

# Riley Baker Educational Consulting

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## May 2013

**1<sup>st</sup>** – Common reply date for college enrollment

**4<sup>th</sup>** – **SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests**

**6<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>** - **AP exams**

Juniors – work on resume

Juniors – speak to advisor about military colleges or

ROTC programs

Seniors – notify the colleges that you will not attend

## June 2013

**1<sup>st</sup>** – **SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests**

(register by 5/2 - late registration 5/17)

**8<sup>th</sup>** – **ACT and ACT plus Writing**

(register by 5/3 - late registration 5/17)

Seniors – thank teachers and others who helped you

Seniors – thank scholarship providers for aid

Seniors – have your final transcript sent to your college

## Learning Differences and College Selection

Learning differences need not get in the way of college success but they should be considered when creating your college list. Colleges offer differing levels of support to students with learning disabilities and ADD or ADHD. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all schools provide a basic level of accommodations to students with physical, psychological or learning disabilities. Academic accommodations, such as extended time or a non-distracting room for exams, are meant to equalize the learning environment and are available at no cost.

Therefore, for students who have developed good learning skills, are able to self-advocate, and don't need individualized support, the basic accommodation model can work well. Students at these schools must take the initiative to secure the appropriate academic accommodations. While most of these colleges offer minimal services, some do provide additional programs such as time management workshops and access to assistive technology.

Schools with structured support go beyond basic accommodations and offer additional support outside the classroom. This can include group or individual sessions to help students with reading comprehension, writing, speaking, listening and time management. Some of these programs also provide summer pre-orientation sessions to prepare students for college courses, familiarize them with campus resources, and introduce them to peers with similar learning issues.

Then there are colleges that provide more comprehensive support. These programs teach learning strategies and skills based on a student's learning style. One of the most well-known comprehensive programs

is the Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques (SALT) Center at the University of Arizona. Students are assigned to learning specialists who provide individualized academic support and help them learn new strategies for success in the university environment. Specially trained tutors and writing support are available, as is a computer lab that provides access to assistive technologies.

Another option is a school such as Landmark College in Vermont, exclusively for students with learning disabilities and ADD or ADHD. Students receive extensive support as they develop learning strategies, and most go on to pursue a bachelor's degree, either at Landmark (which also offers associate degrees) or at another college.

Programs that offer support beyond basic accommodations usually charge fees, which can run several thousand dollars a year, depending on the level of service. Students who need support in college for a disability must have proper documentation. Check with each school you're considering for its requirements; generally colleges want test results that are less than three years old.

When visiting colleges, students should stop by the academic support office and find out what services are available. The attitude of the staff is important in determining whether a college offers a good environment for a student. Talking to students who have similar learning issues is also a great way to find out whether the school is supportive.

Students who know their strengths and weaknesses are in the best position to find schools that offer the support they need, and are likely to be successful in college.

## Successful leaders who majored in English

**Carol Browner**, lawyer, environmentalist, and businesswoman, former head of the EPA

**Mario Cuomo**, former governor of New York

**Joan Cusack**, actress

**Michael Eisner**, former CEO, Disney

**Sally Ride**, astronaut

**Marty Shottenheimer**, former coach of Kansas City Chiefs



**Sting**, singer, songwriter, musician, actor, environmental activist

**Clarence Thomas**, U.S. Supreme Court Justice

**Harold Varmus**, Nobel laureate in medicine, Director of National Cancer Institute

**Bob Woodward**, journalist, author: *All the President's Men*

**Renee Zellweger**, actress

## Focus on Majors: English

Do you love English and literature, but worry that an English degree will not translate well to the real world? Au contraire. Although increasing technology, specialization, and an overabundance of college graduates with degrees in English have led to the major's ill repute, English and Psychology are still two of the most popular majors for students who are not math and science oriented.

What the English degree lacks in job training it makes up for in adaptability. If you want to develop critical reading and thinking skills, research skills, and the ability to persuade others, majoring in English might be just your thing. By examining and analyzing literature, evaluating literature in its social and historical contexts, and sharing your understanding and conclusions with others, you develop critical skills that are relevant to a wide range of professions. Consider the following:

English majors graduate with the ability to:

- organize thoughts, ideas & materials
- analyze texts & interpret their meaning
- argue positions effectively
- analyze the written word
- write in an articulate manner
- do research & explain the results
- think creatively
- critically observe the world
- effectively communicate by listening to and questioning data

Forbes Magazine published an article last December highlighting the most sought after job skills for 2013. Critical thinking topped the list. Other valuable skills include complex problem solving, good judgment, decision-making skills, and active listening. Interdisciplinary thinking and outstanding written and oral communication skills are also highly touted. English majors have had to hone and exercise these transferable skills to earn their degrees.

In order to make an undergraduate degree

in English valuable, students need to combine passion, imagination and strategic thinking. When choosing electives and fulfilling course requirements, students should think carefully. While one student might select courses in business and technology with an eye towards focusing on business communications, another might opt for classes in theater, film and journalism with the intention of becoming a critic. A third student might choose to minor in political science in order to work in the public policy arena. Extra-curricular activities can also have a significant impact on an English graduate's appeal to employers. English majors who study abroad in England, take electives in film, theater and journalism, write for the school paper, and intern at a magazine, will be infinitely more employable than English majors who give little thought to how they spend their educational and free time.

