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Introduction

For over six decades, graduates of the Ida Crown Jewish Academy have attended the finest colleges, universities, yeshivot, and seminaries in North America and Israel. We are proud of this tradition of excellence, and our staff is committed to preparing our students for continuing their general and Judaic studies in the best possible academic, social, and religious environments.

For many students, a year in Israel will be the next step after graduation. We believe this intensive Jewish experience offers an important opportunity to connect with our traditions and homeland. In addition, this year before beginning college offers our students an opportunity for further personal growth and a chance to clarify their future academic and career goals.

However, whether a student chooses to spend a year in Israel, or to attend college immediately, this guide is designed to assist in the transition between ICJA and appropriate post high school programs. Since no two paths are the same, students and parents are offered a range of services: professionals on the staff, online resources, more traditional printed materials available in counselor offices, guidance newsletters and announcements, and school and community libraries and bookstores.

Our coordinators of post high school planning recognize that the Internet has changed our lives, a reality that is evident in college counseling and the application process. Students now use the internet to: register for college tests and report scores to admissions offices, explore career and job opportunities, learn about many aspects of collegiate and Israel programs, take virtual tours of campuses, gain up-to-date information on Jewish life on campus, read college newspapers, follow sports scores, gain a sense of issues on campuses, read college catalogues, learn college admissions requirements, print college applications, download them for completion and send them electronically, monitor the application once it reaches an admissions office, file the CEEB Student Profile, (a preliminary application for financial aid at some private universities), file financial aid forms including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), e-mail admissions officers, financial aid counselors, and faculty members with questions, communicate with students on campus and respond to decisions online.

Although we are moving online rapidly, students, parents, and the school staff remain central to college counseling and Israel program placement. Thus, please use classroom teachers and the following staff members to assist in planning post high school programs.

Rabbi Louis Fliegelman, Director of Guidance, ext. 125,
fliegelman@icja.org

Dr. Vernon Hein, College Counselor, Main Office, ext. 141,
vernon.hein@bairdwarner.com

Rabbi Leonard Matanky, Dean and Israel Program Advisor,
Main Office, ext. 113, matanky@att.org

Testing

Ida Crown Jewish Academy High School Code for both the ACT and SAT: 140725

ACT: (www.act.org)

All students at the Academy should take the ACT, a battery of tests including four 35-50 minute tests in English usage, mathematics, reading, natural science and an optional writing test. Results are reported on a scale of 1-36 with a composite or average of the four sub-tests and a score from 2-12 on the Writing sub-test. The ACT is administered by the American College Testing Program in Iowa City, Iowa. This battery of tests is now used in the Prairie State testing program in public high schools in Illinois. In addition, the test results are used by most colleges and universities in admissions. Scores can be reported to college and scholarship services at the time students register for the ACT or online after the test is taken. If the latter option is used there is an additional charge for each score report. Students may take this examination as many times as they choose and report only their highest scores to colleges.

SAT I: (www.collegeboard.org)

Students may elect to use the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) rather than the ACT for college admissions. The PSAT scores should be used as a guide in this decision. In addition, a few selective colleges seem to prefer the SAT. This three-hour examination is designed to assess critical thinking skills in both verbal and quantitative areas. Since March 2005, students have been required to write an essay. The SAT is administered by the College Board in Princeton, New Jersey. Each sub-test is scored from 200 to 800, with a maximum score of 2400. Scores may be reported to colleges using the same procedures used by the ACT. Students may now use score choice to send only the scores they select.

SAT II: (www.collegeboard.org)

These one-hour examinations are administered in a variety of subject areas with the possibility that students may take from one to three tests on any scheduled test date. Scores between 200 and 800 are reported for each test. Some private colleges and universities use these test scores in admissions. Although the SAT I and SAT II are offered on the same date, they may not be taken together.

ACT/SAT conversion charts are available.

Testing Schedule 2011-2012

- The following test days are for Sunday administration at Ida Crown Jewish Academy. If students are out-of town and need to take a test, they may register for another test center
- **The Modern Hebrew language SAT II is given only in June, so students anticipating the need for this test will need to register for an earlier SAT I.**
- Go to www.collegeboard.com to determine appropriate SAT II tests, if these will be needed in college admissions
- If registrations are mailed to the test companies, the registration dates are postmark dates.

AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST		
Test Date	Deadline Registration	Late Registration
February 13	January 7	January 8-21
April 10	March 4	March 5-18
June 12	May 6	May 7-20
September 12	See ACT web site for regular and late registration dates	
October 24		
December 12		
February 13		
April 9		
June 11		
SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST I AND II		
Test Date	Regular	Late Registration
January 23	December 23	January 7
March 13	February 11	February 25-SAT only
May 8	March 8	April 22
June 5	May 6	May 20
October	See CEEB web site for regular and late registration dates	
November		
December		
January		

Special Testing Accommodations

If a student is eligible for special testing accommodation, such as extended time or oral testing, please be aware of the following:

- The earlier a student is identified with a special testing need, (i.e. 9th grade versus 11th grade) the more likely permission will be granted by the ACT and SAT testing services.
- The ACT and SAT testing services review a student's formal educational evaluation and Ida Crown Jewish Academy IEP, and make an independent decision as to the need for special accommodations.

Application Procedures:

- SAT (college entrance exam based on aptitude/potential): Complete the "student eligibility form" and the regular registration form and submit with the registration fee to Rabbi Fliegelman at least one week prior to the regular deadline.

- ACT (college entrance exam based on achievement): Complete either the Extended Time National Testing Form (time and a half) or Special Testing Form (varied timing options), and submit with the regular registration fee to Mrs. Levin by January 15th of the student's junior year.

Senior Year Course Selection

In college admissions, the Secondary School Record (transcript) is the single most important component of an application. This record of courses taken, the level of difficulty, the grades earned, and the grade point average are excellent predictors of success in college programs.

