

Get Into College

Hundreds of Heads

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Hundreds of Heads Books (March 2009)

Softcover \$17.95 (560pp)

978-1-933512-15-0

"College Admissions officers just want to know that you weren't sitting around all summer with Cheez Doodle crumbs all over your shirt." This is just one of the hundreds of quotes from college staff, students and their parents that make reading this book from cover to cover not only informative but entertaining as well.

Get Into College is not a typical college reference guide. It tackles the usual topics like starting the college search process, SAT/ACT preparation, applications, essays, interviews, and identifying the right college. But the way the book is compiled makes it stand out, with each chapter full of special symbols drawing attention to short, snappy tips such as "Headlines: Best Advice and Top Tips," "Important!" "Expert Advice," and "Amazing!" Just scanning these highlighted snippets is an education; however, there is a great deal more here: solid information and interesting anecdotes.

The editors introduce each chapter's topic, and give important facts and figures. The anecdotes mainly come from others who work with or have lived through the college search process. They give advice and sometimes tell about their mistakes. One student says, "Every college has a financial aid office. They offer all kinds of weird aid. Apply for all that you can." Another admits, "I cut it so close with my application that my parents had to take it to the 24-hour post office so it could be postmarked by the deadline date. It made the whole process more stressful than it needed to be."

Parents' Pages are helpful because parents have usually spent as much time thinking about the college search as their students. One parent says, "Start by looking at the area, not just the college. Don't blow off college tours, either. It's worth your peace of mind." And, "Keep your expectations at bay...learn that living your life through your child is not healthy."

The importance of assessment tests are evidenced by the three chapters devoted to them: "The SAT and ACT: How to Prepare," "Strategies and Tips for Besting the Test," and "Test Day...and Beyond."

Another chapter focuses on extracurricular activities that help the student stand out from the crowd. Students are advised to work part-time, volunteer for a charitable organization, travel or take extra classes. But experts warn students to choose activities in which they are genuinely interested, rather than just to try to pad resumes with stuff. A special insert features sample college admission essays with critiques. Several pages of helpful websites and a list of resources follow.

The editors are both college admissions consultants and former college admissions officers. Their experience working with college-bound students, parents and other educational professionals is apparent. They have put together an informative, easy-to-read resource guide.

Review Date: November 2009.

(December 1, 2009)

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