

Westminster College Advising

Highly Selective Colleges
& Military Academies



The hardest colleges to get into for 2023

How can you beat the odds?

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Harvard - 5% | 9. Brown - 8% |
| 2. Stanford - 5% | 10. Univ of Penn - 9% |
| 3. Princeton - 6% | |
| 4. Cal Tech - 7% | 19. Vanderbilt - 9% |
| 5. Yale - 7% | 23. Naval Academy - 9% |
| 6. MIT - 7% | 24. West Point - 9% |
| 7. Univ of Chicago - 7% | 34. US Air Force - 13% |
| 8. Duke - 8% | 49. Georgia Tech - 21% |



Part I:

Highly Selective College Applications

Part II:

Military College Applications

- Why would you want to apply
 - What is required
 - How to apply
- Timeline for application
- How to set yourself up now
 - Having a backup plan

Part I: Highly Selective Colleges



The 2023 Top Ten Colleges

- Princeton University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Harvard University
- Stanford University
- Yale University
- University of Chicago
- Johns Hopkins University
- University of Pennsylvania
- California Institute of Technology
- Duke University
- Northwestern University



| School Name | Acceptance Rate | Average GPA | Average SAT | Average ACT |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Caltech*</u> | 3.9% | 4.19 | 1520 | 33 |
| <u>Stanford**</u> | 3.9% | 3.96 | 1520 | 35 |
| <u>Harvard</u> | 4.0% | 4.2 | 1530 | 35 |
| <u>MIT**</u> | 4.1% | 4.17 | 1550 | 35 |
| <u>Princeton**</u> | 4.3% | 3.93 | 1520 | 34 |
| <u>Yale</u> | 5.3% | 4.14 | 1520 | 34 |
| <u>Brown</u> | 5.5% | 4.08 | 1510 | 34 |
| <u>UPenn**</u> | 5.9% | 3.90 | 1530 | 34 |
| <u>Columbia*</u> | 6% | 4.12 | 1530 | 34 |
| <u>Dartmouth</u> | 6.2% | 4.09 | 1500 | 34 |
| <u>UChicago*</u> | 6.5% | 4.33 | 1540 | 34 |
| <u>Northwestern</u> | 7.0% | 4.10 | 1520 | 34 |
| <u>Vanderbilt</u> | 7.1% | 3.89 | 1530 | 34 |
| <u>Johns Hopkins</u> | 7.5% | 3.94 | 1540 | 34 |
| <u>Duke</u> | 7.8% | 4.13 | 1520 | 34 |
| <u>Bowdoin</u> | 8.8% | 3.93 | 1420 | 33 |
| <u>Cornell</u> | 8.7% | 4.07 | 1500 | 34 |
| <u>Rice</u> | 9.5% | 4.12 | 1530 | 34 |

Admissions advice
and statistics from
Prep Scholar
on how to apply to
the most selective
colleges

Why would you want to apply?

- Desire a highly specialized degree or innovative programming
- Desire a high academic rigor
- Want to be taught by specific professor
- Tuition is often more affordable - generous endowments
- Early or guaranteed acceptance to graduate program
- Highly connected and supportive alumni network
- Diverse class from all around the world
- Guaranteed employment



Meeting the Requirements

- Most rigorous levels of English, math, science, history, and foreign language, and electives that match with major
- Top grades and top 5% of graduating class
- Almost perfect ACT, AP or SAT scores (or score optional)
- Resume with depth of initiative and impact on community
- Well written, memorable personal and supplemental essays
- Essays that reflect unique intelligence, curiosity & perspective
- Something impressive or unusual that rises above the crowd

What is Holistic Review?

Admissions Officers consider every aspect of the application, from test scores to extracurricular involvement to special accomplishments — and everything in between. By evaluating a student's application from a holistic perspective, the college gets to know applicants as people, not numbers.

1. Apply Early Decision (binding) or Early Action (non-binding)
2. Top course rigor and GPA on transcript all 4 years - a must!
3. If reporting test scores, they need to be higher than admits' average, or apply test optional - ask what is admit rate for both
4. Choose major carefully - acceptance rate higher for some
5. Make sure your application matches with college's mission statement - have a cohesive and thoughtful application
6. Look for openings in athletics, club teams, or band
7. How are you different? Racial diversity, socioeconomic diversity, geographic diversity, and different interests
8. Make sure letters of recommendation align with what you are writing in your applications
9. If waitlisted or deferred - state continuing interest and update application



How to apply

Set yourself up now: Academics

Grades and strength in curriculum carry the most weight in admission to highly selective schools:

