

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS GUIDE

for students enrolled in Oak Meadow High School



PREPARING FOR YOUR  
COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Oak Meadow students take many paths after graduation. For those choosing to continue their education at the college level, careful and organized planning is essential. This guide will give you tips and advice on how to optimize your Oak Meadow experience in the college application process.

# Oak Meadow Graduation Requirements

For students planning to graduate high school with Oak Meadow, we require a distribution of academic subjects that provides a comprehensive education and a well-rounded transcript for college entrance requirements.

- Graduating seniors must be fully enrolled to receive a diploma.
- Students must take at least three courses per year to be fully enrolled.
- Students who wish to receive a high school diploma from Oak Meadow must complete a minimum of **21.5 credits**. (One credit equals a full-year course, or two semesters.)
- If you intend to apply to college, plan to graduate with more than the minimum number of credits.

These are the Oak Meadow courses currently available in each subject area:

## ENGLISH:

4 Credits

Intro to Literature & Composition  
Literature & Composition II  
American Literature  
World Literature  
British Literature

## MATHEMATICS:

3 Credits (4 recommended)

Pre-Algebra  
Consumer Math  
Algebra I  
Geometry  
Algebra II  
Advanced Mathematics  
Calculus

## SCIENCE:

3 Credits (4 recommended)

Biology with Lab (1.5 credits)  
Environmental Science  
Chemistry with Lab (1.5 credits)  
Physics

## SOCIAL STUDIES:

4 Credits

U.S. History  
World History  
U.S. Government  
World Geography

## FINE ARTS:

1 Credit

Integrated Drawing  
The Study of Art  
The Study of Music

## HEALTH:

1 Credit

Integrated Health & Fitness  
(also earns 0.5 PE credit)

## FITNESS/PE:

0.5 Credit

## WORLD LANGUAGE:

2 Credits

Latin I, II, III, IV  
Spanish I, II, III, IV  
French I, II, III, IV  
German I, II, III, IV

## ADVANCED STUDY:

0.5 Credit

## ELECTIVES:

2.5 Credits

Psychology (0.5 credit)  
Intro to Photography (0.5 credit)  
Intro to Short Fiction (0.5 credit)  
Chess

For current graduation requirements, see the Student Handbook on our website.

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Your high school course selection can improve your chances of getting into the college of your choice. As an Oak Meadow student, you are in a unique position to direct the course of your studies and individualize your education. While Oak Meadow requires a minimum of 21.5 credits in order to graduate, **most college-bound students graduate with 22-26 credits.** Taking additional credits allows you the chance to customize your transcript in order to increase your knowledge and skills. If you intend to apply to highly selective colleges, pursue upper level courses in your area of interest and plan to graduate with 26 credits.

For juniors and seniors with strong academic skills, we offer a wide range of Advanced Placement courses through Aventa Learning. These courses provide an interactive online experience along with excellent teacher support. Our AP courses earn full Oak Meadow credit and help prepare students for the College Board AP exams. **Colleges also view candidates with AP course credits as strong, motivated learners with advanced academic skills.** Although most colleges and universities require standardized admissions tests (such as the SAT and ACT), test scores are just one method of assessing a student's academic potential. They do not measure work habits, enthusiasm, study skills, responsibility, creativity, musical talent or artistic ability, leadership skills, motivation, perseverance, initiative or character. The best academic predictor for most college admissions offices is the student's high school record. Taking a full course load and challenging classes in high school will indicate your determination and commitment to your education.

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## Electives & Advanced Study

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A well-designed Advanced Study course is another way to enhance your transcript and help you stand out as a strong, motivated learner. This program is an ideal opportunity for learners to engage in an exciting and personal academic program while preparing for the challenging work of college. During this semester-long project, students have the opportunity to develop an academic or professional area of interest by working with both a local Mentor and an Oak Meadow Faculty Advisor. The student develops a proposal and outline for the course of study, including reading lists, assignment descriptions and deadlines, and final project evaluation measures. Oak Meadow offers the opportunity for students to pursue their interests in the form of Advanced Study.

Life Experience Elective Credit (LEEC) is another way to customize your transcript. LEEC can include music or dance lessons, volunteer work, and job experiences. Credit is earned by submitting a detailed log of your activities and hours. Oak Meadow students have demonstrated skill and earned Life Experience credit in such fields as martial arts, figure skating, writing, fencing, swimming, skiing, web design, tennis, horseback riding, art, dance, music, and theater. Life Experience forms are included in the Welcome Packet students receive at the beginning of the year, and are also available on our website.

