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Feedback Form

We would appreciate your comments about this Fast Facts Handbook, including any additional information you would find useful.

1. Which colleges would you like to have added to the SAT/ACT Scores list on page 21?

2. Is there any additional information you would like added to this handbook? Some possibilities include:

- Listing of college application fees_____
- College application dates_____
- College application requirements_____
- Listing/Overview of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (state university system)_____
- More college data, i.e., size, tuition, special scholarship programs_____
- Unusual college admission programs, i.e., state colleges that offer in-state tuition to talented out-of-state students_____
- Other information (please list):

3. Other comments:

Please copy this page and fax your feedback to A+ at 215.886.0155.

Thank you for your assistance.

1. Test Preparation Options

Whether they intend to or not, students do prepare for the SAT or ACT. Almost all students take the PSAT at least once and possibly three times before attempting the SAT. Some students do nothing else to prepare. Both the SAT and ACT make extensive materials available at no cost; however, some students go into the test without even reading the basics.

All students should prepare in some way. At the very least, they should become familiar with the basic structure of each test and how it is scored; in addition, they should practice some sample questions. This may be accomplished in as little as an hour. For some students, this may be sufficient preparation. Most students, however, need to dedicate substantial time to the preparation process, and there are many options available. No matter what type of preparation a student chooses, parents and students alike need to remember that an unmotivated student will not learn.

Self-Directed Preparation

A student should go to a bookstore to purchase a test-prep book. The cost of this kind of test prep is the cost of the book, usually around \$20. However, to get any benefit, the student must *use* the book – read the chapters, take the pre-test, do the practice exercises, and follow up with a post-test. Most people, not just teenagers, are not very good at this level of self-tutoring. Parental involvement, if possible, is important. Note: Students must be sure to get the most up-to-date book available.

Another method of self-preparation is to use free test-prep websites. Some sites provide extensive preparation, including vocabulary-building exercises and tests, and they keep a record of the student's progress. Some even send e-mail reminders to keep the student on track. In addition to these free sites, many of the pay-for-services sites have no-cost trial sections or practice questions. The College Board and ACT websites offer practice questions with very good answer explanations.

Group Preparation

Group preparation is available in many forms and varies widely in cost. Some schools offer on-site classes given by test-prep companies, including A+ Test Prep, during or after school. School classes can be a problem for some students as they may find it difficult to pay attention or ask questions when surrounded by friends. If students can pay attention and complete the work, group classes like these can be of great benefit. Other group courses are offered by colleges, community groups, individuals, and test-prep companies. It is important to compare the number of classes, total number of class hours, size of classes and materials when gauging the cost and possible outcome of a course. Asking for references is also recommended.

Individual Tutoring

One-to-one instruction is the most expensive form of preparation. However, for many students, it is also the most effective way to increase test scores. One-to-one instruction provides the customization, structure, and individual accountability required for students to apply themselves to the task. Because the ratio is one-to-one, instruction can be tailored to fit the individual student's needs and modified as necessary throughout the course of the program. This form of preparation also facilitates communication between the instructor, student, and parents.

Finally, individual tutoring is often more efficient than group preparation. Many students find that with one-to-one instruction, compared to group preparation, they can achieve the score improvement they seek in about half the instructional time. As with group courses, references are recommended.

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When to Prepare

Most juniors take the PSAT in October and receive their results in December. Many juniors take the SAT or ACT for the first time in January or February, respectively. Preparation for these tests should begin in October or November. A senior who plans to take a test in September (ACT), October (ACT/SAT) or November (SAT) should begin preparation during the summer. Preparation for the SAT Subject Tests should coordinate with the proposed test dates. Two important reminders: 1. the SAT and SAT Subject Tests cannot be taken on the same day; 2. all SAT Subject Tests are not available on all test dates and at all locations.

2. Time Line for Standardized Test Preparation

Ninth Grade

- Do **not** begin formal preparation for standardized tests. Work on vocabulary development instead. Above all, read as much as possible. Reading should include both class reading and personal reading. Reading is a skill that improves with practice.

Tenth Grade

- If the PSAT is given to sophomores, review score reports and work on improving weak areas. Continue reading for pleasure and developing vocabulary.
- If 10th grade PSAT scores indicate possible qualification for the National Merit Scholarship Program (www.nationalmerit.org), PSAT preparation should be considered. That preparation should begin during the summer before 11th grade to allow completion prior to the mid-October test administration.

Eleventh Grade

- Take the PSAT in October. Students should be encouraged to treat the junior year PSAT as a diagnostic exam for the SAT (which it is) and to take it seriously. When score reports come back, students, teachers, counselors, and parents can assess strengths and weaknesses, as revealed by the reports.
- Begin formal or self-directed test preparation after receiving PSAT scores. Preparation is most effective if taken in manageable lessons over time rather than cramming just before taking the test.
- Juniors should take the ACT or SAT for the first time in the spring. Keep in mind that it is not possible to take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests on the same day. Also, students who are enrolled in AP classes may want to avoid the May SAT because it may be given in the same week as the AP exams.

Summer Between Eleventh and Twelfth Grades

- Summer is a great time to prepare for standardized tests. Formal lessons can begin in July or early August to prepare for the fall testing season.

Twelfth Grade

- Retake the SAT or ACT in September or October if necessary. Take SAT Subject Tests. Students may want to take the ACT or SAT one last time in November or December. (December scores may arrive too late for some application deadlines – check with individual colleges and universities.)

