAFSA-Free Application for Federal and Student Aid at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) after January 1<sup>st</sup> of your Senior year in high school. You will need to request a pin number before you can complete the fafsa. You can request a pin # at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)  
We suggest you get your pin before January.
- The FAFSA can be found on-line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) January 1 or after. Students who wish a paper form must contact FAFSA for one. Electronic submissions tend to have their SAR report within 2 weeks. Paper format have their SAR report in 4 weeks or more. You do not need to wait to do your taxes, you can use estimated taxes.
- This application will be used to determine eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant as well as the Illinois Grant (used only at in-state schools).
- Even if you know that you will not qualify for federal or state aid, you must still apply with this form in order to be considered for scholarships, grants, and work study programs given out by the college or university you are considering.
- Most colleges will require some additional information before determining their aid package. Contact your college regarding their required Financial Aid Application.
- SAR Report: Student Aid Report: You will receive this report 2-4 weeks after your FAFSA is processed. It will report the information from your application and, if there are no questions or problems with your application, your SAR will report Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

## **STUDENT AID APPLICATION TIPS**

1. If you are going to apply for financial aid, know the deadline dates, what they mean, and apply by those dates.
2. Make sure the financial information you provide on the applications is complete and accurate.
3. If you are going to visit the college, make an appointment to speak with a Financial Aid Counselor as well as an Admissions Officer.
4. Keep records and copies of material sent to the college or processor.
5. Use certified mail to make sure all documents reach the proper destination on time.
6. Make certain to respond to any and all inquiries and requests as quickly as possible.
7. Call before you visit the college to make sure the person you want to visit will be available.
8. Understand the terms and conditions of all assistance offered. Make sure the offer is a solid commitment and not just an estimate or preliminary assessment of eligibility.
9. If you have been dealing with an intermediary, such as a coach, department head, or other college official who seems to be offering some kind of financial assistance, make sure the intermediary has the authority to make an offer.
10. Inform the Financial Aid Office of any outside scholarships, grants, or other assistance you will be receiving.

### **11. When in doubt, ask!**

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### **Pell Grants –**

Provide need-based federal grants. Applications will be available now through colleges, vocational schools, technical schools, hospital schools of nursing, and other post-secondary institutions. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid will be used for this and the deadline for applying is May 2. Apply as early as possible **after** January 1 of your senior year in high school.

### **College Work Study (CWS) or Federal Work Study (FWS)**

–

Under the College Work Study program, the college arranges for eligible students to work a limited number of hours to earn funds needed. Students work in jobs at the college (library, administrative offices, academic departments, etc.) or for other non-profit organizations. They earn the prevailing minimum wage or more. The federal government pays most of the cost by providing each school with CWS funds.

### **Federal/State Aid Information Center –**

The United States Department of Education provides a Student Financial Aid Information Center with a toll free number (1-800-433-3243) or on-line at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/lsa/index.html> . This organization will answer questions about federal financial aid forms and programs. Included in this program would be Pell Grants, Guaranteed Student Loans, and campus-based federal programs including the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and college work-study programs.

### **Loans –**

There are many varieties of loans available to parents through college financial aid offices and local lending institutions. Parents and students may borrow varying amounts at varying interest rates. Usually, loans to parents have no deferred repayment schedule and carry a higher interest rate.

### **Monetary Award Program (MAP) –**

Provides need-based grants to students who are Illinois residents and attend college in Illinois. The FAFSA must be completed with a MAP – APPROVED Illinois school as the first choice.

## STATE OF ILLINOIS PROGRAMS

### **Illinois State Scholarship Commission State Scholar Program –**

No money involved. Illinois students who wish to participate in the State Scholar program must take the qualifying ACT or SAT test between September and June of their Junior year. SAT scores may be used to qualify for the state scholar program and may be taken between September and June also. These scores will automatically be reported. Illinois State Scholars are determined by a combination of ACT or SAT composite scores and class rank. Each State Scholar receives a Certificate of Merit and statewide recognition as a prospective college student who has demonstrated high academic potential. This is not a monetary award and students who have financial need must apply for monetary assistance through the State Scholar program by taking the appropriate test.

