

Standing Out in the College Application Pool

What Colleges Look for?

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What Colleges Look for?

College application is a two-way journey.

Both you and the colleges are looking for the best fit for each other.

While reviewing their applicants' credentials, the most selective colleges are looking for students who

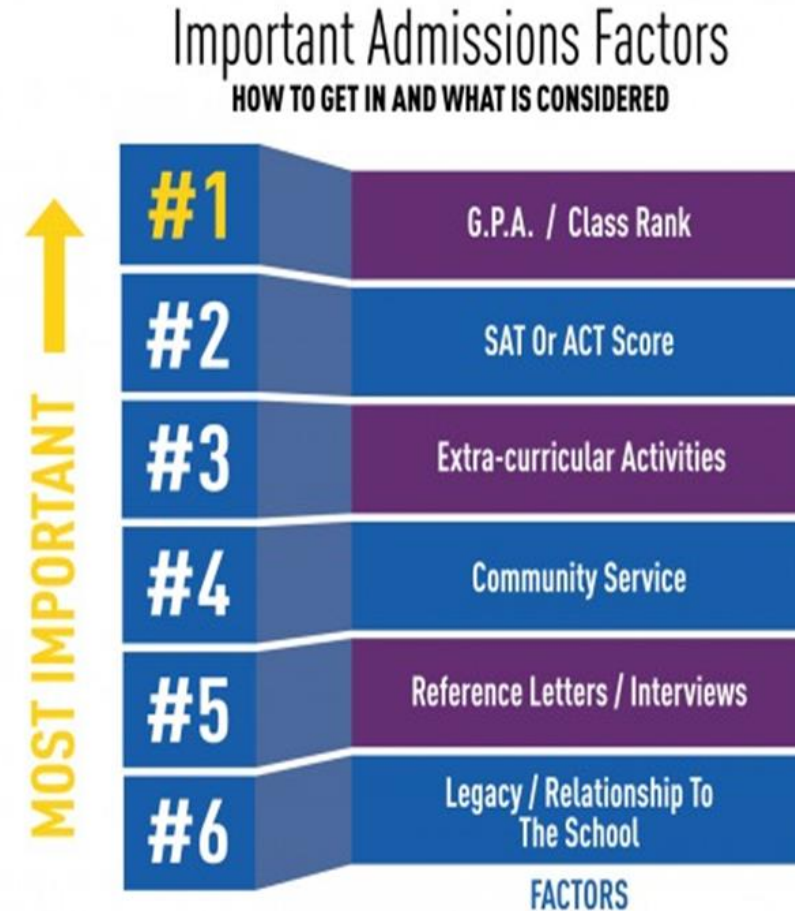
- have not only done well academically,
- but also challenged themselves in-and-out of classrooms,

as these students are more likely to succeed in college.



Admissions Factors

College admissions are determined based upon multiple factors. Some factors are largely out of applicants'/your control, while others are within your control.



Admissions Factors (continued)

Factors out of Your Control

- Geographic location
- Racial or ethnic background
- Extenuating or unusual life circumstances
- Schools attending
- Language and culture
- Living or studying overseas

Factors within Your Control

- . Courses taken
- . Grades received
- . Class rank
- . Standardized test scores
- . Personal statement/essays
- . Letters of Recommendation
- . Extracurricular activities/Leadership
- . Interviews

Controllable Factors: Academic Performance

Regardless of the college's evaluation system, you should present a well-rounded picture of you as an applicant by highlighting your ability to succeed at every institutions that you intend to apply.

First, HigherEdUSA will guide you to focus on academic performance, including high school courses, grades, and standardized test scores(s).

Note. Although still reviewed by many colleges, class rank has declined in significance as many colleges/universities, e.g., University of California system, have eliminated student ranking.

High School Courses and Grades

Courses and Grades.

One of the most significant factors in the admission decision process, if not the top one, is your **grades in college-preparatory and rigorous courses.**

Grade	Honors/AP	All Other Classes
A	5.0	4.0
A-	4.667	3.667
B+	4.333	3.333
B	4.0	3.0
B-	3.667	2.667
C+	3.333	2.333
C	3.0	2.0
C-	2.667	1.667
D+	2.333	1.333
D	2.0	1.0
D-	1.667	0.667
F	1	0

Strategies for Improving High School Grades

- Starting early. The key is to plan ahead and start in 8th or 9th grade to build a foundation that will open doors to advanced coursework later on.
- Getting help from your teacher(s). You should talk to your teacher(s). Teachers are always there for you and they know where you can improve and how. Follow their advice and put in your own time and effort.
- Working hard throughout the senior year. The college may revoke its admission if your final grades fail to meet the standard.

Strategies for Improving High School Grades

(continued)

- . Completing core academic requirements
- . Taking more challenging classes, even though you may have slightly lower grades than you'd achieve in regular high school courses
- . Taking four years of a world language, showing evidence of academic discipline and meeting the challenges
- . Enrolling in several college-prep, e.g., AP, IB, Honor, or college-level courses and perform well

Strategies for Improving High School Grades

(continued)

In addition, HigherEdUSA will offer customized services, based upon your academic needs, and levels of knowledge and skills. Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting students in practicing essay writing
- Assigning appropriate standardized test exercise(s) to students, and then offering feedbacks
- Recommending outstanding pre-college or college-level courses for you to take online or in-person.

Standardized Test Scores

Standardized test scores remain important at many colleges. Tests such as SAT or the ACT allow colleges to compare students from across the country or even from all over the world.

Benefits. Having good standardized test scores should improve your chance of being admitted. If your high school GPA is:

- not as competitive as you would like it to be, test scores could show your real potential to be successful in college.
- outstanding, having great test scores could make you stand out in the application crowd.

Standardized Test Scores (continued)

Although the number of colleges requiring standardized tests has dropped, many still require applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores.

Test Requirements are stated on colleges' admission criteria page:

Test-blind:	Don't send your SAT/ACT scores.
Test-required:	Must send in your best test scores.
Test-optional:	You are strongly advised to send in your test scores as the college will consider them if submitted as part of an application; having high scores would be especially helpful.

Standardized Test Scores (continued)



Strategies for Increasing Standardized Test Scores

Start early.
Practicing both PSAT
and SAT may
improve your SAT
scores, as well as
your high school
grades along the way!



Academic Performance Summary

Working hard in high school is the most important step you can take to make yourself a competitive college candidate. Your GPA is the single most influential factor considered by all colleges. It reflects your performance as a student over almost four years of your life, and also predicts if you could succeed in college.

Standardized test scores typically rank second in importance for colleges that consider them. Even test-optional schools often use standardized test scores to distinguish between you and the applicant next to you with similar qualifications.

Finally, enroll in several college-prep, **advanced/honor**, or **college-level courses** and perform well will not only place you ahead of many other applicants, but also earn you some college credits when you are still in high school!