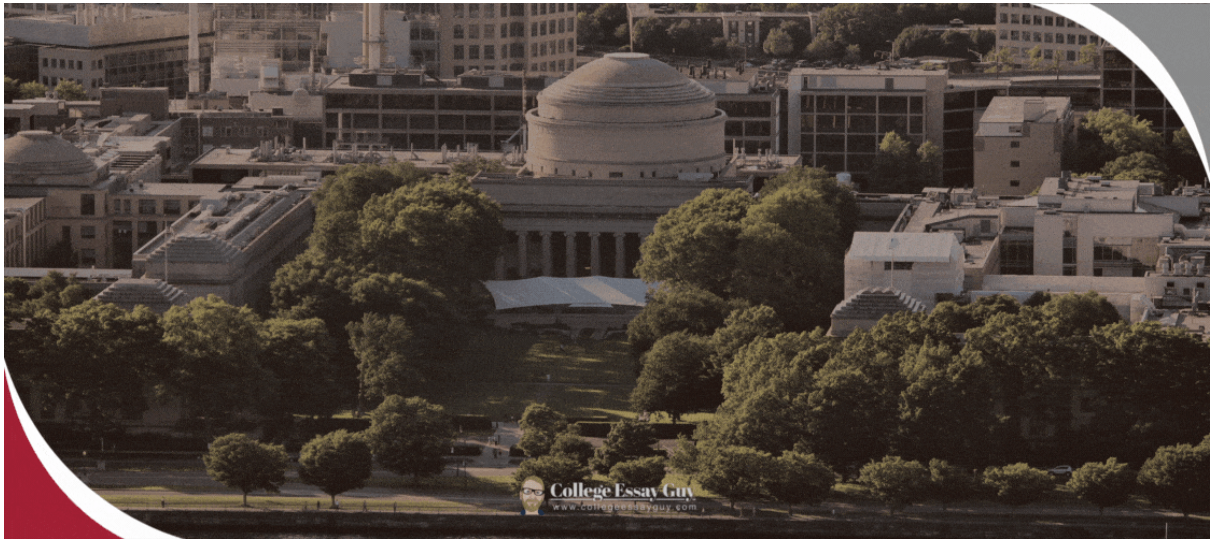# How to Get Into MIT + Admissions Requirements



Because MIT is consistently one of the most selective colleges in the world, we get messages from tons of students asking how to get into MIT.

Well, to get into MIT you'll need near perfect grades and SAT or ACT scores, strong extracurricular activity involvement demonstrating things like commitment to community and leadership, and essays that help you to stand out from other applicants.

But in case you were thinking that applying to MIT is just a numbers fest, a heads up: **the only thing that MIT ranks as "very important" in its application process is *character/personal qualities***. So yes, you'll need pretty amazing academic qualifications, but that's something every other applicant will have. Those won't set you apart.

Last year 33,240 students applied and less than 5% got offered a spot in the freshman class.
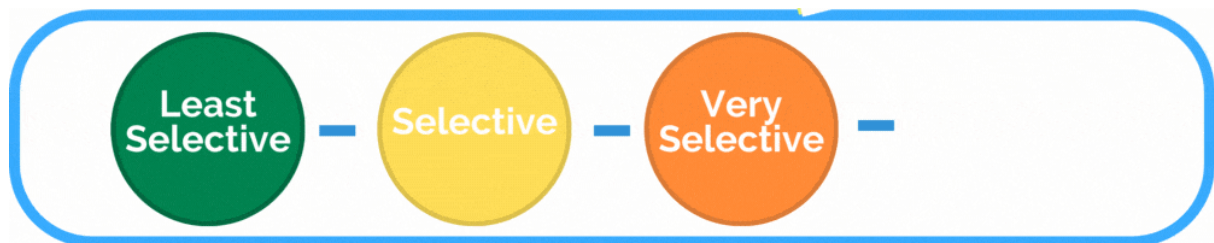
That doesn't mean you can't be one of the applicants that gets into MIT. But it does mean you need to be aware of what odds you're up against. That way, you can prepare the best MIT application possible. And that's exactly why we've put together this guide to how to get into MIT and MIT admissions requirements.

