

Senior College Planning Packet



Class of 2020

MARATHON CLASS OF 2020
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENIORS PLANNING FURTHER EDUCATION

The following information has been assembled to help seniors who plan to go for further education after high school. It is of necessity condensed to a minimum, but it should answer some of the questions which have been most confusing to students and their parents. Read it carefully, and follow through on what applies to you.

- **Research** – Decide where you want to apply. Visit the high school counseling office where you'll find college brochures, catalogues and other information. Research the colleges you are interested in online and request additional information. Find out about campus life and housing options. Look at academic requirements, class size, costs and financial aid. Be organized. Keep a file of possible colleges and worksheets that evaluate the pros and cons of each.

- **Securing college application forms** - Most colleges use the Common Application which can be found at www.commonapp.org. If you would like assistance filling the online application out, please visit Ms. Camenga in the Guidance Office. It can take upwards of forty minutes to complete the majority of the application so please make an appointment for before or after school or during a study hall. Pay attention to deadlines. Focus on the essay question. Please see page 12 for helpful tips to writing your college essay.

- **Time of application** – It is very desirable to do this early this fall. Some colleges take action on applications in the order they are received. Submit your applications as soon as possible and arrange to have your high school transcripts and letters of recommendations sent. Transcripts are sent out through the Guidance Office only.

- **Number of applications** – Some of you may want to apply to more than one school, but in most cases, it should not be necessary to apply to more than 3. Wise planning ahead of time can eliminate a lot of extra work and the spending of money unnecessarily. Each application will likely cost \$50. Some private colleges charge \$60-70. Community College applications are typically free as long as you apply through their college website. If you complete an application of your own, please let Ms. Camenga know what colleges you have applied to so she can send out your transcripts.

- **Letters of Recommendation:** Letters of recommendation from teachers, school counselors, coaches and managers can help college admissions officers get a more complete picture of applicants. Some schools don't ask for any letters of recommendation, while others may require at least 3. Give your reference plenty of time to write you a letter of recommendation.

- **College Representatives-** Some colleges send representatives to visit our school during the year. These visits will be announced to all juniors and seniors, so listen for those in which you are interested. Talking with these representatives puts you under no obligation, so take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about schools and colleges. (See page 3)

- **College Visits** –It is recommended to visit a college if at all possible before you decide to apply. Visiting the college will give you an idea of what your next 2-4 years will be like. Is the campus too big? Too small? Does it have your major? What are the dorms like? Are there activities that the college offers that you'd be interested in? Are you required to live on campus the first year? Can you have a car on campus? What part time jobs are available on campus? Campus tours give you a first-hand experience of the college, and a chance to talk to students, faculty and admissions staff. When you set up an appointment for a college visit, you will meet with a tour guide, who are also usually college students themselves, and they will be happy to answer all your questions.

- **College Interviews:** Some private colleges require an interview. An interview is an opportunity for you to ask questions as well as answer them. After you apply to your chosen college, if an interview is required, you will receive notice from the school requesting your attendance. Please call them at your earliest convenience to set up an appointment. Most Admissions Offices are open on Saturday mornings and may also be open on some days when Marathon High School will not be in session because of holidays.

- **How to prepare for your college visit/interview**
 1. Bring your transcript and a student resume with you.
 2. Read the catalogue and any other literature from the college
 3. Review your academic record, identify for yourself your strengths and weaknesses.
 4. Review your non-academic areas of interest (sports, extracurriculars, etc.).
 5. Identify what you want from this particular college.
 6. Identify what unique qualities you can bring to this college.
 7. Prepare questions you have for your interviewer
 8. Present yourself in a professional manner.

- **College placement exams** – Some colleges require students to make an appointment to take a placement exam. Colleges use placement tests in subjects like math and English to check the academic skill levels of entering students. Then the college can place each student in classes at the right level.

