

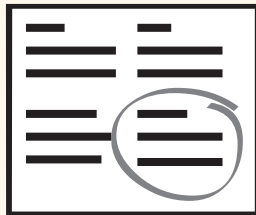
More than three million college admissions tests are administered each year, making the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Assessment (ACT) two of the most important exams that a high school student will ever take. In order to perform at their best, your teen should become familiar with the style and types of questions on the tests to avoid “trap-door answers.” In addition, students should

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boost their reading and vocabulary skills and learn specific process of elimination strategies. Above all, students need to work through as many practice questions and tests as possible in the weeks and months leading up to the actual exam.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO PASS ON TO TEENS PREPARING FOR THESE IMPORTANT TESTS:

- Unlike the SAT, the ACT has no scoring penalty for incorrect answers, so never leave an ACT question blank.
- On the SAT, by eliminating at least two incorrect answers for every question you're unsure about, you will mathematically beat the odds of the test and raise your score.
- Since the test's instructions will not change, don't waste time reading the instructions on the day of the test. You should already know them.
- Never spend too much time on any single question—it's just not worth it. It's better to lose one point on a difficult question than to lose 10 points because you ran out of time on the last part of a section.
- If you are unsure of a question, circle it and come back to it if time permits.
- Don't get bogged down on the difficult questions before you have racked up as many points as possible on the easy and medium questions.



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USEFUL WEB SITES

THE COLLEGE BOARD

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Among its best-known programs are the SAT, PSAT, and the Advanced Placement Program. The Web site features special sections for students and parents, including SAT Preparation Center with free practice tests, SAT question of the day, and preparation planning kits.

collegeboard.com

Free preparation booklet: collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/sat/sat-preparation-booklet.pdf

THE ACT

ACT is a not-for-profit organization that provides assessment, research, information, and program management services in the areas of education and workforce development, including the ACT test. The ACT Web Site features resources for parents such as test dates, registration information, and frequently asked questions. Students also can find helpful information about test prep, college planning, and financial aid.

Parents: act.org/path/parent

Students: actstudent.org

Free preparation booklet: act.org/aap/pdf/preparing.pdf

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAIR AND OPEN TESTING (FAIRTEST)

FairTest works to end the misuses and flaws of standardized testing and to ensure that evaluation of students, teachers, and schools is fair, open, valid, and educationally beneficial. The site includes a list of schools that don't require standardized tests or have deemphasized their importance in the admissions process.

fairtest.org

continued

TEST COMPARISON	SAT	ACT
Length	3 hours, 45 minutes	3 hours, 25 minutes (includes optional 30-minute writing test)
Subjects	Critical Reading Math Writing	English Math Reading Science Writing (optional)
Score Composition	1/3 Math 1/3 Reading 1/3 Writing	1/4 English 1/4 Math 1/4 Reading 1/4 Science
Scoring	Aggregate score 600–2400 based on total of three sections scores Score of 0–12 for essay	Composite score 1–36 based on average of four sections Score 0–12 for optional essay
Penalties	1/4 point deducted for every wrong answer in the multiple choice sections	No penalties for incorrect answers
Sending Scores to Colleges	Starting in March 2009, students can select “opt-in feature,” which will allow them to choose specific test date(s) to be sent.	Student decides which scores are sent.