



# *Kem* College Advisor

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## June 2011

**4<sup>th</sup> – SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests**

**11<sup>th</sup> – ACT and ACT plus Writing**

Seniors – thank teachers and others who helped you

Seniors – thank scholarship providers for aid

Seniors – have your final transcript sent to your college

## Summer 2011

**Do Something Interesting**

Job, internship, or community service; summer program

**Explore Colleges**

Through websites, guidebooks, virtual and real visits

**Rising Seniors**

Begin to work on Common Application

Work on Essays

Narrow College List

Prepare for SATs and/or ACTs

College Tours & interviews

**Underclassmen**

Prepare for fall PSAT or PLAN

## College Interviews

If you feel anxious about a college interview, be glad you're not an aspiring Oxford University student. While students applying to American colleges can usually anticipate questions like why they want to attend that college or what they read for pleasure, students applying to Oxford could be asked why a cat's eyes appear to glow in the dark or what is "normal" for humans. Prospective Oxford students also need to demonstrate that they have academic knowledge and potential in the subject they want to study. If you plan to study biology, you could be handed a cactus and asked to tell the interviewer about it. College interviews at American schools are nothing compared to what students applying to Oxford University have to endure.

In fact, students who interview with admissions officers or alumni from American colleges are often surprised to find that the process was less intimidating than anticipated. Even if you've bonded with an interviewer, you cannot assume that means you'll be admitted to the college. It is unfortunate that interviewers sometimes lead students to believe they will be accepted when that may not be the case. Remember that part of the interviewer's job is to get you excited about that school. A well-intentioned alumni interviewer may tell a student that the school would be lucky to have her, and it's natural to believe that means good news is coming. Since the interviewer does not make the admissions decision, don't rely too strongly on the interviewer's comments.

It is expensive to have admissions officers interview all or most applicants, so few colleges actually require interviews. But more schools are encouraging interviews as a way to help distinguish among all the students who have similarly impressive grades, test scores and extracurricular

activities. While some private schools have always offered interviews, a few public schools are also starting to use them, including the College of William and Mary, which has trained college seniors to interview prospective students.

While a face to face interview on campus is ideal, it's not always possible. Expecting students to interview on campus would be especially burdensome to lower-income students, which is why many schools have alumni around the country conduct interviews with local applicants. Some schools offer phone interviews or other alternatives. In addition to on-campus interviews, Wake Forest University offers applicants the option to have a Skype interview as well as Web-based written interviews, at which a student has thirty minutes to answer questions on a variety of topics.

The interviewer may write a glowing report, but interviews are rarely a major factor in admission decisions. Smaller colleges, which can interview more of their applicants, are likely to give interviews more weight than will large public universities. But even if an interview won't be a major factor in your admission prospects, it's good practice. You will someday interview for internships, jobs, and possibly graduate school programs, so developing strong interview skills is important. And this might be the "tip factor" that leads to "admit".

Before you go to an interview, research the school so that you can say why you and this college are a perfect match. Also have several questions ready as interviewers always ask if you have questions. Engage the interviewer in conversation, and the meeting will be a more pleasant experience for both of you. If it's an alumni interview, remember that alumni interviewers love their school, so asking about their experiences at the college can help get the conversation going. And if you feel anxious, remind yourself that at least you don't have to worry about being handed a cactus.

## Careers in New Media

Although print journalism, such as newspapers, appears to be suffering a serious downturn in terms of viable careers, young adults with a passion for words, design, and technology are finding expanding opportunities in the digital world. *New Media* includes the Internet, websites, computer games and multimedia, DVDs and CDs. New media careers may be technologically based or creatively oriented.

The Web makes it possible to deliver information to people in a variety of new ways. Computer programmers and digital designers pool their talents to develop enticing web sites and to create digital games. From websites offering marketing opportunities, to online learning platforms, to applications for smart phones and tablets, career opportunities in new media continue to expand.

Students who formerly might have considered majors in print journalism might want to look to opportunities in online journalism. Currently, according to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 61% of Americans read at least part of the news online. Traditional newspapers and news magazines now provide an online option for their print subscribers, and some, like the NY Times, are beginning to offer subscription-based digital content to those who have shunned print media. These sites employ both salaried writers and freelancers who may sell their product to a variety of websites. This content differs from traditional journalism in that articles usually include images or graphics, videos and links.

Students who majored in broadcast journalism traditionally headed for careers in radio, TV, or movies, but now may find more opportunities in the digital world. For example, some may find themselves producing video games, phone

applications, or websites. Success in these fields requires hard work and strong computer skills in addition to an understanding of broadcast journalism.

In a similar vein, design students may find that career opportunities are most plentiful in the online world, which has openings for artists, animators, and web designers. Once again, computer skills in addition to design talents are highly prized in this area.

Writers on a vast array of topics are in demand as content providers for websites and blogs. Those who can effectively teach concepts to others find job opportunities creating content for online learning systems. Publicists and public relations specialists are also needed by online companies to help project a good image to the public. Online advertising also provides excellent career options.

Computer science and programming majors are very likely to find themselves working in the digital world. Software engineers design the software that runs computer operating systems and networks.