Students anxious to be competitive in college admissions must recognize that the junior year grades and the selection of senior year courses receive special attention. On all applications, seniors are required to list courses in progress; the school counselor is asked frequently to verify that this information is correct. After an application is filed, it is important that students advise admissions offices of any changes in course selection and levels of difficulty.

Most colleges and universities ask for seventh semester grades (mid-senior year) if a decision has not been made by February. Thus, seventh semester grades become a significant factor in admissions decisions.

Even if accepted, college admissions personnel want to be advised of changes in an eighth semester program of studies. Also, once a student declares the intention of enrolling at a specific college or university by May 1st, the Candidates' Reply Date, that institution requires a final transcript and confirmation of graduation. Several universities, including the University of Michigan, advise students and counselors that an acceptance may be revoked if performance falls below that of the prior two years or if a D or failure appears on the transcript. Thus, to develop a serious case of "senioritis" means that some students may be placing their college enrollment in jeopardy. **ICJA seniors have an additional incentive to maintain their pre-acceptance grade level if they plan to apply to colleges while in Israel.**

When selecting courses for senior year, students need to keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Enroll in the most challenging courses commensurate with abilities and academic preparation;
2. Meet or exceed college admissions requirements;
3. Take at least four or five of the traditional liberal arts courses, (English, Mathematics, Hebrew, Science, and Social Studies);
4. Elective courses such as Band, Public Speaking, and Journalism should be taken in addition to the four liberal arts courses;
5. Do not drop or find an easier substitute for the academic courses outlined above;
6. Although Advanced Placement (AP) courses may look good on the transcript, that reason alone is not sufficient for enrolling in such a class. Appropriate academic preparation for these courses is essential.

Thus, as juniors, you are advised to:

- Select courses carefully and with the recommendations of current teachers;
- Plan to continue in those classes until graduation.

Rabbi Fliegelman, Dr. Jeremy Kahan and Dr. Vernon Hein will assist you in preparing for your senior year course selections by presenting you with a full review of all courses you have taken at ICJA, a listing of credits needed to graduate and recommendations for senior year courses. However, it is your responsibility to review these proposals and confer with teachers, counselors and parents to determine if an alternative program may be more appropriate.

Decisions

To insure that all eleventh graders have equal access to assistance in planning, Dr. Hein conducts a structured career/college exploration program during the second semester. **Attendance is mandatory.**

With specific goals and required activities, some of which are graded, juniors will:

- Complete a written self-evaluation
- Create a professional activities resume for use with college applications
- Draft a one paragraph essay for use with the Common Application: “Describe the activity (extra-curricular, personal, or work) which has had the most meaning for you and why.”
- Compare and contrast selected colleges
- Understand the components of college applications and how each is considered by selected colleges
- Review the high school transcript and information contained on the School Profile
- Draft a one page college essay for use in the fall
- Edit the essay

Following this series of activities in February and March, juniors and their parents are encouraged to continue college-planning activities through individual conferences with Rabbi Fliegelman and/or Dr. Hein.

Israel Planning Program

During the Decisions program, Rabbi Matanky meets with all juniors to review the process of program selection, application, and acceptance. Following that introductory meeting, the Israel program advisor is available for separate meetings with the senior girls and boys to explore the many programs available.

In addition, Rabbi Matanky is available to meet with parents to review possible choices and prepare for the interview process. Interviews are held in October and November for girls’ programs, and January and February for boys’ programs.

A partial listing of Israel programs attended by our graduates is included in this guide under Supplementary Information

The Language of College Admissions

A GLOSSARY

Students may apply to colleges and universities under the following plans.

Rolling Admissions: used by numerous state universities including Illinois; under this plan students may expect a decision any time after an application is completed. Each university determines its own schedule for notification. The candidate need not reply until May 1st of the senior year.

Early Action: a program provided by a few very selective universities which require a completed application, usually by November 1st. A December notification date does not prevent students from applying and being accepted by other institutions and does not require a commitment until the Candidates Reply date, which is May 1st. **Early Decision:** applicants must apply by November 1st to most institutions with this admissions option, but may file applications to additional colleges and universities. If accepted Early Decision, a written and signed agreement requires that a student withdraw all other applications and matriculate at the university accepting the candidate early.

Early Admissions: an option allowing capable students to apply, be accepted, and matriculate after three years of high school attendance. To apply for early admissions at most universities, a student must present exceptional academic qualifications and exhaust the high school's academic program by the end of the junior year. Students must insure that they will be receiving a high school diploma, as some graduate school admissions offices require the credential.

Regular Admissions: this plan, used by most private colleges and universities, requires that students complete their applications by a deadline, usually between January 1st and February 15th, but for some institutions there are later dates. Notifications of decisions occur between late March and mid-April, times determined by each college or university.

It has been the Academy's experience that students may *Defer Admissions* to American colleges and universities in order to study in Israel, but institutions expect students to follow the college's procedures for approving this option. Requests to spend a second year in Israel have been denied by some colleges requiring that students consider alternatives if they elect to remain in Israel.

Except for Early Decision applicants who are accepted, no student is required to accept an offer of admissions prior to May 1st of the senior year, the Candidates' Reply Date.

Exploring Career and College Options

Once students have taken the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), they may begin exploring college options based upon their self assessment, career goals, social and religious requirements, financial realities, and family expectations.

Based upon experience and knowledge of student needs, the school counselors are prepared to provide each junior with a preliminary list of colleges and universities to explore. In initiating this complex process, students and/or parents may find the following Web sites of value.

www.collegeboard.org

www.petersons.com

www.collegeview.com

www.gocollege.com

www.princetonreview.com

In your search, if you come across valuable sites, please advise the college counselor.

Descriptions of Israel programs can be found at the following sites:

www.icja.org

www.wzo.org.il/en/programs

www.yu.edu/cjf/gis

Once specific colleges and Israel programs are identified, go to their own Web sites for additional information. These sites vary in quality and ease of use. However, most now provide their up-to-date applications with requirements and deadlines.

