

# COLLEGE APPLICATION GUIDE

1

**FIRST, decide which Application(s) to complete.** Check the list of Common App schools. If several of your colleges take the Common App, that will be your best choice, but if you're only applying to one or two and they have their own application, using theirs will probably be easier and faster. Talk to Mrs. Hertzler if you aren't sure.



Common App Colleges

UNIVERSAL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Always use your full legal name—it must match the name on your transcript and SAT/ACT score reports.
- Use an email address (not your emhs.net address) you check regularly. (And start checking your email!!)
- Colleges pay special attention to your senior year courses. If you change your schedule after you apply, we have to notify your colleges. SO: if you are on the fence about an AP, DE, honors, or other academically challenging class, be cautious about adding that to your list.
- Double-check EVERYTHING. Preview carefully before you send, and ask a parent, Ms. Hertzler, or friend to proofread. Nothing is final until you enter your credit card info and click "send," but once you do that, you can't get it back.
- Keep careful track of deadlines and each college's application requirements. A late or incomplete application will usually not be considered.

INFO YOU NEED FOR ALL APPLICATIONS	
High School CEEB Code	471030
Date of Entry (to high school)	August 2018 (unless you transferred later)
Graduation Date	June 5, 2022
Graduating Class Size	38
Counselor	Ms. Jodi N. Hertzler
Counselor Job Title	College & Career Counselor
Counselor email (*Leave blank in Common App!)	* <a href="mailto:hertzlerj@emhs.net">hertzlerj@emhs.net</a> (* Leave blank in Common App!)
Counselor phone	540-236-6005
GPA Scale	4.0
Grading Scale	Letter
GPA Weighting	Weighted
Class Rank Reporting	None (we don't rank)
Course Scheduling System	Quarter

## COMPLETE THESE STEPS FOR ALL APPLICATIONS

Log in at [app.scoir.com/signin](http://app.scoir.com/signin). If you've never used Scoir, contact Mrs. Hertzler for login instructions.

### 1

Go to "My Profile" and follow these important steps.

**1. Check your personal information.**

- Make sure all information (legal name, address, etc.) is correct.
- If neither of your parents graduated from a 4-year college, click "I will be a first-generation college student."

**2. Then, complete the FERPA waivers.**

- In the far righthand column, find the FERPA section.
  - Click "Release Authorization." Click "Review and Sign." Select "Granted" and click "Sign." (This gives us permission to send your transcripts.)
  - Under "Waiver of Rights" click "Review and Sign." Select "Granted" and click "Sign." (This assures colleges that your recommendation letters are confidential and authentic.)
  - Check for a green "Granted" box next to each item.

**3. Optional but helpful:**

- If you have started the Common App, type in the number under "Application ID." (You can do this later.)
- Add info to your personal bio, activities & achievements, and college preferences. I will refer to this information as I write your recommendation letter and suggest colleges for you.

### 2

**Update your College List.**

1. Add the colleges you are sure about to the "Applying" column.
2. When you're within two weeks of applying, move the college to the "Applied" column. This allows us to send your transcripts (which can be done before you actually submit your application).
3. Use the College Search feature if you're still building your list, and ask Mrs. Hertzler for recommendations.

### 3

**Request Teacher Recommendation Letters.**

1. Under "My Colleges," click "Application Documents" (top right corner).
2. Click "Request a Recommendation."
3. Enter one or two teacher names so they can upload a letter to your account. Do NOT enter a request for a counselor letter via Scoir.
4. Note: You STILL must fill out our official paper form, or your teachers will NOT write your letter.

## COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- FERPA waivers:** Follow Scoir instructions (left).
- Completed application:** Common App or via college's website
- Official Transcript:** We send this after you complete the official school form.
- Letter(s) of Recommendation:** We send after you request via Scoir and official school forms.
- Test Scores:** You send via College Board or ACT websites—we do not send these for you.
- FAFSA:** You complete after Oct. 1. (Not technically required for application to be complete.)

➡ *Rec. letters and test scores might not be required, and your colleges might have additional required documentation.*  
*It's imperative that you check each school's website for a list of application requirements.*

The following may seem a bit out of order, but have faith: this assures you have entered everything correctly.

