

Beyond the Basics

How GPA and Class Rank fit into College Admissions

Loren Newsom
Loren.Newsom@review.com
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Introductions

LOREN NEWSOM

Princeton Review Phone Number:

1-800-2-Review

Locally: 469-248-4256

www.PrincetonReview.com

Understanding Selectivity

What is selectivity?

When a college is selective, that means it uses an application process to admit some students and reject others.

Why are some colleges so selective?

It might not be the reason you think! Many think it's because some colleges have higher *standards*, or they have better professors, or they offer a more rigorous degree.

Answer: Schools are selective because *they receive more applications than they have seats in their freshman class.*

Understanding Selectivity

Let's try to think like an admissions rep...

The Facts: 1,000 seats in the freshman class

Suburban location

Locally acclaimed

The Problem: 3,000 applications received

What will the admission rate be?

What will be the deciding criteria?

Understanding Selectivity

Let's look at another example...

The Facts: 2,000 seats in the freshman class

Noteworthy alumni and professors

Internationally acclaimed

The Problem: 30,000 applications received

What will the admission rate be?

What will be the deciding criteria?

How College are Selective

They look at each student's *entire* application, and first focus on the two most important components:

- high school transcript
- standardized test scores

High School Transcripts: reveal all the academic work that students have completed from freshman year to senior year

Standardized Test Scores: SAT/ACT, SAT Subject Tests

How College are Selective

All in all, every admissions counselor is ultimately going to be asking one question:

“Would that student applicant make our community better for being here?”

Important Note:

- Selectivity is a **combination** of many things.
- While GPA and SAT/ACT scores play a critical role, admissions is **not** a sole combination of just these two things!

How College are Selective

What else contributes to selectivity?
(the other components of the application)

Academic

- **GPA/Class Rank**
- **Course Selection**
- **Standardized Test Scores**

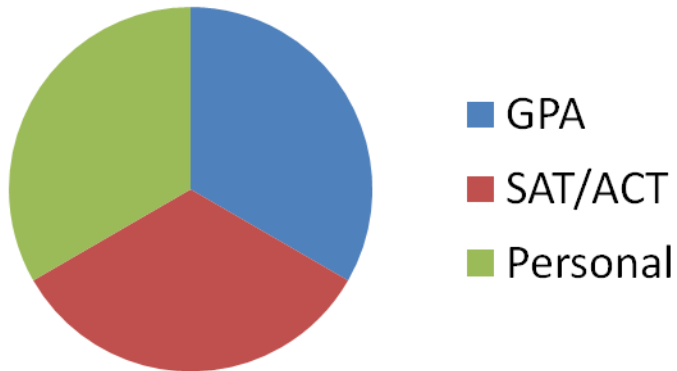
Personal

- **Student activities**
- **Essays**
- **Letters of recommendation**
- **Interviews**

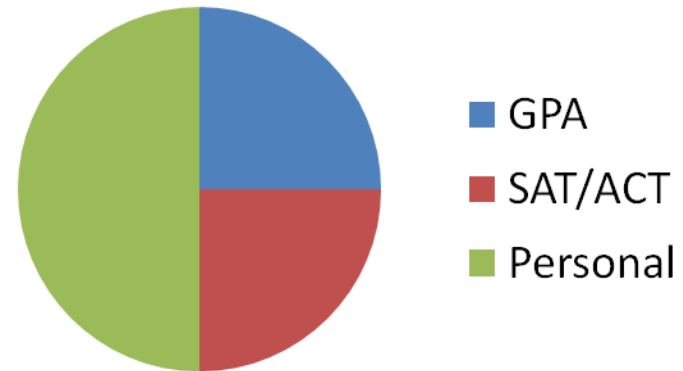
How College are Selective

How much weight is given to each component?

