

Riverdale College Admissions – Quick Reference Guide

There are literally thousands of colleges and universities in the United States, and certainly among them many which will be a good fit for your child. This guide is designed to orient you and your student to the college admissions process. It should provide some early perspective on what you should be doing, and reality check on where you might best focus your child’s attention. However, as with all such guides, it is a simplification of a very complex world. Riverdale’s college counseling office is the place for more complete information. One thing to keep in mind, the level of “admissions competitiveness” does not necessarily equal the level of education or most importantly the level of fit with your student. Also, the dividing line between these categories is artificial and fuzzy at best. For example, it is quite possible to be accepted at a “hyper competitive” college and turned down at an “extremely competitive” one.

Admission Competition	Admit %	Example Schools	SAT middle 50%	Target GPA	SAT II required	Other required	Notes
Hyper competitive	9% - 19%	Amherst, Brown, Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, Pomona, Princeton, Stanford, US Military Academies, Yale	690-780	4.0 with significant Honors classes	Yes – 2 Average = low to mid 700’s Plan early to take these at the best time AP Tests helpful	Some may require a graded English or History essay – so be thinking about saving your best one junior or early senior year 4 years of foreign language	Must show dedication and excellence in 1-2 areas beyond the classroom: arts, athletics, and/or community service. Consider summer classes at a well respected college. Legacy very helpful.
Extremely competitive	20% - 25%	UC Berkeley, Caltech, Cornell, Georgetown, Middlebury, Northwestern, U Pennsylvania, Rice, Swarthmore, Washington U (St. Louis), Wesleyan, Wellesley, Williams	660-750	4.0 with significant Honors classes	Yes – 2 Average = low 700s Plan early to take these at the best time AP Tests helpful	Some may require a graded English or History essay – so be thinking about saving your best one junior or early senior year 4 years of foreign language	Must show dedication and excellence in 1-2 areas beyond the classroom: arts, athletics, and/or community service. Consider summer classes at a well respected college. Legacy very helpful.

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Primary data source: The Fiske Guide to Colleges

Highly competitive	26% - 35%	Bowdoin, Carleton, Claremont-McKenna, Colby, Colgate, Conn. College, Davidson, Duke, Emory, Hamilton, Haverford, Johns Hopkins, Macalester, Notre Dame, NYU, Oberlin, Tufts, USC, Vassar, Whitman	620-730	3.8+ with significant Honors classes	Yes – 2. Average mid 600s to 700 Plan early to take these at the best time	Some may require a graded English or History essay – so be thinking about saving your best one junior or early senior year Most like to see 4 years of foreign language	Should show dedication and excellence in 1-2 areas beyond the classroom: arts, athletics, and/or community service. Legacy is helpful.
Quite competitive	36% - 50%	Babson, Bard, Bates, Bucknell, CO College, Kenyon, Lehigh, Occidental, Pepperdine, Reed, Sarah Lawrence, Santa Clara, Scripps, Trinity, Vanderbilt, Willamette	550-690	3.5+ with a few Honors classes	Some require one or more SAT IIs, but most do not	Most like to see 4 years of foreign language	Should show dedication and excellence at least one area beyond the classroom: arts, athletics, and/or community service. Legacy is helpful.
Somewhat competitive	51% - 75%	Beloit, Lewis & Clark, Simmons, U of Oregon*, Oregon State*, Wheaton, Whittier, and hundreds of other fine schools	500-660	3.0+	Rarely required	None	Just because they aren't as "competitive", doesn't mean they aren't terrific. You can get a great college education here.
Slightly competitive	75% +	Thousands of fine schools, including many you may not have heard about – but you should get to know.	Varies	Varies	Not required	None	Just because they aren't as "competitive", doesn't mean they aren't terrific. You can get a great college education here.

* The select Honors Colleges within UO and OSU look like “Highly Competitive” colleges in their admissions, except they do not require SAT IIs.