

Advice to an Incoming Freshman  
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Being told I would be expected to talk here, I inquired what sort of talk I ought to make. They said it should be something suitable to youth—something didactic, instructive, or something in the nature of good advice. First, then, I will say to you my young friends—and I say it beseechingly, urgently—

Always be original in your thoughts and ideas. Copying somebody else's work, word for word, and giving no credit whatsoever is an absolutely atrocious act that should be avoided at all costs. You do not want to be seen as lazy, or worse, unfit for admission into your top three colleges. This easily leads into my discussion for today: How to Get into Your Dream College, or A Simple Yet Effective Five-Step Guide to Becoming Harvard's Ideal Applicant.

Step 1: Take as many AP classes as possible. Be mindful, however, that you do not taint your resume with weak humanities courses such as Music Theory and Art History, no matter how much enjoyment you derive from those classes. These names don't carry the same oomph as more weighty names do, such as Chemistry, Calculus BC, and, my personal favorite, Physics 1 (this has the lowest passing rate of any AP exam. OOMPH!). You might be absolutely miserable now, but always remember that you are investing in your happiness (and your paycheck) in the future.

Step 2: Have an accomplishment that stands out. I once read about a kid that built a functioning nuclear reactor in his garage. He got rejected from MIT. Some may think this goes to show that no accomplishment will guarantee your admission into a top college. Do not pay any attention to these naysayers. Your best shot is to build a functioning nuclear reactor in your garage that doubles as a machine that cures cancer. With colleges getting more and more

competitive, you have to be willing to put in the work to get the reward. As the saying goes, “all work and no play makes Jack a competent applicant.”

Step 3: Join clubs. You should prioritize the number of clubs that you are involved in over the level and quality of your involvement in each club. In this way, you can effectively cover more ground. Sure, you may never experience any personal fulfillment or accomplishment using this technique, but is a surefire tactic to give you an edge over a competing applicant. Just imagine—admissions officers are deciding between you and John Doe. Your applications? They’re practically identical. You both did Science Olympiad for two years. You both took band as an elective. Even your GPA is exactly the same. The tension is rising in the admission office. Agony and indecision lie heavily over the room. Then, one sharp-eyed admissions officer sees that you attended two Green Club meetings in the second semester of your freshman year. John Doe (a poor, clueless applicant who has never received anything comparable to the stellar advice I am currently offering you) did not go to those two Green Club meetings. I assure you, it will be a quick decision from there, and John Doe will not be happy about it.

Step 4: Try to improve your vocabulary. Rather, you should undertake to augment your terminology. If you do this, everybody will know how smart you are. Before asking “Can I use the bathroom?”, stop yourself and think of a way to rephrase this question in a way that will really galvanize your English teacher. “Am I permitted to employ the facilities?” is just one stupendous option. Sure, you may be losing the meaning of your sentences in the process, but you will be sure to impress anybody you encounter—including admissions officers.

Step 5: Do not brag. Be humble, but do make sure to throw in a casual comment here and there about your accomplishments. This will remind everyone that you will be attending an Ivy

League after you graduate. For example, if you see somebody reading *Of Mice and Men*, approach him or her and start a conversation about how terrible you are at reading. Then smoothly transition to how you finished the book within two days and how you received a 97% on your character analysis of Lennie Small. If you follow this advice, you will not only become well known for your modesty, but you will also have the chance to develop healthy relationships with the people around you. These are the qualities that top-tier colleges like Harvard are looking for in an applicant.

Armed with this valuable advice, you should have no trouble at all gaining acceptance to Harvard or any other college of your choice. As clearly outlined in this piece, you have much to look forward to in the next four years.