2018-19 Common Application Guide

The 2018-19 Common Application is officially live, and the college admissions process for the class of 2023 is already well underway. There's a lot that students need to know when applying to college, so here's an in-depth look at the 2018-19 Common App, including essays, updates, and more.

What Is the Common App?
[The Common Application](#) is a college application platform used by more than 800 colleges and universities in the US, UK, and Canada. The Common Application allows students to apply to multiple schools with one application that features a main application essay, also known as the personal statement along with sections where students can input information on their grades, courses, activities, and more. Some

universities on the Common App will also require students to complete a supplement specific to that school in addition to the main Common Application, which can include additional essays, short answer questions, and more.

Common Application Essay Prompts
When completing the main Common Application essay, students must select from seven different prompts, including the popular "topic of choice" option. The essay topics are broad enough that students can typically write about whatever they want and still find a prompt that fits their essay topic. The Common App essay prompts for the 2018-19 application season remain unchanged from last year They are:

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma – anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Common App Changes for 2018-19

There have been several notable changes on the Common Application over the past few years, including the account rollover feature, the Courses & Grades

[Section](#), and more. Below are some changes that have been implemented for the 2018-19 Common App.

- **Changes to Courses & Grades Section:** Last year saw the [launch of the new Courses & Grades](#) section of the Common App, and this year a [number of changes](#) have been made in order to make the Courses & Grades portion of the Common App easier for students to navigate. First, the section won't be accessible to students who are applying to schools that do not require it, eliminating the chance that students will fill it out needlessly. Second, students who are able to fill out the section will be asked some questions, like if they have access to their transcripts and if their transcripts show grades for completed courses, to see if the Courses & Grades section is appropriate for them. If they answer "no," then they won't be required to fill out the section and colleges won't penalize them.
- **Privacy Improvements:** Student privacy is important, so not only has the Common App updated to be compliant with new GDPR regulations, it has also ensured that students' social security numbers are also masked if students choose to include them in their Common App.

- **New Transfer Application:** The transfer process is very different from regular undergraduate admissions, so the Common App has begun the launch of their new transfer application, with a number of institutions utilizing the app this year as early adopters. For more information on the Common App for transfer, [click here.](#)
- **New Member Colleges:** Over 40 new member colleges were added for the 2018-19 admissions cycle, bringing the total number of colleges that utilize the Common App to over 800. [New Common App member colleges](#) include:
  - Arts University Bournemouth (United Kingdom)
  - Bellarmine University (KY)
  - Bridgewater State University (MA)
  - Cairn University (PA)
  - California University of Pennsylvania (PA)
  - CCAD – Columbus College of Art & Design (OH)
  - Chaminade University of Honolulu
  - Edinboro University (PA)
  - Evergreen State College (WA)
  - Florida State University (FL)
  - Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) (IN)
  - Lewis University (IL)

- Michigan State University (MI)
- Mississippi State University (MS)
- Morningside College (IA)
- Olivet College (MI)
- Oregon State University (OR)
- Penn State (PA)
- Queens College, CUNY (NY)
- Quincy University (IL)
- Radford University (VA)
- Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania (PA)
- Francis College (NY)
- Temple University, Japan Campus (Japan)
- The University of Kansas (KS
- The University of Mississippi (MS)
- The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (NC)
- The University of Utah (UT)
- The Wilkes Honors College of FAU (FL)
- Universidad del Este (UNE)
- University of Central Missouri (MO)
- University of Cincinnati – Blue Ash College and Clermont College (OH)
- University of Iowa (IA)
- University of Mount Union (OH)
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte (NC)

- University of Pittsburgh (PA)
- University of West Florida (FL)
- Walsh University (OH)
- Warner Pacific University (OR)
- Webb Institute (NY)
- Wright State University (OH)

Supplements

Colleges have been releasing their supplemental essay prompts throughout the summer allowing students the opportunity to get a head start on their essays before the Aug. 1 Common App open date. However, there are a number of colleges that won't have their supplements open on the Common App for students to complete for a few more weeks. Click here for a sampling of the Common App supplements and essay prompts that have been available since earlier this summer.

Alternative/Additional Applications

In addition to the Common Application, many institutions are also utilizing the Coalition application, which launched in 2016. About 14 colleges and universities still utilize the Universal Application, and there are a number of universities that accept only their

institutional application, which can be found on their website. It's important to understand that, if a school accepts multiple applications (say the Common App and the Coalition application), there's no application that is preferred over another or that will give you more of an "edge" in the admissions process. Choose the application that works best for you and eliminates the need for multiple application accounts. With over 800 member colleges, the Common Application is likely the most convenient for many students, however, if you are applying to schools that utilize the Coalition app exclusively, take some time to become familiar with the platform.

Whether you're just now starting on your Common Application, or need some help finalizing your balanced college list, WE can assist with any of your college prep needs. For Seniors, and high school students.

Tag: Seniors, Common Application, Admission essay, College guidance. Admission season