Admit Talk

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Above & Beyond How to Think Like a Top 1% Student

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What strong students do differently to build academic depth, meaningful experiences and a profile that stands out.



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Thailand's leading education consultancy, with a team of experienced mentors that strive towards the same goal: ***to guide our students through the process of intellectual exploration for lifelong learning.*** Our services include classes and counseling services that cater to students intending to enter **boarding school, undergraduate, or graduate programs**.

Boarding School Program

- US Boarding School Counseling Program
- Group & Private Test Preparation
  - SSAT
  - TOEFL/IELTS
- Reading & Writing
- Profile Coaching

Undergraduate Program

- US/UK Undergraduate Counseling Program
- Group & Private Test Preparation
  - SAT/ACT
  - TOEFL/IELTS
- Program-Specific Exams: STEP/TSA/CSAT
- Reading & Writing
- Profile Coaching
- Interview Preparation

MBA/Master's Program

- US/UK MBA/Master's Counseling Program
- Group & Private Test Preparation
  - GMAT/GRE
  - TOEFL/IELTS
- Interview Preparation

Class of 2026 Undergraduate Program

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WHAT'S INCLUDED TODAY

1. **THINK DIFFERENTLY**

What does a Top 1% Student actually look like?

Challenge the common idea that strong students simply have perfect grades, many activities, or impressive awards.

2. **BUILD WITH PURPOSE**

How do you turn experiences into a strong profile?

Show students how to move from simply participating to developing meaningful depth.

3. **KNOW YOUR NEXT MOVE**

Where does your profile stand today and what's next?

Move from inspiration to personal reflection and action.

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Session 1

THINK DIFFERENTLY

What does a Top 1% Student actually look like?

Challenge the common idea that strong students simply have perfect grades, many activities, or impressive awards.

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BREAK THE MYTH

What do you think makes someone a Top 1% Student?

A. Perfect grades

B. Many extracurricular activities

C. National / International awards

D. Clear direction & meaningful growth

E. I’m not sure yet

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SETTING THE STAGE

Many of the things we associate with a ***'Top Student'*** are things we can easily measure — grades, awards, activities.

But some of the qualities that make a student genuinely strong are much harder to measure.

THE FIRST TYPE OF STUDENT

Student A

Grade 11 · targeting UK/US universities

- GPA 4.0 + great predicted grades
- Diverse 12 activities: Model UN, robotics, chess club, basketball, choir
- 5 competitions incl. 2 case competitions, 2 hackathons
- 3 internships — one arranged via family connection
- 8 certificates: finance, Python, public speaking…
- Productive summers spent at top ivy league schools

THE SECOND TYPE OF STUDENT

Student B

Grade 11 · targeting UK/US universities

- Strong grades + loads of AP courses
- Interest sparked by a Grade 9 school beach clean-up
- Self-directed reading + followed by a marine biologist's research
- Built a monthly 'reef watch' project with 4 classmates + an NGO
- Findings shared with the local municipality: new waste-sorting bins installed at the site
- Keeping track of the number of sorted waste for 6 months

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Traditional High Achiever VS Top 1%

Student A

Grade 11 · targeting UK/US universities

- GPA 4.0
- Diverse 12 activities: Model UN, robotics, chess club, basketball, choir
- 5 competitions incl. 2 case competitions, 2 hackathons
- 3 internships — one arranged via family connection
- 8 certificates: finance, Python, public speaking…
- Productive summers spent at top ivy league schools

Student B

Grade 11 · targeting UK/US universities

- Strong (not perfect) grades
- Interest sparked by a Grade 9 school beach clean-up
- Self-directed reading + followed a marine biologist's research
- Built a monthly 'reef watch' project with 4 classmates + an NGO
  - Findings shared with the local municipality: new waste-sorting bins installed at the site
  - Keeping track of the number of sorted waste for 6 months

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THE BIG MISCONCEPTION

The traditional high achiever VS The top 1%

Perfect Grades ≠ Strong Profile

More Activities ≠ More Competitive

More Awards ≠ More Potential

Key Takeaway

> Achievement becomes meaningful when there is thought, purpose and development behind it.

More ≠ Stronger

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REDEFINE TOP 1%

Top 1% is not a ranking.

It's a mindset.

A Top 1% student doesn't necessarily:

❌ Do everything

❌ Win everything

❌ Know their entire future at 15

Instead, they increasingly learn to:

EXPLORE → CHOOSE →

GO DEEP → REFLECT → GROW

The Top 1% Students know what matters — and take ownership of their growth.

