



Elite Prep College Planning Guide

A step-by-step guide to college admissions

www.eliteprep.com

This guide belongs to:



Factors considered in college admission

High school coursework and grades

show colleges that you can succeed in college-level courses by achieving **strong grades** in **challenging classes** across multiple core subjects (for example, English, math, science, history, and foreign language).

Standardized test scores (such as the ACT, SAT, and AP and IB exams)

demonstrate **mastery of different subjects** and show your **interest in particular subjects**.

Extracurricular activities

show colleges how you choose to spend your time outside of class as well as **demonstrate your interests, achievements, and personal characteristics valued by colleges**, such as curiosity, leadership, citizenship, and community involvement.

Essays

introduce yourself to the college admission office and share **information about your interests, values, and lived experiences** in a narrative format beyond your grades and test scores.

Recommendation letters

share what school counselors and teachers have to say about your **intellectual and personal qualities** in the school environment and **what you'll bring to the college community**.



A group of four diverse students are gathered around a table, studying together. A young woman on the left is smiling and looking towards the center. A young man in the middle is wearing glasses and looking down at a book. Another young man on the right is also looking at the book. A fourth student is partially visible on the far right, smiling. They are all holding pens and looking at an open book on the table. The background is slightly blurred, showing a bright, indoor setting.

Academic Preparation

Demonstrate that you are ready to succeed in college

*Students must meet **minimum academic requirements** for college admission, but getting into selective colleges requires that students **maximize the learning opportunities** available to them.*

Academic requirements for college admission

University of California

Students applying to the University of California must meet minimum coursework and grade point average requirements.

Minimum Coursework Requirements

- **History/Social Science** – 2 years required
- **English** – 4 years required
- **Math** – 3 years required, 4 years recommended
- **Science** – 2 years required, 3 years recommended
- **Foreign Language** – 2 years required, 3 years recommended
- **Visual and Performing Arts** – 1 year required
- **College-Prep Elective** – 1 year required

Minimum GPA Requirement

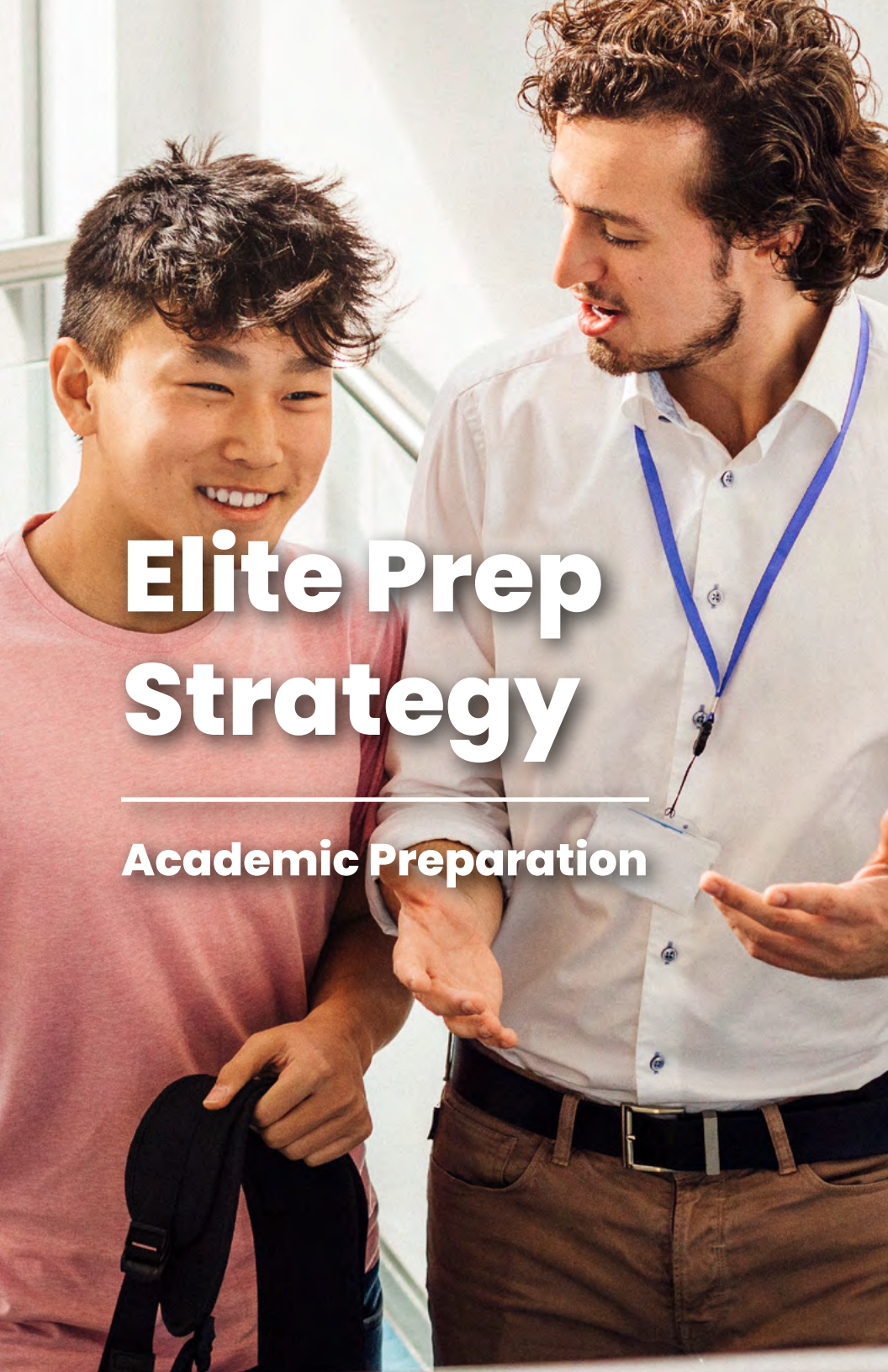
- **3.0 weighted GPA** in grades 10 and 11