Upcoming College Rep Visits to Marathon HS 2019-2020

October:

10/4 - 11:00am – SUNY Delhi – Guidance Office

November:

TBA

Upcoming College Information Days:

College fairs give you an opportunity to talk with college admission representative and gather information about campus life, academic programs, financial aid, and admissions requirements. Admission is free and parents are encouraged to attend any of the following:

Onondaga Community College SUNY College Fair	Tuesday September 17, 2019	6pm-8pm	Onondaga Community College 4585 West Seneca Turnpike Syracuse, NY 13215
TC3's Annual College Day/Night Program	Tuesday October 15, 2019	12pm-2pm & 6pm-8pm	BorgWarner Morse TEC Field House Athletic Facility Tompkins Cortland Community College 170 North Street Dryden, NY 13053
Greater Binghamton College Day	Wednesday October 16, 2019	11am-2pm & 6pm-8pm	Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena 1 Stuart Street Binghamton, NY 13901
TC3 Open House	Friday, November 1, 2019	8:30am-2pm	Tompkins Cortland Community College 170 North Street Dryden, NY 13053

Concurrent Enrollment

Many students are taking a Tompkins Cortland Community College course through the CollegeNow Concurrent Enrollment Program at Marathon High School. There are many benefits of this program including working on your degree and earning college credits at no cost to you.

These are official college courses. They will show up on a college transcript and thus it is very important for these classes to be taken seriously. Please expect to work at the college level. This will include rigorous course work, outside reading as well as higher grading standards. Attendance is important! Absence from class is considered a serious matter, and an absence never excuses a student from class work. Your grade will be impacted by your absences. Taking a college course, you will be expected to manage your time wisely and keep up on deadlines and assignments. Do not hesitate to ask for help.

Transferring Credits: Many colleges will accept the credits you are earning through the Concurrent Enrollment Program. In order to transfer, a grade of C or higher is required. However, each college has their own transfer policy. Don't be afraid to reach out to the colleges you are interested in applying to, to see if they will accept your credits. If you are planning to transfer your credits, your college will need an official transcript from TC3. You can order an official transcript on TC3's website by logging in to your account, click on the grades tab, then on the request transcript tab. Click on the Transcripts Plus logo to begin the ordering process. The transcript will cost \$8.

If you do not maintain a 2.0 (a C: 75%) or higher, you may be placed on Academic Probation or Academic Suspension. Tompkins Cortland Community College defines these as:

Academic Probation: Status of students who fail to achieve the minimum academic standards. A student on academic probation will have a hold on their account but may register for classes after completing a "Student Success Plan" but will be limited to a maximum of 13 total semester credits. The notation "Probation" will be placed on the student's academic record (transcript).

Academic Suspension: Status of students who fail to meet academic standards for two consecutive semesters. Academic suspension is for the period of one semester, including any intervening summer session, and suspended students will be de-registered from classes. The notation "Suspension" will be placed on the student's academic record (transcript).

On October 1st, all students' progress in their classes will be reviewed to ensure everyone is on track. If you are on Academic Probation or Academic Suspension, it may harm your chances of financial aid and may prevent you from being admitted into your chosen major. Colleges will see this notation on your transcript. You may wish to drop or withdraw from the course to avoid receiving a low grade on your transcript. Dropped courses do not appear on the transcript or impact the student's GPA.

Please keep the following deadlines in mind: Tentative

Fall 2019	Spring 2020
Last Day to Add: October 4	Last Day to Add: March 6
Last Day to Drop: October 11	Last Day to Drop: March 17
Last Day to Withdraw w/o GPA Penalty: Dec. 2	Last Day to Withdraw w/o GPA Penalty: May 8
Last Day to Withdraw w/ GPA Penalty: January 14	Last Day to Withdraw w/ GPA Penalty: June 15

College Entrance Examinations

SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test – This is a three-hour examination which measures the student’s ability to communicate and to reason with words and abstract concepts. Most four year colleges require this exam with the essay component prior to admission. Cost for the SAT with Essay is \$64.50.

To register, please visit www.sat.org/register.

ACT – American College Testing Program – This exam is a four part, two hours and forty-minute test of the abilities which students will need to succeed in college work. The following areas will be tested: English, Math, Reading, and Science. Cost for the ACT exam with Essay is \$67.00.

To register, please visit <https://services.actstudent.org>.

You may take either the SAT or ACT, most colleges except either.

SAT Test Dates 2019-2020

Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
August 24, 2019	July 26, 2019	August 13, 2019
October 5, 2019	September 6, 2019	September 24, 2019
November 2, 2019	October 3, 2019	October 22, 2019
December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019	November 26, 2019
March 14, 2020	February 14, 2020	March 3, 2020
May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020	April 21, 2020
June 6, 2020	May 8, 2020	May 27, 2020

Late registration fee is an additional \$30.

