

# Riley Baker Educational Consulting

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## September 2014

10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students—  
Register & prepare for PSAT

Seniors – Finalize college list;  
work on applications & essays;  
review transcript for accuracy;  
request recommendation letters  
from teachers and counselors;  
meet with visiting college reps

**13<sup>th</sup> – ACT and ACT plus  
Writing** – offered in selected  
states only

## October 2014

10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students—  
Review test materials & take  
PSAT either 10/15 or 10/18

**11<sup>th</sup> — SAT Reasoning  
and Subject Tests**  
(register by 9/12 — late  
registration 9/30)

**25<sup>th</sup> — ACT and ACT plus  
Writing** (register by 9/19 — late  
registration 10/3)

Attend area college fairs and  
meetings

Meet with college reps visiting  
high school

Seniors - Continue work on  
college applications; complete  
Early Decision/Early Action  
applications

Complete CSS Profile if  
required by colleges

Submit “rolling” admissions  
applications ASAP

## Completing the Common Application

The Common Application can be a college applicant’s best friend, allowing students to use the application to apply to any of over 500 participating colleges and universities in the United States and abroad with the same application. While the application is easy to use, these ten tips will help speed your Common Application on its way to your colleges.

### **Before you begin your Common Application, check your Internet browser.**

The Common Application’s tech team recommends using current versions of Chrome or Firefox. Internet Explorer users should use Internet Explorer 10 or higher. If you’re a Safari user, make sure that you have Safari 5.1 or higher installed. Regardless of your browser choice, Javascript and cookies must be enabled and pop-up blockers disabled. Proofreading your application will be easier if you have Adobe Reader 10 or higher.

### **Keep your password and ID in an easy-to-find place.**

When you register for your Common Application account, you’ll need to create a password that uses at least one capital letter, a number and a symbol. Since this may mean creating a password that’s different from your customary one, be sure to write down your password and keep it in a place where you can easily find it. After you register and sign in, you’ll be able to find your Common Application ID at the top of the screen. It’s a good idea to record your account ID also and keep it with your password, as you may need it for contacting tech support, for helping a college to track down your application, or for the use of certain high school’s electronic transcript systems.

**Take your time and be thoughtful.** The Common Application isn’t difficult to use, but that doesn’t mean you should speed through it in 15 minutes. Each section is important, so make sure that the information you provide is correct and thorough.

**Read the instructions.** In the right hand column of each page of the application, you’ll find instructions and answers to the most common questions about that section. Even if a section seems obvious, it’s smart to read through the instructions before you start to fill it out. Still have questions? Click on the Common Application *Help* tab to go to the Help Center where you’ll find more detailed answers to common questions. If you still can’t find the answers you need, click on the button that says “My Answer is Not Here” and you’ll be able to contact Tech Support directly. The Help section can be accessed from inside the application while you’re logged in, or from the front page of the application next to the sign-in area.

### **You may have additional questions and essays to complete for specific colleges.**

While the Common Application itself is “common” to all of its users, most colleges have extra questions and some have additional essays. You won’t be able to see these supplemental questions and essays until you enter your colleges into your account. Use the *Search For Colleges* tab to find the colleges you’re applying to and then check the box next to each college’s name. Once you do this, you’ll be able to find each college’s supplement under the *My Colleges* tab in your account. It’s a good idea to enter all of your colleges early in the process so you can get a sense of how much you’ll need to do to complete your applications.

### **Extra college-specific essays may be hidden.**

Many colleges show their extra essays in a section called “writing supplement” under the *My Colleges* tab. The supplemental essays for some colleges, however, are harder to find. If you don’t see a writing supplement for the college immediately, open the questions section for the college. In some cases, you’ll find extra essays in the “other information” section of the college’s questions.

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## Career Options for Chemistry Majors

Only about 25% of all chemistry majors go on to employment as chemists. Trained to solve problems creatively, perform complex analyses and use research results in decision making, chemistry majors acquire numerous skills valued in a variety of careers.

