



August 19, 2021

Dear WSOC Students and Families,

My fellow Strive to Learn counselors and I are so excited for the new school year to begin, as it signals the official launch of this new college and career counseling partnership with the Waldorf School of Orange County. We have been anxiously preparing for and anticipating the chance to meet each of you and to learn more about the journey each student has undertaken so far. Our goal as counselors is to help guide students along the unique paths you choose for yourselves; and we will certainly work closely with you, this year and beyond, to help you determine what that path might be. In introducing our team of counselors – Amanda, Melinda, Rachel, and myself – and Strive founder Josefine to you, I can say that although we bring varied backgrounds, interests, and specializations to our work, we are all motivated by a sense of gratitude that we get to spend our work days working with students and families like you.

As we kick off the first year of this new journey, I want to share a little about Strive to Learn and how we approach this work. First, I'd like to briefly spotlight our mission statement to clarify our core values: "We aim to change the world – one student at a time – by fostering empathetic, curious, and critical individuals who take on the future with confidence and courage." In every meeting, workshop, and message that we share with our students, our focus is to help students grow into young adults who care deeply for themselves, their fellow humans, and the world they inhabit.

At Strive to Learn, all three aspects of our educational model – college counseling, test prep tutoring, and subject tutoring – are driven by the desire to provide mentorship for students that will supplement the guidance they receive from both their families and their communities. As college and career counselors, our specific focus is to expose students to a world of opportunity to inspire them to push their own boundaries and embrace their journey into adulthood. You may notice in our communication that we frequently use words such as "journey" and "path"; this is because we strongly believe that encouraging students to maintain a growth mindset will help them appreciate that learning is a process, accessible to anyone who chooses to keep an open mind about their own capabilities. Finally, I want to express that a guiding principle in our college and career counseling approach is "fit", or the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all college/career destination that is best for all students; instead, by focusing on a range of factors that are unique to each individual, we seek to provide timely information and a spectrum of good-fit options that will allow each student to make an informed, confident choice about their future.

In closing, I want to invite you to familiarize yourself with the materials shared in this virtual packet, including distinct timelines for sophomores, juniors, and seniors that outline what students and their families should be doing during each month of the school year to maximize the value of this Strive to Learn partnership. Please always feel free to reach out to me with feedback, questions, or requests for any college and career counseling topics you would like us to tackle via workshop, blog post, or any other form of relevant communication. With great anticipation and gratitude for the chance to serve WSOC students and families, we wish you an excellent start to the 2021-2022 school year!

Warmly,

William Giacchi
Head Counselor, Strive to Learn





MEET OUR COUNSELORS!

William Giacchi



Academic Coordinator, Head Counselor

Passionate about storytelling and sports, William finds that when students embrace their own unique narrative, they excel academically in the long term. William's students receive deliberate and student-centered guidance with a special attention to personal growth.

College Counselor

With 25+ years of experience teaching Psychology to undergraduates, and the additional wisdom of being an admissions official at a U.S. university, Melinda's unique insight into both sides of college admissions often proves invaluable to her students.

Melinda Blackman



Rachel Heilbronner



College Counselor, Client Experience Manager

Experienced in working with teens to develop and hone leadership skills, particularly in the non-profit sector, Rachel is an enthusiastic and grounded mentor for students trying to find a greater perspective of the college process.

College Counselor

As a resident in the United Kingdom, Amanda's up close and personal understanding of study abroad gives students the confidence to pursue their dreams - STEM, arts, volunteering, trades, and more - on any continent. Amanda's counseling style is self-reflective and deep.

Amanda Merrifield





HOW TO USE SCOIR

What is SCOIR?

A college and career planning website that connects students, families, counselors, and colleges, while helping students keep everything organized throughout the planning process. Students will use SCOIR to learn about colleges, keep track of extracurricular activities, access helpful resources, and much more. Families will be able to stay up to date with upcoming events and important college/career milestones throughout the school year, as well as providing invaluable input that will help us determine the best college/career fit for their student.

Sign In

Students:

1. Make sure you know your login and password information. If you can't remember, go to the login screen and click on "Forgot Your Password?" to reset your password. Your login is your Waldorf School email address.
2. We will be sending out monthly check-in emails to you through the SCOIR messaging system. In order to make sure these emails will not be filtered to your junk/spam folder, please add the following sender to your email contact list before the school year begins: **automated@scoir.com**.
3. All future communication will be sent through SCOIR, including the monthly check-ins and individual messages from your college counselor.
4. We will add helpful documents and links to your SCOIR account throughout the school year by uploading them to your My Drive. Make sure to check your drive on a regular basis to take advantage of these resources. We will outline any new resources we'll be sharing each month in the monthly check-in email you'll receive.
5. The calendar on SCOIR is where you will be scheduling 1-on-1 meetings with your counselor throughout the school year. It will also allow you to see any upcoming events that we have scheduled for you, such as college representative visits and workshops. Please make sure to check the calendar every week to keep up with what's coming up.

