

## Top Ten Strengths and Experiences Colleges look for in High School Students

1. A rigorous high school **curriculum** that challenges the student.
2. **Grades** that represent strong effort and/or an upward trend. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all As in less challenging coursework.
3. Standardized **test scores** (SAT, ACT) that are consistent with high school performance.
4. Passionate involvement in a few **activities**, demonstrating leadership and/or initiative. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.
5. **Letters of recommendation** from teachers and guidance counselor that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits, and an interest in learning.
6. Special **talents** or **experiences** that will contribute to an interesting and well-rounded student body.
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. Demonstrated enthusiasm, often exhibited by campus visits and an interview, **showing an interest** toward **attending** the **college**.
9. Out of school experiences, including **work** and **community service** that illustrate responsibility, dedication, and development of areas of interest.
10. Demonstrated **intellectual curiosity** through reading, school and leisure pursuits, and more.

Adapted from [http://www.iecaonline.org/PDF/IECA\\_CollegeTopTenList.pdf](http://www.iecaonline.org/PDF/IECA_CollegeTopTenList.pdf)