Private Colleges + Universities

While most private colleges and universities do not have minimum requirements for high school coursework and GPA, students are advised to complete the following coursework in high school:

Recommended Coursework

- **English** – 4 years
- **Mathematics** – 4 years
- **History/Social Studies** – 3 or more years
- **Science** – 3 or more years
- **World Language** – 3 or more years



Elite Prep Strategy

Academic Preparation

Students should take **the most challenging courses offered at their high school** and **achieve the best grades possible**.

Ideally, students should take **four years in each of the five core subjects** of history, English, math, science, and foreign language.

Students should **supplement their high school courses by taking additional courses outside of school during the summer or school year**, especially if certain courses are not offered at their high school.

To bolster their academic profiles, thousands of high school students have taken **for-credit Honors and AP courses** through Elite Open School.

Map out your 4-year academic plan

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
History/ Social Science				
English				
Math				
Science				
Foreign Language				
College Prep Elective				

Elite Open School

For-Credit Honors + AP Courses



ELITE OPEN SCHOOL

- Boost your GPA
- Increase your Honors & AP course count
- Explore new subjects
- Deepen your interests

AP Computer Science

AP Computer Science Principles

AP Macroeconomics

AP Microeconomics

AP Psychology

And more...

eliteprep.com/credit

Elite Premier

Small-Group +
Individual
Tutoring

*Effective strategies to
manage your GPA*

eliteprep.com/premier

Standardized Tests

To test or not to test? That is the question.