When you're ready, you'll submit your application through MIT's Application Portal; they're one of the few schools not on the Common App. But not to worry—this article will walk you through what you need to know when applying to MIT.

*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 things that go into 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.

# HOW HARD IS IT TO GET INTO MIT?

**It is extremely difficult to get into MIT:** if you look at the below data, you'll see that you need near perfect grades and test scores.



# MIT ACCEPTANCE RATE

On average, **MIT admits about 4.1%** of the students who apply, making it one of the most selective universities in the United States.



**MIT REGULAR DECISION, EARLY ACTION, AND EARLY DECISION ACCEPTANCE RATES**

MIT's overall acceptance rate was 3.9% last year: 33,767 students applied and 1,337 were admitted.
MIT's early action acceptance rate was 4.7%, with 14,781 applicants and 697 acceptances and 9,488 deferred to regular decision; of those deferred, only 176 were later admitted (or 1.8%).

MIT's regular decision acceptance rate was 2.2%, with 640 students admitted out of 28,474 total applicants (regular + deferred).
763 students were offered a place on the wait list. 0 were admitted from the wait list.

# WHAT GPA DO I NEED TO GET INTO MIT?

MIT doesn't publish the average GPA of admitted students. However, 99% of students who submitted their high school class rank were in the top tenth percent of their high school graduating class. Based on data from high schools, **the average GPA of first year students at MIT is around 4.17**.



# WHAT SAT SCORE DO I NEED TO GET INTO MIT?

**Applicants should score between 1400-1600 on the SAT to be strong candidates for admission to MIT**. Students who get into MIT average around a 1540 on the SAT: 25th percentile SAT composite scores are 1510, and 75th percentile scores are 1570.

That breaks down to around a 750 or 760 in Reading and Writing, and around a 790 in Math.

| Assessment | 25th Percentile Score | 75th Percentile Score |
|---|---|---|
| SAT Composite | 1510 | 1570 |
| SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing | 730 | 780 |
| SAT Math | 780 | 800 |

Average SAT

MIT does offer SAT superscoring, meaning that they will look at your highest score from each section of the SAT, rather than scores on a single test. Because of this, you may want to consider taking the test multiple times (though again, **if you're in the competitive range, MIT generally won't care if you bump from a 740 to a 770, and you can probably better spend that energy elsewhere…**).

But a heads up that **MIT has been pretty explicit that they are looking to understand *who you are***—as long as your test scores are roughly competitive, they really don't care whether you scored a perfect 1600 on the SAT.

# WHAT ACT SCORE DO I NEED TO GET INTO MIT?

Students who get into MIT average around a 35 on the ACT: 25th percentile ACT composite scores are 34, and 75th percentile scores are 36.

That breaks down to around a 35 or 36 in ACT Math, and a 35 or 36 in ACT English.

| Assessment | 25th Percentile Score | 75th Percentile Score |
|---|---|---|
| ACT Composite | 34 | 36 |
| ACT Math | 35 | 36 |
| ACT English | 35 | 36 |
| ACT Writing | 8 | 10 |


Average ACT

MIT does offer ACT superscoring, meaning that you can submit your highest score from each section of the ACT, rather than scores on a single test. But if

you're in the competitive range, MIT generally won't care if you bump from a 35 to a 36…

# WHAT DOES MIT LOOK FOR IN STUDENTS?

**The biggest thing MIT focuses on is how a student and the school fit together**: they've directly stated that that is what drives their selection process. Yes, having competitive grades and test scores is important. But most students who get rejected from MIT have those kinds of scores—you need to **show how you and the school will make a great team**.

How do you know if you and MIT fit together? And how do you demonstrate to the school that you think you do?

Start by exploring MIT's mission and values, both through its mission statement and through what it outlines in its discussion of its mission and objectives. Notice, for example, how often the focus is on education and knowledge for service: MIT wants to work with students who want to help address the world's challenges, and who want to "work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of humankind."

How do you see yourself aligning with this mission and these values? What parts of your story demonstrate that you have already worked toward these things, and that MIT is the place for you to take your next steps? How will you and the MIT community make great partners in trying to solve the world's problems?