### **Illinois State Scholarship Commission Monetary Award Program –**

Awards based on need. All college-bound Illinois residents may apply for a monetary award (applicable toward tuition and fees only) for full-time or half time undergraduate study at any of the more than 180 approved public or private colleges, universities, and hospital schools of nursing within the state. Vocational trade schools are not included. A grant is a gift and repayment is not required. Grades, test scores, and class rank are not considered for grant awards. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available on-line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The applications should be completed in the senior year. It is not necessary to have previous acceptance to a college or university in order to apply for a Monetary Award. The student is required to indicate the college he/she plans to attend. However, he/she is given the opportunity to change his/her college choice. This award last year paid up to a maximum of \$3,500, but will not exceed the tuition at the school the student attends.

**Stafford Loan & Perkins Loan (previously known  
As Illinois Guaranteed Loan Program)-**

Apply in the spring for money needed in September. Applicants must qualify on a basis of need. Information on qualifying for these loans can be obtained from the college financial aid office of the college or university after FAFSA is filed.

**General Assembly Scholarship –**

Each member of the Illinois General Assembly may nominate persons annually for tuition scholarships at the University of Illinois or any other state supported institution in Illinois. Contact a member of the General Assembly from your district or check in the Guidance Office for the application.

**Education Grants & Scholarships-**

See Guidance Office, Check out the free websites listed on page 25 or check out the state programs at [www.collegezone.com/giftassist/753.htm](http://www.collegezone.com/giftassist/753.htm)

**Hope Tax Credit and Life Long Learning Tax Credit-**  
<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p970/index.html>

This should bring to straight to the information about Publication 970. If it does not bring you to it, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and do a search for the above tax credits.

*Additional tax incentive information is also available at [www.irs.gov/publications/p970/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p970/index.html)*

## SCHOLARSHIPS

1. **Apply to all scholarships you meet the criteria for!**
2. Check the scholarship board by the guidance office every week to see what new scholarship applications are available, write down names and see the Guidance Office or official web site for applications.
3. Check the free web sites found on page 25 & 26.
4. Students are responsible for picking up applications and getting the applications in on time.
5. **Type or use black pen**, write as neatly as possible. It is unprofessional to use any color other than black.

## **College Sponsored Financial Aid And Scholarships**

In addition to applying early to colleges this year, it is important to note that your key to financial aid at those universities is the college Financial Aid Office. Also, when applying for financial aid from the Federal Government and the State, it is essential that you make your need known to the Financial Aid Officer of each college campus to which you seek admission. In order to extend financial aid to the largest possible number of students with financial need, colleges frequently put together a financial package that combines a grant, a loan, and a campus job. The college Financial Aid Officer is in the best position to advise you about other possible sources of financial assistance for which you might qualify.

In addition to filling out the FAFSA application, be certain to complete any additional financial statement that is required by the college of your choice. Your college of choice may have a separate form that must be completed. Remember –

- Information concerning the family financial condition is necessary to determine eligibility for most financial aid.
- By giving detailed and accurate information, colleges can make decisions that are fair to all applicants.
- All information is treated confidentially.
- Many colleges provide scholarships for honor students (those with high class rank and high test scores) and for special talents such as music, art, drama, and athletics.
- The student should check the college catalog or web site for the scholarship information and request a financial aid bulletin and application for aid from the Financial Aid Officer.
- Contact the college of your choice to see what no-need awards are available.
- Look on the Internet under professional organization of the major in which you intend to get a degree in. Check these professional web sites for scholarships, ex: Accounting professional organization, Chemical Engineer professional organization.

Many colleges send financial aid and scholarship information directly to Genoa-Kingston High School. A file of this information is kept in the Guidance Office for student and parent use. You may also find information on each college's web site.

#### Available Scholarships

Many Juniors will be receiving information through the mail from several profit-making groups regarding scholarship search services available for a fee. Genoa-Kingston High School has a similar scholarship search service available for free. The Guidance Office provides this service, which includes several college sponsored and privately sponsored scholarships. You can also find many on the internet that are free too.