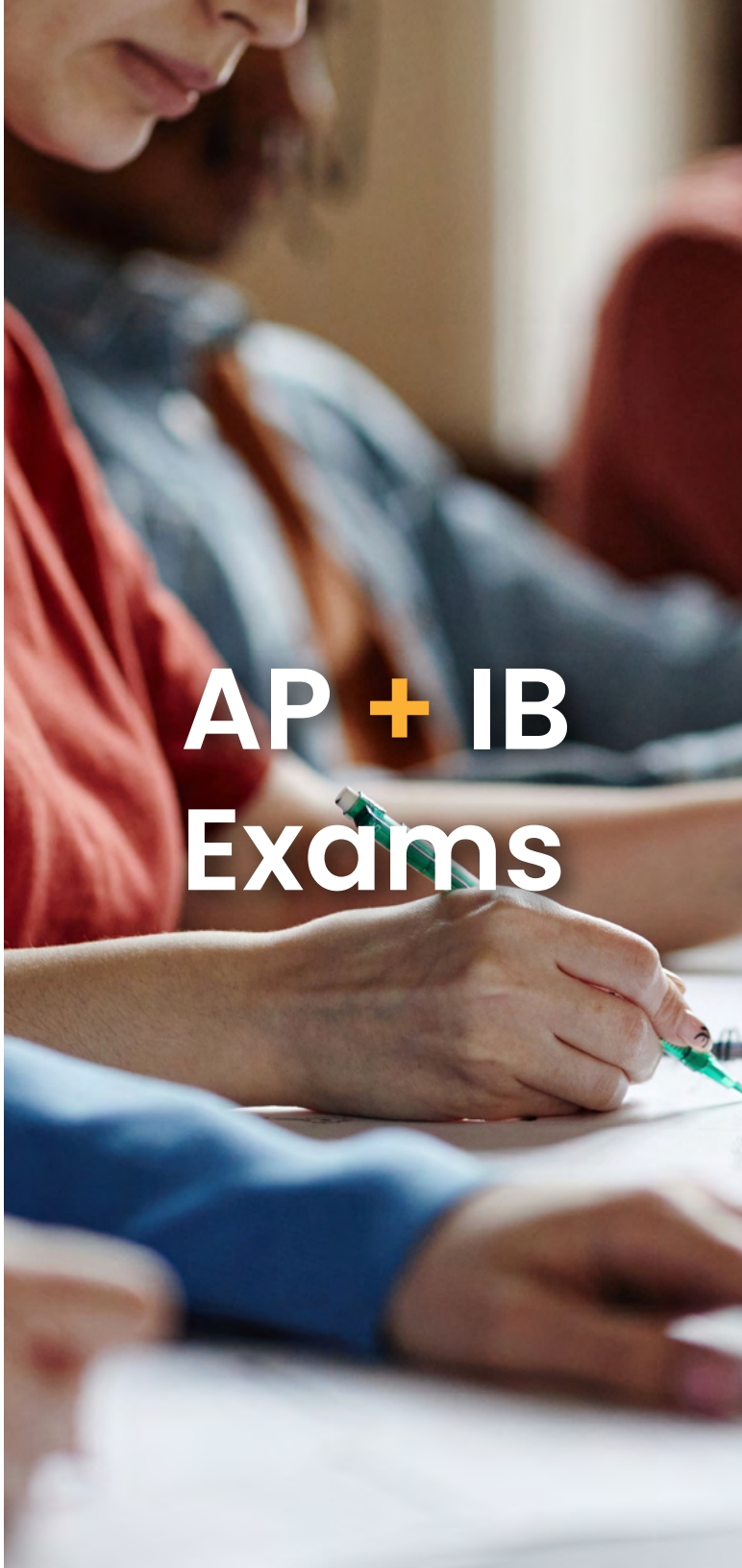
*Most colleges **consider or require standardized test scores** as a part of the application, and having strong test scores helps you **stand out from the crowd**.*

Both **Advanced Placement** (AP) and **International Baccalaureate** (IB) exams test a student's knowledge and skills in **specific content areas**, such as math, science, history, English, and foreign language.

A student's score on the AP and IB exams can allow the student to **demonstrate an interest in specific subjects** as well as **earn college credits** that can be used to satisfy graduation requirements in college.

Students take the AP and IB exams **in May** as they complete the courses at their high school.

Some high schools allow students to take AP courses and exams **as early as grade 9**. At high schools that offer the two-year IB program, students start the program **in grade 11**.

A blurred background image of students in a classroom. In the foreground, a student's hand is visible, holding a green pencil and writing on a piece of paper. Other students are visible in the background, some looking down at their work.

AP + IB Exams



SAT + ACT

Both the **SAT** and **ACT** test a student's knowledge and skills in **mathematical problem-solving, reading comprehension, and grammar and writing conventions** – all of which are important indicators of the student's readiness for college-level work.

Students can take the SAT and ACT **more than one time** to achieve their best score.

Most high school students take the SAT and ACT in **grade 11**; some students take these tests again or for the first time in the fall semester of **grade 12**.