Parents:

1. All parents should have their own SCOIR account before the school year begins. Parents who are not already registered and linked to their student's account will receive an email invite by the end of August 2021. Please follow the instructions in this email to register and set up a password for your account. If you have not received an email invite by August 31st, please reach out to head counselor William at this email address: **wgiacchi@waldorfschool.com**.
2. We will be sending out monthly check-in emails to all WSOC students and parents in grades 10-12 through the SCOIR messaging system. In order to make sure these emails will not be filtered to your junk/spam folder, please add the following sender to your email contact list before the school year begins: **automated@scoir.com**.
3. All future communication will be sent through the SCOIR messaging system, so please make sure to be registered if you would like to receive our monthly check-in emails as well as individual messages from your student's college counselor.



RESOURCES YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Mindful Admissions, the Strive to Learn Podcast

The Strive to Learn team demystifies college admissions topics that can confound even the savviest of students: financial aid, SAT/ACT testing, educational planning, college admissions essay writing, scholarships, and much, much more. Press play to hear from our expert college counselors as well as frequent guest stars and guiding voices in the field of college admissions!

Available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, RSS.com, Stitcher, Amazon Music, Audible, Google Podcasts, and more. [Click here to start listening!](#)

Our Newsletter

A bimonthly overview of upcoming events, new resources, and special offers. The best way to stay informed on the most helpful information for college admissions, SAT/ACT testing, and academics in general.

[Subscribe here!](#)

Our Blog

Regularly updated with new articles written by a range of voices from Strive to Learn's academic and college counseling experts. Currently features more than 50 articles on unique topics. Please feel free to let us know if there is a topic you would like us to cover with a future blog post.

[Read our latest posts here!](#)

Our Social Media

Follow our social media accounts to connect with us and stay up to date on Strive to Learn events, SAT & ACT news, and study tips.

Check out [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) here!

Free Proctored Practice Tests

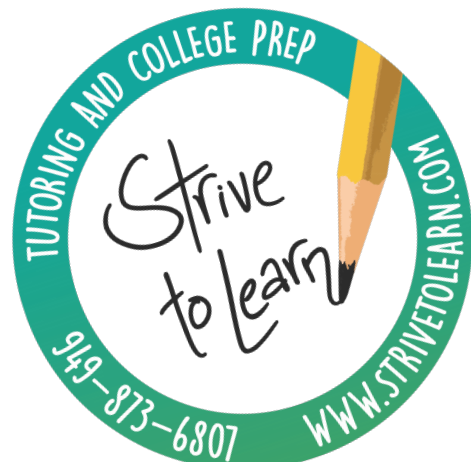
We offer free diagnostic practice tests for the SAT and ACT, either virtually proctored or self-proctored. Register for a free consultation with one of our academic advisors to help interpret and compare your test results, and to develop a study plan that works for you.

[Learn more here!](#)

Our Youtube Channel

Visit our YouTube channel to watch any of our previous webinars and workshops, as well as study tips and advice on college admissions, test prep, and subject tutoring.

[Check out our channel here!](#)



SEPTEMBER

- Before meeting with your counselor for the first time:
 - In SCQIR, update your “Activities & Achievements”, academic details, and college lists with any changes over the summer
- Schedule two meetings with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- Solidify letters of recommendation with counselor and teachers by confirming with your counselor and the teachers you requested letters from (if you would like Lisa Westerhout to write your recommendation, please reach out to her directly by text message)
- Send official requests for letters of recommendation to counselor and teachers (discuss how to do this with your counselor)
- If applying to schools that use the Common Application: attend the “How to Fill Out Common App” workshop and finish filling out Common App
- With parents: attend “Fall Kick-off Meeting” webinar
- With parents: discuss school year timeline for when you might be able to make in-person college visits
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 9/11

OCTOBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: fill out the FAFSA
- With parents: fill out CSS Profile, if needed (ask your counselor if you will need to based on your college list)
- With parents: attend “College Info Night” webinar
- Attend on-campus College Fair
- If applying to UC and/or Cal State schools: attend “How to Fill Out UC and CSU Applications” workshop and finish filling out UC and CSU applications
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 10/2
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 10/23

NOVEMBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend “Financial Aid Literacy Night” webinar
- With parents: fill out FAFSA and CSS Profile, unless already completed
- Submit applications for Early Action, Early Decision, Priority, UC, CSU, and/or Rolling deadlines
- After submitting applications, register on application portals for colleges applied to
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 11/6

DECEMBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- Submit applications for Priority, Rolling, and Regular Decision deadlines
- Complete all applications and application materials (including essays)
- After submitting applications, register on application portals for colleges applied to
- Monitor email inbox and application portals for communication from colleges you applied to
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 12/4
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 12/11

