

# HOW TO GET INTO THE COLLEGE OF YOUR CHOICE

## GENERAL:

1. Just because you think a certain school is the best in the nation doesn't mean it is the college for you. Match your abilities and interest with the school.
2. Parents should not choose a school for you. You need to make the decision, within reason, yourself.
3. Before making a decision, you need as much personal, first-hand knowledge as possible. Do try to visit the school before deciding.
4. Admissions officers are paid to sell their school. Listen carefully, but make up your own mind.
5. DO NOT make a decision without examining the academic offerings of the school—not just the slick brochures but the actual courses required for the major you choose. Insist on a course catalog even if you have to buy one.
6. Talk to students who attend (have attended) the college, if at all possible. Ask about all phases of life, academic, social, emotional etc...

## APPLYING:

1. The quality of your application has a great deal to do with your acceptance/rejection. Admissions officers say that almost universally the quality of application received in their offices well in advance of the deadline is superior to those received at the deadline.
2. Include information about your everyday environment: schools attended, parents' employment status (or lack of employment), parents' marital status, family problems which might have affected grades, moves, etc...
3. You will be asked to specify what type of degree you will pursue. If you wish to study for a liberal arts degree, "undecided" may be acceptable as a major; however, if you are interested in a professional school, i.e., engineering, medicine, you will be expected to declare a major.
4. Do more than simply list extracurricular activities. Tell what you have done in the activities that make you different from other applicants. Be as specific as possible without being ridiculous.
5. Don't pad the application with garbage.
6. Tell how a job has contributed to your development. Let the admissions counselors know what know of job(s) you have had and what you did.
7. Don't substitute a resume' for the application.

8. Make sure that you let the people who write recommendations for you know enough about you to write a good letter. Make several copies of your sheet and give one to each person who will write a recommendation.
9. Choose people to write recommendations who can write a good letter.
10. Ask the people chosen to write your recommendations if they feel that they can write a supportive letter on your behalf.
11. Give the people who will write recommendations plenty of time to write the letters. It is inexcusable to ask them to write an original letter in a day or two. After the first letter is written, many people will make copies for subsequent requests, so time is not as big a factor with these later requests.
12. **ALWAYS** thank the recommendation writers for their letters. A written note is nice, but at least a verbal thanks is absolutely imperative. Remember, it is not part of their “job” to write letters for you. They do it because they care and want to help you.
13. Take the SAT and ACT as early as possible. If your scores are not too good, you will have time to take the exam(s) again. Achievement scores are required in some schools.
14. Check deadline dates carefully. Late applications are usually not successful applications.
15. Complete writing samples **VERY CAREFULLY AND THOUGHTFULLY. PROOF READ!**
16. Remember, just about every student who applies to the more selective colleges is wonderful. If you are to be accepted to the college of your choice, you will have to do something that makes you more wonderful and different from all the others.

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We used the source listed below for some of our information. You may want to purchase a copy.  
**PETERSON’S COMPETITIVE COLLEGES/Fifth Edition**

Hegener, Karen C.  
Peterson’s Guide  
Princeton, New Jersey