Many students take the **PSAT** at school in grade 11 before taking the SAT to get an understanding of how well they will do on the SAT. Students who score high on the PSAT are eligible for academic scholarships.

Comparison of the SAT & ACT

SAT

Digital, Online

- Taken on a computer, Chromebook, or tablet

Two Sections

- Reading and Writing
- Math

Adaptive

- Second module of each section is determined by student's performance on first module

Number of Questions

- 98

Total Time

- 2 hours and 14 minutes

Score

- 800 points for each section, 1600 points total

ACT

Paper-based

- Taken with a pencil and calculator

Four Sections

- English
- Math
- Reading
- Science

Non-Adaptive

- All test takers receive the same questions regardless of ability

Number of Questions

- 215

Total Time

- 2 hours and 55 minutes

Score

- 36 points for each section, 36 points total

A close-up photograph of two young women looking at a laptop screen. The woman on the left has dark, curly hair and is wearing a yellow and blue plaid shirt. The woman on the right has light brown hair and is wearing a blue patterned top. They are both smiling and looking intently at the screen.

Elite Prep Strategy

Standardized Tests

While many colleges allow students to decide if they want to include standardized test scores in their college application, **having strong test scores will help students stand out from their peers.**

Furthermore, several prominent universities, **including Brown, Caltech, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, and Yale,** have reverted to requiring applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores as a part of the application.

Taught by expert instructors, **Elite Prep's courses for the SAT, ACT and AP exams** help students achieve their best results by honing their test-taking skills through weekly practice tests and by learning the concepts tested through topical lessons and exercises.

eliteprep.com/testprep

Colleges that require standardized tests



Map out your standardized test plan

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
PSAT Typically taken in the fall of 11th grade				
SAT Recommended to take in 11th grade or fall of 12th grade				
ACT Recommended to take in 11th grade or fall of 12th grade				
AP Exams Taken in May after completing the AP course				
IB Tests Taken in May after completing the IB course in 11th or 12th grade				

A background image showing three students in a classroom setting. A male student in a grey t-shirt is leaning over a desk, looking intently at a female student with glasses who is writing in a notebook. Another female student is partially visible on the left, also looking at the notebook. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Extracurricular Activities + Achievements

Pursue your interests and passions
– and do them well

*Extracurricular activities allow you to show your **interests, achievements, and personal characteristics** like **leadership and concern for others** – all of which are qualities that will help you **stand out** from other applicants.*



Types of extracurricular activities



- Student government
- Academic and special interest clubs at school
- Engineering and computing projects and hackathons
- School newspaper and yearbook
- Art, music, drama, dance, and choir (in and out of school)
- School and club sports as well as martial arts
- Cultural and ethnic organizations in the community
- American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Research with a professor
- Internships at a company or nonprofit organization
- Volunteering in the community
- Part-time job



Participate in competitions to showcase your talents

Business

Case competitions • Blue Ocean Entrepreneurship Competition • Diamond Challenge • Future Business Leaders of America competitive events • Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's World Series of Innovation • Wharton Global High School Investment Competition

Computer Science

USACO • Hackathons • CyberPatriot

Engineering

Vex Robotics • First TECH Challenge • solar car and solar boat competitions

Foreign Language

National French Contest • National German Exam • National Greek Exam • National Japan Bowl • National Latin Exam • National Spanish Exam

Healthcare and Medicine

HOSA competitive events

History

US History Bee • National History Bee • National History Bowl • International History Olympiad

Journalism

National Scholastic Press Association scholastic journalism competitions • Journalism Education Association's National Student Media Competitions

Law

Model United Nations • Mock Trial • Speech & Debate

Math

American Mathematics Competitions • American Invitational Math Exam • US Math Olympiad

Music

Certificate of Merit music tests • Royal Conservatory examinations • Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations

Science

Science Olympiad, Biology Olympiad, Chemistry Olympiad, Physics Olympiad



Extracurricular Programs

The Art of Photography

- Learn the fundamentals of photography
- Master the tools in Adobe Photoshop
- Build an impressive photo portfolio

Business Case Competition

- Learn to analyze a company or industry
- Define and build a business presentation
- Compete in a college-style business case competition before a panel of judges

