



# Seoul International School

**Class of 2026**

**College Admission Myths**

January 30, 2024

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# The Admission Puzzle

- Transcript: Courses, Grades
- Test Scores
- Teacher Recommendations
- Extracurricular Activities
- Major/Career



# Transcript: Courses

## Myth:

- I have to take X number of APs.
- I have to take [insert class name].

## Fact:

- There is no relationship between number of APs and college results at SIS.
- Very few SIS students “have to” take a particular class (beyond graduation requirements)

**Set yourself up for success.**

**Consider the composition of the whole  
schedule vs individual class**

**What else is competing for your time?  
Balance academic and non-academic  
priorities**

# Transcript: Grades

## Myth:

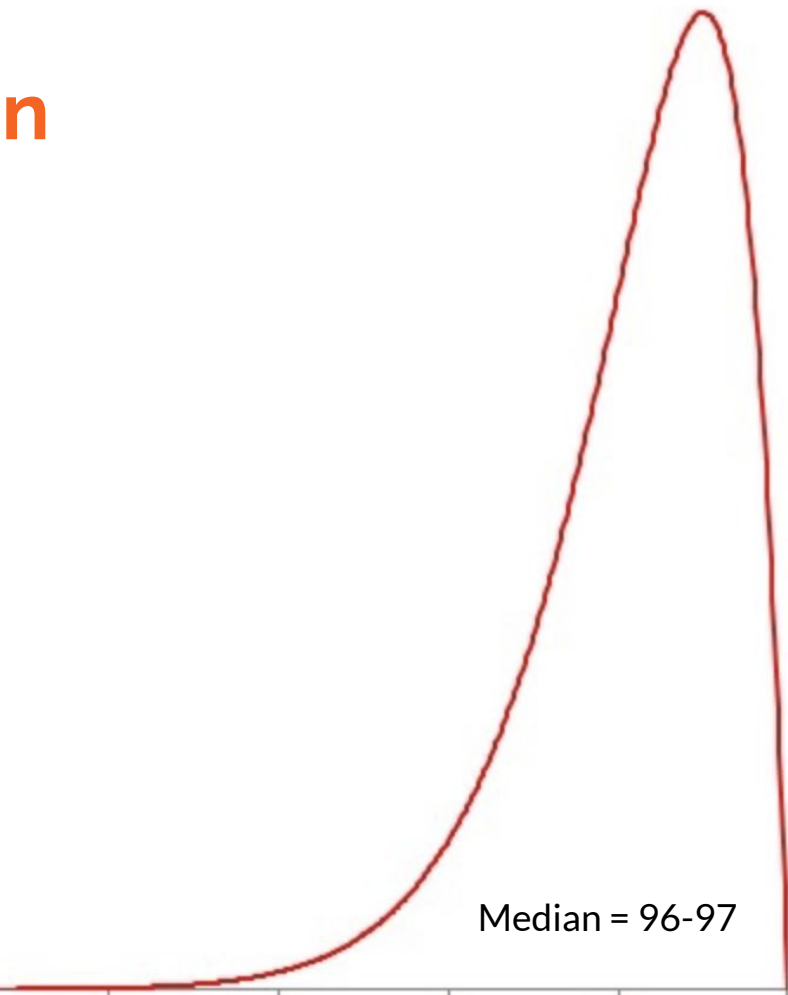
- A semester grade of X vs X-1 vs X+1, etc, will matter in the college process.
- GPA will play a huge role in the college admissions process.

## Fact:

- A difference of a few points is not meaningful to colleges.
- GPA will play little to no role in your admissions decisions and should not play much (if any) role in your college search.

# Non-normal Distribution

- Incredibly narrow, high band of performance
- Colleges look at grade trends over time and across subjects, relative to choices you've made.
- This is not meant to dismiss your hard work!
- But the college process doesn't boil down to one number!



Median = 96-97



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**I wish I hadn't wasted all  
that time and energy  
chasing that extra point.  
It feels so silly now.**

~ Class of 2023 alum who visited SIS in January 2024

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**Free yourself from an unhealthy obsession with grades and/or GPA.**

**Nearly all SIS applicants are considered “academically qualified.”**

**Many colleges re-compute GPAs**

**Note: SIS does not rank students.**

# Test Scores (SAT, ACT, etc)

## Myth:

- Getting another 10/20/50/etc points will matter.
- Most SIS students score above XXXX on the SAT.

## Fact:

- Test scores play a minimal role in decisions for SIS students. The ROI on retesting is low.
- While our students *tend* to have very good scores (1400+), this is the least interesting, least informative part of the puzzle for SIS students.

**Free yourself from an unhealthy obsession with test scores.**

**There is little-to-no relationship between SIS test scores and admission results.**

**Time is a precious commodity. Do something more interesting with your time.**

# Teacher Recommendations

## Myth:

The teacher I ask to write a college recommendation has to be:

- An AP teacher
- From junior year
- In class with my highest grade
- From X class

## Fact:

- Nope
- Nope
- Nope
- Nope

**The teachers who write for you should know you well.**

- **Who knows me the best?**
- **Who can help bring me to life?**
- **How can I make it easy for them to write about me?**

# Extracurricular Activities

## Myth:

The following activities will improve my chances of admission:

- Competitions
- Independent Research
- Self-publishing a book
- Summer Programs
- Internships
- Starting a club/non-profit

## Fact:

- Almost never
- Nope
- Nope
- Nope
- Nope
- Nope

**These can be great experiences!**

**But understand that the benefit is personal growth and further exploring your interests.**

**“Markers of Privilege”**

**Do fewer things better.**

# The College Major

## Myth:

- I have to know what I want to major in by senior year of HS.
- I will have an easier time getting in if I pretend to be interested in majoring in [insert...sociology/anthropology/obscure major]

## Fact:

- Very few schools admit by major, and at most schools, you don't declare your major until sophomore year
- Colleges see through that. Strive for authenticity.



**Exploring majors is a great way to learn more about yourself AND universities.**

**If applying to non-US schools, you will likely apply to a specific major.**

# The Application Puzzle

Optional Information Sessions  
Activity Period / Atrium

Tentative Schedule:

Feb 27: Teacher Recommendations

Mar 5: Extracurricular Activities

Mar 12: The Transcript (Office Hours)

Apr 2: Major vs Career

Apr 9: Senior Results Overview