Strengthen Jewish Considerations in College Selection

Typically juniors and seniors at ICJA, with the encouragement of parents and staff members, seek colleges and universities with a strong Jewish religious presence on campus. This consideration requires that students obtain current information from:

1. Students on campus
2. Faculty members
3. Hillel organizations—**www.hillel.org**
Chabad House—**www.chabad.edu**
4. “Choosing A College” by Rabbi Joseph Polak
5. **www.ou.org/publications/college.html**

Within the past two years, the number of private and public universities using the Common Application has increased significantly. This online option allows students, the teachers preparing recommendations and Rabbi Fliegelman who is responsible for processing transcripts and the Secondary School Report, to send all portions of an application online. Once this has been prepared; this information can be sent to any college accepting the Common Application. For additional information go to commonapplication.org

Participating colleges may also require additional Supplements. As of now the universities of Maryland, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Yeshiva/Stern do not use the Common Application; they continue to use their own online applications. Once applications are filed, most colleges and universities encourage students to check institutional websites to determine if their own applications are complete. Frequently students receive admissions decisions on line as well.

In addition, the following questions were generated to assist our students in exploring campus services and understanding student/faculty attitudes toward Jewish concerns.

- How large is the Jewish student population?
- What percentage of the Jewish students are involved in religious activities?
- How active is the Hillel organization?
- What are the different Jewish groups on campus?
- Where are the Jewish groups located on the campus?
- Are there separate gender dorms on campus?
- What fraternities and sororities welcome Jews?
- Are there social action groups emanating from Jewish organizations?
- If the school is recognized as a commuter school, are out-of-state students invited into area homes for Shabbat?
- For holidays?
- What is the university policy regarding Jewish holidays?
- Have there been scheduling conflicts (exams and graduation) with Jewish holidays? If so, how were these handled?
- Is there any anti-Israel sentiment on campus?
- Are Jewish faculty members involved in Jewish activities?
- What Judaic courses are offered on campus?
- Are there Jewish study opportunities on, or off campus?
- What type (orientation) of synagogues are near the campus?
- What is the name of the rabbi/s?
- How hospitable are the local synagogues to college students?
- Will students be able to observe Passover on campus?
- Is there a kosher kitchen/dining room on campus; under whose hashgacha and who does the cooking?
- How many students keep kosher?
- Will there be a succah on campus?

It is appropriate to identify campus personnel who can answer the questions that ICJA students may wish to ask. During campus visits it is a good idea to visit the Hillel and learn first hand the nature of services and activities available.

College Applications

College applications may include a portion or all of the following components. Printed materials, Web sites, and the ICJA staff are available resources for completing these applications.

- Personal data including a Social Security number
- Family information
- Educational experience at the secondary level
- High school transcript including a grade point average
- A school profile
- Test scores, awards and honors
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience
- Written essay(s) or a personal statement
- Recommendations from teachers and a counselor
- Possible college majors and/or career objectives

For helpful information in getting started, students and parents may turn to several web sites including the following.

www.commonapp.org

www.careerprep.com

www.princetonreview.com

College Essays

All private colleges and universities and some large state universities including Michigan, Maryland and Illinois require carefully written essays or personal statements. The highly selective universities now require responses to several essay topics and short answer questions. Although topics may vary by year, it is helpful if juniors go to specific college Web sites to gain a sense of what will be expected in their applications.

The increased emphasis on college essays is reflected in the planning that English teachers and the college counselor do to assist juniors, both in classrooms and in the structured college counseling program provided during the spring semester. This assistance at the Ida Crown Jewish Academy continues into the senior year. The process of selecting topics, outlining ideas, writing, editing, and re-editing several times is the most time and energy consuming portion of an application. Parents, teachers, and the college counselor may assist students but not re-write essays. **It is essential that the primary effort be that of each student: an honest, thorough, and well-written expression which sets that individual apart from competitors in the college application process.**

The following article is provided by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest to assist students as they think about this important writing activity and is available on their Web site. Also, an online course can be accessed at [**www.essayedge.com**](http://www.essayedge.com) or a similar guide may be acquired by e-mail using [**packets@essayedge.com**](mailto:packets@essayedge.com). Additional information will be made available to all juniors during the college planning workshops.

Writing a College Application Essay

The essay is an important part of a college application. Here are some insights on writing an essay from the people who read hundreds of them every year—admission officers at ACM colleges.

The essay is your chance to use your voice.

The essay is part of your application to a college. In the essay, you can speak in your own voice and personalize your application. Here's your opportunity to show something about you that doesn't really come across elsewhere in your application.

So, step back and be reflective, think about who you are as an individual. How do you view the world? What do you care about deeply? What experiences and people have been important in shaping you as a person? What are your aspirations in life?

It is in such reflection that you can find your own, unique voice. That's the voice that will help you write an interesting essay that only you could have written.

Why do colleges require essays?

A college application includes a lot of information about you, such as grades, recommendations, lists of your extracurricular activities and test scores. All of that information is very important and helps admission officers form a picture of your accomplishments and abilities. However, while it tells about how other people see you, there isn't much about how you see yourself. It's that inside view how you see yourself that colleges hope to find in your essay.

The essay performs other functions as well, such as:

- The essay can be a way of showing that you have researched and thought carefully about the college to which you are applying. It shows, in your own words, why you and the college would be a good "match."
- An essay demonstrates your writing ability, which is a key component to success in college.
- In your essay, you can show that you are willing to put yourself into what you do. That kind of commitment is an important part of effective learning in college. And it shows the admissions committee that you are someone who is willing and able to be a contributing member of a community of learners.
- For selective colleges especially, the essay helps admission committees draw distinctions and make choices among applicants. An essay will rarely take an applicant out of consideration at a college, but it certainly can elevate an applicant in an admission committee's eyes.

Now, some suggestions for writing the essay.

Show your command of the basics of good writing.