Large and Public
Colleges



Small and Private
Colleges



How College are Selective

Qualities and Characteristics Included in the Personal Components

- Goals
- Program of Study
- Gender/Ethnicity/Race
- Extracurricular interests
- Athletics
- Leadership experiences
- Musical/Artistic ability
- First generation to attend college
- State of residence
- Achievements/Honors
- Employment
- Legacy

College Admissions

Academic Components

Academic Components

Grade Point Average (GPA)

- Numerical GPA:
 - based on 0-100% scale
 - average of all classes *attempted* that semester
- Cumulative GPA:
 - average of all classes *attempted* since 9th grade
- Collegiate GPA:
 - based on a 4-point scale

Academic Components

Sample Collegiate GPA Conversion

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>
90-100%	A	4.0
80-89%	B	3.0
70-79%	C	2.0
0-69%	F	0.0

Academic Components

Sample Collegiate GPA Conversion

Percent	100-95%	94-90%	89-87%	86-83%	82-80%	79-77%	76-70%	69-65%	65-0%
Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
Grade Points	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.0	0.0

Academic Components


Advice for students on GPA...
ALL grades count!

Low grades will decrease all averages.

Colleges and scholarship funds look at collegiate GPA.

It's best if students maintain a 3.0 or higher.

Discussion Question

What kind of  classes should students be encouraged to take in high school to **best** prepare them for college?

Discussion Question

Why is it ^{*}important for students to take advanced courses?

Discussion Question

Table 4.3. Percentage of colleges attributing considerable importance to factors in the admission decision by institutional characteristics: 2011 (continued on next page)

	Grades in college prep courses	Strength of curriculum	Admission test scores	Grades in all courses	Essay/writing sample	Demonstrated interest	Counselor rec.	Class rank
Total	84.3%	67.7%	59.2%	51.9%	24.9%	20.5%	19.2%	18.8%
Control								
Public	83.3	59	66.7	52.6	14.1	13.0	1.3	21.8
Private	85.1	71.7	56.9	50.9	29.3	23.1	27.6	17.8
Enrollment								
Fewer than 3,000 students	83.4	67.4	55.9	50.7	28.3	25.7	25.5	16.6
3,000 to 9,999	86.4	71.2	67.8	44.1	22.0	13.6	11.9	23.7
10,000 or more	87.8	65.9	63.4	58.5	17.1	5.0	9.8	14.6
Selectivity								
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	87.8	82.9	53.7	57.5	36.6	15.0	31.7	31.7
50 to 70 percent	88.0	72.3	60.2	54.2	25.3	21.7	13.3	15.7
71 to 85 percent	84.7	70.4	52.8	40.3	25.0	21.1	23.6	16.7
More than 85 percent	80.0	40.0	72.5	55.0	12.5	22.5	15.0	20.0
Yield								
Enroll fewer than 30 percent of admitted students	91.7	77.1	52.3	50.5	27.5	18.3	21.1	20.2
30 to 45 percent	82.9	65.4	59.8	47.6	19.5	18.3	14.6	22
46 to 60 percent	70.8	45.8	79.2	62.5	25.0	13.6	20.8	12.5
More than 60 percent	80.0	55.0	70.0	57.9	35.0	40.0	35.0	15.0

Discussion Question

*All colleges are looking at grades

Almost all colleges also care about
academic rigor of a student's
transcript.

Advanced Course Options

Honors Classes

- Each school sets its own standards and qualifications
- Lowest impact on admissions of the advanced course options
 - Doesn't carry equal weight with other types
 - No college credit
- Better than taking a regular class
- Helpful if the high school uses honors to weight GPA

Advanced Course Options

Dual Credit Classes

- Held to local/state standards
- Very helpful for public in-state schools
 - Likely will receive credit
- Demonstrate a stronger curriculum and can boost applications
- Won't boost as much for selective colleges
- Can't expect much transfer credit out of state
- Limited to 2 per semester
- Must take TSI test to enter courses

Advanced Course Options

Advanced Placement Classes

- Held to national standards, so much higher impact
- Considered part of the "norm" for selective colleges
 - Doesn't give the same "boost" anymore
 - More APs = more boost
- Grades count – can't get more than a letter grade below regular level grades
 - Ex: Straight A students can't afford to get C's in APs
- Higher chance of credit at a broader range of institutions

