GETTING STARTED COMPLETING THE COMMON APP ONLINE: For GRCHS students

Log in at http://www.commonapp.org and create your account; your username is your e-mail address and you will create your own password. (SAVE YOUR PASSWORD.) In the future, when you login, be sure the Applicant tab is highlighted when you do so.
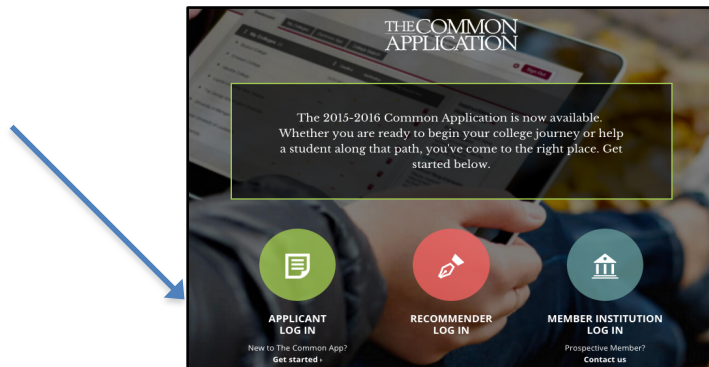

Go first to the fourth tab that opens on the next screen ("college search") and identify the colleges to which you will be applying. Be liberal here—if you think you're going to apply, add the school. You can always delete (and add new ones) at any time before you apply. Having the schools identified places them on your dashboard (the first tab) and provides a quick summary of deadlines, required writing supplements, letters of recommendation, and other requirements.
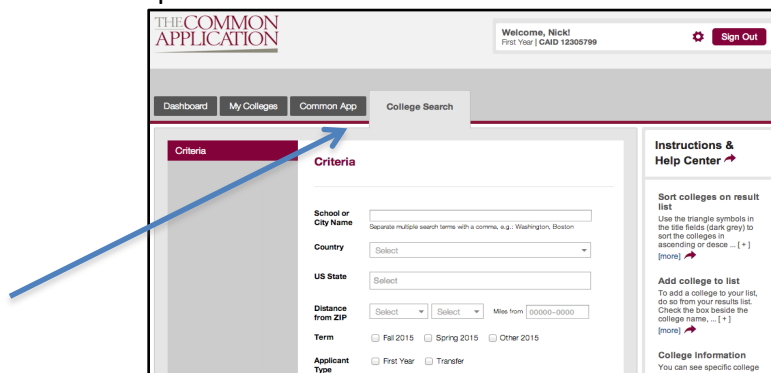
Begin the actual Common App (third tab):
- Any and all questions with red asterisks MUST be answered. When each section is complete, a green check mark will appear and move to the screen to the next section to be completed.
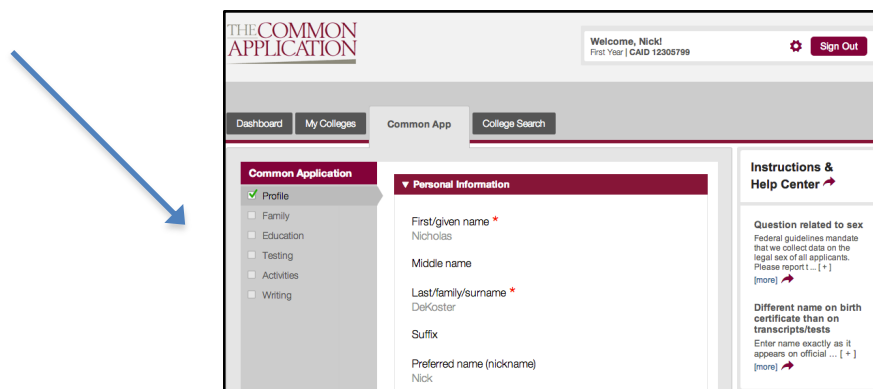
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■ Any items that ask for telephone numbers will also have a space for country codes (Common App is, after all, international). Be sure to use the drop-down menu and select "+1" for the United States or Common App will keep telling you that the section is not complete.

■ Be cautious about giving Common App your cell phone number—it will be passed along to admissions and you may get phone calls from recruiters. Use your home phone/land line/parent cell.

■ When completing the **Education** section:
  ○ Here is the GRCHS info you need in the "Current/Most Recent School" subsection:
    ▪ If you started here in freshman year, your date of entry is 08/2015
    ▪ Your graduation date will be 05/28/19
    ▪ Your "counselor" is Mr. Grasmeyer, Mrs. Hartman, Mrs. Wallace, or Mrs. Williams; enter his/her name and email address here
    ▪ You can use the school phone # 616-574-5650
  ○ Here is the GRCHS info you need in the Grades subsection:
    ▪ GRCHS does not rank students
    ▪ # of students in Senior Class: 212
    ▪ Your Cumulative GPA is **unweighted** if you have not taken AP courses; it is accessed on StudentVue
    ▪ Your Cumulative GPA is **weighted** if you have take none or more AP courses and on a 5 point scale for **weighted** grades- You can access the GPA on StudentVue
    ▪ GRCHS's GPA is **unweighted** OR **weighted** depending on the GPA you are reporting

■ You can access a list of your senior classes and past classes on StudentVue. When you list your senior year courses, do so in this order:
  ○ English
  ○ Math
  ○ Science
  ○ Social Studies
  ○ World Language
  ○ Electives
  ○ Etc.

