

10 Things Colleges Now Look For In High School Students

There's a huge amount of competition for every spot in a college classroom. Here's a few tips for high school students to make sure they make the grade.

- 1. A high school curriculum that challenges the student.** Academically successful students should include several Honors and Advanced Placement classes.
- 2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.** Grades should show an upward trend over the years. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.
- 3. Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT).** These should be consistent with high school performance.
- 4. Passionate involvement in a few activities,** demonstrating leadership and initiative. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.
- 5. Community service** showing evidence of being a "contributor." Activities should demonstrate concern for other people and a global view.
- 6. Work or out-of-school experiences** (including summer activities) that illustrate responsibility, dedication and development of areas of interest. A job or other meaningful use of free time can demonstrate maturity.
- 7. A well-written essay** that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values and goals. The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.
- 8. Letters of recommendation** from teachers and guidance counselors that give evidence of integrity, special skill, and positive character traits. Students should request recommendations from teachers who respect their work in an academic discipline.
- 9. Supplementary recommendations by adults** who have had significant direct contact with the student. Letters from coaches or supervisors in long-term work or volunteer activities are valuable; however, recommendations from casual acquaintances or family friends, even if they're well known, are rarely given much weight.
- 10. Anything special that makes the student stand out** from the rest of the applicants! Include honors, awards, evidence of unusual talent or experience, or anything else that makes the student unique.