



# Tri-Ed Tutoring

expand. excel. exceed.

## Tri-Ed Tutoring's Step-by-Step Guide to SAT & ACT Prep

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Photo credit: Yustinus Tjiuwanda

# A Note From Tri-Ed Tutoring

**“ I feel so much better about this whole process after talking with you. You have been so helpful, and I feel so much less stressed.**

This is the best compliment a parent can give me after an initial phone call.

Tri-Ed Tutoring has helped parents and their students prepare for the SAT and ACT for over 15 years.

We've seen, talked to, and served over 1,500 families who felt overwhelmed by the standardized testing requirement in the college admissions process.



The anxiety surrounding SAT or ACT testing seems to increase for both parents and students as students approach junior year. Within a 15-minute conversation, parents feel the stress lift as their questions are answered and we create a plan for their student's junior and senior years. Standardized testing doesn't seem so scary once you have a plan with manageable steps along the way.

In our step-by-step guide to prepping for the SAT or ACT, we put together the guidance that we give our students to help you understand the journey ahead. SAT and ACT testing doesn't have to be stressful. With a plan in place, it can even be a fun and exciting time.

Thanks for letting us help you navigate standardized testing and the college admissions process. If you feel like this guide may help another parent or student, please feel free to pass it along. As always, reach out to us with any questions you may have along the way!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Paldao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Paldao  
Owner of Tri-Ed Tutoring

 @triedtutoring

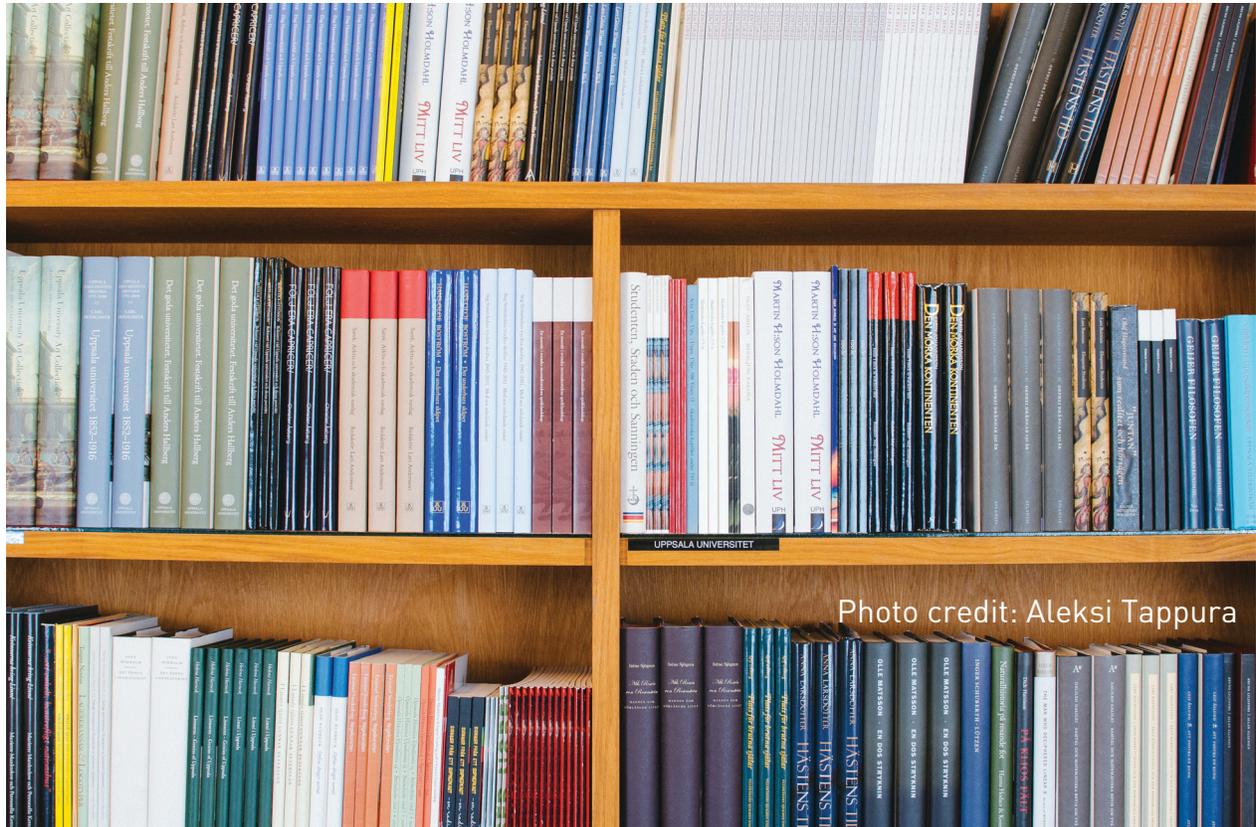
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# Should I Take the SAT or ACT?



One of the questions we are asked most frequently is “should I take the SAT or ACT”?

We always tell juniors they should try both the SAT and ACT. Even if you do not take an official test, you should at least take a practice test of each to get an idea of the differences and see which test better showcases your strengths. This does not mean that you need to or should send both SAT and ACT scores to college. Since both tests are designed to predict a student’s college readiness, one set of favorable scores is all you need.

## You Can Take A **Practice Sat** Or A **Practice Act** Test

Historically, the test that you took was determined by the schools in which you planned to apply—East coast and California schools preferred the SAT while mid-West schools preferred the ACT. Now, schools use either test for admissions without preference for one over the other.

## Who Tends To Do Better On The Act?

The primary differences between the ACT and SAT are content and question formatting. While the ACT covers more content than the SAT, ACT questions are asked in a way that students often find more familiar and straightforward. For example, the ACT math section includes trigonometry, imaginary numbers, logarithms, and matrices. These advanced topics are not found on the SAT. However, ACT questions are more similar to what students would see on a math test in school. For this reason, students who have taken a rigorous course load in school but do not perform well on tests that require a lot of logic and reasoning skills, like the SAT, often test better on the ACT.

