

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE AND THE COLLEGIUM

VIDEO SCRIPT

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Hello. My name is Edward Schaefer. I am president of The Collegium, a liberal arts college in Hagerstown Maryland. At The Collegium, we get asked frequently about the best ways for prospective students to prepare for college. This video will answer that question.

I am going to cover five different topics: Getting Ready, High School Competencies, College Able, some comments directed specifically to homeschoolers but applicable to everyone, and Family Matters.

Let's jump right in.

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First, we'll talk about getting ready for College.

To be admitted to college you must demonstrate two things:

- The standard competencies for high school;
- AND the ability to work at a college level.

These are not the same thing, as I will explain in a moment when we look at each of them in some detail.

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We'll start with the High School Competencies.

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Here is a summary of a recommended high school curriculum:

- English/Literature (4 years – Don't neglect the Grammar. It is critical that you understand basic parts of speech – for example, what a gerund is, what a participial phrase is, what a subordinate clause is, what the subjunctive case is, AND how to use them. This is far more important than creativity per se.)
- History and related studies (3 years)
- Mathematics (2 years or more – at least algebra and geometry)
- Science (2 years or more – at least biology and chemistry)
- Foreign Language (2 years or more. I will say that Foreign language is not critical, but it is VERY helpful. You will take eight semesters of Latin at The Collegium. If it is not the first time you have tried to learn a second language, it will be easier for you.)
- Religion/Theology (Ideally 4 years. These, too, are not absolutely required for admission, but our curriculum is theology heavy. If you have had some preparation, it, too, will make the studies a little easier for you.)

So that's it: English, History, Math, Science, Foreign Language and Religion.

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Now you see what's necessary in terms of the competencies for high school. Let's take a look at the best way to leverage these competencies to ensure that you are ready for college.

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As I mentioned before,

- Being able to complete high school is not an automatic sign that you will be able to work at a college level.

So, what are some signs that you can be successful at college work?

- First, the higher your high school GPA the better. We like to see a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, with rising grades in the later years, rather than falling grades.
- Second, you can take standardized tests. We don't require them, but they are very helpful.
 - Of the standardized tests, we recommend the CLT
 - But the SAT and the ACT are acceptable, too.
- Third, the writing Sample in The Collegium Application is very important. Please don't write it like you are writing a text or an

email. Write it show your mastery of the language and that you can create a coherent and compelling argument or story.

- Fourth, the Letters of Recommendation also help us evaluate your potential.
- Fifth, we require an interview of every applicant. The interview gives us a look at you as a person, rather than as a set of answers on an application. It is a crucial part of the admission process. There is not much you can do to prepare, because you won't know what we will ask you. However, you can dress appropriately, that is, in a way that respects the importance of the event and that conveys your eagerness to be a part of The Collegium. Dress professionally, not casually. Try to relax, and be yourself.

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Now let me say a few words that are directed toward homeschoolers, but they are also applicable to everyone.

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First, at The Collegium, we affirm homeschooling as an excellent choice for families. My wife and I homeschooled our children, and it was one of the best decisions we made in our marriage. Second, homeschooled

students will feel comfortable at The Collegium: most of our students were homeschooled. And finally, several of our faculty were either homeschooled themselves, or they homeschooled their children. I have already mentioned my own family. Another faculty member who was homeschooled himself is William Stover, a brilliant classicist, who teaches the Humanities and Latin for us. Mr. Stover was homeschooled through high school. So, the environment at The Collegium is pro-homeschool, and homeschool-friendly.

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If you are a homeschooler, by far, the easiest way to demonstrate that you have mastered the competencies expected in high school is by having a transcript showing that you have been graduated from one of the many high school homeschool programs that award degrees. These include programs like Kolbe, Mother of Divine, Queen of Heaven, the Regina Caeli Network, Our Lady of Victory, Seton, and others. By the way, Our Lady of Victory is the only homeschool program that is specifically dedicated to traditional Catholicism.

Without such a transcript, it's a little more complex, but certainly not impossible. You will need to demonstrate several things – essentially the content of standard high school courses:

- Writing competency. Don't forget the work with basic grammar.
- Reading experience. You should read broadly and you should read works that are progressively more complex.
- Let me add a special note here related to writing and reading. You should develop the ability to take notes in outline form – that is, you should be able to listen to a lecture or presentation and take down the important points in an outline. You should also be able to read a text and employ the same process, creating an outline of the most important points. This will require you to be able to study a text for how it is constructed – where and how the author makes the points that are most important.
- Math. You should master at least algebra and geometry.
- You should have studied several semesters of History
- And some Science – Ideally biology and chemistry
- Foreign language – As I mentioned, this is not critical, but it is VERY helpful.
- Religion/Theology. Again, these are not absolutely required for admission, but helpful for you in being prepared for our curriculum.

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Finally, let me talk about some family matters, that we believe are VERY important.

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- First, work is a plus. It's not critical, but you will be required to work at The Collegium and to help with some basic chores. Having some work experience will prevent this requirement from being a shock to your system.
- Second, your family should have at least one meal together as a family every day. Now, you might wonder, "What does this have to do with college?" Actually, a lot, not only regarding college, but also regarding the rest of your life, for which college is meant to prepare you. Let me explain.
 - The family is the foundation of society.
 - Family meals are where you learn how to take up your part in rebuilding society through rebuilding the family.
 - Family meals are the best place to learn how to function in a community – which is a critical skill in college.
 - In addition, researchers have found that teenagers who eat dinner with the family have fewer emotional and behavioral problems, greater emotional well-being, more

trusting and helpful behaviors toward others and higher life satisfaction. These are all skills that will benefit you in college. ([USA TODAY link](#))

- And if you need something strictly academic, a recent study of National Merit Scholars found that the SINGLE attribute that all the scholars in the study had in common was that their families ate dinner together.
- Often when I say this to people, they agree conceptually, but then they make lots of excuses about how busy everyone is, and how impossible it would be. I understand the busyness. My children were involved in lots of arts-related activities. We had multiple piano lessons every week, cello lessons, violin lessons, choir, orchestra, ballet, and girl scouts. Add to that my wife taught piano lessons (not to our children) until close to 700PM five nights a week, and I had choir rehearsals every day until after 500PM. We had the perfect excuse not to eat together, but thanks be to God, my wife insisted that no matter what it took, we were going to eat dinner together every night. And we did. It took some creativity and sacrifice, but we did it, - and right up there with homeschooling, it was one of the best decisions of our marriage.

- The devil loves business, because through it, he can divert us from the truly important things in life.
 - No excuses – Make it happen.
- Related to this, the Family must pray together every. A daily rosary, at least, is ideal.
 - For your own benefit you should develop a habit of spending time with God every day – thank Him for His gifts to you; praise Him just because He is God; place your needs before Him; Ask forgiveness for the wrongs you have committed against Him.
 - On a practical level, prayer is integrated into The Collegium day. We sing Lauds and Vespers daily. We will replace one of these hours when we have Mass that day. We pray the rosary daily, and sing the Angelus at noon and 600PM, and we sing grace before and after meals. If daily prayer is a part of your life, the transition to life at The Collegium will be easier.

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As I conclude, let me thank you for taking the time to view this video. I hope it will be helpful. Please visit our website, where you can find out much more about The Collegium and where you will find out how to apply, how to schedule a visit, or how to contact us with your questions.

May God bless you all.