

# Five College Admissions Myths

## 1 **Connections get you in.**

If we had a dollar for every time a family told us, “We know someone,” well, you know the rest. That letter of recommendation from the alumnus who is also your father’s business partner isn’t likely to get you in. Admissions officers are looking for motivated students who can add to their campus communities, not the ones who know the “right people.” So, unless the new research center at your dream school has your family’s name on it (which we admit will probably help), don’t count on your connections to get you in.

## 2 **Application gimmicks make you stand out.**

Ever heard of applicants sending cookies with their applications? How about students who ignore directions and write the application in the school’s colors? These tricks make for good stories, but not for good applications. In fact, tricks like sending food, funny videos, or scrapbooks are more likely to annoy the staff than they are to open the doors of admission for you. Instead, spend your time thoughtfully answering the application’s questions and revealing who you are. And unless a college specifically encourages you to send extra materials, save the cookies for your friends.

## 3 **The more activities you do, the better your chances of admission.**

Colleges aren’t interested in students who dabbled in dozens of activities just to pad their resumes. In fact, it’s much more effective for you to truly commit yourself to the activities you most enjoy. So if you love physics a whole lot more than sports, become the captain of your school’s Physics Olympiad team and study Newton’s playbook instead. Love art more than music? Drop your violin and get the brushes out. Students who are deeply committed to activities they sincerely enjoy are the ones most appealing to colleges.

## 4 **If you don’t have high enough test scores, colleges won’t even look at you.**

Yes, test scores can be very important, especially at the most competitive colleges. But a lot of good colleges are interested in more than just numbers. So don’t necessarily assume that low test scores will keep you out. Instead, ask the counselor at your high school for advice about how your scores match up with your chosen colleges.

## 5 **Every college is getting more competitive these days.**

While there are about 40 schools where the competition is more intense than ever, there are over 2,000 colleges in the country. You may be surprised to learn that all but about 100 of them take virtually everybody who applies. And you know what? A lot of them are great schools. Try to find the ones that fit you, rather than just the ones whose names you know. And don’t assume that the hardest schools to get into are necessarily the best colleges for you.