

Nuts and Bolts of College Prep

The Four Basic Areas of Building your High School Career

GPA

Grade Point Average/ 4.0

3.25↑ minimum
3.50↑ ideal for scholarships

Class Rank

Top 25%↑ in state universities
Top 10%↑ ideal for scholarships

ACT/SAT Score

College Entrance Exams

ACT
22↑ minimum
24↑ ideal for scholarships

PSAT
Take during 10th/11th grade

SAT
1120↑ minimum
1200↑ ideal for scholarships

Extracurriculars

robotics science olympiad
orchestra **student government**
Boy/Girl Scouts **Sports** Theatre yearbook
choir dance Speech/Debate Band
chess film club language club
National Honor Society key club
Arts academic decathlon
ROTC cultural/heritage groups
community youth council

Volunteer/Work

museums local charity
food bank animal sanctuary/zoo
library UNICEF **teacher's assistant**
after school job homeless shelter
children's hospital peer mentoring
habitat for humanity **Best Buddies**
animal shelter tutoring
community garden
camp counseling

My Volunteer/Work

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

My Extracurriculars

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2. _____
3. _____
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Admissions • Financial Aid • Scholarships

Today's college admissions process can be daunting. College admission boards want to admit well-rounded students into their colleges, and they consider many different factors when admitting students of all different abilities and walks of life. You may not have a perfect GPA or SAT score, but you can still make yourself into a sought-after student through commitment to community service and extracurricular activities. Similarly, being involved in a large number of organizations without real investment in one or two does not appeal to admissions. This is because colleges want to admit students who are passionate about something, and have committed to this over a relatively long period of time. Having this strong basis of elements in your application helps you, but these are also only some factors admissions experts look for.

Prepare yourself for more opportunities. Having a strong GPA and ACT/SAT score, being involved in community service, and extracurricular activities can give you the chance to pursue more scholarship opportunities (the Flinn and Dorrance Scholarships, for example), in addition to helping you get accepted into the college of your choice. Certain scholarships and colleges require minimum GPAS, and some may also look at class rank. Through the PSAT and other practice tests, students can improve their scores and predict how well they may do on future exams. The test scores from the PSAT taken during October of junior year can qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship or the National Hispanic Recognition Program. Of course, there are scholarships available that do not take those factors into account, too. Scholarships and grants are available for students with different life experiences, financial need, talents, academic interests, and so much more.

Challenge yourself. Colleges want to admit students who show that they seek challenges. Whether this means taking AP/IB/Honors courses, seeking dual enrollment at a community college, taking summer classes to get ahead and learn new skills, or simply taking a full course-load throughout your high school career; there are many ways to demonstrate this. Taking challenging classes while you are in high school will help prepare you for college classes. Also keep in mind that taking AP and IB classes can help you gain college credit (and save money) before you start college!

Explore things that you are passionate about. What inspires you? What do you love doing? Are you interested in becoming a doctor? You could look into volunteering at a hospital. Are you really great at math? Maybe you could volunteer as a tutor. Do you love art? Why not organize a community mural? If you are great at sports, maybe you could help teach others! Are you interested in law? Look for volunteer opportunities in local government or law practices. There are many volunteer opportunities out there; you just have to ask around and do a little research! It is also alright to do an activity or extracurricular— whether it be participating in a school theater production, concert, or dance performance, or competing on a sports team— simply because you enjoy it. It is okay to have fun! Through these experiences, whether work, volunteer, internship, or extracurricular, you will build your resume, and colleges will learn more about your personality and see that you are thinking about what you may want to do in the future. These experiences may also give you a topic to write about for your college admission or scholarship application essays!

If you need any assistance with the College Planning process, call College Depot to schedule an appointment at 602.261.8847.

Last Revised: 09/05/2017

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