

College Guidance Part

1. College Planning Resources

The following are additional resources to assist you in the college search and application process.

College Searches

- ACT College Planning
www.actstudent.org/college/index.html
- College Board College Search
www.collegeboard.org/csearch/html/ch00.html
- College Edge
www.collegeedge.com
- College Net
www.collegenet.com
- College View
www.collegeview.com
- College Express
www.collegexpress.com
- Early Decision/Early Action
Search tool for early decision/early action admissions by state
<http://www.nacac.com/college-search/search.cfm>
- My College Options
www.mycollegeoptions.org
- My College QuickStart
A personalized college and career planning kit powered by your PSAT/NMSQT test results
www.collegeboard.com/quickstart
- The Princeton Review
www.princetonreview.com
- Sites that can help you with your choice:
www.kaplan.com
www.ed.gov/pubs/prepare
- Schools in the USA
www.schoolsintheusa.com
- U.S. News & World Report: Best Colleges
<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>

Other Resources

- ACT Career Planner
www.actstudent.org/wwm/
- Making It Count
Tool for students transitioning into high school, into college and into their career
www.makingitcount.com

- Occupational Outlook Handbook Bureau of Labor Statistics outlook on occupations, including compensation, employment prospects, and skill matching for students. Information on compensation is available on a state-by-state basis
- www.bls.gov/oco/

2. Standardized Testing

Standardized tests are an essential part of the college application process. Most of the colleges require applicants to provide either an SAT or an ACT test score and will accept either test; no preference is given to one over the other. For students seeking course credit or advanced course placement, colleges may also require SAT Subject Test scores. Please scroll down for information about:

- About the Tests
- Test Preparation

About the Tests

§ SAT

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests/sat>

- **SAT Reasoning Test** – A three hour and forty-five minute test measuring critical reading, writing, and mathematical abilities. Testing is usually done in the spring of the junior year and is often repeated in the fall of the senior year.
- **SAT Subject Tests** – These one-hour subject matter tests, formerly called Achievement Tests, are required by selective colleges. These tests are taken in the junior year or senior year. Students considering applying early decision to selective schools must complete these tests no later than the November testing date in their senior year. It is wise to take the tests at the completion of your study of a subject if you will not be continuing in that area.
- **ACT (American College Testing Program)** – A three hour and thirty minute test measuring understanding and ability in English usage, writing, mathematical usage, reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Students usually take the ACT in the spring of their junior year, and often repeat the test in the fall of their senior year.
<http://www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/what.html>
- **PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)** is a program cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT. It also gives students **a chance to enter NMSC scholarship programs** and gain access to college and career planning tools. The PSAT/NMSQT measures: critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills and writing skills.
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

Test Preparation Resources

The following links can help you prepare for the SAT, ACT and PSAT.

- **SAT Preparation Center**, including Official SAT Practice Test
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html
Standardized Test Dates
- **SAT Skills Insight** is a free online tool that shows students, parents, and educators the skills that students know and highlights the ones they need to know better, using prior scores on the PSAT, the SAT, or any

practice test you have taken.

www.collegeboard.com/testing/sat/skillsmap/overview.html

- **My SAT Online Score Report** is a free online tool that gives students who take the SAT the meaning behind their numbers and insight into their strengths and weaknesses. You can access this report about one week after you have received notice that your scores are available online.
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/infocus.html
- **ACT Online Prep**
www.actstudent.org/testprep/index.html
- **Preparing Students for the PSAT/NMSQT: A Step to the Future** (PowerPoint Presentation) Designed to prepare students for the PSAT by familiarizing them with key question types and test-taking strategies
www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/counselors/psat/ppt/a-step-to-the-future.ppt
- **PSAT practice**, plus strategies, hints, and other information
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html
- **Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions**, including free workshops, practice tests and information sessions
www.kaptest.com/college
- **Kaplan Quizbank** – Free SAT or ACT prep from Kaplan; customize quizzes for personalized prep, reduce anxiety on timed tests with practice questions, and track improvement with instant analysis
www.kaptest.com/quizbank
- **Kaplan: The Test Maze** – A variety of useful test preparation tools
www.kaptest.com/Newsweek/Test-Maze/index.html
- **March 2 Success** – a free, online program designed by Peterson's, Educational Options, and the College Options Foundation and sponsored by the US Army.
- www.march2success.com

3. Financial Aid Resources

- FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the largest provider of financial aid, the federal government has a great deal of information on student financial aid on its website. Almost every college and university requires the FAFSA for families to apply for need-based financial aid. This also includes any education loans the families may want to apply for. The FAFSA is filed on line (www.fafsa.ed.gov) after January 1. You need to have the figures from your tax forms to complete the FAFSA. You may use estimates to initially file the FAFSA, if you haven't finished filing your taxes. Most college deadlines for completing the financial aid forms are February 1 to March 1. Each college website will have the requirements for applying for financial aid and the deadlines.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.mapping-your-future.org

- **Fast Web**

<http://studentservices.com/fastweb>

- **Financial Aid**

www.finaid.org

- **CSS/ Financial Aid PROFILE**

More than 500 colleges and scholarship funds use the CSS Financial Aid Profile. The website includes the list of college and scholarships that use this profile.

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

Additional Financial Aid Resources

ACT's Financial Need Estimator

<http://webapps01.act.org/fane/docs/>

College Bound

www.collegebound.com

Financial Aid Calculation

http://www.aie.org/managing-your-money/finance-tools/efc_calculator/index.cfm

Financial Aid Information

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html?src=mr>

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

<http://www.nasfaa.org/>

Need A Lift – a college financial aid handbook from The American Legion

<http://www.needalift.org/>

Not for Profit Organizations College Board's Savings Advisor

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp?affiliateId=rdr&bannerId=css>

4. ACT vs SAT: Key differences between the ACT and SAT

ACT vs SAT: which test is a better fit for your student? Students may take whichever test they prefer (assuming there are available testing locations for both tests). If you're not sure which test your child would prefer, consider the key differences between the ACT and SAT. Some students find that the ACT caters to their strengths more so than the SAT, and vice versa. Need a quick side-by-side comparison of the tests? Check out our ACT vs SAT

Comparison Chart.

SAT	vs.	ACT
reasoning test	Type of Test	content-based test
Critical Reading: 2, 25-min sections and 1, 20-min section; Math: 2, 25-min sections and 1, 20-min section; Writing: 1, 25-min essay, 1, 25-min section, and 1, 10-min section	Test Format	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 30-min essay (optional)
reading, vocabulary, grammar & usage, writing, and math	Content Covered	grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)
tricky, questions can be phrased in ways that make them difficult to decipher	Test Style	straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Math, Critical Reading, and Writing scores will each range between a 200-800; total SAT	Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four

score ranges between 600-2400		sections; ranges between 1-36
yes – you lose $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point for incorrect answers (except on the grid-in math questions)	Penalty for Wrong Answers?	no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers
yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges	Score Choice?	yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges
questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)	Difficulty Levels	difficulty level of the questions is random
arithmetic, data analysis, algebra I and II, functions, geometry; formulas are provided in the test booklet	Math Levels	arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
with private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores	Tends to be more popular?	with public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores
seven times per year: January, March or April, May, June, October, November, December	Offered when?	six times per year: February, April, June, September, October, December (note that some states offer the ACT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)
typically about four weeks before the test date	Registration deadline?	typically about five to six weeks before the test date
www.collegeboard.com	More Information	www.act.org

5. Question of the Day

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-question-of-the-day>