

# Competitive College Admissions

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# Types of Admission

- Open Admissions
  - Almost all students are accepted.
  - Examples: Community College
- Selective Admissions
  - Certain GPAs, ACT/SAT scores are required. Also, an essay and/or interview are often required.
  - Examples: Some State Universities, Smaller Private Colleges
- Competitive Admissions
  - Space is very limited. High school course selection, test scores, and Extracurricular involvement are evaluated very carefully.
  - Examples: Some State Universities, Harvard University

# Admissions Competitiveness Terminology

## Early Decision:

- For those who want an early response to have time to consider options if necessary. Early Decision applications represent a binding commitment to one college.
- Early Action is non-binding, meaning that you can apply to other colleges even if you were admitted Early Action.

## Regular Decision:

- For those who want more time to submit senior year grades or other supporting materials. Decision made usually by April 15.
- Rolling admissions: decisions made continuously during application period.

# Parts of the application

- Transcript
- Standardized Test Scores
- List of Activities
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essays/Personal Statements

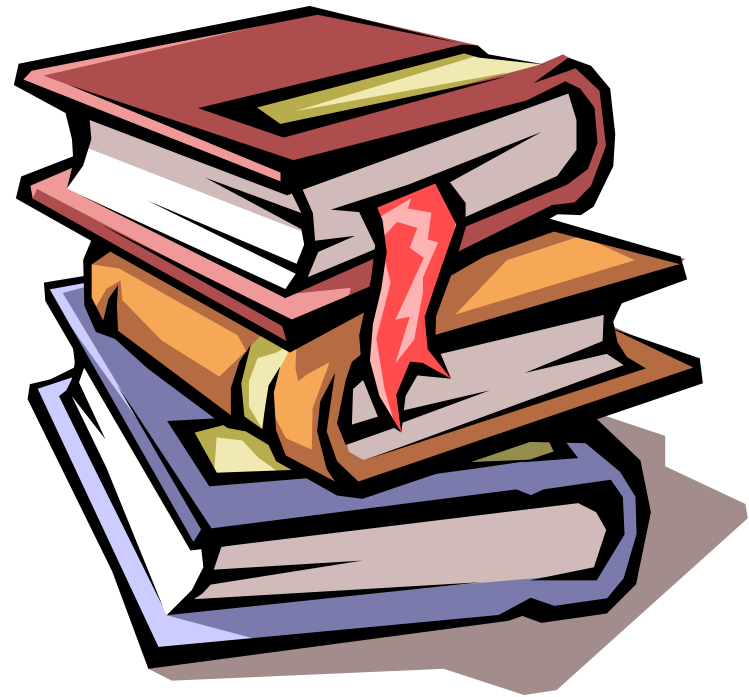
# What is the admission committee looking for?

- **ACADEMIC RECORD**

- Course Selection
- Grades
- SAT / ACT

- **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- Extracurriculars/
- Leadership
- Recommendations
- Essays



# Academic Preparation

- Admissions Offices evaluate student transcripts by considering the following factors:
  - Enrollment in Advanced Placement and/or the IB Program
  - Choosing high school courses which prepare students for their college major.
    - Example: more science and math for prospective engineering or pre-med students.
  - 12th grade course selection and grades are very important in college admission decisions
  - Your high school
    - The percentage of graduates who go on to four-year colleges and universities
    - Which advanced courses are offered at the high school

# Your Transcript



- Your GPA and class rank.
- The courses you took and your grade trends.
- Have you challenged yourself appropriately?
- What does junior year tell us?
- Can you explain the bobbles?
- We **will** notice if you think senior=slacker.

# Standardized Tests

- Which test should I take?
- How many times should I take it?
- What do schools do with my score?
- What about the writing portion?
- Is the ACT or SAT the only number that really matters?



# Direct from ACT

ACT has published “benchmark” scores that correlate to a 75% likelihood of earning a “C” or better in that class in college.

