



**RAINBOW TUTORING**  
inspiration through full spectrum education

## Top Ten Mistakes Students Make When Applying To College

**We believe that celebrating individuality and developing clarity of purpose for attending college are paramount to applying successfully.**

The college admissions process is often a scary one riddled with potential pitfalls. However, with proper guidance and a keen awareness of what matters to them and why, students can find empowerment and peace of mind during this transitional period from teenage-dom to adulthood. The Rainbow Tutoring college counseling family and I help our students avoid the following common mistakes while providing individualized guidance and support. It is our goal to help our students identify and convey their personal brand while making their applications stand-out amongst the rest.



I hope that this information will help you to reimagine the college application process as an opportunity for growth and transformation, rather than a stress-inducing competition. If you're interested in learning more about the Unique RT System for college admissions counseling, call or email our office to set up a consultation for one-on-one tutoring or enrollment into our Paving The Way To The College Of Your Dreams workshop at 310-902-7912 or [rainbowtutoringoffice@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowtutoringoffice@gmail.com).

Wishing you insight, inspiration, vitality, and joy,

*Cindy Chanin*

Cindy Chanin, Director

C. 310-773-7022 | O. 310-902-7912 | [cindy@rainbowtutoring.org](mailto:cindy@rainbowtutoring.org) | [www.rainbowtutoring.org](http://www.rainbowtutoring.org)

## Now, on to the list...



## 1 Thinking “Well-Rounded” Is Better

The truth is, colleges aren’t looking for well-rounded students. They’re looking for a well-rounded class full of angular students. Instead of marketing yourself as a jack-of-all-trades, it’s best to find a niche and market yourself as a unique student with an interesting perspective on the world.

## Prioritizing Prestige 2

Do not allow yourself to get caught up in all the pomp and circumstance that surrounds the name and brand of a school. There really is no definitive rule that deems a college “good” or “best” for all students. When it comes to the prestige of a college in terms of what it will do for YOU, it ultimately comes down to good-fits and bad-fits. Ranking systems such as US News and World Report often use criteria like selectivity and research to inform who tops their lists of “great” schools. However, these factors may not necessarily correlate with great undergraduate instruction. When building a list of schools to which you’re applying, make sure you are prioritizing what is important to you (and whether or not that school meets YOUR criteria), not their prestige or ranking (unless, of course, prestige is paramount to your college experience).

## 3 Lying On The Application

This seems like a no-brainer, but many students think it’s ok to lie in order to “increase” their chances of getting in. Whether it’s talking about your income, ethnicity, or accomplishments, it’s better to stick to telling the truth. Colleges can see right through an inauthentic application, and it will almost always come back to haunt you. Everyone is unique, interesting, and deserves to get into a great-fitting school. Your application should highlight your strengths and all the facets that make you special!

## Thinking Diversity Is All About Skin Color 4

Oftentimes universities will make claims such as “we are committed to diversity” and then post a picture of a multicultural group of friends. Similarly, many of us equate words like diversity to notions of gender and racial equality. However, on college campuses, diversity can mean many things. Diversity of religious beliefs, diversity of political ideology, diversity of geographical origin, diversity in life experience – these are all diverse factors that colleges value, so make sure to showcase your unique perspective and that which sets you apart!



## 5 Limiting Yourself To 70 & Sunny

Don't let weather dictate where you apply! Unfortunately, there are very few places in the world, and virtually none in the US, with weather as great as Southern CA. So, don't deprive yourself of an amazing college experience because of a little gloomy weather. College is actually the best time to live somewhere with true seasons. When else will you have the opportunity to experience snowy holiday seasons and not have to drive or walks miles through it lugging groceries? Consider yourselves blessed if you get the chance to try out something new and foreign!

## Asking Your AP English Teacher For A LOR 6

Many students think it's a good strategy to ask either their hardest teacher or their English teacher for a letter of recommendation. Now, of course, we aren't suggesting that English teachers or AP teachers can't write letters of rec; however, students should be more concerned with getting a letter from the teachers that know them best, rather than the ones who they think will be most impressive. A glowing letter from a coach or teacher you've had for 2 years in a row -- someone who knows your quirky interests, or how strong of a leader you are -- will do much more for you than a generic letter, or worse, a letter that doesn't delve intricately and meaningfully into your strengths.

## 7 Overlooking The "Give" & Focusing On The "Take"

When asked what they want to get out of their college experience, many students can provide a robust list of what they look for in a school. However, it may be more difficult for students to articulate what they themselves can bring to the table. As the saying goes, it's always better to give than to receive, and college admissions is no different. We encourage students to think about what makes them valuable, what they can offer, and how they can transform a campus. From that vantage point, students can create a compelling argument for why a college should accept them.

## Failing To Express Interest 8

Sign-in sheets, thoughtful tweets, and phone calls with clear purpose are all great ways to show colleges that you're interested in them. Many students are too shy, and don't make efforts to network with university stakeholders. Many times colleges keep track of these interactions and they may weigh in your favor if it comes down to a tough decision. College admissions offices are concerned with yield -- meaning, they want to make sure that the students they offer admission to will actually accept and enroll. Failure to express interest in a school, may very well translate as genuine disinterest in attending. Reaching out is a way to self select yourself into an institution.

## 9 Playing It Safe With Essays

Let's face it, tons of college-going high schoolers play sports, are involved on campus, hold jobs, and have cool internships. And, most of those students will write about those experiences. If your goal is to sound like everyone else in the applicant pool, feel free to muse about the leadership skills you gained on the yearbook staff. However, if you want your application to stand out, and get a 15 minute read instead of 5 minutes, then you've got to take calculated risks. Don't be afraid to start a little controversy -- especially if it shows how much of an asset your experience will be in university seminars. Playing it safe won't put you ahead of the pack. Make them remember you.

## Letting Parents Do The Talking **10**

Watching your student transition into adulthood is scary. However, you shouldn't allow your own fears and insecurities to negatively affect your student's experience. Unfortunately, many parents make the mistake of trying to micromanage and hover over the college admissions process. It's important that students speak for themselves when interacting with university representatives. If parents become overly involved in a student's application process, they're likely to annoy college admissions officers, and make the student look ill-prepared for college responsibilities. For their children, parents ought to be the wind beneath their wings that helps them fly. Allow the student to take charge of their experience, not the parent.

### So, how will you avoid these pitfalls?

There are plenty of ways to join in on the conversation with Rainbow Tutoring... We'd love to hear about your application process!

Click here to send us a tweet!



Come to a FREE college knowledge night!

Click here to post on our Facebook wall!



Joining our mailing list!