A well-designed Advanced Study course is another way to enhance your transcript and help you stand out as a strong, motivated learner.

### Oak Meadow currently offers a range of elective credit courses:

- Psychology
- Intro to Photography
- Intro to Short Fiction
- Chess
- Latin \*
- Spanish \*
- French \*
- German \*
- Computer Fundamentals (MS Office)
- Flash Animation
- Java Programming
- Digital Video Production
- Game Design
- Digital Photography
- Web Design

\* College-bound students should take at least three years of a world language.

## Choosing the College That is Right For You

**LOCATION:** In which region of the country would you like to live?

**SETTING:** Are you looking for a rural, suburban or urban campus?

**SIZE OF STUDENT BODY:** Are you more comfortable in a small setting (fewer than 2000 students), a medium-sized school (2000–10,000 students), or a large school?

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER FACULTY MEMBER:** Are you looking for lots of one-on-one interaction with professors? Or do you envision large lecture halls with hundreds of students in each class?

**AREAS OF STUDY:** Is there an area of study that you are interested in? Are there certain schools that specialize in this major?

**PHILOSOPHY:** Are you interested in a liberal arts school or a large research institution?

**ATHLETICS:** Are you interested in a school that has a strong athletic program and many opportunities for competition?

**CAMPUS LIFE:** Are you looking for a school with fraternities and sororities? Do you want a school that offers plenty of cultural opportunities?

## Internships, Volunteering & Travel Opportunities

Internships, volunteerism and travel experiences are also ways to enrich your life and strengthen your resumé and college application. Serving as an intern or volunteering in a field in which you are interested is an excellent way to demonstrate your initiative and motivation while getting practical experience. It is also a good way to explore different interests that you might want to pursue in college or as a career choice. **College admissions officers prefer to see dedication to one initiative over an extended period of time.**

There are many outstanding organizations that provide services to students who are seeking unique travel and learning opportunities. Well-known programs such as Habitat for Humanity ([www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)) and Outward Bound ([www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)), and programs aimed specifically at high school students, such as Putney Student Travel ([www.goputney.com](http://www.goputney.com)), and People to People ([www.peopletopeople.com](http://www.peopletopeople.com)), are all good places to begin your research. Traveling and learning about other cultures, challenging yourself in new ways, studying languages and local economics, doing community service projects, and assisting host communities are all ways to gain valuable skills and show college admissions boards that you are dedicated to learning and growth.

## NCAA Eligibility Requirements

For Oak Meadow student athletes intending to play sports at an NCAA Division I or Division II school or to qualify for an athletic scholarship, compliance with the NCAA eligibility requirements is necessary. Among other requirements, students must graduate with a minimum of 16 core courses (at least 16 credits total in English, social studies, science and math), graduate from high school within four years, meet or exceed the

established grade point average, and present a qualifying test score for the ACT or SAT. Please contact the NCAA Eligibility Center directly for more information and the complete list of requirements.

## Portfolio

Consider keeping an organized portfolio to present your best work during an admissions interview. This type of academic portfolio is used to present your skills, talents, and accomplishments in a visual way and can make a real difference in the admissions process. Portfolios can include drawings, writing samples, photographs, musical recordings, athletic awards, short films, journals, independent study projects, and other personal highlights from your homeschooling journey. In addition to being a real advantage in college admissions, the process of creating your portfolio is an excellent way to review all that you have learned and accomplished during your high school education.

## College Admissions Process

There are many steps to the college admissions process. Most students begin the process before their junior year. Narrowing down school choices, requesting and reviewing college materials, scheduling and taking admissions exams, and keeping track of the deadlines and paperwork required of each prospective college can be time-consuming and challenging. However, it is also an exciting time of exploring possibilities and dreaming of what is to come. **Preparation is the key to managing this phase of your education successfully and efficiently.**

Most schools will ask for a **personal essay**, high school transcript, letters of recommendation from teachers or employers, standardized test scores (SAT/ACT), and any awards or special recognition earned. These admissions materials are designed to give a well-rounded picture of who you are as a student and as an important member of your community. As an Oak Meadow student who

has benefited from years of focused, one-to-one attention from your teachers, your admissions materials will show a distinctive depth and quality.

As you begin **researching college options**, you will want to set up a good record keeping system. We have included a chart with headings for name and location of school, size of student body, majors or special degree programs, tuition, application deadline, required tests, financial aid deadline, and space to write in dates of interviews and visits. There is also space for questions you want to ask or notes about your visit. Take some time to keep this chart updated so you don't miss any important deadlines or requirements.

