

HOW TO CREATE A GREAT COLLEGE LIST

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There are more than 4,500 colleges and universities in the US and the good news is that most schools accept most students, with the national average at 63.8% in 2011 ([source](#)). But which of the 4,500 is right for you? Private consultants can be a wonderful support during the college process and many specialize in developing college lists. If you can afford to hire one, I totally recommend it, and [here's why](#) I think that's a good idea. (Find one near you [here](#) and [here](#).) But if you can't afford it, here's how to do it online, for free.

Where do I even start finding schools?

Use [collegeexpress.com](#) to search according to your interests.

Why College Express? Because school buff [Steven Antonoff](#) – who has been eating, sleeping and breathing colleges for the past few decades – developed an amazing set of lists based on years of visiting campuses, talking to professionals, and studying schools in deep detail. He first published these lists in his book [The College Finder](#). But guess what? Some genius published the lists for free at [www.collegeexpress.com](#). Plus, they're searchable, so you can type in anything from “Schools for the Free Spirit” to “Great Private Colleges for the B Student” and you'll get a list of schools. It's pretty much my favorite resource ever. Another thing I love is that Steven doesn't rank schools, which is pretty tough to do anyway.

Here, I'll make it even easier for you. Check out The Amazing College List below. All the links are clickable.

I'm interested in studying...

[Automotive](#)

[Anthropology](#)

[Aviation](#)

[Biology](#)

[Chemistry](#)

[Computer Science](#)

[Criminal Justice](#)

[Culinary Arts](#)

[Dance](#)

[Dentistry](#)

[Ecology](#)

[Economics](#)

[Education](#)

[Engineering](#)

[English](#)

[Entrepreneurship](#)

[Ethnic Studies](#)

[Equestrian](#)

[Film](#)

[Finances](#)

[Fashion](#)

[Foreign Language](#)

[Graphic Design](#)

[History](#)

[Humanities](#)

[Interior Design](#)

[International Relations](#)

[Hospitality Management](#)

[Journalism](#)

[Landscape Architecture](#)

[Law](#)

[Liberal Arts](#)

[Marine Science](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Medicine](#)

[Meteorology](#)

[Music](#)

[Outdoor Studies](#)

[Photography](#)

[Physics](#)

[Political Science](#)

[Psychology](#)

[Religious Studies](#)

[Robotics](#)

[Sociology](#)

[Theater](#)

[Voice](#)

[World Business](#)

Click any of the links to go directly to the list

[Colleges for Specialized Majors](#)

[Colleges for Students Needing a Second Chance](#)

[Colleges with Strongest Academic Pressure](#)

[Colleges that Do Not Consider Standardized Test Scores](#)

[Colleges Most Like Hogwarts](#)

[Expert-Chosen Unknown College Gems](#)

[Colleges with Interesting Traditions](#)

[Colleges with the Best Honors Colleges](#)

[Top Ten Slacker Colleges](#)

[Most Christ-Centered Colleges](#)

[Colleges with Meditative Spaces](#)

[Colleges with Most Devoted Sports Fans](#)

[Colleges Most Tolerant of Different Perspectives](#)

[Colleges for Socially Awkward Students](#)

[College Promoting Internationalism](#)

[Colleges with a Strong Sense of Community](#)

[Top Ten Colleges with All-Time Most Football Wins](#)

[Colleges Giving Academic Grants](#)

[Colleges with Greatest Diversity](#)

[Best Cooperative Education Colleges](#)

[College with Most International Students](#)

[Colleges with Highest Percentage of Fraternity Students](#)

[Colleges Going Green](#)

[Colleges Offering Grants to Students Without Financial Need](#)

[Colleges with Unconventional Grading Styles](#)

[Wealthy Colleges Offering Enrolling Needy Students](#)

[Colleges with the Most Peace Corps Volunteers](#)

[Alma Maters of Astronauts](#)

[Colleges to Consider for Online Learning](#)

[Gay-Friendly Colleges](#)

[Colleges for the Most Fun-Loving](#)

[Private Colleges for the Underachiever](#)

[Colleges Making a Difference](#)

[Colleges for the Scholar](#)

[Colleges with Unusual Majors](#)

[Colleges for the Socially Conservative](#)

