

College Planning 101

A PREPMATTERS PRESENTATION



Who We Are

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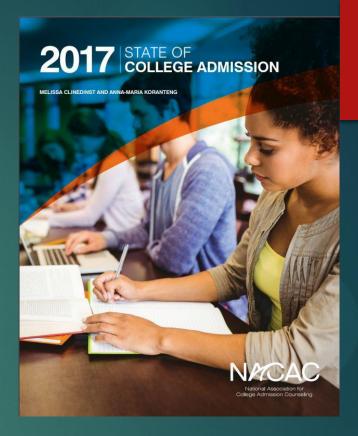


What do colleges want?

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2016

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in College Prep Courses	216	76.9%	12.5%	9.3%	1.4%
Grades in All Courses	218	77.1	13.8	6.4	2.8
Strength of Curriculum	218	51.8	35.3	7.3	5.5
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	219	54.3	27.9	13.7	4.1
Essay or Writing Sample	217	18.9	35.9	22.1	23.0
Counselor Recommendation	213	14.6	46.0	25.8	13.6
Student's Demonstrated Interest	212	13.7	25.5	32.1	28.8
Teacher Recommendation	211	10.9	46.4	28.0	14.7
Class Rank	217	9.2	24.0	34.6	32.3
Subject Test Scores (AP, 1B)	216	6.9	30.6	30.6	31.9
Portfolio	210	6.2	5.7	27.6	60.5
Extracurricular Activities	214	7.9	36.0	36.9	19.2
SAT II Scores	212	2.4	6.1	21.2	70.3
Interview	213	4.7	17.4	31.9	46.0
State Graduation Exam Scores	210	1.9	7.6	21.9	68.6
Work	211	2.8	15.6	47.4	34.1

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2016





How Do Colleges Evaluate Students?

- ▶ ACADEMICS
 - Grades
 - ▶ Academic Rigor
 - ▶ Test Scores

- ▶ PERSONAL
 - Extra-curricular Activities
 - Essays
 - ▶ Letters of Recommendation
 - ▶ Interviews
 - Application Strategy
 - ▶ Other Considerations



THE ACADEMICS

GRADES, RIGOR, TEST SCORES





Grades and Academic Rigor

▶ Do I need to identify an intended major for undergraduate admissions?

► GPA, how important is that number?

What's better? High grades or high rigor?





Standardized Testing

- ▶ PSAT
- ► SAT/ACT
- ► SAT Subject Tests
- ► AP/IB Exams
- ► TOEFL/IELT





an upperclassman told you the act is way easier than the SAT. Your aunt tells you that no one can get into an lvy without taking five subject tests. What's a stressed-out high schooler to do? Chill. As a test-prep geek and founder of PrepMatters, I've come to debunk the most common myths of standardized tests.

Myth 1: Standardized tests are IQ tests.
Knowing the meanings of laconic, loquacious, or lugubri usu does not prove you are smart. Nor does knowing how
nany real roots there are for a quadratic or the rules of loga thims, apostrophes, or parallel structure. Mastery of that in
ormation demonstrates knowledge, not intelligence. In her
emarkable book Mindset, psychologist Carol Dweck details
be benefits of approaching learning with an understrading

that intelligence is not a fixed commod ity but something that can grow through hard work and practice. The first step in test preparation, therefore, should be to shift how you view these tests and your potential for success on them. Combine dedicated preparation with the belief that you can (and willig do well. You will not only perform a tyour best, what your 'best' can be will also keep increasing!

Myth 2: Taking both tests will double your hances of doing well.

Goodgrief, don't you have better things to do with your Saturday mornings? Yes, these tests matter. But so, too, do your grades, activities, family, friends, and, oh yeah, your sainly if you are remarkably better at one test, it should become evident pretty quickly after some practice rounds. If it doesn't then you are probably like most kids and will do equally well on either. Pick the test you feel more corn fortable with (even if it's because your dad likes it better, or perhaps because he doesn't) and put your efforts into that test. Myth 3: The ACT is an easile rest than the SAT.

The ACT is a different test, not better or esailer. In fact, most kids will get similar scores on both. But some will find one test to be so much more their thing. For instance, you might do better on the ACT if you are a highly academic student prone to test atmately (if does not lean on working memory as much as the SAT); you read faster than anyone you know; and you're confortable with the more advanced math setted on the ACT (trigonometry, conic sections, and logarithms). You might do better on the SAT if you are a sharp wiseguy (or wisegift), since the SAT rewards those who look for 'the angle'; you have a killer vocabulary and can decipher even

the densest text; and you are a question analytically. It is w sure you aren't missing an op because "everyone" is takin about "everyone." Which tes

Myth 4: "Good" colleges r I worked with a kid for wh His ACT of 34 was fantastically and practice SATs. Dad, how schools" would 'take' the Ab been well placed years ago, it mors, dean of admissions a sures, "We accept ACT and SA basis." Good enough for me. are entirely test-optional. Ali Myth 5: You should take t

Yes, these tests matter. But so do grades, family, friends, and, oh yeah, your sanity.

doesn't mean you should be once if you know you can official SAT or ACT as practic The real thing is the real thir Myth 6: If you take the AC it's true at Yale. It's not tru

It's true at Yale. It's not tru It's not true at Williams. In sho tests are one-hour exams or leges and universities (but ce mend one or more in additior SAT or ACT. You don't want to you won't need, but you also to a school because you did ments. Visit schools' website recommend, and plan to tak

Ned Johnson is president of P .com), a test preparatory and o based in Maryland, and coauth Parents Can Help Teens Overo

EXCLUSIVE RANKINGS

USNEWS STREET STORT STORT SOMETHING SOMETHING

Up-and-Coming Schools



Standardized Testing

- How do students choose which tests to take? ACT or SAT?
- What is super-scoring and score choice?
- Do colleges require Subject Tests?
- What are test-optional/flexible schools? (Visit Fairtest.org to learn more.)





When to Take Standardized Tests

SAT	ACT		
May 5, 2018	June 9, 2018		
June 2, 2018	July 14, 2018		
August 25, 2018	September 8, 2018		
October 6, 2018	October 27, 2018		
November 3, 2018	December 8, 2018		
December 1, 2018	February 9, 2019		
March 9, 2019	April 2019		



PERSONAL QUALITIES

ACTIVITIES, ESSAYS, INTERVIEWS, LETTERS OF REC...





Extracurricular Activities



- What activities look good on college applications?
- Should students focus on depth or breadth?



Application Essays



What makes a compelling college essay?

When should students start working on their college applications and essays?



Letters of Recommendation



What about letters of rec from teachers, counselors, and other people?

► How many is too many?



Other Considerations



- ▶ First generation
- Under-represented minority
- Recruited athlete
- Legacy/Development applicants
- International students
- ▶ Early decision applicants



Application Options



- Common Application (Common App)
- Coalition Application
- School-specific applications
- ▶ UCAS
- Others



Application Deadlines

- Regular Deadline (Jan.)
- ► Early Decision (Nov.)
 - ► Early Decision II (Jan.)
- ► Early Action (Nov./Dec.)
 - Restrictive
 - ► Single-choice
- Priority Decision (Nov./Dec.)
- Rolling deadline
- Waitlists (March through summer)





Picking a College



- Creating the college list
- Making campus visits
- Interviewing



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