

Arthur L. Johnson High School

Junior Packet



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Glossary of College Admissions Terms

Acceptance Rate The percentage of applicants accepted to a particular school or program. The smaller the number, the more competitive the school or program.

ACT Standardized test used for college admission. Includes four sections plus optional writing section. Scores in each section range from 1-36. Composite score is the average of section scores. Register at www.actstudent.org

Advanced Placement (AP) College-level courses offered at the high school level. See ALJ School Profile for complete list.

Associate's Degree Primarily offered at two-year colleges. Can be applied toward a four-year degree.

Bachelor's Degree Four-year degrees from colleges and universities.

Class Rank ALJ students receive a grade rank by decile; i.e. one in the first decile is considered to be in the Top 10% of the class.

Coalition App A college application platform utilized by 140+ schools. www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org

Common Application A standard application utilized by 800+ colleges and universities. www.commonapp.org

Deferred An admission decision which means your application will be rolled over to the Regular Decision applicant pool.

Early Action An admission plan with an early deadline (typically November 1-15). Not a binding agreement.

Early Decision A binding agreement in which a student is committed to attending a particular school if accepted.

Grade Point Average (GPA) Student's transcript calculates a cumulative GPA which includes all grades earned to date.

Major A student's primary area of study on a college level. Encompasses about half of the total coursework required for graduation.

Minor A student's secondary area of study on a college level.

NCAA Eligibility Student-athletes must meet criteria set forth by the NCAA in order to play a sport at the college level.

SAT Standardized test used for college admission. Includes Evidence-Based Reading & Writing and Math sections. Scores in each section range from 200-800. Register at www.collegeboard.org

SCOIR Student Interactive, online program available to ALJ students and parents. Includes services for college/career search, resume, career interest profiler, and more. See your counselor for access information. <https://app.scoir.com/signin>

Test Optional Some schools do not require SAT/ACT scores, but consider other factors. Visit www.fairtest.org for a list of schools.

Transcript An official document containing a student's academic record. Includes all courses completed and the final grades in each course, as well as the cumulative unweighted and weighted GPA and attendance record.

Undecided/Undeclared A temporary major to declare in college. Students will take courses to fulfill breadth requirements.

Undergraduate The title of students pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree

Unweighted GPA Calculation of grades earned regardless of class level.

Weighted GPA Calculation of grades earned with weight given to class level.

Waitlisted An admission decision meaning no decision has been made yet. Colleges will wait to give you a final decision, sometimes after the May 1 enrollment deadline. Students are encouraged to indicate continued interest in the school.

Frequently Used Scholarship/Financial Aid Terms

Cost of Attendance Includes direct (tuition, fees, room, board) and indirect (transportation, books, etc.) costs.

CSS Profile A form which collects information used to determine eligibility for institutional and private funds. Only required to be completed by some colleges. Initial cost is \$25 and \$16 for each additional report to be sent out. <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>

EOF/EOS/EEO “Educational Opportunity Fund” – An academic support program that provides access to higher education for New Jersey residents. This is a state-sponsored program available to students who are college-bound but need additional academic and financial support. Eligibility is determined based on family income. http://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/EOF/EOF_Eligibility.shtml

FAFSA The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) collects financial information from families who want to apply for federal and state student assistance. The funds available are student loans, work study, scholarships, and grants. www.fafsa.ed.gov

Federal Perkins Loan A government-sponsored low-interest loan administered by the college to help fund post-secondary education for students with exceptional need.

Federal Work Study A program which provides jobs on and off campus for students that have demonstrated financial need.

Financial Aid Package The total award received by a student from a variety of sources. A “package” of aid usually contains a combination of gift aid (grants and scholarships), and self-help programs such as loans and work study.

Grant State, federal, or college financial resources. Do not have to be paid back.

HESAA The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. Provides students and families in NJ with financial and informational resources for students to pursue their education beyond high school. www.hesaa.org

Loan Borrowed money that must be repaid (usually with interest). Subsidized means the interest on a loan is covered while the student is in school; unsubsidized means the borrower can repay interest while in school or the lender will capitalize the interest.

Merit Scholarship Money awarded based on academic merit (typically GPA, test scores, and high school course rigor).