JANUARY

- Submit applications for Regular Decision and Rolling deadlines
- After submitting applications, register on application portals for colleges applied to
- Monitor email inbox and application portals for communication from colleges you applied to

FEBRUARY

- Submit applications for Regular Decision and Rolling deadlines (if needed)
- Monitor email inbox and application portals for communication from colleges you applied to

MARCH

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCOIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: schedule a family meeting with your counselor to discuss acceptances, financial aid offers, and college decision factors
- Monitor email inbox and application portals for communication from colleges you applied to
- Attend on-campus College Fair

APRIL

- With parents: discuss college acceptances, financial aid offers, and college decision factors
- If you decide to attend a 4-year college/university, make your college decision, commit, and pay enrollment deposit by 5/1 at the latest
- If offered a waitlist placement at any colleges you would like to attend, make sure to accept your place on the waitlist
- With parents: if possible, visit college campuses during spring break

MAY

- Complete housing application for college you will be attending
- Attend accepted student virtual/in-person events for college you will be attending

JUNE

- Attend accepted student virtual/in-person events for college you will be attending
- Enjoy graduation!

SEPTEMBER

- Before meeting with your counselor for the first time:
 - In SCQIR, add your extracurricular activities and achievements to your profile and make sure your academic details are accurate
 - Complete the personality, interest, and career exploration surveys assigned to you in SCQIR
- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend "Fall Kick-off Meeting" webinar
- With parents: discuss school year timeline for when you might be able to make in-person college visits

OCTOBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend "College Info Night" webinar
- Attend on-campus College Fair
- Take PSAT-NMSQT during school day
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 10/2
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 10/23

NOVEMBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend "Financial Aid Literacy Night" webinar
- With parents: discuss family finances and affordability in relation to college search
- Attend "How to Research Colleges" webinar
- As you develop your college criteria with your counselor, set your College Preferences on SCQIR
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 11/6

DECEMBER

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- Begin researching colleges suggested by your counselor, using methods and resources covered during "How to Research Colleges" webinar
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 12/4
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 12/11

JANUARY

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend "Test Prep Night" workshop
- Continue researching colleges suggested by your counselor

FEBRUARY

- With parents: attend "College Info Night" webinar
- Continue researching colleges suggested by your counselor
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 2/12

MARCH

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCOR calendar during office hours
- Attend on-campus College Fair
- Continue researching colleges suggested by your counselor
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 3/12

APRIL

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCOR calendar during office hours
- Finalize your college list based on your discussion with your counselor and update college list on SCOR
- With parents: attend "Family Check-in Night" workshop
- With parents: if possible, visit college campuses during spring break
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 4/2

MAY

- With parents: schedule a family meeting with your counselor to share final college list, discuss application timelines, and review summer milestone checklist
- Attend "College Essay Writing" workshop
- Begin working on personal statement essay
- Update your Activities & Achievements on SCOR
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 5/7

JUNE

- Continue working on personal statement essay
- Begin working on summer milestone checklist
- Finish the year strong academically!
- If recommended by your counselor, take practice ACT/SAT tests after school has ended
- If advised by your counselor, take official SAT on 6/4
- If advised by your counselor, take official ACT on 6/11

SEPTEMBER

- Before meeting with your counselor for the first time:
 - In SCQIR, add your extracurricular activities and achievements to your profile and make sure your academic details are accurate
 - Complete the personality, character strengths, and learning styles surveys assigned to you in SCQIR
- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCQIR calendar during office hours
- With parents: attend "Fall Kick-off Meeting" webinar
- With parents: discuss school year timeline for when you might be able to make in-person college visits

OCTOBER

- With parents: attend "College Info Night" webinar
- Attend on-campus College Fair
- Take PSAT-NMSQT during school day

NOVEMBER

- Join or continue participating in extracurricular activities in your areas of interest, and look for opportunities for leadership experience or deeper involvement when possible

DECEMBER

- Join or continue participating in extracurricular activities in your areas of interest, and look for opportunities for leadership experience or deeper involvement when possible

JANUARY

- With parents: attend "Test Prep Night" workshop
- Join or continue participating in extracurricular activities in your areas of interest, and look for opportunities for leadership experience or deeper involvement when possible

FEBRUARY

- With parents: attend "College Info Night" webinar

MARCH

- Attend on-campus College Fair

APRIL

- With parents: discuss summer plans
- With parents: if possible, visit college campuses during spring break

MAY

- Schedule one meeting with your counselor on SCOIR calendar during office hours
- Update your Activities & Achievements on SCOIR

JUNE

- Finish the year strong academically!
- If recommended by your counselor, take practice ACT/SAT tests after school has ended