**Letters of recommendation** should accompany your application. You should request these from your Oak Meadow teachers, sports coach, music teacher, or any adult who knows you well and can provide a good reference for you. You will want to request these at the end of your junior year so each teacher can take the time to produce a high quality letter.

When you complete an application, make copies of everything before you send it. This includes copies of test scores, letters of recommendation, transcripts, financial forms, and any other materials you are required to submit. Before you fill out the application, copy it so you can write on the copy as a rough draft before you fill out the original to send. Colleges look very carefully at how an application is written, so you will want to avoid careless errors. Take your time to fill things out completely and include all the necessary forms. Make sure to mail your application on time, and then take a deep breath and congratulate yourself, knowing you've done everything you can to present yourself in the best possible light.

## The Common Application

Most colleges and universities use The Common Application. The Common Application is a not-for-profit

membership organization that serves students, member institutions, and secondary schools by providing applications—online and in print—that students and school officials may submit to any of its more than 400 members. The Common Application streamlines the application process by using one common application that is submitted to multiple schools. Schools often require their own application materials in addition to the Common App; **it is important to know what your prospective schools require**. We can upload your transcript and school information and your teachers can submit letters of recommendation through this service. Visit [commonapp.com](http://commonapp.com) and please call our office for further details.

## Admission Tests

Most colleges ask applicants to provide them with standardized test scores. Although homeschooled students may not have had much experience with standardized tests, studies have shown that their unique education often gives them an advantage. One report states, "The home educated in grades K-12 have scored, on average, at the 65th to 80th percentile on standardized academic achievement tests in the United States and Canada, compared to the public school average of the 50th percentile." (Academic Leadership Live online journal, Volume 6, Issue 3, April 14, 2008)

The most common tests are the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Test). Often students will take the SAT twice, once as a junior and again as a senior, which increases their chances of a higher score since the higher score is submitted. Many students also take the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) during their sophomore year. Oak Meadow provides interested students with information on the SAT and ACT. It is recommended that sophomores get an SAT prep book and begin working with the material early, particularly the vocabulary words and math skills.

As an Oak Meadow student who has benefited from years of focused, one-to-one attention from your teachers, your admissions materials will show a distinctive depth and quality.

The Oak Meadow School code for SAT/CEEB is **460-341**. Go to [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for test dates, test sites, and registration deadlines.

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# Additional Resources

## PRINTED MATERIALS

*A is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges*  
—Michele A. Hernandez

*Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges*  
—Loren Pope

*25 Months Until College*  
—Judy McNeely

*The New Rules of College Admissions: Ten Former Admissions Officers Reveal What it Takes to Get Into College Today*  
—Stephen Kramer & Michael London

*Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different*  
—Donald Asher

*The College Application Essay: Revised Edition*  
—Sarah Myers McGinty

*Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps: Crafting a Winning Personal Statement*  
—Alan Gelb

*On Writing the College Application Essay: The Key to Acceptance at the College of Your Choice*  
—Harry Bauld

**There are set test dates, test sites, and registration deadlines for all standardized tests. You will want to register and take your tests well in advance to ensure your test scores are received before any college application deadlines. Visit [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for more information.**

## Writing an Admissions Essay

**Your admissions essay is often the best piece of information college admissions officers have to help them understand who you are as a student and as a person.** Your essay will reflect your writing skills, and the depth of insight you have about yourself. It will demonstrate your creativity and originality, and is an excellent chance to portray yourself as someone whose unique perspective and talents will enhance the academic and social life of the college. Your essay can compliment your portfolio and can also provide a chance to describe your work, travel and volunteering experiences, particularly ones relevant to the degree or career you wish to pursue. **As a homeschooled distance learning student, your list of experiences is likely to be varied, extensive, impressive and indicate a distinct sense of delight in learning.**

In addition to the Common App essay, you may be writing an individual essay for each college you apply to, based on the essay questions they pose and the unique social and academic atmosphere the college offers. Your writing should be in your own authentic voice, and clearly express your goals, views, and personal perspective. Oak Meadow welcomes the opportunity to review your essay and offer feedback.

## Applying for Financial Aid

Each college will have different requirements for their financial aid application process. Most schools will require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to apply for all federal

student financial aid programs such as the Pell Grant, Stafford Loans, and work-study. You can access the FAFSA at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov) for information and deadlines. Be sure you are on the federal website; there are many financial aid scams on the internet.

