



## December 2020

Check College Board and ACT websites for available test dates and sites in your area

## SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

### ACT and ACT With Writing

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report (if available) with advisor and map out a plan for test preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing dates

Seniors — File any additional college applications before deadline dates

## January 2021

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

## Interviewing Tips

Your applications have been submitted (or are nearly done) and for some, it's now time for interviews.

The first thing we need to do is to shake your image of the interviewer as the stereotypical older, tweed-jacketed, bespectacled, cranky admission person. You may be pleasantly surprised to find that college admission officers today are young, multi-cultural and far from cranky.

For a student who loved their college experience, working in admission is often a way to stay on at their alma mater and share their enthusiasm with high school students. Admission entry level jobs involve lots of not-so-glamorous travel, visiting multiple high schools each day and then returning to campus to hole-up and read hundreds of applications.

Seniors in the past have had the opportunity to interview with these admission representatives while they were traveling or, as was more frequently the case, students interviewed with alumni representatives in their hometown. In this time of COVID 19, however, your interview will most likely be held via Zoom or through another virtual platform, and may be with an admission rep or with an alumni interviewer. Many students who have applied for scholarships will also find that an interview is part of the scholarship selection process.

What can you expect from an interview?

Colleges want you to like them, even if they don't accept you. This means that the interview is not a test. The interviewer is not there to grill you or intimidate you. In

fact, many interviewers will err on the side of being too gentle and not probing sufficiently to thoroughly understand the applicants.

A student's job is to:

**Control the conversation.** The more the student can make the interview into a conversation versus a question and answer session, the more success they are likely to have. The best way to do that is for the student to make themselves accessible; be genuine, honest and share your personality.

**Prepare but don't be rehearsed.** You can anticipate a variety of questions including: "Tell us about yourself." "What do you think has been your biggest accomplishment, achievement or contribution to your high school or your community?" "Why do you want to attend our school?" "What questions do you have for me?" Think about these questions, practice responding to them and get some critique from someone you trust. Also prepare to ask some questions of your own.

**Be respectful.** Seems a little silly to even mention this, but students unknowingly eliminate themselves from contention for a variety of reasons including: not turning off their cell phones, arriving late, dressing inappropriately, making a poor first impression by slouching, chewing gum, and acting disinterested, etc.

**Follow-up.** It's absolutely the right thing to do to send a hand-written thank you note to the interviewer. Be sure to reference something discussed in the interview and make it substantive. If you are still interested in attending, communicate your enthusiasm in the note.

## Career Paths for Civil Engineering Majors

- Agricultural Engineer
- Building Inspector
- Building Services Engineer
- Civil Engineer
- Concrete Engineer
- Construction Manager
- Consumer Advocate
- Cost Estimator
- Design Engineer
- Entrepreneur
- Environmental Engineer
- Geotechnical Engineer
- Hazardous Waste Technologist
- Hydro Engineer
- Industrial Engineer
- Infrastructure Engineer
- Materials Engineer
- Military Engineer
- Product Development Engineer
- Production Engineer
- Research Engineer
- Site Engineer
- Structural Engineer
- Transportation Planner
- University Professor
- Water Resources Engineer

## Majoring in Civil Engineering

Did you enjoy Legos as a kid? Were you always building things or taking them apart? Do you enjoy using math and science to solve puzzles? If so, a major in civil engineering might be right for you.

A major in civil engineering prepares students to design, build, and maintain facilities such as buildings for both public and private purposes. Some examples of projects are bridges, highways, dams, water purification systems, and environmental control systems.

Because the major follows the requirements set by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, there is not much difference between university programs. Because of the nature of civil engineering, there is a strong emphasis on developing creativity by applying the concepts and principles of math and science. Therefore, students must take many classes in mathematics, including calculus and differential equations, as well as in the sciences. Science requirements often include chemistry, physics, and occasionally biology or geology. Students will also take courses under the umbrella of engineering sciences and design, as well as classes in the humanities and social sciences. During the last two years of the major, students will take the majority of their career-focused classes.

Most courses are lecture-based, but students will often be challenged with “story problems,” which is when a professor presents a real-world situation to the class that they must solve. The goal is to help majors learn to pull important information out of a case, to interpret an issue, and to understand how to apply theories they learn in class to the real world.

Unlike other engineering majors, civil engineering has many concentrations to choose from.

*Structural engineering* focuses on designing large structures such as buildings, bridges, and dams.

*Hydrosystems* concentrates on engineering projects related to water systems: dams, floodwalls, canals, pumping stations, irrigation or drainage systems, and creating navigable waterways.

There is also an *environmental* focus, in which students learn how to plan facilities related to environmental concerns. Some examples include solid waste management facilities, water purification plants, the disposal of hazardous waste, and facilities that mitigate air and water pollution.

Other students may choose a concentration in *geotechnical* engineering. Examples of projects related to geotechnical engineering are excavation and construction methods for tunnels, dams, or other underground structures.

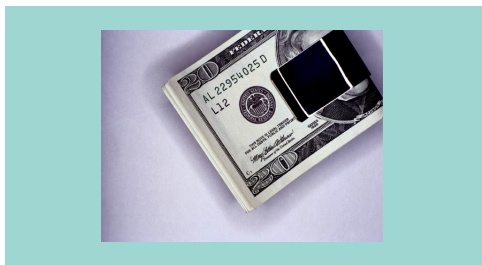
A *transportation* focus will teach students how to design things such as highways, airports, railways, pipelines, and aerospace systems.

Graduates will have a variety of job opportunities. For students interested in the environment, organizations such as the EPA often hire officials and engineers to consult with. Students could either become a civil engineer that works on environmental projects such as the ones listed above or work for an agency that requires knowledge in that sector.