WSOC WORKSHOPS

FOR SENIORS

September

- **Family Workshop: Fall Kick-off Meeting**
 - 1 hour
 - Date: 9/18 (Saturday), 11 am-12 pm
- **Student Workshop: How to Fill Out Common App**
 - 1.5 hours
 - Date: 9/25 (Saturday), 10-11:30 am
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

October

- **Student Workshop: How to Fill Out UC and CSU Applications**
 - 1.5 hours
 - Date: 10/9 (Saturday), 10-11:30 am
- **Family Workshop: College Info Night**
 - 3 hours
 - Date: 10/20 (Wednesday), 6-9 pm
- **College Fair #1**
 - Including "Applying to Out of State Colleges" presentation
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, last week of October (10/25-10/30), during evening hours
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 6-7 total
 - Dates: TBD

November

- **Family Workshop: Financial Aid Literacy Night**
 - 1.5 hours
 - Date: 11/17 (Wednesday), 6-7:30 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

March

- **College Fair #2**
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, Last 2 weeks of March (3/21-4/1), during evening hours

April - June

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-8 per month
 - Dates: TBD





WSOC WORKSHOPS

FOR JUNIORS

September

- **Family Workshop: Fall Kick-off Meeting**
 - 1 hour
 - Date: 9/18 (Saturday), 10-11 am
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

October

- **Family Workshop: College Info Night**
 - 3 hours
 - Date: 10/20 (Wednesday), 6-9 pm
- **College Fair #1**
 - Including "Applying to Out of State Colleges" presentation
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, last week of October (10/25-10/30), during evening hours
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 6-7 total
 - Dates: TBD

November

- **Student Workshop: How to Research Colleges**
 - 1.5 hours
 - Date: TBD, Week of 11/15-11/19
- **Family Workshop: Financial Aid Literacy Night**
 - 1.5 hours
 - Date: 11/17 (Wednesday), 6-7:30 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

December

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 4-5 total
 - Dates: TBD

January

- **Family Workshop: Test Prep Night**
 - Return of PSAT/Practice ACT results
 - 1 hour
 - Date: 1/19 (Wednesday), 6-7 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 6-7 total
 - Dates: TBD





WSOC WORKSHOPS

FOR JUNIORS

February

- **Family Workshop: College Info Night**
 - 1.5 hrs
 - Date: 2/9 (Wednesday), 6-7:30 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

March

- **College Fair #2**
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, Last 2 weeks of March (3/21-4/1), during evening hours
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 8-9 total
 - Dates: TBD

April

- **Family Workshop: Family Check-in Night**
 - 1.5 hrs
 - Date: 4/27 (Wednesday), 6-7:30 PM
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

May

- **Student Workshop: College Essay Writing**
 - 3 hours
 - Date: TBD, last week of may/first week of June
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 7-8 total
 - Dates: TBD

June

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 3-4 total
 - Dates: TBD





WSOC WORKSHOPS

FOR SOPHOMORES

September

- **Family Workshop: Fall Kick-off Meeting**
 - 1 hour
 - Date: 9/18 (Saturday), 9-10 am
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

October

- **Family Workshop: College Info Night**
 - 3 hours
 - Date: 10/20 (Wednesday), 6-9 pm
- **College Fair #1**
 - Including "Applying to Out of State Colleges" presentation
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, last week of October (10/25-10/30), during evening hours
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 6-7 total
 - Dates: TBD

November – December

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

January

- **Family Workshop: Test Prep Night**
 - Return of PSAT/Practice ACT results
 - 1 hour
 - Date: 1/19 (Wednesday), 6-7 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 6-7 total
 - Dates: TBD

February

- **Family Workshop: College Info Night**
 - 1.5 hrs
 - Date: 2/9 (Wednesday), 6-7:30 pm
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD





WSOC WORKSHOPS

FOR SOPHOMORES

March

- **College Fair #2**
 - 2-3 hours
 - Date: TBD, Last 2 weeks of March (3/21-4/1), during evening hours
- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 8-9 total
 - Dates: TBD

April

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 5-6 total
 - Dates: TBD

May - June

- **College Rep Visits**
 - 1-2 per week
 - 3-8 per month
 - Dates: TBD



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS DEADLINES



REGULAR DECISION (RD) ~ NOV-MAR

NON-BINDING

Standard pathway & acceptance rates.
Applications typically due Dec through Feb (some earlier).
Factors in senior year grades, accomplishments, & test scores.
Notifies students by April 1st.



NOTE: Some schools (like UC and CSU) ONLY offer Regular Decision.



ROLLING DEADLINE ~ ONGOING BASIS

NON-BINDING

Admitted on a "first come, first served" basis.
Applications accepted throughout the year - as late as one month before start of semester.
Acceptance rates higher when you apply earlier.
Notifies students within 2-3 weeks.



CAUTION: Apply early (mid August) – seats go fast.



