

TIPS FOR COMPLETING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Source: AVID

In an admission report from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Education Council, the following reminder was given to future applicants: "People do not apply to colleges: folders do. The folder and application are a single opportunity to influence the process. Approach each aspect of the application as an opportunity. Devote time and thought to each of the various portions."

As you think about your folder circulating among the admission committee, consider the following:

1. Read *every word* of the directions before you even print your name.
2. Make a copy of the application and use that copy as a work sheet.
3. Demonstrate your *best* work—something of which you can be proud.
4. Essays should be error-free, thoughtful, logical, and organized. Do not overreach. Use comfortable vocabulary. Be yourself. "The essay should say something the rest of the application doesn't say, or at least should elaborate on something the application barely suggests—a talent, an interest, thoughts on a world or local problem, a personal accomplishment."
5. Do not write what you think the admission office wants. The committee reading your application wants to know *you*—whatever you think and do. No matter how "ordinary" you may feel, your folder represents a different individual from all others.
6. Use specific examples when describing your interests and achievements. Explain your involvement—why the things you chose to discuss are important to you. It is better to emphasize the degree of involvement in a few activities than a long list of superficial interests.
7. Why are you going to college? To learn? To learn what? Why? A college should be convinced that you truly want an education. *Avoid simplistic answers and reasons.* If you want to be an engineer, for example, cite some experience from your own life that led you to this present choice.
8. If humor is a part of your style, feel free to use it.
9. Typing or printing is acceptable. In some cases, you will be required to write an essay in your own handwriting. Neatness and legibility are obviously essential.
10. Proofread. Spelling errors are unacceptable.
11. Clear copies are perfectly acceptable, but sign each one individually. Your name should be on each page or item submitted with the application.
12. Proofread again!