



Climbing the steps to success

November 2016

5th—SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

(register by 10/7 - late registration 10/21)

Seniors – File Early Decision/ Early Action applications

Work on remaining college applications

December 2016

3rd—SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

(register by 11/3 - late registration 11/22)

10th— ACT and ACT With Writing (register by 11/4- late registration 11/18)

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report 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

Selective Admissions

Out of the 3,500 accredited American colleges and universities, only about 50 are considered “highly selective”, meaning they regularly admit less than 25% of their applicants. A couple of hundred colleges are deemed “selective”, generally defined as those which admit less than 50% of their applicants. Selective universities tend to utilize a holistic admissions process in which they consider and evaluate the student as a whole. They are looking for more than excellent grades and test scores. Although these are certainly important, distinctive personal accomplishments, and community involvement and service are also weighed heavily. Selective schools are inundated each year by applicants with strong grades and testing; so what sets the admitted ones apart from those who are denied?

Most importantly, schools want to see that you would be a good fit and that you will be able to positively contribute to their campus. Leaders, well-rounded students, and those with extracurricular accomplishments and interesting talents have a competitive edge. Strengths in athletics, the arts, and/or academic accomplishments and recognition in such areas as poetry and journalism are helpful. Taking challenging high school coursework, demonstrating a passion for learning, and being consistently active in your school and community show your engagement. It is important to take an active role in demonstrating your talents and commitment. Throughout high school, work to make a difference by having an impact on your school and/or community. Make it clear in your application that you intend to continue to contribute your special skills and/or passions in a particular area once admitted to their university.

Additional factors evaluated by selective admissions departments may include legacy status and strong letters of recommendation from high school counselors and teachers (don't forget to request these

during the first few weeks of senior year, or even at the end of your junior year). Also significant are a strong application essay written by YOU and clearly stating your reasons for wanting to attend; athletic accomplishments, special skills and/or talents; active participation in college visits, fairs and interviews; and your capacity to contribute to the college's diverse community. It certainly doesn't hurt to have made recognized contributions to your community or culture. Involvement in two or three activities throughout high school, such as community service and sports, will demonstrate that you are well-rounded. Demonstrated leadership in a group, interesting summer experiences such as a foreign exchange trip, community service and internships are also important. Demonstrated interest in your prospective major, such as through volunteer work, can also show your sense of purpose and dedication.

The most competitive applicants to selective schools have a high weighted GPA (3.8-4.6) focused on challenging coursework, high SAT (750-800 per test section) or ACT (>30 Composite) scores, high AP test scores (4s and 5s), ongoing participation in extracurricular activities, and solid essays and letters of recommendation. Consistency or steady improvement in your grades, along with an explanation of a bad semester, should be highlighted. More and more schools are turning to social media as an “online resume”, so make sure you are using sites such as Facebook to highlight your strengths. You also may want to consider creating a resume, further explaining accomplishments such as academic honors and awards, along with any interesting activities you are committed to both in and outside of high school. Some colleges will allow you to submit a resume, as long as it shares new information and/or provides more detailed information about what matters deeply to you. Above all, demonstrate your interest, and showcase all the reasons you feel you would be a perfect fit for colleges to which you are applying.

Career Paths for Animation Majors

- Video Game Designer
- Art Director
- Character Animator
- Graphic Programmer
- Film and Video Editor
- Visual Effects Artist
- Layout Artist
- Mathematical Modeler
- Game Designer
- Storyboard Artist
- Web Developer
- Character Rigger
- Forensic Animator
- FX Artist
- 3D Modeler/3D Tracker
- Background Painter
- Flash Director
- Inbetweener
- Cartoonist
- Color Key Artist

Majoring in Animation

Animators work as multi-media artists to express stories and concepts by creating animation, special effects and other images using computers and various electronic tools. Animation is essentially a type of visual storytelling; it is an expressive art form that delivers content in a format that is able to surpass reality. Exciting and intriguing graphics and realistic special effects are used in many industries. While animators often work in the entertainment industry, there are jobs available in many other fields such as advertising and education.

In entertainment, animation is used in many different places. Animators work to create video games for PCs and consoles. Within video game animation, job options include being a modeler, a texture artist, an animator, and a motion-capture artist. Video design companies are also employed to create educational and training videos. Animators frequently work in television and film production. Since animated characters and landscapes are much less expensive than creating live productions with highly paid actors, it is a popular entertainment medium. Big name companies such as Disney and Pixar employ animators, along with smaller independent film producers and even local television stations. In film, job options include working as a background artist, a compositor, a character animator, and a rendering artist. A single animated film may require as many as 500 animators, so there are lots of employment opportunities in this industry.

Advertising employs animators to help promote and sell brands and products. Animation is a powerful tool for entertaining and effectively communicating a message. For example, everyone knows who the Geico Gecko and Mr. Clean are; their television commercials are frequent and

entertaining, and although they are unrealistic, they are imaginative and explanatory. Many industries look to animation to convey information, for everything from business to technology to medicine.

In education, animation is used to teach and get information across in a fun, tangible way. Educational videos, e-books, and games are used both in primary and secondary education in online instruction, to make learning more fun and understandable, often in the form of educational shorts.

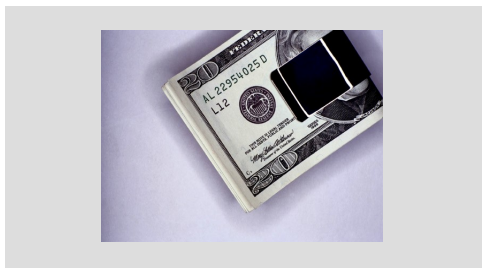
Animation majors can also find work in web design, publishing, graphic design, and art directing. Some choose to freelance and work for a variety of employers. For example, a freelancing forensic animator can help investigators piece together crime scenes and explain evidence for presentation to a jury, or they assist in insurance and liability claims. Mathematical modelers, perhaps the most specialized type of animation, use complex formulae to generate multifaceted models, which are often used in the fields of engineering and aeronautics.