Introduction to Graphic Design

- Learn graphic design skills and industry-standard software to create brand designs
- Develop a portfolio of brand redesigns

Introduction to Speech & Debate

- Develop strong communication skills and gain knowledge in debate techniques
- Hone the skills needed to succeed in competitions

Machine Learning Projects

- Learn fundamentals of Machine Learning through project-based learning
- Discover how to analyze and label data
- Build your own Machine Learning projects through a personal development environment setup

Math Competition Club

- Strengthen core problem-solving skills
- Prepare for prestigious mathematics competitions to showcase your knowledge and skills

Research Proposal Program

- Express your interest in a field of study and demonstrate your ability to research significant topics
- Humanities, Pre-Med, Psychology, and STEM tracks

eliteprep.com/extracurriculars



Elite Prep Strategy

Extracurriculars

Dedicate your time and energy to **activities that you care about**, and **do them well**.

Taking on **leadership roles** allows you to develop valuable skills, including responsibility, teamwork, collaboration, and communication.

Focus on **activities you plan to continue pursuing in college** – colleges are interested in learning what you will bring to the college campus and how you will contribute to the community.

Record your extracurricular activities and achievements

Activity	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership
	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments
	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership
	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments
	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership
	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments
	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership	Leadership
	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments	Accomplishments



Summer Plans

What do you want to get out of your summer?

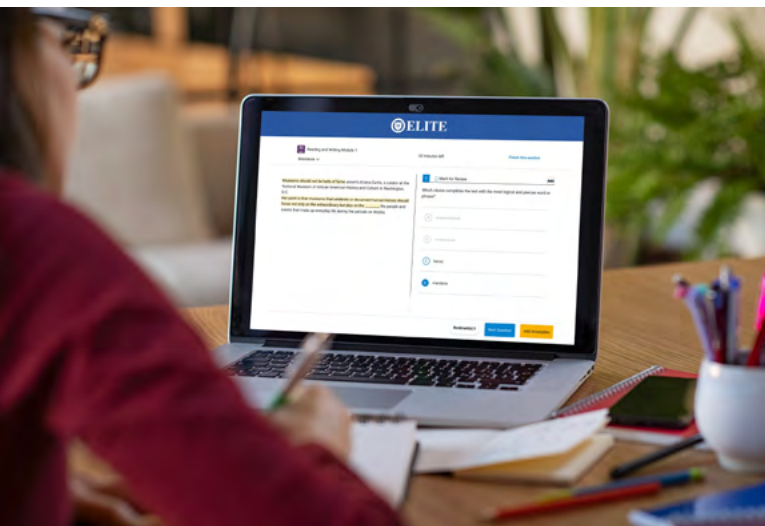
Summer is a great time for you to participate in activities that will allow you to **learn, experience, and grow.**



Types of summer activities



- **Take a summer class at your high school, college, or Elite Open School**
 - To increase your GPA and the number of academic classes you take during high school
 - To get ahead in a subject
 - To make room for other classes in the school year
- **Join a summer program in your area of interest**
 - To explore an area of interest and help you figure out what you want to do in the future (e.g., engineering, medicine, business)
 - To deepen your interest if you already know what you want to do
- **Do an internship, volunteer, or get a job**
- **Study for the SAT or ACT**
 - If you're a rising 11th or 12th grader and want to apply to colleges and universities that consider or require standardized test scores



What do you want to learn or do that you didn't have the time or opportunity to learn or do during the school year?

Is there an academic interest and career field that you want to explore?

How can you build on what you did last summer or during the school year?

What can you do to prepare for your future – whether it's a challenging course in the upcoming school year, your academic interest in college, or a potential career?

