

COLLEGE BOUND

Helpful tips for getting into college and the smartest ways to pay for it.

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The SAT – Myth versus Fact

*Don't fall for silly strategies and misinformation.
Here's what you should know about the SAT.*

One of the most daunting aspects of the college hunt process is probably the prospect of taking the SATs. A student's SAT scores are just a part of what colleges and universities consider when evaluating an applicant. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation circulating among high school students, their teachers, and their families regarding the SAT test. Below are some of the common misunderstandings regarding the SAT test and how colleges regard the test and the students who take it.

MYTH 1: My SAT scores are low, I won't be able to get into any decent schools.

FACT: Schools value SAT scores differently, and how student applicants

are ranked will vary by school. For example, at Holy Cross, the top considerations when evaluating a student are class schedule, GPA and class rank, and standardized tests are less important. Wesleyan University, by contrast, places more emphasis on standardized test scores. So a student with low SAT scores and high grades might do better applying to Holy Cross rather than Wesleyan.

Also, keep in mind that some schools don't even require that their applicants take the SAT. More than 800 schools have abolished the SAT from their admission requirements. A consideration for students who don't test well.

Other strategies for students who struggle

with standardized tests:

- Take a prep course
- Find colleges that give less weight to standardized tests
- Concentrate on the 800 schools that have abolished the SAT from their admission requirement
- Take the ACT as an alternative. Many students who struggle with the SAT format do better on the ACT test.

MYTH 2: SAT prep courses don't work.

FACT: The truth is, they do work as long as your student is willing to put in the time and effort. In fact, with our online prep course, we see around a 200 point average increase on the SAT math and

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Spotlight On Salisbury University



Location: Salisbury, MD

Undergraduates: 7,706

Male/Female: 44/56

Entrance Difficulty: Moderately Difficult

Acceptance Rate: 4,129 admitted out of a pool of 7,739

Average High School GPA: 3.65

SAT Math: 35 percent were over 600

SAT CR: 28 percent were over 600

SAT Writing: 28 percent were over 600

ACT Composite: 41 percent were over 24

Tuition: State Resident: \$5260,

Non State Resident: \$13,606

Degrees offered include Biology and Biomedical Sciences, Natural Resources and Conservation, Health Professions and Related Programs, Education, Liberal Arts and Sciences, etc.

Fun Facts:

- SU students volunteer some 35,000 volunteer hours annually
- 35 percent of students live on campus
- Salisbury University is a state-supported, co-ed school located in a small town on 154 acres
- All four of Salisbury's schools are endowed -- a rarity among public institutions nationwide
- The school is located on Maryland's Eastern Shore -- 30 miles from the Atlantic Ocean and 20 miles from the Chesapeake Bay
- Salisbury University has been recognized as a Top Public University by U.S. News & World Report
- The student body comes from 32 states and 69 countries

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reading scores, and a 2-4 point average increase on ACT scores.

MYTH 3: The SAT test is a test of intelligence and will predict my success in college.

FACT: Not true. The SAT test indicates how well you will do on standardized tests, and not necessarily in college. Long is the list of students unhappy with their SAT results who went on to make Dean's List in college. And don't allow your scores to diminish your enthusiasm for college and higher education.

MYTH 4: If I take the SAT, I don't need to take the ACT.

FACT: In New Jersey, most students choose the SAT over the ACT (although that's starting to change). But the truth is, each test favors a certain type of knowledge and a certain learning style. ACT questions, in general, go deeper in knowledge than SAT questions, although they cover fewer areas. The ACT test more closely resembles classroom learning and testing.

While taking both tests may not appeal to many students, it is often recommended. Most colleges will take either result. After you take both tests, you can decide which scores to submit.

MYTH 5: I don't have to take the SAT until I'm in my senior year.

FACT: Well, you could wait, but that's not what we advise. To make the most of the

test, and your college admissions quest, we suggest you take the SAT and the ACT in your junior year. After you receive your results, take either an ACT or SAT preparation course, and then retake the test once or twice more.

