

# Riley Baker Educational Consulting

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## October 2015

10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students—  
Review test materials & take  
New PSAT

### 3<sup>rd</sup> — SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

24<sup>th</sup> — ACT and ACT plus  
Writing (register by 9/18 —  
late registration 10/2)

Attend area college fairs and  
meetings

Meet with college reps visiting  
high schools

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

Complete CSS Profile if  
required by colleges

Submit “rolling” admissions  
applications ASAP

## November 2015

### 7<sup>th</sup>—SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

(register by 10/9 - late registra-  
tion 10/27)

Seniors – File Early Decision/  
Early Action applications

Work on remaining college  
applications

Register for a PIN at  
<https://fafsa.ed.gov> if you'll be  
applying for financial aid

## Five Tips For *Intellectual Interests* Essays

*“Describe an academic interest and  
how you have pursued it.”*

*“Why have you chosen the academ-  
ic major you indicated? How  
does it relate to your career and  
personal goals?”*

*“Reflect on an idea that has been  
important to your intellectual  
development.”*

*“How will you take advantage of the  
academic opportunities at our  
university?”*

Many colleges ask applicants to write es-  
says in response to questions similar to  
these. Although they may be worded dif-  
ferently, these questions fall under the cat-  
egory of “intellectual interests” essays.

In reading your responses, colleges hope  
to get a sense of your potential to take full  
advantage of the academic opportunities  
available at their institution. They're also  
curious about your academic and intellec-  
tual development during high school. How  
have your academic interests formed?  
How have you shown signs of intellectual  
engagement? How have you taken ad-  
vantage of the academic opportunities  
available to you in high school? Finally,  
these questions are often designed to get  
a sense of how you plan to use or apply  
your education in the future.

Here are some tips for writing “intellectual  
interest” essays:

**Before you write, reflect.** Over the past  
two years, which courses in school  
have made you sit up and take notice?  
Which classes have challenged you to  
think a little deeper, or changed your  
mind about something you formerly  
held true? Is there a class in school  
that you particularly look forward to

each day? Why? But, don't stop with  
school. When you “surf the net,” are  
there topics that you tend to focus on  
most? What subjects or ideas do you  
and your friends get into heated argu-  
ments about? When you have time to  
read *just for yourself*, what types of  
books are you most likely to grab? If  
you had to name a subject or topic that  
you wish you could learn more about,  
what would you say? Have you partici-  
pated in any extracurricular activities  
that are related to a particular subject or  
career that fascinates you? Write down  
your answers to these questions, and  
look for any patterns in your answers.

**Go beyond the obvious.** The best re-  
sponses to intellectual interest prompts  
go beyond simple answers such as “I've  
always enjoyed math.” Instead, they  
paint a picture for the reader of how the  
student's interest developed and ex-  
plain why it matters to the student. So,  
once you've identified a few possible  
subjects or topics for this essay, dig a  
little deeper. How and when did you  
decide that this was truly something of  
interest? Did anyone else play a role in  
helping you to discover this interest,  
such as a particular teacher? What  
experiences have you had that helped  
shape your interest?

**Focus on specifics.** Saying you love his-  
tory is one thing; saying that you are  
fascinated by the Italian Renaissance's  
effect on modern political thought is  
quite another. One suggests a person  
who has a passing interest in a subject;  
the other suggests someone who is  
truly passionate about a subject. As  
you narrow down ideas for your essay,

(continued on page 3)

## Careers for Art History Majors

Although many art history majors go on to careers that are not specifically art-related, there are many opportunities within the field of art. Some possible art-related careers include:

- Gallery curating
- Art conservation and restoring
- Museum marketing and public relations worker
- Art law and law enforcement, including the FBI's forgery team member
- Art consulting for a hotel or corporation
- Managing and representing artists
- Managing museum facilities operation
- Museum fundraising
- Special events planning for a museum or other arts organization
- Antiquarian book dealing
- Antique dealing
- Art and estate appraiser for an auction house or private firm
- Art investment consulting
- Art museum website designing
- Installing exhibits