**How else can you demonstrate that you and MIT fit together? Think about your answers to these questions:**

> How have you collaborated with others in the past, and how can you help MIT admissions readers see that?
> Where have you taken initiative in your education, and how will you continue to do so?
> Where have you taken risks and learned resilience (because MIT knows you're going to fail a lot in life—how you use and work through failure is what's important)?
> Where and how have you explored your creativity?
> How and why do you value community?
> And where do you find balance in life?

# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR MIT

MIT requires letters of recommendation from two teachers, and **the school recommends** **that one letter be from a math or science teacher and one be from a humanities, language, or social science teacher**.

Your recommenders have a couple options for how they submit their letters, but MIT does prefer that recommenders use MIT's application portal.

If you want a guide for how to ask a teacher for a letter of recommendation (and do so in a way that will lead to stronger letters of rec), check out that link.

# MIT APPLICATION DEADLINES

## EARLY ACTION (EA)

| DEADLINE | APPLICATION COMPONENT |
|---|---|
| November 1 | All individual application components—general information, essays, activities, academics, etc. |
| November 1 | Two letters of recommendation—one from a math or science teacher and one from a humanities, social science, or language teacher |
| November 1 | Secondary School Report (SSR), including high school transcript |
| Mid-February | February Updates & Notes Form (including midyear grades) |

## REGULAR ACTION (RA)

| DEADLINE | APPLICATION COMPONENT |
|---|---|
| January 5 | All individual application components—general information, essays, activities, academics, etc. |
| January 5 | Two letters of recommendation—one from a math or science teacher and one from a humanities, social science, or language teacher |
| January 5 | Secondary School Report (SSR), including high school transcript |

# MIT SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPTS & TIPS

**For a full guide to completing the MIT essay prompts (with examples and analysis), click here.**

**PROMPT #1:**

*(Optional) Please tell us more about your cultural background and identity in the space below. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: **Give your grandparents a call!**

Not only will Nana appreciate it, but your elders might just have a sense of cultural heritage you weren't aware of. Hearing a family member's take on this question might make you realize you have more of a cultural background than you initially thought.

**PROMPT #2**

*(Optional) Please tell us if aspects of your identity have been a barrier to educational access and opportunity. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: **Share who you are.**

As discussed above, MIT cares most about who you are and how you and the school fit together. So while this prompt is optional, spend some time brainstorming different ways you identify (you don't need to limit yourself to just race or gender here) and how aspects of those identities have perhaps created challenges for you, then also think about if there's a way to use some of that story to show how you and the school fit together.

**PROMPT #3**

*Tell us more about why this field of study at MIT appeals to you. (100 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: This is a *super* short "Why major?" essay. Because it's so short, the key will be to *briefly* share the origin story for the major you're considering. Here's a guide to the "Why major" essay.

## PROMPT #4

*(Optional) If you think that additional information about your family will give us a more thorough impression of your background, please include it here. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: This is basically part two of the first "cultural background" prompt. Have more to share? Share it here!

## PROMPT #5

*(Optional) If there is anything that we should know about your school's grading system, please use the space below. (250 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: Check with your guidance counselor to see if there's anything you should include here. Things *not* to include: general statements about teachers' difficult grading standards or over-explanations of not-that-bad grades.

## PROMPT #6

*(Optional) If you have or had any extenuating circumstances regarding your coursework (including disruptions due to COVID-19), please tell us about them here. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: You can put here whatever you're putting in the 250-word space included on the Common App COVID-19 section. For a complete guide to that one, including examples, click here.

## PROMPT #7

*(Optional) We understand that sometimes things outside of your control impact your ability to complete tests to the best of your ability. If you have an extenuating circumstance, such as exam cancellations or illness, please let us know here. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: Pretty straightforward. This is similar to the Common App "additional information" section, but it's specific to extenuating circumstances like exam cancellations or illnesses.

