

Narragansett High School Guidance Department

College and Career Information

1. What factors should my son or daughter consider when selecting a college?

The following factors should be considered when trying to formulate an initial list of colleges to apply:

- size (ie. larger than 5,000, smaller than 15,000)
- location (ie. northeast, west coast)
- campus (urban/rural setting)
- intended major/minor
- cost (financial aid opportunities)
- extracurricular opportunities (intercollegiate athletics vs. intramurals)

2. What is the difference between Early Decision and Early Action?

Early Decision requires an academically qualified student to submit an application to a university by a set date (usually by November 1st or November 15th). Early Decision is legally binding which means that by applying Early Decision, the student has made a commitment to attend that college if admitted, and to withdraw all other applications upon acceptance. Early Decision is not recommended unless the student is absolutely sure that he/she will attend the university if accepted. This option should be discussed with your counselor before being pursued.

Early Action is a non-binding plan that requires an academically qualified student to submit an application by an early deadline so that the student may know at an early date whether he/she has been accepted. A student may apply Early Action to more than one institution, unless the institution's policy is "Early Action-Restricted" in which case there are limitations on early action applications set by the college.

3. What do admission counselors look at when considering a student's application to their school?

Admission officers are looking at a variety of criteria when reading applications for admissibility. Most of these are:

- Student Transcript
- Strength of Schedule
- Grade Point Average
- Standardized Test Scores (SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject, ACT)
- Personal Essay
- Letters of Recommendation
- Extracurricular Activities
- Community Service

4. Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?

Most colleges require two letters of recommendation from classroom teachers and the one from your guidance counselor. Students should choose teachers that can attest to their academic and personal strengths. Whenever possible, students should choose teachers that may be related to their choice of major. Be certain to give teachers at least two weeks' notice of application deadlines. Students should provide teachers with a resume, an information sheet with a list of schools and deadlines, teacher evaluation forms, and stamped, addressed envelope for any colleges that are not CommonApp Schools. (see #5) For schools that are CommonApp schools, the student will invite the teacher and counselor through the school forms link of the Common Application.

5. What is the Common Application? (CommonApp)

The Common Application is an online application that is accepted by 488 different Colleges and Universities across the country. Students who are applying to multiple schools can use the common application and have to fill out only one application regardless of how many schools they are applying to that accept the common application. This greatly streamlines the process for students. Many schools will only accept the Common Application now as their sole way of applying.

6. When should my son or daughter take the SAT I (Reasoning Test)? How many times should my son or daughter take them?

The recommended track would be the following:

- Students take the PSATs in the Fall of their Sophomore and/or Junior years
- Students take the SAT I (Reasoning Test) in the spring of their Junior year (May or June sitting)
- Students take the SAT I (Reasoning Test) again in the fall or winter of their Senior year (October sitting)

It is recommended that a student take the SAT I (Reasoning Test) twice. Most colleges and universities will look at a candidate's best Math and Verbal score when reviewing his/her application. This is referred to as super-scoring.

7. What is Score Choice? How does this change the way my son or daughter will report SAT scores (SAT I or SAT II) to individual colleges?

Score Choice is a new score reporting feature established by College Board that started in **March, 2009**. Score Choice gives students the option to choose the SAT scores by test date and SAT Subject Test scores by individual test that they want sent to colleges. Score Choice is optional, and if students choose not to use it, all scores will be sent automatically. It should be noted that scores from an entire SAT test will be sent--scores of individual sections from different test dates cannot be selected independently for sending. Just a reminder, SAT scores must be sent directly from College Board to the colleges and universities.

8. Who is responsible for reporting my son or daughter's SAT scores to colleges?

Students are now **solely** responsible for reporting their SAT scores to colleges. Students can select **four** schools to send scores to for free, but only if they are sent within ten days of taking the test. After that, it will cost \$11.00 per school. Please see [College Board's](#) website for more details.

9. What are the SAT Subject Tests and when should my son/daughter take them?

The SAT Subject Tests (also known as SAT II) are tests in specific subject areas such as Biology, Chemistry, Spanish, etc... They are one hour tests and three may be taken in one sitting. SAT Subject Tests are required by some colleges in addition to the SAT I (Reasoning Test).

10. What is the difference between the SAT I (Reasoning Test) and the ACT?

The ACT is a more curriculum based five-section exam that includes Math (up to trigonometry), Science, Reading, English, and Writing (optional essay). Students that take the ACTs are not penalized for wrong answers and are encouraged to make an educated guess on each question. The SAT I (Reasoning Test) is a ten-section exam with three Critical Reading sections, three Math sections (up to Algebra II/Geometry), and three Writing sections. There is a penalty for each incorrect answer (1/4 of a point).

11. How do I get help in preparing for the SATs?

The student may do one or more of the following:

- Students may hire an individual tutor for math and/or English.

~[College Board](#)

~[Way to Go RI](#)