There are also key differences between the reading and math sections of each test. The ACT reading section focuses on details from the passage and speed, whereas the SAT reading section targets inferences within the passage. The entire ACT math section can be answered using a calculator and all math questions are multiple choice. A portion of the SAT math questions must be answered without the use of a calculator and a little under a quarter of the questions are fill-in the blank.

## Who tends to do better on the SAT?

The SAT offers more time per question on the reading and math sections. Students have 74 seconds to answer each reading question and 84 seconds to answer each math question. The ACT allots 52.5 seconds per reading question and 60 seconds per math question. That's why students that struggle with time management on tests often prefer the SAT.

Also, as mentioned, the SAT has less content. For this reason, students who have taken a less rigorous curriculum may find the SAT less challenging. The SAT does not include a science section while the ACT does. The primary skills needed to be successful on this section are a basic understanding of experimental design and the ability to interpret data tables and graphs. This section does not require a lot of general science knowledge, but it can be challenging for students who are unfamiliar with lab sciences.

# SAT and ACT Overview

|                                       | SAT  | ACT   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Total Time</b>                     | <b>3 hrs.</b>  | <b>2 hrs. 55 min, or 3 hrs. 35 min</b>  |
| <b>Subjects Tested</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combo Reading/Writing</li> <li>• Math</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English (Writing)</li> <li>• Math</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Essay (optional)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Essay</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional (last section)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Scoring</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400-1600 total</li> <li>• 200-800 section</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-36 composite</li> <li>• 1-36/section</li> <li>• Essay scored separately</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>Reading Questions &amp; Pacing</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65 min for 52 questions</li> <li>• 75 sec/question</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 min for 40 questions</li> <li>• 52.5 sec/question</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Math Questions &amp; Pacing</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 min for 58 questions</li> <li>• 83 sec/question</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 min for 60 questions</li> <li>• 60 sec/question</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Writing Questions &amp; Pacing</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 min for 44 questions</li> <li>• 41 sec/question</li> <li>• 1 essay in 50 min</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 min for 75 questions</li> <li>• 36 sec/question</li> <li>• 1 essay in 30 min</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>Science Questions &amp; Pacing</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science intertwined with other sections</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 min for 40 questions</li> <li>• 52.5 sec/question</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Reading Content</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage Based Reading (100%)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage Based Reading (100%)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Math Content</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Math-Trig</li> <li>• Increased focus on Algebra II skills</li> <li>• Decreased focus on geometry</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Math-Precalculus/Trig</li> <li>• More advanced math topics covered</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Essay Content &amp; Pace</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No essay</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a stance and compare to other perspectives (40 min)</li> </ul>  |

## Part I

# When Should I Prepare For The Sat Or Act?



There are many factors to consider before planning SAT or ACT prep, and these factors can vary based on your starting SAT or ACT score and goal score. Below are some factors to consider:

### Take a practice test of both the **ACT** and **SAT**

During the summer before junior year, try a full-length practice ACT and SAT. There are free full-length tests on [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), respectively. This way, you can see which test best showcases your strengths. Because colleges will use either test in the admissions process, it is a good idea to know on which test you score higher so you can focus your prep on that test.

## **Plan Based On Your Rigor Of Curriculum**

Currently, the SAT covers up through the first half of Algebra II and the ACT covers through pre-calculus. Students who have already finished Algebra II by the end of 10th grade can start preparing the summer before junior year. If your math track has not covered this material, it may be better to wait until junior year as SAT or ACT prep should largely be a review of material learned rather than an introduction to new concepts.

## **Think About Your Schedule During The School Year**

Do you play a spring sport and find you are busier during that time of year? Are you involved in clubs that require a greater time commitment certain times of the year? Will you have SOL tests, AP exams, and finals during the spring that will need a lot of time and attention? You should be prepared to dedicate about four to five hours per week to test prep so it's important to think about your schedule before junior year begins and decide when that is the most feasible.

## **Test On A Date That Allows You To Order Your Questions And Answers**

There are a few test dates during the year in which you can order a copy of the test questions and your answers for an additional fee. This is a great way to review your exact mistakes and prepare for future tests. I recommend testing on at least one test date that allows this. For the SAT, the Question and Answer (QAS) service is available in October, March, and May. For the ACT, the Test Information Release is available in December, April, and June.

## **What is your goal score?**

Are you trying to reach the top score ranges? Is your goal to increase 300 points? If so, that will take a lot of work. Keep in mind that the SAT and ACT are not tests for which you can cram. The more you want to increase your score, the earlier you should start practicing. Think about your goals early to avoid unnecessary stress during the fall of your senior year.