Each college has its own deadline and may have its own form to complete as well. Colleges advise that you send your FAFSA and the college's own form, if required, at least one month before the earliest college deadline on your list. When your FAFSA has been processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) via email or a paper copy will arrive after 7-10 days. Your SAR includes your expected family contribution. The college uses this information to determine your eligibility for a financial aid package.

## Campus Visits & Interviews

Once you have narrowed down your list of potential colleges, you will want to schedule visits with the ones in which you are most interested. Spring of your junior year is an excellent time to visit prospective colleges. Ideally, visits should be arranged to allow you the opportunity to attend some classes and spend the night in a dorm. Many schools have developed specific programs for prospective students so contacting the school's admissions office is the best way to begin.

Give yourself some time to explore the campus, and visit the cafeteria, library and bookstore. Talk to students on campus, and if possible make an appointment with a faculty member in your area of interest. Talk to everyone you meet so you can begin to get a clear picture of the social and academic atmosphere of the school. You may be living there for four years—don't be shy about asking questions!

Most colleges will want to arrange an interview. As a student of a non-traditional program, the college interview presents an exceptional opportunity for you to express yourself and share your experiences in ways


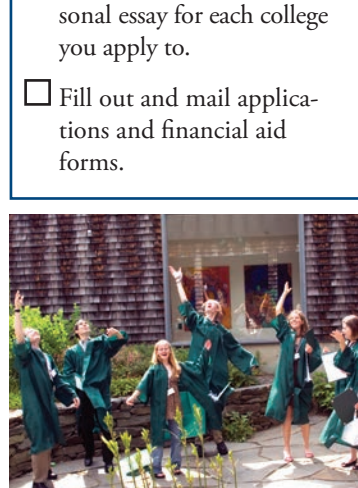
which distinguish you from the many other candidates for admission. Colleges and universities take a serious look at engaged learners who have shown initiative in their education, are independent workers and thinkers, and are involved in their communities.

In your interview, take the time to describe the ways in which your Oak Meadow experience has helped shape the way you learn and how you approach your studies. **College life demands a great deal of independence**

**and self-motivation, and as a homeschooler, you have spent years cultivating these qualities.** You have benefited from a 1:1 student/teacher ratio and this focused mentorship enabled you to develop your own skills and strengths to a high degree. Your unique education gives you a distinct edge. Spend some time thinking about (and practicing) how to best describe your experiences so that in your college interviews you can convey with enthusiasm and sincerity the richness of your educational background.

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## Year-by-Year Checklist

SOPHOMORE	JUNIOR	SENIOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin taking as demanding a course load as you can manage successfully.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get involved in activities, sports and extracurricular programs that interest you.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seek out volunteer opportunities in your community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT/NMSQT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue taking a rigorous course load and, if you qualify, begin taking AP classes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue with your leadership responsibilities, extracurricular and volunteer activities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research financial aid, student loans and scholarships, and speak to your family about paying for college.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT for the second time, if desired.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Study for the SAT.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research colleges you are interested in, and request printed materials. Plan college visits.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT and ACT.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of questions you have for each school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice your college interview.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Request letters of recommendation from your teachers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrow your college search down and visit each school on your final list.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review admissions requirements for each school and obtain application materials.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Common App.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make a checklist for deadlines.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT a second time, if desired.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write an individualized personal essay for each college you apply to.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fill out and mail applications and financial aid forms.</li> </ul>
		

### Additional Resources

**ONLINE MATERIALS**

- [www.embark.com](http://www.embark.com)
- [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
- [www.studentedge.com](http://www.studentedge.com)
- [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)
- [ww.usnews.com/features/education/best-colleges/guide-to-admissions.html](http://ww.usnews.com/features/education/best-colleges/guide-to-admissions.html)
- <http://www.homeschool.com/articles/college/default.asp>

# College Application Worksheet

Name of School	Location	Size	Major/Degree Programs	Tuition	Application Deadline	Required Tests	Financial Aid Deadline	Interview/ Visit Dates	Notes



**Oak  
Meadow**  
School

PO Box 1346 Brattleboro, Vermont 05302 ☎ 802-251-7250 ☎ oakmeadow.com

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Most schools will ask for a **personal essay**, high school transcript, letters of recommendation from teachers or employers, standardized test scores (SAT/ACT), and any awards or special recognition earned. These admissions materials are designed to give a well-rounded picture of who you are as a student and as an important member of your community. As an Oak Meadow student who

has benefited from years of focused, one-to-one attention from your teachers, your admissions materials will show a distinctive depth and quality.

