

The  
**Princeton**  
Review®



# FINDING YOUR BEST FIT COLLEGES

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February 12, 2025

# FINDING YOUR BEST FIT COLLEGES

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What Are  
Best Fit  
Colleges?

2

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What  
Colleges  
Want

3

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Getting Into  
Your Best  
Fit Colleges

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**WHAT ARE  
BEST FIT COLLEGES?**



**There are over 4,000  
colleges in America**

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***You will identify your  
best-fit colleges***

# DREAM SCHOOLS

From The Princeton Review's [College Hopes & Worries Survey](#)

## STUDENTS' TOP 10

1. Harvard College

2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology

3. Princeton University

4. Stanford University

5. University of Michigan

6. Yale University

7. University of Texas-Austin

8. Columbia University

9. New York University

10. Brown University

## PARENTS' TOP 10

1. Massachusetts Institute of Technology

2. Princeton University

3. Harvard College

4. Stanford University

5. Duke University

6. University of Michigan

7. Yale University

8. New York University

9. Cornell University

10. Brown University



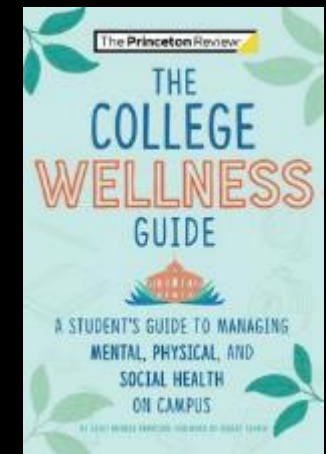
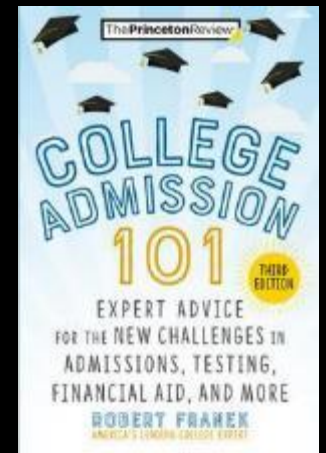
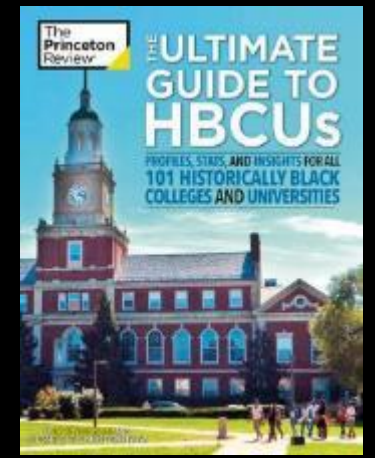
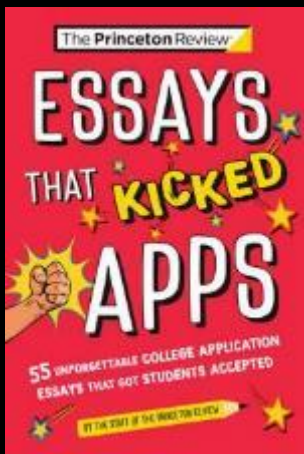
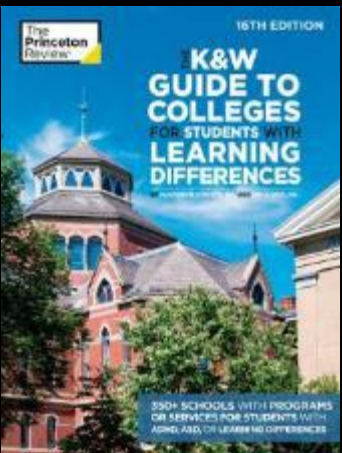
# THE BEST FIT SCHOOLS FOR YOU...

- Academic Fit
- Social Fit
- Financial Fit
- Career Services Fit



To find your best-fit schools, go right to the source:

Current College Students





# WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE A SCHOOL

- Prestige
- Programs
- Location
- School Spirit
- Friends
- Family

# Identifying Your Best-Fit Schools

✓ Visit Campuses

✓ Attend College Fairs

✓ Go to Information Sessions

✓ Interview

✓ Call Admissions Offices



College admissions is **not** a game of winners and losers.

