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Testing Strategy for the College Entrance Exams



Creating a test taking strategy will put you ahead of the competition. Too many high school seniors take the tests (SAT, ACT) only once in their senior year, hoping and praying that they get a great score. Students who are stressed tend to not score as high as they could have if they weren't stressed out. *Don't wait until your senior year!*

Great scores are designed, created and implemented.

First identify the most difficult college that you want to get into. Not everyone wants to go to Harvard, Stanford or the United States Air Force Academy. Create a list of colleges and identify the most difficult school to get into that is on your list.

Next, find the **Middle 50% Scores** for that college. To find the Middle 50%, go to CollegeBoard.org, type in the name of the school and then click on "Applying" on the left side, then scroll to and click the SAT/ACT tab. Also look at the 'Application Requirements' tab and see if there are any special admission requirements that you need to complete, such as Subject Tests. Check the 'At A Glance' section (tab on the left side of screen). Scroll down to find out what percentages of students are admitted.

Being in the Middle 50% gets you through the first door, but not yet admitted. Your goal is to score better than the Middle 50% or on the higher end of the Middle 50%. This gives you a stronger chance of being admitted and being admitted with scholarships.

The strategy is: Take both tests, the ACT and the SAT twice. Then look and see which test you are the most comfortable with and focus on retaking that test.

When you take the tests for the first time don't guess on any of the answers. If you guess, and get the answer correct, you won't know if you need to brush up on that specific subject area. Review the answers after you have taken the tests to see which areas you need improvement on, prep, study and retake.

1. Take both tests (SAT/ACT) twice, get a base score, review the score and see which area needs improvement
2. Pick up an official prep book and review 10 - 15 minutes every day. Official Prep books from CollegeBoard or American College Testing are best.
3. Register on **AZCollegePlanning.com** and review the Test Prep Videos*
4. Sign up on CollegeBoard.org for the SAT Question of the Day and review it every day.
5. Review the ACT Question of the Day, every day. ACT questions found on ACTStudent.org.
6. When you review the Question of the Day, before you click on the answer; ask yourself which of Dr. Beasley's Secret Test Strategies will get you to the correct answer fastest. (Print out Dr. B.'s cheat-sheet [available online at AZCollegePlanning.com] & review it when answering the Question of the Day.)
7. Review "retired" tests (these can be found on AZCollegePlanning.com).
8. Take the tests again, but this next time for points. Practice and repeat, practice and repeat!

**Students who practice and apply Dr. Beasley's Secret Test Taking Strategies found on AZCollegePlanning.com are more likely to increase scores and potentially earn a perfect score. Higher test scores increases the chances of admission and scholarships.*

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Some colleges require students to take the **SAT Subjects test**. Double check and verify that the college requires the Subject test or not. Some colleges will take the ACT in lieu of the SAT Subjects test along with the main SAT I. All colleges will take the SAT or ACT test. Some colleges require the students who take the ACT to take the writing section is also. Check the requirements for each college/university that you plan on sending in an application.

Some students take the test as early as 6th or 7th grade. (7th graders can qualify for the Duke TIP program by taking the SAT.) If it is later in your high school years, don't fret, start now. Sign up and take the earliest test date that you can. Evaluate and retake as necessary.



Students should start taking the SAT/ACT and P-SAT as early as possible. Get a base score, prep/review and retake the tests often and frequently.

Students often worry that taking the SAT/ACT test too many times will impact their chances of admission. This is not true. Colleges will accept the student's highest test scores.

You can take the SAT/ACT prior to your freshman year. Academically talented students should take the SAT in sixth or seventh grade as part of Johns Hopkins University's Search for Talented Youth program or the Duke TIP program. Some eighth graders just want to see what it's like, so they experiment with it. This is good.

My personal opinion is that every freshman should take the SAT/ACT once in the fall and once in the late spring. When those scores come in, special note should be taken of the areas of weakness. The diagnostic report that comes with the score report can be helpful in targeting efforts for improvement.

Juniors should keep in mind that they will be taking the P-SAT in October. The P-SAT is not only a preliminary version of the SAT but also a qualifying exam for National Merit Scholarship competition. Don't consider the P-SAT as one of your SATs; it's not an SAT. I recommend that Juniors take the SAT/ACT in the late fall/winter and again in the spring. Preferably you hit the scores you want in your Junior year. Your Senior year should be reserved to retake the SAT/ACT only as needed or if you believe you can bump your scores. Each college can have different test deadlines. In order to make sure your scores arrive on time, check the deadlines of all the college on your list. Schedule tests accordingly.

You can take the SAT/ACT as early as you want, as often as you want. Colleges will take your highest score. Many colleges actually ask you to retake it to raise your score to get more money. Some colleges will take your best component scores from different tests (Super Score).

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- To register for the P-SAT contact your local high school counselor to sign up
- To register for the SAT go to: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register>
- To register for the ACT go to: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/>

My GPA (weighted) _____ (unweighted) _____ High School Graduation Year _____

The most difficult college to be admitted to on MY list is: _____

The percentage of students admitted is _____%.

The Middle 50% SAT Scores at my proposed college is:

SAT Reading _____ Math _____ Writing _____

The Middle 50% ACT Scores at my proposed college is:

ACT _____ with writing without writing

This school requires SAT Subjects Test Yes No

My PSAT Score (Freshman year) _____ (Sophomore year) _____ (Junior year) _____

My SAT Scores _____ / _____ / _____ test 1 _____ date of test

(Read/Math/Write) _____ / _____ / _____ test 2 _____ date of test

_____ / _____ / _____ test 3 _____ date of test

_____ / _____ / _____ test 4 _____ date of test

_____ / _____ / _____ test 5 _____ date of test

_____ / _____ / _____ test 6 _____ date of test

My ACT Scores _____ test 1 _____ date of test

_____ test 2 _____ date of test

_____ test 3 _____ date of test

_____ test 4 _____ date of test

My SAT Subject Score _____ score _____ subject _____ date of test

(subject) _____ score _____ subject _____ date of test

_____ score _____ subject _____ date of test