## Part II

# When Should I Prepare For And Take the SAT or ACT?



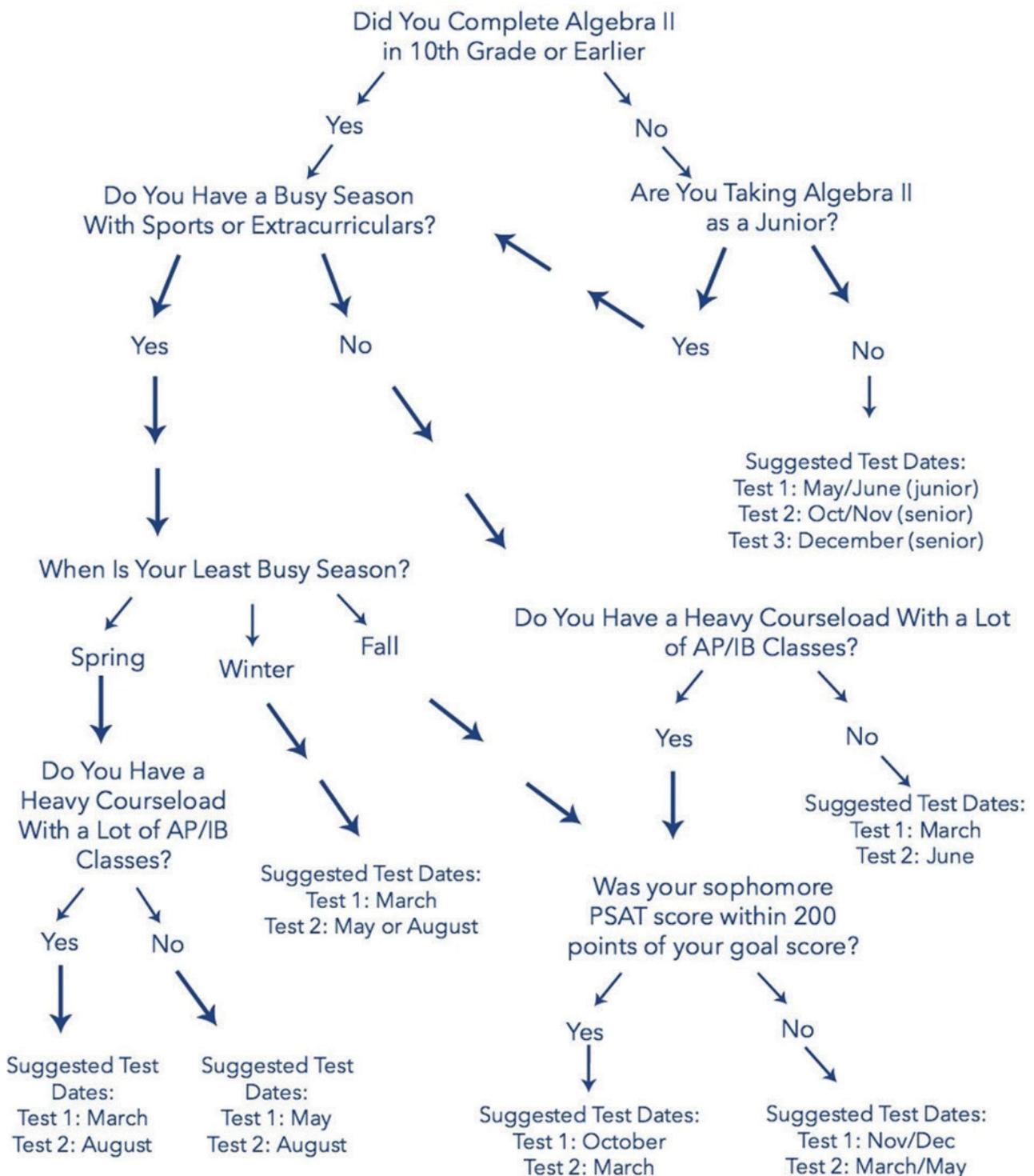
Photo credit: DGT Portraits

Now that you know what to consider when planning your SAT/ACT test dates and preparation, it's time to write that schedule down on paper. Below are two sample schedules, a general schedule and an accelerated schedule. The general schedule is ideal for most students, while the accelerated schedule is slightly modified for students that are more advanced in their coursework. The accelerated schedule is good for students that would like to finish SAT prep earlier in junior year to allow time for AP/IB tests and finals during spring of junior year.

|                                  | <b>General Schedule</b>   | <b>Accelerated Schedule</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Summer before Junior Year</b> | Take a practice SAT and ACT. Decide which test showcases your strengths and begin preparing for that test. Use the SAT-ACT Concordance chart to compare scores.   | Take a practice SAT and ACT. Decide which test showcases your strengths and begin preparing for that test.   |
| <b>Fall of Junior Year</b>       | <p>Continue preparing for the test of your choice. Start with a review of content that you will see on the test. Then, focus on timed sections to work on pacing and test-taking.</p> <p>The PSAT is given in October. This is a great practice test. Keep in mind that scores and results will not come back until mid-December.</p> | <p>Begin preparing for the test of your choice. For advanced students, we recommend prepping mostly during the summer since the school year tends to be busy with advanced coursework.</p> <p>The PSAT is given in October. Not only is this good practice taking a standardized test, but it also qualifies students for the National Merit Scholarship. For this reason, it is worth putting some work into preparing for the PSAT even if you are planning to take the ACT.</p> |
| <b>Winter of Junior Year</b>     | For the ACT, take your first test in December or February. For the SAT, try your first test in December or March. Order a copy of your test questions and answers, if available on your test date (Note: test questions are available for the December ACT and March SAT).  | <p>Take your first ACT test in December, or try your first SAT test October, November, or December. Order a copy of your test questions and answers, if available.</p> <p>Use the score report and your questions and answers from test one to determine areas that still need some review. Continue preparing for test two.</p>   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Spring of Junior Year</b></p>     | <p>Scores are released. Use the score report and your questions and answers from test one to determine areas that still need some review. Continue preparing for test two.</p> <p>For the ACT, take the April test; for the SAT, take May. Keep in mind, you can order your questions and answers after you receive your scores. This way, if you have reached your goal, you won't need to waste money ordering the questions. If you haven't reached your goal, you can order your test questions to help you review during the summer.</p> | <p>Take the second ACT in February or April and the SAT in March. Keep in mind, you can order your questions and answers on the April ACT and the March SAT after you receive your scores. This way, if you have reached your score goal, you won't need to waste money ordering the test questions. If you haven't reached your goal, you can order your test booklet to help you review during the summer.</p> |
| <p><b>Summer before Senior Year</b></p> | <p>If you have not reached your goal score based on the schools in which you plan to apply, continue to prep during the summer.</p>   | <p>If you have not reached your goal score based on the schools in which you plan to apply, continue to prep during the summer.</p>  |
| <p><b>Fall of Senior Year</b></p>       | <p>Take the September or October ACT test administration or the August or October SAT. This way you can finish testing in the late summer or early fall and focus solely on college applications in the fall and winter.</p>  | <p>Take the September or October ACT test or the August or October SAT. This way you can finish testing in the summer or early fall and focus solely on college applications in the fall and winter. The results of these tests will also be back in time for early applications for most schools.</p>   |

# When Should I Take the SAT For The First Time?



The SAT is offered seven times a year: August, October, November, December, March, May, and June.

The ACT is also offered seven times a year: September, October, December, February, April, June, and July.

