



## **COACHING FOR COLLEGE e-Tip Sheet** for parents who have a student preparing for college

### **College Testing with the SAT and ACT - April**

College testing takes place several times a year and another round of tests is coming up this spring. I often get questions from parents who are concerned about the testing procedure. Some of their questions include:

- Which test do the colleges prefer?
- What is the difference between the SAT and ACT?

You get the picture. The tests cost money. The preparation and anxiety for the tests are stressful for your teen and for you. And finally, how many Saturday mornings can your teen test or retest before the whole college admission thing goes stale and repetitious.

So, in addition to sharpening the number 2 pencils, having new batteries for the calculator, taking a snack and water to the test, and getting a good night's rest...here's some helpful insight regarding college testing.

#### **COLLEGE PREFERENCE**

Traditionally, the SAT was the test of choice for private and east and west coast schools while the ACT was the preference for the Midwest. Now, more colleges are accepting both test results and an increasing number of students are taking the ACT. My advice, If you plan to attend college in the Midwest, just take the ACT. I think taking both the ACT and SAT is good experience to see the difference in the testing rigor. If you want to keep your options open for applying to schools around the country, this is a helpful tactic.

#### **THE DIFFERENCE**

ACT includes a science reasoning test, SAT does not.

ACT includes trigonometry questions in the math section, SAT does not.

SAT tests much more vocabulary than the ACT.

ACT tests English grammar and reading, SAT focuses on vocabulary and reading.

SAT has a guessing penalty, ACT does not.

SAT has a penalty for wrong answers, ACT does not.

Feel your teen could use a jumpstart for the college planning process? Perhaps as the parent, you realize you could use a tune-up on your career path as well or want to prepare to become an *Empty Nester*®. Contact Beckon Call and let's talk!

Coaching for College e-Tip Sheet© is written by Barbara Wulf. Send questions, comments, and article ideas to: [Barbara.wulf@me.com](mailto:Barbara.wulf@me.com). or 920-725-2930.



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ACT is a content-based, straightforward exam whereas the SAT tests critical thinking and problem solving and the style of the test is “tricky with distracters.”

SAT generally poses more of a time challenge for students.

Scoring: ACT is 200-800 for Math and for Verbal, added together for a composite score. Median is about 1000. The SAT is 1-36 for each subject with an average taken for a composite score. Median is about 21.

Many students find they score higher on one test versus the other depending on what kind of test taker they are. So, depending on the student’s strengths and weaknesses, the student will probably perform better on one test than the other.

Students can take free practice tests online to get familiar with the directions and gain some testing savvy regarding test strategies and guessing. Visit [www.act-sat-prep.com](http://www.act-sat-prep.com) or [www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com) and get prepping.

Source: ACT SAT Online Preparation

### IN THE NEWS...

The state of Maine is trying something new this spring by requiring all high school juniors to take the SAT on a Saturday morning. The test can help students get a jump on a college acceptance letter next year while ensuring their school meets federal and state education standards. The SAT will be used to replace their 11<sup>th</sup> grade Maine Educational Assessment and the test cost of \$41.50 will be paid for by the state and support their efforts for the No Children Left Behind legislation.

According to the Portland Press Herald, Maine has a lower rate of students attending college as compared to the other New England states. This initiative hopes to help raise the rate and possibly encourage more students to apply to a college. Students who miss the testing due to work or other necessary responsibilities will be given the chance to test in May. Other states will be watching how this works and might follow suit. So, it looks like college testing can have a dual purpose. (Oh, the good news... students will get Monday off to compensate for the mandatory Saturday test date!)

Source: Portland Press Herald, Mark Peters – Writer

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