Here are some key points that admission officers look for in an essay:

- Make sure to answer the essay question and to follow all the instructions that are given.
- Start off with a strong opening paragraph that captures the reader's interest.
- Use a style that you find comfortable and that is appropriate for the subject matter.

- Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Make a point and stick to it; develop your argument or narrative.
- Check all of your facts. Do you mention a date, or a place or an event in your essay? Make sure it's correct.
- Give your reader complete information, so he or she won't be confused. In general, it's best to be succinct. If there is a recommended length for the essay, pay attention to it. The essay should be neatly typed. Remember that mistakes, especially sloppy mistakes, make it look like you don't take the essay (and by extension, the application) very seriously.

Good sources of essay topics

Does the application ask you to choose a topic to write about? There are as many (actually, many more) good topics as there are applicants. Here are some places you might look for an essay topic:

- Do you have hobbies and non-school pursuits that really excite you and that engage your heart and mind? Writing about your out-of-classroom interests could help bring out a part of you that's not covered or not covered completely and to your fullest advantage elsewhere in your application.
- Is there a social cause that you hold near and dear? Remember, an essay is not an academic paper; but a cause that you feel passionately about, and that has been in your thoughts and activities, might be the basis for a strong essay. Perhaps there is an event (local, national or international) that has touched you in a personal way.
- Is there an academic subject that really sparks your interest? Why does that subject engage you? Has it led to experiences or study outside of school? There may be essay material that goes beyond the courses you took or scores on AP tests.

How to handle a topic

Often, you will be asked to write about an experience you've had, an achievement in your life, or someone who has been significant to you. Go beyond the what and dig into the how and why. For example:

- This is a personal essay, not a travelogue. So, if you're writing about a trip to another country, tell about how your experiences affected you, and why they were interesting or meaningful to you. In other words, the people reading the essay are interested in what makes you tick and how you got the way you are, not in how the trains run in Paris.
- Are you writing a tribute to your grandparents and their influence on your childhood? Be personal and specific, not just sentimental. Explain how the particular things your grandparents did or said were important to you. Did you overcome an athletic injury and recover to perform well? A description of the type of cast you wore and your rehab routine won't make a compelling essay. But a reflection on what it felt like to watch your teammates, instead of play alongside them, just might be the ticket.

Possible pitfalls when writing an essay

- Writing a poem or making a videotape in place of an essay is probably not a good idea, unless you're applying to a specialized school that encourages such a submission.
- Humor can be risky, so be careful how you use it.
- Honor code" rules are in effect when you write an essay, so do your own work and don't make things up. As a practical matter, other items in the application, such as letters of recommendation, make it quite possible that you'd be found out if you tried to make things up.

An Admissions Dean's Tips for Getting In. How to write a memorable essay and explain a bad grade

By Kim Clark

U.S. News and World Report: November 7, 2007

What can applicants do to increase their chances of getting in to a good college? Colleges usually just tell applicants the same old generalities about wanting students with good grades and test scores and community service. But Peter Van Buskirk, a former admissions dean at Franklin & Marshall College, in Lancaster, Pa., has started spilling the beans about what really goes on behind those closed-door admissions meetings. Van Buskirk, author of "Winning the College Admission Game", tells U.S. News how taking an extra test or community college course in the fall, for example, can make the difference between a thin and fat envelope the following spring.

Many high school students are torn between choosing easy classes so they will get A's and taking honors or Advanced Placement classes, in which they might get lower grades.

What's your advice? It depends on where you apply. The harder a school is to get into, the more you need to show that you are moving to the next logical level of rigor. It is quite a step from high school to college classes. If you take a "gut" in your senior year, you are not going to be at the top of your game. It's like if you've taken a year off of playing soccer. You're not in shape. If you're worried about your GPA, some colleges will recalculate it using weights that give higher scores to advanced or AP classes.

What if a high school doesn't have many AP classes?

Should a high school student take community college courses? Absolutely. From a dean of admissions' point of view, it is really cool to see kids step out of the norm. Colleges that are picky want to see what kids do when they don't have to do anything. We like to see kids have some passion for learning. If the student maybe runs out of math classes in high school, and chooses to go to the community college for math classes, that's pretty impressive.

What if the student doesn't do well on the SAT? Many colleges—757 to date—are saying that such standardized tests are no longer useful and, to prove it, they have made the submission of test scores optional. Colleges that continue to require testing typically do so for two reasons. One, their volume of applications is such that they use test scores to help screen out weaker candidates. And two, they like big numbers. Even though these are not intelligence tests, the average test scores for a college's entering class are the most widely recognized metric for quality in that class. So I encourage kids to take both the SAT and the ACT. The SAT is designed to trick you. So if you do well at puzzles, you'll do well on that.

The ACT is a subject test. If you take both, you give the college admissions officer options. They can let you in based on your ACT score, if it is higher, and don't have to report your lower SAT score to U.S. News to consider in its rankings.

If students get a bad grade, or a bad test score, or some other problem, should they explain it in their application essay? You don't want the admissions officer to just guess about what was behind a poor grade, because we tend to be cynical and think that the student was lazy or disinterested, not that something horrible happened in your life. This [grade or test score] is something that can be addressed in an interview as well as a note that is attached to your application. In addition, you need to make sure the teachers and counselors who write on your behalf are prepared to speak to these circumstances as well. As you tell your story, though, make sure you provide explanations and insight, not excuses.

You talk about résumé-building and how you can tell if it is phony. What extracurricular activities should students be involved in? Kids need to follow their passions. I worry that there are a lot of young people right now who are being remade into the images of what somebody thinks a dean of admission wants to see, at the expense of lives well lived. The reality is that deans of admission are constantly looking for that something different in a young person that is genuine.

How can they tell if it is genuine? Admission officers look to see if you have been involved with a particular activity over time, and if you've grown with that activity. If you've been in the choir for three or four years, well, clearly you like to sing if you've become a soloist, if you've become section leader, if you've become a student director, if you've become an officer in the choir, that suggests you are invested at another level. Forming a club just so you can be president of it is pretty transparent. You have teachers and counselors writing on behalf of the student. If those things are not showing up in the recommendation, that is a good way for us to determine that the student is not terribly genuine about the interest.