Want to learn more about career options for students majoring in art history? The University of Texas at Austin has developed a Career Guide for Art History Majors that highlights career opportunities which align with the skills and talents art history majors offer. Download the free guide here: [www.utexas.edu/finearts/sites/default/files/attach\\_download/art\\_history\\_career\\_guide.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/finearts/sites/default/files/attach_download/art_history_career_guide.pdf)

## Majoring in Art History

In 2014, President Obama's off-hand comment that students might be better off being trained in manufacturing skills than majoring in art history caused a stir. Many former and current art history majors countered that their degrees had prepared them for successful careers, not just in the art world, but also in areas such as business, design, and education. As a result of the uproar, students and parents may find themselves wondering: what is an art history major, and is it worth considering?

As its name implies, art history is the study of art created by past civilizations. Art historians examine and interpret many types of art, including paintings, sculptures, crafts, and architecture in an effort to understand how they relate to the development of societies and cultures.

Art history is an intellectually demanding college major. In art history classes, students learn about the social, political, historical and religious contexts of various forms of art. Some classes focus on the artwork of specific historic periods, geographic locations, or cultures. Additionally, most art history programs require art history majors to take at least a few classes in studio art. Most programs also require coursework in a foreign language. Some art history students also take elective courses in art conservation, museum studies, and arts administration to supplement their study of art history. Students majoring in art history need to be able to gather and analyze information from a wide variety of sources and should have strong oral and written communication skills.

Art history can be a fascinating undergraduate major, but many students and parents wonder about job prospects for art history majors. Like many liberal arts majors, art history does not prepare students for specific jobs per se, but rather helps them develop skills that can be applied to many different types of careers. Many of

the skills art history majors develop are in high demand by employers in many industries. These include research skills, communication skills, sensitivity to and understanding of cultural diversity, and the ability to find creative solutions to complex problems.

Some art history majors pursue careers that are closely tied to their undergraduate major, such as working as curators or archivists in museums or art galleries, or taking jobs as art conservators and preservationists. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, job openings for archivists, curators, and museum workers are expected to grow 11 percent in the next decade, with salaries for all jobs in this segment averaging just below \$50,000 a year. Although some museum and gallery jobs accept students with just an undergraduate degree, a Master's degree is required for the best career opportunities in these fields. Other careers closely aligned with art history majors include art appraiser, arts administration, and arts education.

However, art history majors aren't limited to working in arts-related fields. Their well-developed writing and communication skills, problem-solving and analytic abilities and research talents enable art history graduates to succeed in many professions. Recognizing these skills, professional schools at the master's level, including law, business, and medical schools, welcome applications from art history majors. Other art history majors apply their skills and talents in fields ranging from marketing to journalism.

Whatever an art history major's future career path, students who pursue internships and work experience while still in college will have the most options immediately after graduation. Art history majors may also want to supplement their art history education with classes that further develop job-specific skills in subjects such as business or computer science.

## Financial Matters: Finding Affordable College Options



Our uncertain economic climate has prompted many families to eliminate all but public colleges and universities when compiling a college list. While the sticker price for tuition at state-supported colleges does appear to be lower than that at private institutions, it's important to consider the real costs involved in college education.

Budget cuts have forced public institutions to increase tuition, eliminate academic programs, raise class sizes, and reject greater numbers of applicants. Private colleges have also had to tighten their belts, but larger endowments have generally reduced their cost-cutting measures. As in the past, students attending private colleges receive significant amounts of financial aid and scholarships, often reducing their final cost to amounts close to or even less than what they might pay at a public institution.

Further affecting the total cost of edu-

cation is the number of years required to obtain a degree. Students at private colleges have a much better chance of completing their undergraduate studies in four years than do those at state-supported schools. A recent study showed that the graduation rates of private universities are 62% greater than those of public colleges.

