HOW DO I SELECT A COLLEGE  
  
  
  
**Before you start answer these questions:**

* Do I have an ultimate goal?
* Why do I want to go to college?
* What do I hope to achieve in college?
* What are my academic goals?
* What things do I want out of my college experience?
* Do I want to become involved in campus activities such as sports, student government, music, or theater?
* Do I want to be challenged academically?
* What do I want to study ( major )?
* What are my interests, attitudes, and abilities?
* What do I do well?
* What possible careers interest me?
* Do I want to enter the work force immediately after graduation?
* Is it important to me to have a good paying job when I graduate?
* Do I hope to attend graduate or professional school?



**Which College?  How to Eliminate Schools?**  
You will need to analyze the following to help you select or eliminate schools for further consideration based on the factors that are most important to you.  
**Majors/Area of Study**  
Does the school offer courses/majors that interest me?  
Will the program of study in my area of interest help me achieve my goal?  
How long does it take to achieve my goal?  
What percentage of students graduate in four years?  
What is the overall graduation rate?  
**Type**  
Community, Technical, or Junior Colleges  
Four year colleges and Universities  
**Size-Smaller vs Larger**  
Would I like to attend a small school?  
Would I be happier at a large college or university with bigger classes?

**Small- under 3,000 students**

 -Classes are smaller and provide students with greater interaction between students and teachers  
- Students have more opportunity to contribute to class discussion  
-Professors may get to know you better.  This is especially helpful when doing research or asking for recommendations for jobs or graduate school

**Medium- between 3,000 and 10,000 students**

**Large-Between 10,000 and 20,000 students**

- There is a greater range and variety of courses offered.  
- It is easier to combine fields of study that include engineering  
-There are more advanced facilities and resources available at large universities.   
-Nationally known and popular sports teams usually come to large universities.

**Largest- over 20,000 students**

**Location**

* Is distance from home important?
* Do I want to consider only schools located in a certain region, state, metropolitan area, or my hometown?
* Do I want to get home frequently, or do I see this as an opportunity to experience another part of the country?
* Is climate important to me?

**Campus Setting-Urban vs Suburban**  
Do I prefer an urban environment with easy access to museums, ethnic food, and major sports teams?  
Would I prefer being in a rural setting with access to skiing, hiking, and camping?  
Is weather a major situation?  
  
**Cost**

* Does the school offer a good education at a reasonable price?
* How much is the total cost?
* What is the average rate of student indebtedness for the each school?
* Can my family help pay for college? How much?
* How is financial aid awarded?
* Will I qualify?
* Will I qualify for for grant, merit scholarship, work-study, low interest loans, etc...?
* Are there ways I can save money while in school?
* Will I need to find a part-time job?
* Can I realistically afford this school or is there a more reasonable financial choice for me?

**Academic Atmosphere**  
What type of academic atmosphere would I want?  
Will I want a campus that has strong supports? extra office hours?  small classes?  
Do I want a general program?  (Undecided)  
Do I want a specific academic program?

**Social Atmosphere, Culture Composition, and Quality of Life**  
Will I be involved in the social atmosphere?  
Will I join a specific group that I have been involved in during high school?  
What do the Facilities look like?  
Are there athletics that I can participate in? Division 1, 2, or 3?  intramurals?  
What activities do they offer on campus?  
Can I bring a vehicle to campus?  
What services do they occur?  
Is there any issues with security?

Go to A Less Expensive School  
  
Let me state a fact that you may not want to hear...you might not be able to afford to go to the **school of your dreams. It’s true. The myth that a lot of students are fed is that because you’re   
investing in education, price should be irrelevant.**  
There are a lot of things in life that are important and education is one of them.  
  
 My home is **important. It’s where I live. It’s where I spend most of my time. It’s where I create memories with my family. But just because my home is important doesn’t mean I can spend any dollar amount necessary to get my dream home. It doesn’t work like that. Now if I have the money to just pay for it, that’s one thing, but my guess is you don’t. The same principle is true with cars, vacations, and clothes.**  
  
What makes us think that education gets a free pass and that we’re justiﬁed in graduating with **piles of debt?**  
Sure you may want a “nicer” education or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (ﬁll in the blank) but that doesn’t **necessarily mean you can afford it. I’m sorry if you’ve had your heart set on an outrageously expensive school, and now I’m raining on your parade!   
Keep in mind that most companies and businesses aren’t as interested in the name on the degree as we think they are. Now I understand that in certain industries and professions, where you graduated from carries some signiﬁcant weight. But most of the time, where the degree came from means more to the person who got it than the person reading the resume. The knowledge is valuable, not the name on the piece of paper.**  
  
  
**now what?**  
1. Evaluate if you’ve got your heart set on a school you can’t afford. Why are you interested in that particular school? What makes you think you can’t ﬁnd a similar experience at a less expensive school?   
2. Do your homework. Can you ﬁnd the same degree program for less elsewhere? Compare apples to apples and see if what you’re really paying for justiﬁes the value of what you’re receiving. 

