

# how to form your short list

## WHAT IS A SHORT LIST?

Your short list is just that (a short list!) of about 4-6 schools that you are serious about applying to in the fall of your senior year.

## WHEN SHOULD I HAVE IT READY?

Your short list should be completed and ready to go the first week in August.

## CAN I EDIT MY LIST?

Absolutely! Sometimes the perfect school creeps up on you. That's the beauty of a short list; if you start out small it is okay to add on or take away a school here and there throughout the process!

## WHAT SHOULD I DO ONCE I HAVE MY LIST?

Once you are happy with your 4-6 schools you have narrowed down, now is the time to research! Set up accounts with each school and begin applications if possible. Be mindful of deadlines!

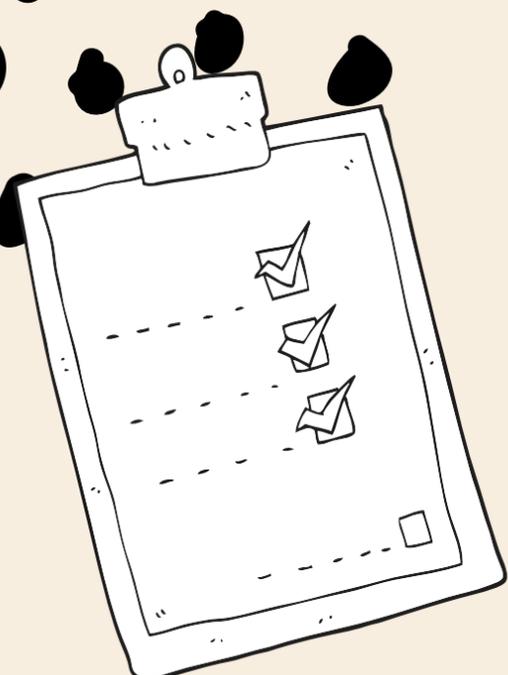
## HOW DO I NARROW IT DOWN?

The most precious thing you have your senior year is time. You have a limited amount of days in high school left so you don't want to waste them. That being said: it is a waste of your time to apply to schools you wouldn't be happy attending. Life is too short and application fees are too expensive for that mess!

## I LIKE TOO MANY SCHOOLS...HELP!

If you find yourself with a long list, there are a couple of options. First, narrow down any schools you have not or will not visit. You should see your future college at least once, so if you do not see yourself visiting a university, you may as well mark it off the list (there are exceptions, of course, travel expenses, international, etc.)

Second, sit down and write out a paragraph about why you want to attend each school. If you can't find the time or the motivation to write about a particular school, scratch it off the list. You probably didn't want to go there that bad anyway! Plus this will be helpful to get yourself in the right mindset when applying and some schools actually use that question in essays!



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## CATEGORIES

Getting to know the definitive characteristics of the universities you have in mind is a pivotal part of the narrowing process.

### the reach school

You should have 1 or 2 reach schools on your list. These are tough universities with higher average test scores and GPA category than you fall under. It's important to include these because you only apply to college once! Who knows? Maybe you are just the right fit! But you'll never know until you try!

### the attainable school

This is the biggest and most important category by far! An attainable school is one where the reported averages of accepted students are in your range. It's important to apply to 3 attainable schools because you are more likely to have better results than with the reach schools, and you will be more challenged than at a safety school.

### the safety school

You should apply to 1 safety school. This is your back up plan. Your scores should be well above the average reported by this university so you have the highest chance percentage wise to get in. This school will also more often than not have a higher overall acceptance rate than your reach and attainable schools.

Although nothing is guaranteed, choose a school you would actually be happy attending. This will be crucial during the application process (you don't want the school to know it's your safety!)

And remember! Even though these are pretty broad categories, don't compare your schools to anyone else's! These characteristics are personalized to YOU and no one else has had the exact same experience as you. Your safety school may be someone's reach, so be kind to everyone and give comfort to those who need it!