Smaller class sizes, more contact with professors, higher likelihood of timely graduation, tuition breaks through campus-based financial aid—for all of these reasons, private colleges can be the more affordable choice for college.

When looking at public options, don't overlook opportunities in public universities in nearby states. Through agreements developed between some neighboring states, many out-of-state students pay tuition at the same or only slightly higher rate than would in-state residents. For example, students from Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin may be eligible for tuition reductions at certain public mid-western institutions through the *Midwest Student Exchange Program*.

The *Western Undergraduate Exchange* (WUE) program allows residents of member states to enroll in participating institutions at a reduced tuition. States served by WUE include Alaska,

Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The *Academic Common Market* provides reduced tuition (often at in-state levels) for students in sixteen southern states who want to pursue degrees not available at their own in-state public universities. Undergraduate reciprocity programs are available to students in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Some state universities, such as the University of Texas at Austin, attract highly qualified students to their state by offering them scholarships that include the right to pay in-state tuition. Other state systems, such as that of the Virginia public colleges, have a tuition structure that may result in out-of-state students paying no more than they would for a similar education in their home state.

The bottom line is to check out prices at all programs of interest to you. You may just be surprised by the cost of studying out-of-state or at a private college. Include both publics and privates on your final list and you'll be able to evaluate the best option for your family in the spring.

## Five Tips For Intellectual Interests Essays (continued from p.1)

try to focus on specific areas of the subject that fascinates you most, rather than talking in broad generalities.

**When possible, provide supporting evidence.** The most believable essays will let your reader see you in action, pursuing your interest. For example, if you're writing about your interest in environmental science, but cannot point to any specific thing you've done to pursue

this interest, your essay will probably not resonate as much as one written by someone who talks about how taking AP Environmental Science inspired him to start a local recycling effort in his town. Try to include examples of how you've *demonstrated and developed* your interest.

**Be honest.** Don't try to impress the admissions committee by writing

about an intellectual or academic subject that you don't have a sincere interest in. Don't try to fabricate evidence of your love for an academic or intellectual subject that you don't really feel. It may take some thought to identify the right topic and approach, but the best approach will always, ultimately, be one that stays true to who you really are.

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## College Fairs and Area Meetings

Each year, college admissions representatives crisscross the globe, bringing information about their colleges to a location near you. Through information sessions and college fairs, colleges try to put a human face on their institution. Information sessions are smaller, more intimate meetings, hosted by one or a small number of colleges. Often held at area hotels, students who have expressed an interest in a particular school by writing for information or signing up at its website are invited to group talks about the college and its offerings. Parents, too, are encouraged to attend. Colleges do keep track of attendees and consider your presence to be an expression of real interest in attending that school. This may give you a slight edge in competitive admissions.

College Fairs are much larger events, held in gyms, convention centers or hotel ballrooms. Presented by private groups, by area colleges and by the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), College Fairs bring admissions personnel and college alumni together with large numbers of students from area high schools. Some fairs may have representatives from hundreds of colleges, and it's easy to be overwhelmed by the seeming confusion. Your best bet is to come prepared. Know in advance

which colleges will be represented and the questions you want answered. Attendance at a College Fair is wonderful way to learn about college choices and to meet the people who may be influential in your admissions decisions.

Decide before the Fair which schools you'd like to see and map out a plan of attack. Give yourself adequate time and get to the Fair early before it fills with students. Bring a notebook, a bag for materials and a pen. It's also a good idea to preprint labels for yourself with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, school, date of graduation, and possible major area of interest; use these labels for the contact cards you'll be given at each table, and save yourself the time needed to complete them. Have a list of questions with you and jot notes about the answers you get from each college representative. Ask about the most popular majors, the percentage of students who live on campus, the availability of internships, the percentage of students who receive financial aid. Find out if admissions decisions are made without regard to financial need (need blind) and if merit scholarships are available. You might want to investigate support services, ask about campus safety, and inquire about career services.

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