Advanced Course Options

International Baccalaureate

- Held to international standards
 - Therefore, these can have the biggest impact on admissions for highly competitive schools and are considered most prestigious
- **ONLY IF STUDENT FINISHES THE PROGRAM**
 - Can't just take a few IB classes
- Strongest prep, but also the most rigorous
- Not very relevant for college credit

Advanced Course Options

Benefits of Advanced Courses

- Potential for college credit
- GPA/Class rank boost
- Credit towards advanced degrees
- Experience with college level material
- Potential to save time and money in college
- Increase competitiveness of college applications

Academic Components

Transcript Excerpt #1

	<u>Cum. GPA</u>
Jonathan	3.5
Marcia	3.4

Whose GPA is better?

	<u>9th</u>	<u>10th</u>	<u>11th</u>	<u>Cum. GPA</u>
Jonathan	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.5
Marcia	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4

Now whose is better?

Academic Components

Transcript Excerpt #2

	<u>9th</u>	<u>10th</u>	<u>11th</u>	<u>Cum. GPA</u>
Arvin	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Gina	2.9	3.4	3.9	3.4

What are going to be the pros and cons of these transcripts?

Academic Components

Transcript Excerpt #3 (*senior grades*)

<u>Arvin</u>	<u>1st Sem.</u>
Advanced Algebra	B+
English Literature	A-
Earth Sciences	B+
World History	A-
Psychology	B+
P.E.	A-
Semester GPA	3.5

<u>Gina</u>	<u>1st Sem.</u>
AP Calculus	A
English Literature	B+
AP Chemistry	B
European History	B+
French IV	A-
Art	B+
P.E.	A
Semester GPA	3.4

Academic Components

Class Rank System

- Schools only use this if there is a large enough class.

Class rank = comparison between an individual student and the rest of the class

Example:

Total 9th graders = 300

Student = better than 270 students

Rank = 30

Academic Components

Improving Class Rank

- Students can improve their rank by taking more challenging courses.
- Here's an example of a GPA weighting scale...

<u>Course Type</u>	<u>Weight</u>
AP courses	1.15
Dual courses	1.10
Honors courses	1.05

Class Rank

Why should students care about class rank?

TOP 10% RULE!

Texas law states that any student in the top 10% of his or her class (regardless of class size) will be guaranteed admission to any state institution.

Legislation is in effect to alter this law at some colleges.

Advice for Students

➤ Start with the goal

- Do you want a particular career? What will it take to get that job?
- Do you want to go to a certain type of college? What kind of students get in to those schools?

➤ Then work backwards

- What do you need to do/accomplish to become the right kind of applicant?

Are you... Prestigious University Bound?

What kind of students typically go to **prestigious universities**?

- Usually large private schools
- Examples: Harvard, Yale, Rice, Vanderbilt, Stanford

Are you... Prestigious University Bound?

Requirements

- High GPA (3.5-4.0)
- Good SAT/ACT scores (1400+/30+)
- SAT subject test scores (at least 1-2)
 - APs can help with this
- Lots and lots of advanced coursework
 - IB and AP are good for this
- Glowing recommendations
- Solid essays
- Rich and diverse extracurriculars

Are you... Prestigious University Bound?

Boosts

- Elite/competitive academic honors/experiences
- National/international level experiences and interests
- Leadership
- Publications
- Insightful self-evaluation

Are you... Liberal Arts University Bound?

What kind of students typically go to **liberal arts universities**?

- Usually small private schools
- Examples: Amherst, Trinity, TCU, Baylor

Are you... Liberal Arts University Bound?

Requirements

- Competitive GPA (above a 3.3)
- Competitive SAT/ACT scores (1200+/27+)
- Some advanced coursework
- Good recommendations
- Diverse extra-curriculars

Are you... Liberal Arts University Bound?

Boosts

- SAT Subject Tests
- Lots of advanced coursework
- Leadership experience
- Insightful essays
- Diverse/unique experiences

Are you... Big City University Bound?

What kind of students typically go to **big city universities**?

