



# EZ College Consulting

Dear Leila,

This is a personalized report for your future college applications. Since you are just starting 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I will focus on your high school planning rather than college options or career pathways. The main aim of the report is very simple. We would like to contribute to the brainstorming that you must undertake during high school scheduling, rather than only providing you with specific directions regarding college application steps and procedures. This report will also contribute to the holistic approach that is essential to making the best decisions regarding college applications.

One of the most important criteria that distinguish college applicants is their high school grade point average (GPA). You will be taking at least 24 different classes taught by 15-16 different teachers, and the average grades of those classes will not be a coincidence. Your academic performance, especially during 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, will be extremely important. Currently, you would like to study international relations at one of the top colleges in the nation. The applications will be very competitive, and you should have many A's and few B's in your transcripts. Your GPA should be very strong at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

Here it is important to explain the difference between unweighted and weighted GPAs. Unweighted GPAs are measured on a scale of 0 to 4.0 and do not take the difficulty of your courses into account. This means that an A in an Advanced Placement (AP) class and an A in a low-level class will both translate into 4.0s. Weighted GPA, on the other hand, takes the difficulty of your classes into account along with your grades. Typically, a weighted GPA scale ranges from 0 to 5.0. Most colleges will use the unweighted GPA as the best reflection of your high school performance. However, some colleges will examine your high school transcripts in detail and evaluate specific classes including AP, honors, and dual enrollment classes (via weighted GPA). Your school offers these types of classes, and my first recommendation for you is to take at least four AP classes by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. AP classes are more challenging than regular classes. They are also transferable classes to all colleges in the United States. They show that you successfully faced rigorous academic challenges during your high school years. You still have time to take our AP class during 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Talk to your counselor about your AP options. You can start with AP Human Geography. During 10<sup>th</sup> grade, you can take two more AP classes that align with your interests. You can also take two AP classes during 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to talking to your counselor, a simple Google search for AP course descriptions will help you to choose from among the classes that interest you.

Besides the AP classes, there will be dual enrollment (DE) classes available to you after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I know that your school has agreements with local colleges and offers plenty of DE classes. Allow me to explain how dual enrollment classes work. Through agreements with universities, high schools offer select college courses to their most successful students, especially during 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Universities provide the course



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materials, and in many cases, students take those courses on their own high school campuses. Credits earned from a DE class are transferable not just to the university that has the agreement with the high school but also to almost all universities in the United States. However, there are eligibility requirements that a student must meet in order to register for these classes. I believe you need to have a GPA over 3.0 at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. You must also pass sections of the Post Secondary Education Readiness Test, which you will be taking at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I also assume your school is offering this test two times per year. Having those DE classes on your transcripts will have a significant positive impact on your college applications. Like AP classes, DE classes show that you have completed challenging classes during your high school years. What's more, DE classes reduce the number of credits you will need to complete to meet graduation requirements. In many cases, you will complete a DE class in a single semester; however, it will be counted as a yearlong class. Talk to your counselor and learn more about the DE options offered at your school. Lastly, try to take at least two dual enrollment classes during your 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

One of the most important criteria that universities will take into account is your standardized test scores. Put simply, an admissions officer will evaluate your GPA in concert with your SAT (or ACT) scores to make sure that you are academically qualified for their school. Your Preliminary SAT (PSAT) score was 1000/1520. Your percentile was 74 among a national representative sample of 8<sup>th</sup> 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 for this specific test. 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. A high SAT score simply means better schools with larger scholarships. Let me give you an example. Georgetown University (Washington, DC) is nationally ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> and has a very reputable international relations program. Last year's average SAT score for accepted students was 1435/1600. Your SAT scores will distinguish you from the other applicants.

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 a 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 have plenty of time to join extracurricular activities in and out of your school. There are hundreds of options for extracurricular activities, but I will list the five major categories. (1) Academic activities. These are based on a certain academic subject, and include both clubs and competitive teams, such as Astronomy Club, Engineering Club, Literature



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Club, Psychology Club, Academic Decathlon, Robotics Competition, Math League, Drama Club, Photography, and High School Theater Program. (2) Cultural and language activities. These may help you reconnect with your roots, or allow you to get a taste of the world's diversity without ever leaving home. For example, French Club, German Club, International Food Club, and Latin Club. (3) Community activities. These will allow you to become involved in your community. Examples include Kids Helping Kids, Habitat for Humanity, and various community festivals. (4) Government. If you are interested in making a difference through policy in your school, in your community, or on a larger scale, participate in one of these extracurricular activities in your school. Examples include student council and student government. (5) Media. If you love writing and communicating, consider becoming involved in a media activity. You can join a school or local magazine, journal, newspaper, or website. You can also consider music, performing art and religious clubs both in and out of school. Your extracurricular activities should be personally satisfying.

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. 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.

Since you are interested in international relations, I have listed below the best colleges in this field. Remember that your 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade performance is extremely important for your eligibility.

1. Georgetown University, DC
2. Stanford University, CA
3. Yale University, CT
4. University of Southern California, CA
5. Brown University, RI
6. University of Pennsylvania, PA
7. American University, DC
8. Tufts University, MA
9. Pomona College, CA
10. Johns Hopkins University, MD
11. George Washington University, DC



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Among the occupations you may pursue after completing this major are diplomat, economist, foreign affairs analyst, immigration specialist, international lawyer, journalist, lobbyist, political analyst, language specialist, and demographer. I have listed below average job salaries for some of these occupations.

Diplomat – 87,000 USD/year

Intelligence specialist – 70,000 USD/year

Political analyst – 84,000 USD/year

Lobbyist – 71,000 USD/year

Communications specialist – 50,000 USD/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). Further, do not be intimidated by the tuitions as listed. I have worked with students with similar academic backgrounds, and based on my experience I can say that you will be awarded scholarships of between 30% and 60% of the cost of tuition from those schools. Lastly, you will be completing your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during your senior year. 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 Dr. Erkan Acar



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