ACT Test Dates 2019-2020

Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
September 14, 2019	August 16, 2019	August 30, 2019
October 26, 2019	September 20, 2019	October 4, 2019
December 14, 2019	November 8, 2019	November 22, 2019
February 8, 2020	January 10, 2020	January 17, 2020
April 4, 2020	February 28, 2020	March 13, 2020
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020	May 22, 2020

Late registration fee is an additional \$30.

TRANSFERRING TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

If you are planning on attending a two-year college and transferring into a four-year college, please keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. Students who intend to transfer should parallel their two year course of studies with that of the four-year college
2. Four year colleges are looking for a specific group of required courses. If a student has not satisfactorily completed the courses at a two-year institution, then the student may be asked to take the required prerequisites and lose a semester of college.
3. Students need to talk to admissions personnel at the four-year college to ascertain the transfer policy.
4. Get to know the transfer counselor on the two-year college campus very soon after beginning the freshman year. They will help keep you on track.
5. Students must do the appropriate paperwork at the college they are leaving. The registrar's office must be notified of your intent to withdraw.

THE MILITARY

You may be seriously considering joining the military. Although the military certainly provides secure employment, it is very important that you learn all the facts before making a commitment.

Recruiters from all services are readily available to discuss active duty and reserve programs. If you are planning to continue your education, you may also wish to ask about officer training programs. It is a good idea to discuss the alternatives offered by each service before making a decision. In most cases, recruiters are able to guarantee specific training in advance. If you are definitely interested in obtaining a certain type of training, make sure that you obtain this guarantee before signing up.

You will be asked to take the ASVAB exam, a free test given every year in February, during the week. Students can use their scores from the ASVAB test to enlist in the Military after graduation. These scores can also qualify you for certain jobs and training in the Armed Forces and are good for two years.

If you are under 18, your parents must consent for you to join the military, Because of this requirement, the recruiter will ask to meet with your parents before enlisting you.

Your eligibility for the military and specific training is based upon the scores you receive on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, also known as the ASVAB. If you wish to explore military options, you should make arrangements with a recruiter to take this test. Your scores will allow each recruiter to determine the types of training for which you qualify. The results might also assist you in identifying other career possibilities. Marathon High School offers the test, free of charge, annually in February. See Ms. Camenga in the Guidance Office for more details.

The following recruiters visit Marathon periodically:

- New York National Army Guard - SSG Carl Bush
- United States Army- SSGT William V. Wunderle
- United States Air Force- Christopher Arab, Technical Sergeant, USAF
- United States Marines- SSGT Dion Nez
- United States Navy- David Kurtz, DCCS(SW)

For contact information, please see Ms. Camenga or check out the military display in the HS Library.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS

Most scholarships fall under one of the following categories:

1. Those given by the college itself, usually depending on the need as well as the record of the student. Information on these scholarships will be found in the college catalog and on the college's website. If you are interested in applying for a specific scholarship from your college, you should contact the college's financial aid department to request an application form.
2. Those given by special groups or for certain field of study (Marathon Teacher's Association, Teacher Education, Elks, etc.) Information on some of these scholarships will be available in the Guidance Office. It might be well to check with the church or lodge with which you or your parents are connected to see what might be available. Starting in January, scholarships start to filter in and can be found in the white Scholarship Binder. Scholarships will also be sent electronically to your email. Reminders of upcoming deadlines will also be sent to your email, so check your email often! Scholarships can also be found on the school website at <http://www.marathonschools.org/hs-guidance-office.html> under the Financial Aid bubble.

STATE, FEDERAL, AND BANK LOANS

- Direct Subsidized Loans: a federal loan for which the government pays interest while you are in school
- Direct Unsubsidized Loans: a federal loan for which interest accrues while you are in school but may be deferred until repayment
- Direct PLUS loans: federal loans for graduate students and parents of undergraduate students
- Private loans: loans from banks or other non-government sources

It is possible for students to borrow money from the State or Federal Government or the local bank for further education.

Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or FAFSA). Without it, you won't have access to federal student loans – many of which are not based on need or your income.

Always use federal loans first, such as the Perkins, Direct, and PLUS loans. They carry lower, fixed interest rates and often have more favorable terms than private (or alternative) loans.

If you need to use private student loans, consider all of the costs. Private loans can have origination fees, different ways of compounding interest, and higher interest rates or APRs.