Thinking about your schedule and your quiz results, which test dates will you plan to take?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_, if needed



Photo credit: David Pennington

# How Long Will I Have to Prep For The SAT or ACT?

You might be wondering, “How long is it really going to take to raise my SAT or ACT score?” This question does not have one simple answer as there are a lot of factors when it comes to test scores. One universal truth is that the SAT and ACT are not tests for which you can cram and expect a marked improvement.

## How Much Time Do I Need To Raise My Score?

In two to three months, a 100-point increase on the SAT or 2-3-point increase on the ACT is reasonable. Have we seen better gains? Yes, but that is not the norm. If you are trying to raise your score 200+ points on the SAT or 5+ points on the ACT, that will not be a quick process. You will likely need to dedicate the better part of a year to see that type of improvement. Therefore, prep often begins the beginning of junior year and may continue into fall or winter of senior year. Could you hit your goal sooner? Yes, but you should plan to set aside three test dates in case you need three attempts to reach your goal. For example, March and June of junior year, then October of senior year (if needed) would be a good timeline for the SAT.

## Why Does It Take So Long?

First, you must remember how scores are calculated for a standardized test. Scaled scores are determined based on how you did compared to a sample of other students. To get a 1500+ on the SAT, you have to be in the 98th percentile of test takers, meaning you did better than 98 of every 100 students. To get a 1400+, you have to be in about the 94th percentile, meaning you scored better than 94 out of every 100 students. Think of a sport you play. How many hours would it take for you to be in the top 2% of all soccer players or all gymnasts? Now apply that same idea to SAT or ACT prep.

Slow and steady is key. Studying a little bit each day over time is far more effective than attempting to cram several hours of study into a few weeks. Again, this means you should plan to start prep at least two to three months before the test date.

Another factor in prep time is your number of weak areas as determined by your initial practice SAT or ACT score. For example, a student that answers every question about systems of equations correctly but misses every problem on quadratic equations is an easier “fix” than a student that misses some problems in each category. In the first scenario, less material needs to be covered since there are very targeted weak areas.

The final factor to consider is your learning style. Are you the type of student that can see a concept one time and master it for a test, or do you require repetition, repetition, repetition? If the latter is true, factor in more time to prepare for the SAT or ACT. Remember that these tests cover material from multiple classes spanning three years. Although it should all be review, it’s a lot of material to remember and master at one time.

In summary, at a minimum, you should plan to study two to three months before taking the test. If you want to improve your score by a very significant amount and/or if you tend to need more time to master concepts, factor in more time. Remember that the more you prepare, the more confident and less stressed you will feel when it’s time to take the test.

# SAT/ACT Score Goal Setting

- What colleges are of interest to you?
- What are the average SAT/ACT scores for these schools?
- What are the average GPA's for these schools?

Fill in the blanks with your current GPA and test scores, Then, create a list of your interested colleges along with average test scores and GPA for each school. You can use the college search engine on <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/> or search the internet for “Freshman Profile \_\_\_\_\_ (insert college name)”. A few Virginia schools are listed below as an example.

My GPA is \_\_\_\_\_

My current scores are \_\_\_\_\_ (PSAT), \_\_\_\_\_ (SAT), \_\_\_\_\_ (ACT)

| College Name  | Mid-50% SAT | Mid-50% ACT |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| UVA           | 1340-1520   | 30-34       |
| Virginia Tech | 1180-1390   | 25-31       |
| VCU           | 1070-1260   | 21-28       |
| JMU           | 1120-1290   | 23-28       |
| Radford       | 950-1100    | 19-24       |

\*Mid-50% range means that 25% of accepted students scored below the lower end of the range and 25% of accepted students scored above the higher end of the range.

Data from [www.collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://www.collegescorecard.ed.gov)

# SAT and ACT Study Prep Options

Just the thought of studying for the SAT or ACT can be nerve-wracking, especially if you're not motivated to study on your own. Fortunately, there's more than one way to study. While self-study is an option, there's also group study and one-on-one tutoring. Read on for the pros and cons of each study option.

|                    | Target Students   | Pros   | Cons   |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Self-Study</b>  | Self-study is recommended for self-motivated students who can create their own schedules and stay on top of their studies.  | <p><b>Study How, When, and Where you Want:</b> A major perk of self-study is the ability to study how, when, and where you want.</p> <p><b>Self-Pace:</b> You can also study at your own pace. If there's a topic or concept you don't understand, you can spend more time on that specific content.</p> <p><b>Cost-Effective:</b> Self-study is the most cost-effective study choice- there are many free and low cost resources available.</p>   | <p><b>Distractions:</b> It can be challenging to maintain focus and a consistent designated study time, especially during busy times of the year with regular class homework and sports practices.</p> <p><b>Lack of Guidance and Feedback:</b> A major disadvantage to self-study is the lack of guidance and feedback from a subject matter expert. You aren't able to ask questions if you don't understand the video or study guide explanation.</p> <p><b>No Accountability:</b> You can't turn to a teacher or tutor for encouragement or support when you're not motivated to stay on track.</p>  |
| <b>Group Study</b> | Group study is recommended for students who can focus in a group setting and feel comfortable asking questions in class. This is a good option for students that need an overall review on all content areas of the test. Group study provides accountability and structure at a lower price point than 1:1 prep. | <p><b>Built-In Study Partner:</b> Questions about your homework assignment? Ask someone in your class to study with you.</p> <p><b>Learn from Peers:</b> Learning with peers can be fun but learning from peers is even better. Pair up with someone who is stronger in your weaker subjects and vice versa.</p> <p><b>Accountability:</b> A study group provides accountability- you have a place to be on a specific day, at a specific time. If you're not there, your teacher will ask why you missed class that day.</p> <p><b>Test Strategies:</b> Learn new test strategies and decrease anxiety on test day.</p> | <p><b>Distractions:</b> A group study class is not ideal if you are easily distracted by your peers.</p> <p><b>Set Curriculum:</b> Group study follows a structured curriculum across all subject areas (reading, writing, and math), making it less than ideal for students that need a deeper review of specific topics (ex: a student that needs to improve only the math score).</p> <p><b>Group Dynamics:</b> The attitude of your peers will most likely influence your own. This can be a pro or con depending on the group. If there are many motivated students, it will likely push you to also put in the work. However, if there are students that are less positive, it can be a distraction.</p> |

