



COMMON QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMON APPLICATION 2017 – 2018

PART 1 – ACCOUNT CREATION

- Register for a Common App account. From the home page – www.commonapp.org – click on the green box that reads “Apply Now”. Click “Create an Account”. Answer the registration question indicating that “You are a Student”. You will be prompted to enter an email address and password. **Use the email address you plan to use for all college communication. MAKE SURE YOU DON’T TYPE ANY EMPTY SPACES BEFORE OR AFTER THE EMAIL ADDRESS or PASSWORD!** Write down this information in a safe place.
- Next, you will be prompted to enter demographic information and answer brief questions to create your account – name, address, etc. Indicate that you plan to start college in **2018**. Once the questions are complete, you may click “Create”.
- Then, you will be directed to the home page of your Common App account. You will see your first name in the upper right corner, along with your Common App ID (CAID) which you may need in the future for technical support.
- Your Common App account is organized into several tabs on the home page – **Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, and Financial Aid Resources**. The “**Dashboard**” is your home page. The following tabs will help you navigate the Common App.

PART 2 – ADDING COLLEGES

- In the “**College Search**” tab:
Begin by searching for Common App colleges to which you plan to apply. After you add these colleges, they will show up in other sections, representing your Common App college list. *Note: Over 700 colleges use the Common App, but not all. If you are searching for a college and can’t find it, chances are they do not accept the Common App and you will have to go to that college’s official website for their electronic application. A full list of Common App member institutions can be found here: <http://www.commonapp.org/search-colleges>*
- Eventually, in the “**My Colleges**” tab, you will see your list of colleges that accept the Common App. Each one has its’ own menu to keep you organized.

PART 3 – FILLING OUT THE COMMON APPLICATION

- In the “**Common App**” tab:
This is where you actually fill out the application. The underlined words below correspond to each section (see the menu on left side of screen). Read through these notes for tips and answers to filling out your 2017 – 2018 Common App.
- PROFILE
 - This section is mostly self-explanatory and some of the questions should be automatically filled in for you following your account creation. You must answer all questions with a red asterisk; any others are optional.
 - You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of PROFILE, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

- FAMILY

- You must answer as much as you know about your parent(s)/guardian(s) and any sibling(s). Enter the most accurate information that you know. This is where you will be asked about your parent(s) education, so if they attended college, be sure to get the accurate information.
- You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of FAMILY, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

- EDUCATION

- This section asks for information about HCRHS. Click on “Find School” and HCRHS should come up based on your previously entered zip code.
- Date of entry: **September 2014**
- Boarding school: **No**
- Graduation date: **June 21, 2018**
- Counselor information:

Mr. Kevin Maldonado	(A-EL)	kmaldona@hcrhs.org	908-284-7274
Mrs. Linda Kovacs	(EM-LE)	lkovacs@hcrhs.org	908-284-7232
Mrs. Marjorie Duffy	(LF-RI)	mduffy@hcrhs.org	908-284-7271
Mrs. Julie Blake	(RJ-Z)	jblake@hcrhs.org	908-284-7240

Job title for all counselors: **School Counselor**
- Other school: For students who transferred into HCRHS from another high school indicate the school and dates you attended, prior to coming to HCRHS.
- Community-Based Organizations: If you received free assistance with the college application process through any community-based organizations, list that in this section.
- Education interruption: For students who may graduate early, take time off, take a gap year – you will need to briefly explain this. Or, check “No interruption to report”.
- College & Universities: This section is for coursework taken through a college or university. For example, if you took a HCRHS course for college credit or physically went to a college campus to take a course. (AP courses do not count here.)
- Grades:
 - Choose “**None**” for class rank reporting
 - Enter **772** for graduating class size
 - Enter your **weighted** cumulative GPA
 - Enter “**5**” for GPA scale, and select “**weighted**” for GPA weighting

Note: A 5.0 GPA is not possible at HCRHS and colleges are made aware of this when they review our school profile during the evaluation process. We provide colleges with our highest possible weighted GPA, which is usually around a 4.4-4.5. But, you must use the above reporting method (5) as it is the most accurate according to our weighted grading scale.
- Current year courses: Report the courses that you are taking **senior year**. Our course scheduling system is **semester**. Enter the title of the course, the level (if applicable), and the course schedule (first semester, second semester, or full year). Do not list Study Hall, Late In, or Early Out.
- Honors: **You have 5 slots to list honors**. This section is a place for you to mention National Merit honors, National Honor Society membership, or any other academic honor society memberships. For years of involvement, include the year you were inducted and all years you were a member. This is also a place for you to share classroom or department awards, school-wide honors, athletic honors, or state, national, or international honors.
- Future Plans: Enter your first-choice career interest, along with the highest degree you plan to earn.
- You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of EDUCATION, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

- TESTING

- Tests taken: Indicate whether or not you are reporting test scores. Then, choose the tests you plan to report. (You still need to send official score reports directly from the testing agencies to the colleges.)

Reporting scores on the Common App is optional, but it gives the college an initial look at your scores while they wait on your official score reports to arrive.)