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- Make note of all deadlines. Do not assume one school's dates will be the same as another's. If a school's application deadline is February 1 and the SAT is January 25, the school will not receive scores on time. An earlier test should be taken.
- If they haven't already been sent, have SAT or ACT test scores sent to schools. Schools need official score reports directly from the testing agencies, not copies of student reports or scores on high school transcripts. This takes time; allow 3 to 5 weeks for receipt of scores.

General Comment

- Pay attention to test registration deadlines. Late fees are costly, and testing centers do fill up.

3. Types of College Admissions Applications

There are a number of ways in which schools manage their admissions application process. Each admissions scenario can result in acceptance, rejection, deferral, or placement onto a waiting list.

Early Decision

The Early Decision application is an application made to one school by a school-specified deadline, often November 1. Applicant agrees to attend the school if accepted. Regular applications may be made to other schools. Applicants are notified of their status by mid-December, allowing time for applications to be made to other schools if applicants are rejected or deferred. IF accepted, applicants are required to withdraw applications made to other schools. Applicants who are deferred will be considered in the regular application pool and still have a chance of being accepted. Students who are deferred or rejected are freed from the Early Decision contract and may apply to other schools. Students are also free to apply elsewhere if the school cannot meet the student's financial needs. Applicants should pay close attention to a school's early decision policies; some schools only accept or reject, with no deferrals. Some highly competitive schools, including Harvard and Princeton, no longer have Early Decision programs.

Early Action

Multiple-Choice Early Action

This application is due by a school-specified date; schools send decisions by a school-specific date. Both dates are prior to the school's regular deadlines. Students may apply to more than one Early Action school. Acceptance is non-binding and may be sent out later than Early Decision acceptances. Applicant is free to make regular applications to other schools.

Single-Choice Early Action

Like the Multiple Choice applicants, students apply early but may only apply to one Early Action institution and to no Early Decision institutions. Acceptance is non-binding and may be sent out later than Early Decision acceptances. Applicant is free to make regular applications to other schools. Note: This is becoming the favored early application system for highly competitive schools, including Yale and Stanford.

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Rolling Admissions

Applications are sent in at any time. Schools evaluate complete application packages and respond quickly, sometimes in two to three weeks. Student has until spring to accept or reject decisions. In general, applications to schools with rolling admissions should be made as early as possible.

Regular Admissions

All applications are due by a specified date, usually sometime between January 1 and February 15. Decision letters are sent out to all applicants on the same date, usually April 1. Students have until a third date to accept or reject the school's offer. Students who are wait-listed may be accepted after this third date, as space becomes available.

Early Admissions

Student enters college before completing high school, usually after the junior year. Early Admission is not offered by all schools. Each school has its own procedures and requirements.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)

CRDA is used by many colleges and universities. It specifies May 1 as the date that accepted students let a school know of their intentions to attend. Not all schools use this date, however. The acceptance letter will specify the date.

4. Application Documents

Common Application/Universal Application/School Application

The Common Application is a standardized application that is currently accepted by 392 schools. Most of these schools also offer a school-specific application. When a school elects to accept the Common Application, it states that it will not give preference to one application type over the other. About one-third of the schools use only the Common Application. All schools that use the Common Application require at least one essay. In addition to the Common Application and school-specific applications, there is also the Universal College Application, which is currently accepted by 84 schools.

The Common Application is available on-line (www.commonapp.org) and may be submitted to schools electronically or downloaded and mailed. The student is responsible for checking each school's additional requirements and for submitting the application and the required supporting materials, as well as the appropriate fee, to each school. Like the Common Application, the Universal Application is available on-line (www.universalcollegeapp.com). Rules and procedures are similar to those of the Common Application. Some schools accept both applications.

School-specific applications are available on-line for many colleges and universities and may be submitted electronically if the school permits. Many schools prefer electronic applications and so reduce or eliminate their application fees for electronic submissions of school-specific applications and of the Common or Universal Applications. The most obvious saving is postage, but some schools reduce or eliminate their application fees if a student applies on-line. For example, Bryn Mawr College (whose application fee is \$50) and Drexel University (\$75) waive fees for on-line applications.

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Counselor forms and letter of recommendation forms are available on line for some schools and on the Common Application site. These may be submitted electronically. The applicant can track these submissions online as well.

Transcripts and Test Scores

Students should submit requests for high school transcripts early. Most seniors are applying to colleges at the same time, so a backlog can develop in the school office. Students should allow time for their high schools to process transcript orders. Transcripts will need to be sent two or three times for some students, as colleges and universities usually want updated records at a semester or year's end.

The student may report SAT or ACT scores on his application, but it is necessary to ask the testing service to send official copies to each college. Applications are not complete without them. The SAT and the ACT have definite, published time requirements for sending scores. It is possible to have scores sent more quickly, but this is quite expensive. In addition, some schools do not accept rush scores.

Letters of Recommendation

Many colleges and universities require letters of recommendation. The number varies by school, but most require a minimum of two--one from the school's guidance counselor and one from a teacher. Guidance counselors write recommendations for many students and should be given adequate lead time to get letters completed. Teachers also receive a large number of requests and should be given several weeks to prepare a letter. A polite reminder is sometimes necessary.

Students should try to select teachers who know them well as students. Students should ask for letters in a way that allows teachers to gracefully refuse. Teachers who do not want to write letters of recommendation usually do not feel that they can write favorable letters, and therefore students should not insist.

It may be helpful for students to provide a resume or list of extra curricular activities to those writing recommendation letters as this provides the letter writer with a better sense of the total student. If a college or university provides a form for recommendations, the form should be given to the teacher. If there is no required format, the teacher should be informed of that, also. Students should supply addressed envelopes and postage. Some schools accept electronic letters so students should inform letter-writers it that is an option.

