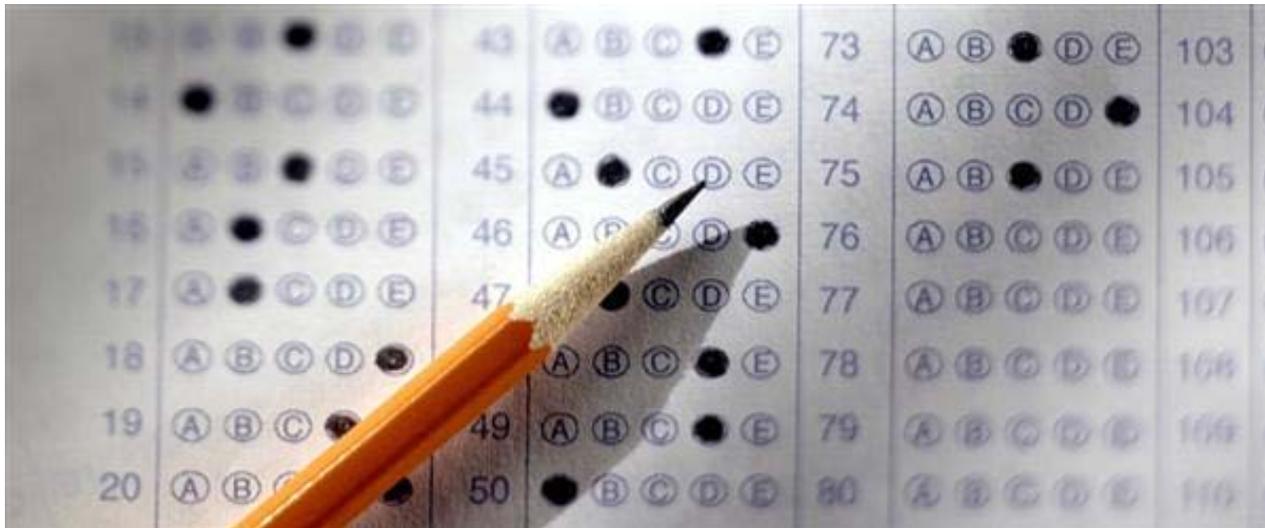


College Entrance Testing:

SATs, ACTs, Subject Tests, and test-optional schools



College & Career Day

April 1, 2017

Today's Workshop

- Goal: Learn about different college entrance exams to develop a testing timeline and preparation plan.
- Topics covered:
 - PSAT
 - SAT
 - ACT
 - SAT Subject Tests
 - Test Optional Schools
 - Test Preparation – Khan Academy
 - Individual Timeline and Preparation Plan





CollegeBoard

PSAT

- PSAT is the Preliminary SAT
 - Provides practice for the SAT
 - Enters you to win the National Merit Scholarship
 - The beginning of the college process
- Students take the PSAT in 10th and/or 11th grade at Somerville High School
 - Offered on a Wednesday in October for free



Components of the PSAT:

- Evidence-based reading test
- Evidence-based writing and language test
- Score ranges will be similar to SAT (320 – 1520)
- 4 Multiple choice answers (instead of 5)
- Rights-only scoring: 1 point for correct answer, no deduction for incorrect or blank answers
- 2 hours and 45 minutes



Components of the SAT

- Total: 3 hours or 3 hours, 50 min (with writing)
 - 65 minute Reading section
 - 35 minute Language & Writing section
 - 55 minute Math section with calculator
 - 25 minute Math section with no calculator
 - 50 minute Essay (optional)



Components of the SAT

- Score ranges from 400 – 1600
- Rights Only Scoring: No penalty for incorrect answers
- 4 Multiple Choice options (instead of 5)
- Evidence-based reading and writing
- Deeper focus on fewer math concepts (one math section without a calculator)
- Fewer, longer sections

The SAT: When to take it?

- Students should take the SAT for the first time in 11th grade.
- Students should take the test 1-3 times. Typically it is recommended to take it twice. Taking it a 3rd time is recommended only in certain circumstances. More than 3 times is excessive and generally not necessary.
- Offered in: January, March, May, June, August, October, November, December

Optional SAT Essay

- Some colleges will require/recommend the essay and others will not.
- Most colleges have created and posted their SAT essay policy. You should research now to find out the policies at schools you are interested in. See handout for some schools' policies.
- If even 1 school recommends or requires that you take it, you should take it.
- If you don't have any idea where you might apply, it is better to take the optional essay.
- If you take the SAT with the essay, you must send the essay scores to schools. You cannot choose to send only the SAT scores without the essay.



