

College Admission Game

Time: With discussion, 30-45 min.

Materials: Profile cards, prizes

Directions: Use this activity to demonstrate to students specific characteristics that give one applicant an advantage over another in the college admissions process.

1. Ask eight volunteers to play. Hand each player a “student profile card” and have them line up in order of GPA from highest to lowest. They should hold up the card with the GPA side facing the audience.

2. Ask the audience and the players to make predictions about which students would seem the most desirable to college admissions offices based on what they see (GPA only).

3. Then, read the following instructions:

- If you have taken an exceptionally strong academic program, move up two spaces.
- If you served in student government, move up one space.
- If you clearly stated that this college is your first choice by making an early decision application and commitment, move up two spaces.
- If you have job shadowed someone in your desired career field or intended major, move up one space.
- If you have not done any college and career research, move back one space.
- If you do not know any of your teachers well enough to feel comfortable asking for a recommendation, move back two spaces.
- If, when you typed your college essay, you forgot to change the name of the college you were applying to, move back three spaces.
- If you did not write the optional college essay, move back one space.
- If the topic of your college essay was sports as a metaphor for life, move back one space.
- If you wrote the “Essay of the Year,” the one that was passed around the admissions office, move up two spaces.
- If you plagiarized an American history paper and were caught, sit down—you are out of the competition entirely.
- If you will be the first in your family to attend college, move up two spaces.
- If you attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years, move up two spaces.
- If you have participated in NO extracurricular activities, move back three spaces.
- If you have participated in a significant community service project, move up one space.
- If you belong to an organization like Junior Achievement, Scouts, Honor Society, etc., move up two spaces.
- If you are a varsity athlete, move up one space. If you are all-region in a sport, move up another space. • If you got a “D” in an academic course at the end of your junior year, move back three spaces.
- If you wrote a letter to the college admission officer and explained the extenuating circumstances surrounding a grade of “D,” move up one space.
- If you decided to protect your GPA by not taking AP classes offered at your school, move back two spaces.
- If you come from a single-parent household and must work part-time to help with expenses, move up two spaces.
- If your last name is Kennedy, and the name on the college library is Kennedy, and it is not a coincidence, move all the way to the front of the line and stay there.

At the end of the game, discuss why some attributes advanced students forward and why some moved backward. What does this mean for students and college admissions? How can students create the strongest application?

Student Profiles: Print out this page. Cut and fold the paper so that the front side of paper displays the GPA and student profile is on the back. Select eight players and hand each one a player profile card. Enlarge if needed.

4.1 GPA	• You took a strong academic program. • You forgot to change the name of the college when typing the essay that was sent to several different schools.
4.0 GPA	• You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years. • You decided not to take AP classes (even though your school offered them) because you wanted to protect your GPA.
3.7 GPA	• The topic of your essay was sports (as a metaphor for life). • You are a Scout. • You are all-region in basketball.
3.5 GPA	• You job shadowed someone in your intended field or major. • You participated in NO extracurricular activities. • You attended an enriching summer program between 11th and 12th grade.
3.3 GPA	• You applied for early decision to your first-choice college. • You have not done any college and career research. • You plagiarized an American history paper and were caught.
3.1 GPA	• Your intended major is psychology or premed. • You wrote an essay that was passed around the office because it was so good. • You are the first in your family to attend college. • You are a varsity athlete. • You made a “D” in your junior year but wrote to the college to explain extenuating circumstances. • You have taken a strong academic program.
2.9 GPA	• You served in student government. • You are quiet and do not know your teachers well enough to ask for a recommendation. • You have participated in community service. • You have taken a strong academic program. • You are from a single-parent household and must work to help with expenses.
2.8 GPA	• You did not write the optional essay for your college application. • You have participated in some community service. • Your last name is Kennedy, and the college library is named after your grandfather.

Answer Key

4.1 GPA	• You took a strong academic program. (+2) • You forgot to change the name of the college when typing the essay that was sent to several different schools. (-3)
4.0 GPA	• You attended an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years. (+2) • You decided not to take AP classes (even though your school offered them) because you wanted to protect your GPA. (-2)
3.7 GPA	• The topic of your essay was sports (as a metaphor for life). (-1) • You are a Scout. (+2) • You are all-region in basketball. (+1)
3.5 GPA	• You job shadowed someone in your intended field or major. (+1) • You participated in NO extracurricular activities. (-3) • You attended an enriching summer program between 11th and 12th grade. (+2)
3.3 GPA	• You applied for early decision to your first-choice college. (+2) • You have not done any college and career research. (-1) • You plagiarized an American history paper and were caught. • (Disqualification)
3.1 GPA	• Your intended major is psychology or pre-med. (-1) • You wrote an essay that was passed around the office because it was so good. (+2) • You are the first in your family to attend college. (+2) • You are a varsity athlete. (+1) • You made a “D” in your junior year but wrote to the college to explain extenuating circumstances. (+1) • You have taken a strong academic program. (+2)
2.9 GPA	• You served in student government. (+1) • You are quiet and do not know your teachers well enough to ask for a recommendation. (-2) • You have participated in community service. (+1) • You have taken a strong academic program. (+2) • You are from a single-parent household and must work to help with expenses. (+2)
2.8 GPA	• You are a legacy at the college to which you are applying. (+2) • You did not write the optional essay for your college application. (-1) • You have participated in some community service. (+1) • Your last name is Kennedy, and the college library is named after your grandfather. (Moves to the top).

Original Ranking Based on GPA: 4.1, 4.0, 3.7, 3.5, 3.3, 3.1, 2.9, 2.8

Final Ranking Based on Inclusive Profile: 2.8, 3.1, 2.9, 3.7, 4.0, 3.5, 4.1, 3.3