

What I Wish I Knew

An IvyClimbing Student

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What I will cover

- Background
 - Choosing colleges
 - What I wish I knew before applications
 - Advice for students currently in high school
 - A note to the parents
 - Reflection
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Background

- ❑ Los Altos High School, Class of 2010
 - ❑ Family of three
 - ❑ GPA: 4.00 unweighted, 4.76 weighted
 - ❑ SAT: 2240
 - ❑ AP: 1 sophomore year, 3 junior year, 4 senior year
 - ❑ Chemistry/Linguistics major
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Awards

- ❑ MIT Leadership Award
 - ❑ Outstanding Achievement in Chemistry
 - ❑ Poems in Silicon Valley Newspaper
 - ❑ Article on California Council of Humanities
 - ❑ National Merit Finalist
 - ❑ Chemistry Olympics... just kidding!
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Extra Curriculars

- Karate
 - Environmental Club
 - Summer volunteering in Mexico
 - Learning languages
 - Housework!
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How I chose my colleges

- Guess which ones I chose!
 - Dartmouth vs. Columbia
 - Chicago vs. Yale
 - Stanford vs. UPenn
 - UC Davis vs. UC Irvine
 - Cornell vs. UC Berkeley
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How I chose my colleges

- College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won
 - Focus: Chicago vs. Yale
 - Professors
 - Fit
 - Location
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How to choose colleges

- Brand name doesn't mean better
 - Highest starting salary? (according to Yahoo news)
 - Loma Linda University
 - Mid career?
 - Dartmouth College
 - Application will be stronger if student actually wants to attend
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What I wish I knew

- ❑ START EARLY—it's never too early
 - ❑ SATs: Get them out of the way
 - ❑ Choose colleges before you start
 - Limit the number you apply to (unless you have huge amounts of time)
 - ❑ Less quantity = better quality
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What I wish I knew

- ❑ Stay organized: Deadlines, essays, interviews
 - ❑ Colleges want to see theme, involvement
 - ❑ Get to know teachers (and especially the counselor)
 - ❑ College Counselor—Where would I be without you?
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What I wish I Knew

- ❑ Interviews are not scary!
 - ❑ Be yourself, not someone you are not
 - ❑ A chance to present personality, not test scores
 - ❑ Be prepared to talk about yourself
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Attention High School students

- Find theme now
 - SATs are not the end of the world—
even comparatively low scores
 - Grades > Extra Curriculars
 - Choose teachers to write letters of
recommendation at end of junior year
 - Be sure to woo them!
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Attention High School students

- Write essays soon! And make sure your own voice resonates throughout the pieces
 - Grades
 - Which colleges appeal to you?
 - Grades!!
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A note to the parents

- ❑ Your child is going to be stressed, so try to help out
 - ❑ Handle some of the secretarial work
 - ❑ Make sure student is working; essay season is not the time to be forcing chores or pushing piano competitions
 - ❑ “Wind Beneath My Wings”
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Special Case

- ❑ Twins!
 - ❑ Use this to your advantage
 - ❑ Twins = diversity (and extra financial aid)
 - ❑ If one twin gets into Harvard, other will automatically get in
 - ❑ Early rounds—divide and conquer!!
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Reflection

- ❑ Enriching process—very introspective
 - ❑ Start early!
 - ❑ Transition from high school to college
 - ❑ I couldn't have done it myself
 - ❑ Applied to different schools than twin
 - ❑ Wherever you end up going, rest assured that you will enjoy it
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