

SEVEN COMMON COLLEGE APPLICATION MISTAKES

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From repurposed essays to college name misspellings, believe us—admissions teams have seen it all. And while these application mistakes may be common, it doesn't mean they're unavoidable.

As you gather everything together to send yours off, keep in mind this list of the seven most common app mistakes we've seen.

1. **Writing a generic essay.** Colleges know you're most likely applying to several schools, so be sure you're not treating each application with individual care. Read and answer prompts carefully; don't recycle an essay you've sent somewhere else...especially if it's off topic. (Struggling with your essay? Check out these college essays that worked for Siena).

That said, get this: [Siena's Express Application](#) *doesn't require an essay*. More on that later!

2. **Forgetting to proofread.** This isn't a quick text message to your buddy who will disregard your spelling errors. The admissions team will notice applications with grammar or punctuation errors, so [read—and then reread—everything](#). Get a second (or third) eye to review anything you may have missed.
3. **Underemphasizing extracurriculars.** Many schools weigh extracurriculars alongside grades and tests, so don't just list your activities. Here's your chance to get specific with details and make your accomplishments stand out.
4. **Crossing off a college you can't afford.** A little off topic, since this tip isn't about the application itself—but it's a big mistake people make during the process: don't skip applying to a school because its tuition seems too expensive.

You have options, like talking to a financial aid counselor about scholarships and aid, that make colleges *much more affordable*. Many students, including at Siena, don't pay the full sticker price. (You may be happily surprised at what our [Net Price Calculator](#) shows as an estimate of your actual cost to attend Siena.)

5. **Lacking familiarity with the school.** While we'd hope you're applying to schools you *actually want* to attend, don't forget to do some thorough research. Often schools have a *Why do you want to attend our school?* prompt, so show them you're interested in them specifically! Let them know you've visited, checked out their academic programs, etc.
6. **Thinking “shortcuts” will hurt your decision.** Siena College is officially test-optional. And what's more, we offer you the choice of submitting the Common Application or Siena's Express Application—the latter of which takes about 10 minutes and (as mentioned before) doesn't require an essay.

Although these sound like shortcuts, we see them as more efficient and fair ways of helping you get your college application in and ensure applicants are on a more even playing field. Don't dismiss these opportunities and worry that they'll hurt your chances; they won't!

7. **Applying on the deadline.** While there are emergency exceptions, you'll want to avoid sending in your application on its actual due date. For one, colleges have different deadlines, so you don't want to risk confusing them and accidentally missing a deadline.

Plus, if there's anything you're forgetting (like a letter of recommendation), you won't have the extra time to fill in the holes. Don't stress yourself out more than you need to; apply sooner than later.

With all that said, are you feeling like your app is in tip-top shape and clear of errors? Let Siena know you're interested...