

Ocean City High School
Guidance Department
Post-Secondary Planning Guide



Grades 9 & 10



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You Tube @OCHS Guidance

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INTRODUCTION

You are now entering a very exciting period of your life. The transition from high school is a time filled with challenge and opportunity. However, it can also be a difficult time. Just keep in mind that it will have its rewards – if you work at it.

Remember, post-secondary planning is a process with a beginning, middle, and end. Approaching post-secondary with this perspective will lead to better decision-making.

Because the process of selecting a college/career path is very personal, it must begin with self-reflection. You must consider many things about yourself: your goals, your values, your strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for going to college or choosing a particular career. Then, consider the many criteria that you will use in choosing which colleges and/or careers to explore. It is never too early to begin planning for life after graduation. This self-reflection is a great starting point for 9th and 10th grade students.

Throughout the process of making a college/career path decision, one of the best resources is your school counselor. Your counselor knows the various steps in the process, and can help you establish a logical approach. Just as important, your counselor can help you better understand yourself, your abilities, your interests, and your needs.

The road to your post-secondary plans lies before you. It's time to begin your journey!

GET CONNECTED WITH CAREER PLANNING

Before you decide on a post-secondary setting, you should investigate potential career options. Things to especially consider are **interest** in a specific career, **aptitude** for that career, and the **job market** for that career in the future. For instance, the U.S. Department of Labor predicts that only 20% of the careers in the first quarter of the 21st century will require a four year college degree, and that 65% of the careers will require post-secondary education of two years or less. You can prepare for this job market in a variety of ways:

- Network with parents and adult friends to learn more about the current job market
- Take interest inventories available through the counseling office on family connection.
- Participate in career shadowing experiences
- Visit the reference section of the school's library
- Choose high school courses to investigate a variety of career possibilities
- Participate in volunteer experiences related to a possible career choice
- Listen to career speakers in your building whenever possible

FAMILY CONNECTION

The college/career path planning process has dramatically changed many aspects of how our society does business, and the OCHS Guidance Department is no different. Our department website is located on the web at <http://www.oceancityschools.org>. Here, you can find a variety of school, college, and career planning information. In addition, the Ocean City High School Guidance Department has been happy to partner with Family Connection through Naviance for the past 12 years.

Family Connection is a web-based service designed especially to assist students and parents in the college and career planning process. It is a comprehensive website that provides a wealth of information, which you and your child can use to help in making decisions about courses, colleges, and careers. Family connection is linked with Counselor's Office, a service that we use to track and analyze data about college and career plans, so it provides up-to-date information that is specific to our school.

Family Connection will allow you and your parent or guardian to:

- **Get involved in the planning and advising process** – Build a resume, complete online surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers.
- **Research colleges** – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from OCHS students who have applied and been admitted in the past.
- **Sign up for college visits** – Find out which colleges are visiting our school and sign up to attend those sessions.
- **Communicate via email** – Allow us to share information with you about upcoming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other web resources for college and career information.
- **And much, much more...**

***Email has become a necessary tool in the college planning process, for both the student and the parent. Email is used for SAT and ACT test registration, requesting college view books and information, applying to schools, and in the financial aid process. If you do not have an email, we would strongly advise you to set up an email account for this purpose.

Each of our students has an active account beginning freshman year. Parents can also have a specific registration code that will enable them to register for this valuable resource. If your parent or guardian, needs a registration code, they can email their name and your name to your Guidance Counselor. We will then send a registration code to access the site and set up an account. If you need help accessing Family Connection, see your counselor or send them an email.

After you receive your registration code you:

1. Go to the website <http://connection.naviance.com/ochs>
2. Enter your registration code, click register
3. Enter your email address and a password, click complete registration
4. You now have access to the site using your email address and password

Once your parent is registered, TCCI Family Connection will allow them to view your information and use features of the site. As mentioned earlier, it will also allow us to share information with you and your parent or guardian about up-coming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other web resources for college and career information. In addition, the site includes a quick link that you can use to send us an email.

We hope that you will find this important resource helpful. If you have any further questions about Family Connection, please contact us.

WHY START PLANNING NOW?

With graduation still a few years away, you may ask yourself if it's really necessary to start planning now for what will come next. In reality, it is never too early to start post-secondary planning. Choosing a college or career is a big decision, so starting to think about it as soon as you start high school puts you in the best possible position to have an easy and successful transition.

