

COLLEGE BOUND

YOUR APPLICATION MENTORSM

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Books, Essays, and Applications

Summer, 2010

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Congratulations on making it through another school year. As finals become a distant memory, summer is a great time to relax and read something that *you* get to choose. Seniors congratulations on graduating! We wish you continued success moving forward and have enjoyed working with you tremendously!

Below are our reading picks for this summer.

The last week of August is a great time to visit schools! Many schools are back in session.

Success, Suspense, The South, Service, and Satire

Many Books; Many Perspectives

We've read several books that have made an impact and made us question how different cultures and upbringings impact our lives. The books range from a memoir about a woman growing up in poverty in the South to a Swedish hacker who helps find a serial killer.

Many college interviewers or applications will ask you about a book you enjoyed or one that you recommend others read, so it is good to have at least one book that you can speak about with passion. Also, the best way to prepare for the Critical Reading for the SATs is by reading. This summer's book ideas represent something for everyone's taste and hopefully you will enjoy them as much as we did.

Success

***Outliers: The Secrets of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell**

Gladwell is part marketing guru, part social anthropologist. His former books *The Tipping Point* and *Blink* were very popular among business and

marketing executives. His latest book, *Outliers*, takes a systematic look at how people become wildly successful. (think Bill Gates, Professional hockey players, etc.) He illustrates how success is obtained through a combination of opportunity, community support, hard work (10,000 hours), and the ability to take advantage of a given opportunity. [Outliers](#)

The Big Short by Michael Lewis

If you are interested in the financial crisis of 2007, you will enjoy Michael Lewis's account. He tells us about the very smart investors who had the foresight to bet against the housing bubble and the **story of the "subprime crisis" before it went down**. He is able to explain what went wrong in the credit markets and the mortgage markets over the past decade.

The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook by Ben Mezrich

You all use it, but do you know how and why it started? This book reads like a novel as it chronicles the early stages of Facebook and its founders at Harvard. It features intrigue, sex (or search for), betrayal, and human nature. After reading it, I was struck by how the new paradigm of social interactions was founded by someone who was socially awkward. It also gives a good view of life at Harvard.

Zappos CEO Adds Happiness to Corporate Culture

Here is a link to an interesting article from the Star Ledger that interviews, Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos on how he built happiness into Zappos' corporate culture. He wrote a book on it as well, but the interview gives you the gist. [Click here for article on bulding happiness into culture](#)

Suspense

The Girl with the Dragon Tatoo by Stieg Larson

This graphic novel is the first of a trilogy that follows the main character as she unwinds a decade old mystery. There is a lot of suspense and violence within the book, but somehow you will find yourself unable to put it down once you get into the story.

The South

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls

[Video Interview with Jeanette Walls](#)

After reading this book, you didn't know whether to feel awe or disbelief. Walls describes her peripatetic, homeless childhood with an alcoholic, dreamer father and an artistic, mentally unfit mother in such a straight forward manner, that you understand how she was able to pull herself out of this upbringing to become the great success that she ultimately did. It will inspire you to think differently about your own life.

The Help by Kathryn Stocket

This was one of my favorite books of the last year. I loved hearing the different voices and found myself thinking how different the cultural norms in the South were from where I grew up in LA several years later. The characters come alive on the page and it gives a great depiction of the South in the sixties.

Service

The Space Between Us by Thrity Umrigar

This is another perspective of a servant-employer relationship. It is about two women in Bombay, India who are separated by their social class, however, they find themselves sharing many life experiences. The story addresses many interesting issues such as the meaning of friendship and the loyalty to family even when something is morally wrong.

Satire

Accepted by Susan Coll

If you can get past the first 50 pages without feeling like the topic is too close to home, you will start to enjoy this book that satirizes the college application process. Hopefully, you will begin to laugh at the insanity and realize that in the end, it all works out!

Top Ten Things Colleges Look for

IECA Consultant Survey [IECA](#)

IECA consultants were surveyed on the top ten things colleges look for in applicants.



1. **A rigorous high school curriculum** that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes.
2. **Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.** However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all As in less challenging coursework.
3. **Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT).** These should be consistent with high school performance.
4. **Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative.** Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.
5. **Letters of recommendation from teachers and guidance counselor** that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits, and an interest in learning.
6. **A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values and goals.** The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.
7. **Special talents or experiences** that will contribute to an interesting and well-rounded student body.
8. **Demonstrated leadership in activities.** Colleges want people who will arrive prepared and willing to take leadership of student activities and events.
9. **Demonstrated intellectual curiosity** through reading, school, leisure pursuits, and more.
10. **Demonstrated enthusiasm to attend,** often exhibited by campus visits and an interview, showing an interest toward attending the college.

Magazines, Newspapers, Blogs

Other reading materials

If books aren't your thing, [The Week](#) is a great magazine that captures all the events around the world. I like it because I can quickly stay abreast of what's happening and just read short articles of interest.

Application Checklist

1. Finalize list.
2. Set up common application account August 1
3. Register for State applications or non common application schools.
4. Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation who can write well and reveal a different piece of your puzzle.
5. If applicable, put together portfolio, tapes, etc.
6. Work on Personal Statement and essays.
7. Rewrite, rewrite, rewrite!
8. Visit schools (Most schools are back in session the last week in August)
9. Try to enjoy the process; this is your road to a great 4 years

Top College Websites

from US News and World Report

[Top College Websites](#)

[Set Up an Appointment](#)

Rising Seniors: Meeting to Work on Personal Statements

If you have not done so yet, please call or e-mail me or Diane to schedule an appointment to work on your essays, finalize your lists, or plan out next year. The more we get done over the summer, the less you have to do come fall.

Have a great summer. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bleich and Diane Forman
College Bound Mentor, LLC

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