

COMMON APP CAMP

2026 · Class of 2027. This is your year.

WARM-UP · PICK ONE

- 1 A photo on your phone that sums up your summer. What does it say about you?
- 2 The story of your name: who chose it, what it means, your nicknames.
- 3 One goal, personal or academic, for senior year.

Share with your table, and introduce yourself to a volunteer while you're at it.

Camp map

START HERE

We don't go in order. Finish a station, jump to what YOU need.

A

Get set up

Overgrad + H/EOP

B

Common App

Green checks everywhere

C

Build your list

Academic · money · social

D

Colleges + questions

Add all, answer each

E

Essays

Statement + supplementals

F

Diversity Overnights

Free visits. Apply NOW

Volunteers are here all day. Wave one over any time.

How camp works

THE DEAL



Be present

Phones down
during sprints.



Move forward

Stuck 5 minutes?
Ask.



Be professional

Colleges read what
you write.

The work goes home with you. Class time is never enough for a whole application.

Meet the volunteers

THE DEAL



They've been through this.

- They read drafts out loud with you
- They audit your green checks
- They gut-check "is this a reach?"
- They went to college. Ask them anything

**Use them
constantly.**

Asking is the move,
not the backup
plan.

Accelerated Timeline

OPT IN

A half-year course: extra time + individual support for every application.

Especially if you're doing:

- Early Action or Early Decision
- QuestBridge or Posse
- A long college list

85+ average?

You're in
automatically.
Anyone can join.

Want in? Tell us within the FIRST WEEK of classes.



STATION

A

Get set up

Your list lives in Overgrad · H/EOP answered

Your list lives in Overgrad

A · SET UP

The screenshot displays the Overgrad interface with a list of colleges. Each college entry includes a header with the school name, a 'Reach' status, and 'Admissions Chances: NA'. Below this, it lists the school's location, year, number of students, and website. A table of statistics follows, including Annual Net Cost, % Need Met, White Grad Rate, Reported GPA, Test Scores (Middle 50%), Optional, and Rigor. The bottom of each entry shows the 'Intended Application Type' and a note about when it was added. The sidebar on the right contains 'TASKS' and 'MESSAGES' buttons, and a 'Help' button is at the bottom right.

College	Location	Year	Students	Website	Annual Net Cost	% Need Met	White Grad Rate	Reported GPA	Test Scores (Middle 50%)	Optional	Rigor
The New School	New York, New York	4-Year Private	6,819	https://www.newschool.edu/	\$55,359	48.0%	65.8%	89	1150-1380 SAT	25-30 ACT	-
Fordham University	Bronx, New York	4-Year Private	10,239	https://www.fordham.edu/	\$42,581	65.9%	84.8%	92.6	1330-1490 SAT	30-33 ACT	-
New York University	New York, New York	4-Year Private	29,430	https://www.nyu.edu/	\$35,035	64.5%	86.5%	96.2	1480-1570 SAT	33-35 ACT	-

- 1 Log in to Overgrad
- 2 My Future → My Colleges = your list
- 3 Follow / unfollow as you research

Your list is also in your workbook; Overgrad is where we work now.



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Can't log in? Two-minute fix. Flag one now.

H/EOP = money + support

A · SET UP

Don't know your H/EOP status?

- Ask family TONIGHT: household size + 2025 income
- Tell us whether you're over, under, or unsure
- 2025 tax return: optional, advisors only

Household	Income under
2	\$39,128
3	\$49,303
4	\$59,478
5	\$69,653
6	\$79,828
7	\$90,003
8	\$100,178



GRAB A VOLUNTEER

Money questions are private. Pull an advisor aside.



STATION

B

Common App

One application → every SUNY + private college on your list

Common App in 30 seconds

B · COMMON APP



One app, 1,000+ colleges

All your SUNYs + privates.



CUNY is separate

The only other application.



Financial aid is separate

FAFSA · TAP · CSS come later.



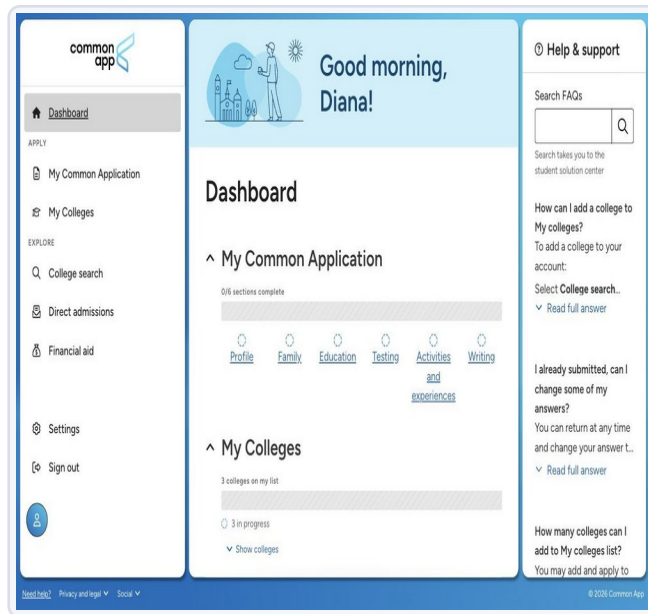
The GUIDE has every answer

Copy → paste → edit.

