



HERITAGE ACADEMY

College Preparation Guidebook

The keys to getting into the college or university of your choice

This is a practical guidebook with the steps scholars should take to get into their school of choice. Follow these steps to make the most of your time at Heritage Academy.



HERITAGE ACADEMY

“Building America’s Heroes”

Dear Heritage Parents and Scholars,

Congratulations on participating in the Heritage Academy academic program. Heritage Academy is dedicated to youth, their growth and development. The purpose of education is to build strong character. Strong character is reflected in strong families, strong communities and a strong nation.

While teaching the academic disciplines, Heritage Academy is dedicated to instilling into the minds and hearts of today's youth a knowledge of and respect for the ideals and values of the great men and women of history, including those who founded the American nation.

As today's rising generation gains an appreciation of these people of accomplishment, they will be ready to provide the selfless service to their fellow citizens and to their country which will be required in the coming years to assist in preserving America's greatness. Heritage Academy exists to this end.

This guidebook outlines the strategies that will prepare each scholar to enter a higher education program and gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to earn a degree and begin a successful career. Look at this guidebook as a set of keys that will open up opportunities for the future.

Remember, college preparation is important for all scholars who wish to pursue their education. Many scholars may be the first person in their family to ever go to college but by following the strategies outlined in this guidebook they can be on their way to earn a college degree.

The Heritage Academy faculty stands ready to help you succeed in our academic program and prepare for higher education.

Regards,

Heritage Academy Administration

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

College Preparatory Seminars:

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Meet with Heritage Academy's College Coaches as they present important information on college preparation and the college application process. Seminars are held at the Mesa Campus.

- 8th Grade Seminar—For parents of 8th graders and their scholars. Introductory seminar which will explain the importance of college prep course selection, standardized testing, GPA, extracurricular/service activities, and digital citizenship. **Gateway (3/23); Laveen (3/30) ; Mesa (2/7)**
- 10th Grade Seminar—For parents of 10th graders and their scholars. Specifically focused on college prep course selection, standardized testing, GPA, extracurricular activities, and summer opportunities. **Gateway (9/15); Laveen (11/17); Mesa (9/27)**
- 11th Grade Seminar—For parents of 11th graders and their scholars. Specifically focused on SAT/ACT test preparation, scholarships/financial aid, extracurricular/ service activities, and digital citizenship. **Gateway (8/30) ; Laveen (10/20); Mesa (9/13)**
- 12th Grade Seminar—For parents of 12th graders and their scholars. Specifically focused on the college application process, college application essays, scholarship essays, FAFSA and other financial aid. **Gateway (8/30); Laveen (10/20); Mesa (8/30)**
- Heritage Alumni Lunch Seminar—For 11th and 12th graders. Heritage graduates return to share their college experiences. **Mesa (12/21)**
- College Night at Heritage Academy—For 8th-12th graders and their parents. Representatives from Rio Salado, Grand Canyon, and local colleges present how their programs interface with Heritage Academy. Specifically focused on dual enrollment courses, Maricopa Community College associate degrees, and financial aid. **Gateway (3/23); Laveen (10/20); Mesa (2/7)**

PSAT and ACT/SAT Test Preparation Courses (fees apply):

PSAT Prep Course: 3 weeks. 9/23, 9/30, 10/7 from 12-3pm at the Mesa Campus. The deadline to register for the PSAT is 9/21.

ACT Prep Course: 6 weeks. 3/3, 3/10, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7 from 12-3 at the Mesa Campus.

PSAT Test:

Registration Deadline is: October 1st

PSAT Exam: Wednesday, October 19th from 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Choosing a Path:

College preparation begins with choosing an educational path. College preparation for the community college/state university route is different from preparation to a highly selective university. Scholars should decide which type of college they wish to attend and know what is required by those types of colleges and universities. This decision will drive course selection for both electives and core classes. It will also drive selection of extracurricular activities to some extent. All college-bound scholars should have a realistic short-list of perspective colleges, and scholars should carefully research admission requirements for each of their choices.