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**WHAT  
COLLEGES  
WANT**

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# WHAT IS A SELECTIVE COLLEGE?

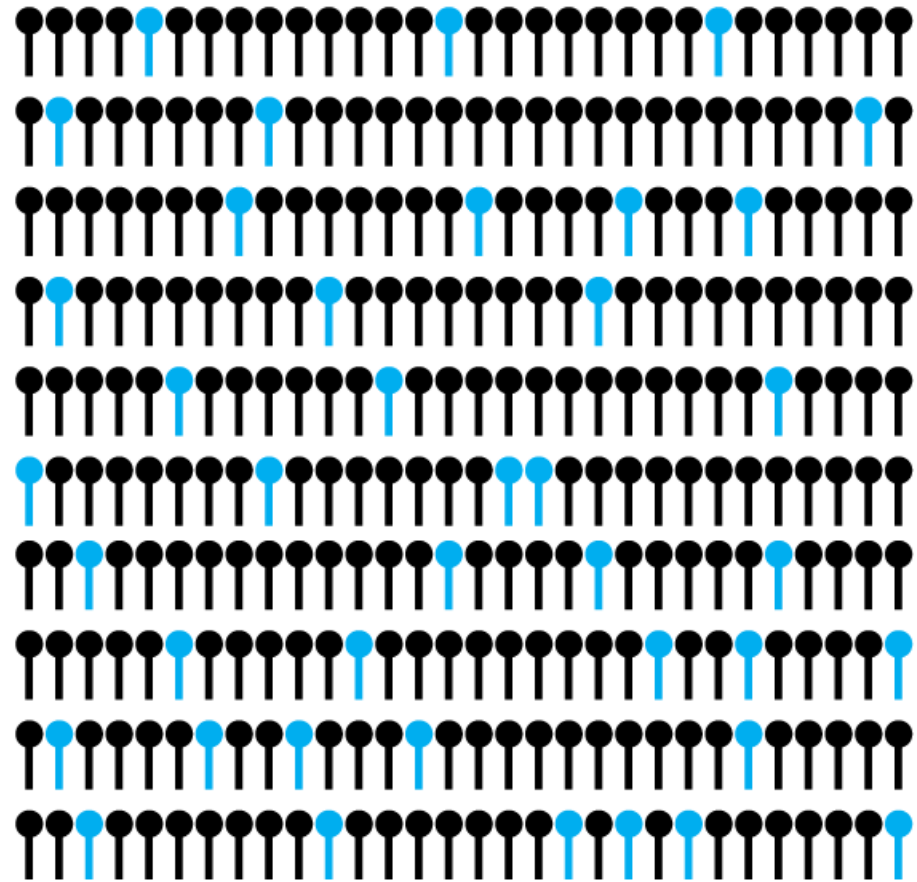
A selective college is one that **admits** some students and **rejects** others

Very, Highly, and Most Selective are subjective and undefined

# Why are colleges selective?

Each school has a **select number of spots** for admission.

Admissions officers are looking for the “right” students, not necessarily the conventionally “top” students.



# YOUR HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

| 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade | Sem 1 | Sem 2 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| English               | X     | X     |
| Math                  | X     | X     |
| Social Studies        | X     | X     |
| Science               | X     | X     |
| Foreign Language      | X     | X     |
| Elective              | X     | X     |
| Elective              | X     | X     |

| 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade | Sem 1 | Sem 2 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| English                | X     | X     |
| Math                   | X     | X     |
| Social Studies         | X     | X     |
| Science                | X     | X     |
| Foreign Language       | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |

| OVERALL        |      |
|----------------|------|
| Unweighted GPA | X.XX |
| Weighted GPA   | X.XX |
| Class Rank     | XX   |

| 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade | Sem 1 | Sem 2 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| English                | X     | X     |
| Math                   | X     | X     |
| Social Studies         | X     | X     |
| Science                | X     | X     |
| Foreign Language       | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |

| 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade | Sem 1 | Sem 2 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| English                | X     | X     |
| Math                   | X     | X     |
| Social Studies         | X     | X     |
| Science                | X     | X     |
| Foreign Language       | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |
| Elective               | X     | X     |