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WHAT STRONG UNIVERSITIES NOTICE

Beyond the numbers...

There're **qualities** top universities looking for

HOW THEY EXPLORE	HOW THEY SHOW UP	HOW THEY GROW
Curiosity	Consistency	Self-Awareness
Initiative	Contribution	Reflection
		Growth
		Potential

These qualities aren't written down anywhere on a form.
They're demonstrated through what students do, how they respond, and how they grow over time.

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THE QUESTION STRONG STUDENTS ASK

❌ Most students ask:

“What should I do?”

✅ Top 1% students ask:

“What am I curious about?”

Example: Student B’s biology class covered marine ecosystems for two weeks as part of the regular syllabus.
Most classmates moved on after the test — he kept reading about ocean plastic on his own.
That’s the exact moment curiosity separates itself from good grades.

KEY TAKEAWAY

When you start with curiosity, your experiences become much more meaningful.

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Session 2

BUILD WITH PURPOSE

How do you turn experiences into a strong profile?

Show students how to move from simply participating to developing meaningful depth.

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GOOD GRADES VS INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

Good Grades tell the university: “I can learn”

Intellectual Curiosity tells them:

“I want to understand more”

A student can have excellent grades because they know how to study, prepare for exams, and perform well in class. *This is valuable.*

Intellectual curiosity takes it one step further. **It’s when a student doesn’t stop at what’s required:** ***they ask another question, explore another perspective, connect what they're learning to something outside the classroom.***

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FROM INTEREST TO DEPTH

INTEREST	EXPLORE	ACTION	REFLECT	NEXT STEP
"I find this interesting."	*"I want to understand more."*	*"I want to try something."*	*"What did I learn?"*	*"What do I want to explore next?"*
Noticed ocean plastic during a beach clean-up	Read reports, followed a marine biologist's blog	Started a monthly reef-watch project, 4 classmates	Most waste traced to one upstream source, not beachgoers	Exploring environmental policy + economics

One step at a time — no huge project, just five small honest moves.

KEY TAKEAWAY

That's how depth develops — not in one big achievement, but through a series of intentional choices to keep going deeper.

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DEPTH DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BIG

Small Action + **Genuine Interest** + **Continued Development**

You don't need to create a massive organisation or win an international competition to demonstrate depth.

Sometimes depth comes from a very small problem you genuinely care about. What matters is what you do with the opportunity, what you learn, and whether you continue developing from there.

THE LEVEL OF DEPTH

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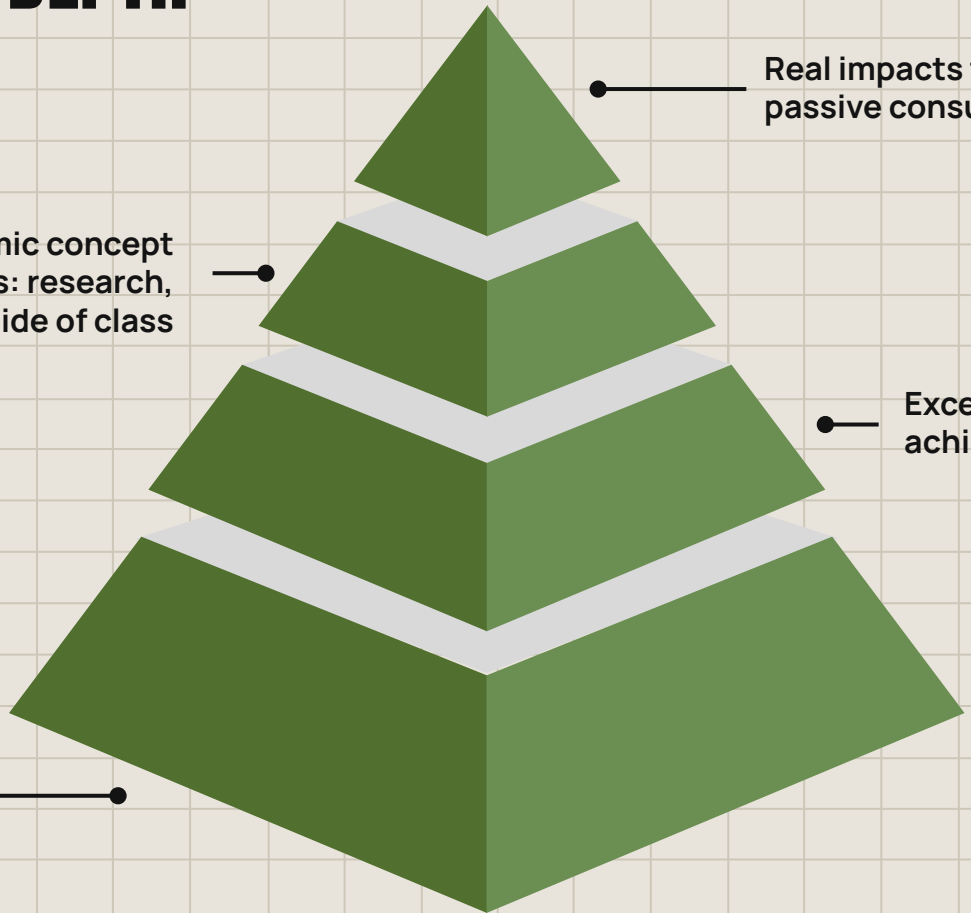

