



How do I know how hard it is to get into a college?

When trying to decide how hard it would be for you to get into a specific college, you have to realize that there are at least two categories you're dealing with. The first category consists of schools that are hard for everyone to get into, no matter how qualified. These are the colleges with acceptance rates that range from the single digit to the 20's. It may be harder for you than another student to get in because of qualification differences but it's still hard.

Once you get past this category of hard schools, it's actually difficult to just rely on acceptance rates to figure out how hard it is to get into a college. The main issue is self-selection. Students may apply to a college because it is the closest one available. Since there is limited space at the college, it may accept less than 50% of the applicants. However, the middle 50th percentile test scores for the freshman class may be in the average range.

Therefore, many use the test scores as a way to judge how hard it is to get into a college. The schools report the 25th and 75th test score percentiles. It is generally expected that if your scores are above the school's 75th percentile, you should be easily admitted to the college. If your scores are below the 25th percentile, it may be too difficult for you to be admitted without some sort of [hook](#).

However, these numbers may be "inflated" if the institutional is a [test optional](#) school. Only students who do well on the tests (relatively speaking) would report their scores. If the scores of the students who were admitted without submitting test scores were included, the overall range may be significantly lower.

You can also get an idea of how you compared to freshman by looking up the GPA and class rank of enrolled freshman at websites like [CollegeData.com](#). Under the Admissions section, you can find the average GPA and the percentage of students by GPA categories. It also displays a breakdown of freshman by high school class rank. When comparing the GPA information, it's safest to use [unweighted GPAs](#).

While these numbers can provide a good indication of how difficult it may be for you to be accepted at a school, they aren't necessarily the final answer if you can get in. At some public institutions, the numbers are an absolute cut-off point but that's not the case at many private schools.

Homeschoolers are often accepted at private schools without class rank or GPA information. Potential applicants need to be aware that high schools are increasingly not reporting class rank so it may not be a reliable indicator depending on the school. Also, the growing number of test optional schools means that students can be admitted with other qualifications.

The statistics of the enrolled freshman class can provide a reasonable set of expectations for qualifications but there will always be exceptions.

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