- Another test to standardized college admissions
- Score ranges from 1- 36
- What is on the ACT?
 - English: grammar and rhetorical skills
 - Math: pre-algebra, algebra, coordinate and plane geometry, trigonometry (about 4 questions)
 - Reading: comprehension of passages
 - Science: skills required in natural sciences
- 4 sections, 2 hours 55 minutes (without writing)
- How many times to take it?
 - 1-3 times depending on whether you are also taking the SAT
- Register at actstudent.org. Cost: \$56.50 (\$39.50 no writing)
 - Fee waivers exist. Talk to your counselor.



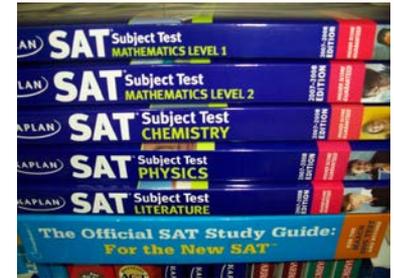
- But most schools want the SAT right?
 - No! Colleges will accept EITHER test.
- I heard that I have to be good at science to take the ACT...
 - Not necessarily. The ACT tests the skills you need in science – not the knowledge
- Is the ACT easier?
 - No. Different people may prefer different tests but neither one is easier.

SAT or ACT? Or both?



"We were originally thinking SAT, but then Noah's admissions advisor told us left-handed students born on Tuesdays do better on the ACT."

SAT Subject Tests



- What are SAT Subject Tests?
 - Hour-long, content-based tests.
 - Many colleges require them. Test in your best subject – it is a great chance to show off!
- What subjects are offered?
 - Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, U.S. History, World History, Math Level 1, Math Level 2, French**, German**, Spanish**, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Chinese*, Japanese*, Korean*

SAT Subject Tests

- When to take them?
 - You can take up to 3 in one day (different day than SAT)
 - Can be in 10th grade after a course was taken
- Cost: \$26 for 1st test; \$20 for other tests on same day
 - Fee waivers exist. 2 per student. 1 waiver covers all tests taken on one day (i.e. 3 subject tests in one day = 1 waiver)



Test Optional Schools

- What are they?
 - Colleges that do not require ACT/SAT test scores
 - No penalty for not sending scores
 - If you send scores, colleges will evaluate them
- Where do I find test optional schools?
 - www.fairtest.org
 - See handout for top schools that don't require test scores
- Some schools are test-flexible: You don't have to send SAT/ACT scores but you probably have to send them something else (an extra essay, etc.)
- Check the requirements for each school!



Test Optional Schools

- Test Optional (or Test Flexible) schools are an excellent option for many students.
- You should **strongly** consider Test Optional/Test Flexible schools if:
 - Your SAT/ACT scores do not “match” the rest of your application (i.e. your grades are high but your scores are not)
 - Your SAT/ACT scores are going to hold you back from admission to a school

Other College Standardized Tests

- TOEFL

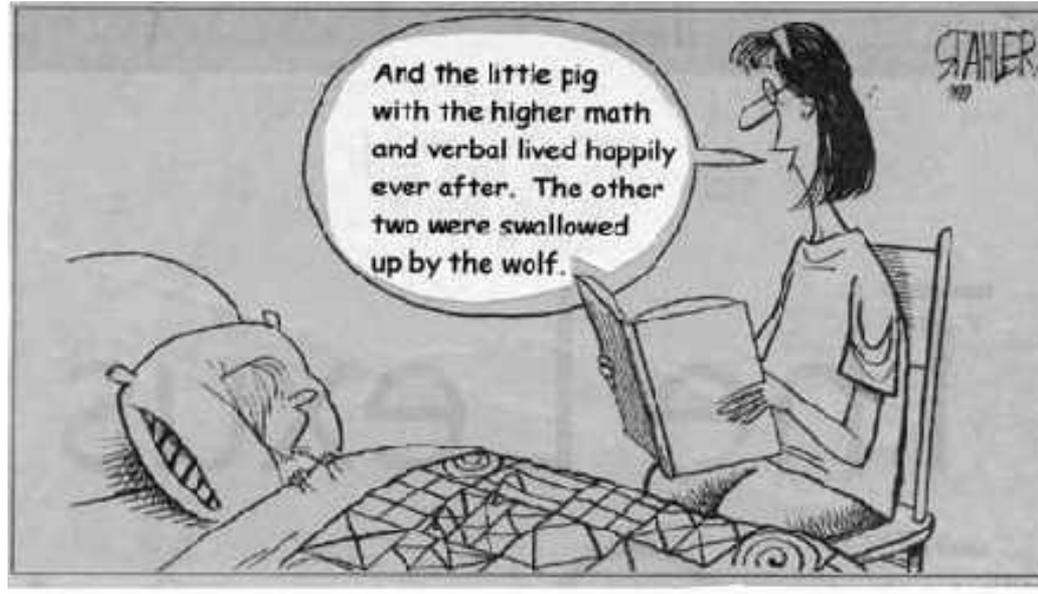
- For international students or students who are learning English
- Resources in Guidance College & Career Room
- See Ms. Artavia for information on how to sign up
- Cost is \$185. Some fee reductions available.

