



14 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ODDS



Strong grades, interesting extracurriculars, volunteer and service learning, and great test scores are only a few factors that admissions officers consider. Competitive and elite institutions want to see that you have made the most of every opportunity presented to you, both in and out of the classroom!

MEET THE ACADEMIC MARK

- Minimum or average GPA
- Do they consider SAT scores
- Do they require certain math or science courses?
- Are you in honors, AP, IB, or concurrent classes?

TAKE CHALLENGING COURSES

- Advanced coursework (AP, IB, concurrent) show that you can thrive in stressful and demanding classes.
- Go above and beyond when you can and minimize release periods.

MAINTAIN YOUR GPA

- A strong GPA shows your **commitment throughout the entirety of high school**, not just on SAT test day!
- GPA is not everything! If you had a tough year, explain that in an essay!

GET INVOLVED

- Extracurricular activities show admissions officers that you can build relationships, network, and lead outside the classroom
- Focus on 2-3 main extracurriculars and pursue leadership roles!

MAKE AN IMPACT

- Volunteer and donate your valuable time to **a cause that is important to you**, not just what you think will look good on an application.
- Focus on one singular volunteer opportunity

REACH FOR HIGH TEST SCORES

- Strong test scores show your academic potential and ability to prepare and study for an exam!
- SAT scores place you into college classes like math and English
- Take the test multiple times!

USE YOUR SUMMER WISELY

- Review the Summer Checklists!
- Work and save money
- Attend a summer camp
- Tour colleges in-person or virtually
- Read and stay engaged academically

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Ivy League schools require 3 letters of recommendation, two academic and one personal.
- Inform your favorite teachers and counselor of your academic goals
- Ask for letters of recommendation

SEEK LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Run for leadership positions in your favorite clubs
- Start your own club, business, or nonprofit
- Connect with local leaders who are doing similar work to yours!

VISIT CAMPUSES

- Visiting a college is a great way to show the school you are interested in attending.
- **Virtual tours, online workshops, and Zoom information sessions** are free and easy ways to connect!

WORK WITH YOUR ADVISOR

- Applying to colleges is a lot of work!
- Work with your CCA or Upward Bound to **create a college list, an application plan, and scholarship application plan.**
- They will help you stay on track!

GET A HEAD START

- The Common App refreshes on August 1 annually, but you can create an account and work on sections before August 1.
- Plug in your extracurriculars, your classes, and more!

NAIL THE ESSAY

- College essays give admissions officers a glimpse into who you are as a person, your goals, and values.
- Start early, revise many times, and have your advisor proofread.
- Show, don't just tell!

CONSIDER EARLY APPS

- Applying early shows strong interest in a school and means you'll find out as early as December of senior year.
- **Early decision is binding, meaning you must attend if accepted.**