

How to get into Princeton + Admission Requirements 2023



Princeton, originally chartered in 1746 as the College of New Jersey, has a long history of producing students committed to public service and the communities they're involved in. The Princeton community is so closely-knit that each of its graduating classes holds a reunion every year. Some of the more famous Princeton Tigers include Woodrow Wilson, John F. Kennedy, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Michelle Obama.

With 36 academic departments to be a part of, Princeton offers its students an innovative, collaborative, and engaging learning environment, boasting a student-to-teacher ratio of 5:1. Its interdisciplinary programs allow students to experience and explore their interests in areas such as the humanities, natural sciences, and arts. The unique and highly sought after experiences provided by Princeton are why it receives close to 40,000 applicants year after year.

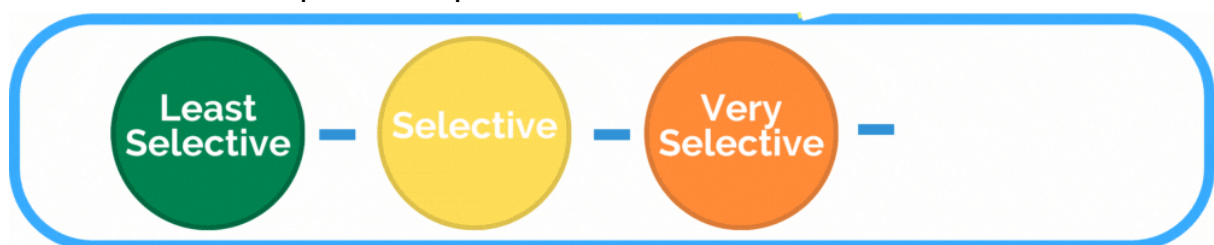
Throughout this post, you'll find information that covers several topics—**how to get into Princeton, Princeton GPA requirements, Princeton acceptance rate, when to apply and more**—that will hopefully help you navigate the Princeton admissions process.

Fun fact: Charles Conrad took a Princeton flag to the moon during the Apollo 12 mission in 1969.

A quick note on college rankings: we think they're generally a bad way to think about where you should go to college. We talk about **why rankings are bad in greater detail [here](#)**, but essentially, a lot of college rankings don't actually tell you whether you and the school would fit well together, or that the school is someplace you'll thrive. That said, we also understand that many students/families are confused regarding and have questions about aspects of the application process, so we've built the post below to hopefully clarify things, so students/families can make informed decisions.

HOW HARD IS IT TO GET INTO PRINCETON?

It is extremely difficult to get accepted to Princeton. Out of the 38,019 applications who applied last year, only 2,167 were accepted, making the acceptance rate of Princeton 5.7%. The grade point average of people who get accepted to Princeton are in the highest of their class, boasting a 3.95 GPA for applicants accepted for the 2022 - 2023 school year. People who successfully get into Princeton also tend to have impressive extracurricular activities and college applications essays. Some academic and nonacademic factors that the university takes into consideration are class rank, GPA, standardized test scores, application essays, recommendations, extracurricular activities, talent, and personal qualities.



PRINCETON ACCEPTANCE RATE

The Princeton University acceptance rate is 5.7%, making it one of the most competitive universities in the world. Acceptance rate is an indication of how competitive a school is, but it is also an indication of how popular a school is. Other schools that have a similar acceptance rate include Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Brown, and Yale. To get into a school like Princeton, you will need to excel in almost every major college application factor. You can find the list of college application factors such as average GPA, test scores, and extracurricular activities that Princeton takes into consideration [here](#).



PRINCETON EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION, REGULAR DECISION, AND TRANSFER ACCEPTANCE RATE

Princeton's early action acceptance rate for the 2019 - 2020 school year was 13.9% because it received 5,335 applications and accepted 743 students. Notice that the early action acceptance rate is higher than the regular decision acceptance rate. This is something to keep in mind as you complete the Princeton application. With anywhere from 30,000 - 40,000 applicants each year, Princeton is a widely popular school to apply to. You can find more quick facts about the 2019- 2020 applicants [here](#).