As you begin **researching college options**, you will want to set up a good record keeping system. We have included a chart with headings for name and location of school, size of student body, majors or special degree programs, tuition, application deadline, required tests, financial aid deadline, and space to write in dates of interviews and visits. There is also space for questions you want to ask or notes about your visit. Take some time to keep this chart updated so you don't miss any important deadlines or requirements.

**Letters of recommendation** should accompany your application. You should request these from your Oak Meadow teachers, sports coach, music teacher, or any adult who knows you well and can provide a good reference for you. You will want to request these at the end of your junior year so each teacher can take the time to produce a high quality letter.

When you complete an application, make copies of everything before you send it. This includes copies of test scores, letters of recommendation, transcripts, financial forms, and any other materials you are required to submit. Before you fill out the application, copy it so you can write on the copy as a rough draft before you fill out the original to send. Colleges look very carefully at how an application is written, so you will want to avoid careless errors. Take your time to fill things out completely and include all the necessary forms. Make sure to mail your application on time, and then take a deep breath and congratulate yourself, knowing you've done everything you can to present yourself in the best possible light.

## The Common Application

Most colleges and universities use The Common Application. The Common Application is a not-for-profit

membership organization that serves students, member institutions, and secondary schools by providing applications—online and in print—that students and school officials may submit to any of its more than 400 members. The Common Application streamlines the application process by using one common application that is submitted to multiple schools. Schools often require their own application materials in addition to the Common App; **it is important to know what your prospective schools require**. We can upload your transcript and school information and your teachers can submit letters of recommendation through this service. Visit [commonapp.com](http://commonapp.com) and please call our office for further details.

## Admission Tests

Most colleges ask applicants to provide them with standardized test scores. Although homeschooled students may not have had much experience with standardized tests, studies have shown that their unique education often gives them an advantage. One report states, "The home educated in grades K-12 have scored, on average, at the 65th to 80th percentile on standardized academic achievement tests in the United States and Canada, compared to the public school average of the 50th percentile." (Academic Leadership Live online journal, Volume 6, Issue 3, April 14, 2008)

The most common tests are the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Test). Often students will take the SAT twice, once as a junior and again as a senior, which increases their chances of a higher score since the higher score is submitted. Many students also take the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) during their sophomore year. Oak Meadow provides interested students with information on the SAT and ACT. It is recommended that sophomores get an SAT prep book and begin working with the material early, particularly the vocabulary words and math skills.

As an Oak Meadow student who has benefited from years of focused, one-to-one attention from your teachers, your admissions materials will show a distinctive depth and quality.

The Oak Meadow School code for SAT/CEEB is **460-341**. Go to [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for test dates, test sites, and registration deadlines.

The home educated in grades K-12 have scored, on average, at the 65th-80th percentile on standardized academic achievement tests in the United States and Canada, compared to the public school average of the 50th percentile.

# Additional Resources

## PRINTED MATERIALS

*A is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges*  
—Michele A. Hernandez

*Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges*  
—Loren Pope

*25 Months Until College*  
—Judy McNeely

*The New Rules of College Admissions: Ten Former Admissions Officers Reveal What it Takes to Get Into College Today*  
—Stephen Kramer & Michael London

*Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different*  
—Donald Asher

*The College Application Essay: Revised Edition*  
—Sarah Myers McGinty

*Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps: Crafting a Winning Personal Statement*  
—Alan Gelb

*On Writing the College Application Essay: The Key to Acceptance at the College of Your Choice*  
—Harry Bauld

**There are set test dates, test sites, and registration deadlines for all standardized tests. You will want to register and take your tests well in advance to ensure your test scores are received before any college application deadlines. Visit [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for more information.**

## Writing an Admissions Essay

**Your admissions essay is often the best piece of information college admissions officers have to help them understand who you are as a student and as a person.** Your essay will reflect your writing skills, and the depth of insight you have about yourself. It will demonstrate your creativity and originality, and is an excellent chance to portray yourself as someone whose unique perspective and talents will enhance the academic and social life of the college. Your essay can compliment your portfolio and can also provide a chance to describe your work, travel and volunteering experiences, particularly ones relevant to the degree or career you wish to pursue. **As a homeschooled distance learning student, your list of experiences is likely to be varied, extensive, impressive and indicate a distinct sense of delight in learning.**

In addition to the Common App essay, you may be writing an individual essay for each college you apply to, based on the essay questions they pose and the unique social and academic atmosphere the college offers. Your writing should be in your own authentic voice, and clearly express your goals, views, and personal perspective. Oak Meadow welcomes the opportunity to review your essay and offer feedback.