**CHECK OUT THESE INTERNET WEB SITES  
FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

**SELECTING & APPLYING  
TO COLLEGES**

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)  
[www.anycollege.com](http://www.anycollege.com)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)  
[www.petersons.com/ugchannel](http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel)  
[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
[www.collegeillinois.com](http://www.collegeillinois.com)  
[www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)  
[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)  
[www.whatsnextillinois.org](http://www.whatsnextillinois.org)  
[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)  
<http://studentaid.ed.gov>  
[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)

**GENERAL/FINANCIAL AID  
INFORMATION**

[www.collegezone.com](http://www.collegezone.com)  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)  
[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)  
[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)  
[www.makingitcount.com](http://www.makingitcount.com)  
[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)  
[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)  
[http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student\\_guide/index.html](http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html) (Free on-line book you can print out from the government about funding your education)  
[www.knowhow2goillinois.org](http://www.knowhow2goillinois.org)

**SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH  
SITES**

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)  
[www.collegeillinois.com](http://www.collegeillinois.com)  
[www.petersons.com/ugchannel](http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel)  
[www.meritaid.com](http://www.meritaid.com)  
[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
[www.wiredscholar.com](http://www.wiredscholar.com)  
[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)  
[www.bridgequest.org](http://www.bridgequest.org)  
[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)  
<http://studentaid.ed.gov>  
[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)

**Student Loan Information**

Loan repayment calculators,  
family contribution information  
[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
[www.collegezone.com](http://www.collegezone.com)  
[www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)  
[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)  
<http://studentaid.ed.gov>  
[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)

## **NCAA Guide for Student Athletes**

[www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

### **Tax Credits**

Hope & Life Long Tax Credit

[www.irs.org](http://www.irs.org)

### **Military**

[www.marines.com](http://www.marines.com)

[www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil)

[www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil)

[www.ngb.army.mil](http://www.ngb.army.mil) National Guard

## **MILITARY ACADEMIES**

[www.usafa.af.mil/](http://www.usafa.af.mil/) US Air Force Academy

[www.cga.edu/](http://www.cga.edu/) US Coast Guard Academy

[www.usmma.edu/](http://www.usmma.edu/) US Merchant Marine Academy+

[www.usma.edu/](http://www.usma.edu/) US Military Academy

[www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu) US Naval Academy

## **STUDY HABITS**

[www.howtostudy.org](http://www.howtostudy.org)

[www.homeworktips.about.com](http://www.homeworktips.about.com)

[www.academictips.org](http://www.academictips.org)

[www.how-to-study.com](http://www.how-to-study.com)

[www.makingitcount.com](http://www.makingitcount.com)

[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)

## **CAREER PLANNING**

[www.ides.illinois.gov/](http://www.ides.illinois.gov/)

[www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

[www.mymajors.com](http://www.mymajors.com)

[www.mappingyourfuture.org](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org)

# Writing the College Application Essay

by Zoë Kashner

Look at it as a chance to tell your side of the story

## 1. Why the Essay Is a Good Thing

**B**y the time you are filling out your college applications, your high school record is pretty well set. You have your grades, and your lists of activities. You've created good relationships with teachers that are now yielding strong letters of recommendation, or ... you haven't. At this point, there's little you can do to change your record, and if there were any missteps, faux pas, bumbings, blunders, or even giant mistakes, you sort of have to live with them. But here's the good news:

**With your college application essay you get a chance to explain** any missteps, faux pas, bumbings, blunders or mistakes. Your grades and letters of recommendation reflect other people's opinions about you, but with the essay, you can tell your side of the story. If not quite an opportunity for redemption—if redemption is required—it's pretty close. And if your record is close to perfect, the essay gives you an opportunity to round out your profile, to add interest to those long, boring lists of A's and sky-high test scores.

So, don't worry, be happy: Done well, the essay can only help. And if you relax a little, it shouldn't be that hard to write. After all, aren't you just finishing many years of school? Haven't you spent a lot of that time writing? Everything you need for success on your essay is already there in your head—your knowledge, thoughts, and feelings, and the writing skills you have been practicing for years.