GPA REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO PRINCETON

The recommended GPA requirements to get into Princeton are between 3.7 and 4.0. You will need an incredibly high GPA and will likely be graduating at the top of your class in order to get into Princeton. If your GPA is lower than suggested at the time you apply—less than 6.2% of the 2022 - 2023 applicants had a GPA below 3.75—you may have to perform above average on your standardized tests. If your grades aren't as high as they could have been due to life experiences or

hardship, you should consider writing about it in your [additional information section](#).

PRINCETON UNWEIGHTED GPA REQUIREMENTS

Princeton Unweighted Average GPA: 3.95



GPA Distribution	Percent Admitted
4.0	68.41%
3.75-3.99	25.40%
3.50-3.74	3.70%
3.25-3.49	1.75%
3.00-3.24	0.67%
2.5-2.99	0.00%
2.0-2.49	0.07%
1.0-1.99	0.00%
Below 1.0	0.00%

WHAT GPA IS REQUIRED FOR PRINCETON?

Applicants' GPA when applying to Princeton should ideally be between 3.8 - 4.0 to be strong candidates. While there are no official Princeton GPA requirements, the bulk of applicants—usually around 90%—have an unweighted GPA of at least 3.75. If your GPA is less than this, you will want to compensate by increasing your SAT or ACT score, demonstrate outstanding extracurricular activities, and write an exemplary personal statement.

Princeton considers unweighted GPA as one of its admission factors.

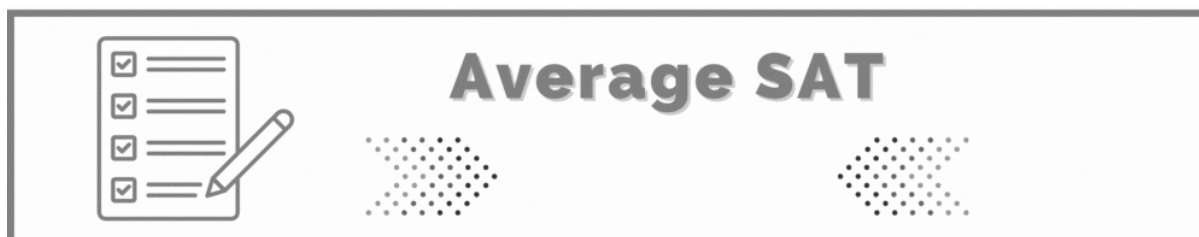
Academic GPA is one of several factors listed as 'very important' in the [Princeton](#)

[University Common Data Set for 2021 - 2022](#). The median **unweighted** GPA for Princeton University is 3.95. This indicates that you will likely have to take some higher level classes like AP and IB in order to be a competitive candidate for Princeton. If your school uses a weighted GPA scale—or any scale that is not the 4.0 scale—Princeton recommends that you recalculate your GPA. You can calculate your GPA [here](#).

SAT REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO PRINCETON

The recommended SAT requirements to get into Princeton are a 1500 to 1580 composite score, combining the reading and writing, and math sections together. The [2022 SAT Suite Annual Report](#)'s SAT score distribution showed that only 8% of students received a score between 1400 - 1600. This means applicants that choose to include their scores in their Princeton application have an incredibly high SAT score, like *incredibly* high. If your SAT is lower than suggested at the time you apply, you may have to perform above average on your other standardized tests or have spectacular extracurricular activities to compensate. If your grades aren't as high as they could have been due to life experiences or hardship, you should consider writing about it in your [additional information section](#).

As of right now, [Princeton is looking at the impact COVID-19 has had on secondary education](#) and has decided to remain 'test optional' until the fall of 2025. This means it doesn't require standardized test scores, but will consider them if submitted. It's up to you whether to submit your scores or not. There are a number of factors to consider as you make this decision, and you can read more about them [here](#).



PRINCETON AVERAGE SAT COMPOSITE SCORE: 1540

SAT Score Distribution

Reading %

Math %

700-800	88.18%	93.41%
600-699	11.19%	5.96%
500-599	0.63%	0.63%
400-499	0.00%	0.00%
300-399	0.00%	0.00%
200-299	0.00%	0.00%

WHAT SAT SCORE IS REQUIRED FOR PRINCETON?

Applicants should score between 1530 - 1590 on their SAT to be strong candidates for admission to this school. Having less than this will require compensating by using a substitute ACT score or having an above-average GPA. You do not need to submit an SAT or ACT score for application to Princeton, but it will be considered if submitted.