- You may also share future test dates to indicate that you are not done testing and more results will be submitted in the future.
- SAT Tests: You will need specific score details, including scores from each section and exact test dates. This also allows you to enter your highest scores across multiple test dates.
- ACT Tests: You will need specific score details, including scores from each section and exact test dates. This also allows you to enter your highest scores across multiple test dates.
- SAT Tests: You will need specific score details, including scores from each section and exact test dates. This also allows you to enter your highest scores across multiple test dates.
- SAT Subject Tests: Only choose those SAT Subject Tests that you wish to share.
- You may also enter AP Test scores in this space, but it is entirely optional. You may consult with your counselor or Mrs. Nuechterlein to determine which AP scores to report.
- You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of TESTING, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

- **ACTIVITIES**

- **You have 10 slots to list activities. This is your place to shine – do not underestimate anything you do! Include all activities, both in and out of school. Don’t leave out things like cultural exchange trips, summer programs, childcare, any work in which you received pay, and rec/club sports.**
- **List activities in order of importance to you. Once you list multiple activities you can move them around using the little arrows.**
- Choose your activity type. If it is not listed, choose “other”.
- Indicate any position you held and the organization name.
- You get 50 characters for “Position/Leadership and organization name”. Type “Member”, “Active Participant”, or something similar if you did not hold a leadership position. Spell it out if the activity is specific to HCRHS. Use the little space you have wisely!
- You get 150 characters to explain the activity and any accomplishments you received. **Don’t be wordy! You don’t need to write a full sentence. Use strong, powerful words. It should be clear and concise. We believe this is one the most important sections of the Common App. It’s your place to share how you fill your time and what is most important to you!**
- Always select grade 12 if you intend to continue the activity into 12th grade.
- Timing of activities: **Also very important!** The school year is approximately 41 weeks including breaks, summer is about 11 weeks. Estimate and average the hours/week and weeks/year for each activity.
- You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of ACTIVITIES, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

- **WRITING**

- Personal essay: Your essay must be at least 250 words, but no more than 650 words. You may type your essay in a word processing program first to check for grammar and spelling, then copy and paste into the text field. Or, starting August 1, 2018, Common App should offer the ability to share your essay using Google Drive.
- Disciplinary History: Answer these questions honestly and accurately.
- Additional Information: This a space to explain any special circumstances, up to 650 words, not shared within your application. Students have used this section to elaborate on an activity, explain a family background situation, discuss a poor grade, and more. It is not required to use this section.
- You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of WRITING, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

Your Common App is complete when all sections in the left side menu have a green checkmark. You can go back and edit Common App content at any time prior to submission.

PART 4 – ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND WRITING SUPPLEMENTS

- Click on “My Colleges” to view the required “Questions” and “Writing Supplements” (if any) for each of your colleges. Most are available by early August. These “questions” are particular to each individual college and only the college asking the questions will see the responses. Writing supplements can be additional short or long essays. Treat them with utmost importance. If the college is asking, they want to know!
- Once these items are complete, you may start the process of submitting your application. When you submit your Common App, it goes to one school at a time. Therefore, you don’t need to have every supplement for every college completed to submit – you submit to each college individually.

PART 5 – WHAT’S NEW WITH COMMON APP FOR 2017-18?

- For 2017-18, Common App will introduce a new section called “**Courses & Grades**” which gives students an opportunity to self-report their courses and grades earned. This is done by many colleges in a separate online platform, but for 2017-18, approximately 12 colleges/universities will integrate with Common App to make self-reporting grades part of the Common App process. You should see this go “live” on August 1, 2018. You may come across this section if you are applying to any of these institutions:
 - Birmingham-Southern College (AL)
 - Chapman University (CA)
 - College of Idaho (ID)
 - The George Washington University (Washington, DC)
 - New York School of Career & Applied Studies of Touro College & University System (NY)
 - The Ohio State University (OH)
 - Purdue University (IN)
 - Ripon College (WI)
 - St. John’s University (NY)
 - Underwood International College, Yonsei University (Seoul, South Korea)
 - University of Southern California (CA)
 - West Virginia University (WV)

PART 6 – FERPA RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

- In the “**My Colleges**” tab you will find your organizational area, providing you with a task list for each college.
 - Complete the **FERPA Release Authorization**. Click on “release authorization”, read through the information, then check the box that you have read and understand the information. On the next screen, check the box indicating that our school has the authorization to release requested records to colleges. Next, it is highly recommended that you select “I waive my right to review...” indicating that you are waiving your right to review your letters of recommendation. Finally, check the last box indicating that you understand your waiver selection CANNOT BE CHANGED. Type your electronic signature and see that the date is entered. This should bring you back to the “My Colleges” page and you should see “FERPA Release Authorization” with a green checkmark. This task should show up as complete for each college in “My Colleges”.
 - In “Recommenders and FERPA”, under the “Counselor” and “Teacher” sections, **do nothing**. HCRHS uses Naviance eDocs to send all documents electronically to colleges. We will teach you this process in September. You DO NOT need to print any of the forms in these sections. Your counselor and teacher(s) have electronic forms to use that are accepted by colleges.
 - Only use the “Other Recommender” section if you have someone **outside of HCRHS** writing a letter for you. Follow the prompts to enter that recommender’s email address. That recommender will receive instructions to upload a letter of recommendation for you, and that letter will be shared with your Common App colleges. We will go over this process in more detail in September.

Please utilize the “**Help Center**” located within the Common App website, and also reach out to your counselors with questions.