Having an idea of what you want to do after high school will allow you, with the help of your counselor, to choose the best classes, take the right standardized tests, and fill your time with the most fulfilling and valuable extracurricular activities for your goals. There is no "one best way" to go through high school, so knowing the desired end point will help you discover your individual optimal path.

Additionally, with the competitive nature of both the job market and college admissions, early planning gives you ample time to prepare to present your best self to employers and admissions counselors. Beginning the post-secondary planning process now minimizes the risk that you will be blindsided by experiences missed or requirements left unfulfilled.

There are plenty of reasons to start thinking now about life after graduation, but that does not mean that a plan needs to be solidified overnight. Now is *not* the time to make definitive choices. However, it is the perfect time to come up with a list of several options that sound interesting. Keep these options in mind throughout the next couple of years, consistently be adding to and editing the list as interests and aptitudes emerge. This is the time to explore.

We hope that this guide will give you a better idea of what you should be doing at this point to plan for the most successful post-secondary outcome possible.

COLLEGES AND COLLEGE PLANNING

College Admissions and Financial Aid Terms

Here are the definitions of some commonly used terms related to the college admissions process:

ACT – The American College Test is a standardized college admissions instrument. The ACT is an achievement test that consists of Math, Science, English, Reading, and an optional Writing section.

Candidates Reply Date – Students have until May 1st of their senior year to notify a college of their intention to attend that school. Students confirm their choice by sending a tuition deposit (most likely non-refundable). Check with the specific college regarding this policy.

CEEB Code – Also known as the high school code, it is the identification number assigned to a particular high school by the College Entrance Exam Board. Students need this code for SAT registration, college applications, etc. Posted in the Guidance Office, the CEEB code for Ocean City High School is 311045.

Common Application – This is a college application accepted by a large number of colleges and universities nationwide. Students can complete the general application once and submit it to multiple schools. Find it online at www.commonapp.org.

Community College – A two-year institution offering a variety of degree and certificate programs. Degrees can be terminal or transferable to a four-year college or university.

CSS Profile – The College Scholarship Search Profile is a supplemental financial aid application used by over 450, mostly highly selective, colleges and universities. There is a fee to file this form.

Early Action – For colleges offering this option, students can apply early, usually between November 1st and December 1st of their senior year, and receive notification between mid-December and mid-January. Early action is not a binding contract; however, students should have thoroughly and carefully researched all of their educational options, visited campuses, had interviews, completed SAT and/or ACT tests and considered financial factors prior to applying early action.

FAFSA – The **Free** Application for Federal Student Aid is the main vehicle in the application process for need-based federal financial aid. Forms must be filed with the federal government soon after October 1st of the applicant's senior year. **There is no fee** to submit this form. Apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

GPA – Grade Point Average. Ocean City High School reports a **cumulative, weighted**, numeric 3-year average (9th, 10th, and 11th grades) on transcripts.

Merit-Based Scholarships – Financial awards from colleges to students based on academic achievement (grades and SAT scores), not family income.

Need-Based Scholarships – Financial awards from colleges to students based on family income, not academic achievement.

NCAA Eligibility Center – Formerly NCAA Clearinghouse, The National College Athletic Association is found online here. Prospective student athletes register online with the NCAA sometime after their junior year of high school. They must file prior to participating in, or accepting money to participate in, collegiate Division I or II level athletic teams. NCAA charges a fee to register and requires that students send official test scores directly from the College Board or ACT, using code 9999.

Net Price Calculator – An online tool to help determine the overall price of attending each college.

Official Test Scores – SAT or ACT scores that are sent directly from the testing agency to a college. These scores are sent for free (up to four schools) when registering for the test, or can be sent afterward for a fee. OCHS does not send scores to the colleges.

PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. OCHS administers this test each October to sophomores and juniors. Juniors who score in at least the top 98th percentile *may* be in contention for a National Merit commendation or scholarship.

Rank – The academic standing of a student in relation to his or her class.

Rolling Admissions – An admissions policy whereby institutions process applications as soon as all credentials are received, without regard to a specific due date. An admissions decision is then typically rendered within a four to six week period. It is important to apply as soon as possible to schools using a rolling admissions policy.

SAT – A standardized college admissions instrument. The SAT was originally called the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then the Scholastic Achievement Test, then simply the SAT (or SAT I), and is now called the SAT Reasoning Test. The 3-hour and 45-minute College Board exam includes Math, Critical Reading, and Writing Sections. SAT performance is a major factor used in the college admissions process at many colleges and universities. OCHS students are encouraged to take the SAT at least twice and the ACT once between the spring of their junior year and fall of their senior year.

SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II) – Another college admissions instrument required at mostly highly selective colleges and universities. SAT Subject Tests are achievement tests designed to measure a student’s ability in fourteen different subject areas. The tests are one hour in length, and students may take up to three tests in one day.

School Profile – A document that provides a statistical snapshot of OCHS. It includes school history, course offerings, grading scale, standardized test performance, and a comprehensive list of colleges and universities offering admission to the previous year’s graduates. A copy of the School Profile is sent with each college application mailed from the Guidance Office.

Superscoring – A policy used by many (but not all) colleges to use a student’s best test scores on each section combined from multiple test administrations, rather than scores from one test date.

Transcript – A record of high school coursework and grade performance. Official transcripts include a counselor’s signature and an embossed school seal.

Work Study – College work-study is a government supported financial-aid program whereby eligible students may work while attending school. Often, income earned from a work-study program is applied directly toward tuition.

Waiting List – A practice by which colleges and universities postpone making a final admissions decision on a potentially admissible candidate.

COLLEGE READINESS

If you're planning to go to college, it's important to take the right classes in high school. Some universities may require fewer years in some subjects than we've recommended here, but for "strong preparation," you should plan to take the following:

English: 4 years of college prep English are required. This will give you the skills you'll need to understand literature and write effectively.

Math: 4 years will give you the best possible preparation. Students who take math in each year of high school are far more successful in college than students taking only three years.

Science: 3 years of lab sciences are recommended, even if you don't plan to pursue a science-related field.

Social Studies: 3 years will give you the ability to understand and contribute to the world you live in.

Foreign Language: 3 years of the same language are recommended. Many universities require their students to study a foreign language. Strong preparation in high school will let you go further, faster in college.

Art: 1 year of a visual or performing art is required. This includes courses in art, music, theater, or dance.

Strong Preparation. Many colleges will require students to meet certain college prep curriculum standards. But just meeting the minimum is not necessarily the best way to prepare for college. Strong preparation means going beyond the minimum – taking honors or advanced placement courses where appropriate. Remember, be the best you can be!

WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED TO KNOW...

What Counts Most with Admission Directors?

Survey of Members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling

Criteria	Degree of Importance		
	Considerable	Moderate	Limited
Grades in College Prep Courses	82%	12%	3%
Class Rank	42%	35%	15%
Grades in All Subjects	41%	44%	12%
Test Scores	20%	40%	25%
Counselor Recommendations	20%	50%	23%
Teacher Recommendations	20%	50%	23%
Essay	15%	35%	28%
Interview	14%	31%	37%
Work/Extra-Curricular Activities	6%	38%	43%
Personal Recognition	1%	12%	41%

- Keep in mind that colleges may have other priorities that impact student admission, such as minority recruitment, geographical mix, talent mix, athletes, and diversity of student body.

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

Freshman Year

- Fall
 - Meet with your counselor – get to know them, and let them get to know you!
 - Get involved! Join a club, sport, or activity.
 - Take the PSAT 8/9 in October
- Winter
 - Start exploring your interests. Think about which classes you're really enjoying and why. Take the cluster finder or career interest profiler on Family Connection if you haven't already. Discuss the results of these with important adults in your life.
 - Create your graduation plan, which details a course plan for the rest of high school depending on your post-secondary goals.
- Spring
 - Choose your classes for next year. Keep your college and career goals in mind!
- Summer
 - Get a summer job or participate in a summer enrichment experience. Check out the OCHS Job Fair in February for job opportunities, and use Family Connection to find enrichment experiences.
 - If you get a job, start putting some money away for college. Your future self will thank you!

Sophomore Year

- Fall
 - Check in with your counselor. Provide them with any updates that they should know about, and make sure that you're fulfilling any prerequisites for higher level classes in your plan for junior and senior year.
 - Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. You can't qualify for the scholarship until your junior year, but taking it now will allow you to practice for when you can qualify.
- Winter
 - With your family, start to do research about financial aid. Fill out the FAFSA4caster to get a better idea of how much aid you may qualify for.
 - If you can, visit a college campus just to see what it's like. Attend an open house at a local school, like Stockton University, or plan to visit a nearby school on your next family vacation.
- Spring
 - Choose your classes for next year. Keep your college and career goals in mind!
 - Make sure you're still involved in your school or community. Continue with former activities, or find new ones that you might like.
- Summer
 - Get a summer job or participate in a summer enrichment experience. Check out the OCHS Job Fair in February for job opportunities, and use Family Connection to find enrichment experiences.
 - Continue putting a portion of your earnings into a college fund.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SUMMER EXPERIENCES

