A5. Mock College Admissions

Introduction
In this lesson, students review the basics of the college-admission process in a group-oriented, hands-on activity. This activity will provide a “behind-the-scenes” look at college admissions. Participants will be divided into small groups and will play the role of admissions officers. Each group will be given a set of “students” and will decide which students will be admitted to “their” university.

Learning Goals
• To develop a more in-depth understanding of college-entrance requirements.
• To identify what steps students must complete to be eligible for a four-year college.
• To recognize students’ own potential to attend a four-year college or university.

Timing
45–60 minutes

Target audience
Students in grades 7 to 11.

Materials Needed
• Handout: Applicant Summary Sheet
• Handout: Applicant Review Worksheet

Activities
1. (5 minutes) Pair up students. Have students brainstorm as many responses as possible to this question: What does it take to get into college? Emphasize that students are to think creatively, and think back on their own knowledge or previous lessons on this topic.

Optional: The team that has the longest list of realistic responses in a minute’s time, wins a prize.

2. (15 minutes) Have students share responses. From their answers, create a list of “entrance requirements” that will be used to evaluate applicants. In your discussion, cover the necessity of:
• Test scores, such as the SAT or the ACT;
• Courses that are required by universities (Stress the difference between high school graduation requirements and college-admission requirements, in terms of high school classes);
• Grade point average;
• Special Skills, Talents or Other Factors, such as participation in clubs, sports, student government, after-school jobs, community service, organizations, etc.

3. (3 minutes) Divide students into groups of four. Explain that they are admissions officers for the imaginary Eagle University. Each student in a group should choose a different participatory role: “Reader,” “Writer,” “Facilitator” and “Reporter.”

4. (15 minutes) Distribute the handouts Applicant Summary Sheet and Applicant Review Worksheet. Tell students to evaluate each application to Eagle University. The reader reads each biography out loud. The writer writes down the positives and negatives of each applicant, and notes any additional comments on the Applicant Review Sheet, getting feedback from the entire group. The facilitator insures that everyone is speaking, asking for clarification, and making sure the group stays on time.

5. (5 minutes) Only two of the applicants can be admitted to Eagle University. Using the criteria established each group selects their top two picks.

6. (5 minutes) Each reporter will then explain their group’s choices with the entire class.

7. (10–15 minutes) Discuss the results and look at the similarities and differences between the groups’ decisions. Discussion questions:

Mock College Admissions
• Is there any one candidate who was clearly the best choice? If so, why?
• What made the good candidates so good?
• What could the weaker candidates have focused on to have been stronger?
• What choices do students need to make in order to be college eligible by their senior year?
• What do you as students need to focus on now in order to be college eligible?

8. Optional Writing Assignment
• Persuasive Essay: Ask students to choose one applicant from the Mock College Admission exercise and, in three to five paragraphs, explain why the “admission officer” chose this person to attend Eagle University. What were the applicant’s strengths? What were the applicant’s potential weaknesses? Why did the “admission officer” choose this candidate despite these potential weaknesses? Finally, conclude with an argument to the fellow “admission officers” explaining why this candidate is the best overall.

Extensions
• Have students create their own Individual Academic Action Plan from Appendix B. Students should be able to recognize if they are on track for college, or whether they will need to redirect their current efforts.
• With pens and colored paper, students will create an artistic rendition of an ideal college applicant. What sorts of tools, knowledge, and expertise will this student need to have? What do those attributes look like?
• Have students write journal entries on college-related topics, such as: “You’re a college student now, describe a typical day in your life.”
• Choose an applicant who was not admitted to Eagle University, and write a letter of appeal to the director of admissions from that student’s perspective.

CURRICULUM AND SKILL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH/ LANGUAGE ARTS
National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association
www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/
1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the work place; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MATHEMATICS
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
www.nctm.org/standards/
Mathematics Number and Operations: Students develop fluency in operations with real numbers, vectors, and matrices, using mental computation or paper-and-pencil calculations for simple cases and technology for more-complicated cases; students judge the reasonableness of numerical computations and their results.

NOTES
Applicant Summary Sheet

James: 3.95 GPA; 1350 SAT
James is a serious, dedicated student. His studies are very important to him and he does not take them lightly. He has worked extremely hard at school and because of this he has not participated in many extracurricular activities. His family is not wealthy but because both parents have college degrees, they have encouraged and supported James’ efforts.

David: 2.65 GPA (3.45 GPA in his junior and senior year); 800 SAT
David became involved with gangs, drugs and violence in the seventh grade, but always stayed in school. In his sophomore year, David’s counselor saw his potential and started encouraging David to do better. David changed his life around and is now working extremely hard to not only graduate from high school but also to go to college. David’s file contains numerous letters of recommendation from his teachers, community members and his church.

Rosa: 3.55 GPA; 1150 SAT
Rosa has always earned very high grades and has been actively involved in school and extracurricular activities. She is the captain of her volleyball team this year and is in her second term as student body president. One of her more notable accomplishments was to begin a tutorial program for her school. She began by getting her fellow students to volunteer and later on was able to get money for the school to develop a more formal tutorial program.

Dwayne: 3.00 GPA; 1020 SAT
Dwayne’s father died when he was 7 years old and he has since helped his mother take care of the house and his two younger siblings. He also works 20 hours a week at a shoe store. He has been captain of his school’s soccer team for the past two years and has several NCAA Division I colleges recruiting him. Because of his limited free time, Dwayne has to constantly balance work, school and family. Dwayne’s mother went to Eagle University and wants him to go there, too.

Teresa: 3.45 GPA; 1450 SAT
Teresa was in seventh grade when she and her family immigrated to the United States. She and her family came as farm laborers and spoke absolutely no English when they first arrived. She will be graduating in June and wants to go to college. Neither of Teresa’s parents speak English. They and many of the farm workers depend on Teresa to translate for them and to drive them to town for doctors’ appointments, etc. She also works weekends and evenings to help support her family.
### Applicant Review Sheet for Eagle University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Positives</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>James</td>
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<td>Dwayne</td>
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<td>Teresa</td>
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