Students stress over college application essays. But you've said they don't always make such a big difference to the application. In my opinion, the essay is a missed opportunity for most students. Only about 20 percent of the submitted essays truly make a difference in who gets in. As an admission officer, you have two basic concerns: Is there evidence that students can write? Can they put words together to make sentences, and sentences together to make paragraphs? And then, of course, what do those paragraphs say? Can the students demonstrate some artistic ability? The faculty at a college or university really wants to make sure that I can bring them students who can write. So that is the primary focus. The teenage tendency is to do something that is good enough. In that case, sure, you satisfied a requirement. But you have probably not produced something that is going to help you get in. It won't hurt you, but it won't help you. Essays that give the reader new perspective into who you are and how you think are the ones that can make a difference.

So how can you make an essay that will help you? One of the best editorial tools out there is free. It is called time. T-I-M-E. If kids take time to develop an idea and let it become an essay, then they'll create something that can be very meaningful. The objective for the student is to create an essay that I will want to read. I am a busy guy. When I pick up an application, I have to get through it quickly, so I can go to the next application. If you

can get me to get past the first paragraph to the second, third, and fourth, now you are making a difference in how your application will be perceived. If you take time to develop the idea so that I will want to read more, so I will want to share it with colleagues, then you win. It is not a bad idea to start thinking about essays at the end of your junior year. Obsess on them? No. But start a journal. Keep track of your thoughts on a regular basis. The thoughts you find yourself coming back to in that journal are often thoughts you could build upon in developing an essay topic.

A lot of parents believe that if they apply for financial aid, the student's chances of getting in are reduced. Is that true?

I believe that is the case. I would further say that it depends on where the student is applying. It is really important for students to put themselves on the right playing field. By that, I mean putting themselves into a competition that makes sense for them. Find the place that matches up with your ability to perform. Find the place that values you for what you do well. That school will make sure you get what you need in order to complete your education. The bottom line is that a student's ability to be self-supporting financially is an important credential at many places.

How about not applying for aid the first year, to give the student a better chance at admission, then, once the student gets in, applying for aid for the second year. Is that a wise strategy? Colleges build their financial aid budget for the upper-class years based on the expectations or demonstrated need they see in the entering class. As a result, hiding your need for aid the first year is not a good idea. Colleges might say, if you looked rich when you got in but look poor in the second year: "That's your problem," because they didn't budget for the aid when they let the student in. They might just say, "Here are some loans." Better to apply to a school that values the student for who he or she really is.

You've said that people don't realize that colleges are making a business decision when they admit a student. That is one of the things that have changed the most over the past generation of college-going. Institutions want to make sure that when they enroll a class of 500, or 5,000 that they are creating new and diverse communities. Each place in that community, they hope, will be filled by somebody who brings something different. They attach a value to each of those places. In the instances where they are giving financial assistance to somebody, they want to make sure they are getting added value for that place and that financial assistance.

Some final tips

- Leave yourself time to rewrite and revise. For the great majority of people, this is not an easy assignment. Start early and leave plenty of time! Most likely that means to give yourself weeks, not days and certainly not hours, to rework your essay.
- If your essay is longer than three pages (unless the instructions call for something longer), then it had better be interesting! Think hard about what you really want to focus on, and take out whatever gets away from your central point.
- The admission committee will take your essay seriously. You should, too. You have a lot to gain by putting in the time and effort to write a good essay.

Sample Essay Topics

1. In an essay of 300 words or less, choose one extracurricular activity, work experience, or community service project from the list you provided on the application and explain why you initially chose it, why you continued with it and how you benefited from it. (University of Illinois)
2. "Eyes are the window to the soul." This 16th century proverb is often quoted in literature and life. What would the eyes in your self portrait tell us about you? Relate these ideas to your academic and personal experience and goals. (Yeshiva University)
3. Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. (University of Michigan)
4. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you. (Common Application)
5. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. (Common Application)
6. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence. (Common Application)
7. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence. (Common Application)
8. Topic of your choice. State the topic clearly. (Common Application)
9. What are the unique qualities of Northwestern - and of the specific undergraduate school to which you are applying - that make you want to attend the University? In what ways do you hope to take advantage of the qualities you have identified? (Northwestern University)

Campus Visits and Interviews

All admissions counselors advise potential applicants to visit campuses and spend time learning about the institution and its programs. Few schools require interviews for admissions, but if schedules permit, admissions counselors will talk with students one-to-one or in small groups. Orientation sessions and campus tours are provided routinely throughout the calendar year. However, students should telephone in advance to make arrangements to attend these programs.

In order to avoid charges of economic discrimination, those colleges and universities which consider the results of an interview in the admissions process will arrange for these conferences to be conducted by alumni representatives as close to a student's home as possible. Such interviews are scheduled after an application is complete and need to be taken seriously. The college counselor at the Ida Crown Jewish Academy is willing to simulate interviews in order to prepare students for this activity.

The following article is provided by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest to assist students in preparing for college visits and interviews and can be found on their Web site.

There is no substitute for seeing a college yourself!

There are numerous ways to find out about colleges. Brochures, their websites' videos and college fairs are helpful; however, visiting colleges provides the most helpful information.

Call the admissions office in advance

Just as there's no substitute for seeing a college, in addition, advance planning is essential. When you call the admissions office, tell them the date you would like to visit and the time of day you expect to arrive. If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask that they make arrangements. Also, find out if interviews are possible if you would like one, and how to arrange for visiting classes and talking with faculty members.

Read about the college and think about questions

Go back through the information you've collected about the college. Check the resources at your school's guidance office and browse the college's Web site, if possible. This research will help you think of questions to ask and aspects of the college to explore while you're there. Talk to as many students as you can.

