

## **HOW AND WHEN TO CREATE A PORTFOLIO FOR APPLICATIONS**

If you have a talent or skill that you cannot fully exhibit on the regular common application for colleges, then you might consider submitting a portfolio as a supplement. A portfolio is defined as a collection of work or series of pieces that showcases one's abilities and dedication to an art form, whether that is visual art, written work, performance art, or music. Any submitted portfolio will be criticized by professionals at the school, so you must discern whether this step is appropriate for your skills before putting in the work required for making a good portfolio. Below, we've summarized the basics for this process. Take a look.

### **Determine if you should submit a portfolio.**

Because portfolios primarily concern art forms, they do not typically include athletic abilities or academic work. Sports reels are sent to a college coach and not included as an option for the regular application. However, if you have worked extensively on drawing, painting, photography, graphic design, animation, writing (both nonfiction and fiction pieces), acting, dancing, filmmaking, or playing an instrument or instruments (solo or with a band), submitting a portfolio is likely a good option for you. These collections should exhibit enthusiasm and focus, so even if you are multi-talented, create a portfolio that shows depth by emphasizing only one talent.

### **Start working early.**

Most students who chose to submit a portfolio have been pursuing their interest in the art form for many years, so they have enough work to choose from when starting to compile their portfolios. Realistically, you will have pieces and performances that date back at least months or years, but to create a formal portfolio, you should start planning logistics around the beginning of your junior year.

### **Take note of each school's requirements.**

Many schools will have different sets of requirements for portfolio submissions, including size, format, labeling, and written summaries. For instance, if you are submitting a portfolio of paintings, drawings, or graphic design work, some schools ask that you submit everything online, meaning you will have to scan and upload your work with the proper pixelation and sizing. Others ask for print copies of your pieces, while others still ask for CDs or DVDs of your performances. If you are applying to more than one school with a portfolio, pay close attention to these details, and create a separate portfolio for each one.

### **Plan your portfolio.**

Portfolios are best when they tell a story, so if you have a breadth of work to choose from, go for pieces that demonstrate your talent while indicating a thematic interest or motif throughout. You should have a few videos, images, or examples of your basic skill level, whether that means still life drawings, an edited short film, or your vocal range, etc. Next, choose some pieces that exhibit range and creativity, with subjects or stories that interest you most. After choosing the pieces that best demonstrate your growth as an artist, you can ask a professor or high school teacher to give you preliminary review, helping guide you toward a final product before you submit the portfolio to colleges and universities.