

Summer of Senior Year College Planning Tasks

Dear Rising Seniors!

Below are some Colleges Planning Tasks that can help you and your family with tackling the College Process. While the items below do not “have” to be completed over the summer, it is a very good idea to get a jump on the items listed as it will help make this exciting process more manageable.

- Continue to visit and tour colleges.
 - Lots of campuses have virtual tours.
- Update your “Colleges I Am Thinking About” list in Naviance.
- Complete your resume on Naviance (click on: “About Me”; “My Stuff”; “Resume”). This will provide you with an easy templet to include your achievements, activities, volunteer experience, etc. Your resume will be a helpful tool when completing your applications and teachers will need it when completing your letters of recommendation.
- Start your draft essay. The Common Application Essay Prompts for the Class of 2021 are already available (see below).
- If you are using the Common Application you can create your Common Application account (Commonapp.org) and start to complete some of the basic information. (IMPORTANT! Use your legal name when completing your applications).
- If you are applying to a non Common Application school such as Rutgers or Montclair State, go to the college’s web-site to acquire their application.

About Letters of Recommendation

Colleges and Universities can vary on the number and type of letters of recommendation that they accept. Some colleges accept none (i.e., Rutgers) while most others will limit the number of recommendation letters to one or two (i.e., Temple will only accept one letter). The general rule of thumb is to ask two academic teachers for letters of recommendation.

- 1) Ask your teacher in person before requesting your recommendation letter via Naviance. (Remember to also give your teacher the “Letter of Recommendation Request Form,” AKA “the blue form” which can be picked up in the Guidance office or on-line at mpsnj.org (click on: “Resources”; “Guidance”).
- 2) Request letter(s) of recommendation via Naviance (click on “Colleges”; click on: “Letters of Recommendation”, follow the prompts).

Common App Essay Prompts

The 2020-2021 Common Application Essay Prompts are as follows:



1. 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.
2. 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?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. 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.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. 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?
7. 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.