- Once you're on campus, try to take advantage of a variety of ways to learn about the college: Meet with an admissions officer or attend an information session
- Take a tour of the campus
- Sit in on a class
- Have a meal in the cafeteria or Hillel
- Pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine.

Throughout your visit, talk to as many students as you can and don't be bashful about asking questions!

Prepare for the interview

If you have scheduled an interview, take along your list of questions, so you're sure to cover everything you wanted to find out. You'll probably be asked about your academic background, interests, hobbies, goals and why you're interested in the college, so be ready to talk about that.

As with any interview, be on time, or call ahead if you know you'll be delayed.

Take time to look around on your own

Take some time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere. While organized activities can give you information you can't get on your own, the reverse is true, too.

You've probably already thought of lots of questions to ask during your campus visit. Here are some suggestions, but be sure to ask the questions that are important to YOU.

When you talk to students, ask...

1. How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical here?
2. Are faculty members interested in students and accessible outside of class?
3. Do many students go home on weekends?
4. What is Shabbat like on campus?
5. Are the athletic facilities open to all students or only to athletes?

6. Is it possible to study in your dorm room? 7) How easy is it to get kosher food?
7. Is the food good?
8. Are campus jobs readily available?
9. Is there easy access to computers? Where are they located?
10. What's the library like as a place to study? to do research?
11. What do you like most about this college? least?
12. How easy is it to get the classes you want?
13. If you could change something about this school, what would it be?

If you attend a class, ask yourself...

1. Are students prepared for the class? Do they seem interested in the material?
2. Do I feel that the students are learning either new facts or new ways of thinking about a subject?
3. Is there time for questions and discussion? Do students participate?
4. Am I intellectually challenged by what is taking place in the class?
5. Is there good rapport between professors and students?

As you tour the campus, ask yourself...

1. Are the buildings in good repair? the grounds well-kept?
2. Are the residence halls pleasant and quiet enough to study in? Are there laundry and kitchen facilities?
3. What's the cafeteria like?
4. Are computers and lab equipment up-to-date and plentiful?
5. What's the surrounding town or city like?

In an interview or information session, you could ask...

1. Does the college have academic programs that fit my interests?
2. Where are computer terminals located? Will I have to pay extra for computer time?
3. Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a first-year student?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
5. How many students will there be in courses I'm likely to take in my first year? Are those courses taught by professors or graduate assistants?
6. What kinds of campus jobs are available for first-year students?
7. Will there be any new programs or facilities in the next two years?
8. What are the college's recent graduates doing now?

Write down your impressions

1. Were the people you met friendly? Did they answer your questions fully and candidly?
2. What do you think of the quality of instruction and the academic atmosphere?
3. Were the students the kind of people you'd like to get to know?
4. Did you like the social atmosphere? 5) Would you like to spend more time there?

Financial Aid

Because of the cost of a college education and of post-high school Israel programs, many parents need financial assistance to meet a portion of these expenses for tuition, room and board, books, transportation, clothing and incidental fees. Most private universities and some public universities will meet defined need. Admissions officers encourage students to apply with a commitment to meet the demonstrated need of their applicants. They use the term Need Blind to assure that a student's need does not influence the admissions decision. In some instances it may be less expensive to attend a private university with an excellent financial aid package than to attend an out-of-state public university which has a commitment to provide for their in-state residents. Also, some students have to choose a specific college, although accepted at several schools, based entirely on the financial aid package. If there is need, students should not be programmed to feel that there is only one ideal school for them!

Financial assistance consists of three types of need based programs: grants (federal, state, and institutional), loans, and work options-either on or off campus. In all cases, students are expected to use summer work experiences to meet a portion of college costs. Most institutions attempt to restrict the annual loan amount so that students are not saddled with large debts which must be re-paid after graduation. Families with need may meet with financial aid officers during campus visits, telephone financial aid counselors, or e-mail offices to clarify institutional policies and procedures. However, knowing the language of financial aid is essential. **The College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile is used by some private institutions early in the application process.** These forms, available at ICJA in September or online at www.collegeboard.org, must be filed during the fall. There is a charge to register and a processing fee for each student.

After January 1st of a student's senior year, parents are required to file the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) available at ICJA in December or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The most recent federal tax information for the prior calendar year is necessary for providing accurate information. Once completed, a Student Aid Report (SAR) is returned to parents for corrections and/or modification. The FAFSA provides financial aid officers and parents with an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) used in determining a college's financial aid package. In filing a FAFSA some supplemental forms may be needed to account for special circumstances: divorce, separation, business ownership, or student emancipation.

When colleges accepting a student provide financial aid packages, decisions to accept or reject the package must be made by May 1st. Financial aid packages may vary widely by institution, and although some negotiation of amounts may be possible, do not count on this flexibility when considering a final college choice.

Students are encouraged to explore scholarship options as well. Some are publicized in guidance newsletters.

In addition, students may go online to a variety of sites

www.collegezone.com

www.finaid.org

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org/scholarships

Financial Aid for Israel Programs

In addition to community and national scholarship programs for Israel study, Hebrew Theological College (HTC), Touro College and Yeshiva University (YU) sponsor Joint Israel Programs which allow students to be eligible for Federal and/or State assistance, including student loans. In order to qualify for State assistance, the student must be a resident of the state in which the school is located. Therefore, in most cases, state aid will only be available via HTC.

During senior year, interested students may apply to either of these institutions and, if accepted, pay a special fee (HTC-\$850/YU-\$500/Touro-\$900) to participate in its Israel program. Through this program, students are considered as if attending an extension of the U.S. based university and therefore are eligible for government aid. In addition, transcripts are prepared by and tuition is paid directly to HTC, Touro or YU.

Students who choose to attend either of these institutions for college study, will also receive college credit for the Israel program. Generally, YU recognizes up to one-year of Israel Yeshiva credit for boys and 1-1/2 years of Israel seminary credit for girls. HTC grants up to two years of credit for both boys and girls. These schools give credit (HTC \$500/YU \$250/Touro \$450), from the above mentioned fee towards their college credit only if the student actually attends HTC, Touro or YU.

