



College application process in different countries

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"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."

"Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea."

As you start answering these questions, you realize that college app season has started. It is always hard to write about one's life in a 650-word essay. To some, it is an enjoyable experience, summarizing what they have accomplished and learned throughout their life. To others, it is nothing but stress. Now, imagine yourself in a foreign country having to go through the college application process. What would that look like? What are some differences and similarities between the college application process in different countries? As an immigrant from South Korea, I wanted to explore the college application process in a few other countries by interviewing Minnetonka's students.

South Korea

There are two admission types in South Korea: Susi and Jeongsi. Susi is similar to early action in the United States, and Jeongsi is mostly associated with regular decisions. However, the biggest difference between the two admission types is that Jeongsi is solely based on students' scores on Suneung, while Susi focuses more on extracurriculars and a holistic review. This means that a single Suneung score can dictate one's admission chances and impact a student's future career and life. Suneung is more than just a Korean version of the SAT: the test can determine someone's life permanently. Most companies look for graduate students from certain prestigious universities, such as the "SKY" (Seoul, Korea, Yonsei) colleges. They are treated like the Harvard, Yale, or other top tier Ivy League schools of South Korea. If one wants to reach their dreams and get recognized in the workplace, they need to go to one of those three universities.

According to Heeseo Kim, a student from Cheongshim International Academy, "Students in Korea can only choose up to a certain number of universities to apply to. That is why the college application process is so deadly; you only have one shot. Some students like me go to an international school to apply to international universities, and I find the college app process to be much more unrestricted and encouraging."

India

India has Board Examinations, which are public examinations that are conducted both at the end of 10th grade and at the end of the 12th grade. These tests are a crucial component in students' college applications because most universities in India do not conduct a holistic review. The board examination is the one and only opportunity for students to get into their dream school.

"This system creates extreme stress in students because this test is the only way that the students can prove how hard they have worked for the past eighteen years. That is also why the suicidal rate of high school students in India is so high."

-Sanjana Krurup, '22

China

Similarly, China also requires that students take Gaokao, known as the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE), which is a test that determines students' admission to college. Even in high school, students have class ranking systems and placement tests at schools at the beginning of the year to place students in classes based on their rank, such as the "super class" that is filled with students with extraordinary academic achievements.

"I think college application process in China is really academic-focused. Schools care more about how smart students are and how well they can solve mathematics questions rather than what kind of person they are or what they are really interested and talented in. It is really important to get into a good school in order to get a good career and succeed in China. Due to these factors, some students change their direction and decide to apply as an arts or music applicant, which (in my opinion) might cause negative influence on them because they are doing it just to get into a college, and it doesn't represent their true interest."

-Britney Dang, '22

"You apply for admission to a college because you would like to go there. Think about what it will be like to go to the school, whether it is a university in this country or another country. What really matters is not whether or not you would get admitted to a college. It's your happiness and your life that matters. Good luck for all seniors who are working through the college application process!"

-Phil Trout, College Career Center