Most student borrowers will need a credit-worthy co-signer to be approved for a private student loan. Most private loans have variable interest rates (meaning they will fluctuate over time), while government-backed (or federal) loans have fixed interest rates and more lenient repayment terms.

****Financial Aid Nights will be held Wed. November 20th and December 11th at 5:30pm in room 204.**

Please bring your tax information from 2018.**

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

You should fill out the FAFSA as soon as you can after October 1st of each year. Because the FAFSA asks for tax information from the previous calendar year, you may want to wait until your family has all of the necessary paperwork or has filed their income taxes. You can file the FAFSA before filing your income taxes using estimates, but you will need to go back later and correct any discrepancies.

The only deadline for filling out the FAFSA is June 30th at the end of the school year for which you are filing. In other words, for the 2019-2020 school year, the FAFSA will be available on October 1, 2019. You can file the FAFSA anytime between then and June 30, 2020. However, many states and schools allocate funds on a first-come, first-served basis, and some states have deadlines for filing the FAFSA to be eligible for certain kinds of aid. Please visit the Department of Education's Student Aid on the Web for more information.

It takes less than an hour to complete and submit the FAFSA. Please see Ms. Camenga for assistance. The FAFSA must be filed yearly and must be done individually on each child in college. If you are not sure you want or need to apply for financial aid, it is to your advantage if you do apply. If your financial aid situation changes, the FAFSA will be on file and can be adjusted accordingly. If you have any questions or concerns, call the financial aid office at the college you plan on attending. They're the "experts".

To apply please visit: www.fafsa.gov

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial aid to students attending college in New York State. TAP awards are made on the basis of financial need.

Depending on the academic year in which you begin study, an annual TAP award can be up to \$5,165. Because TAP is a grant, it does not have to be paid back.

To apply please visit: <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/>

EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is available annually beginning in March. An applicant must be a resident of New York State as well as a US Citizen and have graduated from high school or have earned a high school equivalency diploma. Applicant's family must have a combined federal adjusted gross income of \$125,000 or less. Applicant must be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and Cornell University and Alfred University. Applicants must be enrolled in at least 12 credits per semester and complete at least 30 credits each year. The Excelsior Scholarship covers the normal four years. A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship may receive up to \$5,500. This scholarship allows for tuition costs to be covered minus the amount of the TAP grant awarded to each student.

Application Deadline: July 20, 2020

To apply please visit: <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/>

JOB INTERVIEWS

Don't be late for the interview!

Punctuality is very important when arriving to an interview. This is the first impression the employer gets, and if you're late, it gives the impression that you don't value the interviewer's time. Even arriving five minutes late can lose you the job - we're not kidding. Arriving 10-15 minutes early, on the other hand, will give you time to prepare. Be sure you have directions and you know how to get to your interview location. If you're unsure, go the day before to make sure you know how to get there.

Dress up

Keep your interview outfit casual, but not too casual. Showing up in jeans and a T-shirt may be comfy but doesn't give the best impression, even if that's what you'd be wearing on the job. Khakis and a nice collared shirt, or a tailored top and (not mini) skirt are always a good choice. If you're applying for a retail clothing store, avoid wearing clothing with a competitor's logo. A full suit is probably too much, unless you're applying for an office support job or a prestigious internship.

Prepare, prepare, prepare

Did I mention prepare? Know the company you are interviewing with and have questions ready for your interviewer. This shows the interviewer that you have an interest in the company. Keep in mind that it never hurts to practice. Make sure you know who you are and what skill set you possess. And always be yourself - you want them to hire the real you, not a fake version of you. Also know your schedule and your cell phone number. An employer may ask you when your availability is and it is a good idea to be prepared.

Be aware of your body language

When you're nervous, do you tend to rub your arm? Jiggle your foot? Or click a pen? You are going to drive the interviewer *crazy* if you do any of those things! At the job interview, do your best to keep still, sit up straight and look the interviewer in the eyes. You want to appear calm and in control. Be polite and listen carefully and be attentive. Get plenty of sleep the night before your interview. Yawning during an interview can be viewed as rude.

Practice interview questions and answers

- **"Tell me a little about yourself."**

This is always a tough one, because you ask yourself, "What do they want to know?" Focus on your skills, abilities and your interests. The interviewer wants to know about you and what your plans are for the present and the future. Definitely don't start talking about your childhood, the music you like, your soccer trophies or anything else that's not relevant to the job. Remember to keep the answer brief, because it can set the tone for the rest of the interview.