For more information, students are encouraged to go online at:

www.yu.edu/jip, www.htc.edu or www.touro.edu

Sources of Financial Aid for Israel Programs

Scholarships for Israel programs are available from several sources. The following is a partial list of the sponsors for these funds.

- Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, High School Financial Need-Based Scholarship information & application: Go to www.juf.org/israel_experience/ccip.aspx, Deadline: March 1st.
- Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago Merit Scholarship information and application.: Go to
- www.juf.org/israel_experience/merit_scholarship.aspx Deadline: March 1st.
- Lavin, Tresley, Cohen, Fink, Rosenblum, Chaimovitz, Gassel, Well & Rosenthal Israel Scholarships, Sponsored by the Associated Talmud Torahs, Deadline: January 15th.
- Louis and Saerree Fiedler Israel Scholarship Fund sponsored by the Associated Talmud Torahs, Deadline: January 15th.
- Yaakov Matanky Memorial Scholarship sponsored by the Associated Talmud Torahs, Deadline: January 15th. Sora Levenson Memorial Scholarship, Deadline: March 31st.
- Adina Weiner Memorial Foundation, Deadline: May 30th. Alisa Flatow Memorial Scholarship, Deadline: February 12th. Applications available at www.alisafund.org.
- Joseph Masliansky Memorial Scholarship of ICJA, Deadline: February 28th.
- Sam Gorenstein Memorial Scholarship for study in Israel at universities, Deadline: April, 2008.
- Chicago Rabbinical Council: the Rabbi Gedalia Dov Schwawrtz, shlita, Torah Essay Contest, Deadline: April 30th.

APPENDIX PAGES 21-27 Supplemental Information

- Calendar
- SAT/ACT Conversions
- Self-Assessment Form
- Israel Programs
- Transcript Request Form

Calendar 2011-2012

	Juniors	Seniors
September		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Colleges ✓ Applications ✓ ACT September 11 College representative visits
October	✓ PSAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Off campus college fairs ✓ Colleges File applications for state ✓ Universities ✓ CSS Profile due ✓ SAT I and II October ✓ ACT October 23 ✓ Israel applications (girls) College representative visits
November		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.D. and E.A. applications by 11/1 ✓ Israel Interviews (girls) ✓ SAT I and II November
December	✓ PSAT score return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SAT I and II December ACT December 11
January	✓ SAT I and II 1/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College applications due 1/11 ✓ FAFSA filed ✓ Final examinations (boys) ✓ Israel notificaiton (girls) ✓ SAT I and II January
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ College Planning ✓ Junior Parent meeting 2/4 ✓ ACT 2/13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAFSA filed ✓ College dicisions ✓ ACT February
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ College Planning Program ✓ SAT I 3/13 ✓ Registration for 2011-2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Israel notification (boys) ✓ College decisions ✓ SAT March
April	✓ ACT 4/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ College decisions ✓ ACT April ✓ Defer admission for study in Israel
May	✓ SAT I and SAT II 5/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 5/1
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ SAT I and SAT II 6/5 ✓ ACT 6/12 ✓ Final Examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Final examinations ✓ Graduation
Summer	✓ Visit Colleges	

SAT/ACT Conversions 2011-2012

(SAT writing score has been excluded)

SAT I to ACT

Recentered SAT I Score Verbal + Math	ACT Composite Score	ACT Composite Score	Recentered SAT I Score Verbal + Math
1600	36	36	1600
1560-1590	35	35	1580
1510-1550	34	34	1520
1460-1500	33	33	1470
1410-1450	32	32	1420
1360-1400	31	31	1380
1320-1350	30	30	1340
1280-1310	29	29	1300
1240-1270	28	28	1260
1210-1230	27	27	1220
1170-1200	26	26	1180
1130-1160	25	25	1140
1090-1120	24	24	1110
1060-1080	23	23	1070
1020-1050	22	22	1030
980-1010	21	21	990
940-970	20	20	950
900-930	19	19	910
860-890	18	18	870
810-850	17	17	830
760-800	16	16	780
710-750	15	15	740
660-700	14	14	680
590-650	13	13	620
520-580	12	12	560
500-510	11	11	500

**Please note that the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign uses the following conversions when reviewing applications:*

ACT	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
SAT	960	1000	1040	1080	1120	1160	1200	1240	1280	1310	1360	1410

Ida Crown Jewish Academy
Self Assessment / College Recommendation

Name _____

Soc. Sec.# _____

Please provide the following confidential information using black ink and your best handwriting. Be specific and thoughtful in responding.

1. Please list four adjectives to describe yourself. You do not need to be modest; however, you need to be honest.

1) _____ 2) _____

3) _____ 4) _____

2. To date, what has been your favorite course or courses. What is your least favorite subject area?

Favorite: _____

Least Favorite: _____

3. Indicate your proposed senior year general studies courses and anticipated level in each.

1) English _____

2) Mathematics _____

3) Science _____

4) Social Studies _____

5) Elective _____

4. List in order of importance your significant extra-curricular activities while attending high school

1) _____ 2) _____

3) _____ 4) _____

5. Briefly describe your most significant service activity or project.

6. Indicate your primary summer activities prior to the following grades.

Freshman: _____

Sophomore: _____

Junior: _____

7. List past paying jobs since entering high school.

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

8. If you are currently working, indicate the job and approximate hours per week.

Employer: _____

Hours: _____

9. Which hobbies mean the most to you?

1) _____ 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

10. As you think about life after high school graduation:

1) Do you plan to go to Israel?

Check one: Yes No Undecided

2) If you are considering college, what are possible majors?

3) Possible career areas?

4) In case a legacy would be helpful as you consider college admissions, indicate the college or university where your parents earned undergraduate degrees.

Mother _____

Father _____

5) Will you need financial assistance beyond what your parents will provide to attend college?

Check one: Yes No Undecided

11. As you reflect on your high school experience and think about the future what are the ideal characteristics of a college or career that would appeal to you?

