Introduction to College Admissions Testing

BWS Education Consulting
Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Take the PSAT as a junior
- Try both the ACT and SAT once in the winter of junior year
- Based on results, focus on both the SAT and ACT or just one
Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Take the SAT and/or ACT again in the spring of junior year
- If needed, take the ACT or SAT again in the fall of senior year
- All schools will accept either the ACT or SAT
Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Fine to take each test 3 times
- For early decision, try to take the last tests in September or October of senior year
- For regular decision, can typically take the tests as late as January or February of senior year
Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- If applying to highly selective schools, take 2-3 SAT Subject Tests
- Best to take Subject Tests at the end of a corresponding AP or Honors course (May/June)
Advance Planning Situations

- Student Athlete
- Extended Time
How do schools use test scores?

- About \( \frac{1}{4} \) to \( \frac{1}{3} \) of what schools consider.
- Grades most important admissions factor.
- Some schools “superscore”.
- Some schools don’t require test scores (fairtest.org).
- When in doubt, simply call the college admissions office.
SAT Overview

- Math
  - Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, data analysis

- Reading and Writing
  - Reading passages, vocabulary in context
  - Grammar and editing

- Optional Essay
  - Analyze an argument
ACT Overview

- English (grammar and editing)
- Math (Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, pre-calculus)
- Reading (reading comprehension)
- Science (analyze experiments, data, and passages)
- Optional: analytical essay
ACT and SAT Similarities

- Can guess on both tests
- Both curved
- Test broad critical thinking and problem solving skills
ACT and SAT Differences

• Faster test-takers usually like the ACT
• More in-depth thinkers tend to like the SAT
• Students with extra time usually prefer the ACT
• Students with test anxiety often prefer the SAT
ACT and SAT Scoring

- ACT: 1-36 for each section, 1-36 average as composite

- SAT: 200-800 for each section, 400-1600 sum as composite

- Optional Essay will not affect overall score, but will be reported
What is a good score?

- It depends!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SAT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ivy League</td>
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What can students do to prepare?

• Read widely
• Take rigorous courses
• Do realistic, timed practice
• Work on argumentative writing
• Vocabulary memorization not as important anymore
Free Resources

- Khanacademy.org
- Actstudent.com
- BWSEducationConsulting.com
- Subscription services at the Columbus Public Library
How can parents help?

- Order the “Test Information Release” (ACT) or “Question and Answer Service” (SAT)
- Encourage reading
- Help with test anxiety
Further Information

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- 614.353.4725