These are:

English	18
Math	22
Reading	21
Science	24

# Letters of Recommendation

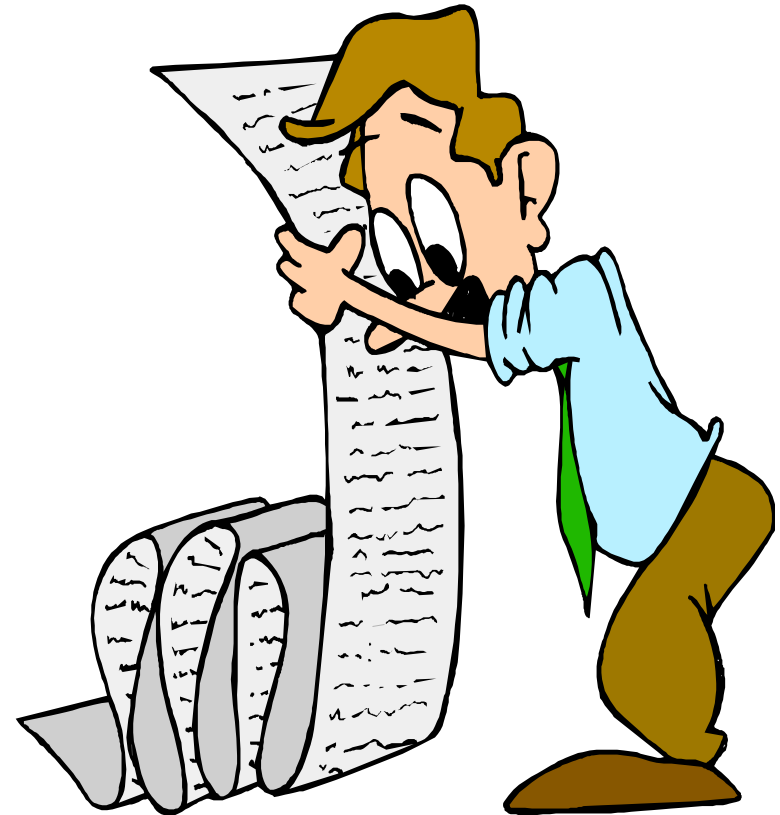
- Clear and comprehensive recommendations can make a difference in admissions decisions.
- Recommendations can come from teachers, counselors, coaches, advisers, employers, etc.
- Provide 3-4 weeks notice for a recommendation to be written.
- Provide a “brag sheet” to the person writing the recommendation.
- Recommendations are reviewed looking for the following information:
  - Comparisons to other students in the class.
  - Information about the school grading system and/or competition for grades.
  - Illustrative examples or anecdotes.
  - Personal information (example personal problems or health issues which had an impact on performance.)
  - Other personal traits or study habit information.

# Extracurricular activities

- Commitment, level of accomplishment, initiative, and leadership are most important.
- Admissions offices will ask the following questions when reviewing student resumes/activity lists in an application:
  - How much time does the student devote to this activity?
  - Is there evidence of leadership—is the student an officer or leader in the organization/sport?
  - Balance is best—do not limit involvement to one type of activity.
  - Volunteerism is very important.

# List of Activities

- Don't join every club senior year just to make it "look good."
- We like to see commitment and passion!
- Don't forget work and outside activities, too.
- This is a good time to brag a little bit!
- There are no activities that "count more" than others.



# Personal Statements and Essays

- If the application asks a question, answer it. If it imposes a word limit, stick to it.
- The “tell us about yourself” essay
  - If it’s the first time you’ve thought about it, don’t write your essay about it.
  - Be passionate!
  - Let us get to know you.
- Make sure **your** voice comes through in all of the written portions of the application.

# Hints for Writing the College Essay

- Start early.
- Be yourself.
- Be honest.
- Stay focused on your topic.
- Write and re-write.
- Get a second opinion.
- Proofread.
- Know which school you are applying to.
- Don't confuse applying on-line with sending an e-mail.

## What admissions counselors think:

100 admission counselors were asked to name the top 4 hints for high school seniors to make their admission application more competitive.

- Ask for recommendations early
- Thoroughly complete entire application
- Don't be modest on activities
- Apply before the application deadline



# Applying for Admission

- Narrow your choices
- Review college admission test requirements
- Know application fees and deadlines
- Know scholarship requirements
- Submit application materials
- Application for admission
  - If applying online, be sure to notify counselor so that transcripts, recommendations, and test scores are sent to colleges and universities.
    - High school transcript
    - Admission test results
    - Recommendations