[Colleges for the Improved Student](#)

[Colleges that Offer A Lot of Financial Aid Opportunities](#)

[Colleges that are Underrated](#)

[Colleges for Video Game Lovers](#)

[Colleges for Sea Conservation](#)

[Best Undergraduate Colleges Overall](#)

[Colleges with Great Living Spaces](#)

[Most Beautiful College Campuses](#)

[Colleges for Creative Writers](#)

[Top Ten Activist Schools](#)

[Colleges with Campus Spirit](#)

[Broad-Minded Colleges](#)

[Colleges for the Independent Learner](#)

[Colleges Offering Community Service Scholarships](#)

[Colleges Where All Students Live Off Campus](#)



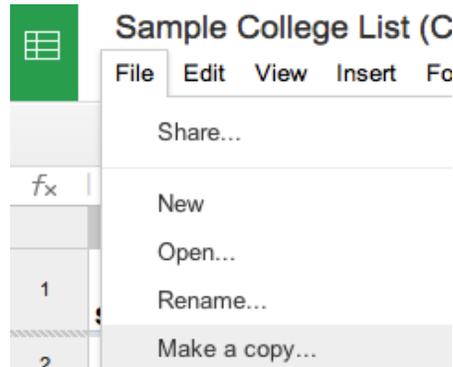
What do I do next?

1. Notice which colleges are coming up repeatedly.

Example: maybe you've never heard of Brandeis, but you see it on the lists for "Colleges with Excellent Political Science Programs," "Colleges with Fine Music Programs," and "More Colleges for Creative Writers" (and you want to major in Poly Sci, you play the violin and like to write poems in your spare time). Put in our list. Which list? This one...



2. Make a copy of [this Google spreadsheet](#). How? Go to "File" and click "Make a copy..."



3. Type your list of schools into that doc, like this:

	SCHOOL	General Acceptance %	How Many Stud
40	REACH	1-24%	
41	Amherst	12%	1800
42	Wesleyan	20%	3200
43	Tufts	21%	10,000
44	MAYBE	25-75%	
45	Brandies	39%	5000
46	Hampshire College	63%	1500
47	Mt. Holyoke	42%	2400
48	Emerson	48%	4500
49	MATCH	76-100%	
50	Wheaton College	64%	1600
51	U. of Washington	60%	10000
52			
53			

Share this list with anyone who is helping you (your counselor, friend, or parent) using the "Share" button in the top right corner. And list a bunch, like 15-20. You'll whittle it down. How? Through research.

Any favorite sites for researching schools?

Stay on www.collegeexpress.com and type in the school name. Then click "Lists" to see what other lists that school is on.

For the pro perspective, go to collegecountdown.com where for \$20 you can get online access to the [Fiske Guide to Colleges](#), which is pretty much the go-to guide for college research (and #1 on [Amazon](#)). This \$20 is optional, but totally worth it.

For the student perspective, go to unigo.com where you can read real students' opinions on their schools. But don't just read 1-2 reviews, read a bunch of them, in particular the "What's the stereotype of students at your school" and "Is the stereotype true?" You'll get a sense of the school vibe pretty quick.

How many schools should I apply to?

Pick nine schools. Why nine? Because nine allows you to pick three of each of these:

- 3 Reach (1%-24% chance of acceptance)
- 3 Maybe (25%-75% chance)
- 3 Likely (76%-99% chance)

Keep searching and researching until you're in love with all nine – yes, even the "Likely" schools. (Bonus tip: If you're applying to the University of California schools, count them as one, since the application and essays will be the same for all of them.)

How do I know my chances of getting in?

You can find the general acceptance rates on many sites, but I recommend using parchment.com to find out your real chances.

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Why Parchment? Because you can enter more specific info on yourself: in addition to GPA and test scores, you can also add extra info--extracurriculars, leadership, hardship--basically details that will give you a slightly more accurate sense of how you compare. How much more accurate? It's tough to say, but it will give you at least a sense of whether the school is a reach, maybe or likely.

Why trust Parchment? Because it's the transcript-sending service for many thousands of students--both when they're sending the initial transcripts and when they send the final transcript, confirming students' acceptance--so the site actually knows a.) that students are reporting grades correctly and b.) who was actually accepted where.

