



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS RESOURCES

There are hundreds of online and print resources for the college admissions process, many quite good, and unfortunately many not helpful at all in my opinion. This list does not include all or even most resources, but instead is a sampling by topic of resources which have been helpful to me and/or my kids, and were published within the last ten years or as noted. Teachers and others with grammar sensibilities, please don't cringe at my lack of "correct" form and order for a bibliography. I simply want to give you enough information so you can find the resource on your own, along with a brief description.

GENERAL

These books, and one website, focus on more than one aspect of college admissions, usually providing a blueprint or roadmap for the entire process.

[Admission Matters](#), 5th edit., Sally Springer and Jon Reider (August, 2023)

- A decent and thorough general guide to the college admissions process. Also contains glossary and resource sections starting on p. 349 (in 4th edit.).

[The Enlightened College Applicant: A New Approach to the Search and Admissions Process](#), Andrew Belasco and Dan Bergman (2017)

- Terrific perspective and overview of the college admissions process from the mindset of being a smart consumer.

[The Truth About College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together](#), Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark (2019) and companion workbook (2021)

- Great resource and tool that acknowledges and celebrates the importance of approaching the process as a family and team. The 2nd edition will be released in September, 2023.

[Demystifying College Admissions: A Parent-to-Parent Guide to the Reality of the College Process](#), Terry Greene Clark (2016)

- Though older, this book remains a solid primer on the college admissions process written by a parent for parents.

[The Secrets of Picking a College](#), Lynn F. Jacobs, Jeremy S. Hyman, et al. (2015)

- Also older, but the format of "Top XX" lists make this easy to read or browse for a particular topic.

bigfuture.collegeboard.org- one stop shop for the college admissions and search processes

FINDING A GREAT FIT COLLEGE

College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You (14th ed.), Steven R. Antonoff (2022)

- This resource has been around for 40 years, so they must be doing something right. Very helpful workbook written toward the teen, but can be reviewed or talked through together.

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges, Loren Pope and Hilary Masell Oswald (2012)

- A bit older, but provides a great perspective on the value of many smaller private colleges across the U.S., along with important reminders that many/most of those smaller schools might have a higher sticker price, but also have a better track record of offering merit and/or need-based financial aid. There is also a companion website with up-to-date information on the colleges and CTCL-specific college fairs around the country: <https://ctcl.org/>.

Find the Best Colleges for You, U.S. News and World Report (2022 ed.)

- I'm not a fan (at all) of the ratings and rankings game, but in terms of large catalogues of college information, I like this one. At $\frac{1}{3}$ the size of most, e.g. Princeton Review and Fiske, it contains enough information to perhaps get your unmotivated or overwhelmed teen interested in digging further into a particular college or type of college. Also contains a few articles and unfortunately, advertisements.

www.niche.com/colleges/search/best-colleges/- another ranking site; use as a starting point to broaden options while ignoring the actual numerical scores, or ranks

Do an internet search on "Common Data Set for XXXXX" for admission data, ethnic enrollment, etc., for individual college (XXXXX = the name of a college). Originated by the Common Data Set Organization founded by the College Board, U.S. News and World Report, and Peterson's.

www.collegedata.com- a wealth of information about individual colleges is available for no charge on this website; also offers paid registration to access greater details

nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator- Developed by the National Center for Educational Statistics, a branch of the U.S. Department of Education, this site provides a common set of statistics and other data to better facilitate comparisons between colleges

collegescorecard.ed.gov- U.S. Department of Education search engine, also includes career and major search options

FINANCIAL AID/COVERING THE COSTS OF COLLEGE RESOURCES*

Most books and websites covering the college admissions process, including many of those in the General and Great Fit sections on previous pages, contain posts, pages, chapters or entire sections with financial aid information. See also the Other section, and these financial aid-specific resources:

[The Price You Pay for College: An Entirely New Road Map for the Biggest Financial Decision Your Family Will Ever Make](#), Ron Leiber (2022)

- Thorough examination of all things money and college.

[studentaid.gov](#)- the official site to find the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and general information on financial aid and cost of attending college

[finaid.org](#)- excellent all-around resource; calculator, scholarships, and more

[thecollegesolution.com](#)- Lynn O'Shaughnessy site with terrific information about covering the costs of college. She also holds occasional webinars. Her book by the same name was the first resource I used with my three kids, but hasn't been updated since 2012 so YMMV (Your Mileage May Vary). She also offers an online course available through the website which is also quite good.

Note: I do not include specific sites that claim to find college scholarships. Unfortunately, many are scams or simply not worth the time to research and fulfill any requirements of the site, and you should NEVER pay for a scholarship service. You will likely have much more success seeking scholarships directly from the college itself, or from the local sources below.