EARLY ACTION (EA) ~ OCT-DEC

NON-BINDING

Early pathway, acceptance rates similar to RD.
Applications due as early as October (most Nov & Dec).
Apply EA if your application is already as strong as it will be.
Allows more time to decide which offer to accept.
Notifies students by Mid-December.



CAUTION: Do not apply if you want to include senior grades in your application and/or take the December SAT/ACT.



RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA) ~ NOV

RESTRICTIVE

REA colleges might not allow you to apply EA or ED to other colleges, but each college's REA policies are unique.
Notifies students by Mid-December.

CAUTION: Check the college's admissions web page for specific restrictions and potential benefits.



EARLY DECISION I & II (ED) ~ OCT/NOV & JAN

BINDING

Significantly higher acceptance rates than EA or RD.
MUST ATTEND if accepted - only apply ED if it is absolutely the school of your dreams.
Notifies students by Mid-December.



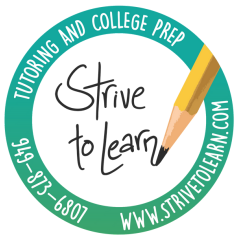
CAUTION: You are legally liable to attend if accepted, which includes being able to pay the cost of attendance. This is a big family decision!

Decision Deadline: May 1st

FOR MORE TIPS FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@strivetolearntutoring



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everything you need to
know about testing in 2021

SAT & ACT

survival guide



  @strivetolearntutoring



2021/2022 SAT & ACT DATES

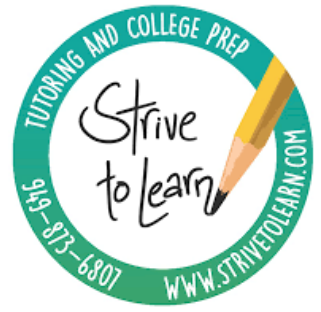
Test	Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration	Scores
SAT	8/28/2021	7/30/2021	8/17/2021	9/20/2021
ACT	9/11/2021	8/06/2021	8/20/2021	9/24/2021
SAT	10/02/2021	9/03/2021	9/21/2021	10/15/2021
ACT	10/23/2021	9/17/2021	10/01/2021	11/05/2021
SAT	11/06/2021	10/08/2021	10/26/2021	11/19/2021
SAT	12/04/2021	11/04/2021	11/23/2021	12/17/2021
ACT	12/11/2021	11/05/2021	11/19/2021	12/24/2021
ACT	2/12/2022	1/07/2022	1/21/2022	2/25/2021
SAT	3/12/2022	2/11/2022	3/01/2022	3/25/2021
ACT	4/02/2022	2/25/2022	3/11/2022	4/15/2021
SAT	5/07/2022	4/08/2022	4/26/2022	5/20/2021
SAT	6/04/2022	5/05/2022	5/25/2022	6/13/2021
ACT	6/11/2022	5/06/2022	5/20/2022	6/24/2021
ACT	7/16/2022	6/17/2022	6/24/2022	7/29/2021



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WHAT ARE THE SAT & ACT

and why do I need them?

The SAT and ACT are standardized tests that colleges use as an objective tool to assess your academic preparedness. At least, that's what colleges will say. But what they really do is open doors through scholarships and admissions to selective colleges. Yes, there has been a movement towards test-free and test-optional colleges, but, for the more selective colleges, and moving forward in a post-pandemic world, not submitting your SAT and ACT scores will be seen as a more declarative statement.

So, when should you take the SAT or ACT, and when does it make sense to skip it? Well, it depends on you, your personal history with academics, and where you plan on attending (so make sure to check in with your college counselor). But, overall, a strong SAT or ACT score will never close any doors, and in fact can help you gain access to great scholarships, select universities, and, more importantly, differentiate yourself from the crowd of applicants.

We've decided to put together a resource to help you with the basics. In this guide, you'll learn the differences between the two tests, when you should start studying, as well as some tips that have helped hundreds of students (just like you) get better test scores with less stress.

– JOSEFINE BORRMANN

STRIVE TO LEARN FOUNDER



COVID-19'S IMPACT

on the SAT & ACT tests

The value of a high SAT or ACT score lands differently in 2021. While some colleges still require SAT/ACT scores as part of their admissions decisions, other colleges have gone either "test-optional" or even "test-blind." However, just because a college may not consider your SAT/ACT score for admissions purposes, they may still use your test scores for consideration on how much free money they might offer you to attend their college (called merit-based aid).

Unfortunately, each college has different policies on what they will do with SAT/ACT scores, so you're going to want to do a bit of research before you decide to opt out.

GENERAL GUIDELINE

If you're ok doing standardized tests, and don't struggle with severe test anxiety, then we recommend taking the test, just in case.

Should I take the **THE SAT/ACT?**

If you...

