



# EZ College Consulting

Dear John,

This is a personalized college guidance report that we prepared for you. We believe in respecting the personalized nature of college applications, since each student has his/her own unique academic background, capacity, and future plans that must be evaluated carefully. As we did with you, we obtain the necessary information about our students' academic progress as well as their future career plans if they are specified. Accordingly, we prepare a road map report to contribute to the holistic approach that is essential to making the best decisions regarding selection of a college major and career planning. In this report you will find several sections covering the topics of (1) transcript evaluations, (2) course selections, (3) extracurricular activity planning, (4) schools that best match your profile, (5) tests and necessary scores, (6) technical application procedures and The Common Application platform, and (7) time management.

You are just completing the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, so I would like to cover the topics of transcript evaluation and high school course selection first. One of the first and most important criteria that will distinguish you during college application evaluations at admission offices is your high school grade point average (GPA). Currently, your unweighted GPA is 3.35/4.00 and you are ranked 42/121 among your classmates. You still have this year and the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and I assume you can increase your GPA up to 3.60/4.00. Universities will scrutinize the details when they evaluate your transcripts. You have completed one advanced placement (AP) course during 9<sup>th</sup> grade. However, I do not see that you are taking any AP courses this year. I know that AP classes are more challenging than regular classes. I am not sure why you decided not to take any AP classes this year; however, you should know that those classes will be extremely important for your college applications. They are challenging classes and are transferable to all colleges in the United States, and they show that you successfully faced rigorous academic challenges during your high school years. I highly recommend taking two more AP classes next year. Please talk to your school counselor about taking at least two more AP classes. AP Human Geography can be considered as one of the options. Further, I want you to talk to him about potential dual enrollment classes for which you might register in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. High schools have agreements with universities allowing some qualified high school students to take specific college classes on or off of their campuses, especially during 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. You might be one of those elite students. I am very sure there will be some prerequisites to register for those classes. Your school counselor will inform you of those specifics. Dual enrollment classes will also set your college applications apart, since as college-level classes they are naturally more challenging than regular high school classes.

Let's continue on to the SAT. One of the most important criteria that universities will take into account is your standardized test scores. Simply put, an admissions officer will evaluate your GPA in concert with your SAT scores to make sure that you are academically qualified for their school. Your Preliminary SAT (PSAT) score was 1100/1520. Your percentile was 82 among a national representative sample of 10<sup>th</sup>



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graders. This is just an indicator, and I assume your SAT scores will increase. I highly recommend that you focus on this test next year. There are many online resources available that will prepare you. Some high schools offer SAT preparation classes, especially on weekends. I am also very sure that there are private local institutions that might help you prepare for this specific exam. Increasing your scores really depends on your dedication. Because you want to study psychology in California, I will share the average SAT scores of students accepted last year by relevant schools. I will also share the ranking of those schools and you can start planning your SAT preparation and target scores.

The third criterion of college admissions is the extracurricular activities that you have completed during your high school years. This criterion has more subjectivity since there are variety of activities in which students participate that can be considered extracurricular activities. First of all, I have to highlight that none of the universities require or specify extracurricular activity hours. However, they would like to see “well-rounded” students rather than individuals who are only academically successful. Always remember that universities are looking for developed leadership skills that have allowed you to become involved with your community in a meaningful way. You participated in only one extracurricular activity at a local church. This may not be considered an impressive extracurricular activity, since you only participated in church activities a couple of times. The quality of the activities at this church is also unclear. The good news is that you still have plenty of time to join some activities in and out of school. There must be some student clubs at your high school. Those clubs may include but are not limited to (1) student government, (2) academic teams, (3) debate team, (4) culture clubs, (5) music clubs, etc. Animal shelters and hospitals have their own internship programs available for high school students. You may also think of some other activities, since almost anything that you are actively and productively involved in can be considered an extracurricular activity. Here are some popular categories for extracurricular activities: (1) sports, (2) community service, (3) employment, (4) arts, (5) hobbies, and (6) academic activities such as math or science clubs or competitions, research, or writing. You need to develop this part of yourself.