Your only goal: green checks

B · COMMON APP

- 1 Create your account, or roll over last year's
- 2 Profile → Education → Activities → Family
- 3 Answer everything, even optional questions
- 4 All green → hit Preview



Don't know your SSN? Skip it. Everything else gets an answer.

Profile + Education

B · COMMON APP

The screenshot shows the 'Personal Information' section of the Common App. The left sidebar lists sections: Profile, Personal Information (selected), Address, Contact Details, Demographics, Language, Geography and Nationality, Common App Fee Waiver, Family, and Education. The main content area is titled 'Complete your Common Application' with a 'Preview' button. It includes fields for 'First name*' and 'Last name*', both with instructions to enter legal names. There is a question about sharing a different first name with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No', and a 'Clear answer' button. A 'Middle name' field is at the bottom. A 'Help & support' sidebar on the right contains a search bar, a 'Need Help?' section with a link to FAQs, and a link to 'All help topics'.

PROFILE Open every subsection. Answer it all.

The screenshot shows the 'Current or Most Recent Secondary/High School' section of the Common App. The left sidebar lists sections: Family, Education (selected), Other Secondary/High Schools, Colleges & Universities, Grades, Current or Most Recent Year Courses, and Honors. The main content area is titled 'Complete your Common Application' with a 'Preview' button. It includes a field for 'Current or most recent secondary/high school*' with an example address. Below this are 'Change' and 'Remove' buttons. There is a 'Date of entry*' field with a calendar icon and a note about the date format. At the bottom is a question 'Is this a boarding school?*' with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'. A 'Help & support' sidebar on the right is identical to the one in the Profile section.

EDUCATION School, grades, courses. College classes ON a campus go here.



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Finished both? Green-check audit before moving on.

Current Year Courses

B · COMMON APP

In Education → Current Year Courses, copy your schedule from this list.

- AP Microeconomics OR Global Issues
- AP Environmental Sci OR
Environmental Sci OR AP Psych
- AP English Language OR 12th Grade English
- PreCalculus or Calculus (*already took Calc? enter "Math")
- AP Research (if applicable)
- Physical Education
- Advisory
- Art Elective
- Senior Seminar

Activities & Experiences

B · COMMON APP

NEW NAME (WAS "ACTIVITIES")

Copy, then personalize

Paste from the guide, edit to what YOU did.

Everything counts

Jobs, siblings, service, summer programs.

Max 10, best first

Order matters.

One exception

College classes ON a campus
→ Education.



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Read one description to a volunteer:
does it sound like you, or like a form?



WORK TIME

☐ Account created or rolled over

☐ Profile + Family: all green

☐ Education: green, courses in

☐ Activities drafted from the guide



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Table check every 20 min: one thing finished + one thing stuck.

B · SPRINT



VOLUNTEERS

Green-check audits. Activities read out loud.

Stuck 5 min? Ask.



STATION

A large blue circle containing a red letter 'C' in the center.

C

Build your list

Academic fit · financial fit · social fit, in that order

Every college gets three tests

C · YOUR LIST



ACADEMIC

VP, P, R, or SR for your stats? Test optional?



FINANCIAL

Affordable? 100% of need met?



SOCIAL

Could you answer “Why this college?”

Dream fit still has to pass the money test.

How selective is it?

C · YOUR LIST

Check the acceptance rate:

≤ 10% **Extremely selective** high-90s · 1300+ SAT · big essays

≤ 30% **Highly selective** 90+ · 1100+ SAT · college courses

≤ 50% **Selective** 85+ · polished statement

≤ 60% **Less selective** 75-95 · mostly GPA + SAT

> 60% **Likely yes** send your best; merit \$ lives here

VP stats above their range **P** equal **R** below **SR** far below or ≤10%

TRUE or FALSE

“The higher a college’s percentage of financial need met, the more money you’ll receive from that college.”

Thumbs up or thumbs down. Convince your neighbor first.

TRUE

“100% need met” = the college covers the FULL gap between its price and what your family can pay.

That's why we hunt these schools. The list is in Google Classroom.

Where to research

C · YOUR LIST

Back to Educator Account

Dashboard My Planner My Future Search Applications

Use the filters to find a college.