**Bargaining with the colleges**  
  
  
**There is not only a lot of competition among students trying to get into selective schools, but there is also a lot of competition among colleges to attract the best talent. If you’ve ever purchased some big-ticket item such as a car, you know one of the best forms of negotiation is to ﬁnd two different stores with the same product and put them against one another. “Over at XYZ Store, they have this same product for 10% less than you do. Can you beat that price?” Then you take the new price over to the original company and see if they can beat it again. You do this a time or two until you get the best possible price for the item.**  
 **It may not be talked about much, but this works with colleges. If you’re a high-quality student and multiple schools are interested in you, why not put them against one another? I’ve heard about this a few times from students but one particular student I spoke with went back and forth between two schools and got an additional $10,000 in scholarships!**  
  
**now what?  
1. Write out on paper what your full ﬁnancial aid offers are from each school, so you can compare apples to apples. Don’t include outside scholarships or funding. Just what you would receive if you went to each particular school.  
2. Contact the schools individually to tell them what the other school’s offer was and see if they would match it or beat it.  
3. Keep going back and forth until you have received the best possible ﬁnancial aid package from each school.**

**TO DO LIST FOR THE SUMMER  
  
1.  Write your College Essay  
(Personal Stories)  
Begin collecting**[**personal stories**](http://admissionpossible.com/Personal_Stories.html)**that you can use for your college application essays. Students, parents and family members can begin remembering anecdotes, apocryphal stories, and the like at family dinners or long car rides. Someone should write these down for use in the essay writing process.  
2. Ask the Recommenders  
Ask favorite teachers if they will fill out the**[**teacher evaluation**](http://admissionpossible.com/Letters_Recommend.html)**/ recommendation form for your college applications.  
3. Make sure you are Senior Classes are set  
Carefully choose your**[**senior classes**](http://admissionpossible.com/Courses_and_Grades.html)**, taking into consideration the rigor of the program and balance in your life. Your goal should be to put together as rigorous as an academic schedule as you can without going overboard.  
4.  Summer Plans  
Finalize your summer plans.  Prep classes for SAT/ Act, Volunteer Work, activities, etc  
5.  Testing  
Take the AP test for any AP class in which you are enrolled, following by the respective subject test.  
6. Create a running log of Activities Resume  
Finalize your activities resume.  
7.   Classes and Grades  
Ace your finals!  
8.   Finalize your College List  
Narrow down your college list to the 10-20 colleges you like best. Arrange them into Reach, Good Chance and Pretty Sure categories (based on your SAT/ACT scores compared to successful applicants at the colleges.)  
9. College Visits  
Consult with your parents about setting up a schedule to visit colleges. Consult with your parents about setting up a schedule to visit colleges  
  
10. Complete the Parent Brag Sheet and Start the online application process**

**APRIL**  
**College List**  
Continue exploring and narrowing down your college list.  
**Senior Classes**  
Consult with your high school counselor about your senior year courses.  
**Summer Plans**  
Actively pursue your [summer activities](http://admissionpossible.com/Extracurricular_Activities.html), whether a job, a special academic or enrichment program at a college, a trip or volunteer activity. Most importantly, do what you love.  
**Testing**If you haven't already, sign up for the SAT, subject tests and/or ACT so that you can finish up your testing by June.  
**MAY  
Personal Stories**  
Begin collecting [personal stories](http://admissionpossible.com/Personal_Stories.html) that you can use for your college application essays. Students, parents and family members can begin remembering anecdotes, apocryphal stories, and the like at family dinners or long car rides. Someone should write these down for use in the essay writing process.  
**Recommenders**  
Ask favorite teachers if they will fill out the [teacher evaluation](http://admissionpossible.com/Letters_Recommend.html) form for your college applications.  
**Senior Classes**  
Carefully choose your [senior classes](http://admissionpossible.com/Courses_and_Grades.html), taking into consideration the rigor of the program and balance in your life. Your goal should be to put together as rigorous as an academic schedule as you can without going overboard.

**Summer Plans**  
Finalize your summer plans.  
  
**Testing**  
Take the AP test for any AP class in which you are enrolled, following by the respective subject test.  
  
**JUNE**  
**Activities Resume**  
Finalize your activities resume.  
  
**Classes and Grades**  
Ace your finals!  
  
**College List**  
Narrow down your college list to the 10-20 colleges you like best. Arrange them into Reach, Good Chance and Pretty Sure categories (based on your SAT/ACT scores compared to successful applicants at the colleges.)  
  
**College Visits**  
Consult with your parents about setting up a schedule to visit colleges during the summer. Identify dates; call for interview appointments; research travel arrangements.