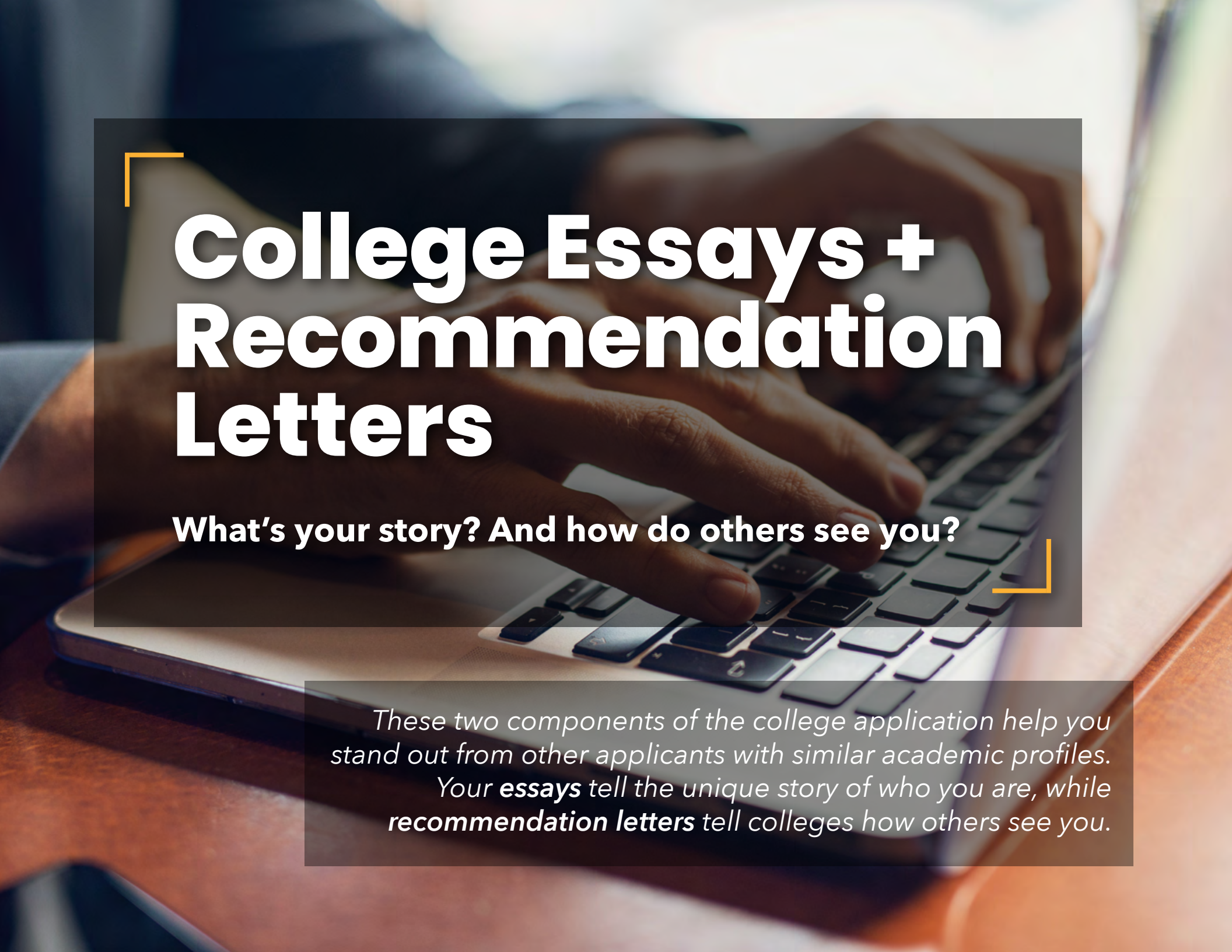
Do you plan to take the SAT or ACT for your college applications?

A young man with glasses and a blue shirt is holding a tablet, and a young woman with glasses and a white shirt is pointing at the screen. They are both smiling and looking at the tablet. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a school hallway.

**What do
you want
to get out
of your
summer?**

Plan your summer activities

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Summer School				
Summer Camp				
Internship/ Research				
Part-Time Job				
Volunteering				
Sports				
Music				
Art				
Other				



College Essays + Recommendation Letters

What's your story? And how do others see you?

*These two components of the college application help you stand out from other applicants with similar academic profiles. Your **essays** tell the unique story of who you are, while **recommendation letters** tell colleges how others see you.*



What's your story?

As a part of the college application, you will have the opportunity to share information about yourself with the admission committee through a **personal statement** or **essay**.

Some colleges ask students to submit one essay, while other colleges require multiple essay responses.