Today, many software engineers design and maintain company websites, often on a contract or freelance basis. Strong problem-solving and analytical skills, as well as the ability to communicate well and work effectively as a member of a team, help to assure success in the field of new media.

So rather than mourning the death of newspapers and the resultant loss of jobs, think to the ways you can turn your interest in writing, design, technology, the arts, production, or marketing to careers that will flourish along with the growth of new media.



*"From websites offering marketing opportunities to online learning platforms to applications for smart phones and tablets, career opportunities in new media continue to expand."*

## Focus on Finances: Establishing Credit



Here you are, 18 years old, and you find yourself inundated with offers of credit from well-known banks. College students particularly, are wonderful targets for these offers. Unfortunately, since so many students have never handled a credit card before, they are prone to misuse these cards, and end their college years with poor credit scores. Understanding the importance of a good credit rating can keep this from happening to you.

You can begin to establish your credit history with a *secured* credit card. This is a card with a credit limit equal to a savings account amount at that same bank. The savings account serves as security for the bank. Always try to pay off the entire balance on your credit card each month to avoid the high interest charges that will be applied to balances. At the very least, always make more than the minimum

monthly payment. Follow this advice and, in less than a year, you'll begin to establish a good credit record. Once this happens, you're likely to receive offers for *unsecured* credit cards, not tied to a savings account. Be very careful accepting these offers and try not to open more than one additional line of credit. Here too, aim to pay off your entire balance monthly. By graduation you should have a solid credit rating.

Why is this important? Many prospective employers will run a credit check on job applicants before offering employment. Your credit score reflects your payment history, credit limits, and balances on your accounts. A low credit rating can sink your offer of a dream job. Your credit rating will also be checked when you apply for a car loan or want to lease an apartment. A poor credit history will result in your paying a higher interest rate on the car loan and may keep you from getting that apartment or a mortgage on your future house.

## College Jargon—Talking the Talk

College-speak has its own set of key words and phrases. Knowing the jargon before setting foot on campus can help incoming freshman feel right at home. Here's a quick primer to help get you up to speed.

- **Advisor**—A faculty member who serves as an academic advisor. Once you've declared a major your advisor will generally be a professor from that academic area.
- **Audit**—sit in on a class just for the knowledge, not for the credit.
- **CLEP** - College Level Examination Program—a passing score on these tests administered by the College Board can shorten your path to a college degree. Read more at [www.Collegeboard.com](http://www.Collegeboard.com).
- **Credits (or credit hours)** - a number value based on class hours that is assigned to each college course passed. You need to complete a specific number of credits to be awarded your degree.
- **Drop/Add**—A period of time during which you can drop or add classes with no penalty.
- **Full time/ part time**—based on the number of credits taken in a term. In a semester system, twelve or more credits is generally considered "full-time".
- **Matriculated / non-matriculated**— seeking (or not-seeking) a degree.
- **Major**—Your area of academic specialization. Each college will require a group of specific courses for that major. Example, a business or psychology major.
- **Double major**—Taking the required classes for majors in two subject areas. This is easier to do when the majors are related and share some common classes.
- **Minor**—An area of academic interest in which you take some, but not all, of the classes required for the major. Example, a business major with a minor in accounting.
- **Concentration**—A concentration is specific. A business major might specialize in entrepreneurship.
- **Quarter system**— Some colleges divide the academic year into four "quarters" and require students to attend three of these. You take fewer courses at a time than you do in a semester system.
- **Honors programs/ degree**—Honors programs are for highly qualified students enrolled at that university, but the honors programs (and benefits) vary from college to college. Most offer smaller classes, more interaction with professors, and may offer a special diploma.

## Summer Visits to Campus

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Although not the ideal time for campus visits, summer may often be the only viable option for families wanting to tour colleges. Keeping in mind that you'll still want to revisit the colleges on your short-list when they are in session, a summer visit to campus can provide valuable information about a prospective college's feel and offerings.

Campus visits allow you to look behind the college's promotional literature for a first-hand view of the physical facilities, course offerings, special programs, and campus atmosphere. You'll be able to speak with current students (usually tour guides and perhaps some students taking summer classes), possibly sit in on a class, and try out the food in the dining hall. Take the admission office's tour and participate in any information sessions offered, and then strike out on your own. Some questions you'll want answers to include:

- Who are the instructors – professors, graduate students, or research assistants?
- How difficult is it to get into the classes you want and need?
- How safe is the campus? What security procedures are in place?
- What are the housing and food options? How many students live on campus?
- What percent of students graduate on time? What percent of the freshman class returns for sophomore year?
- How satisfied are current students with their choice – what do they like best? What do they complain about?

This is also your chance to evaluate the campus surroundings. Movies, restaurants, things to do? What's the relationship between town and school, do students participate in the life of the surrounding community, are there nearby opportunities for internships and community service?

**Books for Families of Graduating Seniors:** High school graduation and the graduate's upcoming departure from the family home can be pretty stressful for student and parent alike. Two wonderful books that provide insight into today's college experience are *Letting Go* (Karen Coburn) and *I'll Miss You Too* (Margo Bane Woodacre and Steffany Bane). The first provides a guide to what the student will experience at college, and the latter offers a look at the college experience from the perspective of both parent (Woodacre) and child (Bane).

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