

May 2021

1st – Common reply deadline for college enrollment (check college websites; some colleges have delayed this until June 1st)

SAT - May 8th

AP exams

Juniors – work on resume and college list

June 2021

SAT - June 5th

ACT - June 12th

Seniors – thank teachers and others who helped you
thank scholarship providers
have your final transcript sent to your college

Summer Plans—In-Person & Virtual

Summer 2020 was dramatically different for high school students, with in-person programs closed and very few virtual opportunities. However, Summer 2021 already promises great improvements since exciting options are opening up. Some of the most well-established summer programs are offering both a few on-campus courses and many online courses. One excellent example of this is at the well-known Summer@Brown, on the campus of Brown University. Stanford University is now open for summer 2021 enrollment with special advanced online coursework, and the Phillips Academy Summer Session has a hybrid option with both boarding and online opportunities. Columbia University has a wide range of program types, and Barnard, Smith, University of Connecticut, Cornell, Emory University and Harvard offer a variety of programming options.

Summer programs offer such an exciting, broad and rich array of subjects! Consider a summer program to be your opportunity to explore, deepen your interests and spark new academic passions. This is what a good summer program can bring you – new ideas, new experiences and greater self-awareness. These invigorating experiences, on-campus or online, can also give you a much greater understanding of college life in general and better preparation as you turn towards your new 'home away from home' on-campus next year, or the year after.

Being on-campus would be a splendid opportunity, but in reality, campus programs may not be widely available this summer. Nevertheless, these and other outstanding colleges and universities are offering excellent on-line programs of various lengths, often taught by great teachers who can make virtual courses brilliant and stimulating! As an online summer program student, it is important that you still

follow the same rules of engagement and behavior as an on-campus participant – turn your camera on, be on-time for class, engage and ask questions in class, and make a positive impression on your instructors.

Some students believe that the 'right' summer program at a prestigious Ivy League institution will demonstrate the student's interest and abilities, and hopefully gain 'points' in the student's college application process. However, colleges' admission office and summer programs offices are in NO way connected.

What IS important is *your* response to the opportunities you have, whatever they may be. These are the topics you'll use to write vibrant, appealing essays on your college applications, showing your motivation and the dynamic intellectual interest that led you to spend some of your summer weeks eagerly learning. Each college's admission officer hopes to read about your excitement as you discovered something new about yourself when you experienced your first taste of life away from home, or how an offshoot to what you thought of as a prospective major opened up the doors for new thoughts and ideas about your future goals.

As you consider your summer plans, keep the following in your mind. The reason behind your selection of a specific program should be an opportunity for you to demonstrate your interest in exploring areas of academic inquiry. For example, you are not duty bound to complete a STEM program as a Math major if you are fascinated with the study of Chinese, and don't assume that your colleges won't take you seriously if you embark on a summer writing program if you plan to apply for a major in Marine Biology. Just be ready to write about your academic interests in your application, if possible, or share with an admission officer in an informational interview. It demonstrates your desire for knowledge, and that, after all, is what colleges are seeking in successful applicants.

Career Paths for Visual Arts Majors

- Animator
- Art consultant
- Art critic
- Art editor
- Art gallery director
- Art preservationist
- Art therapist
- Cartoonist
- Cinematographer
- Courtroom sketch artist
- Curator
- Exhibit designer
- Fashion designer
- Furniture designer
- Graphic designer
- Jewelry designer
- Illustrator
- Interior decorator
- Landscape designer
- Museum director
- Painter
- Product designer
- Teacher



Majoring in the Visual Arts

Art has the ability to connect people across cultures, to communicate messages, to inspire change and open minds. Artists are the marker of a healthy society, and if you are passionate about and talented at creating art, a major in the visual arts may be right for you.

Visual arts majors learn traditional forms of art production in media such as painting, drawing, digital imaging, sculpting and photography. Students begin by taking lower-level courses in the fundamentals of these media, gaining practical skills in producing their own art. As the major continues, they develop their own individualized styles with an understanding of historical traditions. Many major programs require students to study art history as part of their coursework, and students will often analyze the works and achievements of individual artists.

Throughout the process, students grow as creators, but they also gain many other skills. One is communication, as students will need to justify and present their artistic choices. They will develop an eye for art, engaging in critical evaluation of peers' works and the works of renowned artists. In taking and applying criticism, they will be better prepared to process judgement in their personal and professional lives.