## 2. What's the Big Idea?

**T**here are two types of college-application essay questions. The first, and most common, asks you to write about any topic, as

long as it reveals something about you. With the whole world to choose from, coming up with a strong, clear idea can be difficult.

**Start by putting yourself in the position of your reader**, a nice, smart admissions officer who wants to know you better. Imagine the questions that admissions officer may have about you.



Shawn Hall/Painting Scholastic Art Award 2000

"It's important for the essay to be legible, but we aren't making fine literary distinctions. We believe we can teach people how to write."

—Marilyn McGrath Lewis, director of undergraduate admissions, Harvard University

Why did you quit orchestra in 10th grade? What did it take to raise your grade point average from a C one semester to an A the next? Write down the answers. Just take notes.

It's also OK to ask others for help. People who know you well can tell what you what they think is interesting about you. Again, just take notes.

After a few days, look over your lists of thoughts. Which ideas seem central to the way you think about yourself? Start with one of those topics.

The second type of essay asks you to respond to a specific question. Make sure you answer the question that is asked. Use brainstorming skills to provide supporting examples and details for your main point.

## 3. Write It

**O**nce you've settled on an idea, it's time to get your thoughts on paper. The best way to do this is simply to start writing. Often called "free writing," this technique asks you to write in a sustained way without censoring yourself. And it works. **Write without stopping for at least three full pages.** You may wind up discovering a whole new topic that is more interesting, and more heartfelt, than what you started out with.

You can also free write if you feel

# Three Real Essays

Two That Work, and One that Doesn't

## 1. An essay about your choice of subject

yourself freezing up when faced with a specific question. In that case, free write about and around that topic.

The result of your free write will be rambling and disorganized but full of substance. Read your work over carefully, and try to find your main point, then write it down in one sentence. Ta Da! You have a thesis.

After you've found your thesis, identify the parts of your free write that are worthy of inclusion in an essay. If your thesis can stand alone as an opening, start there. If it needs an anecdote to introduce it, that's fine too. **Your first draft should be more carefully written than your free write, but**

**don't parse every sentence.** In this first draft, it's important to make sure that all the details and ideas get full expression.

### 4. Revise

**Revision is not spellchecking.**

It is a close review of your first draft. Look for major errors, lack of flow, poor transitions, or weak organization. Use the checklist on page 14 to make sure your essay meets the basic elements of good writing.

### 5. OK, Now Proofread

Once you have a strong second draft, **check for spelling and grammar mistakes.** This is important! Errors alienate your readers, and alienation is not your goal.

### 6. Be Yourself

Remember: You are more prepared for this task than you may feel. Keep in mind that your favorite school is recruiting high school seniors, not Nobel Laureates. **No one expects you to be older, more experienced, or more knowledgeable than you are.** They only expect you to be yourself.

Adults tend to label adolescence as a difficult stage in development, but adults often have trouble knowing just how to help teenagers with their problems. Some of my friends realized that we were the ones best suited to helping one another with our growing pains. We would sit informally and discuss problems that seemed monstrous to us, but when we analyzed them we discovered that they were not so unusual or upsetting. Based on that realization,

we decided to formalize our discussions and open a peer-counseling center

where any student could come to discuss any problem. My experience in peer counseling has helped me to mature and develop new interpersonal skills, and I have gained confidence in my ability to handle my problems more successfully in the future.

When I first became involved in peer counseling, I was the one receiving help. When my brother, John, had informed me and my parents that he was not going to attend college, I felt an increased burden to achieve to compensate for my brother's lack of motivation. As a result, I became depressed. I discussed my problem with other students in the peer-counseling center, and realized that I was placing an unnecessary burden on myself because, in reality, my parents never asked me to work harder. I simply felt guilty about my brother's decision, and that caused my depression.

By working through this problem, I realized the value of sharing my concerns and decided to help the

other students feel better about themselves. When my friend told me about the problems she had at home with her mother and her stepfather, I asked her to come to the center. At first she was reluctant to reveal herself because she was afraid others would not understand, but her need to share was more compelling. The example of my own success helped me to persuade my friend that by discussing her problems she could deal with her situation at home more effectively and also feel better about herself. As one of her peer-counselors, I was able to understand her needs. As a result, I could help her formulate a plan of action to overcome her difficulties.