1

**Create a profile at [apply.commonapp.org](http://apply.commonapp.org)**

1. Indicate that you are “applying as a first-year student and plan to start college in 2021 or 2022.”
2. Be sure to enter the email and snail mail addresses you want colleges to use.

1a

**Click on the “Common App” tab and select “Education” from the list on the left. Click “Find School” and select Eastern Mennonite High School.**

2

**Add at least one college to your list.**

1. Click the “College Search” tab.
2. Type in the college name or click “More filters” to search.
3. Click on the plus sign to add a college to your list.
4. *You can come back and add up to 19 more colleges later.*

3

**Complete the “Recommenders & FERPA” section for one college.**

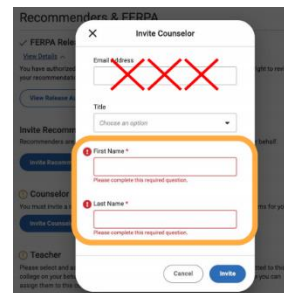
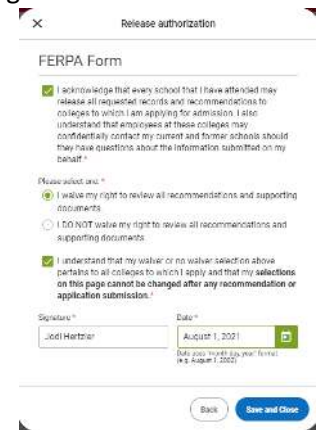
*Note: You only need do this once, and then it can be applied to all colleges.*

1. Click the “My Colleges” tab and select one college.
2. Click “Recommenders & FERPA” (column on the left).
3. Click “Complete Release Authorization” and follow the instructions to waive your FERPA rights.

4. Click “Invite Counselor.”
5. **LEAVE THE EMAIL FIELD BLANK**, but complete the rest of the information.

6. Click “Invite Recommenders” and select “Invite Teacher.”
7. **LEAVE THE EMAIL FIELD BLANK**, but complete the rest of the information.
8. Click NO for “Would you like your teacher to complete an evaluation . . .”
9. Repeat steps 6-9 for any additional teachers who will write recommendation letters for you.

*Note: You will be prompted to download PDFs of various forms. Ignore this. We complete those forms in Scoir.*



**Click the “Common App” tab and complete each section.**

*When you have filled in a section completely, you will receive a green check. If you click “Continue” and do not get a green check, go back and see what still needs to be answered.*

*The steps below walk you through each section.*

**4**

**Profile & Family**

- **Demographics** questions are optional, but may help you qualify for specific scholarships or receive helpful info.
- **Common App Fee Waiver** (last option under “Profile”): If your family qualifies for free/reduced lunch, click YES. *Make sure to let me know so we can complete the required form in Scoir.*
- Check with your parents regarding their education history and job titles.

**5**

**Education**

*Use info from page 1 of this handout to help you answer questions in the “Current Secondary School” and “Grades” tabs.*

- **MTC:** If you take classes at MTC, add the high school providing the credit under “Other Secondary/High Schools.”
- **Dual-Enrollment courses:**
  - List the college name(s) providing the credit under the “Colleges & Universities” tab.
  - Select “Dual enrollment with high school.”
  - Do not indicate a degree earned (leave that blank).
- **Current Courses Section:** Use your schedule to enter all courses you plan to take senior year.
  - Count the total number of classes you’re taking all year.
  - Course scheduling system: select Quarter
  - Type the course title as it appears on your schedule
  - “Course level”: select one of the following options:
    - *N/A* = most of our classes
    - *advanced placement*
    - *dual-enrollment*
    - *high honors* = automatic honors classes such as research writing or advanced music
    - *honors* = optional honors you took in regular courses
  - “Course Schedule”: You can select more than one quarter for 1 credit classes.
- **Honors:** This section is for academic awards such as NHS, National Merit, etc.
  - Do not list optional honors classes here—those will show up on your transcript and in your courses list.
  - You can list an honors scholar award (if you sure you’ll get it) as “Anticipated in May: English Honor’s Scholar Award.”
- **Community-Based Organizations:** indicate 0. (I’m your “free assistance” 😊)

**6**

**Testing**

If you plan to send test scores, indicate that you wish to self-report. This speeds the processing of your application. Plus, *some schools no longer require official scores from testing organizations until you enroll—save yourself the money!*

Most colleges are test optional. If you aren’t sure about sharing your scores, talk to me.