Many art majors become artists in their own right. They paint, draw, sculpt, or photograph independently, selling their works to collectors, patrons, galleries, and museums. Often, artists may be found doing caricatures at amusement parks, being hired to photograph weddings or graduation ceremonies, painting portraits for families, opening their own galleries to sell works, or doing commissioned work.

Other artists may choose to work for a single company. They may become cartoonists, animators, illustrators, or other types of artists in a variety of fields. For example, a graduate may find work at a film production company in designing or animating characters for a movie. Another

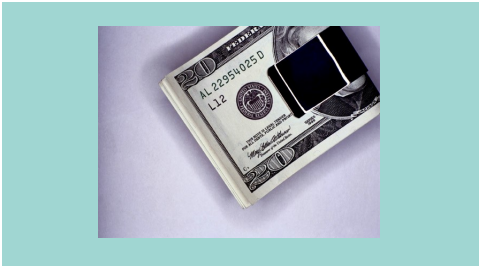
may design sets for either film or theatre productions. Other artists work with police departments to create drawings of suspects from witness descriptions. Graduates may become political cartoonists for a newspaper, or work at an ad agency designing materials for a variety of clients or within a single company designing ads. Majors could even use their skills in producing materials for nonprofits or political campaigns.

Some students may choose to focus less on their own art production and more on skills gained in analyzing and critiquing art. Some may become art critics, museum curators selecting art pieces to display at a museum, or journalists with an art beat. Others may choose to work as talent agents or art preservationists. Art preservationists work to preserve older and more delicate works of art; this requires an understanding of science as well as art. Typically they work for museums. Some art majors may pursue art history and become historians or curators specializing in older styles of art.

Students with an interest in therapy may receive further degrees and become art therapists. Art therapists work with patients to help them improve cognitive abilities, relieve stress, rehabilitate from an injury or traumatic experience, or communicate in ways that they may not be able to verbally. Art therapists work with a variety of ages and demographics, but some examples of clients are veterans with PTSD, patients at hospitals, patients at psychiatric and rehabilitation centers, and seniors.

Other art majors become teachers. Typically, art studios conduct classes with both serious and non-serious students. However, graduates could also work with greater talent levels as a fine arts teacher at high schools and universities. This job type would require an interest in education and working with people, and may require more advanced degrees.

Financial Matters: Financial/Legal Issues for New College Students



There are a few legal and financial issues that should be addressed before your son or daughter goes off to college. If your child has turned or will turn 18 during the next year, she is legally an adult, and you, her parent, lose the legal authority to make decisions on her behalf. That means that you have no legal right to see her grades, to manage her finances (although you remain responsible for paying her college tuition), or to make medical decisions or speak with her doctor. So, before she goes off to college, consider asking her to sign some documents that will keep you informed.

- **FERPA release:** with your child's permission, you can speak with the college about her performance. Colleges often have their own FERPA release forms, so ask your student's college for a copy.

- **HIPAA Authorization:** allows you to access your child's health records and speak to her doctors about medical issues.

- **Advance Care Directive for Health Care:** allows you to act on your adult child's behalf in the event that she is incapacitated and unable to make decisions for herself.

- **Durable Power of Attorney:** allows you to act on your adult child's behalf regarding legal or financial matters.

You can get the previous three forms from your family lawyer. Each of these forms can be revoked at any time, but having them in place while your child is away at college may provide the whole family with extra peace of mind.

This is also a good time to address money management issues.

- **Set up a bank account** that will allow you to easily transfer money to her account. An online bank account may be the most useful, especially if the bank has special student accounts available that will give parents access to bank information. Find out which banks have ATMs close to campus—

college kids usually don't write many checks. Be sure to check on fees for using an ATM that's not part of your bank's network.

- **Make plans to protect student property.** College kids tend to have a lot of valuable electronics and computer equipment. Renter's insurance can protect your investment if these items were to disappear. Your homeowner's policy might also cover dorm room possessions—check with your agent.

- **Health insurance:** check out options provided by the college and compare these policies with your existing family medical coverage.

- **Car insurance:** check with your agent. If your child will not have a car at college, you may be eligible for a discount on your auto rate.