Net Price Calculator A required [tool](#) used by institutions to disclose the actual net price a student would pay to attend. Every college offers this service from their website.

NJ CLASS Loans State-based additional source of funds for college costs.

NJ STARS An initiative that provides New Jersey’s highest achieving students with free tuition at their home county college. Eligible students must be in the Top 15% of the graduating class at the end of either junior or senior year. Students must be legal NJ residents for a minimum of twelve consecutive months prior to high school graduation.

Pell Grant A grant awarded to help undergraduates with exceptional need pay for their education after high school.

PLUS Loan A loan available to parents of undergraduate students.

SAI (formerly EFC) A formula-based index number range used by financial aid professionals when creating an aid offer.

Selective Service U.S. male citizens can register for selective service via the FAFSA.

Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) Awards going to full-time undergraduate New Jersey residents attending college in New Jersey.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How many schools should I apply to?**
 - *The suggestion is between five and ten schools. The list should include at least two safety schools, two mid-range schools, and one reach school. Criteria for admission to schools changes every year and it is important to keep your options open.*
- **Should I schedule an interview?**
 - *Yes! Not only will the interview allow the college to get to know you more, but will help you get a better understanding of the college. Interviews, if offered, are an important part of your application.*
- **What should my senior year of high school schedule include?**
 - *Besides graduation requirements, students are advised to maintain a challenging course load which can show colleges you are hardworking and willing to challenge yourself. It is always suggested to exceed requirements, including a fourth year of math, science, social studies, and language.*
- **How many times should I take the SATs/ACTs?**
 - *No more than three times for each test. Students are recommended to take each test at least twice in order to super-score (combining your highest score from each section).*
- **Should I stay in average-level and get an A, or try for honors/AP and potentially get a lower grade?**
 - *Colleges expect students to pursue a challenging course load and also be successful. If you meet the criteria set in place for an honors or AP level class, you CAN handle the work, but it may require putting in extra time and seeking support from teachers. It shows the colleges that you are prepared for college-level classes.*
- **Do I have a better chance of getting in if I apply Early Decision?**
 - *It depends on a number of factors, including what the school is looking for, but it demonstrates your strong interest in the school and that is valuable. Acceptance is said to be more likely for qualified students applying ED. This decision is binding, so it is not one to take lightly and requires approval of a parent/guardian and your school counselor.*
- **How are extracurricular activities considered in the college admission process?**
 - *Extracurricular activities are important supplemental information in a college application. Colleges look for depth not breadth – consistency and leadership over the volume of activities.*
- **Should I apply to colleges if my admission test scores or grades are below their published ranges?**
 - *Yes! This is considered a reach school. The admission scores and grades that colleges show on their websites are averages or ranges, not cut-offs. Also, the criteria for admission changes each year.*
- **If a school is test optional, should I send my scores anyway?**
 - *Speak to your admission counselor at this school to determine your best option.*
- **Should I bother applying to schools that are expensive?**
 - *Yes! You will not know if you can afford a college until you apply and receive financial aid and scholarship information. Sometimes private schools can be more affordable than public schools.*
- **I am thinking about starting at a two-year school. Is this a good idea?**
 - *Every student's situation is different. It is important to weigh all of your options and consult with your family and counselor when making this decision to determine the best path for you for your future.*
- **How does what I declare as a major on my application affect my chances of getting in?**
 - *Your choice of major can affect your chances of getting in. Students are recommended to speak to the admission counselor for our region and determine what the best option would be.*
- **What happens if I am waitlisted or deferred?**
 - *If waitlisted or deferred, students are advised to send a letter immediately to the attention of their admission counselor. In this letter, students should discuss their interest in the school and any new or additional accomplishments. Additionally, updated grades and test scores should be sent.*
- **I would like to do a shared-time program with the vocational school. Can I do this and still go to college?**
 - *Students interested in shared-time programs should consult with his or her counselor as early as possible to determine if they will be able to do the program and be an eligible college candidate.*