Selecting classes at Heritage:

Educational goals will drive course selection. To be competitive for highly selective universities and academic scholarships, scholars should take the most rigorous courses offered on campus.

Core classes: The most rigorous core classes at Heritage are the Honors and Dual Enrollment courses. Some Honors classes are not Dual Enrollment courses, but all Dual Enrollment courses are labeled as Honors courses on the scholar's high school transcript. Scholars should take the highest level math, science and foreign language available to them.

Elective classes: Because colleges look for depth not breadth, scholars should choose one or two areas of interest and take all available classes in that area. For example, if a scholar is interested in Kenpo, take all Kenpo classes and become a black belt and even an assistant teacher. If a scholar sings, strive to be in the concert choir and audition for the regional and all-state choirs. If sports are of interest, commit seriously to one or two sports and play all four years, achieving leadership positions within that sport. In short, choose elective courses that are personally enriching, where depth and leadership can be achieved.

SAT/ACT Preparation:

Standardized tests are important in the college admission process because they are just that: standardized. Colleges know that grades are subjective, so they place a great deal of weight on a student's ACT or SAT score. ACT and SAT scores are also extremely important for scholarship consideration. Most universities accept both the ACT and the SAT, and the scholars can choose which test to take; however, some prestigious universities require the general SAT test and specific subject tests. Scholars should research standardized test requirements for their school of preference.

Standardized test preparation takes various forms. First, know that it cannot be done overnight but is a process that begins in childhood and continues through 11th grade. Consider the following test-prep strategies:

- Read, read, read. Nothing can make up for a lack of knowledge and fluency with language.

- Select rigorous classes. Difficult courses better prepare scholars for the SAT and ACT tests.
- Enroll in test prep courses during 10th and/or 11th grade. Becoming familiar with the tests and practicing the specific skills needed to succeed improve test scores. Test prep courses can be taken at Heritage in the fall or spring or from private companies.
- Take standardized tests during the spring of junior year and the fall of senior year.

FINANCIAL PREPARATION

Estimating Costs:

College has become increasingly expensive. Although college costs are dependent on many factors, financial preparation is imperative to a scholar’s ability to stay in school and avoid excessive debt. Below is a table that estimates expenses that may be incurred at varying institutions:

Sector	Tuition and Fees	Books and Supplies	Room and Board	Transportation	Other Expenses	Total Expenses
Two-Year Public						
Commuter	\$3,264	\$1,270	\$7,466	\$1,708	\$2,225	\$15,933
Four-Year Public						
In-state, on-campus	\$8,893	\$1,207	\$9,498	\$1,123	\$2,105	\$22,826
Out-of-State, on-campus	\$22,203	\$1,207	\$9,498	\$1,123	\$2,105	\$36,136
Four-Year Private						
On-campus	\$30,094	\$1,590	\$10,823	\$990	\$1,590	\$44,750

* Sample too small to provide meaningful information.

** Average total expenses include room and board costs for commuter students, which are average estimated living expenses for students living off campus but not with parents.

Source: [Trends in College Pricing, College Board.](#)

Current tuition at Maricopa Community Colleges is \$84 per credit hour.

Current tuition per semester: ASU \$5,078, NAU \$4,994, and U of A \$5,029.

As indicated by the chart above, tuition is just a part of the overall price tag. Fees, books, housing and meal-plan requirements are also expenses that should be taken into account. These expenses should be listed on the colleges’ websites. Please be aware that many schools, including ASU, are “requiring” students to live on campus for their first year. While housing exemptions are available through application, scholars should realize that their only housing options as freshmen at ASU are the dorms or their parents’ residence.

Scholarships:

There are two main types of merit-based scholarships: college/university scholarships and private scholarships.