- 5 core subjects all four years (Math, Science, English, History, Language)
- All A's in core subjects, or trending upward
- Honors, AP/IB, or college courses - most rigorous on School Profile
- Courses line up with student's interests and declared major
- Start taking PSAT in 10th, and ACT or SAT in 11th grade
- Set a goal for ACT or SAT and take prep classes to help
- Take AP exams - use practice tests to prepare

Set yourself up now: Activities

Once student has met the high academic threshold, maintaining a depth of involvement in activities is the next critical step. This is an incredible opportunity for your student to stand out from the pack:

- Find something **interesting** that fits naturally in your life
- Can be music, athletics, an academic interest, an independent project, community service, art, creative writing, or entrepreneurship
- Demonstrate **initiative** by starting with an idea, then taking steps to make it a reality. Create something that you can pursue to a higher level
- Consider your level of **involvement** (time spent, leadership)
- Consider level of **impact** (school, region, state, national, international)
- Something meaningful will also have personal impact, reflected in essays

Initiative and **Impact** can set you apart!

Set yourself up now: Strategy

Colleges want students who are a good fit, are applying for the right reasons, and will be successful on their campus.

- Visit the college and research website, may track interest
- Know the culture and community of their institution
- Be very intentional how you write your supplemental essays, so you are memorable
- Highlight these aspects of your personal character: integrity, independence, resilience, commitment, care for others
- Excel in one or more extracurricular activities or specialize talent
- Make the most of every opportunity and resource available. Show good use of discretionary time
- Show how you are unique or are interested in diversity
- Stand-out in a competitions, locally or nationally Science, Academic, Photography, Music Composition, or Music Performance

Follow the Admissions Blogs

- [Princeton University](#)
- [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)
- [Harvard University](#)
- [Georgia Tech University](#)
- [Yale University](#)
- [University of Chicago](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University](#)
- [University of Pennsylvania](#)
- [California Institute of Technology](#)
- [Duke University](#)



Create Cohesive Application

Make sure each layer of your application points to a "soundbite" or personal statement

- ✓ Transcript - Which courses you take support intended major
- ✓ Standardized Tests - Strong in the subjects you will study in declared major
- ✓ Activities - Demonstrate interest in major and show your impact on community. Also show your commitment and leadership over past 4 years
- ✓ Personal Essay - Tells a story that reflects your personality and passions
- ✓ Supplemental Essay - Shows sincere interest in that campus community
- ✓ Letters of Recommendation - Explains who you are within the learning community and your commitment to your major

Have a backup plan

- Choose colleges that are a good fit for YOU
- Have at least 2 target and 2 likely, in addition to the highly selective college (reach)
- Keep it in perspective: If you don't get in, don't take it personal. You will not know all the the circumstances
- Reapply the next year, but find get involved in something that enhances your application
- Trust in God's plans for you - they are good!



Part II: Military Academies

The Five Federal Service Academies



[U.S. Military Academy](#)



[U.S. Naval Academy](#)



[U.S. Air Force Academy](#)



[U.S. Coast Guard Academy](#)



[U.S. Merchant Marine Academy](#)

The Six Senior Military Colleges

Students are part of a Corps of Cadets, and live and study in an immersive military environment similar to a service academy, but there is no service requirement after graduation unless you receive an ROTC scholarship

- [Norwich University](#) (Vermont; four-year private university)
- [The Citadel](#) (South Carolina; four-year public college)
- [Texas A&M University](#) (Texas; four-year public university)
- [University of North Georgia](#) (Georgia; four-year public university)
- [Virginia Military Institute](#) (Virginia; four-year public college)
- [Virginia Polytechnic Institute](#) (Virginia; four-year public university)

State-Supported Maritime Colleges

Students at these academies are organized as cadets, and graduate with appropriate licenses from the U.S. Coast Guard and/or U.S. Merchant Marine

- California State University Maritime Academy
- Great Lakes Maritime Academy
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Maine Maritime Academy
- Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- State University of New York Maritime College
- State University of New York (SUNY)
- Texas A&M Maritime Academy

Military Junior Colleges

These four schools participate in the Army's two-year Early Commissioning Program ([ECP](#)), an Army ROTC program in which qualified students can earn a commission as a Second Lieutenant after only two years of college.

- Georgia Military College (Milledgeville, GA)
- Marion Military Institute (Marion, AL)
- New Mexico Military Institute (Roswell, NM)
- Valley Forge Military Academy and College (Wayne, Pennsylvania)



ARMY ROTC



Why would you want to apply?