I know that the experience I have gained through peer counseling will be of use to me in whatever career I pursue. The ability to listen, analyze, and develop a plan of action is essential to everyday problem solving. I am confident that when I go away to school I will be able to deal with my problems and share my strength with others.

### What Works

This writer knows what she wants to tell us. She participated in a meaningful activity, which helped her grow up. She provides concrete examples, and frames her ideas in a straightforward and organized way.

### What Could Be Better

Perhaps because of length requirements, the writer doesn't include details that may help the reader understand the depth of her experience. Instead of telling us a story, and letting us draw the conclusion that she has matured, she spells it out for us in a way that makes this essay a dry read.

"We're looking for the essay to bring the rest of the application together, to bring the application to life."

—Tami Hrasky, senior associate dean,  
Grinnell College

## Essay Editing Checklist

Make sure the following statements are true for your essay.

- You can clearly state the point of your essay.
- Your writing stays focused on this point.
- You answered the question you were asked.
- Your first two sentences are engaging; they make you want to continue reading.
- Your conclusion sums up the essay.
- The words you use came from your heart, not a thesaurus.
- You avoided the passive voice.
- You carefully proofread for grammar and spelling.
- Two other people have read and critiqued your essay.
- Every sentence has a reason for being there.
- Anyone who reads your essay will know it's about you and by you.
- The essay sounds like you, not someone you think you should be.

### Web Surfing for Essay Help

These two sites offer excellent, ethical help with your essay:

<http://www.ivyessays.com/undergrad/index.html>

E-mail in your essay and get a substantial letter back offering criticism and suggestions. The site charges \$75 for one critique, up to \$400 for a former admissions officer to guide you through the whole process.

<http://www.northfork.com/essaywiz/> The Essay Wizard is a former teacher who "won't write it for you." You first click through about 10 pages of advice. Then the Wizard can critique your essay—\$50 for a one-time critique, \$75 for the whole process.

## 2. An Essay About a Childhood Experience

**A** creek is no place for shoes. I think it's unreasonable to ask children to keep their shoes on in such a place. My bare feet were always covered with calluses from walking down the rough pavement of Peardale Street and around the corner, past the weeping willows, but not as far as the Lindsays' squeaky old swing set. It was hard to see from the road, and as far as I could tell, nobody ever went there—except for me. Large pines nearby stood tall and erect, looking down at the ripples and currents that nudged each other playfully, like the children in the back seat of a car on a long drive. Stones and pebbles lined the shallow bottom and allowed the water to glide in creative patterns over their smooth surfaces. Larger, moss-covered rocks dotted the bank and provided ideal spots for a child to sit and watch and wonder.

The creek taught me things; it was my mentor. Once I discovered tadpoles in the eddies and pools that lined the small rivulet. A cupped hand and a cleaned-out mayonnaise jar aided me in scooping up some of the more slothful individuals. With muddy hands and knees, I set them on the kitchen counter, and watched them daily as they developed into tiny frogs. I was fascinated by what was taking place before my eyes, but new questions puzzled me. Dad was usually responsible for assuaging these curiosities. He told me about different kinds of metamorphosis and how other tiny creatures lived in the water that I couldn't see without a fancy magnifying glass.

**B**y the creek, my mind was free to wander. I remember sitting on a mossy rock and watching the birds; I used to pretend I was one. As my body lay still, my imagination would take flight. High above, looking down on the stream from the heavens, the wind whistled over my face and the sun warmed my body. When my eyes flickered open, it was usually time to go home. Sometimes I even did.

I was always up for a challenge. My

sister and I used to jump from rock to rock, in a kind of improvised hopscotch obstacle course that tested our balance and agility against one another. She was four years older, and I had to practice every morning when she was at school in order to keep up. On the rare occasions that I outdid her, I wore a goofy smirk for the rest of the day.

The creek was frontier. The stream extended far into the depths of the woods. I thought that if I wandered too far into its darkness, I might be consumed and never heard from again:

"What's most important is for you to write about something you care about."