When it comes to extracurricular activities, colleges are looking for quality over quantity. Admissions counselors would rather you participate deeply in a few activities than join fifteen clubs and attend a few meetings for each. Pick a manageable number of activities, and strive to be a valuable member within them. Stick with the ones you really enjoy, and eventually aim for a leadership role. You could be president of your club, or captain of your sports team. If these roles don't appeal to you, try taking the lead on a project, or mentoring younger members of your club or team. Not only will this leadership experience be useful later in life, it will also show colleges that you will be a strong, positive influence on their campus.

What you do over the summer can be an important factor in your college applications. Colleges want to see that you've spent your summer months doing something valuable. This could be working a summer job, or attending a summer enrichment program. In February, Ocean City High School will have a summer job fair, where students can apply for positions with many local employers. For enrichment opportunities, Family Connection is a great resource. Under the "Colleges" tab, Family Connection has an area where you can search for summer enrichment programs. This one location (called "enrichment programs") provides a wealth of information on enrichment experiences with a focus ranging anywhere from STEM to Animal Rights and Rescue.

Overall, one of the most important things you can do at this point to prepare for college is to get involved in your school and community. Your academic classes will help you grow intellectually, but how you fill the rest of your time will help you grow as a person.

SEARCHING FOR COLLEGES

There are a variety of resources available to help you with the college search process. One of these is Family Connection. Under the "Colleges" tab, there are several tools to help you begin to think about what you want in a college. The SuperMatch™ college search is a particularly useful tool that allows you to search for schools using a wide variety of criteria, such as acceptance rate, available majors, and political climate of the school. SuperMatch™ also allows you to compare schools and save your searches.

Another great resource when it comes to searching for colleges is BigFuture by The College Board. This can be accessed online at bigfuture.collegeboard.org. Their "Make A Plan" feature allows you to input your information, including grade level, where you are in the college search process, interest in financial aid information, whether you are thinking about a 2-year or 4-year school, and what excites you most about college. From your responses, BigFuture creates an individualized, comprehensive plan that you can follow in order to prepare for college.

Connecting With the College That Is Right for You

When searching for prospective colleges, it can be tempting to refer to the U.S. News and World Report college rankings in order to determine which schools are the best. However, it is important to keep in mind that the top rated schools may not be the best fit for you. In the college search process, fit must come before rank when it comes to evaluating a school.

Why do you want to go to college:

What do you hope to gain?

What learning opportunities do you need?

What are your goals?

How will college help you achieve these goals?

Factors to consider in choosing a college:

1. Type of college
 - a. Two or four-year college?
 - b. Residential or commuter?
 - c. Large or small?
 - d. College or university?
2. Location
 - a. What area(s) of the country can you realistically consider?
 - b. What about the relation between location and costs?
 - c. Are specific interests and goals tied to a specific location?
3. Admissions selectivity
 - a. What are the admission requirements?
 - b. Are you eligible for admission?
 - c. How academically demanding is the school?
4. Costs
 - a. How much will it cost?
 - b. What kind of financial aid is available?
 - c. How do you apply for financial aid?
5. Majors and programs
 - a. Does the school offer the major you want?
 - b. Does the school offer you the chance to explore several areas of interest?
 - c. Does the school have internships? Exchange programs? Study abroad?
6. Social Life
 - a. What is campus atmosphere like?
 - b. What extracurricular activities are available?

EXPLORING MAJORS AND CAREERS

For high school students, figuring out their area of interest – what they want to do when they grow up – is one of the first steps in the college planning process. Choosing a prospective major and subsequent career will help you focus your search. Family Connection has a plethora of great tools for exploring interests and related careers under the “Careers” tab. Here, you can answer questions about your interests and aptitudes, which will then allow you to explore careers that you may enjoy and their related college majors. You also have access to Roadtrip Nation, a huge library of interviews with leaders of their field conducted by young people.

BigFuture by College Board also has a section dedicated to career exploration. Here, you can find a whole page full of interesting articles dedicated to college majors and careers, as well as videos detailing experiences of college students who were once in your shoes! You can also use this page to browse comprehensive explanations of various majors and careers.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

PSAT 8/9

The PSAT 8/9 is administered in October. It is a test that will help students figure out what they need to work on most so they are ready for college when they graduate from high school. It tests the same skills and knowledge as the SAT and PSAT/NMSQT – in a way that makes sense for your grade level.