- Accuplacer

- Students applying to 2 year/community colleges and state schools
- Practice resources in Guidance College & Career Room
- Take test at community colleges for free

How much does SAT/ACT matter?

- Very important (though not most important) factor in the college admission process
- You must prepare for these tests. Do not take these tests without practice and preparation.





How to improve your score

- Test-taking strategies you can start now!
- Prep courses
- Online resources
- Books & Practice tests
 - Available in the guidance College & Career Room
- Create a study plan and test timeline
 - Take the test more than once

Test-taking strategies

- Take practice tests on your own!
 - Figure out your baseline score
 - Practice testing conditions and pacing
 - After the test, review the questions and answers. Similar questions will show up on the test!
 - Online practice tests through Kaplan and Princeton Review. Paper practice tests available in Guidance.
- Flashcards – make your own
- Online practice questions
 - SAT Question of the Day
 - ACT Question of the Day



Prep Courses

- Kaplan – highly recommended in 11th grade
 - Two courses currently offered this spring.
 - Discount (usually \$700, take it for \$50-75 at SHS)
- Let's Get Ready
 - Free test prep organization
 - Provides SAT coaches that are Tufts students
 - Also provides college preparation (essays, etc)
 - Summer course also offered – location & more info TBD

How to make the most of a prep course

- Most prep courses offer about 10 hours of instruction. Some assign homework. This is not enough.
- The course is only worth something if you put in twice as much effort outside of it
 - Do extra practice problems based on what questions you tend to have trouble with.
 - Pay attention in class! (its going to be boring...)
 - Do your homework for your benefit, not to get it done

Online Options: Khan Academy



In partnership with Khan Academy, the College Board is offering personalized, free practice resources for all students.

How to Use Khan Academy

- Create a College Board account (**save your info, you will need it to register for SATs**)
- Create a Khan Academy account
- In College Board account, there will be an option to link College Board & Khan Academy accounts
- This will send your scores to Khan Academy, which will create an individualized practice plan for you.
- After any other SAT, your scores will be sent to Khan Academy to continue to individualize your practice.

Khan Academy SAT Practice

- Will offer:
 - Full Length Practice tests
 - Shorter Diagnostic Quizzes
 - Videos and practice for all questions
 - Daily Practice App – click to play demo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8f-jif9itg>
 - Offers Question of the Day
 - Can take a paper test and upload answer sheet to get instant scoring

Khan Academy's Individualized Plan

- Based on PSAT scores, SAT scores, practice tests, diagnostic tests, and performance on practice items, Khan Academy will adapt to provide students with the practice that they need.
- If a student is doing well on practice items at Level 2, they will move up to Level 3.
- If they are consistently getting questions incorrect, they will go down to Level 1, which will help them practice fundamental skills that may not be on the SAT but are necessary to move on to SAT questions. This is perfect for younger students!



Creating a Plan and Timeline

- PSAT in 10th and 11th
- SAT in 11th and 12th grade (and/or ACT)
- 2-3 SAT Subject Tests in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade
- ACT in 11th or 12th grade (and/or SAT)

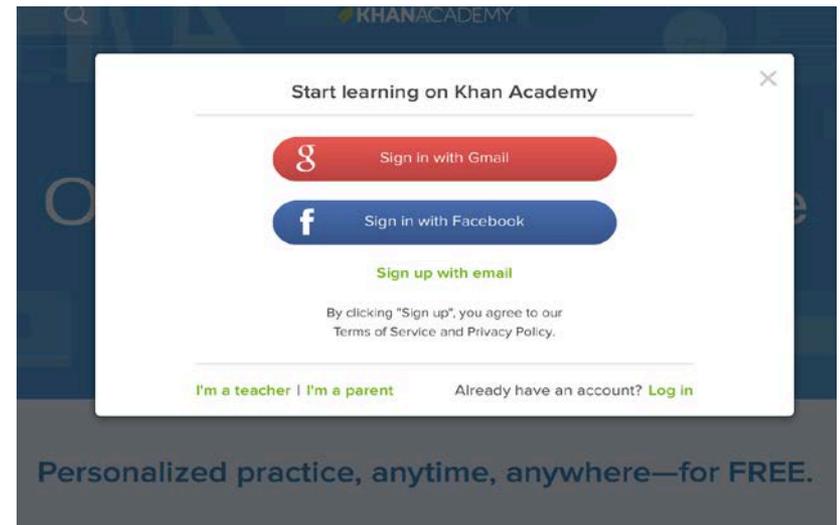
Your SAT/ACT Prep plan should align with your desired test dates – don't jump into a test OR a test prep course without a plan

Questions?



