

COMPLETING THE COMMON APPLICATION: 2023-2024

Information highlighted in green, should be entered exactly as it is listed on this sheet!

 indicates a very important information

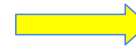
PART 1 – ACCOUNT CREATION

Go to www.commonapp.org to begin.

- Click “Create an Account”--top right
- Answer the registration question indicating that “You are a **FIRST YEAR STUDENT**”
- You will be prompted to enter an email address and password.

 **ENTER AN EMAIL ADDRESS.**

- Write down this information in a safe place.
- Next, you will be prompted to enter demographic information

 **Use your FULL LEGAL NAME, no nicknames.** and answer brief questions to create your account – name, address, etc.

- Indicate that you plan to start college in **2024**. Once the questions are complete, you may click “Create”.

Your Common App account is organized into several tabs on the home page – **Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, and Financial Aid Resources**. The “Dashboard”

is your home page. These tabs will help you navigate the Common App. ↓



Dashboard

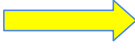
My Colleges

Common App

College Search

Financial Aid Resources

PART 2 – ADDING COLLEGES

In the “**College Search**” tab search for Common App colleges to which you plan to apply. After you add these colleges, they will show up in other sections, representing your Common App college list. Over 1000 colleges use the Common App, but not all. If you are searching for a college and can’t find it, chances are they do not accept the Common App and you will have to go to that college’s official website for their electronic application.  A full list of Common App member institutions can be found [here](#).

In the “**My Colleges**” tab, you will see your list of colleges that accept the Common App. Each one has its own menu to keep you organized. See PART 4 of this guide for more information.

PART 3 – FILLING OUT THE COMMON APPLICATION .

The “**Common App**” tab is where you actually fill out the application. The underlined words below correspond to each of the six sections (think of these as UNITS) of the application **Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, and Writing**. A seventh section - **Courses & Grades** - is only required for certain colleges.

Each “unit” has several topics within it (think of these as CHAPTERS). You know you have completed a section when there is a GREEN CHECK MARK.



Information in the Common App tab is sent to **ALL SCHOOLS** you submit an application to.

PROFILE

- o This section is mostly self-explanatory and some of the questions should be automatically filled in for you following your account creation. **You must answer all questions with a red asterisk**; any others are optional.
- o You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of PROFILE, and be **sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete**.
- o The application will now include optional questions in which a student can share their preferred first name and their preferred pronouns. The wording of a question will also change “sex” to “legal sex” to reduce student confusion. These changes are all designed to avoid making certain applicants feel excluded and build on the creation of a text box where students can voluntarily explain their gender.

FAMILY

- o You must answer as much as you know about your parent(s)/guardian(s) and any sibling(s). Enter the most accurate information that you know. This is where you will be asked about your parent(s) education, so if they attended college, be sure to get the accurate information.
- o You must click “Continue” after each sub-section of FAMILY, and be sure a green checkmark appears indicating the sub-section is complete.

EDUCATION

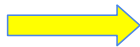
- o This section asks for information about New Milford High School. Click on “Find School” and NMHS should come up based on your previously entered zip code. **Our CEEB code is 310997**
- o Date of entry: **September 2020** (assuming you have attended NMHS all 4 years)
- o Boarding school: **No**
- o Graduation date: **June 2024**
- o For students who may graduate early, take time off, take a gap year – you will need to briefly explain this. Or, check “NO CHANGE IN PROGRESSION”.



Counselor information: Please see the FAQ doc for counselor information.

- o Other secondary schools: For students who transferred into NMHS from another high school indicate the school and dates you attended, prior to coming to NMHS.
- o Colleges & Universities: *This section is for coursework taken through a college or university. (Dual Enrollment and AP courses do not count here.)*
- o Grades:
 - o Enter **140** for graduating class size
 - o Choose "**NONE**" for class rank reporting
 - o Enter "**4**" for **GPA scale reporting** and enter GPA exactly as indicated on your transcript (do not round up)
 - o Select **WEIGHTED** for GPA weighting
- Current year courses: Report the courses that you are taking **senior year**. Our system is **SEMESTER**.
- Enter the title of the course, the level (if applicable), and the course schedule (first semester, second semester, or full year).
- Honors: **You have 5 spaces to list academic honors.** This section is a place for you to mention National Merit honors, National Honor Society membership, or any other academic honor society memberships. For years of involvement, include the year you were inducted and all years you were a member. This is also a place for you to share classroom or department awards, school-wide honors, or state, national, or international honors **(for example First, Second or Third HONOR ROLL)**
- Community-Based Organizations: If you received free assistance with the college application process through any community-based organizations, list that in this section.
- Future Plans: Enter your first-choice career interest, along with the highest degree you plan to earn

TESTING




Many colleges are now test-optional. [Here is a link to a database of test optional schools](#)