|                                      |  |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p><b>In-Person 1:1 Tutoring</b></p> | <p>One-to-one tutoring is recommended for students who score extremely high or low on the SAT or ACT test because it offers a flexible, personalized approach. In addition, private tutoring is ideal for the easily distracted student and the reserved student who might not speak up in a group setting. This is also the best option for students with busy schedules as it is the most flexible in terms of scheduling.</p> | <p><b>Personalized Study Plan:</b> A tutor creates personalized study plans based on your academic strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><b>Guidance, Feedback, and Encouragement:</b> This option includes a subject matter expert who provides guidance, feedback, and encouragement.</p> <p><b>Individualized Attention:</b> With individualized attention it can be easier to focus and concentrate during tutoring sessions. You can also target your specific weak areas rather than following a set curriculum.</p> <p><b>Accountability:</b> Your tutor will hold you accountable for paying attention during the session and completing homework assignments.</p> | <p><b>Cost:</b> Private 1:1 tutoring requires a financial investment.</p>  |
| <p><b>Online 1:1 Tutoring</b></p>    | <p>Online 1:1 tutoring is an ideal option for students that need more flexibility. It's great for students that may be traveling or live outside their preferred tutor's travel area.</p>  | <p><b>Convenient:</b> Online tutoring can take place in your home or out and about- anywhere you have a computer and internet connection.</p> <p><b>Flexible Scheduling:</b> Since online tutoring can take place just about anywhere, scheduling can be more flexible... and immediate!</p> <p><b>Online Resources:</b> Utilizing and sharing online resources is more accessible when tutoring online.</p> <p><b>Access to All Tutors:</b> Matching a tutor and a student is usually somewhat dependent on geography. However, when tutoring online, you have access to any tutor.</p>  | <p><b>Technology:</b> Technology can be great when it works, and not so great when it doesn't. If your computer or internet is not working, an online tutoring session won't work either.</p> <p><b>Distractions:</b> If you're not in a quiet, distraction free setting, it can be difficult to concentrate during online tutoring.</p> |

## Best Books For SAT Prep

There is no way around it—practice makes perfect. The best way to improve your SAT scores are to take real SAT practice tests under timed conditions. We start out our suggested study materials with a guide to the best places to find official practice SAT tests and unofficial practice tests that do a good job of mimicking the real thing.

The first step for SAT prep: take a practice test. There are a lot of great [practice tests](#) available. However, when you start out, you should stick to the official SAT practice tests. This will give you a good sense of where you are scoring and what you need to work on.