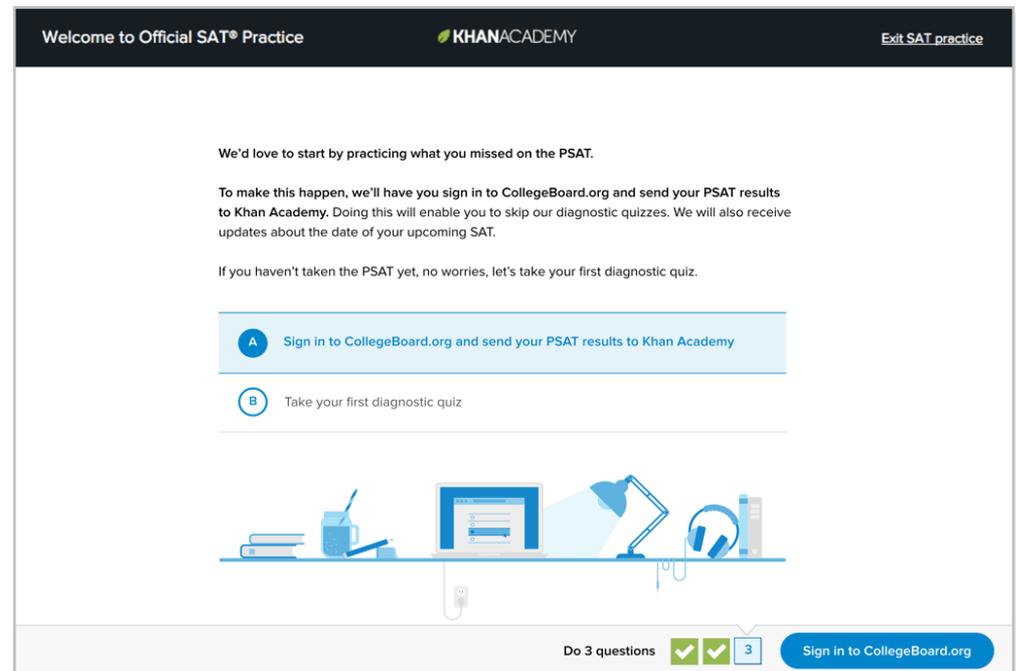
Linking College Board and Khan Academy

1. Go to satpractice.org
2. Click the green button that says: Start Practicing
3. Sign up for a Khan Academy Account



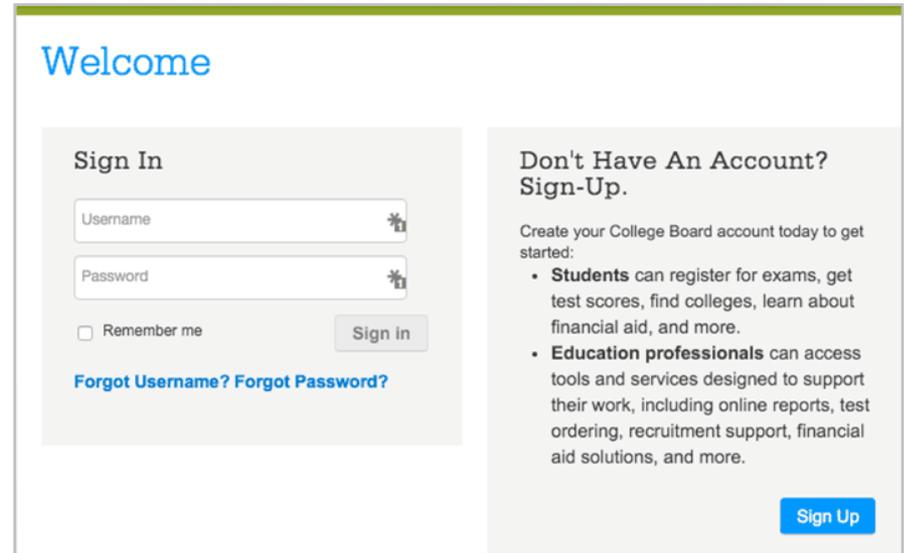
Linking College Board and Khan Academy

- You have logged into Khan Academy for the first time and will be asked if you would like to send PSAT results
- If you already have a Khan Academy account, a prompt will appear asking if you want to send your PSAT results to Khan Academy
- After choosing that option, you will be directed to collegeboard.org



