

**Test Prep Strategies and Resources**

* **Today, we will focus on the following:**

1. **Primary Testing Values**
2. **Mindset and Approach**
3. **Four Considerations to Make About any Test**
4. **ACT and SAT Specific Strategies**

**Primary Testing Values:**

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**Test Taking:**

Knowing the layout and types/levels of questioning involved in the test being taken

**Time Management:**

Knowing how to set and keep a pace while testing in a stressful environment

**Logic and Reasoning:**

Being able to effectively distinguish between right and wrong answers even in the face of relative uncertainty

Content is tested only to an extent… the emphasis is on logic and reasoning skills

**\***Most content used for testing is learned in high school by the end of junior year or earlier.

Remember, it is just a test. It is not the gatekeeper to “perfect adulthood”

**Mindset and Approach:**

Below are some common motivators, but aren’t necessarily good

Pride- I want a high score!

Peer Pressure- everyone knows someone who got a perfect score/near perfect score

Fear of Lost Opportunity- a low score= going to a “bad school”= getting a “bad job”= hard life… etc.

**Pragmatism: think realistically about what score you need to make**

What score does a student NEED in order to get into college???

As students, you must do your research: if you don’t even know where you want to go, you won’t know what you need to get in!

Do not prepare for these tests as though “accidentally getting into Harvard” is a possible outcome! Getting a high score is great, but what is actually needed is far greater metric to work toward. Upper tier schools are notoriously difficult to get into, and unless it has been a targeted approach for years, a high exam score is not likely to result in admission to those schools. Certainly not by itself!

**Beyond Mindset:**

Mental preparation makes for a logical first step…recognizing that these tests are not insurmountable barriers is absolutely critical for many students.

Self-confidence plays a key role in preparedness.

Familiarizing oneself with the formatting of the tests would then be the next step.

**Four Considerations to Make About Any Test**

1. Layout of the test- how many questions? Subjects? Sections?
2. Timing Mechanics- how long will you have to answer the questions?
3. Scoring Mechanics- how are scores determined?
4. Style of Questioning- how are questions asked? What sort of skill is valued?

**ACT Specific Strategies and SAT Specific Strategies**

ACT

Time management skills is key

Fill in all the bubbles (there are no negative points)

Correctly answering 50% of all questions will get a composite score of 18!

SAT

The average high school junior will be prepared to take the SAT by the end of their junior year

Logic and reasoning are still the most essential skills for the SAT, but College Board has added context and content to the mix

Answer everything!

Practice vocabulary that matters- SAT vocab has taken the more obscure words out and added words high school students are more likely to see

Time is a factor, but depending on ability, it might not affect students

Spend quality time on questions that are manageable and guess on the remainder

As with the ACT, scoring a 50 % on the SAT almost translates to the minimum college readiness score

Process of elimination is a major skill for the SAT

**\*\*\*Always bring a watch\*\*\***

The analog watch is essential for both tests- being able to visualize blocks of time and make decisions based on the remaining time is an essential skill to have.