—Chris Ellertson, Director of Admissions,  
Trinity University, Texas

Gradually overcoming my fear, I embarked on expeditions and drafted extensive maps, using my father's old compass, a sheet of paper, and a few colored pencils. As my body grew in height and weight, my boundaries grew in extent and breadth.

Years later, I happened to be walking to a friend's house by way of the creek. It occurred to me that what was once an expedition was now merely a shortcut. Although I had left this stream behind, I found others: new questions and freedoms, new challenges and places to explore. But this creek would remain foremost in my memory, whatever stream, river, or ocean I might wade.

### What Works

This essay is intricately detailed, which allows the reader to experience vicariously what the writer is describing. Each paragraph starts with a straightforward sentence, letting us know what the writer has gained from her connection to this special place.

### What Could Be Better

What are the "new questions and freedoms, new challenges and places to explore"? A few choice details extending this last section would round out this essay.

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### 3. An Essay About an Experience Abroad

On a sunny day in 1992, I borded a plane to begin my trip around the world. I felt both excited and scared not knowing exactly what lay ahead. I embarked upon eleven foreign lands which included: Hong Kong, China, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, India, the Seyshelles Islands, Kenya, France, and England. Although each country had its own personality, Kenya touched me in a special way. What I saw and felt on the first day the jeep headed out on the Masai Mara was more fulfilling than my highest expectations.

The sun rose quietly out of the tall grass on the savanna waking all forms of life to greet its warmth. The sky's hue changed to royal blue and white clouds floated easily in the heavens. Along the horizon, a herd of elephants swayed through the grass. As we came closer, I discovered baby elephants trailing like a caboose behind their mothers. Every elephant walked in the same direction as if a destination was awaiting them. Suddenly, my heart rose for just beyond the jeep a pride of lions lounged in the shade of a tree. The male lion looked like a great king, wearing his royal headdress, while watching his heirs tumble in the grass. In the distance, appeared hundreds of prancing gazelles. Immediately three of the lions dashed away to capture their prey. Preceding their departure, a vulture flew overhead as a sign to us that the prey had been

caught. The scene created mixed emotions for me. On one hand the killing made me angry, yet on the other hand, I knew it was necessary for the lions' survival. From observing the wildlife of the Masai Mara, I realized that the lives of the animals were only a simplified version of our own life as humans. Everyday we fight to survive. Basically, our motivation for success is our desire to survive physically and mentally. We create organizations, such as governments, to supply order in our communities. We depend on family and friends to give us love and support. Most of all we need food, clothing, and shelter in order to live. Our life may have more complications, but at the core humans and animals are both motivated by their desire to survive. The idea of all these animals as a metaphor for my life made the gap between us closer. For once, I was in the cage and the animals were free. I saw myself in the animals. I identified with the pride of the lion, the exuberance of the gazelle, and the peace of the elephant. I discovered the qualities we both share. I felt at one with, not only the animals, but the universe.

The colors of the land and sky were fading with the dying sun as the jeep headed for camp. The cool air blew through my hair as I watched the day come to an end. In the twilight, I closed my eyes and imagined the day to come.

#### What Doesn't Work

This essay is unoriginal in both execution and meaning. The details are abundant, but so generic, they seem to have been lifted from a Discovery Channel show or a greeting card. The absence of original observations makes the rest of the essay in which "the lives of animals" are compared to those of humans equally

trite and forced. It is as though the writer felt he or she ought to use this special experience as the subject of an essay—after all, how many applicants have trekked to Africa?—but had no specific passion for it. Add to that the many spelling and punctuation errors, and you have a weak performance.

#### How to Avoid Writing This Essay

Remember: details are important, but they must be precise and original. And they should be used in support of a point. Always, decide what your thesis is, state it clearly, and organize your ideas based on that thesis. All the details should relate directly to the thesis.

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spelling error in the first sentence  
 spelling error  
 vague choice  
 missing comma  
 onslaught of generic details  
 tone  
 unoriginal imagery. Did the writer really witness this?

dabious conclusion given weakness of present details  
 too many big ideas none are fully explored  
 can a gap become closer?