

# Navigating The Maze to College Entrance

---

STANDARDIZED TESTING

DEADLINES, DEADLINES, DEADLINES!

# Learning Targets

---

1. Students and families will learn the differences between the SAT and ACT.
2. Students and families will learn what SAT Subject Tests are and when they should be taken.
3. Students and families will learn different terms relating to college admissions deadlines.

# Differences Between SAT and ACT

---

## SAT

- Math section only contains Algebra and Geometry
- Explicitly tests vocabulary
- Questions are abstract: the questions look and feel different than those from school
- Essay is mandatory
- No science section
- Timing is not as difficult

## ACT

- Math section contains Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry
- Vocabulary is not tested
- Questions are much more straightforward (almost the same as questions students see in school)
- Essay is optional
- Contains a science section
- Time is extremely difficult

**\*Both tests offer score choice\***

# Students May Prefer.....

---

## SAT IF....

- Tests well
- Very strong in math
- Have time management issues
- Good at changing gears

## ACT IF....

- Strong time management
- Stronger in English
- Likes science
- Does well in class

# Test Feedback

---

## SAT

Question-and-Answer Service  
(Q&A)

Get the entire test booklet back-  
test scores and answers!

Offered 3 of the 7 tests

- January
- May
- October

## ACT

Test Information Release (TIR)

Get the entire test booklet back-  
test scores and answers!

Offered 3 of the 6 tests

- April
- June
- December

**Students should be encouraged to take these  
exams and use the returned tests to their  
advantage!**

# Testing Timelines

---

## SAT TIMELINE

### PSAT/NMSQT: October

- Results in December

### SAT

- Start preparing after PSAT
- Ideal first test in January\*
  - Order Question-and-Answer Service (QAS\*)
  - Leaves time for another test in spring (March, May\*, June)
- Last: Oct\*/Nov senior year

## ACT TIMELINE

### Aspire

- Freshman and Sophomore year

### ACT

- Start preparing in January
- Ideal first test in April\*
  - Order Test Information Release (TIR\*)
  - Leaves time for another test in summer (June\*)
- Last: Sept/Oct senior year

# Root Causes of Mistakes

---

1. Lack of familiarity with content
2. Failure to read carefully
3. Assumption that questions are like the ones in high school classes
4. Nervousness/time stress

# Admissions Packet

---

- There are many separate pieces of information that make up a student's college application packet.
- Standardized test scores are just one part of a student's college portfolio.
- The SAT/ACT is in fact becoming an even more crucial piece of a student's application with every year that passes.





# Competitive Edge

---

- As the number of students who apply to colleges increases (as it does each year), students can and need to take advantage of opportunities to set themselves apart from the competition. The SAT/ACT is one way to differentiate themselves from their peers.
- Gaining a competitive edge can come from any section of the SAT or ACT and, as such, the test should be taken 3 times in order to maximize benefit.

# Test Score Differentiation

---

Every test counts!

- Some schools will “super score” the SAT or ACT, meaning that they will take the best scores from each section and combine them for a new composite score.

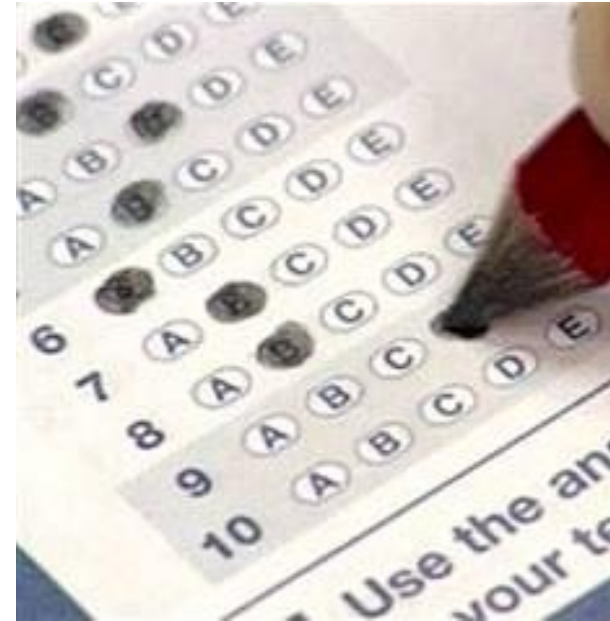
Example SAT super score:

- Test 1: M: 520    R: 600    W: 640
  - Test 2: M: **640**    R: 590    W: **650**
  - Test 3: M: 590    R: **680**    W: 570
- 
- FINAL Super Score: M: 640    R: 680    W: 650

# Subject Tests

---

- SAT II Subject Test is an excellent way for a student to differentiate him/herself from other applicants.
- These tests also show additional initiative (as most schools do not require these tests to be taken).



# Subject Tests

---

- Subject Tests are a great way for a student to show interest in a specific program/department at a given college.
- Students should only take a Subject Test if he/she is confident they can perform well on the test, unless otherwise required.
- These tests are not mandatory for every school, only some of the more highly selective institutions.

# Cut-Off Points

---

- Some colleges are using SAT/ACT scores as an initial filter for applications.
- It is possible a student's application will not even be opened to review unless the student has reached a specific SAT/ACT benchmark, otherwise known as a "cut-off point".



# Creating Opportunity

---

The more prestigious a college/university, the higher the cut-off point will be.

In order for students to let other strengths shine through, it is imperative that the standardized test scores meet the college's criteria.

This use of test scores as a cut-off point becomes more prominent each year.

- This means that an increased stress should be placed on preparation for these exams every year.

Deadlines, Deadlines,  
Deadlines

---

# Definitions

---

Regular Decision

Rolling

Early Action

Early Decision

Restrictive Early Action



# Early Action

## BENEFITS:

Can apply to multiple Early Action schools

Some colleges have higher acceptance rates for EA

Still considered for regular decision

NON binding

Done early....less stress!

College	EA Deadline
CSU	Nov 15, Notify by Feb 1
CU	Dec 1
DU	Nov 1 (EA and ED)
U of Georgia	Oct 15
Stanford	Nov 1

# Early Decision

---

If not accepted early, still considered in regular pool

Accepted early=over and done

Binding agreement

Apply to only 1 ED

If accepted, withdraw all other applications

Can break agreement only if financial package is not enough to meet student's demonstrated need

# Restrictive Early Action AKA Single Choice Early Action

---

Non binding early action

One REA school

Can apply to other colleges if they are:

- Non binding rolling admissions
- Public college/university
- Outside of the US

# Waitlisted vs Deferred

---

## WAITLISTED

On radar but not first option

You are a benchwarmer

Can pull you in if someone plays for another team

## DEFERRED

If applied EA or ED, will be reviewed with regular applicants

Can now apply to other schools, takes you out of binding option

# Missed The Deadline?

---

Every May, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) posts colleges that still have room!

<http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/College-Openings/Pages/College-Openings-Results.aspx>

# Learning Targets

---

1. Students and families will learn the differences between the SAT and ACT.
2. Students and families will learn what Subject Tests are and when they should be taken.
3. Students and families will learn different terms relating to college admissions deadlines.

Thank You For Your  
Time Tonight!

---