

## Typical Application Mistakes

(Adapted from NACAC Listserv suggestions, the ACT website, and BHS Counselors' Experiences!)

1. **Misspelled words and grammatical errors.** This is a big “pet peeve” for admissions officers.
2. **Applying online, but the application isn't really submitted.** You should receive a confirmation message if it has been successfully submitted.
3. **Forgetting to sign and date the application** (if paper).
4. **Not reading each section carefully.** If the form asks what County you live in, don't misread it as Country and write United States.
5. **Not following the instructions for the essay.** Address the topic prompt and keep to the suggested length.
6. **Listing extracurricular activities that aren't.** Your sports, arts activities, formal organizations, and volunteer activities should be listed. “Hanging out with friends” and “talking on the phone” are not extracurricular activities. Be accurate; colleges may check with the high school.
7. **Letting Mom or Dad help you fill out your application.** Two different styles of writing are a dead giveaway to admissions people. They also know if an essay sounds more like a 45-year-old than a 17-year-old. Advice is OK, but do the work yourself. Tip: parents should not touch the application.
8. **Writing an essay about wanting to attend College X and sending it to College Y.** Oops! Read and re-read each application and/or essay before you submit it.
9. **Waiting until the last minute; not leaving enough time to do a good job.** Spread out the tasks over several weeks. Also, don't wait to submit electronically at the last minute. Several thousand other students will be trying to get through and time may run out. And...the power on Bainbridge Island WILL go out at the worst-possible time! Also note: Common Application midnight deadline (east coast time) is 9 PM (west coast time). Plan ahead.

### Be Sure To.....

1. **Read carefully the full application directions.** Check-off tasks as you complete them.
2. **Check all deadlines.** For the application postmark, for transcript release forms, for counselor recs, for teacher recs. Write them down. Map it out. Use the *College Application Process Worksheet*. Get organized.
3. **Use your full legal name for all documents.** If colleges get letters of recommendation or test scores that do not match the name on your application, they may open two files causing confusion and delays.
4. **Select a professional email address and check it often.** Colleges will use it to communicate with you.
5. **Select one username and password for all online applications.** Otherwise it can get really confusing. Keep your username and password secure! Bring both to all counseling meetings so your counselor can help you.
6. **SAVE your work in the online applications.** Also, log out after you save each session.
7. **Submit the appropriate Supplement if you are using the Common Application.** Find them for each college as you work through the [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
8. **Compose and save your essay(s) in a word-processing application.** Then copy and paste into the appropriate boxes in the online application. Adhere to the word length requirements of each college.
9. **Ask a teacher or parent to read/comment on your essay** before submitting it.
10. **Review your BHS transcript for errors.** If you find a mistake, contact your counselor immediately for corrections before sending it to colleges through Parchment.
11. **Be careful when making selections from drop-down menus in online applications.**
12. **Mention jobs along with other activities.** They show that you have used your out-of-school time constructively.
13. **Review carefully the question about reporting school discipline issues.** Talk with your counselor if you have questions. The counselor's *Secondary School Report* will have to address this issue as well.
14. **Make copies of your applications before mailing them....or....print copies of online applications** if possible and **print out your receipt and keep it.** You'll then have a record of your application ID number.
15. **If you use regular mail (most apps will be online, though):** a) put your application in a large enough envelope so it stays neat, and b) mail it from the Post Office (first class mail) on or before the deadline. Do NOT send it certified, overnight mail, etc., or it may not get to the campus Admissions Office in a timely manner.
16. **Have test companies send SAT or ACT scores.** BHS does not send test scores.
17. **Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.**
18. **Good luck from all the counselors! We'll help you in any way we can! Just come see us!**