Get Ready for the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT- When test results arrive, students should connect to their College Board and [Khan Academy®](#) accounts to get free personalized study recommendations.

Get Matched to AP Courses- Test results will also let students know if they should consider an AP course. [AP Potential™](#) also helps schools grow their AP programs.

PSAT/NMSQT GRADES 10/11

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is offered once a year in October. Upon registering for the PSAT, students receive a PSAT bulletin which provides test-taking hints and sample tests. The PSAT is the only qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships. Juniors must score in the top 1% of PSAT junior test takers in order to qualify for National Merit Scholarships. *Sophomores are invited and encouraged to take the PSAT as practice, planning, and preparation.*

What is on the test?

The PSAT includes five sections:

- Two 25-minute critical reading sections
- Two 25-minute math sections
- One 30-minute writing skills section

*There is no essay section on the PSAT.

My College QuickStart

My College QuickStart is an easy-to-use, online, personalized college and career planning tool available free of charge to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. The information and answers your child provided when they took the test are incorporated into this useful tool, and it presents their data back to them in six main parts:

- **My Online Score Report**- an enhanced score report that allows students to review each test question, the student's answer, and the correct answer with answer explanations.
- **My SAT Study Plan**- a customized SAT study plan based on the student's PSAT/NMSQT performance, highlighting skills for review and practice.
- **My Personality**- a detailed personality test that helps students better understand their own strengths and interests.
- **My College Matches**- a starter list of colleges based on the student's state and indicated choice of major.
- **My Major and Career Matches**- major and career matches that are compatible with the student's general interests and personality type.
- **My AP Potential**- a report that shows students which AP® courses they may be ready for and which match the college majors that interest them.

Access is available using the access code printed on the student's paper score report, and the tool can be utilized throughout high school. Using My College QuickStart together with your parent or guardian is a great way to introduce yourself to important aspects of the college-going process. Visit www.collegeboard.org/quickstart for more information.

BigFuture- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>

A free, comprehensive college planning website provided by College Board that improves the college planning process for all students.

TESTING PREPARATION – METHOD TEST PREP

Method Test Prep is an online SAT and ACT prep program that works to help students score at their full potential. This program is available for use anywhere there is an Internet connection. This is a resource that the Ocean City School District provides to all students free of charge through Family Connection.

SAT & ACT

We recommend that students take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. However, some students may be ready to take it earlier. It is necessary to keep in mind, though, that it is not recommended to take the SAT more than three times. Consult your guidance counselor if you feel that you may be ready to take the SAT or ACT during your freshman or sophomore years.

SAT Subject tests relate to specific high school courses, and should be taken as close to finishing the related course as possible. Depending on your course work, you may want to take an SAT Subject Test before junior year.

For more information on SAT Tests, visit <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/>

For more information on ACT Tests, visit www.actstudent.org

FINANCIAL AID

The cost of attending college consists of tuition; room and board; books and supplies; computer costs; transportation; and personal supplies and incidentals. The final cost is determined by the amount of financial aid a student is awarded subtracted from the total cost.

Types of Financial Aid:

- **GRANTS** – money from the state and federal resources which **does not** have to be repaid
- **LOANS** – money from federal sources and banks that **must be** repaid
- **WORK STUDY** – a program within the college that allows the student to work on campus and receive money. The money is not given up front or taken off one’s tuition. The student is paid when and if he or she works.
- **SCHOLARSHIPS** – money from private sources and the college itself. The student must apply for the scholarship and the money does not have to be repaid. Scholarships can be need-based or merit-based.

How Do I Apply for Financial Aid?

One of the first steps in the financial aid process is to file a **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** form. The FAFSA will ask information regarding both the student and parents’ prior prior year’s taxes (For a student entering college in the fall 2017, use taxes from 2015). The FAFSA cannot be completed before October 1st of the student’s senior year. However, there is a useful tool on the FAFSA website – fafsa.ed.gov – called the FAFSA4caster. This tool allows you to input your information before the student’s senior year, and it will give you an idea of how much financial aid the student may be eligible for. Knowing this information will help with making college choices.

The Armed Services

The guidance department has current information for each branch of the military and ROTC opportunities.