- Really struggle with standardized testing
- Have severe test anxiety
- Are applying to a test-required university or program (ex: honors college, combined BS+MD, selective scholarships)
- Are applying to only UCs
- Don't believe your GPA reflects your abilities but you are good at taking tests
- Want another shot at improving your overall application
- Have time to study and prepare without it being too much of a stress burden on you
- Had a non-traditional education (Waldorf, home-school, long absence, etc.)
- Want to be considered for a highly selective college & special scholarships

SKIP?



TAKE IT!



Differences between the **SAT & ACT**

Although the SAT was designed to originally test aptitude whereas the ACT tested achievements, over the years the both tests have converged to test the same thing: "college readiness" – but in somewhat different ways.

Each test is structurally different in terms of content, pacing, and the types of problem solving skills it requires. And what we've found is that students oftentimes emerge from their diagnostic SAT and ACT with a strong preference one test over the other.

	ACT	vs.	SAT
FORMAT	4 SECTIONS ENGLISH, MATH, READING, SCIENCE OPTIONAL 5TH SECTION: ESSAY 2:55 HOURS (3:40 HOURS W/ESSAY)		4 SECTIONS WRITING & LANGUAGE, READING, 2 MATH, NO ESSAY OPTION 3 HOURS
PACING	<u>QUICKER</u> AT 0:49 MIN/QUESTION		<u>SLOWER</u> AT 1:10 MIN /QUESTION
SCORING	TOTAL: 1-36 AVERAGE OF ALL 4 SECTIONS EACH SECTION OUT OF 1-36 <u>NOTE: MATH = 25% OF SCORE</u>		TOTAL: 400-1600 ADD UP TWO MAIN SCORES W&L + R: 200-800 + MATH: 200-800 <u>NOTE: MATH = 50% OF SCORE</u>
APPROACH	<u>FEELS MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD</u>		<u>MORE INFERENCE & LOGIC</u>
CAVEAT	<u>~400</u> COLLEGES SUPERSCORE		~900 COLLEGES SUPERSCORE

**ENGLISH/
WRITING &
LANGUAGE**

GRAMMAR & USAGE, PUNCTUATION,
STRUCTURE, RHETORIC
SLIGHTLY LESS COMPLEX PASSAGES
MUCH FASTER PACED
75 QUESTIONS IN 45 MINUTES

GRAMMAR & USAGE, PUNCTUATION,
STRUCTURE, RHETORIC
SOME DATA GRAPHS INCLUDED
33% MORE TIME PER QUESTION
44 QUESTIONS IN 35 MINUTES

MATH

PRE-ALGEBRA THROUGH BASIC TRIG
STRONG EMPHASIS ON GEOMETRY
BROADER RANGE OF CONCEPTS
NO FORMULAS GIVEN
CALCULATOR ON ALL QUESTIONS
60 QUESTIONS IN 60 MINUTES

PRE-ALGEBRA THROUGH BASIC TRIG
STRONG EMPHASIS ON ALGEBRA
DEEPER ON FEWER CONCEPTS
BASIC GEOMETRY FORMULAS GIVEN
CALCULATOR ON ONLY 1 SECTION
58 QUESTIONS IN 80 MINUTES
OF THESE, 13 ARE OPEN ANSWER

READING

4 PASSAGES, 10 QUESTIONS EACH
FOCUS ON READING COMPREHENSION
UNDER TIME CONSTRAINT
40 QUESTIONS IN 35 MINUTES

5 PASSAGES, 10-11 QUESTIONS EACH
FOCUS ON VOCABULARY, AUTHOR'S
ROLE, TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
52 QUESTIONS IN 65 MINUTES

SCIENCE

LOTS OF GRAPHS & DATA BUT NO
SPECIFIC SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE
REQUIRED
40 QUESTIONS IN 35 MINUTES

NO SCIENCE SECTION: 21 QUESTIONS
ABOUT GRAPHS & DATA IN OTHER
SPACES

ESSAY

OPTIONAL 50 MINUTE ESSAY SECTION

NO ESSAY SECTION

ACT

SAT

...and these differences are just the beginning.

How to decide **WHICH TEST TO TAKE**

The most common mistake students make when choosing which test to take is basing their choice on advice from reddit, rumors, or what their best friend says. However these tests weigh different sets of skills uniquely! Therefore the easiest way to get a better score is to pick the test that leans in YOUR favor. So before you swear allegiance to any one particular test, take a full-length practice version of each test and see which one feels better! Trust me, you'll thank us later.

DON'T

- Pick the ACT because you love math & science
- Base your decision off of what your friend is doing

DO

- Take a free diagnostic SAT & ACT
- Get your scores evaluated (for free) by one of our academic advisors

MAIN DIFFERENCES

Do you....

- Struggle with timing?
- Find that you are strong in math?
- Rely heavily on your calculator?
- Find yourself re-reading passages?
- Like straightforward questions?
- Decipher tables and graphs quickly?
- Love geometry?
- Love algebra?