- Desire an immersive, militaristic environment
- Fully funded education
- Want a career in the military
- Premium leadership development program
- Graduate as an officer
- Want to serve their country
- Highly connected alumni network
- Guaranteed employment



What is required

- 4 years of highest levels of English, Math, Science, History, two years of foreign language, and other courses
- Excellent grades and high moral character
- Persuasive letters of recommendation and a [nomination](#)
- Participation in team sports all 4 years - team captain
- Top 10% of graduating class
- Top ACT or SAT scores - varies by service academy
- Many strong leadership and service activities
- Intense demonstrated interest

How to apply

1. Confirm Eligibility - US Citizen, between 17 and 25, unmarried
2. Get Started - start a preliminary application, reach out to recruiter
3. Apply for a Nomination - contact your US Senator or Representative
4. College Entrance Exams - SAT or ACT with writing
5. Transcripts - official transcript and mid-year senior grades
6. Candidate Fitness Assessment - physical fitness exam
7. Medical Exam - must be in good medical condition
8. Complete Your Online Application - activities, awards, letters of recommendation, personal essay, transcript and school profile
9. Interview - candidate and their parents

Application Timeline

West Point
Air Force Academy
Naval Academy
Coast Guard
Merchant Marine

- Before 11th grade - Make a plan with academics, sports, leadership, and test scores
- Prepare for Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA)
- December 11th Grade - fill out preliminary application and contact recruiter
- February 1st - apply for Summer Leaders Experience or STEM camps
- Spring 11th Grade - Start applying for nominations from both US Senators and Representative
- Summer before 12th Grade - Take CFA, work on resume and essays
- August 12th Grade - Complete application for admission, submit School Official Evaluations
- Fall - Attend information sessions and compete for state Nominations
- October - Complete Medical Exam and appeal any issues that come up
- October/November - Interviews
- March - April - Candidates typically notified of admission

Set yourself up now: Academics

- Focus on getting good grades and taking challenging academic classes*
- 4 years of Math: geometry, algebra, and trigonometry; pre-calculus and calculus are also very valuable and are highly encouraged
- 4 years of Science - at least one year each of chemistry and physics
- 4 years of English - special attention to the study and practice of effective writing, grammar, literature, and speech
- Foreign language - at least two years
- History - one full year of U.S. History, and European or World History
- Introductory computer, geography, government, economics, and typing courses are recommended

*Honors, Advanced Placement, if offered

Set yourself up now: Activities

- ✓ Hone your competitive spirit by participating in athletics
- ✓ Practice leadership skills in school clubs
- ✓ Serve local community
- ✓ Attend local Civil Air Patrol, Sea Cadets, Boys/Girls State
- ✓ Attend US Naval Academy's STEM camps ([here](#))
- ✓ Attend Summer Sports Camps at Air Force Academy ([here](#))
- ✓ Read through West Point "Start Young" brochure ([here](#))
- ✓ Practice the Candidate Fitness Assessment ([CFA](#))
- ✓ Build a relationship with your local US Representative and Senators
- ✓ Start running regularly; two-mile runs are recommended
- ✓ Reach out to local recruiter and make sure they know you are interested



Set yourself up now: Nomination

Main Nomination Sources: [Senator](#), [Representative](#), [Vice-President](#)

Other Nomination Sources

- Army (Active, Reserve, and National Guard)
- Army Junior and Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Units and Honor ROTC Units of other services
- Children of deceased or disabled veterans and children of prisoners of war or servicemembers missing in action
- Children of Medal of Honor Awardees
- Sons and daughters of career military personnel may be eligible for Presidential nominations. Service-Connected Nominations are due 15 December.

Very competitive - only 1 to 10 nominations given within a state

Start in spring semester of 11th grade year

[FAQ](#) - Frequently asked questions

Have a backup plan

- If no sports teams, consider club sports or individualized like rowing, cross fit, fencing, etc.
- If no leadership opportunities in school, join Sea Cadets, Civil Air Patrol, Sea Scouts, Boys Scouts
- If you do not have the grades emphasize athletics and leadership activities
- Attain certifications like scuba diving, flight license, wilderness survival
- Consider being a recruited athlete
- If you do not have standardized test scores, look at Merchant Marines or Coast Guard Academy
- If you do not have nomination, look at Coast Guard, Military or Maritime colleges/universities
- If you do not get in and really want it, consider prep year programs:

[West Point](#) [Air Force](#) [Merchant Marines](#) [Naval Academy](#)

The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps
Proverbs 16:9