**PROMPT #8**

*Please list up to four activities—if you have more than four, choose the ones that are most important to you. (40 words or fewer per activity description)*

**Tips**: Emphasize tangible, measurable impact. Use active verbs. Use lists and incomplete sentences. Cut extra words by using more specific words (i.e., "told people about" → advertised, "came up with" → brainstormed). For a comprehensive list of tips and ideas, head over to our full activities list writing guide.

**PROMPT #9**

*(Optional) If you have or had any extenuating circumstances regarding your activities (including disruptions due to COVID-19), please tell us about them here. (150 words or fewer)*

**Tips**: This is truly optional, but if, for example, you had to drop a sport because of injury or had to choose between two clubs because of time commitments or balancing your life, you can say so here.

**PROMPT #10**

*We know you lead a busy life, full of activities, many of which are required of you. Tell us about something you do simply for the pleasure of it. (225 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: **End with a clear "so what."**

This isn't a trick question—they aren't looking for you to say "calculus". MIT really wants to know where you find joy. If possible, find a way to connect your interests back to your core values. With only 225 words available, don't be afraid to *tell* the reader what this just-for-fun activity shows about you.

**PROMPT #11**

*Describe the world you come from; for example, your family, clubs, school, community, city, or town. How has that world shaped your dreams and aspirations? (225 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: **Start by brainstorming your dreams and aspirations.**

What problems do you hope to solve? What career do you want to pursue? What impact do you hope to have on your community? Make a list of 5-10 long-term goals you want to accomplish.

**Bonus tip: Include a mini "Why us?" moment that captures how MIT will help you continue to pursue that dream and aspiration.**

By no means is this a requirement, but if there's an MIT-specific resource that will help you achieve your goal, include it!

## PROMPT #12

*MIT brings people with diverse backgrounds and experiences together to better the lives of others. Our students work to improve their communities in different ways, from tackling the world's biggest challenges to being a good friend. Describe one way in which you have collaborated with people who are different from you to contribute to your community. (225 words or fewer)*

**Tips**: **Demonstrate collaboration, cite tangible outcomes.**

The "collaborated with people who are different from you" phrasing was added in 2022—be sure to address it. And MIT won't necessarily expect you to have solved the problem entirely, but the reader may like to know what the impact your actions had.

## PROMPT #13

*Tell us about a significant challenge you've faced (that you feel comfortable sharing) or something important that didn't go according to plan. How did you manage the situation? (225 words)*

**Tip**: **Leave the reader with a satisfying conclusion, even if you haven't fully resolved the challenge.**

If you're still working to overcome that challenge, tell us how. And if you learned something valuable along the way, don't hesitate to share it explicitly: readers tend to care more about how you go about trying to solve problems and what you've learned from them than about the challenge itself.

## PROMPT #14

*(Optional) No application can meet the needs of every individual. If you think that additional information or material will give us a more thorough impression of you, please include it here. (Many students will leave this section blank—and that's okay.)*

*Please note, we may not be able to access all links you share. If you have supplemental materials you would like to submit, please refer to our optional creative portfolios. (350 words or fewer)*

**Tip**: This is basically the Additional Info section of your Common App. You can find a complete guide for that section here.

### ACTIVITIES PROMPTS/OPTIONS

*(In addition to the 4 Required Activities)*:

> List any summer activities (reading, relaxing, camp, travel, summer school, volunteer work, etc.). List your most recent summer activity first. *You may list any summer jobs and internships in the previous Jobs section.*
> *You may list up to **five scholastic distinctions** you have won since entering high (secondary) school. Please include the year you received the achievement and indicate the level of distinction.*
> *You may list up to **five non-scholastic distinctions** you have won since entering high (secondary) school. Please include the year you received the achievement and indicate the level of distinction.*

**Tip**: Similar to above, this is similar to a combo of the Common App "activities list" and the "additional information" sections: use them to show how you have pursued your curiosity, engaged with community, and worked toward bettering yourself and your society.

# HOW TO GET INTO MIT—FINAL THOUGHTS

The most important thing is to show how you and MIT fit together—MIT gives you a lot of chances to do so through your writing and activities. Yes, you will generally also need near perfect grades, SAT or ACT scores, and strong extracurricular engagement. But if you think MIT is really where you fit best, use the various parts of the application to help them see it.