- **“Why do you want to work for us?”**

Here's your chance to tell the interviewer why you chose to apply for the job. Don't say because of the pay. This is your opportunity to talk about why you think you'd fit in really well and what you could bring to the team.

- **“What extracurricular activities do you participate in?”**

This is your chance to talk about you and show your personality - but again, keep it short! Your extracurricular activities should reflect your best traits and your interests.

- **“Why should I hire you?”**

Be honest. Let the interviewer know why you are the best for the job. This is your chance to sell yourself and set yourself apart from the other job candidates.

Bring the following with you to the interview:

- Completed job application (if the employer doesn't have it already)
- Working papers (if you need them)
- References
- Resume with updated contact information
- Notepad / pen
- Photo ID (they may need a copy for their records)
- Enthusiasm
- Positive attitude
- Any questions for the employer
- Be on time
- Dress appropriately
- Be confident
- Make eye contact
- Smile
- Calm your nerves, take deep breaths beforehand. The worst they can say is no.
- Be prepared
- Be aware of your body language

The 2019-20 Common Application Essay Prompts

Option #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.

"Identity" is at the heart of this prompt. What is it that makes you you? The prompt gives you a lot of latitude for answering the question since you can write a story about your "background, identity, interest, or talent." Your "background" can be a broad environmental factor that contributed to your development such as growing up in a military family, living in an interesting place, or dealing with an unusual family situation. You could write about an event or series of events that had a profound impact on your identity. Your "interest" or "talent" could be a passion that has driven you to become the person you are today. However you approach the prompt, make sure you are inward looking and explain *how* and *why* the story you tell is so meaningful.

Option #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?

This prompt may seem to go against everything that you've learned on your path to college. It's far more comfortable in an application to celebrate successes and accomplishments than it is to discuss setbacks and failure. At the same time, you'll impress the college admissions folks greatly if you can show your ability to learn from your failures and mistakes. Be sure to devote significant space to the second half of the question—how did you learn and grow from the experience? Introspection and honesty are key with this prompt.

Option #3

Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

Keep in mind how open-ended this prompt truly is. The "belief or idea" you explore could be your own, someone else's, or that of a group. The best essays will be honest as they explore the difficulty of working against the status quo or a firmly held belief. The answer to the final question about the "outcome" of your challenge need not be a success story. Sometimes in retrospection, we discover that the cost of an action was perhaps too great. However you approach this prompt, your essay needs to reveal one of your core personal values. If the belief you challenged doesn't give the admissions folks a window into your personality, then you haven't succeeded with this prompt.

Option #4

Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma--anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

With the ability to write about an "intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma," you can essentially write about any issue that you find important. Note that you do not have to have solved the problem, and some of the best essays will explore problems that need to be solved in the future. Be careful with that opening word "describe"—you'll want to spend much more time analyzing the problem than describing it. This essay prompt, like all of the options, is asking you to be introspective and share with the admissions folks what it is that you value.

Option #5

Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Maturity comes as the result of a long train of events and accomplishments (and failures). This prompt is an excellent choice if you want to explore a single event or achievement that marked a clear milestone in your personal development. Be careful to avoid the "hero" essay—admissions offices are often overrun with essays about the season-winning touchdown or brilliant performance in the school play. These can certainly be fine topics for an essay, but make sure your essay is analyzing your personal growth process, not bragging about an accomplishment.

Option #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?

In essence, it's asking you to identify and discuss something that entralls you. The question gives you an opportunity to identify something that kicks your brain into high gear, reflect on why it is so stimulating, and reveal your process for digging deeper into something that you are passionate about. Note that the central words here—"topic, idea, or concept"—all have rather academic connotations. While you may lose track of time when running or playing football, sports are probably not the best choice for this particular question.

Option #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.

Use this option if you have a story to share that doesn't quite fit into any of the options above.

Final Thoughts

Whichever prompt you chose, make sure you are looking inward. What do you value? What has made you grow as a person? What makes you the unique individual the admissions folks will want to invite to join their campus community? The best essays spend significant time with self-analysis rather than merely describing a place or event.

The folks at The Common Application have cast a wide net with these questions, and nearly anything you want to write about could fit under at least one of the options. If your essay could fit under more than one option, it really doesn't matter which one you choose. Many admissions officers, in fact, don't even look at which prompt you chose—they just want to see that you have written a good essay.