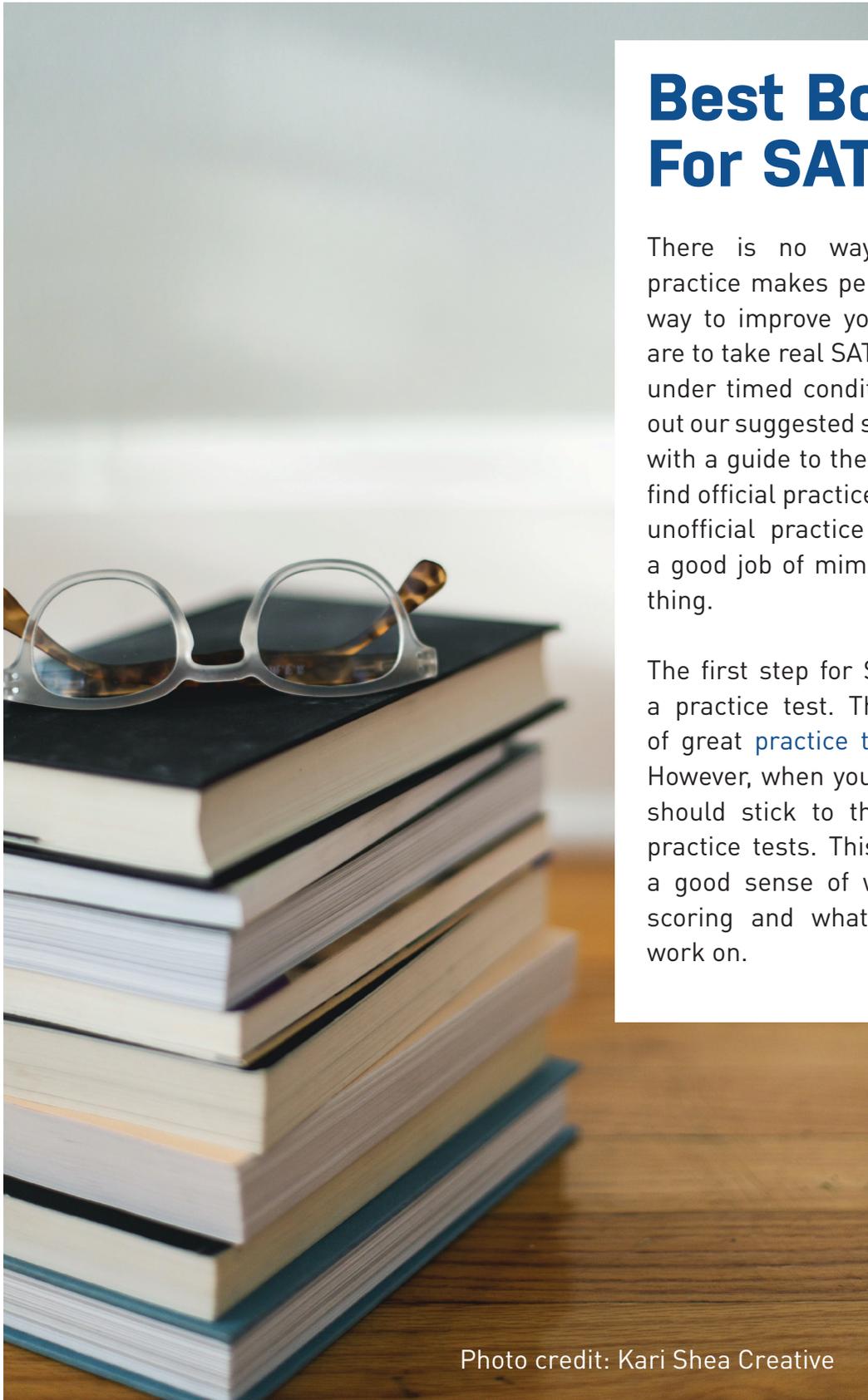


Photo credit: Kari Shea Creative

## OFFICIAL PRACTICE TEST RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Official SAT Study Guide, 2020 Edition

Math: All levels

Reading: All levels

Writing: All levels

Having the guidebook made by the test maker of any standardized test is non-negotiable. This is the only study guide that has real SATs, so it is the most reliable for monitoring your progress. This book has 8 official practice tests. The study guide was updated from the 2018 edition. It now includes practice tests 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Tests 9 and 10 are the most recent practice tests available and are copies of the released SAT from October 2018 and October 2019, respectively. The tests are in reverse order so we recommend that students start from back to front so that they take tests 9 and 10 closest to the date that they will take the SAT.

Before you start practicing for the SAT you should take a timed practice test under test taking conditions. Go to a quiet place around 8 am, the same time you will be taking the test, and time yourself for each section.

After your first practice test, review the explanations and use the remaining tests to continue doing timed practice sections. The Official SAT Study Guide also has lessons throughout that will help you as you prepare for the SAT.

Please Note: The explanations for the SAT practice test are helpful for the reading and writing section. However, if you struggle with the math concepts, the explanations may not be as helpful. If you still do not understand a question for math, YouTube is a great resource for that. Just type in the name of the test, the section, and the question (example: test 1, section 3, question 4).

In addition, a lot of students have asked us if there is an Official SAT Study Guide 2020 in PDF. There is not a copy of the book in PDF format. However, all 8 tests in the Official SAT Guide are available in PDF form here: [8 Free Official SAT Practice Tests](#)

### Question and Answer Service: QAS

Math: All levels

Reading: All levels

Writing: All levels

QAS is the question and answer service and is available for October, March, and May administrations of the SAT. The SAT provides a copy of the test, the correct answers, and the answer sheet for students who pay the fee for the QAS report. After you finish practice tests 1-8, you want to start taking practice tests that have previously been administered.

The r/SAT reddit thread keeps an updated list of QAS reports released. r/SAT reddit is also a great resource for students who want to connect with other students during the SAT from all around the country and the world.

Please Note: There are not any explanations for these tests--just answer sheets. Again, YouTube is a great resource for explanations.

After you have exhausted all the official practice tests available, then you may have to turn to unofficial practice tests. We suggest you save at least 1-2 official SAT tests to close to your test date so you have a real SAT to use right before your test date. Although these tests are not exactly the same as a real test, these will allow you to continue your momentum for the SAT and are a good substitute.

## **UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE TEST RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **Ivy Global: Ultimate SAT Guide**

Math: Beginner to Intermediate (below 1000 to 1300)  
Reading: Intermediate to Difficult (over 1200 to 1600)  
Writing: All levels

Ivy Global has 3 practice tests contained within its book and two additional tests available online. In addition, the book comes with lessons in reading, writing, and math.

The practice tests tend to be great for everyone. It allows you to practice the SAT with tests that are very realistic.

The math lessons tend to be geared towards students in the beginning to intermediate range (below 1300). Some of the harder passport to advanced math concepts are not covered as extensively as in other books but there is a lot of great material for students that need to freshen up on the basics.

However, for students looking to improve their reading score, this book is for you. Ivy Global has some of the most challenging reading practice sections you can find. This can be intimidating at first but the reading explanations are very helpful.

Ivy is great at updating their tests, which means new editions come out frequently. If you plan to use with a study group or with a tutor, order multiple copies at the same time to make sure you are working with the same editions.

Please Note: The explanations for Ivy Global are online. They are not contained in the book.

### **Ivy Global: SAT 6 Practice Tests**

Math: Beginner to Intermediate (below 1300)

Reading: Intermediate to Difficult (over 1200 to 1600)

Writing: All levels

This is Ivy Global's book with 6 additional tests. Like their Ultimate SAT Guide, the tests tend to be very realistic.

The book starts with a quick summary of SAT concepts, which is helpful, then jumps right into the practice tests. This is great for students who are looking for more practice before the SAT.

Please Note: Just like with the Ultimate Guide, the explanations are online.

### **Marks Prep: Four Realistic SAT Practice Tests**

Math: Intermediate to Difficult (over 1200 to 1600)

Reading: Beginner to Intermediate (below 1300)

Writing: Beginner to Intermediate (below 1300)

As advertised, Marks Prep has four realistic practice tests contained in their book.

The math tends to be a little more challenging than the SAT, perfect for students who already have a 500+ on math. The reading and writing sections tend to have questions that are great for students in the beginner to intermediate range. There are challenging questions but not as challenging as other books.

The math explanations are where this book shines. The explanations walk you through step by step and they also discuss different strategies to implement. The tips are well thought out and very helpful.

This is one book where the explanations are as effective as the tests itself. Make sure you take the time to examine each. The explanations have light bulbs for teachable moments and caution signs warning you what to look out for when you confront these questions on the SAT.



## Best Books For ACT Prep

Are you ready to prepare for your next ACT but don't know where to start? We are here to help. Many people decide to start off their ACT prep with self-study with prep books. We know a great ACT book can make a real impact. Below are some of our favorites:

Photo credit: Hannah Olinger

## OFFICIAL ACT PRACTICE TEST RECOMMENDATIONS:

### The Official ACT Prep Guide 2021-22

Math: All levels  
Reading: All levels  
Science: All levels  
Writing: All levels

Having the guidebook made by the test maker of any standardized test is non-negotiable. This is the only study guide that has real ACT questions. It is the most reliable for monitoring your progress. This book has five official practice tests and bonus content online. The Official ACT Study Guide also has lessons throughout that will help you as you prepare for the ACT.

