36 Most Common Mistakes Students make on College Application.
By: Rakeish Bedesi

The college application is the primary resource for admissions departments to determine a students worthiness for acceptance. This application is the only opportunity students have in presenting themselves in the best light possible, in hopes of gaining admission. Many will say that completing the application is a test in-of-it itself. We agree. This simple test determines how detail oriented students are and how well they follow instructions. In any give year, colleges receive thousands of applications for admission from prospective students, all competing for the same seat. In order to help students submit an error free university application, weve asked admissions officers across the country what common mistakes do students consistently make on applications. Check out the major blunders:

1. Students do not read the directions carefully to make sure they understand what items are needed in order to complete their application. **Recommendation**:*Before beginning the application read through it for understanding.*

2. Students write the wrong social security number or use different numbers on different pieces of information.**Recommendation**: *Carefully copy your social security number from your card.*

3. Students use the wrong college address labels.

4. Students applying for regular decision but checked early action.

5. Students use the online application but fail to request information from their high school counselor.

6. Students have questionable remarks and photos of themselves on social network sites, like MySpace, FaceBook and others (a recent problem).

7. In the college essay students exceed the number of words required. **Recommendation**: *If you need to write a 500 words essay it must be 500, not 500+. Colleges test your ability to communicate your thoughts with clarity and concision. They want to see that your writing flows and is methodical.*

8. Students miss the application deadline. **Recommendation**: *After choosing which institutions you would like to apply to, write down the application deadline dates on a calendar or in a personal planner. Cross off the names of the colleges as you submit your application.*

9. Students take ACT or SAT in the spring of their senior year. **Recommendation**: *Tests should be taken in your junior year or fall semester of your senior year to ensure that test scores will be released on time to apply for the September semester. Also, when you take the SAT or ACT early, you can retake the test if the scores are unsatisfactory.*

10. Students send in application but do not send high school transcripts. **Recommendation**: *Make a check list of documents that will accompany your application.*

11. Students copy or buy essays from the internet. **Recommendation**: *Do not plagiarize essays. Write your own essay. If you are copying essays from the internet then most likely another student will do the same. Getting caught is risky and not worth it.*

12. The students parent fills out the application. **Recommendation**: *You are the one seeking admission into college, not your parents. Therefore, you should be the one to complete the application.*

13. Activity list is full of ambiguous acronyms. **Recommendation**: *Do not use acronyms. Spell out each word. Just because you know what the acronyms mean, does not mean others will.*

14. Students expect long list of activities to overshadow actual academic work. **Recommendation**: *Instead of joining an array of clubs, extensively participate in one or two activities. Admissions officers are not looking to see how many activities you sign up for as much as your role in each extracurricular.*

15. Students provide incorrect email addresses / telephone numbers.

16. Students forget to sign and date the back page of the application or have their parents sign it.

17. Students misspell their intended major: psychology and business are the most misspelled.

18. Students are careless in filling out the application and make typos, grammatical errors or have sloppy handwriting.**Recommendation**: *Illegibility/poor penmanship can create problems, especially handwritten essays. Do not handwrite essays unless the application specifically requests you to. Otherwise, type them on a computer and attach the printed page to your application. If your handwriting is poor, consider applying online.*

19. Applications folded 10 times to fit in a small envelope look bad. Soda/coffee stains, and dirty or sticky pages, torn/ripped edges all can affect your eligibility. **Recommendation**: *Mail your application package in a legal size envelope. Also to be careful, DO NOT eat while completing your university application.*

20. Students use pencil when filling out an application. **Recommendation**: *Use a blue or black ink pen.*

21. Some applications ask for County and/or Country. **Recommendation**: *Read carefully! Do not mix these up.*

22. Many students who have jobs do not mention them on applications. **Recommendation**: *Often, these jobs impact the time students have available for activities. Include this information to paint a full picture of your out-of-school activities.*

23. Students send the wrong essay. Sometimes students mix up college essays and send an essay intended for one university to another college.

24. Students do not address the essay question / topic. **Recommendation**: *If you are not sure, ask your counselor for clarification.*

25. For online applications, students slip the mouse and click on the wrong item in a drop down box. (It is amazing how many students say they're from Afghanistan -- which is usually listed right after United States on drop-downs for countries)

26. Students substitute thesaurus words for more colloquial phrases. **Recommendation**: *Bright teens do not and should not write like their parents. Applications that stand out do not have the above problems. They "tell" rather than "show."*

27. Students list "Hanging out with friends" or "talking on the phone" as an extra curricular activity. **Recommendation**: *For those who do this, hanging with friends and talking on the phone are not note-worthy activities. Ask your counselor if you are not sure what to include.*

28. Students blame a teacher in their personal statement for bad grades. **Recommendation**: *Colleges care more about what you did about the bad grade than why you received it in the first place. Did you ask for extra help? Repeat the course? Get a tutor?*

29. Students turn in essays with numerous misspellings and grammatical errors. **Recommendation**: *Proofread and ask your counselor or teacher to read it over. Remember that sometimes computers do not pick up errors that are spelled correctly.*

30. Students do not inform their high school counselor that they are applying to colleges x, y, and z. Students fail to mention the necessity of submitting required forms by the certain deadlines. **Recommendation**: *Tell your counselor which colleges you are applying to for admission.*

31. Students do not send SAT or ACTs, OR assume later test scores will automatically be sent to same institutions as indicated in earlier tests. **Recommendation**: *Each time taking the SAT or ACT, request the scores be sent to your institution of choice.*

32. Information on student transcripts is not updated or incorrect. **Recommendation**: *Check your name spelling, home address, phone numbers AND course names, grades, and credits received.*

33. Many colleges that use the Common Application also have supplements. Students forget to complete the supplement.

34. Students write generic essays. **Recommendation**: *Relate your essay to yourself. Write details that are unique to you and that only you could have written.*

35. Students list e-mail address that are in bad taste or vulgar. **Recommendation**: *Be aware of the impression your e-mail address makes. Create a "professional" e-mail address for college and job applications. Offensive e-mail addresses make a bad impression.*

36. Students do not ask a teacher or advisor to review their application before submission. **Recommendation**: *After completing your application, ask your parent or your high school counselor to proofread it for you. Always have a fresh eye look at your application. Doing so will help eliminate the above mistakes.*

RESOURCE:

http://www.applyingtoschool.com/forms/common-mistakes-students-make-on-college-application.aspx