Application Essays

Competitive schools require application essays from applicants. Most schools also provide suggested or required topics. As on the SAT and ACT, writing off-topic is simply bad form. If multiple topics are given, students can practice on more than one essay and submit the strongest. If a school asks for one essay, students should send one essay and no more. The common application can be a time-saver because a student may need to write only one essay.

5. Other Application Requirements

Interviews

Some colleges suggest interviews for applicants who live within a reasonable distance. Some schools require interviews for all applicants. Others only request interviews with particular students. Most colleges are reasonable; if an interview at the school is a hardship, most will forego the interview or arrange an interview closer to the student's home. Often schools ask local alumni to interview applicants. In any case, find out if

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the college considers the interview an evaluative or simply an informative component of the admissions process.

Arts Majors' Additional Requirements

Students who plan to enter the fine arts, music, or performance arts are usually required to submit portfolios, tapes, videos or auditions.

Application Fees

Application fees range from no fee at all to \$75 or so, with many in the \$40-\$50 range. Some schools offer fee waivers to students in whom they are interested. All schools have fee exemption policies for needy applicants, but students should not assume that they will qualify for a fee waiver at all schools. Fee waiver applications are generally sent to the schools by the high school counselor on behalf of a student rather than by the student. A student's application is not considered complete until the fee is received.

6. Admissions Policies

Admission Indexes

Some schools use admissions formulas or indexes for admission. Most are a balance of GPA or class rank and SAT/ACT scores. These are plugged into the formula, which produces an index number. The schools have established index numbers at which students will be admitted, deferred, or rejected. Scholarships are also awarded using this system. The most openly publicized indexes are used by some state university systems. If the formulas have been made public, applicants may pre-assess themselves.

Students who do not meet the automatic acceptance number should not be discouraged from applying. Even schools that use admissions indexes consider other factors in evaluating applicants who do not make the automatic admission cut, including letters of recommendation, difficulty of high school courses, extracurricular activities, interviews, and essays.

Many schools do not use strict admissions formulas, because in addition to wanting academically talented student bodies, they want diverse student bodies. For example, the University of Pennsylvania may not accept all valedictorians from Montgomery County. They may select one or two of those applicants and reject the others in order to accept valedictorian applicants from Nebraska and Georgia, thereby creating geographic diversity.

Recently, admissions indexes have been in the news regarding their application of affirmative action. Some schools awarded applicants extra points for their race, school districts, or disabilities. This procedure has been challenged in courts, sometimes successfully, and most of these index factors have been changed or eliminated. Many colleges and universities have developed other means to ensure equal opportunity.

For further information, see the following websites:

<http://airweb.org/page.asp?page=347>

"Trends in College Admissions 2000: A Report of a National Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Policies, Practices and Procedures." Two versions are available as PDF files, complete, 196 pages, and summary, 30 pages.

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/cb/admissions-decision-making-models>

"Admissions Decision-Making Models: How U.S. Institutions of Higher Education Select Undergraduate Students," Gretchen W. Rigol, 1993 (available in PDF format).

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Some schools use a form of indexing for awarding scholarships. For example, a school might state that any accepted applicant would be awarded a scholarship if his GPA or test scores were at or above a predetermined level. If these types of awards exist, they will be listed on a school's financial aid information page.

The Application Process

Even if colleges do not use publicly-available admissions formulas, they do establish priorities for consideration and may use internal indexes as a tool to help evaluate their applicants. For most colleges, grades, GPA, and class rank (if available) are the most important criteria. Many schools provide a profile of their most recent entering class, including test scores (mean, median and/or mid-50% cluster), GPA, and class ranking distributions. These are helpful guidelines for students. Often, schools also include the number of applications received, the number accepted, and the number or percentage of students who actually enroll.

Each school states what it needs for consideration. Students need to understand that an application is not complete and will not be evaluated until all required items are received by the school, including the application fee. Meeting deadlines is critical.

Applications may ask students to fill in their test scores and GPA, but they also require official copies of high school transcripts (i.e., sent by the high school directly to the college or university) and test scores (sent by the testing company directly to the college or university). These requirements all take time to fulfill and should be requested early in the process.

Students should try to send in all application materials as a packet, but some items such as test scores or grades from the first semester of senior year may not be available. Schools know this and expect that some items will arrive later. It is extremely important, however, that the application and all available supporting materials be submitted before the deadline.

7. Financial Aid Basics

There are two major categories of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. Need is the difference between the total estimated cost of attending college for one year and the family's expected contribution. Merit aid is awarded to students who meet particular criteria, usually without consideration of need.

How Need is Determined – FAFSA

Virtually all schools use the FAFSA ("Free Application for Federal Student Aid"); the FAFSA is required for all federal and most state awards. The form is available on-line as well as at libraries and can be requested by phone. Applying online at www.fafsa.gov is easiest since the website checks the form for math errors and omissions. The website also has a worksheet to assist parents in gathering required information. Once the information is gathered, completing the form is relatively easy and quick.

Federal Methodology uses the information supplied on this application to determine how much a family can be expected to contribute to the student's education for the year of the application. This amount is called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

As the name implies, applying under FAFSA is free. It is not necessary to pay someone to complete the form. The application may be submitted after January 1 of the senior year. Applicants should not wait for acceptance letters to begin the financial aid process; nor should parents wait until they have filed their income taxes to complete the form. Estimates are permitted.