Biochemist  
Biomedical engineer  
Chemical engineer  
Chemical sales rep  
Chemist  
College Professor  
Consultant  
Dentist  
Food scientist or technician  
Forensic scientist or technician  
Government policy-maker  
Hazardous waste manager  
Laboratory technician  
Materials scientist  
Medical scientist  
Patent attorney  
Perfume chemist  
Pharmacist  
Physician  
Physician's assistant  
Primary or secondary teacher  
Radiologist  
Registered nurse  
Science writer  
Veterinarian

## Majors: Chemistry

Chemists provide the understanding needed to create the products we use each day. The results of their efforts are seen in the medicines that treat diseases, in the fabrics we use in clothing and furniture and in the synthetic materials that make up many of the objects used in daily life. Students skilled in math, curious about the physical world and good at analysis and problem-solving, may enjoy a major in chemistry.

Chemistry majors study the composition, make-up and properties of matter. By learning how one form of matter may react with other molecules to change into a new material, chemists can utilize these chemical reactions to produce the products used in today's technological world.

Initially, chemistry majors begin by taking a core curriculum in the four general areas of chemistry: inorganic, organic, physical and analytical chemistry. These chemistry courses are supplemented by advanced studies in mathematics, biology, computer science and physics.

After a grounding in these general subjects, chemistry students are encouraged to specialize in one of the four traditional subgroups of chemistry. Organic chemists study carbon-based compounds—the chemistry of living things, while inorganic chemists study all other elements. Physical chemists specialize in the structure and properties of matter, while analytical chemists consider the identification of the individual components of complex mixtures.

A major in chemistry requires a great many hours in the laboratory and a large number of required classes. This leaves the chemistry major little time for elective classes. Choosing to combine another major with chemistry will probably add one or more years to your bachelor's degree.

Although some colleges award B.A.s in chemistry and others offer a B.S., there is little real difference between the degrees.

Programs accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS) are required to offer specific courses regardless of degree, thus assuring that graduates are eligible for ACS certification.

Job opportunities for chemistry majors are expected to be most plentiful at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Although entry level employment is available for those with a B.S./B.A., further study leading to an M.S. or Ph.D. in one of the branches of chemistry will yield more responsible as well as more interesting positions.



Chemistry majors often go on to scientific careers, taking such positions (after advanced study)

as research chemists, pharmacists and physicians. Many others are employed by drug or oil companies, become high school chemistry teachers or work as laboratory technicians.

Crime lab analysts often have degrees in forensic chemistry. A bachelor's in chemistry also provides an appropriate background for those seeking careers as environmental consultants.

Students thinking about a major in chemistry might also want to look at related majors such as chemical engineering, materials engineering, biochemistry, molecular biology, forensic science and environmental science. In selecting your college for one of these majors, consider the breadth and depth of courses offered in your chosen field and the research opportunities available for undergraduate students. Be sure to check to see if the program is ACS certified. You can learn more at the website of the American Chemical Society at [www.acs.org](http://www.acs.org) and by reading about careers in chemistry in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

## Financial Matters: The Language of Financial Aid



When you're searching and applying for college financial aid, it helps to understand the jargon. The FAFSA form (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) employs a bewildering array of acronyms. American students should file a FAFSA as soon as possible after

January 1st of senior year. Complete your application online at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. To make the process easier, we offer a handy translation guide.

- COA stands for Cost of Attendance. This number includes such costs as tuition, room and board, fees, books, a minimal budget for incidental spending, and two round trips yearly between the college and the student's home.
- EFC is the Expected Family Contribution—the amount student and family are expected to be able to

pay towards the first year of college expenses. The EFC is derived from an analysis of all of the data entered on the FAFSA form.

- ESTABLISHED NEED—the difference between the COA and the EFC. This is the amount that the college financial aid package will attempt to meet.
- CSS PROFILE—the College Board form required by many private colleges in addition to the FAFSA. The PROFILE gathers more in-depth financial information. If required, complete the College Scholarship Service PROFILE

## Completing the Common Application (continued from p.1)

In other cases, the writing supplement won't appear until you complete all of the questions. For example, Cornell University's supplemental essays differ for each of the University's schools. Once an applicant indicates which Cornell school they're applying to in the Academic questions for Cornell, the system will automatically show a writing supplement with the question for that school.

