

Phillips Academy

Andover, United States



Founded in 1778 as the nation's oldest incorporated boarding school, its Harkness tables still turn lectures into conversation.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	83/100
Academic outcomes	81/100
University placement	79/100
Prestige & heritage	87/100
Alumni network	86/100
Facilities	84/100
Transparency	85/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Phillips Academy sits at the apex of the American boarding-school market. Founded in 1778, it has age, money, scale and academic seriousness in one package. The defining academic feature remains the Harkness method: students around a table, expected to speak, argue, listen and think in public. That matters. This is not a school for children who want to hide at the back and absorb information in silence. It is a school for the intellectually ambitious, the verbally agile and the self-directed. The numbers reinforce the point: a **7:1** student-teacher ratio, average class size of **13**, 300 courses and 150 electives. Add an endowment of \$1.47 billion and parents are looking at an institution with the means to sustain *serious intellectual pressure* and *unusual breadth*.

What sets Andover apart is not only prestige but density: talent, expectation, opportunity, competition. The school draws from 41 states and 53 countries; **18%** of students are international and **47%** receive financial aid. That combination gives it more range than the polished East Coast caricature. Its public language around “non sibi” and service is not decorative either; the school has built a culture that ties academic performance to public purpose, leadership and contribution. Parents who want a narrow exam factory should look elsewhere. Andover offers a liberal American education in the full sense: broad, discussion-led and loaded with choices across arts, languages and extracurricular life. The trade-off is obvious. Large, high-powered schools offer freedom, but they also demand judgement. A teenager who needs constant shepherding can get lost in all that option-rich independence.

It belongs on a shortlist because very few schools match its combination of history, resources, selectivity and reach. The campus offer is substantial without lapsing into empty spectacle: art gallery, archaeology museum, observatory, extensive faculty, and financial aid at a scale that many rivals cannot match. Fees are high — **\$79,800** for boarding and **\$63,840** for day students — but this is an expensive school with a correspondingly deep infrastructure. The alumni footprint is vast, and the school’s institutional confidence is grounded in real substance rather than branding. *Old-school gravitas*, *restless curiosity*, *high expectations* and *social range* all sit together here.

The right student for Phillips Academy is bright, articulate, resilient and ready to be tested by peers who are equally able. They need academic stamina, a taste for discussion, and the confidence to navigate a large, busy community. They do not need polish on arrival, but they do need appetite: for ideas, for responsibility and for full participation. For a teenager who wants *conversation instead of passive learning*, *a demanding peer group* and a school that treats adolescence as preparation for public life, Andover earns its reputation.

STRENGTHS	TRADE - OFFS
- Founded in 1778, Phillips Academy is the oldest incorporated boarding school in the United States, giving it deep institutional history and a large alumni network. - Need-blind admissions policy meets 100% of demonstrated financial need, with roughly 47% of students receiving aid averaging about \$45,000 per year. - Low student-teacher ratio of approximately 7:1 supports small, discussion-based classes across a broad curriculum of around 300 courses and 150-plus electives. - Substantial endowment of roughly \$1.41 billion (as of September 2024) underwrites facilities, financial aid and faculty resources well beyond typical secondary schools. - Strong record of matriculation to highly selective universities, including regular placement at Ivy League and other top-ranked US colleges.	- Acceptance rate of around 13% makes entry highly competitive, with academic strength alone insufficient to secure a place. - Boarding tuition for 2026-27 is \$79,800 and day tuition \$63,840, before additional fees for books, activities and travel, placing it well beyond many middle-class family budgets even with aid. - Located in Andover, Massachusetts, roughly 20 miles from Boston, meaning international and out-of-state families face significant travel logistics for visits and school breaks. - As a large campus with around 1,150 students across grades 9-12 plus a postgraduate year, some families may find the environment less intimate than smaller boarding schools.

ADMISSIONS

Applications are submitted via the Gateway to Prep Schools portal or the Standard Application Online, with a February 1 deadline for September entry. Requirements include transcripts, SSAT or ISEE scores (PSAT/SAT/ACT accepted for grades 11-12 and postgraduates), teacher and counselor recommendations, a graded writing sample, student essay, parent statement and an interview. The acceptance rate is approximately 13%, placing Andover among the most selective US boarding schools. Admissions are need-blind, and applicants may choose boarding or day status at the point of application.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (711)

SPORT: Q7363924, Humphrey Bogart, George W. Bush, Robert Gardner, J. Paul Austin, Chang Hee-jin, Benjamin Spock, Glen Foster

MUSIC: Duncan Sheik, Sam Endicott, Samuel Adams Holyoke, Sidney Homer, Sr., Jack Lemmon, Pete Robbins, Thomas Chapin, April March

DRAMA: Nathaniel Parker Willis, Christian Clemenson, Paul Monette, Jonathan Levine, Steven Cantor, Humphrey Bogart, Jack Lemmon, Edgar Rice Burroughs

VISUAL ARTS: Horatio Greenough, Josiah Johnson Hawes, Peter Halley, Robert Bright, Samuel Isham, Scott Mead, Q7637985, George W. Bush

LETTERS: Nathaniel Parker Willis, David Pingree, Charles Phelps Taft, Charles West Kendall, David Graeber, Paul Monette, Robert B. Semple, Jr., Robert Bright

POLITICS: Charles Phelps Taft, Charles West Kendall, Cyrus King, Howard M. Baldrige, Daniel Henry Chamberlain, Daniel W. Gooch, David Stuart, Peter Plympton Smith

SCIENCE: Charles R. Bentley, David Pingree, Daniel Henry Chamberlain, David Graeber, Levi L. Conant, Peter Halley, Samuel Isham, Sherman Day

BUSINESS: David L. Gunn, Gardiner Greene Hubbard, Robert Macauley, Thomas C. Foley, George H. W. Bush, Thomas Cochran, Timothy C. Draper, Victor Kiam

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_32649a28d2.