Search

Clear Filters

University Name

Location

Admissions Chances

Tags

Admissions Considerations

Academics

Majors & Areas of Study

School Type

Setting

Campus Size

Net Price

College Search

1 2 3 ... Next Last

1-10 of 7076

	College	White Grad Rate	Net Price	Location
Follow	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	96.5%	\$19,813	Massachusetts
Follow	Rice University	94.7%	\$12,640	Texas
Follow	California Institute of Technology	96.3%	\$18,902	California
Follow	Harvard University	97.8%	\$16,816	Massachusetts
Follow	Harvey Mudd College	93.0%	\$32,492	California
Follow	University of Chicago	95.4%	\$18,967	Illinois
Follow	Washington University in St Louis	94.7%	\$22,117	Missouri
Follow	University of Maryland-College Park	89.8%	\$44,391	Maryland
Follow	Yale University	95.3%	\$27,818	Connecticut
Follow	Williams College	97.0%	\$14,852	Massachusetts

TASKS

MESSAGES

Help

1

Overgrad search:
filter by price, major,
size

2

Google Classroom:
100% need met list

3

Still unsure? The
college's site



GRAB A VOLUNTEER
about THEIR college.

Ask a volunteer what surprised them



WORK TIME

☐ Research records done for your handout schools

☐ New finds followed in Overgrad

☐ Unfollowed what you're out on

☐ Each school tagged VP / P / R / SR



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Show a neighbor your top 3. They get one question about each.

C · SPRINT



VOLUNTEERS

Reach-or-probable gut checks. Money fit second opinions.

Stuck 5 min? Ask.



STATION

D

Colleges + questions

Add every college you're considering, then
answer what each asks

Add your colleges

D · COLLEGES

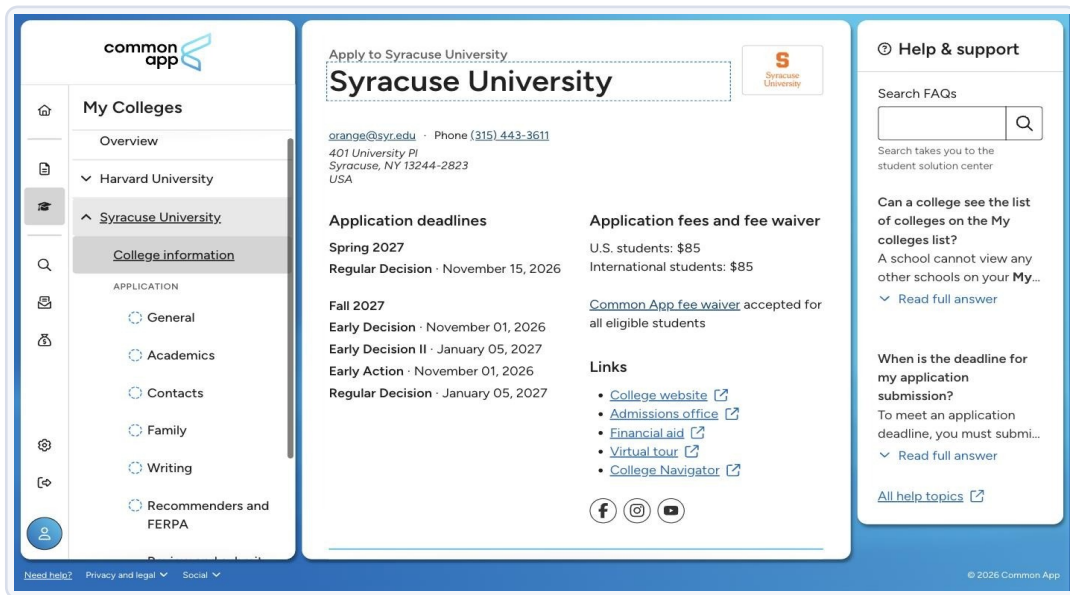
The screenshot shows the Common App 'College search' interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Dashboard, My Common Application, My Colleges, College search (highlighted), Direct admissions, Financial aid, Settings, and Sign out. The main content area is titled 'College search' and features a search bar with 'Binghamton' entered. Below the search bar is a 'More filters' button. A single result is displayed: 'SUNY Binghamton University' with a '+ Add' button. On the right, there is a 'Help & support' section with a 'Search FAQs' box and a 'How do I search for a college?' link.

- 1 College search → type the name
- 2 Click Add → it lands in My Colleges
- 3 Add EVERY college you're considering

Removing later is easy, and adding unlocks each school's essay prompts.

Each college asks its own questions

D · COLLEGES



My Colleges → pick a school → its Application sections:

- **General**
- **Academics**
- **Contacts**
- **Family**
- **Writing**

Answers vary by school. That's normal.

Safe defaults for the questions

D · COLLEGES

Admission plan

Pick one. You can change it.

Need-based aid?

YES. Always yes.

Fee waiver?

“Yes, I meet the guidelines.”