Also, representatives of each branch of the military visit our high school each year. If your student is interested in military academies, the application process must begin junior year. For more information, please contact the following:

LOCAL RECRUITING OFFICES

U.S. Air Force Recruiting Station

609-641-0489
333 Tilton Road Ste. 4
Northfield, NJ
www.airforce.com

U.S. Marine Corps

609-889-9024
www.usmc.mil

U.S. Army Recruiting Station

SSG Brian Haldan
609-484-0161
563 Tilton Road
Northfield, NJ
www.goarmy.com

U.S. Navy Recruiting Station

609-484-8121
www.navy.mil

U.S. Army Reserve Recruiting Station

www.goarmy.com

U.S. Coast Guard Recruiting Office

609-464-8260
1333 New Road Ste. 8
Northfield, NJ
www.uscg.mil

New Jersey National Guard

www.nj.gov/military

ACADEMIES

U.S. Military Academy

West Point, NY 10966

U.S. Naval Academy

Annapolis, MD 21402

U.S. Airforce Academy

Denver, CO 80840

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

New London, CT 06320

U.S. Merchant Marine

King's Point, NY 11024

ROTC

Army ROTC

Ft. Monroe, VA 23351

Air Force ROTC Admissions

Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

Commandant of the Marine Corp

Academy Marine Corps
Washington, DC 20380

Commander

Navy Recruiting Command
Code 314 Navy Department
Washington, DC 20370

Entering the Workforce

Resume Writing

No matter what you plan to do after graduation, you will need to know how to communicate effectively. One of the most important ways that you will communicate is through the job application process. Knowing how to write a cover letter and resume are necessary skills for advancement in any vocation. Remember that a resume won't get you a job, but it will get you an interview.

There is no "right" way of creating a resume. Be unique and allow your personality to show, but remember to be professional at all times. Use a font that is professional and easy to read. When describing your work and related experiences, use action words, such as "aided," "demonstrated," "monitored," and "utilized." Also, use short phrases to describe your experiences, not complete sentences. If you need to provide references, ask for permission before you use someone's name and information. Finally, have several people proofread your resume for spelling, formatting, and grammatical errors. Feel free to use the resume tool (under the "About Me" tab) on Family Connection to format your resume.

When you're ready to print, don't use regular copy paper. Print on resume paper, which can be purchased at Walmart. Resume paper is heavier, colored, and may even have a granite or marble design. On page 18 is a worksheet that will help you in writing your resume. Sample resumes begin on page 20. **Please remember that these are samples and should not be copied.**

Cover Letter

Before a prospective employer reads your resume and application, they will read your cover letter. Cover letters are an important part of your application package, as they spark interest and make the employer want to read your resume. More than just what's on the resume, your cover letter is more personable and should link together your skills and how they will be of benefit to the employer.

Be sure that the cover letter is addressed to whoever is responsible for hiring new employees. Cover letters are generally three paragraphs. Paragraph one is used to tell the employer why you are writing. Paragraph two is your opportunity to sell your product, which is yourself! Describe how your skills and experiences relate to the requirements of the position that you are applying for. Paragraph three describes the next step, which is an interview. Sample cover letters begin on page 22. **Please remember that these are samples and should not be copied.**

The Interview

Now that you have made it past the cover letter and resume stage, you are ready for the interview. Relax. Take a deep breath. It's normal and expected that you are nervous, and the best way to deal with anxiety is to be prepared. By following these tips, you will be well on your way to your new job!

- A strong handshake, good posture, eye contact, and professional dress are important.
- Be sure that you know a lot about the employer: what is your prospective employer in charge of, how large is the company, how long has the company been around, who are the top individuals in the company, and any current or local issues that pertain to the company.
- Don't appear to be a know-it-all. You're trying to get a job, not re-structure the organization!
- The most important thing that you can do is to be yourself. Be relaxed, but enthusiastic. Remember: whoever interviews you sat in the same seat that you're sitting in at some point!

Sample Interview Questions You May Be Asked:

- Tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Why did you choose this field to work in?
- What are some of your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- I see on your resume that you worked at _____. Can you tell me a little about what you did there?
- Tell me about a difficult time in your life and how you handled that situation.
- What kind of leadership roles have you had, and what have you learned from them?
- What made you interested in our company?
- What are your career goals OR where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- What will you bring to our company?
- Why should we hire you?

Follow Up Letter

A follow up letter, or thank you note, is important. Sending a note after your interview is an added element that may help your employment opportunities. Even if you do not get the job that you applied for, a thank you letter may help keep your name fresh in the employer's mind. Remember to make the note personalized to your interview. A sample follow up letter is on page 23. **Please remember that this is a sample and should not be copied.**

Resume Worksheet

Use this page to help you put together the information you'll need to compile your résumé.