ACT	SAT
	✓
	✓
✓	
	✓
✓	
✓	
✓	
	✓

How a growth-mindset can **RAISE YOUR SCORES**

Preparing for the SAT or ACT can be stressful and, at times, discouraging. When working toward a goal, it is important to develop a **growth mindset** that encourages learning and resilience rather than engaging in negative self-talk.

By switching your language and thoughts from negative to positive, you allow yourself to explore your abilities further and reach your goals!

When I went into my first SAT test senior year of high school, I was so nervous and overwhelmed with thoughts of failure and anxiety. I reminded myself that I was well prepared, took a few deep breaths, and switched my mindset from "I can't do this," to, "I'm prepared and ready!" Changing my tone of self-talk from negative to positive helped me perform a lot better, and gave me more confidence in my abilities to succeed.

TURN NEGATIVE SELF-TALK → **INTO MOTIVATION**

INSTEAD OF

"I'm not good at _"
"I am a failure."
"I suck at _"

TRY

"I'm not good, yet."
"I get to try again."
"I will improve."

How to prepare for **TEST DAY**

Plan Ahead

- Register for your test date early!
- Don't plan to take the test the day after a big event.
- Switch from learning new concepts to reviewing concepts two weeks before your actual test date.

Two Nights Before

- Make sure to get two good nights' sleep before the test!
- RELAX the night before your test date.

On Test Day

- Eat a healthy, brain-boosting breakfast.
- During breaks, get up and walk around to get your circulation going. We recommend jumping jacks!
- Don't do anything new... like drink a red bull for the first time in your life.

Test-taking Strategies

- Don't get stuck on one question -- skip it and come back to it at the end
- Double-check your answers if you have extra time
- Bubble in as you go -- don't wait until the end!
- When in doubt, guess -- you won't get penalized for incorrect answers
- Underline and annotate -- you're allowed to write on the test booklet

WHAT TO BRING ON TEST DAY

- A SCIENTIFIC OR GRAPHING CALCULATOR (I.E., TI-84)
- GOOD ERASER
- SEVERAL NO.2 PENCILS
- WATER & SNACKS
- A SILENT WATCH (NO APPLE WATCHES)
- PHOTO ID (DRIVER'S LICENSE/SCHOOL ID)
- PRINTED ADMISSION TICKET

SHOULD I SUBMIT

my SAT/ACT scores?

You've gotten your scores back, and, while they might be an improvement, they aren't the stellar scores you had hoped for. Follow these pointers to decide whether or not a particular college should see your scores.

- You studied hard, took the test more than once, but feel like your score doesn't reflect your abilities.
- You are applying to ONLY test-optional/free universities AND your GPA is in the top 50% of GPA's of admitted students.
- Your GPA is in the bottom 50% of admitted students, but your SAT/ACT score is in a higher percentile
- You have some red flags, like C's or Ds, on your transcript
- You want to show strength in a particular subject that you scored well on
- Your education has been non-traditional (Waldorf, Montessori, homeschooled, prolonged leave of absence) and you want to show that you're capable of succeeding in a traditional setting
- You want to be considered for highly selective programs, honors colleges, & special scholarships at a test-optional university
- You are a student-athlete (your coach will tell you)

SKIP



SUBMIT



WHEN SHOULD I start studying?

The least stressful approach to testing is to start in the summer between sophomore and junior year to feel accomplished and confident, finishing your standardized testing by December of junior year.

This will help you focus on building your college list and focus on other aspects of your college career!

FAQ

Isn't sophomore year too early to start SAT/ACT Prep?
Don't I need to do Junior level math to do well?

As long as you've completed Algebra I and Geometry, you've already got 90% of the skills needed for either the SAT or ACT math section. Plus, taking the SAT or ACT sooner rather than later means that you'll have an easier time remembering all that you learned in Algebra I and Geometry because it's fresh in your mind.

When is the latest that I can take my SAT or ACT
and still have my scores considered by colleges?

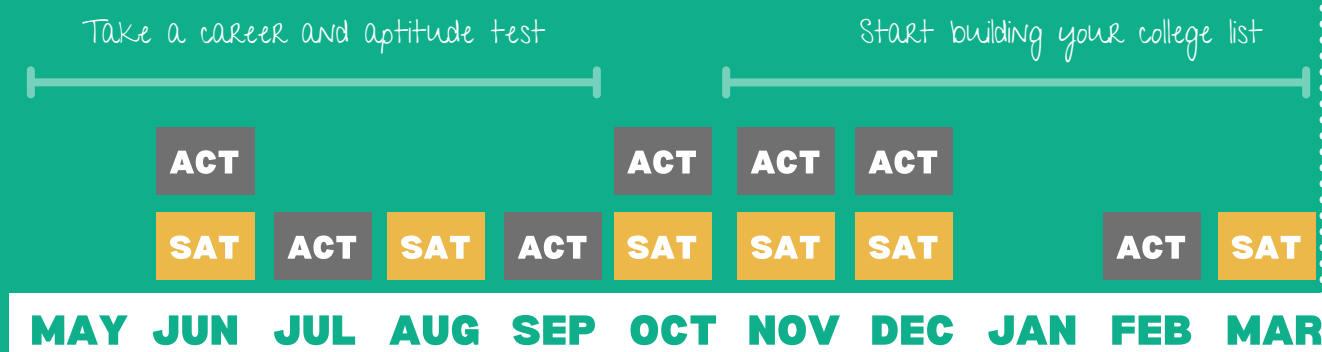
Typically, December of your senior year is the latest test date that colleges will consider in your application. However, if you are applying Early Decision or Early Action, then the last date you can take your SAT or ACT is in September or October. Occasionally (and I mean very rarely) colleges with rolling deadlines may accept February or January results.