12. Which specific colleges or universities are you considering?

13. Which specific Israel programs are you considering?

Partial Listing of Israel Programs

Attended by ICJA Graduates

For the most updated information, consult our website - www.icja.org

BOYS' PROGRAMS

Israeli Yeshivot

- Birkat Moshe—a Hesder yeshiva located in Maalei Adumim (outside of Jerusalem)
- HaKotel—a Hesder yeshiva located in the Old City Har Etzion—a Hesder yeshiva located in the Gush Etzion
- Kerem B'Yavneh—a Hesder yeshiva located near Ashkelon
- Ma'alei Gilboa—a “mechina k'dam tzva'i”
- Otniel—a heder yeshiva located south of Hebron
- Shaalavim—a Hesder yeshiva located mid-way between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

American Programs

- Derech Ohr Sameach— for day school students who are looking to connect with Judaism (Jerusalem)
- Eretz HaTzvi—A high-level American yeshiva with a strong emphasis on preparing students for “post-Yeshiva” (i.e. college) experiences (Jerusalem)
- Jerusalem College of Technology—combining Judaic studies with college level math, science and business courses (Jerusalem) Lev HaTorah—traditional mid-level yeshiva program with additional Judaic classes and Israel experiences (Ramat Beit Shemesh)
- Mevaseret Zion—traditional yeshiva program with additional Judaic classes (Mevaseret Zion)
- Netiv Aryeh—located next to the Kotel—highly structured high-level program (Jerusalem) Ohr David—small, traditional yeshiva program (Jerusalem)
- Orayta—an alternative learning program organized by the founder of Isralight and focusing on Jewish philosophy and study
- Ohr Yerushalayim—traditional mid-level yeshiva program with additional Judaic classes (outside Jerusalem)
- Petach Tikva—a Hesder yeshiva in Petach Tikva
- Reishit Yerushalayim—traditional mid-level yeshiva program with multiple tracks of Judaic classes (Beit Shemesh)
- Shvilei HaTorah—traditional mid-level yeshiva program with additional Judaic classes (Jerusalem)
- Tochnit EIT Lilmode-a yeshiva program for boys with special needs. Offers mainstreaming options into its “parent” program, Shvilei HaTorah, and opportunities for regular chesed work around Jerusalem
- Torat Shraga—High-level yeshiva program located on the campus of Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel (Jerusalem)
- Yeshiva Leadership Academy (Israeli yeshiva) —a “mechina k'dam tzva'i” located in the Golan Heights
- Yesodei HaTorah—traditional yeshiva program with an emphasis on skill development (Ramat Beit Shemesh)

CO-ED PROGRAMS

- Bar Ilan University—Religious Zionist university
 - program with “yeshiva-type” option in conjunction with NCSY
- Hebrew University—university program (Jerusalem)
- Tafnit—a year long Israel experience program sponsored by World Bnei Akiva, includes 2 month learning component, trip to Israel, volunteer work and Israel seminars

GIRLS’ PROGRAMS

Israeli Institutions

- Beit Midrash L’Nashim—of Yeshivat Har Etzion. Very competitive “beit midrash” based program (Migdal Oz/ Gush Etzion)
- Midreshet Ein HaNatziv— A women’s yeshiva program affiliated with Kibbutz HaDati movement
- Michlelet Yerushalayim—very competitive Judaic program based in a women’s college (Jerusalem)
- Midreshet HaRova—high level school, affiliated with Bnei Akiva with foreign students from around the world (Jerusalem)
- Midreshet Lindenbaum (“Brovender’s”)—“beit midrash” based program offering both Talmud and Tanach tracks of study (Jerusalem)
- Nishmat—high level institution founded by Rebbetzin Chana Henkin, and based within a graduate level/adult Judaic studies program (Jerusalem)
- Orot College—religious Zionist women’s Judaic college (Elkanah)

American Programs

- Afikei Torah—mid-high level program (Jerusalem)
- Bnot Torah (“Scharfman’s”)—middle-high level institution (Jerusalem)
- Darchei Bina—high level institution (Jerusalem)
- Emunah V’Omanut—Israeli College of Arts, combining strong Judaic program and arts (Jerusalem)
- Machon Maayan—a program of NCSY, combining study, Israel experience and chesed opportunities (Bet Shemesh)
- Michlelet Esther—mid-level institution with strong emphasis on affective education, affiliated with Neve Yerushalayim institutions (Jerusalem)
- Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim—high-level “beit midrash” based program (Jerusalem)
- Midreshet AMIT—high level program combines integrated chesed program at Beit HaYeled (Jerusalem)
- Midreshet Moriah—high level, classroom based institution (Jerusalem)
- Midreshet Yeud—a Judaic program which combines study and volunteer opportunities via “Sherut Leumi” (Ramot Bet)
- Shaalavim for Women—high level institution affiliated with Yeshivat Shaalavim (Jerusalem)
- Tiferet—an intensive middle level Judaic program for motivated young women (Ramat Beit Shemesh)

Transcript Request

Ida Crown Jewish Academy
Current Student Request for Transcript

Include \$2.00 per Transcript

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Cell Phone # _____ E-mail: _____

Request for: ____ Official Transcript ____ Unofficial Transcript

Common Application on line:

List Schools:

Deadline

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My college choice does not participate in the Common Application:

Send my transcript to:

College/Israel Institution: _____

Application is: Regular Decision _____ Deadline _____

Early Decision _____ Deadline _____

Early Action _____ Deadline _____

Complete Mailing Address:

Israel Institution Fax Number: _____

Include AP scores: _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature: _____

(if student is under 18 years old)

For office use only:

Code: _____

Date Processed: _____ Registrar Signature: _____

Counselor Signature: _____ Date Sent: _____

Date Sent: _____ Counselor Signature: _____

For office use only:

Code: _____

Date Processed: _____ Registrar Signature: _____

Date Sent: _____ Counselor Signature: _____