Regardless of the number of essays you are asked to write, colleges are asking the same questions: **Who is this student**, and **what is this student going to bring to our campus?**

What's Your Story?

Mark below which of these statements applies to you.

Statements you mark "Yes" can act as topics to kickstart your essay brainstorming.

I have experienced a significant struggle that has shaped who I am.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have dedicated a significant amount of time to service and helping others.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have an academic or intellectual interest that I am deeply invested in.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have a skill or talent that I have nurtured over time and am proud of.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have faced conflict with another person head-on and resolved it.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have spoken up for a belief, a person, or a group of people in a public way.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have pursued and/or upheld diversity, equity, and inclusion in a significant way.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have learned something fascinating that has transformed the way I think and act.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have worked or been trained in a professional context and developed a unique skillset.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I have developed a unique philosophy or mindset that I choose to live by.

☐ Yes

☐ No



Counselor + Teacher Rec Letters

Make a good impression on your counselors and teachers so they can be strong advocates for you.

- Get to know your teachers and guidance counselors – start as early as 9th grade
- Ask teachers for opportunities to help inside and outside of class hours
- Have a genuine desire to learn and pursue knowledge, not just an obsession with A's
- Don't be afraid to stand out in class and among your peers by driving discussions, especially about the things you care about

Which teachers should you ask?

Ask teachers who know you well and can share insights about your intellectual curiosity and personal qualities and character. Consider the following factors:

- Courses in core subject areas (English, history, math, science, foreign language)
- Subjects that you are interested in studying in college
- Advanced level courses taken in 11th or 12th grade (preferably AP and IB courses)
- Courses where you performed well in terms of grades and AP or IB exams
- Classes where you stood out and made a difference

	How long have they known you?	How would they describe you?	What have you done with their help?
Teacher 1			
Teacher 2			
Teacher 3			

Elite Prep College Consulting & Application Services

Elite College Consulting

Multi-Year College Consulting Program for 8th-12th graders

Our comprehensive admissions counseling program includes:

- Planning your 4-year coursework
- Creating a customized plan to target outstanding scores on the SAT, ACT, and/or PSAT
- Planning your extracurricular involvement during the school year and summer
- Building a well-balanced college list
- Securing outstanding recommendation letters from your teachers and counselor

UC-Application-in-a-Summer

Fast-Track UC Application Support for 12th graders

Our UC application program assists rising seniors in completing the application to the University of California in the summer. Services include:

- Brainstorming and editing responses for the 4 UC Personal Insight Questions
- Developing extracurricular activities list to highlight leadership and accomplishments
- Advising on college major selection
- Completing all parts of the UC freshman application

College Application Services

One-on-One Essay + Application Help for 12th graders

Work with our expert counselors to craft an outstanding college application package that shines a light on who you are and what you've achieved. Services include:

- Brainstorming and editing the personal statement and college-specific supplemental essays
- Developing extracurricular activities list to highlight leadership and accomplishments
- Building a well-balanced college list
- Advising on college major selection
- Guidance on how to obtain strong recommendation letters
- Preparing for college interviews

eliteprep.com/collegeadmissions



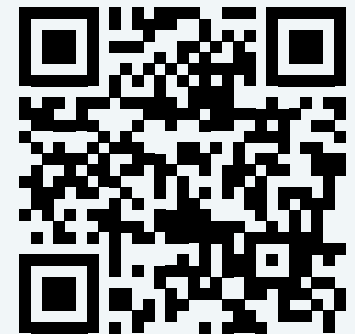
Elite Prep CollegeScore™ Quick Assessment

eliteprep.com/collegescore

Do you have what it takes to get into a top college or university in the U.S.?

Take the Elite Prep CollegeScore™ Quick Assessment to find out how top colleges would rate you across a range of college admission factors.

The Elite Prep CollegeScore™ Quick Assessment is designed for college-bound students in grades 9-12.