SAMPLE TIMELINE

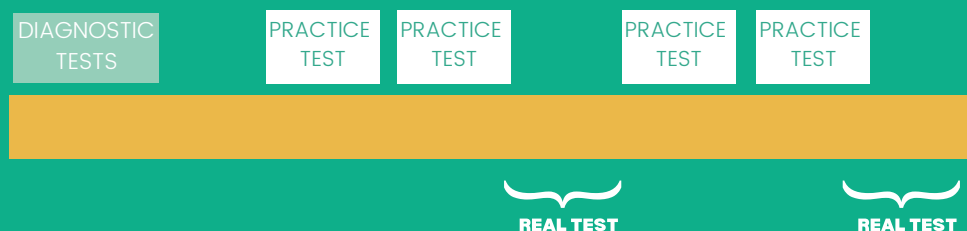
Rising Juniors

1. Find out which test showcases your strengths: take one diagnostic test of each SAT & ACT
2. Meet with us to fine-tune your testing strategy
3. Plan on taking two real tests – students often score higher on the second as they get more comfortable
4. As you study, gauge your progress with proctored practice tests

Start preparing for your AP tests



LOW-STRESS TIMELINE



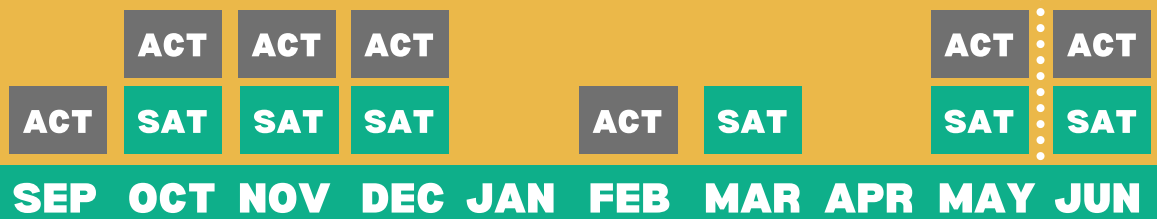
SAMPLE TIMELINE

CURRENT JUNIORS

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2. Meet with us to fine-tune your testing strategy
3. Plan on taking two real tests – students often score higher on the second as they get more comfortable
4. As you study, gauge your progress with proctored practice tests

Start building your college list

AP tests



REGULAR TIMELINE



ACCELERATED TIMELINE



SAMPLE TIMELINE

Rising Seniors

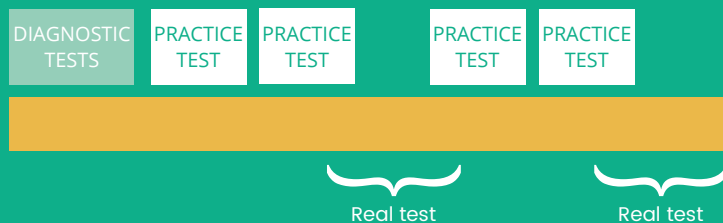
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4. As you study, gauge your progress with proctored practice tests

Last chance for RD*** deadlines.

Last chance for EA*/ED** deadlines



Accelerated Timeline



Regular Timeline



*Early Action **Early Decision ***Regular Decision

RESOURCES

to help you prepare

WEBSITES

ACT.org
Cracknet.org
College Board
Grammarbytes
Khan Academy
Number 2
Prep Factory
PWN.org
SAT.org
TestPrePreview

PODCASTS

Mindful Admissions
36: The ACT Prep
ACT Right
The Millennial SAT
Dominate Test Prep
College Prep
Podcast

YOUTUBE

Best ACT Prep
Magoosh
Supertutor TV
Prepped and Polished

APPS

The Grading Game
MathBrain Booster
Daily Practice- New SAT
Pocket Prep
Visual Vocab SAT
SAT Vocab-Magoosh

Take a free live proctored
practice test online!

Book now:

www.strivetolearn.com/test-prep or
call/text us at 949.873.6807