7

**Activities**

- Enter up to 10 activities, *ranked by most important first*. You can rearrange them after you enter them.
- Estimate your hours/weeks of involvement.
- Be concise and make lists using active verbs.
- Don't use complete sentences! You only have 50 characters for the position box and 150 characters for the details box.
- Highlight leadership skills/roles.

8

**Writing**

- **Personal Essay:**
  - Select the writing prompt you are responding to. You can insert your essay directly from Google Docs or paste an essay from another word processor.
  - Make sure to click "Preview" and proofread your essay to be sure it's perfect (sometimes pasting from another processor leads to errors; one year the last paragraph was left off!).
  - Note: you won't get a green checkmark if your essay is less than 250 or more than 650 words.
- **Additional Information Section:**
  - COVID-19 Question: If you feel your grades or life circumstances were impacted by the pandemic (in positive or negative ways), you may explain in this section (in 250 words or less). Not sure how to write about it? Check the [College Essay Guy's suggestions](#).
  - Additional circumstances/qualifications: If you feel there's something important which has not been included elsewhere, use this section to provide details. *Don't repeat info found elsewhere*. If you aren't sure about this section, consult with Ms. Hertzler.

9

**Courses & Grades**

- Only complete this section if your colleges require it.*
- Grading Scale: A-F
  - Schedule: Semesters
    - If you took a 1 credit class, enter 1 for a semester and leave the other blank.
    - If you took a .5 credit class, enter .5 for one semester and leave the other blank.

**Congratulations! You've completed the bulk of the Common App.**

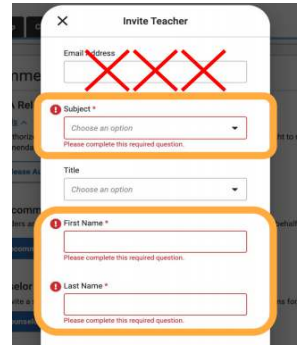
*Now it's time to focus on each college's specific questions so you can submit.*

10

**Click on the "My Colleges" tab and follow these instructions for each college.**

1. **Questions:** Read & answer all questions carefully.
  - "Preferred Admission Plan": Check deadlines & select carefully. If you indicate Early Decision, remember this is a binding agreement and you have additional forms to complete (talk to Ms. Hertzler for details).
  - Note: Even if a college says it doesn't require a writing supplement on the "College Information" page, there might be a supplemental essay under "Questions."
  - Disciplinary Info: Some colleges ask about disciplinary violations—if you have something to report, do so honestly. Ask Ms. Hertzler if you need help with wording.

	<p>2. <b>Recommenders &amp; FERPA:</b> You completed most of this in Step 3. You will have to “Assign” your teacher recommender(s) for each college. Remember, when inviting a teacher, <b>LEAVE THE EMAIL FIELD BLANK!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Recommenders: Some colleges allow you to submit a non-academic recommendation. If you wish to do this, ignore Common App and ask your recommender to send a letter to Ms. Hertzler and she’ll submit via Scoir.</li> <li>• Inviting an Advisor: You can invite up to three people to advise you on your application. These people can view your application but cannot make changes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>Submit your application.</b></p>	<p><i>Applications are submitted to colleges one at a time. Your application can’t be sent until you confirm you have completed a final review, entered your credit card, and signed your name.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a “Preview” button at the top of each section. <u>Use it frequently</u> to check for errors.</li> <li>2. When you are ready to submit to a college, select your college under “My Colleges” and click “Review and Submit.” Give your application one final, careful review.</li> <li>3. Pay your fee by credit card.</li> <li>4. Sign the submission statements, confirming that your application is accurate and your own work. <i>If it is later learned that you have made inaccurate statements or someone else wrote your essays, your acceptance can be revoked.</i></li> <li>5. Check that your application and writing supplement were successfully submitted by clicking “Dashboard.” Remember it may take a few days before the college downloads and views your application.</li> </ol>



## MORE COLLEGE APPLICATION TIPS

(Much of the following was borrowed from the College Essay Guy at [collegeessayguy.com](http://collegeessayguy.com). I highly recommend his website, which has many free resources, examples of excellent essays, and a helpful blog.)