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How Need is Determined – Other Forms

In addition to the FAFSA, some schools have their own financial aid forms. Applicants should be very careful to check each school's requirements. The most common additional form is the Financial Aid PROFILE that is processed by the College Board as part of its College Scholarship Service (CSS). Here, schools use *Institutional Methodology* to determine the amount of expected family contribution (EFC), using additional information acquired from these forms. This service has a fee. Do not use the service unless the school requests it.

Many states use the FAFSA to determine state aid, but others use supplemental forms as well. Each state sets its own requirements and deadlines. Parents and students should check state requirements for all schools.

Time Is of the Essence

Deadlines are real and must be respected. Ignoring them can be deadly to a student's prospects for financial aid. Allow plenty of time for mailed documents to be received by the schools. Submit electronically if possible.

Merit Awards

Merit awards, or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of predetermined criteria. Such scholarships are, for the most part, awarded by individual schools. In addition, some corporations, fraternal and social organizations, and ethnic organizations award scholarships. In dollar amounts, they range from token awards to substantial support for students. Most are based on academic achievement and are awarded by colleges, but a few may be won through essay writing or some other form of competition. There are numerous books and websites that list these scholarships and their requirements.

Some schools have automatic scholarships. If an applicant meets established GPA/class ranking and standardized test scores, he qualifies for a scholarship. As a part of applying to a school, an applicant should also look into the school's financial aid programs. Almost all scholarships require that the recipient maintain a specific GPA to retain the award from year to year. Some of these awards, especially very generous ones, require high GPAs – 3.5 for example – to be maintained.

Any student interested in investigating scholarships should spend some time in the library, bookstore or online. There are many reputable search sites, including www.collegeconfidential.com/financial_aid/.

Types of Financial Aid Awards

There are three major types of financial aid: (1) grants and scholarships, (2) loans and (3) work/study. Grants are gifts of money that are not paid back. Grants are untaxed for the most part. Grant funding comes from the federal government or state governments and from college or university monies. Scholarships are also free money, but like merit awards, carry the responsibility to maintain a minimum GPA.

Loans are of various types. Many are given to the student in his name. The federal or state government may subsidize interest and repayment does not begin until the student quits or finishes school. Interest rates are usually lower than those of loans secured by parents. Although there has been a lot of negative press recently about the burden of repaying student loans, most people are able to repay loans. As an illustration of their affordability, in most cases, monthly loan payments will be much less than monthly car payments. Many people repay loans earlier than required. However, no one should take on loans that are not truly needed.

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Work/study is a jobs program; students are hired to work at a part-time job at their school for a wage. The federal government subsidizes these wages. Some schools have their own work/study programs as well, increasing the number of available jobs. While some work/study students bus tables in school cafeterias and wash dishes in the kitchen, many students are hired to work in libraries and offices or as helpers to faculty members. Schools try to match student talents and career plans with on-campus jobs. Hours are limited to prevent a job from becoming a burden to the student. Work should not be viewed negatively. Studies have shown that college students who work 8 to 10 hours per week, on average, perform better in school than those who work more hours or do not work at all.

Financial Aid Packages and Renewals

After acceptance, a student receives a financial aid package. A financial aid award may include a scholarship, grant, loan or job, or any combination of the four. Award packages may change from year to year, depending on the student's need and developing skills and talents. A student who had a grant and a loan for the freshman year may receive a scholarship instead of the grant or loan after a good academic year. If a student's family has more or less money, the awards will be adjusted accordingly. In order to do this, an application for financial aid must be submitted each year that a student is enrolled in school. Scholarships may be withdrawn for poor performance and are not usually reinstated if grades later improve.

It Should Not Cost Money to Get Money

Be aware of scholarship and financial aid scams. Some websites ask for money to enroll in scholarship searches; others ask for money in order to qualify for an award. Reputable companies do not award scholarships based on any payment of money. In addition, no one can guarantee a scholarship. Any scholarship search service that requires fees in advance or that purports to guarantee scholarships should be avoided. In most cases, industrious students and parents can perform their own Internet searches for scholarships.

In Summary

- Pay attention to deadlines. Financial aid agencies are serious about their dates.
- Fill out all forms as completely as possible. If an applicant cannot complete a line on a form, a note should be included explaining the omission.
- Don't pay to get financial aid information. Information is free for virtually all financial aid.
- Unless a student has unlimited funds, it is worth applying for aid. Even families with good incomes and assets may qualify for some aid. Good students from all income levels may be awarded scholarships.
- Parents and student should set up a financial aid file, because a new application for financial aid is required for each school year. Having information ready, especially passwords and user names, ready is a time-saver.

8. Test Dates

SAT Test Dates

Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (Late Fee Applies)**
January 23, 2010	December 15, 2009	December 16, 2009 - December 30, 2009
March 13, 2010*	February 4, 2010	February 5 - February 18, 2010
May 1, 2010	March 25, 2010	March 26 - April 8, 2010
June 5, 2010	April 29, 2010	April 30 - May 13, 2010

Sunday testing available for the day immediately following the regular testing date. Please consult www.collegeboard.com for more information and to apply for non-Saturday testing.

If a student misses the late registration date, he or she may be able to take the SAT as a standby. Fees for standby include the regular registration fee, the late fee and the standby fee.

*No Subject Tests given on these dates

**Late registration dates are given for online and phone registrations. Registration by mail requires a postmark no later than the last day of late registration. Consult the website.

SAT Subject Tests

Up to three SAT Subjects Tests may be taken in one day.

Language tests with listening are administered only on the November test dates. No reading-only language tests are administered on the November test date. Spanish and French reading tests are administered on all other dates except March.