LOCAL RESOURCES

Ensure you and your teen find, review, and bookmark the following sites as available and applicable:

- **School** website page/section devoted to post-secondary options, including college, particularly noting scholarship opportunities, information sessions, and the school's process and timeline for college applications, e.g., transcript and letter of recommendation requests, etc.
- School **district** website page/section devoted to post-secondary options, including college, particularly noting scholarship opportunities
- **State** government website page/section devoted to post-secondary options, including college, particularly noting scholarship opportunities
- Websites of parent and/or teen employers to determine whether college scholarships are offered
- Community organizations parent or teen is involved in for college scholarship opportunities
- Scholarship opportunities related to teen's special interests

***DISCLAIMER: I am not a financial advisor and your experiences and results may differ.**

TIMELINE RESOURCES

Uncommon College Guide has a page devoted to timelines, including a downloadable checklist for each high school grade level. Additionally, many general books about college admissions contain timelines. Here are a few more resources which revolve around grade level timelines:

[Countdown to College: 21 To Do Lists for High School: Step-by-Step Strategies for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Graders](#) (4th edit.), Valerie Pierce and Cheryl Rilly (2019)

- Helpful format and includes grade level timelines among other checklists.

[College Admissions Cracked: Saving Your Kid \(and Yourself\) from the Madness](#), Jill Margaret Shulman (2019)

- Excellent resource on the overall process written chronologically beginning with fall of junior year.

Khan Academy- www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/get-started/introduction-ca/a/master-timeline-college-admissions

College Vine- blog.collegevine.com/ideal-timeline-for-the-college-application-process/

Do an internet search on "college admissions timeline" for more online options.

COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

One of the top complaints of parents of teens is that they just don't know how to talk to their kid, or that their kid has no (apparent) interest in talking to them, yet having regular conversations is one of the most important aspects of a successful college admissions process. Here are a handful of useful resources:

[Love the Journey to College: Guidance from an Admissions Consultant and Her Daughter](#), Jill Madenberg and Amanda Madenburg (2017)

- I really appreciate the back and forth between mother and daughter; great insights about the process from both perspectives.

[The College Conversation: A Practical Companion for Parents to Guide Their Children Along the Path to Higher Education](#), Eric J. Furda and Jacques Steinberg (2021)

- Five parts and more than 200 pages of broad conversation areas and specific exercises parents and teens should have during these often challenging years. LOVE THIS.

tabletopics.com- not a college admissions specific resource, but several of the chat packs available through Table Topics are geared towards teens and families, so keep a pack at the dinner table and/or in the car to encourage listening, learning, and great conversation.

PERSONAL ESSAY RESOURCES

Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps: Crafting a Winning Personal Statement (3rd ed.), Alan Gelb (2017)

- I appreciate the easy-to-follow steps, reasonable scope of each task, and recaps at the end of each chapter. This book also has well-done appendices, including one with student essay examples, and one on conquering the supplemental application required of many colleges and universities.

Complete Guide to College Application Essays: Essential Tips for Making Your Writing Stand Out, Staff of Princeton Review (2020)

- Easy to follow and use, including places to take notes, this book is one that could help motivate a teen to make progress on his/her essay. It also contains many tips and information on supplemental questions and other aspects of the college admissions process.

Writing Successful College Applications: It's More Than Just the Essay, Cynthia Clumeck Muchnick (2014)

- Different than the first two recommended books, this contains over 50 sample essays, several chapters with guidance for supplemental questions, and a final chapter with "Insights, Tips, and Wisdom" from 10 Deans of Admission. This book is a very helpful big picture guide to writing a college essay, as well as a guide to help your teen convey his/her story in writing in the college application as a whole.

INSPIRATIONAL RESOURCES

I am a big fan of TED and TEDx talks, and here are a handful of my favorites related to parenting, personal growth or simply life:

- Julie Lythcott-Haims: "How to Raise Successful Kids Without Over-Parenting" (2015)
- Shawn Achor: "The Happy Secret to Better Work" (2011)
- Mel Robbins: "How to Stop Screwing Yourself Over" (2011)
- Brene Brown: "The Power of Vulnerability" (2010) and "Listening to Shame" (2012)
- Anne Lamott: "12 Truths I Learned from Life and Writing" (2017)

Or check out <https://www.ted.com/playlists> for suggestions by topic, including most popular, global, binge-worthy, etc. So much great stuff on TED. Challenge yourself and your teen to find and share a Ted Talk on an interesting, educational, and/or fun topic each week (or periodically).

Also, find and share personal development, health and wellness, or fun podcasts with your teen AND ask for their recommendations. If neither of you have any, challenge each other to find 2-3 to share over the coming week.

OTHER RESOURCES

[What Every Parent Needs to Know About College Admissions: How to Prepare Your Child to Succeed in College and Life](#), Christie Barnes (2021)

- Heavy focus on viewing college through the lens of career path and other options. An important approach in my opinion, and a nice resource to balance others more focused on the college application and experience itself.

[Quick Guide to Choosing Your College Major](#), Laurence Shatkin, PhD (2019)

- Solid resource for browsing while considering interests, majors, and what careers the latter might lead to.

www.educatetocareer.org- some sections are fee-based, but much of this site is free, and invaluable for thinking and planning ahead

www.nacacnet.org/nacac-college-fairs- NACAC, or National Association for College Admissions Counseling, organizes college fairs around the country each year, along with virtual options

www.campustours.com- virtual campus tours

fairtest.org- list of more than 800 colleges with flexible or optional standardized testing requirements (SAT/ACT); the pandemic accelerated the trend towards more test-optional or test-blind (standardized test scores not even considered) colleges and universities

www.collegeconfidential.com- videos, photos, student reports