- **Discuss credit card dangers:** college students are besieged with credit card offers—discuss how the misuse of credit cards can affect their ability to get credit in the future. Look into debit card options or provide your offspring with a card in your name that can be monitored.

Brainstorming Your College Essay

Summer is a great time to ponder deep thoughts, and as the school year winds down, rising seniors should be pondering their college essays.

The essay is a student's best opportunity to set themselves apart in the college application. Their grades through junior year are set and while they may be able to improve their test scores in the fall, it's the essay where they can truly put the spotlight on their personality.

Remember, there are more than 35,000 other student government presidents, nearly 35,000 other school newspaper editors and thousands more members of the National Honor Society. The essay can be the ticket out of "Sameville." No question, summer is the best time to start thinking about and drafting your essays.

Where to start? Brainstorming a compelling topic is much more challenging than just sitting down and writing an essay; in fact, it is a much more rewarding process. It is tough work because it requires self-analysis and a willingness to dig deep to provide the college admission reader with thoughtful, introspective writing.

How do you brainstorm? First, find a quiet place where you can think and write, away from distractions. To start, free-write some thoughts on different or defining moments you've had. Have you worked with someone who has had an impact on your life? This could be an extracurricular, academic, or athletic activity. What are the descriptors or the "defining characteristics" that you or someone who knows you really well would use to describe you?

Are you passionate about something? Do you have any quirky hobbies? Did you choose to become vegan? How have you changed in the last few years? Which experiences have been the most meaningful? And especially, how have you grown and changed during this pandemic year? Ask yourself, "What do I want colleges to know about me?" This is a great time to think about what is important to you and how you have matured over the last several years.

Once you have written some thoughts, take a look at the essay prompts for the Common App and the Coalition Application. These are intentionally vague, providing you with opportunities to use your brainstormed topics to fit one or more of the prompts.

Take-aways from the 2021 Admission Year



Tutoring - College Counseling
Test Prep - Study Center

6700 Fallbrook Ave
Suite 101
West Hills, CA 91307

818.888.8665

SynergyAcademics.com

Jennifer@SynergyAcademics.com

Everyone involved in the college admission world would probably agree that the 2021 admission cycle was unlike any other. At a recent gathering of educational consultants, we compiled a list of take-aways that will likely be important for the next few years. Current juniors should keep these take-aways in mind while finalizing their own college lists.

1. Completely unpredictable—we all saw admission decisions that were unexpected. Students with exceptional credentials were turned away or waitlisted. Other students with lesser credentials were accepted at highly selective colleges. This points to the fact that every student needs to have a balanced list of colleges.

A balanced list consists of colleges that fit realistically into the student's academic success and personal interest profile. Some (2-3) can be more selective (reach) schools, but avoid unrealistic schools that will very likely disappoint over 90% of their very strong applicant pool. Denials from such institutions can be very hard for students to understand and accept. Most colleges on your list should be 'possible' schools, where your grades, scores and interests really 'fit', and where you can thrive and be happy. Be sure to also include a significant number of 'likely' institutions, whose acceptances will boost your confidence, and may even offer the financial incentive of 'merit' aid.

2. Balanced list—those 2021 high school graduates who had very balanced college lists had the greatest number of college options at the end of the process. Every

school on your list should be one you would be excited to attend.

3. Test optional/ test blind—with so many students applying without test scores (a trend expected to continue for at least one more year), colleges were forced to put more emphasis on other parts of the application. The test optional policies also led to a great increase in the number of applications to highly selective colleges. For example, applications to UCLA increased 25% to 160,000 applications.

4. Personal stories—students who were most successful in the process tended to share highly personal stories in their personal statements. Essays that featured stories about how the student made a difference in some way were particularly valued. College admission officers looked with favor on evidence of character.

5. Falling acceptance rates at the most selective colleges. With the great increase in applications, the acceptance rate at the most selective colleges reached new lows. Harvard accepted about 3% of applicants, while Columbia, Princeton and MIT limited their acceptances to about 4%. This again points to the need for a balanced list—among all colleges, the average acceptance rate is 57%.

6. Out-sized waitlists—most applicants to highly selective colleges are now sitting on one or more waitlists—dragging out the college selection process though June or later.