**The FERPA waiver must be completed before you can invite and assign your recommendation writers.** You'll need to enter into your Common Application account the names and email addresses of the teachers and counselors who'll be writing your recommendations. Before you can do that, however, you'll need to enter at least one college into your account and complete the FERPA waiver form in your account. When you enter the first college into your account, you'll see an item, FERPA and recommenders, appear under the college's name in My Colleges. Click on that link, and you'll be taken to a new page where you can sign the FERPA waiver. FERPA is a U.S. Federal law that protects the privacy of student records. You'll be given the choice of waiving your right

to ask colleges for copies of your letters of recommendation or not. Although you have the right to say no to the FERPA waiver, it's usually best to waive your right, as that assures colleges that recommendation letters are truthful and accurate.

**Your Common Application Dashboard helps you stay on top of your application status.** Once you've entered your colleges into your Common Application account, you'll see each college listed under your *Dashboard* tab. Initially, you'll see yellow icons next to each college's application and supplement. Once you have successfully completed and submitted your Common Application and the supplement for a college, the icons will turn to green. Once you indicate the term you're applying for in the colleges' extra questions sections, you'll also be able to quickly scan a list of deadlines for all of your colleges.

**Proofread carefully.** Before you submit your Common Application, you'll see a print preview of your application. It's a good idea to actually print this out and proofread the hard copy before you submit your application. Keep the hard copy in a safe place. If you discover a mistake **after** you submit your

application, you won't be able to correct the application for that school, but you will be able to correct the mistake in your account before you send it to the next school.

**Pay, then sign your application.** Your application won't be sent to colleges until you pay your application fee and then sign your application, in that order. Once you pay your application fee, your credit card payment will need to clear the system before you can move to the signature page of the application. In rare cases, it can take up to two days for your payment to clear. If your payment doesn't immediately go through, you'll need to return to your account when it does and continue to the signature page before your application can be submitted to that college. Once you've signed your application, your Dashboard icons next to the college will both turn to green. You'll also receive a confirmation email from the Common Application verifying that your application has been successfully submitted. If your Dashboard icons are not green, or you don't receive the confirmation email, make sure that you have paid, signed your application, and hit the final submit button on the signature page.

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## Making the Most of Your High School Years

In the quest for the “perfect college” it’s easy to get caught up in the college admissions frenzy and lose sight of what’s truly important as you begin the new school year: that is, making the most of high school. High school is a time to learn more about yourself in a relatively safe environment. During these years, you can try out a variety of extracurricular activities while learning more about the academic subjects that engage your interest. You can follow your passions by choosing advanced classes in subjects that truly interest you, and hone your leadership skills through participation in student government, publications, sports, the arts and various clubs.

Rather than choosing activities with an eye to impressing college admissions officers, select those that truly interest you. During the early years of high school, you may wish to try out a number of different activities. Through deeper involvement in the one or two activities that really click with you, you’ll develop leadership skills and a sense of purpose. It’s the depth of involvement in activities, rather than number of activities, that truly matters to colleges.

High school is the time to discover more about who you are. With a wider pool of potential friends than in middle school, you’ll make new friends based on common interests, similarities or differences.

You may even find yourself changing groups of friends throughout high school as your interests change.

Don’t overload on classes. Take only as many honors and AP classes as you can comfortably handle. Although you may receive a bump in your GPA for these classes, that “bump” comes at the price of a heavier workload and more hours of study outside of school. Ideally, you should take advanced classes in subjects that truly interest you. That interest lightens the burden of the extra work required.

High school is also the time to be yourself and to give some time to others. Pursue outside interests by taking classes in your community in art, music, dance, martial arts, drama or language. Make time to give back to others by volunteering your skills in a meaningful way. As with clubs, choose community service activities that matter to you. Find a cause and devote yourself to it.

During these years, learn all you can. Be open to new ideas, concepts, and views, both academically and personally. Read widely. And remember that learning doesn’t end when the school day is over. You’ll learn a lot from summer jobs, friends, volunteer activities, courses, travel and self-exploration if you simply “seize the day”!