Please Note: The ACT's explanations are very helpful for the reading and writing section, but they are confusing for students struggling with math or science. If you still do not understand one of the official explanations, YouTube is a great resource. Just type in the name of the test, section, and question (ACT official practice test one, section four, question one).

After you have exhausted all the official practice tests available, then you may have to turn to unofficial practice tests. We suggest you save at least one to two official ACT tests, so you have one to take right before you sit for the test. Although these tests are not exactly the same as a real test, they are a good substitute.

## UNOFFICIAL PRACTICE TEST RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Peterson's ACT Guide 2020

Math: All levels  
Reading: All levels  
Science: Intermediate to Advanced (current score range of 24+)  
Writing: All levels

One of our favorite books is the Peterson's ACT Guide. The tests are true to form and the book targets students at almost all levels. The science can present a challenge for some students but is still beneficial for all students. The reading and writing is very true to form. The ACT passages look and feel like the ones students will experience on the ACT.

The math sections provide variety for students at all levels. In addition, Peterson's ACT Guide offers some great standalone math lessons. The trigonometry lesson is ideal for students looking for a challenge.

## Ivy Global's ACT Guide

Math: Intermediate to Difficult (current score range: 22-30)  
Reading: Intermediate to Difficult (current score range: 22-30)  
Science: Intermediate (current score range: 23-25)  
Writing: All levels

Ivy Global has three practice tests contained within their book. In addition, the book comes with lessons in English, math, reading, and science. The practice tests are realistic for the most part; however, even the most advanced students will find the reading lessons to be a challenge at times. If you are trying to improve your reading score, this is the book for you. The writing lessons are true to form and the punctuation lesson is a great exercise for any student starting out.

The math lessons are geared toward students in the intermediate to difficult range (over 22-30). However, the pre-algebra, elementary algebra, and coordinate geometry lessons are applicable to all students. The science lessons are helpful but not extremely challenging. Ivy is great at updating its tests, which means new editions come out frequently. If you plan to use this book with a study group or a tutor, order multiple copies at the same time to make sure you are all working with the same editions.

Please Note: The explanations for Ivy Global are online, they are not contained in the book.

## Barron's ACT Math and Science Workbook

Math: Intermediate to Difficult (current score range: 22-30)  
Reading: N/A  
Science: Intermediate (current score range: 23-25)  
Writing: N/A

Looking for extra review questions for math and science? Barron's ACT Math and Science Workbook is the perfect resource. This workbook contains lessons on all major math and science topics. Each section consists of strategies, and the math section includes an explanation on how to use a calculator. The math caters to students at all levels, and there is also an entire practice test devoted to math. Solutions are offered for each problem and, for the most part, these solutions are accessible to students.

The science section provides students with a variety of questions. It is great for students starting out as well as those who are trying to achieve a perfect score in the section. Each question type found on the ACT science section is covered. There are multiple opportunities for a deeper dive and practice problems throughout.

Overall, these practice tests can feel a little more challenging than the real thing, but Barron's is a great resource for content review of each question type.

### **For the Love of ACT Science**

Math: N/A

Reading: N/A

Science: All levels

Writing: N/A

One of our favorite books for students trying to improve their ACT Science score is *For the Love of ACT Science*. It is applicable to students at all levels and the strategies are easy to implement. This book is also a quick read (only 142 pages) and makes the science section feel like a breeze. Many students report that “it all just clicked” after reading the book.

### **The College Panda's ACT Math: Advanced Guide and Workbook**

Math: Intermediate to Difficult (current score range: 22-30)

Reading: N/A

Science: All levels

Writing: N/A

Looking for extensive practice on the concepts tested for ACT math? *College Panda* is the book for you. Each section is designed to review, then test your knowledge of ACT math concepts. The *College Panda* book allows you to solidify your strengths and work on your weaknesses. The problems tend to be challenging. Beginners can use the book to explore overall concepts and then work on some of the easier lessons. Intermediate to advanced students can use this book to drill down on the harder questions.

The solutions in this book are helpful for intermediate to advanced students, but at times beginner students may need to look for resources outside of the book to understand the foundational concepts that are skipped over. Beginners will benefit from the book, but we recommend doing a little review and practice in the *Official ACT Prep Guide* before jumping in.

# There's an App For That: SAT and ACT Study Apps



Although there is no substitute for taking full-length timed practice tests, it isn't always feasible to carry around a five-pound study guide. With the ease and convenience of mobile applications, you can study for the SAT or ACT anytime, anywhere. Apps not only provide relevant content material, but they can also create a study timeline, personalize a study plan, and track academic progress. Here are a few free apps designed specifically for SAT and ACT study prep.

## 1. Ready4 SAT App

The Ready4 SAT App offers over 1,000 SAT questions with answer explanations, 100+ flashcards, interactive lessons, and customizable practice tests. Practice test scores are tracked and analyzed to determine strengths and weaknesses. The app also includes a listing of SAT score requirements for 400 colleges.

## 2. Khan Academy App

The Khan Academy App includes over 10,000 videos and 40,000 practice questions in math, science, history, economics, finance, and more. Brush up on algebra, biology, grammar, and other SAT or ACT concepts through interactive exercises and assignments.

While the app itself is subject content focused, Khan Academy in collaboration with College Board created an entire website dedicated to SAT prep. The Official SAT Practice website is a compilation of eight practice tests, thousands of practice questions, videos, interactive lessons, and expert SAT strategies. A personalized study plan tailors lessons-based concepts that were missed on the PSAT test.

## 3. Ready4 ACT App

Similar to the Ready4 SAT App, the Ready4 ACT App consists of 1,500 ACT practice questions, 100+ flashcards, and customizable practice tests. The app also tracks performance, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and compares your test scores with the average accepted scores at 400 top colleges.