College/university scholarships: When students apply to most colleges or universities, they are automatically put into the academic scholarship pool and are selected based on their transcripts and standardized test scores. Students can apply for other university scholarships from the college’s or

university's website. These scholarships often require multiple essays and have specific criteria that must be met for consideration. Colleges and universities want the best and brightest at their schools and are willing to offer a lot of money to students they believe will benefit their institutions. College/university scholarships are often the best scholarships available.

Private scholarships:

There are many private scholarships available to differing demographic groups. Scholarships range from a hundred dollars to more than \$20,000.00. The big dollars scholarships are difficult to secure as many students are vying for the same money. Smaller scholarships, with more specified criteria, are easier to obtain if one fits the criteria. It is also important to note that many scholarships are only for students of low income families and many additional scholarships give preference to students with financial need. Following is a list of scholarship search engines:

www.fastweb.com
www.petersons.com
www.supercollege.com
www.finaid.org
www.collegenet.com

Financial Aid:

The federal government offers assistance to students with financial need in several ways:

- Grants—amounts based on needs as assessed through the FAFSA form.
 - Loans—available to qualifying students and parents.
 - Work-study Program—campus employment offered to qualifying students paid by federal government through the universities/colleges.
- See FAFSA <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

In addition, many employers offer tuition assistance to their employees which often covers tuition, fees, and books. The military also offers tuition assistance in various forms to its members.

BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Academic Rigor:

A scholar's course selection, standardized tests, and grades are the most important elements on the college application; however, colleges are also looking for well-rounded students that have a variety of extracurricular and leadership experience. Consider participating in some of the following activities to strengthen your application and make the most of your high school years:

Extracurricular and Service:

- Heritage or Club Sports
- Heritage Extracurricular Clubs (Debate, Scholarly Journal, etc.)
- National Honor Society
- Student tutor/SPED tutor

- Private Lessons
- Boy Scouts
- Summer Camps

Leadership:

- Scholar Council
- Team captains/section leaders
- Leadership through Boy Scouts or Church
- Leadership through employment
- Leadership through civic organizations (Mayor’s Youth Council, etc.)

Employment:

- Entrepreneurship—Starting a business is a great way to earn money, develop and display a strong work ethic, acquire leadership, innovate and create. Entrepreneurship is viewed favorably on a college application essay because of the many skills it demands; in addition, scholars can usually maintain more control over their schedules by choosing which hours to work. Naturally, this benefits their school work. Students could consider starting a lawn care business, child care business, teaching music or art classes, tutoring, creating a summer camp, etc.
- Other employment—Colleges like to see that students are well rounded and can handle multiple responsibilities at once. Traditional high school jobs can be helpful in building a college resume **if they do not interfere with the scholar’s school work. If scholars are working too many hours and cannot keep up with their course load, a job is counter-productive.** Consider summer jobs or jobs that require less than 10 hours per week.

CHECKLISTS

With this overview of the major elements of a successful higher education strategy, it’s time to take action. It’s time to roll up your sleeves and get to work. Download one or more of these helpful checklists to help you get organized:

<http://collegeapps.about.com/>

<http://www.collegeprep101.com/checklists.html>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Heritage Academy College Coaches:

Mesa:	Melanie Hale	mhale@heritageacademyaz.com
Gateway:	Kathleen Lopez	klopez@heritageacademyaz.com
Laveen:	Sherri Keuker	skuecker@heritageacademyaz.com

Links to AZ colleges and universities:

- <http://www.asu.edu/>
- <https://www.nau.edu/>
- <http://www.arizona.edu/>
- <https://www2.maricopa.edu/>
-
- <http://www.usnews.com/rankings>

Links to SAT and ACT registration:

- <https://sat.collegeboard.org/register>
- <http://www.actstudent.org/>

Link to Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

Link to The Common Application – (1 application for over 500 public and private colleges and universities)

- <https://www.commonapp.org/Login>

Link to Aptitude Tests

- <http://richardstep.com/>