Subject Tests in Literature, US History, Math 1, Math 2, Biology E/M, Chemistry, and Physics are administered on all test dates except March.

Check the website for World History, German, Modern Hebrew, Italian, and Latin as these tests have very limited availability.

Canceling SAT or SAT Subject Test Scores: scores can be canceled at the test center on the day of the test or by written request. To cancel scores after you leave the test center you must submit your request in writing by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the Wednesday after the test date.** More information can be found at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/scores/cancel.html>.

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ACT Test Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (Late Fee Applies)
February 6, 2010*	January 5, 2010	January 6 - January 15, 2010
April 10, 2010	March 5, 2010	March 6 - March 19, 2010
June 12, 2010	May 7, 2010	May 8 - May 21, 2010
September 11, 2010**	Dates not yet established for registration/late fees.	
October 23, 2010		
December 11, 2010		
February 12, 2011*		
April 9, 2011		
June 11, 2011		

* Test not given in New York State on these dates.

**Test not offered in US territories, Puerto Rico or Canada.

Non-Saturday test dates are available for each of these dates. Please consult www.act.org for more information and instructions for applying for non-Saturday testing. After the late fee date, only standby status is available. It is advisable to register for the writing section while registering for the test. Writing can be added later but test centers are often closed.

Canceling ACT Test Scores: scores can be canceled at the test center on the day of the test or by written request. To cancel scores after you leave the test center you must submit your request in writing by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the Wednesday after the test date**. More information can be found at <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/scores/cancel.html>.

9. SAT/ACT Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Both the ACT and the College Board (for tests including the SAT, PSAT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams) may provide special testing accommodations for students with provable disabilities. The application and approval process is complex and time-consuming for each test. Fortunately, most students who require special accommodations have already been assessed and have the proper certifications on file with their schools. These are permanent certifications as long as the student stays in the same school district and the student's needs do not change. After being certified by the testing agency, the student is provided with an identification number that is used on test registration forms. (Observational note: The ACT seems to be more strict in granting accommodations than the SAT. Do not assume that having an accommodation from the College Board guarantees an accommodation from the ACT.)

Guidance faculty should encourage students who are known to have disabilities to begin the certification process well before any test dates, allowing a couple of months' review of the application. A student who will be taking the PSAT with accommodation should begin the application process in early summer.

A student who has been approved for accommodations is not required to use them. If a student wishes to take a test without accommodation, he should register for the test, but should not provide his special identification number on the form.

The only accommodation available for standby students is 50 percent extended time.

Types of Disabilities

Any student who currently has an IEP, 504, or other accommodation plan in place may consider special testing. Disabilities include visual or hearing impairment, medical, physical and psychiatric conditions, and learning disabilities. All applications for accommodations must be completed by the student's high school; students do not submit this application. Please note that in most cases the ACT and the College Board will not provide accommodations for a student unless he/she is already receiving accommodations at school.

Limited English language proficiency is not considered to be a disability, nor is any disability of a temporary nature, i.e., a broken arm. If a temporary condition such as an injury occurs, the testing agency should be contacted to re-schedule the test if necessary.

Types of Accommodations

For the visually impaired, accommodations include large-type test booklets, readers, Braille booklets, and answering devices, magnification devices, dictation, and large block answer sheets. For the hearing impaired, audio amplification and sign presentations are provided. Other learning/testing disabilities are accommodated by extended time, extra breaks, multiple-day testing, specific time of day testing, small groups, individual testing, special furnishings, and alternative test sites with an approved proctor.

Some accommodations permit the student to be tested at the regular testing sites. Others require special venues and special testing dates. Please be sure to specify any special needs, however small they may seem.

Score Reporting

Score reports for students tested with accommodations are received in the same manner as score reports for students who test without accommodations. Score reports are not flagged for accommodations. If a student is tested with any accommodation that has not been previously approved, those test scores will be cancelled.

10. Which Test Should a Student Take?

The SAT and ACT are accepted by almost all colleges and universities. Some students submit scores from both.

So Which Test is Right for a Given Student?

Although a comparison chart of the two tests is a starting point for selecting either test, the best way to decide if the ACT or the SAT is better for a particular student is for the student to take a practice test. If a student is tempted to take the ACT instead of the SAT because he hears that the ACT is easier, he should take a practice test before actually registering for the ACT. Neither test is easy. Both are a fairly grueling way to spend a long Saturday morning.

Every student should visit the testing websites (www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org). Both have good preparation pages and practice questions. For more information, students may also visit school libraries or the public library to check out test prep books – and read them! It does not take long to become familiar with the types of questions asked and to make a thoughtful decision about which test to take.

Most juniors take a standardized test in the spring with the idea that it can be retaken in the fall of the senior year. If you retake the ACT or SAT, do some preparation beforehand. There is often some minor improvement with a second testing, but students can sometimes increase their performances substantially with some serious preparation. Above all, students should not obsess about test scores. They remain only one facet of the college application, and for most schools, they are not the most significant or deciding factor. High school grades, class rank, and the degree of difficulty of courses taken are substantially more important.

There are also a growing number of colleges and universities that do not require standardized test scores. Many of these schools are very selective but have chosen to concentrate on grades and class rankings and have other requirements, such as the submission of graded research papers. If standardized testing is a real problem for a student, one of these schools might be the answer. See page 17 for a partial list of such schools.

If test scores and grades are not high enough to get a student into the school of his dreams, there may still be alternatives. It is possible to enroll as a freshman at one college and transfer to another after the completion of the student's freshman or sophomore year. A student planning to transfer after a year or two at college should check with his desired school for transfer requirements. For most colleges, transferring is a fairly simple process. Some schools, especially those with high retention rates, for example Ivy League schools, accept very few transfers. Princeton University accepts no transfers.