## Applying for Financial Aid

Each college will have different requirements for their financial aid application process. Most schools will require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to apply for all federal

student financial aid programs such as the Pell Grant, Stafford Loans, and work-study. You can access the FAFSA at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov) for information and deadlines. Be sure you are on the federal website; there are many financial aid scams on the internet.

Each college has its own deadline and may have its own form to complete as well. Colleges advise that you send your FAFSA and the college's own form, if required, at least one month before the earliest college deadline on your list. When your FAFSA has been processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) via email or a paper copy will arrive after 7-10 days. Your SAR includes your expected family contribution. The college uses this information to determine your eligibility for a financial aid package.

## Campus Visits & Interviews

Once you have narrowed down your list of potential colleges, you will want to schedule visits with the ones in which you are most interested. Spring of your junior year is an excellent time to visit prospective colleges. Ideally, visits should be arranged to allow you the opportunity to attend some classes and spend the night in a dorm. Many schools have developed specific programs for prospective students so contacting the school's admissions office is the best way to begin.

Give yourself some time to explore the campus, and visit the cafeteria, library and bookstore. Talk to students on campus, and if possible make an appointment with a faculty member in your area of interest. Talk to everyone you meet so you can begin to get a clear picture of the social and academic atmosphere of the school. You may be living there for four years—don't be shy about asking questions!

Most colleges will want to arrange an interview. As a student of a non-traditional program, the college interview presents an exceptional opportunity for you to express yourself and share your experiences in ways


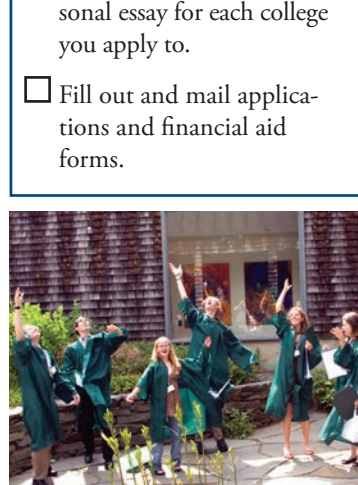
which distinguish you from the many other candidates for admission. Colleges and universities take a serious look at engaged learners who have shown initiative in their education, are independent workers and thinkers, and are involved in their communities.

In your interview, take the time to describe the ways in which your Oak Meadow experience has helped shape the way you learn and how you approach your studies. **College life demands a great deal of independence**

**and self-motivation, and as a homeschooler, you have spent years cultivating these qualities.** You have benefited from a 1:1 student/teacher ratio and this focused mentorship enabled you to develop your own skills and strengths to a high degree. Your unique education gives you a distinct edge. Spend some time thinking about (and practicing) how to best describe your experiences so that in your college interviews you can convey with enthusiasm and sincerity the richness of your educational background.

As a student of a non-traditional program, the college interview presents an exceptional opportunity for you to express yourself and share your experiences in ways which distinguish you from the many other candidates for admission.

## Year-by-Year Checklist

SOPHOMORE	JUNIOR	SENIOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin taking as demanding a course load as you can manage successfully.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get involved in activities, sports and extracurricular programs that interest you.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seek out volunteer opportunities in your community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT/NMSQT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue taking a rigorous course load and, if you qualify, begin taking AP classes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue with your leadership responsibilities, extracurricular and volunteer activities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research financial aid, student loans and scholarships, and speak to your family about paying for college.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT for the second time, if desired.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Study for the SAT.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research colleges you are interested in, and request printed materials. Plan college visits.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT and ACT.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of questions you have for each school.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice your college interview.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Request letters of recommendation from your teachers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrow your college search down and visit each school on your final list.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review admissions requirements for each school and obtain application materials.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Common App.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make a checklist for deadlines.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the SAT a second time, if desired.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write an individualized personal essay for each college you apply to.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fill out and mail applications and financial aid forms.</li> </ul>
		

### Additional Resources

**ONLINE MATERIALS**

- [www.embark.com](http://www.embark.com)
- [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
- [www.studentedge.com](http://www.studentedge.com)
- [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)
- [ww.usnews.com/features/education/best-colleges/guide-to-admissions.html](http://ww.usnews.com/features/education/best-colleges/guide-to-admissions.html)
- <http://www.homeschool.com/articles/college/default.asp>