1. **Name:** _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

2. Education

High school name: _____

High school address: _____

GPA (if "B" average or higher): _____ Rank (Example – top third): _____

Expected graduation date: _____

List and describe courses of special interest and/or special programs you've participated in: _____

List the skills you've acquired in those classes: _____

3. Employment (for each position, list or describe)

Your employer, dates worked, and your position: _____

Your job responsibilities and promotions: _____

The skills you've developed: _____

Your accomplishments (give a concrete example of each): _____

Favorable comments by employers and/or awards: _____

4. **Volunteer Work** (for each position, list or describe)

The organization and your volunteer duties: _____

The skills you've developed: _____

Your accomplishments (give a concrete example of each): _____

5. **Activities**

List extracurricular activities or school-related projects: _____

List computer / software-program and Internet experience and skills: _____

List awards and notices of recognition for activities and achievements: _____

6. **Other**

List your other special skills (example: language proficiencies, problem-solving, and leadership skills): _____

Describe any experiences that highlight these skills or abilities: _____

Sample Resume 1

501 ATLANTIC AVENUE OCEAN CITY, NJ 08226
PHONE: (609) 399-1290 • E-MAIL: NEEDSAJOB@WORK.NET

RED RAIDER

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a challenging position in the health care industry.

EDUCATION

2010 - Current Ocean City High School Ocean City, NJ
Expected Graduation Date: June 17, 2014
GPA: 3.7

AWARDS RECEIVED

Atlantic Career and Technical Center Health Care Award

October Student of the Month

Smith National Volunteerism Award

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

Key Club, **President** 2010-2013

Ocean City High School Football Team, **Captain** 2010-2013

National Honor Society 2012-2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

2012 – 2013 Linwood Nursing Home Linwood, NJ
Health Care Assistant

Assisted patients with all aspects of daily functioning.

Coordinated social functions and trips.

Provided care and support to patients.

2013 – Present McDonald's Restaurant Ocean City, NJ
Food Service Worker

- Provided customer service.
- Responsible for opening restaurant.
- Promoted to head cashier.

Red Raider
 501 Atlantic Avenue Ocean City, New Jersey 08226
 609-399-1290
 Redraider@ocsdnj.org

Class Rank: 14/306

SAT Score: 2050/2400

Activity, Honor or Job	Grades	Hours/week Weeks/year	Description
Yearbook Staff	10, 11, 12	10 hrs/week 36 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized, edited and published an award winning yearbook for the benefit of the student body Editor of the entire book, also in charge of managing staff
Drama Guild	9, 10, 11, 12	16 hrs/week 45 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehearse and perform 2 quality shows a year Starred in major leading roles since Freshman Year
Choir	9, 10, 11, 12	4 hrs/week 36 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected Choir Secretary – in charge of taking attendance and paperwork Elected Choir President – in charge of overseeing choir as a whole
SADD Club	10, 11	1 hr/week 36 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominated Vice President and subsequently President Advise students throughout the district against destructive decisions while promoting a positive lifestyle
Student Council	9, 10, 11, 12	2 hrs/week 36 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely involved member Take part in school and community service projects bettering the community
DECA	10, 11	2 hrs/week 20 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run OCHS's "Super Bagels" morning breakfast stand twice a week Won numerous awards at local and regional DECA business competitions
National Honor Society	11, 12	1 hr/week 36 weeks/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inducted for outstanding academic and leadership accomplishments Take part in service projects
Voice of Democracy Essay Contest	10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrote a patriotic essay for the local VFW Won second place regionally and received scholarship money
Board Recognition	10, 11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized by the Ocean City Board of Education for achievement in the VFW Essay Contest Recognized for leading roles in the Drama Guild
Freshman Team Building Peer Leader	11, 12	3 hrs/week 1 week/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led a group of freshmen through various challenges and obstacles to promote unity and welcome them to our school Nominated by teachers
Literary Magazine Publication	9, 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published in the nationally recognized high school magazine "Speak Easy" Recognized for photography and poetry
City-Wide Beach Cleanups	9, 10, 11	5 hrs/week 1 week/year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Went through Ocean City cleaning up trash and recyclables

Interests and Hobbies: One of my greatest passions in life is theatre. I love performing in and watching shows. I plan on majoring in marketing in college and then moving to New York City to pursue a career in the field. Outside of school, I enjoy traveling, going to the beach, watching movies, cooking, driving and spending time with my friends and family.