Another consideration in selecting an admission test is that some colleges accept submission of the ACT Plus Writing instead of a combination of SAT and SAT Subject Tests. Check with individual schools as these requirements change from year to year.

Score Choice

The College Board has instituted a change in how test scores are reported, called *Score Choice*. With Score Choice students have the option of selecting their scores from a single test date or single SAT Subject Test to be sent to a college. The College Board website has detailed information about Score Choice including a tutorial and a list of college score use methods. Go to http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/score_choice.html to learn more about Score Choice. The ACT sends score by testing date. Neither program allows partial test date scores to be sent.

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	SAT	ACT
Subjects/Skills tested	Math through the first semester of Algebra II Reading, Vocabulary and Grammar Questions require much decoding	Math through basic trig Reading and Grammar Most questions are straightforward
Calculators	Scientific graphing calculator allowed	Scientific graphing calculator allowed
When Offered	Seven times each year: January, March, May, June, October, November, December. Most students test on Saturday; Sunday is available for documented religious reasons.	Six times each year: February, April, June, September (limited locations), October, December. Most students test on Saturday; non-Saturday is available for documented religious reasons.
Where Offered	Both tests are given at most area high schools at least once a year. Some schools offer both tests each time offered SAT Subject tests cannot be taken on same day as SAT. SAT test dates differ from ACT dates.	
Ease of registration	Easy; on-line, by mail, by phone	Easy; on-line, by mail, by phone
Preparation	Practice questions on-line at ACT and SAT websites; books in libraries and bookstores; on-line practice for free; group classes and individual tutoring are available for both tests.	
Fees	\$49.00 for regular registration; includes scores sent to 4 schools, each additional school \$10.50 essay cost included in registration fee Late registration add \$26.00 Standby testing add \$43.00 Changing date or place \$25.00 Scores free on-line; by phone \$15.00	\$34.00 for regular registration; includes scores sent to 4 schools, each additional school \$10.00 add \$15.00 for writing Late registration add \$21.00 Standby testing add \$42.00 Change place/date \$21.00 Scores free on-line
Score Choice	Score Choice is permitted. Students can opt to have a single test date. Date for SAT/single subject test result sent to Schools. See school websites to determine how Test scores are used.	Send selected test result to selected schools. Test scores cannot be broken down by subject and sent separately. Some schools will use multiple test results to create a composite; others use a single test date's score only.
Other tests	SAT Subject Tests are required by some schools	Some schools accept ACT with writing instead of Subject Tests
Question/Answer Service	For some test dates, students may obtain a copy of their test booklet and a printout of their answers and the correct answers. See websites for available dates and fees.	
More Information	www.CollegeBoard.com	www.act.org

877.730.7200 • www.aplustutoring.com

12. Schools That Do Not Require the SAT or ACT

There are a growing number of colleges and universities that do not require submission of SAT or ACT scores. Fair Test (www.fairtest.org) includes a list of 730 schools on its website. Included on the list are De Vry Institute and ITT Technical Institutes; schools that focus on older students such as Peirce College; and distance (on-line) learning schools. Also included are many specialized schools, including the Julliard School and the Boston Architectural College, as well as seminaries and other religious training schools. This list provides only a starting point, however. All the schools on the list offer bachelor's degrees. The list is followed by a long list of footnotes and many schools have multiple notations that qualify their test-free classification. The list includes a number of highly selective schools that truly do have alternatives to the SAT or ACT. Any student who does not want to use test scores should be careful to check each school's admissions guidelines. A school that does not require standardized test scores usually has alternative requirements.

The most common alternative requirement is that students submit a graded paper with the grade and comments from the teacher. Schools usually ask for a research paper written in 11th or 12th grade. Some schools ask for more than one paper. High class rank and GPA may also excuse a student from submitting test scores.

The list that follows is a selection, compiled from the Fair Test list and other sources, of schools in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions that offer standardized test score alternatives. Most still accept standardized test scores and for many of these schools, most applicants do submit SAT or ACT scores. It is necessary to know the rules before applying. Some schools have a space on their application where the student declares the intention to make an alternative application. Students should be cautioned--if scores are sent to many of these schools, they will be used.

Mid-50% SAT scores (Verbal/ Math) and ACT scores (composite) are provided if available.

Pennsylvania

Bryn Mawr College – may submit scores from SAT, ACT, SAT subject tests, AP or IB

Chatham College – accepts a resume instead of test scores

SAT: CR510-620/M470-580; ACT: 22-27

Dickinson College – test scores are optional for admission, but are required for scholarship consideration

SAT: CR600-690/M590-680; ACT: 26-29

Elizabethtown College – scores not required if GPA/class rank meet requirements

Franklin & Marshall College – applicants must submit two graded papers and complete a no scores option form

SAT: CR580-670/M590-690

Gettysburg College – must complete no score option form; scores required for scholarship consideration

SAT: CR600-680/M610-670; ACT 27-30

King's College – accepts a graded paper submitted by the high school guidance office

Muhlenberg College – accepts a graded paper and personal interview instead of test scores; scores required for scholarships, honors, and special pre-med programs

SAT: CR560-660/M560-660

Susquehanna University – accepts two graded papers instead of scores; also requires college prep courses

SAT: CR530-620/M540-630

University of Scranton – accepts two graded essays from high school and an interview

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Ursinus College – no test scores if in top 10% of class or a 3.6 or 4.0 in a high school without rankings; graded paper required
SAT: CR550-660/M560-660; ACT: 22-28

New Jersey

Drew University – graded paper may be submitted instead of test scores; BA/MD program requires scores.