MYTH 6: Choose "C" if you don't know the answer.

FACT: Students often pass along tips and suggestions on how to make the most of the SAT test. But the problem is a lot of that information is out of date or incorrect. The SAT test is too important to blow on silly suggestions, so resist the temptation to follow them, unless the advice comes from a respected SAT tutor or offered by a professional prep course.

Fast Facts about the SAT

- Test length is 3 hours 49 minutes
- Test sections – there are 10 sections to the test
- Math content – 33 percent of total score. Tests up to Geometry and Algebra II
- There is no science content
- Essay – First section is required. 25 minutes and factored into total score
- Scoring – 3 scores of 200-800 per section with a total possible score of 2400
- Guessing strategy – Only guess when you can eliminate some answer choices
- Costs – around \$50



News You Can Use

Questions to Ask on a College Visit

College visits should be a part of your college hunt, but be sure you go prepared with questions. Jot them down before your trip, and bring them with you on a college tour.

Some questions you may want to ask include:

- How does the school transition students from high school to college?
- How many freshmen return for their sophomore year?
- What majors is the school known for?
- Is the faculty easily accessible to undergraduate students?
- How large are typical classrooms?
- What is the town/city like?
- What activities are offered to students?
- What percent of students live on campus?
- What are the school's living and eating options?
- Does the school use teaching assistants?
- What is the average college debt students leave with?
- Does the school offer a study abroad program?

You can also ask your tour guide specific questions, such as:

- Why did you decide to come to this school?
- What is the best part of going to school here?
- What would you change about the school, if you could?

NOTE: Many universities don't let their guides answer the question, "What other schools did you apply to?"

Lights... Camera... Action!

America Online visits CCPS office to shoot videos

We've been getting some nice media coverage lately, with appearances on News12 NJ, the Channel 11 morning show, multiple Patch stories... and now AOL.

The first email address I ever had was AOL. So it was fun when I got a call from AOL headquarters asking if a team from AOL Finance could come to our Springfield office to capture some of my recommendations on college planning and funding.

When they mentioned the shooting schedule was 3-4 hours, I thought: "What in the world can I talk about for 4 hours?" But the reality is, the time flies by.

They want to get everything just right, so you end up doing multiple takes. Between lighting, equipment, phones ringing, electrical interference, background noises, etc., there are plenty of things that factor into production and require time to sort out. Plus, they shoot 10 times more footage than what they need – then chop it down in the editing room.

I thought you might enjoy some photos from the shoot. If you'd like to see the end result on AOL, go to <http://www.dailyfinance.com/2012/03/20/study-up-on-cutting-the-cost-of-college-tuition-savings-experiment/>



Ask the Professor

Q: Can I bring a friend with me on a college visit?

A: You could, but you might enjoy your college visit more, and get the most from it, if you don't. Remember, your visit isn't a vacation, it's a time to see if the school is a good fit for you, and it's easy to be distracted if you have a friend along. If you do decide to bring a friend with you, sit down and go over your expectations for the visit, in order to manage your time wisely. You may need to split up at some point over the visit, so that you both gather the information you'll need.

Did You Know?



- ✓ *At public colleges: 40% of full-time students live on campus, 40% live off-campus and 20% live at home*
- ✓ *At private colleges: 64% of full-time students live on campus, 19% live off-campus and 17% live at home*

College Match Game



Which college did Ashley Judd attend?

- A) University of Kentucky
- B) Vanderbilt University
- C) Columbia University
- D) University of Tennessee

Answer: A. Ashley Judd graduated from the University of Kentucky, and then pursued graduate work at Harvard University



Upcoming FREE workshops

April 12 - 7:30 at the Maplewood Public Library

There are two ways to reserve a seat:

Online: www.myacfa.com

Call: 1-973-467-0101



"THIS IS 'TAKE YOUR DAUGHTER TO WORK' DAY, NOT 'HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER DO YOUR WORK' DAY."

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