Princeton SAT Distribution Composite Score %	
1400 - 1600	92.26%
1200 - 1399	7.53%
1000 - 1199	0.21%
800 - 999	0.00%
600 - 799	0.00%
400 - 599	0.00%

ACT REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO PRINCETON

As of right now, Princeton doesn't require the ACT (or any standardized test) for their general admissions. The applicants that did include their ACT composite score, which combines the English, mathematics, reading, and

science sections, generally scored between 33 - 35. Applicants that score incredibly high are recommended to include their ACT composite score in their application. If your ACT is not what you'd hoped by the time you apply, you may have to make it up by getting above-average scores on the SAT and having an above-average grade point average. If your ACT wasn't as high as you'd like because of difficulties or hardship, you should consider writing about it in your additional information section.

If neither your SAT or ACT are as high as you'd like them to be, talk with your college counselor or other expert on whether you should include your test score in your application.

PRINCETON AVERAGE ACT: 34



ACT Score Range	Composite Score %
30-36	93.97%
24-29	5.78%
18-23	0.25%
12-17	0.00%
6-11	0.00%
Below 6	0.00%

WHAT ACT SCORE IS REQUIRED FOR PRINCETON?

Applicants should score between 30 and 36 on their ACT to be strong candidates for admission to Princeton. Having less than this will require compensating by using a substitute SAT score or having an above-average GPA. If your SAT score is lower than the recommended score, then you'll want to compensate in the other required sessions of the Common Application—personal statement, activities list, additional information section, and supplemental essays.

WHAT DOES PRINCETON LOOK FOR IN STUDENTS?

Princeton is looking for students that are committed to making a difference in the communities around them—at home, in their current classrooms, in the Princeton community, and in their future endeavors. The university wants to know not only what you're presently doing to make a difference, but what you plan on doing to continue positively impacting the people and things you'll interact with later in life.

Princeton's Undergraduate Admission office states: "we look for students who make a difference in their schools and communities, so tell us about your leadership activities, interests, special skills and other extracurricular involvements ... We want to know what you care about, what commitments you have made and what you've done to act on those commitments."

To put it simply, Princeton is not only looking for students who excel academically, they're also looking for well-rounded students that exhibit values like diversity, inclusion, community, responsibility, curiosity, and drive in their everyday lives.

So how can you show the admissions committee your awesome personality? Or the skills, values and qualities that you believe are most important?

Through your **personal statement**, **activities list**, **additional information section**, **supplemental essays**, **counselor recommendation**, **teacher recommendations**, and **optional interview**. All of these sections provide you with opportunities to show who you are outside of your gpa and standardized tests scores, as well as highlight the different ways you are a vital part of your community. You can find helpful admission tips from Princeton **here**.

As you complete your application, think about the answers to some of these questions:

What information about myself does the admissions officer need to know in order to understand who I am? (it might help to do the **Everything I want Colleges to know about Me** brainstorming exercise)

What activities have helped me grow the most (or learn the most) as a person?

What communities do I play a significant role in?

In what ways am I an integral part of this community? What actions, solutions, or impacts do I have in this society?

What **values** do I demonstrate in this community and what values have I learned from this community?

In what ways do I satisfy my curiosity? And how has this influenced my extracurricular activities?

As you complete your application, refer back to the [First-Year application checklist](#) to ensure that you submit everything Princeton is asking for.

PRINCETON APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Princeton application deadline for regular decision is January 1st. Princeton also provides an alternative form of application in addition to regular decision: restrictive early action. **The application deadline for Princeton's restrictive early action is November 1st.** Below is a table showing the deadlines for each of the steps of the Princeton admissions process.

Notification Plan	Application Material	Application Deadline
Restrictive Early Action	Submit Test Scores	November 1st
	Submit Application	November 1st
	Submit Financial Aid Application	November 9th
	Admissions Decisions Released	Mid-December
Regular Decision	Submit Test Scores	January 1st
	Submit Application	January 1st
	Submit Financial Aid Application (if still pending)	February 1st

PRINCETON EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION POLICY

Princeton offers restrictive early action for applicants. So what does this mean for you? If you apply during Princeton's early action cycle, you can't apply to other *private* universities through their early action program. While private colleges will be off the table, you'll still be able to apply early action to public universities, service academies, and international institutions that are nonbinding decisions. You can read more about Princeton's early action policy [here](#).