Class of 2026 Timeline & Checklist

January - June

- ☐ Set up appointments with your counselor to plan for senior year & research colleges/careers
- ☐ Schedule a Junior Parent Meeting
- ☐ Visit colleges (3 excused absences per year)
- ☐ Register to take the SAT and/or ACT tests before the end of the school year
- ☐ Register & request a transcript via Naviance for the NCAA Eligibility Center if pursuing a Division I or II sport
- ☐ Submit signed Transcript Release Form
- ☐ Ask two teachers for letters of recommendation & officially request them via SCOIR
- ☐ Complete Senior Brag Sheet on SCOIR
- ☐ Build resume on SCOIR
- ☐ Create a potential list of schools on SCOIR
- ☐ Check admission requirements for each school (*and major*) on your list to help with senior year scheduling

Summer

- ☐ Work on your college essay
- ☐ Visit colleges
- ☐ Compile a list of colleges you will be applying to; update your “Applying” list on SCOIR
- ☐ Create your Common App account and begin the application if colleges accept this application

September - November

- ☐ Set up frequent appointments with your counselor
- ☐ Create timeline for college application deadlines and share deadlines with your counselor and teachers
- ☐ Work on, complete, and submit your college applications
- ☐ Update and maintain list of applications on SCOIR
- ☐ If necessary, register for the fall SAT and/or ACT tests
- ☐ Meet with college representatives visiting ALJ throughout the fall
- ☐ Continue to visit colleges and set up interviews (if offered)
- ☐ Attend application workshops and the *Financial Aid Workshop* at ALJ
- ☐ Sign up to participate in *Instant Decision Days* in November & December
- ☐ Start working on FAFSA (available October 1) and submit as soon as possible
- ☐ **Submit transcript waiver and request at least two weeks prior to your college application deadline**
- ☐ **Send required test scores officially through the CollegeBoard (SAT) or ACT websites**

December - April

- ☐ Submit the FAFSA and the CSS Profile (if required)
- ☐ Track scholarship offers from each school; review financial aid & consult with college financial aid officers
- ☐ Apply to outside and local scholarships
- ☐ Submit requests for mid-year grades to be sent
- ☐ Keep SCOIR updated with admission decisions as they come in
- ☐ Let the schools know that you are not attending by withdrawing your application
- ☐ Make a final decision by May 1

May - June

- ☐ Take AP exams (if enrolled in AP classes)
- ☐ Complete the Senior Exit Survey on Scoir
- ☐ Graduate!

Step-by-Step Applying to a School as an ALJ Senior

1. Submit application to school online on either Common App or the school's website
2. Submit SAT and/or ACT scores to school online via www.CollegeBoard.org (SAT) or www.ACT.org (ACT)
3. SCOIR
 - Click "My Colleges" → "Add College" → "Add to Applying" → "Add School"
 - Indicate app type (Common App, Directly to School, or otherwise)
 - Indicate deadline
 - Indicate if you are applying test-optional or not
 - Once you have submitted your application, click and drag the college to the "Applied" column
 - If applied via Common App, include your Common App ID
 - Confirm the deadline you applied for
 - Include the major you applied for
 - Confirm test-optional status or if you will send or have sent your SAT/ACT scores
 - Confirm the email address you used for the application

Helpful Tips

- Change email address to something appropriate and helpful (i.e. first and last name)
- Monitor social media use – don't post what you wouldn't want a college to see
- Keep an open mind! Just because an older sibling or friend or neighbor did not like a school, that doesn't mean you won't like it! The same goes for looking at schools away from home.
- Don't shy away from a school only because of their price. Talk to the admission counselor and determine if you would be eligible for merit or need-based aid.
- Consider admission statistics on SCOIR when making your list
 - Include safety, mid-range, and reach schools
- **PLAN AHEAD!** Do not wait until the day an application is due to submit the application.

Responsibilities in the Application Process

Student is responsible for...

- Reviewing all admissions requirements for each college
- Completing the Brag Sheet on SCOIR (*you will receive a notification for it*)
 - ◆ Will help your counselor and teachers write detailed letters about you
 - ◆ Will not be sent to your schools
- Completing a detailed resume on SCOIR by developing a brief personal statement, adding your activities and achievements, and clicking "download resume" in the upper right-hand corner
- Asking teachers for letters of recommendation
- Submitting all applications, essays, and paying the application fees
- Sending official SAT scores from www.collegeboard.org
- Sending official ACT scores from www.actstudent.org
- Updating SCOIR to indicate when applications have been submitted

Parent is responsible for...