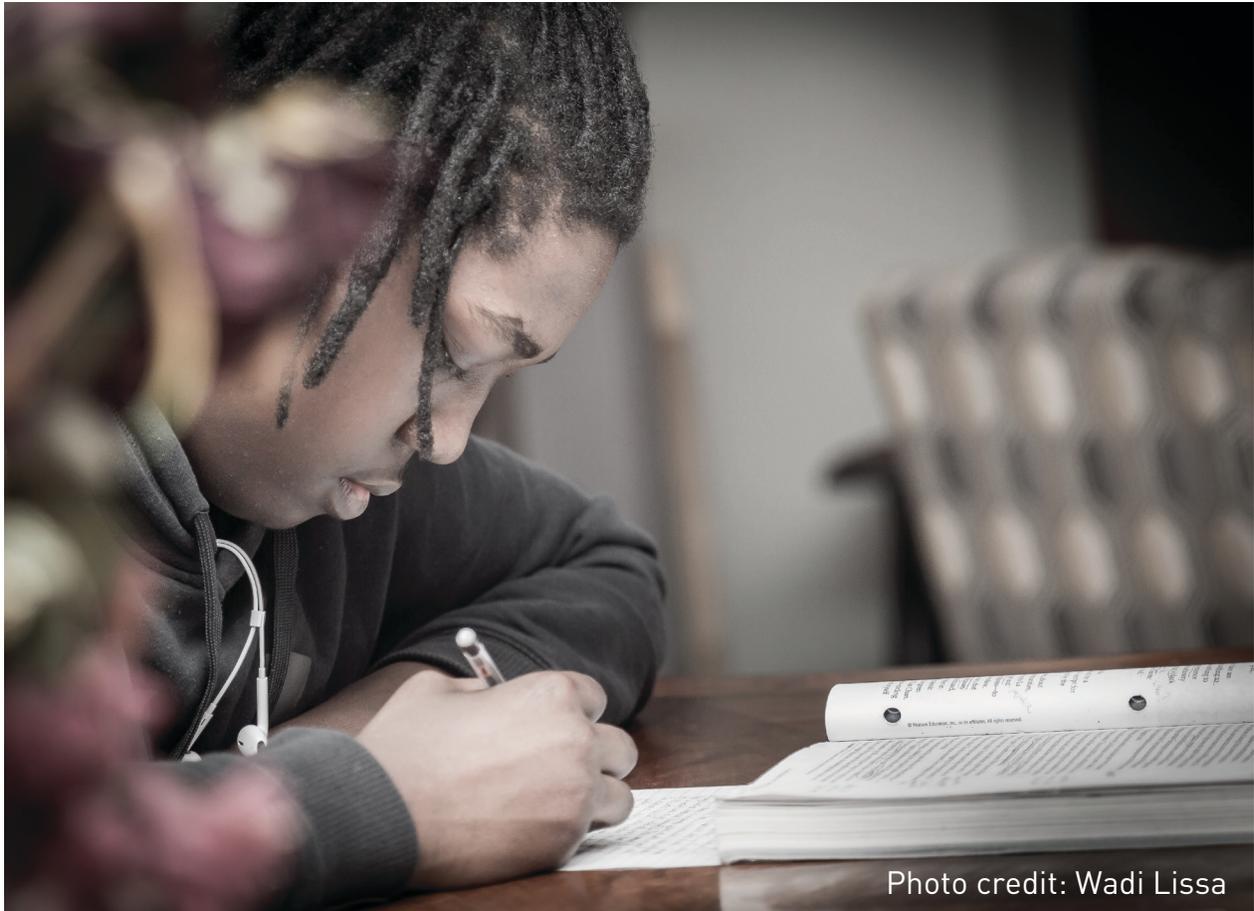
## 4. The ACT Online Prep App

The ACT Online Prep App designed by ACT, Inc. provides a personalized learning path with engaging built-in games and a library of resources targeting all ACT content material. A timeline and easy to use dashboard monitor academic progress. This app can only be installed by ACT Online Prep users.

## 5. Vocabulary Builder App

The Vocabulary Builder App by Magoosh incorporates a vocabulary game with 1,200 vocabulary words and example sentences for each word. Since a strong vocabulary enhances reading comprehension and writing, this app is recommended for both SAT and ACT test prep.

# Test Day Checklist



Congrats! You are now in the homestretch! Follow these steps on the days leading up to the SAT or ACT to make sure you have everything ready for test day and avoid any stress on the morning of the test.

- Print your ticket and set it out with your driver's license.
- Make sure you have your calculator. Bring extra batteries.
- Leave your phone behind.
- Wear a wristwatch so you will know how much time you have—not all classrooms have a clock.

- Eat a big and healthy breakfast the morning of the test.
- Get a good night's sleep on both Thursday night and Friday night. This way you will be fully rested and ready to focus for the test.
- Wear comfy clothes and layer up. You do not want to be uncomfortable, too cold, or too hot. All of these outside factors will distract you more than you realize.
- Bring a water bottle and a snack. You don't want to be thirsty or hungry.
- Take three deep breaths between each section. This will bring more oxygen to your brain and allow you to "escape" from the test momentarily.
- Make time for stress relieving activities before the test.
- Have a positive attitude; create a positive mantra. "I am a good student; I am smart; I know the material; I will do great on the SAT!"
- Treat yourself after the test!

*Good Luck!!*

# About Us

**Tri-Ed Tutoring**, a small, family-owned company, has provided private in-home and online tutoring services for all subjects and grade levels since 2006. We specialize in individualized instruction with a focus on remediation of a student's weak areas and enrichment of his or her strengths. Our company consists of about 30 tutors throughout the Northern Virginia area.

Since we know our tutors well, we hand select each student's tutor based on subject expertise and student/tutor personalities. We really listen to the concerns of each family before selecting a specific tutor for a student. In addition to our unique, personalized tutor matching process, our tutors work around students' busy schedules to find a time and location that works for them.

## Services

### Test Prep Tutoring

High School Entrance Exams  
SAT- Individual and Class  
ACT, PSAT  
GRE, PRAXIS  
College Placement Tests  
ASVAB (Military)

### Subject Tutoring

All Subjects

### Study Skills

Organizational Skills  
Time Management  
Academic Coaching

### College App Assistance

College Essay  
College Application Review



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