Linking College Board and Khan Academy

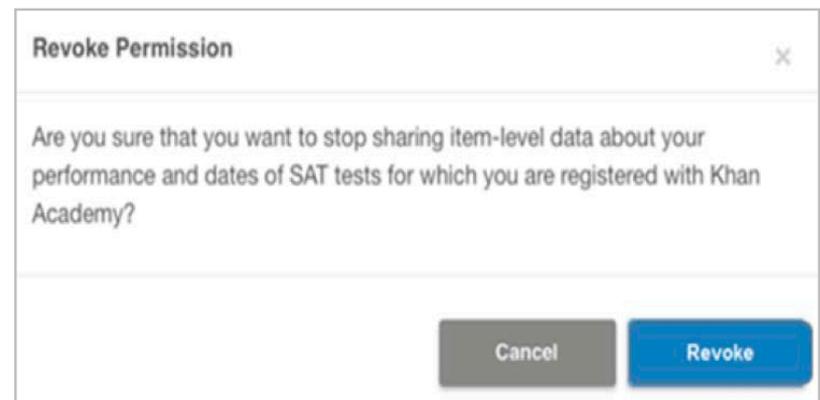
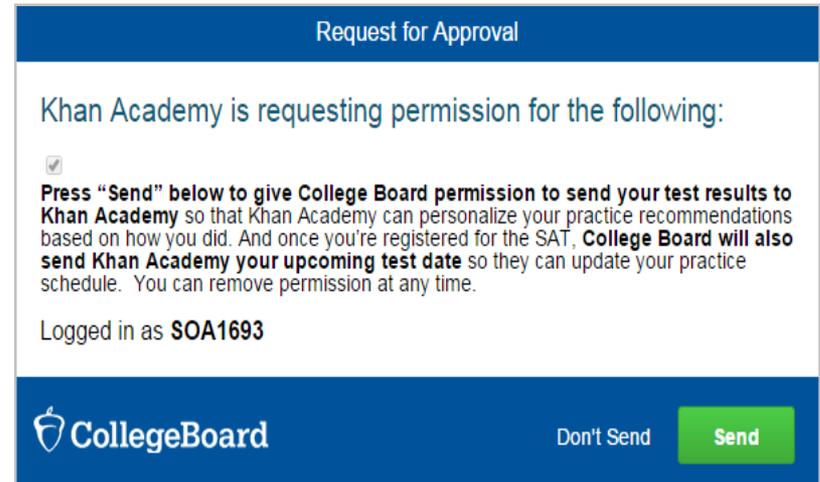
- Sign in to your College Board account; if you do not have a College Board account, click 'Sign Up' to create one.



The screenshot shows the College Board login interface. At the top left, the word "Welcome" is displayed in blue. Below it is a "Sign In" section with a "Username" input field, a "Password" input field with a visibility toggle, a "Remember me" checkbox, and a "Sign in" button. Below the sign-in fields are links for "Forgot Username?" and "Forgot Password?". To the right of the sign-in section is a "Don't Have An Account? Sign-Up." section. It contains the text "Create your College Board account today to get started:" followed by two bullet points: "Students can register for exams, get test scores, find colleges, learn about financial aid, and more." and "Education professionals can access tools and services designed to support their work, including online reports, test ordering, recruitment support, financial aid solutions, and more." At the bottom right of this section is a blue "Sign Up" button.

Linking College Board and Khan Academy

- After successfully logging in to your College Board account, you will be asked for permission to link your accounts.
- After clicking “Send” you will be redirected to SAT practice on the Khan Academy site.



Get started practicing!

Subjects ▾ Search 

KHANACADEMY Alyssa Murphy

Official SAT® Practice **Dashboard** Practice Tips and Strategies Full Tests Review In partnership with 



WELCOME TO OFFICIAL SAT PRACTICE

Choose your practice schedule

Based on your test date, we'll put together a practice plan to ensure you're ready for the real deal.

Choose your practice schedule

You are connected to CollegeBoard.org

When you receive your [real test results](#), we'll read them in and personalize your practice recommendations to focus on what you missed.

Test scores [View Full Tests](#)

Your test scores will appear here once you [complete your first practice test](#) or import a real exam from [CollegeBoard.org](#).