

Reach, Possible, and Safety Schools

Given today's competitive admissions climate, some students apply to as many as 8-12 colleges. Your prospective college list should contain about 25% Reach schools, 50% Possible schools, and 25% Safety schools. Reach, Possible, and Safety Schools are defined as:

Reach Schools – Your test scores, GPA, and/or class rank are below those of the majority of accepted students at these schools. It would take something compelling on your application to override those odds.

Possible Schools – Your test scores, GPA, and/or class rank more closely fit the ones of accepted students or at least fall within a realistic range. You have a reasonable chance (typically better than 50-50) for admission.

Safety Schools – Your test scores, GPA, and/or class rank typically fall above the 75th percentile of admitted students and the school usually accepts more than 50% of its applicants. You will almost certainly gain admission.

If the school's admissions rate is under 30%, it's probably not a true safety school for many applicants, even those with well above average scores and other strong factors.

*** Remember – what category a school falls into is relative to your unique statistics, i.e. a Reach school for one student may be a Safety School for another student***

Case Study: Sally Student

Grade Point Average – 3.67 on a 4.0 scale **Class Rank:** 50th out of 285 students **SAT Scores:** Critical Reading – 600, Math –540, Writing – 560

College/University	Grade Point Averages	Mid 50% SAT Scores	Percentage of Applicants Admitted	Reach/Possible/Safety
Clark University	3.75 or Higher: 27% 3.50-3.74: 25% 3.0-3.49: 35% 2.0-2.99: 13%	Critical Reading: 550-660 Math: 540-650 Writing: 550-600	71%	Possible
Boston University	3.75 or Higher: 26% 3.50-3.74: 30% 3.0-3.49: 40% 2.0-2.99: 4%	Critical Reading: 580-670 Math: 600-690 Writing: 590-680	54%	Reach
Elms College	3.75 or Higher: 10% 3.50-3.74: 13% 3.0-3.49: 36% 2.0-2.99: 40%	Critical Reading: 420-530 Math: 420-530 Writing: 440-540	82%	Safety
University of Massachusetts – Amherst	3.75 or Higher: 30% 3.50-3.74: 26% 3.0-3.49: 40% 2.0-2.99: 4%	Critical Reading: 510-620 Math: 540-640	64%	Possible
Westfield State University	3.75 or Higher: 8% 3.50-3.74: 8% 3.0-3.49: 32% 2.0-2.99: 52%	Critical Reading: 450-540 Math: 470-560	62%	Safety