Four-Year College Planning Guide

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
High School Academics	Enroll in the most challenging classes you can handle and work on developing good study habits. While you won't be applying to colleges until your senior year, the grades you receive in 9th grade will be included in your college applications!	Continue to enroll in the most challenging classes you can handle. If your school offers honors and Advanced Placement courses, enroll in courses that interest you and will challenge you to develop knowledge and skills in different subjects.	The 11th grade will likely be your most challenging year in high school – as it should be. Continue to challenge yourself by taking honors and AP courses. But don't overdo it – colleges want to see that you're able to succeed in the courses you take.	You should strive to take four years of courses in the five core subjects of history, English, math, science, and foreign language to develop a broad-based education that will help you succeed in college.
Standardized Tests	Some students start taking AP classes and exams in 9th grade.	Take the PSAT in the fall if it's offered at your high school. Prepare to do your best on AP exams if you're enrolled in AP classes at school.	Prepare for and take the SAT or ACT in the fall if you're ready to reach your target score. Round out your 11th grade by getting strong scores on your AP exams.	Take the SAT or ACT one last time if necessary. Take the SAT in August and the ACT in September if you're applying to colleges under the early decision or early action process. You can take the SAT and ACT through December for colleges you're applying to under regular decision.

Four-Year College Planning Guide

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Extracurricular Involvement + College Applications	Join student clubs and organizations that interest you. Find ways to participate and contribute to the club's activities. Participate in activities in and out of school that are important to you, such as sports, music, art, and STEM projects. Fill your summer with activities that allow you to explore your intellectual and personal interests.	Continue to deepen your involvement in student clubs and organizations. Look for opportunities to step up and take the lead in club activities. Take your activities to the next level – participate in competitions and achievement tests in sports, music, art, and STEM. Build on what you did last summer by engaging in activities that allow you to develop knowledge in an area of your interest and gain experiences not available at school.	Run for leadership positions in clubs and student government. Continue to demonstrate excellence in your extracurricular interests. Make your last summer count – seek opportunities that will allow you to develop knowledge and skills for a career path that you want to pursue in the future.	Construct a well-balanced list of colleges where your high school academics and standardized test scores are competitive. Understand the admission requirements as well as application components and deadlines for each college. Many colleges require you to respond to multiple essay prompts. Spend time brainstorming, drafting, and revising your college application essays. Make a good impression by participating in interviews if they are offered by the colleges you're applying to.



Elite Educational Institute Locations

Northern California

Cupertino

(408) 973-8966 • cupertino@eliteprep.com

Fremont

(510) 979-0808 • fremont@eliteprep.com

San Jose

(408) 266-3838 • sanjose@eliteprep.com

San Ramon

(925) 234-9853 • sanramon@eliteprep.com

Southern California

Arcadia

(626) 287-1245 • arcadia@eliteprep.com

Cerritos

(562) 403-7252 • cerritos@eliteprep.com

Fullerton

(714) 525-6611 • fullerton@eliteprep.com

Irvine-Newport Beach

(949) 252-9124 • irvine@eliteprep.com

Irvine-Northwood

(949) 654-8523 • northwood@eliteprep.com

La Crescenta

(818) 236-3872 • lacrescenta@eliteprep.com

Los Angeles

(213) 365-8008 • losangeles@eliteprep.com

Northridge

(818) 831-4422 • northridge@eliteprep.com

Rowland Heights

(909) 444-0876 • rowlandheights@eliteprep.com

San Diego

(858) 720-0808 • sandiego@eliteprep.com

Thousand Oaks

(805) 778-1177 • thousandoaks@eliteprep.com

Torrance

(310) 378-4171 • torrance@eliteprep.com

West LA

(310) 470-4340 • westla@eliteprep.com

Yorba Linda

(714) 974-0484 • yorbalinda@eliteprep.com

Georgia

Suwanee

(470) 253-1004 • suwanee@eliteprep.com

Nevada

Henderson

(702) 859-4881 • henderson@eliteprep.com

Las Vegas

(702) 800-7577 • lasvegas@eliteprep.com

Texas

Austin

(737) 220-1911 • austin@eliteprep.com

Flower Mound

(469) 943-2692 • flowermound@eliteprep.com

Houston

(281) 392-8958 • houston@eliteprep.com

Plano

(972) 306-3200 • plano@eliteprep.com

Southlake

(817) 752-9088 • southlake@eliteprep.com

Virginia

Chantilly

(703) 402-6282 • chantilly@eliteprep.com