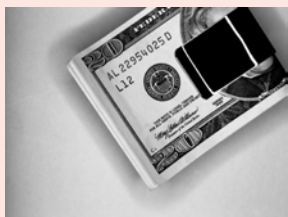
The most successful English graduates are those who think of their major as only one of the foundational blocks of their career preparation. One block alone is not enough. Students must consider what they've learned academically and how it applies to the workplace, demonstrate their understanding and skills outside the classroom, and use time to their advantage. Developing career search skills is a must for all students.

English as a major has provided the foundation for successful careers in such far-flung fields as acting, business, grant-writing, public relations, lobbying, politics, and event-planning. English majors are often creative and particularly adept at expressing themselves, often succeeding in script-writing and advertising careers. The ability to identify critical ideas and separate important information from distracting jargon is beneficial in marketing, speech writing, and research.

To explore the career options a major in English can lead to, consult the following resource:

[www.pdx.edu/careers/what-can-i-do-with-a-degree-in-english](http://www.pdx.edu/careers/what-can-i-do-with-a-degree-in-english)

## Financial Matters: Managing College Finances



College is full of hidden costs: that extra pizza delivery, a special concert, the newest tech toy, a necessary college sweatshirt, or a much-needed trip home or to visit friends. The easy access to plastic makes it easy to put off paying these costs until later but, ultimately, pay up you must.

When considering college costs, it's important to include these unforeseen expenses in your college budget, and also to consider how they'll be paid. The new college-issued student cards that allow students to charge not only

meals and books but also tech toys, groceries, and college supplies at both the university bookstore and neighboring shops may actually increase these extra expenses by making it simple to put them on the family's tab. It's also really easy to run up big cell phone bills talking to friends on other campuses. Before your child leaves for college, a heart-to-heart talk about finances is in order.

One place to save at college is on the college meal plans. Often, colleges require students to subscribe to a minimum number of meals. Choose a plan that fits your child—there's no point in paying for meals that your child will not eat. Many students prefer the opportunity to cook some of their own meals. Place some additional money in a flexible spending account or consider a low limit credit card to help your child manage extra expenses. A prepaid calling card is a good way to avoid those

high cellular bills.

Ask your child to look for opportunities to save or earn money while at school. Textbooks can be bought used and resold at the end of the semester. Students can consider a co-op program and get paid while exploring a future career. Part-time jobs are a good idea. Many students benefit from the additional structure that a job adds to their week as well as from earning extra spending money. Even without Federal Work/Study programs, many jobs are available on or near campus. Most students can work 10-15 hours per week during the academic year and full-time during the summer.

If money is really tight, consider earning some credits at a lower-priced institution, or by meeting some degree requirements through CLEP (College Level Placement) exams.

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## Are All APs Created Equal?

Juniors selecting classes for the next school year often choose with an eye to how rigorous their schedule will appear to the admissions committee at selective colleges. Hoping to impress, the students choose as many Advanced Placement and honors courses as they can fit into their day. Unfortunately, this strategy often leads to a grueling senior year, and the classes selected might not truly be the best for that particular student. When choosing classes, consider your strengths and interests first. That way you'll end up with a program that is tailored to you and one in which you will be successful. While it is true that selective colleges want students willing to challenge themselves intellectually, you'll need to maintain good grades in those demanding classes if you truly hope to impress.

Select only as many AP classes as you

can manage. Remember, these are college-level classes, and each requires a considerable amount of outside reading and writing. Don't overdose on APs. You might consider combining especially challenging APs like Calculus, Literature, Chemistry, or European History, with one of the less-demanding ones such as Psychology, Statistics, or Government. Let your interests point to appropriate choices. Are you talented in art? Try Studio Art. Good at computers? Maybe Computer Science is for you. Although each of these classes requires a good deal of outside effort, enjoying what you're studying will make it seem less like work.

Are all APs created equal in the eyes of admissions officers? No; some are known to be much more intellectually challenging than others. But by select-

ing the APs that are truly best for you, you can earn grades that reflect both your effort and potential.

### Blog Review

If you haven't had a chance to check out The Choice, the education blog of the New York Times, you might want to do so soon. The site can be found at <http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com>.

Recent topics include: college as a journey, not a destination, the growing trend toward Spring admissions, choosing a practical major, online courses for high school students, and an early listing of 2013 admissions statistics.

With the stated goal of demystifying the college admissions process, The Choice continually features interesting and often thought-provoking articles sure to interest college bound students and their parents.

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## Talent and College Admission

Unlike the myth of the “well-rounded” student, colleges continue to reward the applicant with a desired special talent with offers of admission. If you’re a sophomore or a junior with a special talent, you should begin thinking *now* how to make that skill known to the colleges that interest you.

Athletes should speak with their coaches and ask for assistance in assessing their skill level. Specialized summer sports camps and showcases can help high school athletes catch the eye of college coaches. You can also begin contacting coaches at target colleges via e-mail and by completing athletic information forms for prospective student athletes that are posted on college websites. Be sure that video is taken of you during competition to use in compiling a DVD for recruiting purposes.

Visual artists should prepare a portfolio to showcase their talents. Bring yours

to a National Portfolio Day (<http://portfolioday.net>) to learn ways of improving your portfolio. Another option is to work on portfolio development at a local art center. Individual college websites have information on their portfolio requirements for visual art applicants.

Musicians need to record audio for a CD that can be sent to colleges in lieu of a live audition. Similarly, a performance DVD can enhance the application of theater or dance majors. Any student with an arts talent, visual or performing, should consider including evidence of this talent on the common application. In a similar fashion, writers should save samples of their best work in a variety of genres to submit when possible.

With these supplements in hand, you’ll be ready to showcase your talent for college admissions committees. Check before sending, however, to be sure that Dream U will consider additions to your application.