

Harvard, Berkeley, or Bust: The Truth about Selective Colleges

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Course Selection & Grades

1. Admissions representatives evaluate where you are: Courses and grades - push your rigor - but more specifically, push yourself in the area you want to study after high school
2. Grades should go up not down

Standardized testing

1. We will start seeing more testing plans: optional, required, and not required.
<https://www.ccmrwithmsthrash.com/seniors/institution-optional-information>
2. Having an SAT or ACT test score-you may or may not need it
3. Colleges do not have a preference for SAT or ACT (my side note: if you're applying for a STEM major, you want to take ACT-it has a science component and can demonstrate your strengths)
4. Testing will never get you into a highly selective college: It boils down to whether or not you can do the work
5. If a school requires scores, it can be the reason for "not accepted"
6. Do your research on [colleges](#) you're interested in and their testing policies

[Letters of Recommendation](#)

1. Admissions representatives reading your letters ultimately want to know how you're going to show up in the classroom. Can you contribute, be kind, and hold a conversation?
2. Suggest getting a recommendation letter from a STEM and Humanities teacher- get diverse letters (some elite schools require this)
3. Ask the people who know you the best and like you the most!

Summer & Extracurricular Activities

<https://www.ccmrwithmsthrash.com/events>

1. Get some rest, relax, and don't overbook yourself
2. Attending an elite summer camp doesn't necessarily help you get into that university during the application process
3. Explore things that interest you- spend your time and energy on those things
4. Extracurriculars can include taking care of family, walking dogs, and hobbies

Essays

1. Students get very anxious about the topic, but the readers are taking about 3 minutes on an essay because there are so many essays.
2. Tell your story and move on

Find your Fit

1. One elite school might be a good fit but that doesn't mean all are.
2. Recruiters are looking for students that are a good fit for their particular college
3. Don't stress over pieces that you can't control: essay prompts, application questions, can you do the work, etc.

Remember: each acceptance is day-to-day and varies from one admissions officer to another

Early Decision

1. Binding

Demonstrate Interest

1. Get on the college mailing list
2. Go to an open campus day
3. Ask the college if they consider this when making decisions on applications
4. If they do, build a personal relationship with the admission officer for your area