- Completing the Parent Brag Sheet on SCOIR

Counselor is responsible for...

- Writing a letter of recommendation
- Submitting transcripts and letters of recommendation

Standardized Testing

www.collegeboard.org · www.actstudent.org

SAT Test Dates 2025-2026	March 8, 2025	September 13, 2025
	May 3, 2025	October 4, 2025
	June 7, 2025	November 8, 2025
	August 23, 2025	December 6, 2025

ACT Test Dates 2025-2026	February 8, 2025	September 6, 2025 (anticipated)
	April 5, 2025	October 25, 2025 (anticipated)
	June 14, 2025	December 6, 2025 (anticipated)
	July 12, 2025	

**Starting in March 2024, the SAT will be administered digitally.*

***Registration deadlines are typically one month prior to the testing date. Review websites for more information.*

SAT or ACT? [Do you know which test is right for you?](#)

Colleges accept both tests equally, so the choice is up to you! The ACT and SAT generally test the same types of content. The biggest differences are that the ACT has a Science Test and the SAT has one Math section for which you cannot use a calculator.

	SAT	ACT
Test Structure	ONLY OFFERED DIGITALLY 98 questions - Reading and Writing (2 modules, 54 questions) - Math (2 modules, 44 questions)	HAS BOTH DIGITAL AND PAPER FORMATS 215 questions - English (75 questions) - Math (60 questions) - Reading (40 questions) - Science (40 questions) - Essay (optional)
Length	2 hours and 14 minutes	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 35 minutes (with essay)
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	Covers: - Arithmetic - Algebra I & II - Geometry, Trigonometry, & Data Analysis	Covers: - Arithmetic - Algebra I & II - Geometry & Trigonometry
Calculator Policy	You can use a calculator on all math questions	You can use a calculator on all math questions
Essays	Not offered	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a total scale of 400-1600	Scored on a total scale of 1-36

Letters of Recommendation

- Most four-year colleges will require the submission of at least one letter of recommendation
- Each counselor will complete a letter for each student
- Before asking teachers, students **must** complete the Senior Brag Sheet on SCOIR
- Juniors must ask teachers *before* the end of junior year
- Selection of Teacher
 - o Ideally, the teachers should be able to speak highly of you, preferably knowing you from inside and outside the classroom
 - o The subject that the teacher teachers should be considered depending on your major of choice
 - Example: students applying to a business program should have at least one letter from a math teacher
 - o ***After a teacher agrees to write a letter, the student must formally invite them via SCOIR**
 - **"My Colleges" → "Application Documents" → "Request a Recommendation" → search for the teacher → send the request**
 - o It is the responsibility of the student to inform his or her teachers of application deadlines with **a minimum two week lead-time**
- Outside letters
 - o Outside recommenders can send their letters to the counselor for submission. Letters can also be sent directly to colleges by the outside recommender.



SCOIR Student

<https://app.scoir.com/signin>

What Do I *Have* to Use SCOIR For?

- Move colleges to the "Applied To" column to request that your transcripts be sent (**IMPORTANT**)
- Officially request teacher letters of recommendation
- Track college applications
- Track admission decisions and scholarship offers
- Complete Senior Brag Sheet/Parent Brag Sheet
- Complete resume

What *Can* I Use SCOIR For?

- Research colleges & careers
- Track test scores
- Search scholarships
- Learn when college representatives are visiting ALJ
- Do career assessments and personality/interest inventories

College Essays

Things to Remember:

- Topic or approach should be unique
- Passion, knowledge, and enthusiasm can make any topic interesting
- Have your essay proofread by many people – teachers, peers, counselor, family members
- Remember to actually answer the question you have been asked
- No matter what you are discussing, mention what the influence is on YOU, the student

2024-2025 Common Application Essay Prompts

***2025-2026 prompts are currently TBD.*

1. *Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*
2. *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?*
3. *Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?*
4. *Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?*
5. *Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.*
6. *Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?*
7. *Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.*



NCAA Athletics

Students planning to pursue a sport in college must plan ahead to ensure that he or she has taken the required course of study to be eligible. Students are advised to consult with their school counselor as soon as possible. During junior year, students are encouraged to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org). While this process is required for students heading towards a Division I or II program, Division III athletes can also create a profile to help in the recruitment process.