### How to Make Sure Your Application Does Its Job:

1. Make a list: “Everything I Want Colleges to Know about Me”
  - Think of your core qualities, key interests, heartfelt values, interesting fun facts, brilliant achievements, important lessons, etc.
2. After you have completed your application, ask yourself:
  - Which of these things are clearly demonstrated in my application?
  - Which are “kinda there” but not in a super clear way?
  - Which aren’t there yet but should be?
3. Use the answers to those questions to fine-tune your app.
4. Tip: give your list to a friend or family member and then ask them if those items are reflected in your application.

### The Activities Section

1. State your role & the organization in the top box so you don’t waste characters in the lower box (only 150 characters allowed). Don’t repeat words!
  - *Top box:* Editor of Sports Column, School Newspaper  
*Description box:* Responsible for brainstorming, revising, and supervising articles by other writers
2. Emphasize tangible, measurable impact, especially if it was a one-time event.
  - Whom did your activity help? How many people? How much money did you raise?
3. Use active verbs to list your tasks (aim for a variety—don’t sound redundant)
  - *Instead of:* Worked at a clinic doing a variety of tasks  
*Try:* Organized patient diagnosis notes, sterilized tools for surgeries, assisted clerks with data entry
4. To fit in more info: use lists, don’t use complete sentences, cut extra words.
  - *Instead of:* I raised money to donate to a school in Ghana in Africa by selling t-shirts and bracelets.  
*Try:* Arranged advertising events, organized fundraisers, and gave presentations at school meetings.
5. Use the present tense if it’s something you still do.
6. Include any responsibilities you had (demonstrate leadership skills).
7. List activities in descending order of importance.

## The Personal Essay

- Remember: Your essay should answer three questions:
  1. Who is this person?
  2. Will this person contribute something of value to our campus?
  3. Can this person write?
- An amazing essay has these qualities:
  1. The story is unusual in content, structure, or both.
  2. There's a "wow" moment.
  3. The ending is surprising and/or makes the reader think.
- If you're writing about an extracurricular (sports, music, service trip, etc.):
  1. Make sure to *tell a story*. And make it a good one. Don't just tell us you've played basketball since you were three, take us to the moment when you first held that heavy orange ball in your hands, or the moment you got smashed in the nose with a ball and loved it.
  2. The "so what?" needs to be unpredictable.

## Supplemental Essays

*(on Common App, found in the "Questions" section under college name in "My Colleges")*

- Be unique, be you. Make it all about you. (Even if the question seems to be about them, make it about you.) This is as an opportunity to show more of your skills/talents/interests/personality traits. Make the reader want to meet you.
- For a "Why Us" essay, do your research and think of it as a "why are we perfect for each other" essay—don't rewrite their brochure; don't talk about the location, reputation, weather. If you mention any specifics, make sure you get them right.
  - Be specific—mention classes you want to take, professors you've met/heard about, clubs and activities that you genuinely want to be part of or are excited about. Or offer to start something—club, group, activity (but make sure they don't already have it and that it's something you could actually do).

## The COVID Question

*The Common App now includes a 250-word section allowing students to describe the impacts of COVID-19 on their lives.*

*So... should you write about it?*

- YES, if your life has been significantly impacted, either for good or bad (or both).
  - Possible structure:
    - Challenges faced + impacts on you
    - What you did about it
    - What you learned
  - It's okay to be creative (maybe answer via an anecdote), but make sure to communicate all the relevant information.
- NO, if things haven't changed for you much, other than watching more Netflix than usual.
- Note: it's probably best to keep your coronavirus experience to this section, rather than use it for your main college essay.