BUSY PROFILE VS STRONG PROFILE

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The traditional high achiever

- ✖ Does many things
- ✖ Collects certificates
- ✖ Starts constantly
- ✖ Chases impressive titles
- ✖ Activities feel disconnected
- ✖ Asks “What looks good?”

The top 1%

- ✅ Chooses intentionally
- ✅ Builds experiences
- ✅ Develops consistently
- ✅ Takes meaningful responsibility
- ✅ Experiences have connections
- ✅ Asks “What matters to me?”

KEY TAKEAWAY

The real question: which student can demonstrate meaningful development?

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CASE STUDY

The difference between
having experiences and developing through experiences

STUDENT A

- Strong grades
- 5 competitions & 3 clubs
- Internship
- Volunteer work
- Multiple certificates

Approach the process as a checklist

STUDENT B

- Strong grades
- Emerging interest (ocean plastic)
- Related activity (reef watch)
- Small project (waste-source log)
- Continued exploration (policy)

Cohesive story

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THE 3 QUESTIONS

Before saying **YES** to another activity...

Why am I doing this?	What will I learn or contribute?	Where could this take me next?
"Because I keep thinking about it after class."	*"I can log real data and share it with our school."*	*"Maybe environmental policy at university."*

Honest answers, worked through live — this is the exercise to run with your own student.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Can't answer any of the three? Maybe you don't need another activity — go deeper into something you're already doing.

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How do competitive schools differentiate between the two?

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1

What do recommenders say about the student?

2

Spike in the activity, not a random mix of unrelated activities

3

Actions on the list: title VS roles

4

Essays:
Boasting achievement VS Reflecting on growth and development

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THE COMMON APP ESSAY PROMPTS FOR 2026-2027

Prompt 1

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Prompt 2

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Prompt 3

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

Prompt 4

4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

Prompt 5

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Prompt 6

6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

Prompt 7

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

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Session 3

KNOW YOUR NEXT MOVE

Where does your profile stand today — and what's next?

Move from inspiration to personal reflection and action.

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In partnership to help build the intrinsic motivation

- Student
- Parents
- Consultants



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In partnership to help build the intrinsic motivation

Student

Parents

Consultants

Find your intrinsic motivation
— chase what genuinely interests you, not what looks good on paper.
Build with purpose
— turn that interest into real depth, one honest step at a time.

Take ownership of your own education and your own story.

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In partnership to help build the intrinsic motivation

Student

Parents

Consultants

Observe your child
— notice what they lean toward before deciding what they should do.
Set the right goals together
— direction, not pressure.
Bring the right narratives into everyday conversation
— growth and curiosity, not just results

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In partnership to help build the intrinsic motivation

Student

Parents

Consultants

- Understand the student
- Bring structure, perspectives, and honest feedback throughout the journey.
- Strategize and develop the plan

Traditional achievers prepare for career/future that exists.

whereas...

Top 1% builds their own future; they become the changemakers

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PROFILE READINESS CHECKLIST

Academic Direction
Do you know what you want to explore?

Intellectual Curiosity
Do you go beyond what's required?

Activities & Impact
Are you participating — or creating value?

Personal Narrative
Can you connect your experiences?

Scan to start

22 questions, ~3–5 min

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FINAL TAKEAWAY

Stop asking what else you should add.

Start asking what you should understand, develop and do next.

Don't try to be the student who does everything.

Be the student who knows what matters — and goes deeper.

Think Differently. Build With Purpose. Know Your Next Move

Ready to build your profile with purpose?

Book Your Profile Consultation With EduSmith

1. Understand
Identify your strengths, interests & gaps

2. Strategize
Build a clear academic & extracurricular direction

3. Develop
Turn your experiences into meaningful depth

4. Plan
Create a personalised roadmap for your university journey

CONTACT US



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