Testing plan

Depends on your score. Ask!

Scholarships?

YES, even if it adds an essay.

Housing

Usually “on campus.”



GRAB A VOLUNTEER

ED vs EA? Test optional or not? Real conversation. Flag one.



WORK TIME



Every college you're considering added



Application sections answered per school



Supplemental prompts copied into a Google Doc



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Done early?

Brainstorm bullets under each supplemental prompt.

D · SPRINT



VOLUNTEERS

ED vs EA
support. Fee-
waiver sanity
checks.

Stuck 5 min? Ask.



STATION

E

Essays

Personal statement + supplementals: where you stop being a GPA

The personal statement

E · ESSAYS

THIS IS YOUR STORY.

The one place 1,000+ colleges hear your actual voice. Honest beats impressive.

Nobody picks the “right” prompt. Write the story first.

250–650 words

The structure that works:

CHALLENGE →
CHOICE →
OUTCOME

The 7 prompts (same as last year)

E · ESSAYS

- 1 A background, identity, or talent you can't leave out
- 2 A setback, and what it taught you
- 3 A belief you questioned or challenged
- 4 Something someone did that made you thankful
- 5 An accomplishment that sparked growth
- 6 An idea that makes you lose track of time
- 7 Anything you want

Pick after you write. The story comes first.

Supplemental essays

E · ESSAYS

What they are

Short essays a college adds: “Why us?”, community, major.

Your system

One Google Doc. Every prompt in. Bullets first.

Write once, adapt twice

Overnight prompts overlap. Recycle your best.

Prompts appear after you add a college (station D). Add them all today.

Drafts get better out loud

Use this every time you have 2+ paragraphs:

1

READ IT ALOUD

You'll catch half the fixes yourself.

2

2 + 1

2 things that stuck +
1 they wanted more.

3

SWAP

Other drafts make yours better.

No draft is too rough for this. Rough drafts are the point.



WORK TIME

☐ Personal statement doc started, or 200 words further

☐ One supplemental brainstormed in bullets

☐ One read-aloud with the 2+1 protocol



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Blocked? Say the story to a volunteer, THEN write what you said.

E · SPRINT



VOLUNTEERS

Hear read-alouds. Give 2+1. Unstick blank pages.

Stuck 5 min? Ask.



STATION



F

Diversity Overnights

Free campus visits at top colleges. Applications
are open NOW

Diversity Overnights

F · OVERNIGHTS

SLJ COLLEGE OFFICE · CLASS OF 2027

These colleges will fly you out for free to spend a night on campus.

Fly-in and diversity overnight programs cover your travel, meals, and housing so you can experience a college before you apply. You stay in a dorm, sit in on classes, and meet students like you. The only thing most of them cost is a short application.

It's a real trip, on them

Most programs book and pay for your flights or trains, your meals, and your room. You bring a bag; they handle the rest.

Applying alone helps you

In our own SLJ tracking, students who applied to a college's overnight — even the ones who didn't get in — were about **twice as likely** to later be accepted to that college. That's our internal numbers, not a formal study, but the pattern is real: applying shows the college you're serious, and they notice.

The money follows

Nearly every college on this page meets **100% of demonstrated financial need**. These aren't just nice campuses — they're the schools that can actually be affordable.

The strategy: curious about a region — say, the South? Apply to the overnight at **every** college on this list in that region. Visiting a campus makes it real, and psychologists have a name for what happens next: the more familiar a place feels, the more you like it. Students who visit are far more likely to apply, get in, and go.

Being selective is part of these programs — if you don't get picked, that says nothing about your admission chances (see the stat above). Apply anyway. Deadlines and links on this page are verified against each college's official site.

19 open now 3 close within 2 weeks Next deadline: Elon University (Aug 31) Search a college...

Apply now 19 Dates coming 5 Closed for 2026 31 Everything 55

REGION South Northeast Midwest West

SHOW ONLY ☒ Travel covered ☐ Virtual-friendly ☐ No essay

Sort: Deadline (soonest first) 19 programs shown



FREE: travel, meals, dorm



~2x as likely to get in (our tracking)



Pick a region, apply to ALL of it



19 open now. Next: Aug 31



GRAB A VOLUNTEER Pick one program with a volunteer and start it NOW. Ten minutes.



How's it going?

ONE WIN

something you
finished

ONE STUCK

something in your
way

ONE NEXT

your next 30
minutes

Table → volunteers collect the stucks → we solve the big ones together.

Before you leave

WRAP UP

EXIT TICKET

- Check-in sheet → a volunteer
- Personal statement doc exists
- Show your green checks

TONIGHT + THIS WEEK

- One Diversity Overnight application
- QuestBridge / Posse accounts checked
- H/EOP answer from family
- Keep the essay doc growing

You showed up. That's the hardest part. See you tomorrow.