Always confirm with the college/university if you have questions about their test optional policy

- o Tests taken: Indicate whether or not you are reporting test scores. Then, choose the tests you plan to report. (You may still need to send official score reports directly from the testing agencies to the colleges. Reporting scores on the Common App is optional, but it gives the college an initial look at your scores while they wait on your official score reports to arrive.)
- o You may also share future test dates to indicate that you are not done testing and more results will be submitted in the future.
- o SAT/ACT Tests: You will need specific score details, including scores from each section and exact test dates. This also allows you to enter your highest scores across multiple test dates.
- o You may also enter AP Test scores in this space, but it is entirely optional. You may consult with your counselor to determine which AP scores to report.

ACTIVITIES

- You have 10 slots to list activities. This is your place to shine – do not underestimate anything you do! Include all activities, both in and out of school. Don't leave out things like cultural exchange trips, summer programs, childcare, any work in which you received pay, and rec/club sports.

 **List activities in order of importance to you. Once you list multiple activities you can move them around using the little arrows.**

- Choose your activity type. If it is not listed, choose “other”.
- Indicate any position you held and the organization name.
- You get 50 characters for “Position/Leadership and organization name”. Type “Member”, “Active Participant”, or something similar if you did not hold a leadership position. Spell it out if the activity is specific to NMHS. Use the little space you have wisely!
- You get 150 characters to explain the activity and any accomplishments you received. Don't be wordy! You don't need to write a full sentence. Use strong, powerful words. It should be clear and concise. Don't repeat what you typed above, or what you will include below.

 **Great examples of how to write a good 150-character description are [here](#).**

- Always select grade 12 if you intend to continue the activity into 12th grade.
- Timing of activities: The school year is approximately 41 weeks including breaks, summer is about 11 weeks. Estimate and average the hours/week and weeks/year for each activity.

WRITING

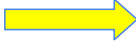
- Personal essay: Your essay must be at least 250 words, but no more than 650 words. You may type your essay first to check for grammar and spelling, then copy and paste into the text field, or share your essay using Google Drive.

 **Resources to help as you begin to put together your essay: [College Essay Guy](#)**

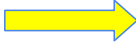
Essay Prompts for 2021-22

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 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.*

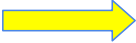
Additional Information Section

-  **Common App is giving all applicants an opportunity to share any impact COVID-19 has had on their life, in 250 words or less. It is entirely optional.**
- o There is also another space, up to 650 words, where you can share special circumstances or qualifications not reflected in your application. Students have used this section to elaborate on an activity, explain a family background situation, discuss a poor grade, and more. It is not required to use this section.

COURSES & GRADES (this is not required by all colleges/universities)

 You only need to complete this section if it indicates under the “Courses & Grades” header that you have colleges requiring this. If so, carefully follow the prompts in this section to report your grades. Have a transcript available to report accurate courses and grades.

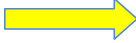
PART 4 – ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND WRITING SUPPLEMENTS (These are unique to the particular school)

- Click on “My Colleges” to view the required “Questions” and “Writing Supplements” (if any) for each of your colleges. Most are available by early August. These “questions” are particular to each individual college and only the college asking the questions will see the responses.
-  Writing supplements can be additional short or long essays. Treat them with utmost importance. If the college is asking, they want to know!
- Once these items are complete, you may start the process of submitting your application. When you submit your Common App, it goes to one school at a time. Therefore, you don’t need to have every supplement for every college completed to submit – **you submit to each college individually.**

PART 5 – FERPA RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

In the “**My Colleges**” tab you will find your organizational area, providing you with a task menu for each college. Look for the **FERPA Release Authorization**.

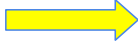
- Click on “release authorization”, read through the information, then check the box that you have read and understand the information.
- On the next screen, check the box indicating that our school has the authorization to release requested records to colleges.

 **It is highly recommended that you select “I waive my right to review...” indicating that you are waiving your right to review your letters of recommendation.**

- Finally, check the last box indicating that you understand your waiver selection CANNOT BE CHANGED once it is made.

- Type your electronic signature and see that the date is entered.

In “Recommenders and FERPA”, under the “Counselor” and “Teacher” sections, enter your teacher/counselor name, title, and New Milford email.

 **Be sure to click ENABLE PREVIEW so that your counselor can support you in the process, by reviewing what you have entered.**

Only use the “Other Recommender” section if you have someone **outside of NMHS** writing a letter for you. Follow the prompts to enter that recommender’s email address. That recommender will receive instructions to upload a letter of recommendation for you, and that letter will be shared with your Common App colleges. We will go over this process in more detail in September.

Please utilize the “**Help Center**” located within the Common App website and watch many of the videos embedded within the site, and also reach out to your counselors with questions.