- **Honors** include department awards, National Merit Commended/Semi-finalists, AP Scholar/Scholar with Honors/Scholar with Distinction, and anything for which a student has been selected by the school *even if unable to attend*. Specify if it's a school, regional, state, or national award (i.e. Presidential Award for Community Service). And, include non-academic awards, too (e.g. recognition from work, sports, scouting, etc.) You have five slots given to you in this area.
- **Testing**
    - Whether or not you self-report test scores is up to you. Please see your counselor if you have questions or concerns about this.
- When you complete the **Activities** section, list these *in priority order*—most important to you goes first; next most important second; etc. You have ten slots given to you in this section. You get only 150 characters for description so use adjectives, action words and nouns and abbreviate where appropriate

- Be sure to go beyond the essay part of the writing section and complete the two sections at the end (disciplinary history and additional information, if being utilized)

- Once Common App info has been completed (minus the essay—don't need to have done the essay to go to this next step), you need to match your Common App account with Naviance Student. You will do this "match" through your Naviance Student account under "colleges" > "colleges I'm applying to."
- Again, since GRCHS sends transcripts and letters of recommendation through Naviance Student, you will need to complete the FERPA waiver FIRST and then match your Common App with Naviance Student. To complete the FERPA waiver, click on the "My Colleges" tab or "Colleges I'm Applying to". Then click "Match Accounts"
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    Re: Federal Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) questions. We recommend you authorize your schools and colleges to release and share records. We highly recommend you WAIVE your right to access your recommendations and other documents being sent from GRCHS. Doing so gives the colleges confidence that you trust your recommenders to write honest assessments. Teachers and colleges pay close attention to how you respond to this question. *Warning: once any invited school official submits a recommendation, you cannot change your FERPA response!*

- You can now invite teachers as recommenders in your Family Connection account. **You must invite and assign your Recommenders two weeks prior to your application deadline.**

- <mark>NEW – NOT ALL COMMON APP COLLEGES REQUIRE A PERSONAL ESSAY</mark>. Click on the first tab, "Dashboard," to check whether a personal essay is required and which college(s) require Member Questions or a Writing Supplement.
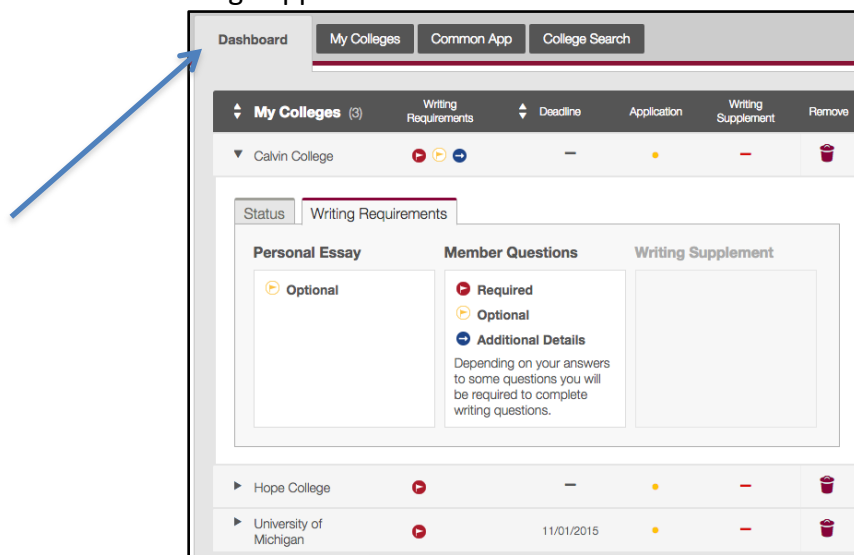
- Visit the **Writing Supplement** section under each entry in "My Colleges" to determine what your additional questions for that school may be (if released—not all schools have released theirs yet!). You may complete these if they are accessible.
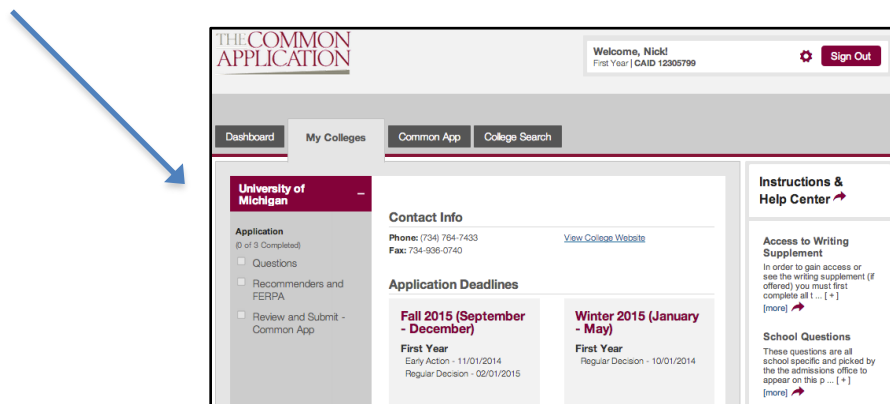
- Write your **Essay** in a Word processing program and cut and paste it into the Common App. Be warned about trying to copy essays into Common App from Microsoft Word; in this new release of the Common App many students report that the essays seem to transfer over smoothly, but when they Preview the essay, they see blank spaces, missing lines, or computer code that turns some (or all) of their essay into hieroglyphics. The easiest "cure" that's been discovered so far is for students to Copy their Microsoft Word essays into Notepad, the very basic word processing program that

comes on most PCs. Once it's pasted into Notepad, the computer code from Word is cleaned off; students then hit Copy from Notepad and paste into Common App, and everything is fine. Common App will undoubtedly come up with a better fix, but for now, that's the best thing to do.

- After you complete the Common App and college supplements, you **Submit** each to each college, in two separate steps.

You must submit both the Common App and any Writing Supplement *and* pay your Application Fees by the deadline in order for your submission to be complete!

If additional screenshots would be helpful for you, click here: http://counselors.grcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CommonApp_Presentation.pdf