Students who are more interested in the research aspect than the actual design process would do well in a government laboratory. However, other students may be more inclined to become construction engineers who work on various projects.

Majors may choose to work for the city on building or maintaining local structures such as roads, water supply systems, or bridges. Students with a focus in transportation may go on to work for organizations such as the Department of Transportation. Finally, a student could seek a graduate degree to work as a civil engineering professor.

## Financial Matters: Searching for Scholarships



Scholarships provide gift money that does not have to be repaid. That makes scholarships an attractive way to help pay for college. Most scholarships are awarded directly by the college you attend, but there are also other sources of scholarship aid. Federal and state governments, employers, credit and professional organizations, some private companies, foundations, individuals, and religious and civic or-

ganizations offer scholarships. But how can you find out about these?

To search for scholarships, choose a couple of the free scholarship search engines described below. And remember, any scholarship service that requests money to apply is likely to be a scam.

- FastWeb ([fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)) connects you to targeted scholarships based on your profile (strengths, interests, skills, groups).
- SRN ([studentscholarshipsearch.com](http://studentscholarshipsearch.com)) matches students to appropriate scholarships based on strengths, talents, field of study, sports, achievements and background.

- College Resource Network ([collegeresourcenetwork.com](http://collegeresourcenetwork.com)) also includes many minority scholarships in its database.
- School Soup ([goodcall.com](http://goodcall.com)) allows users to search through thousands of awards with no fee or account sign-up required.
- Cappex ([cappex.com](http://cappex.com)) comprises a database of scholarships worth over \$11 billion.
- BigFuture ([bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)) offers a searchable scholarship database.
- [Scholarships.com](http://Scholarships.com) compares your background with its database and identifies good matches.

## The 5 P's of Choosing Colleges

With over 3,500 colleges and universities in the U.S., deciding where to apply – and, ultimately, which college to attend – can seem overwhelming, especially as you begin your college search. The task can be less daunting if your family agrees on a game plan for sorting out the options. The first step? Deciding what your priorities are for your college search.

For most students and their families, college search priorities boil down to one or more of the “five P’s”: Place, Program, Prestige, Price, and Personal. Let’s take a look at some of the questions you and your parents might ask yourselves in order to weigh the importance of each “P.” As you read through these questions, answer those that seem particularly relevant to you.

**Place:** Are you dreaming about attending college in a city? Is staying close to home important? Is a particular part of the country calling you? Do you prefer warm weather most of the year or want

to experience all four seasons?

**Program:** Do you already have a specific college major or career in mind? Are you hoping for strong advising to help you figure out your interests? Do you prefer a school with more flexible general education requirements or a more structured curriculum? Is studying abroad or access to internships critical? Do you need support programs for a learning disability?

**Prestige:** Are “bragging rights” about the college you attend important to you? Will you only consider schools that rank high on published surveys?

**Price:** What is a realistic annual budget for your family for college expenses? Are you hoping for scholarships? Are you willing to take on student/parent loans for a more expensive college?

**Personal:** Are you hoping to participate in certain extracurricular activities during college, such as athletics, music or Greek life? Would you

prefer to attend a religiously-affiliated college? Do you want a school where students tend to be more liberal or more conservative, or perhaps a mix? Are there other characteristics you hope your future college will have?

Don’t be surprised if your priorities change as you begin to research, visit, and apply to colleges; changing your mind is part of the college search process. As your list begins to take shape, revisit the 5 P’s to evaluate how each college fits your current priorities.

The “5 P’s” can also be a useful starting point for family discussions about college. Students and parents can work through the list of questions individually and create their own ranking of the importance of each “P.” Then, meet as a group to discuss how and why you’ve prioritized the five categories. Often, you’ll discover ideas for your college search that you or your parents haven’t considered before.

## Dealing With Deferrals



Tutoring - College Counseling  
Test Prep - Study Center

6700 Fallbrook Ave  
Suite 101  
West Hills, CA 91307

818.888.8665

[SynergyAcademics.com](http://SynergyAcademics.com)

[Jennifer@SynergyAcademics.com](mailto:Jennifer@SynergyAcademics.com)

Early decision, early action and priority applicants receive admission decisions on a time frame that coincides with the holidays. Some will be thrilled with acceptance, others disappointed by rejection, and still others left in limbo by a letter deferring the decision until a later time. While disappointing, a deferral is actually a “maybe”; it’s up to you now to convince your chosen college that you really are an excellent candidate for admission.

Colleges generally defer applicants because they still need more information to make a decision. Sometimes, the applicant’s grades may be in question; the admission committee would like to see some senior year grades before acting on your application. A strong showing in challenging senior classes will help sway the committee to “accept”. Have your midyear grades sent as soon as they are available. Be sure to tell your school counselor about any new achievements so she can include mention of these in her mid-year report.

Or perhaps, the college would really like to see higher SAT or ACT scores. If you’ve retaken the SAT or ACT this winter, have the testing agency send the new

scores to the college. If you have applied Test Optional this year, inquire if additional information might be helpful. Another strong recommendation letter (perhaps from a senior year teacher or an employer), copies of articles you’ve written for the newspaper, or other more recent evidence of achievement could be sent in support of your application. Just be sure that you read the college’s deferral letter carefully; it will state exactly what type of information they would welcome. Follow their lead.

Sometimes, the decision was determined by circumstances that are beyond your control. The college may be looking to increase diversity or, perhaps, had too many qualified applicants from your region. You can still influence the final decision by letting “Deferral U.” know how interested you are in attending. Write directly to the admission officer in charge of your region, expressing your continued interest in attending and asking if any additional information would be helpful. A call from your school counselor to the college could provide you with insight into the reasons behind the deferral. Don’t give up, but rethink all of your college options—there are many colleges that can provide a perfect fit.