PRINCETON SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPTS

To complete Princeton's supplemental essay requirements, applicants must complete several short supplemental essays. Their prompts are below and the Princeton supplemental essay guide that they were sourced from can be found [here](#). (See that guide for example essays and analysis.)

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 1: *Briefly elaborate on an activity, organization, work experience, or hobby that has been particularly meaningful to you. (Please respond in 150 words or fewer)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 2: *At Princeton, we value diverse perspectives and the ability to have respectful dialogue about difficult issues. Share a time when you had a conversation with a person or a group of people about a difficult topic. What insight did you gain, and how would you incorporate that knowledge into your thinking in the future? (50-250 words)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 3: *Princeton has a longstanding commitment to service and civic engagement. Tell us how your story intersects (or will intersect) with these ideals. (50-250 words)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 4: *What is a new skill you would like to learn in college? (50 words)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 5: *What brings you joy? (50 words)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 6: *What song represents the soundtrack of your life at this moment? (50 words)*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 7: *For Applicants Pursuing an A.B. Degree (or are Undecided):* *As a research institution that also prides itself on its liberal arts curriculum, Princeton allows students to explore areas across the humanities and the arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. What academic areas most pique your curiosity, and how do the programs offered at Princeton suit your particular interests? Please respond in 250 words or fewer.*

Princeton Supplemental Essay Prompt 8: *For Applicants Pursuing a B.S.E. Degree:* *Please describe why you are interested in studying engineering at Princeton. Include any of your experiences in, or exposure to engineering, and how you think the programs offered at the University suit your particular interests. Please respond in 250 words or fewer*

HOW TO GET INTO PRINCETON—ESSAY TIPS

Quick Tips for Prompt 1

Connect your choice of extracurricular activity or work to **values** you resonate with. Instead of simply listing off your roles and responsibilities—which can make the reader feel disconnected from you—use the word count to bridge your activity to a part of who you are. Try not to focus too much on fancy writing form—you’re working with no more than 150 words. Sometimes it helps to just be direct. It’s important to include information that helps the reader understand your actions and what you’ve learned from said actions.

Incorporate **active verbs** into your essay to help create a clear image to the reader of what you’ve done.

If possible, discuss the impact your actions have had—because of X, Y happened.

Quick Tips for Prompt 2

Mimic the prompt outline to structure your own essay. This might look something like this: your difficult conversations → insight → what now and what next?

Make sure to bring your essay back to you. This prompt is yet another chance for you to show the reader more of who you are and what makes you tick.

Quick Tips for Prompt 3

Your activities list is probably filled with different things you've done and still do that show how important service and civic engagement are to you. Try writing about something you're passionate about.

Be sure to include how your topic connects back to your own values, as well as the different responsibilities and roles you might have because of your topic of choice.

If any of your values are similar to the values in [Princeton's Mission Statement](#), try to have them included in your essay.

Quick Tips for Prompt 4, 5, and 6

Think of each of these prompts as a chance for the reader to see a quick snapshot of who you are. You have 50 words (or about two sentences) to directly respond to each of the prompts.

Try to use as much of the word count as possible to explain your answer. Be intentional and tell 'why' you answered the way that you did.

Be specific. Get creative. Take a *calculated* risk. Generic answers don't always provide the reader with additional information about who you are as a person.

PRINCETON MAJOR-SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

Quick Tips for Prompt 7

Research, research, research. Take time to explore the different research, academic, and even internship opportunities that Princeton offers.

Connect back to your own core values throughout the essay.

Write in a way that shows how you and Princeton are a great fit for each other. Princeton offers excellent resources, but you also offer the university your different talents, skills, and interests. Think of it like this:

A (school-related detail) + B (how this connects back to you) = a great 'Why Us' sentence

Quick Tips for Prompt 8

Avoid mentioning things that Princeton knows about itself. The Prospect Gardens and the creation of Lake Carnegie? Don't include them, they're a quick google search that other applicants might include. The prompt asks about engineering, so let that be the focus of your essay (and yes, this is very much a 'Why Us' type of essay).

Really research Princeton. Look for specific resources, courses, professors, and programs that interest you.

Include Princeton-specific resources into your essay as you weave in your own skills, qualities, and values.