Animation majors should have strong skills in drawing, the arts, and computer technology. College courses for this major cover the technical aspects of computer animation along with the physical aspects of drawing. Students can expect to take classes in multimedia design, 3D modeling, animation, and character design. They may also take 2-D and 3-D animation, life drawing, texture and lighting, and digital imaging.

College and career information for prospective animation majors can be found at www.animation-school.net.



Financial Matters: Completing the CSS Profile



The bulk of college financial aid money comes from the federal government; this aid is distributed by colleges using information supplied by families when they complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) available on October 1st. About 400 colleges, universities and scholarship programs, however, use an additional form, the *CSS Profile*, to gather more information in order to award their own institutional funds to deserving students. Students applying to college should check to see if this form is

required by schools on their list. Some scholarship programs also utilize the CSS Profile. It, too, becomes available on October 1st each year.

The *Profile* provides a more complete picture of your family's finances; it also provides a way for you to describe special circumstances right on your application. Begin by logging on to the College Board website at <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>.

Use your College Board student account and password to begin the *Profile* process. Alternatively, parents can create a separate account, since sensitive financial information will be collected. The first step after logging in to your account is to register for the correct year (2017-18 for this year's senior class). Now, complete the registration

questions and download and print out the pre-application worksheet and instructions.

Once this is done, you can begin the online application immediately or come back to it at a later time. You will need a number of financial documents, so get these ready before beginning the application. Answer questions carefully; answers are saved as you change screens and you do not need to complete the whole form at one time. Unlike the FAFSA, there is a processing and reporting fee for this application. After an initial \$25 registration fee (includes one school report), you will be charged \$16 for each additional report required. After submitting, you will receive an acknowledgement and instructions for making any needed revisions.

Acing the Interview

It's not unusual to get nervous before an interview with a college admissions officer or alumni representative. Students are afraid that if they are not brilliant, witty and charming, their chances of getting into the college are next to nothing. But the truth is that interviews have little impact on admissions decisions. Admissions directors understand that well-qualified students can be extremely anxious and may not come across well in an interview, and sometimes the chemistry just isn't right between a student and interviewer. Recommendations from teachers who know you well and well-written essays can have a much bigger impact on admission decisions.

Knowing that it won't make or break your application should help students feel more relaxed. Schools that do offer evaluative interviews generally use them to confirm the information in other parts of the application. Sure, there are

things you can do in an interview that will tank your application, such as spouting racist views. Admissions officers think about how you'll interact with dorm-mates, so likeability certainly is a plus, but you aren't likely to ruin a strong application if you're nervous and not at your best.

Of course, the fact that interviews aren't a major factor in admissions decisions means that having a great interview won't get you into a school. But it's possible that if it came down to two similarly well-qualified students, and one had formed a bond with an admissions officer during an interview, that admissions officer might be more inclined to advocate for that student. So you do want to make the most of the opportunity.

Being prepared will lower your anxiety level and help you create a better interview experience. Have some clear

ideas about your strengths, interests and goals that you can communicate during the meeting.

Interviews are usually optional, and only worth having if you've done your research. Have several questions prepared so that when the interviewer asks if you have any questions, you're ready to communicate a real interest in the school. You should be seeking information that isn't obvious from the website. It's fine to ask what students do on weekends, but it's also a good idea to ask about specific academic programs, especially those that are unique to that school.

If you approach the interview as a conversation, where you and the interviewer are exchanging information, it can actually be fun. The more you initiate conversation, the less time the interviewer will have to ask you questions. So relax and enjoy!

How Colleges Evaluate Transcripts

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Imagine the dilemma. College admissions offices must somehow make sense of the myriad of ways that students from the more than 25,000 U.S. high schools report student achievement on their high school transcripts.—to say nothing of the many different ways that international applicants from dozens of countries present their grade reports and credentials. Some secondary schools use a 100 point scale, others opt for a 4.0, a 5.0, or even a ten point scale. Some add additional points for honors, AP or IB classes. Still others offer no grades at all, reporting progress anecdotally. The trick is to somehow level the playing field for all students by converting these reports to a common scale.

Most high schools send a school profile along with their transcript. The profile explains the grading scale and usually offers some sort of grade distribution so admissions officers can estimate how their applicant performed compared to other students at their high school. The profile also provides information about the number and type of advanced classes available at that school as well as standardized test score results. Armed with this information, admissions officers can make an informed guess about what that 3.5 or 4.74 really means. For international students, you may have to work with your school to develop a school profile that can be sent to your colleges.

At most high schools, a student's GPA will include all classes, including non-academic ones such as PE or band or religion. Other schools offer a weighted GPA, an unweighted GPA, and a state-approved GPA. Once again, the college admissions officer must determine how to evaluate these numbers in comparison to the GPAs of other applicants. In most cases, colleges respond by re-computing the applicant's GPA to include only grades earned in core academic classes—math, science, social studies, English, and foreign language. This will usually be an unweighted GPA, but rigor of curriculum will be heavily factored into the evaluation.

What happens when students retake a class to improve performance? Once again, this is left to the discretion of each admissions office. Often, colleges will replace the lower grade with the new grade earned for the same class, but other colleges may simply average both grades into their re-computed GPA. As you can see, it's no small task to evaluate transcripts fairly. College admission officers travel to visit schools and learn about their programs and options for students, and they pour over schools' profiles and statistics, as they work hard to assess the multitude of transcripts as fairly as possible.