- Usually large public schools
- Examples: UT Dallas, UTEP, LSU, NMSU

Are you... Big City University Bound?

Requirements

- Slightly above average GPA (3.0+)
- Slightly above average SAT/ACT (1000+/20+)
- Some extracurriculars

Boosts

- Advanced coursework
- Better application elements
- Leadership and experiences

Are you... Small Public College Bound?

What kind of students typically go to **small public colleges**?

- Examples: Tarleton, A&M Commerce, UT Galveston

Are you... Small Public College Bound?

Requirements

- Passable GPA (2.5+)
- Take the SAT/ACT

Boosts

- Transferable credit
- Anything beyond that

Are you... Trade/Technical School Bound?

What kind of students typically go to
trade or technical schools?

Are you... Trade/Technical School Bound?

Requirements

- Graduate high school or have GED
- May need some basic coursework
- Money to pay for school

Boosts

- Some relevant coursework in high school

Are you... Community College Bound?

What kind of students typically go to **community colleges**?

Are you... Community College Bound?

Requirements

- Graduate high school or have GED

Boosts

- Nothing needed – guaranteed admission

Advice for Students

- 9th grade is a fresh start
- You should take your grades **seriously** once you begin to take high school courses.
- Choose your high school classes carefully.
- Advanced students should begin your required sequences early to be able to **take AP or dual credit** courses

Advice for Students

- Your **grades count all four years** of high school. When colleges review your transcript, they often look at grade trends across subjects and course levels
- Even if you had a rough first year of high school, there's still time to turn your grades around. Many schools will reward your **upward trajectory**.

Advice for Students

- Think about what kind of college you want to attend and do your **research!**
- Class rank is very important if you want to attend a public university in Texas.
- GPA is more important than SAT/ACT scores to most universities, so be sure to keep those grades up!
- But, the **personal components** of the application are what set students apart.

GETTING INTO COLLEGE IS MORE THAN TEST SCORES

GREAT GRADES



GREAT TEST SCORES



GREAT APPLICATIONS





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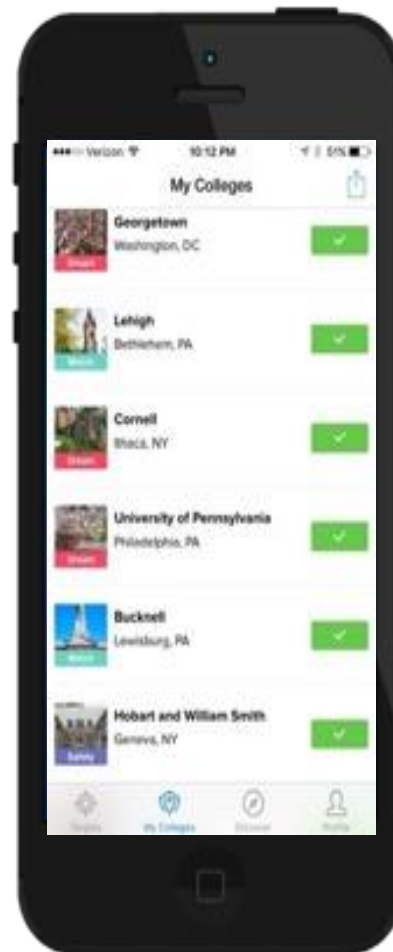


Robert Franek

author of *Colleges That Pay You Back* and *The Best 380 Colleges*

TOOLS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY YOUR BEST FIT SCHOOLS

TOOLS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY YOUR BEST FIT SCHOOLS





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GETTING STUDENTS
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*Based on a 2015 Princeton Review survey of parents of students enrolled in 4-year colleges

** Based on a 2015 Princeton Review survey of over 1,000 students enrolled in 4-year colleges
and U.S. News & World Report national ranking for Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges

A close-up photograph of a young woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a black graduation cap and gown. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. A yellow tassel hangs from the cap. In the background, other graduates in caps and gowns are visible but out of focus. The overall scene is bright and celebratory.

**YOU CAN GET THE
SCORE YOU WANT
WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

Q & A

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