You would like to study psychology and you prefer universities in California as your first choices. Ten percent of college students in the US study psychology and almost all universities offer psychology programs. However, I should emphasize that after your graduation from this major, you must continue with at least a master’s program in psychology. Having at least a master’s degree in psychology is a must. Some of the most common entry-level jobs for psychology graduates are mental health counselor, child custody worker, college admissions counselor, job analyst, psychological technician, substance abuse counselor, human resources professional, and judicial service coordinator. I assume you have begun thinking about your own career plans. You still have time to increase your GPA and SAT scores, and you should choose your classes for next year wisely. You also have plenty of time to plan and complete extracurricular



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activities. We do not have a clear and final picture of you as a college applicant. However, I would like to share some potential colleges' rankings and the average SAT scores of last year's accepted students. I have provided U.S. News & World Report's college rankings. U.S. News & World Report is one of the most respected institutions and periodically publishes the Best Colleges Rankings in the United States.

There are hundreds of schools in the region in which you wish to study. However, I was able to narrow down the number of schools to 10 for you. In the future, we can narrow down our list of prospective schools even further based on your academic success (including extracurricular history) and schools' rankings (best match). In this refined list there will be seven schools for you. One of the most important reasons why I recommend applying to at least seven schools is to see the scholarship options that they will offer after you complete their applications. You will use the same documents for all schools anyway. There is no need to modify any information, especially in your personal statement.

I picked the schools mostly from the University of California chain. Those schools are the best state universities in the nation and will have reasonable tuitions for residents. I assume you will also be eligible for some scholarships.

The first school that I recommend is University of California, Los Angeles. It is ranked 19 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1365/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The second school that I picked for you is University of California, Irvine. It is ranked 33 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1286/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The third school is University of California, San Diego. It is ranked 41 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1257/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The fourth school is University of California, Santa Cruz. It is ranked 70 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1263/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The fifth school is University of California, Riverside. It is ranked 85 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1179/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The sixth school that I recommend is University of San Francisco. It is ranked 96 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1186/1600. Tuition: \$48,232. This is a private institution.



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The seventh school that I picked for you is San Diego State University. It is ranked 127 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1185/1600. Tuition: \$19,368 (out-of-state), \$7,488 (in-state).

The eighth school that I recommend is University of California, Merced. It is ranked 136 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1100/1600. Tuition: \$43,232 (out-of-state), \$14,240 (in-state).

The ninth university that I picked for you is Biola University, La Miranda, CA. It is ranked 157 in National Universities. Last year's average SAT of accepted students was 1181/1600. Tuition: \$40,500. This is also a private institution.

I would like to stress the importance of time management. You have plenty of time to increase your GPA and join in extracurricular activities. Further, you also have plenty of time to prepare your documents and apply to schools. However, I should note that all of the above-mentioned schools also accept applications through "early action" and "early decision" options. The due date for such applications is November 1<sup>st</sup>. In short, many universities accept their students very early, and the acceptance rates for those early applicants become very high. Students also have more of a chance to get better scholarships through those types of admissions. Early action applications are non-binding applications. However, early decision applications are binding, and if you prefer this option and the school accepts your application, you should go there. You have to decide carefully. On the other hand, all of the schools that I chose for you also have regular admission deadlines, mostly in January. I am very sure that you can complete your applications before November 1<sup>st</sup> of your senior year.

The final cost of the schools to which you apply will vary. Schools have their own internal scholarship policies, and you can get full or partial scholarships that will reduce the final cost. Scholarships can be awarded based on need or merit (academic success). Do not be intimidated by the tuitions as listed. Lastly, do not forget to complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many students are eligible for some form of financial aid. Students who are not eligible for need-based aid may still be eligible for an unsubsidized Stafford Loan regardless of income or circumstances. Amounts can change yearly. The maximum Federal Pell Grant award is \$6,095 for the 2018–19 award year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) and \$6,195 for the 2019–20 award year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020; <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>).

Good luck.

Prepared by Erkan Acar, PhD