Sample Cover Letter

Your Name

Your Address

Your City, State, Zip Code

Your Phone # (*this should be a number where messages can be taken for you*)

Your Email (*you should be checking this daily*)

Date

Employer/Scholarship Name

Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name,

I am responding to the Employment/Scholarship opportunity within your Business/Local Scholarship Program. Please accept this letter and accompanying resume/application as evidence of my interest in applying for this job/scholarship. I feel my qualifications and my skills would prove to be an asset for your organization. I will graduate from Ocean City High School this June 2014. Now, I am looking for a job that will add experience to my developing career. Here are some of my key strengths that I would bring to the position. I am:

1. A self-starter.
2. Disciplined.
3. An excellent communicator.
4. Very willing and eager to learn new things.
5. Exceptional at customer service.
5. A great team worker.

Accepting challenges is the foundation of my life experiences and something I do with confidence. You will find me a totally committed individual with pride in being direct, spontaneous and communicative. I can maintain records, perform numerical calculations with accuracy, and I need little direction to complete assigned tasks. These are the qualities that make an excellent candidate for this post.

I am responsible for handling and organizing various important activities in my school. I have participated in numerous cultural/community activities. I have a working knowledge of MSWord, MSPowerPoint, PSExcel, and the Internet.

I would appreciate your consideration of my credentials. If you do think there is a shared interest, I would welcome the chance to meet with you to hear more about your company, the requirements of the position, and how my skills would be a good fit.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Sample Follow Up Letter

Good Afternoon **Interviewer's Name**,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday about the **position name** with **business name**.

It was a pleasure meeting with you, and I truly enjoyed learning more about the role and the company. After our conversation, I am confident that my skills and experiences are a great match for this opportunity.

I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of joining your team and would greatly appreciate a follow-up as you move forward with the hiring process. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone. Thanks again, and I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Best regards,

Your Name

Appendix

COLLEGE PLANNING

Name: _____ GPA: _____ Rank: _____

Verbal Math Composite
 SAT: _____ SAT II: _____ ACT: _____

Final List of Schools	REACH (1-2 Schools)	1. _____
		2. _____
	POSSIBLE (4-6 Schools)	1. _____
		2. _____
		3. _____
		4. _____
		5. _____
		6. _____
	SAFETY (1 - 2 Schools)	1. _____
		2. _____

*** ADMISSIONS SELECTOR ***

	Most Competitive	Highly Competitive	Very Competitive	Competitive
Rank	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 35 - 50%	Top 50 - 65%
GPA	A to A-	A- to B	No less than B-	B- to C
SAT	655 to 800	620 to 655	570 to 620	450 to 575

	Less Competitive	Non Competitive/Open Enrollment	Special
Rank	Top 65%	Evidence of Graduation	Talent or Special
GPA	Below C	SAT for placement only	Interests Considered
SAT	↓ 450		(Art, Music, Nursing, Etc.)

SAT PREP INFORMATION

PRIVATE TUTORS

Please note that the tutors have contacted our office. We do not endorse any specific tutor or service.

We are providing information for our students and parents.

Will provide individual instruction or small group instruction. Fee varies.

Dr. Daniel Loggi www.LoggiSAT.com	609-646-0109	(Verbal/Math)
Ms. Miriam Mast (Best Testers/The Learning Curve)	609-576-5900	(Verbal/Math)
Mrs. Cox (OCHS)	609-385-6336	(Math Only)
Mrs. Williscroft	609-335-1079	(Verbal Only)
Mr. Daniel Slattery (not available January – June)	609-927-7572	(Verbal Only)
Ms. Donna Lynn Warren	609-927-7182	(Math Only)
Doug Brown	609-390-2483	(Math Only)
Lynn Myers (OC)	609-399-7219	(Verbal/Math)
Linda Musial Prep/Math)	\$60 – 6 sessions minimum *test taking techniques 610-212-4084	(General)
Chris Orr	310-623-2622 or cdohoya@gmail.com	(Verbal/Math)
Kate Mancuso (SAT/ACT/GMAT/GRE)	609-992-8401	
Katie Foreman	609-442-7074 or kforeman@mainlanderegionalnet	
	(Math/Subject Test Math, any mathematics up to AP Calculus)	

OFFICIAL SAT PREP:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/sat> (Khan
Academy)