



45 Questions to Ask Your Guidance Counselor

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So, you've begun thinking about college applications. The process can be intimidating, but there is no shortage of resources on the Internet or even at your own school in the form of your high school guidance counselor. Your college [counselor](#) should be the go-to person who helps you understand the basics of the process, organize school visits, help make your school list, and assist with any issues that might come up. Your counselor will also be writing a recommendation letter on your behalf, so it's very important that you get to know this person and vice versa.

The question on your mind may be: where do you start? Once you've introduced yourself, it's time to sit down and pick his/her brain as you gear up to decide what classes to take, where to apply, what the different application components entail, and how to succeed in the process. To guide you through making the most out of the resource that is your counselor, we have outlined questions that can help you get the conversation started.

Choosing Your Classes and Scheduling

1. What classes should I take if I want to be an X major?
2. Which elective courses or AP classes do you recommend?
3. Do my courses show that I'm challenging myself?
4. How do I maintain a balance between juggling classes and extracurriculars?
5. Do you have any [organizational](#) or scheduling tips?
6. Should I take the [SAT or the ACT](#)?
7. When would be the best time to take the SAT/ACT?
8. Which SAT Subject Tests should I take and when?
9. How often should I meet with you to make sure I'm staying on track?

Exploring Your Interests and Pursuing Extracurriculars

10. What are some of the most impressive activities for a student interested in X?
11. Do you have any ideas for pursuing this activity in a way that is different from my peers?
12. Would X activity look good on my application?
13. How can I make the most of my [leadership](#) roles?
14. How can I take my participation in an activity to the next level?
15. What activities can I do at home while things are still online to get ready for college?
16. Are there any [scholarships](#) or awards I should work toward?
17. How do I decide whether I want to turn an interest into a career?

Building a School List

18. How can I decide between a college nearby or one far away?
19. How much should I consider [rankings](#)?
20. Which colleges do students from our school commonly apply to?
21. How have our admissions results been from school X?
22. Do you think I'd be more suited for liberal arts or a large national university?
23. Do you have college handbooks or other guides that I can browse or borrow?
24. What are suitable reach, fit, and [safety](#) schools for me?
25. What are the admitted student profiles like for the schools I have my eyes on?
26. Will you host any [college fairs](#) in the upcoming year?
27. Can you put me in touch with recent alums from our school who attend the colleges I'm interested in?
28. What should I look for when [visiting campuses](#)?
29. Do you know of any schools similar to the college I'm interested in?

Applying to College

- 30. When should I create a [Common Application](#) account?
- 31. Could you offer some advice on how I should order my [activities list](#)?
- 32. Is it better for me to apply to my top choice school during the [early decision/early action](#) round?
- 33. Who should I go to for [letters of recommendation](#)?
- 34. What do colleges look for out of my personal statement?
- 35. Will you help edit my personal statement?
- 36. When should I request interviews?

Financial Aid and Scholarships

- 37. What forms do I use to apply for [financial aid](#) and where I can find them online?
- 38. Where can I find scholarship opportunities?
- 39. How does my family's income affect my financial aid and scholarship opportunities?
- 40. Are there any scholarships you think I qualify for?
- 41. How do I appeal for more financial aid if necessary?

Counselor Recommendation & Letters of Recommendation

- 42. Do you need a [brag sheet](#) from me or my parents?
- 43. How can I help you know me better, so the letter can be more personal?
- 44. Could you please highlight X qualities in your letter?
- 45. Which teachers are the best options to ask for letters of recommendation?

Trust your counselor to be a resource you can turn to and ask questions that come up as you navigate the college application process. Building a strong relationship early in your high school career can help your counselor understand your personality, likes, and dislikes as well as support you in building your profile all throughout high school.