Students **must** communicate with their coaches throughout the recruiting process to contact college coaches.

Sample Resume

Im A. Student

365 Westfield Avenue

Clark, NJ 07066

732-000-0000 · im.a.student@gmail.com

Education

Arthur L. Johnson High School, Clark, NJ

September 2022-June 2026

Academic Achievements

- High Honor Roll (Grades 9-11)
 - Achievement of a 3.75+ GPA
- Spanish National Honor Society (Grades 11, 12)
 - Maintain 3.0+ GPA in Spanish classes

Work Experience

- Babysitting (Grades 9-12)
- Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Clark, NJ (Grade 12)
 - Responsible for stocking shelves and assisting customers
- Clark Recreation Summer Camp Counselor (Grades 10-11)
 - Organize and oversee group of ten second-graders
 - Assist with all activities for campers

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Key Club (Grades 9-12)
 - President, Grade 12
 - Secretary, Grade 11
 - Participant, Grades 9-10
 - Participated in numerous volunteer activities throughout the year
 - Co-chaired first annual Relay for Life for the Clark Public School District
 - As President, work closely with advisor to ensure goals of organization are met
- Art Club (Grades 10-11)
 - Work on pieces to include in art portfolio
- Junior Varsity Soccer (Grades 9-11)
 - Played mid-field position
 - Participated in approximately 15 hours of practice a week while in season
 - Volunteered with team at youth soccer camp (Summer 2017)
- Union County All-Stars Travel Soccer (Grades 9-11)
 - Played mid-field position
 - Participated in approximately 10 hours of practice a week while in season
 - Traveled with team to national tournament in Raleigh, North Carolina

References

- Mrs. Joan Counselor, School Counselor, Arthur L. Johnson High School
- Mr. John America, History Teacher, Arthur L. Johnson High School
- Mr. Matthew Midfield, Soccer Coach, Union County All-Stars

College Application Reference Sheet

School Information

Arthur L. Johnson High School
CEEB: 310228
365 Westfield Avenue
Clark, NJ 07066
732-382-0910

Counselor Information

Ms. Molly Cusick, mcusick@clarkschools.org, x3253
Mrs. Jennifer Sanchez, jsanchez@clarkschools.org, x3255
Mrs. Meghan Ryan, mryan@clarkschools.org, x3250
Mrs. Ellen Zamboni, ezamboni@clarkschools.org, x3252

SCOIR Student

To track college applications, request transcripts, request letters of recommendation, complete brag sheet, build resume, etc.

<https://app.scoir.com/signin>

Student Username: _____ Password: _____

Parent Username: _____ Password: _____

CollegeBoard

To sign up for the SATs or SAT II (Subject Test) tests; to send SAT, SAT II, and AP scores to colleges.

www.collegeboard.org

Username: _____ Password: _____

ACT

To sign up for the ACT tests; to send ACT scores to colleges.

www.actstudent.org

Username: _____ Password: _____

Common Application

900+ colleges use Common App for admission.

www.commonapp.org

Username: _____ Password: _____

Common App Education Information

Common Application → Education Section → Grades

Class Rank Reporting: **Decile**

Decile Rank: **Top** _____ %

Rank Weighting: **Weighted**

GPA Scale: **4.0**

Unweighted GPA: _____

Weighted GPA: _____

Size of Graduating Class: _____

ARTHUR L. JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT'S RELEASE OF PUPIL RECORDS

Federal and State law forbid release of Pupil Records without permission. Ref.: N.J. Administrative Code #6:3-2.6. states, "Organization, Agencies and Persons from outside the School (shall have access to pupil records) if they have written consent of Parents or Adult (age 18) Pupils."

I give my permission for the release of all necessary student records to colleges, scholarship programs and/or athletic representatives. I understand that transcript requests require ten (10) school days to process.

Student Name

Student email address

Parent's Signature

Adult Pupil's Signature

Parent email address

Date