Thomas Edison College – no test scores required

New York

Bard College – test scores optional

SAT: CR650-750/M590-690

Hamilton College – accepts SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, AP/IB or applicant can submit all; school will select the most favorable combination. Subjects must include quantitative and verbal topics.

SAT: CR620-710/M640-710

Sarah Lawrence College – a graded paper is requested; no standardized tests required for admission

SAT: CR620-710/M550-640; ACT: 25-30

Union College – requires test scores as well as a graded paper, but accepts SAT, ACT or SAT subject tests

SAT: CR570-660/M590-680; ACT: 24-29

Connecticut

Connecticut College – SAT is optional; two subject tests or ACT, with or without writing, is required

SAT: CR630-700/M620-700

Massachusetts

Cambridge College – does not require scores

College of the Holy Cross –SAT and ACT are optional but will be considered if submitted

SAT: CR630-670/M580-680;

Mount Holyoke College – Test scores are optional; college assigns only 10% weight in selection process to scores

Wheaton College – test scores not required, but will consider if submitted

Vermont

Middlebury College – accepts SAT, ACT, three subject tests, AP or IB scores

Maine

Bates College – test scores optional for admission, but must be submitted before entering school for placement

SAT: CR630-710/M640-710

Bowdoin College – scores optional; 20-25% of applicants do not submit; however scores must be submitted after acceptance for course placement.

SAT: CR650-760/M650-750

13. Helpful Websites/Books

www.nacacnet.org

National Association for College Admissions Counseling; website has an area for students and parents with information and numerous links. Also includes articles and past issues of organization newsletter

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool>

National Center for Educational Statistics website – COOL (college opportunities on-line) pages on many schools including admissions information, test scores, costs and college profiles

www.fairtest.org

Provides information about schools with alternatives to SAT/ACT. Although there are a few schools, which do not use test scores at all, the majority of the schools on this list still use scores in some way

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Official site for the federal financial aid application form; print out or apply on-line

www.fastweb.com

Scholarship matching; financial aid information with many links

www.finaid.com

Financial aid information including a needs calculator, many links

www.collegeboard.com

Overview of SAT, SAT Subject Tests, on-line registration, scores, practice questions, practice test, test dates, registration, college information, financial aid information

www.act.org

Overview of the ACT test, including writing, test dates and registration, practice questions, college information

www.commonapplication.org

Official website for the common application, get information, download the application, apply on-line and more

www.universalcollegeapp.com

Official website for this alternate application, get info, download info and apply on-line

www.number2.com

Free on-line test prep for SAT and ACT, plus a vocabulary builder

www.gocollege.com

Free on-line test prep for SAT and ACT

The College Board College Handbook, 2009, 46th Edition, College Board, 2008.

Extensive listing of schools, including admissions info, size, cost, application deadlines, majors, scholarships. Updated yearly.

The Insiders' Guide to the Colleges 2010: Students on Campus Tell You What You Really Want to Know, 36th Edition. (Paperback), Yale Daily News, St Martin's-Griffin, New York, 2009. A look at schools from the student perspective written by college students.

Both above books are available at bookstores and public libraries.

15. SAT and ACT Scores at Various Colleges and Universities

College/University	SAT				ACT			SAT Subject Tests***/Comments
	Mid 50% Reading	Mid 50% Writing	Mid 50% Math	Mid 50% Composite*	Mid 50% English	Mid 50% Math	ACT Essay**	
Albright College	440-550		450-560	18-23			R	test optional
Amherst College	660-760	660-760	660-760	29-33	30-34	28-34	R	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Arcadia University	480-620	480-610	480-580	20-26	20-27	18-25	Y	not required
Boston University	580-680	590-670	590-690	25-30	26-30	25-29	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Brown University	650-760	660-770	670-780	28-33	28-34	28-34	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Bryn Mawr College	620-730	620-710	580-680	27-31	27-33	25-30	R	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Cabrini College	440-520		420-520	16-21			N	not required
Carnegie Mellon University	620-720	620-710	670-780	29-33	28-34	28-33	Y	2 subject tests - subjects based on major
Cedar Crest College	480-590	470-570	480-580	21-27	20-27	20-27	N	
Chestnut Hill College	440-550	440-540	420-530	17-21			N	
College of New Jersey	560-660	570-670	590-690	*			N	
College of William and Mary	630-730	610-720	620-710	27-32	27-34	26-32	N	subject tests optional
Columbia University	660-760	650-760	670-780	28-33	29-34	28-34	Y	2 subject tests - subjects based on major
Cornell University	630-730	640-730	670-770	29-33	28-34	29-34	Y	2 subject tests - subjects based on major
Dartmouth College	660-770	660-770	670-780	29-34			Y	2 subject tests - student choice
Davidson College	630-730	630-730	640-730	28-32			N	2 test suggested only
Delaware Valley College	460-550	440-540	470-560	20-23	19-23	19-24	Y	
DeSales University	490-600	480-590	490-600	19-25	17-24	16-24	N	
Dickinson College	600-700		590-690	26-30			N	tests optional; used for scholarship
Drew University	520-650	510-640	510-620	20-25	20-25	19-25	N	tests scores or graded paper submission
Drexel University	540-630		570-660	23-28	22-28	23-29	N	
Duke University	660-750	680-780	680-790	29-34	30-34	29-35	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Eastern University	470-590	460-590	450-580	19-23	19-24	16-21	N	
Elizabethtown College	500-600		510-610	21-25	20-25	19-25	R	
Franklin & Marshall College	600-690		630-700	*			R	test scores or 2 graded writing samples
Georgetown University	620-730		630-730	28-32	28-34	27-33	N	3 subject tests required
Gettysburg College	610-690		610-690	27-30*			R	optional; scores used after acceptance for placement