# Your Standardized Test Scores

| <b>SAT SCORE</b> | <b>INTERNAL RATING</b> | <b>ACT SCORE</b> |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1500-1600        | 10                     | 34-36            |
| 1400-1500        | 9                      | 31-33            |
| 1300-1400        | 8                      | 28-30            |
| 1200-1300        | 7                      | 25-27            |
| 1100-1200        | 6                      | 22-24            |
| 1000-1100        | 5                      | 19-21            |
| 900-1000         | 4                      | 16-18            |
| 800-900          | 3                      | 13-15            |
| 700-800          | 2                      | 11-12            |
| <700             | 1                      | <10              |



## In *The Best 390 Colleges*

# Test required, Test Free, Test-Optional?

**Test Required**  
7% of Schools

**Test Optional**  
84% of Schools

**Test Flexible**  
2% of Schools

**Test Free**  
7% of Schools



## In *The Best 390 Colleges*

# Test required, Test Free, Test-Optional?

**93% of all schools will want to see high test scores if students submit them**

**96% of those schools with <25% acceptance rate want to see high scores**

# WHAT ELSE DO APPLICATION READERS SEE?

- Application Essays
- Letters of Recommendation
- Extracurricular Activities



**Every application reader asks  
the same question about  
every applicant:**

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***Will you make our community  
better by being here?***

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# GETTING INTO YOUR BEST FIT COLLEGES

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# BUILDING YOUR APPLICATION LIST

- ONLY Best-Fit Schools
- Reach, Target, & Likely Schools
- Balance your list

# Your College Application

**INFORMATION**

**NUMBERS**

*SAT dates: August, October, November | ACT dates: September, October*

**YOUR SUBMISSIONS**



# PERSONAL STATEMENT AND ESSAYS

YOUR  
APPLICATION ESSAY  
SHOWS THE ADMISSION  
COMMITTEE WHAT  
MAKES YOU DIFFERENT  
FROM OTHER  
APPLICANTS



# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

YOUR **RECOMMENDATIONS** SHOW  
THE ADMISSION COMMITTEE WHO  
YOU ARE IN THE **CLASSROOM**

ASK EARLY and PROVIDE  
INFORMATION

THANK THEM FOR THEIR HELP!



# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

YOUR  
**ACTIVITY LIST**  
SHOWS THE ADMISSION  
COMMITTEE HOW YOU  
SPENT TIME  
**OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

# APPLICATION DEADLINES

✓ Regular Decision

✓ Priority Deadline

✓ Early Action

✓ Early Decision

✓ Rolling Admissions

# One last application deadline...

✓ Restrictive Early Action/Single Choice Early Action

*Typically used at highly selective schools (including but not limited to Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale).*

*It's not binding, like early decision, but does indicate to the school that it is the only **private** school to which the applicant is applying early decision/early action.*

A photograph of a library with a wooden ladder leaning against a tall bookshelf filled with books. The scene is dimly lit, with the ladder and the top of the bookshelf being the brightest parts of the image. The background is dark, and the text is overlaid on the right side.

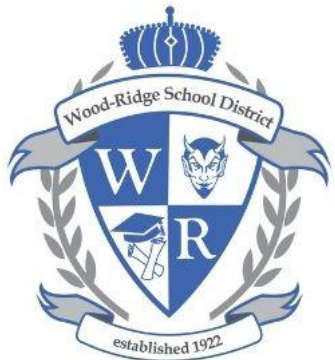
**Dream colleges are  
your best-fit schools.**

***You can find them,  
and you can  
get into them.***

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

College Readiness  
Webinar Series



# Essays That Kicked Apps:

## Crafting Your College Essay

Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 7pm

In a more competitive than ever admissions landscape, college application essays are a great way to stand out from other applicants. In this presentation, we will discuss why these essays are important, some editing basics, and how to make your essay memorable in the minds of the admissions committee.





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# Questions?

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