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College/University	SAT			ACT			ACT Essay**	SAT Subject Tests***/Comments
	Mid 50% Reading	Mid 50% Writing	Mid 50% Math	Mid 50% Composite*	Mid 50% English	Mid 50% Math		
Gwynedd-Mercy College	440-540		440-540				R	SAT/ACT writing reviewed as needed
Harvard University	690-800	690-790	700-780	31-35	32-35	31-35	Y	3 subject tests required
Haverford College	650-740	660-750	650-740	*			Y	2 subject tests - student choice
Holy Family University	420-510	410-490	420-510	17-23	19-20	17-19	Y	
Howard University	470-670	430-680	460-680	19-29	18-30	18-29	Y	
Immaculata University	420-530		400-500	17-21			R	
Ithaca College	540-640	540-640	550-640	23-28	22-29	23-28	Y	will be considered if submitted
Johns Hopkins University	630-740	630-730	660-770	29-33	24-31	28-34	Y	upto 3 subject tests - based on major
King's College	450-550	450-550	450-560	*			N	test scores or grade paper submitted by high school
Kutztown University	450-540	430-520	450-550	18-22	16-22	17-22	N	
La Salle University	460-560	460-570	450-560	19-24*	18-24	17-24	R	subject tests may be submitted for placement
Lafayette College	580-670	590-680	610-700	26-30			R	Recommended; may be used for placement
Lehigh University	590-680		640-720				Y	
Mass Institute of Technology (MIT)	660-760	660-750	720-800	31-34	30-35	32-36	Y	Math 1 or 2 and Bio, Chem or Physics
Millersville University of PA	470-570	460-560	490-580	*			N	
Morehouse College	460-560		450-570	18-24	17-24	17-24	R	
Moravian College	500-600	500-600	510-610	19-23			Y	
Muhlenberg College	560-660	560-660	560-660	26-29			Y	tests optional; required for scholarships; interview & graded paper required
New York University	620-720	620-720	630-720	28-31			Y	2 subject tests - student choice most majors -
Penn State Abington	400-520		420-540	17-23	16-22	17-23	Y	
Penn State University Park	530-630		560-670	24-28	23-29	24-29	Y	
Philadelphia University	480-560		490-590	22-26			N	
Princeton University	690-790	690-780	700-790	31-34	31-35	30-35	Y	3 subject tests required - subjects by major
Rice University	650-750	640-750	670-780	30-34			Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
Rider University	470-560	460-570	470-570	19-24			Y	
Rollins College	540-640	530-640	550-640	23-28	22-29	22-27	N	tests waived w/ graded paper & portfolio

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College/University	SAT				ACT			SAT Subject Tests***/Comments
	Mid 50% Reading	Mid 50% Writing	Mid 50% Math	Mid 50% Composite*	Mid 50% English	Mid 50% Math	ACT Essay**	
Rowan University	480-580	480-580	500-600	*			N	
Rutgers University-Camden	480-580	470-570	500-600	*			Y	
Shippensburg U of PA	470-540	440-540	440-550	*			Y	Writing for placement only
St. Joseph's University	500-600	510-600	510-610	22-26			N	
Stanford University	650-760	670-760	680-780	30-34	30-34	29-35	Y	2 subject tests - student choice
Swarthmore College	680-760	660-760	670-760	28-33	29-35	28-34	Y	SAT + 2 Subject, ACT w/ writing or SAT and ACT (w/wo Write)
Syracuse University	520-620	530-630	550-650	23-28	23-29	23-29	Y	
Temple University	500-600	490-590	510-610	21-26			Y	
UC Berkeley	580-710	590-710	620-750	25-31	24-32	26-33	Y	2 subject tests in different areas of study
UCLA	560-680	590-690	600-730	25-31	24-32	26-33	Y	2 subject tests in different areas of study
University of Chicago	660-770		650-760	28-33	29-35	28-34	N	will be considered if submitted
University of Delaware	540-630	550-640	560-660	24-29	23-28	24-29	Y	subject tests recommended for honors
University of Maryland	570-680	560-670	600-700	*			Y	
University of Miami	580-680	580-670	610-700	27-31	27-33	26-32	N	
University of Notre Dame	650-750	640-730	670-760	31-34			R	recommended, used for placement
University of Pennsylvania	650-740	670-760	680-780	30-33	30-34	29-34	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing
U of PA state system	400-540	390-540	410-560	16-23			varies	range for 10 campuses
University of Pittsburgh	570-670		580-670	24-30			N	
University of Richmond	580-680	590-690	590-680	26-30			R	
University of the Arts	480-590	460-580	450-560	20-25	19-26		N	
University of the Sciences	530-600		560-660	23-27			R	
University of Virginia	600-710	610-720	620-720	27-32	27-33	26-33	R	2 subject tests - strongly recommended
Ursinus College	560-670	560-660	560-670	25-29	25-29	24-29	Y	Recommended
Villanova University	590-690	590-690	620-710	27-31	27-32	27-32	Y	
West Chester University (PA)	480-560	480-570	490-580	*			Y	
Widener University	440-530		460-560	*			N	
Yale University	700-800	700-780	700-790	30-34			Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing

*Accepts ACT but scores not reported; usually due to too few scores; ** Y=required, N=not required, R=recommended