

Prepare Your High School Student for College



Before you know it, college will be knocking at your door. As the parent of a high school student, it's your job to make sure the transition is as easy as possible. Don't wait until senior year before you start thinking about preparation. Right now you can begin helping your child put their best foot forward by this instructional guide for conquering the inevitable college entrance test known as the SAT. For the student:

Freshman – Read some good classic books and incorporate some logic curriculum into your studies (especially if your school doesn't provide it). Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October for practice. This will help you get familiar with the test and allow you to assess your strengths and weaknesses. Practice test-taking techniques about an hour a week with actual College Board practice tests. Only take an actual SAT if you are scoring around the national average of 1500.

Sophomore – Continue with logic and reading good books, which are usually full of great vocabulary words. Again, take the PSAT/NMSQT for practice in October. Practice test-taking techniques about two hours a week. Take a couple of SAT's in the fall since you will already be studying for the PSAT/NMSQT. The tests are basically the same except for the essay.

Junior – Absolutely take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. This is when it counts for all the big scholarship opportunities, which could include full tuition, room and board, honors dorms, study-abroad stipends, graduate money, etc. Practice test-taking tips several hours a week leading up to the PSAT/NMSQT. Take a couple of SAT's in the fall and a couple more in the spring if you want a higher score.

Senior – Check to see if the college you are interested in wants an early decision. If so, you'll need to take the October and possibly the November SAT test. If not, go ahead and take the December SAT as well. Student's scores should improve each time and there are no penalties for taking it many times since colleges generally drop the lowest scores and sometimes will take the highest scores in each section from different tests. If you want a higher SAT score, go ahead and schedule 2-3 more in the spring. There is still a January, March, May and June test. After all, this is your last chance while you are in school.

Parents – make sure that each year your student is adding more community service to their transcript. Also, make sure they get good grades because sometimes the student's GPA can mean the difference in acceptance for certain state schools that only take the top 10 percent. Start doing college searches and campus visiting as early as ninth grade. Many colleges have weekends designed just for potential students to visit. Have your child start applying for scholarships as soon as possible. There are many that are designed for the younger high school-aged student, so don't wait.

The longer your student waits to prepare for the SAT, the less time he or she will have to improve. Good SAT scores not only will help with college entrance, but also can provide scholarships. College is just around the corner and can sneak up on you fast. Armed with a little bit of knowledge and some preparation, the pathway to college can be made easier when you start early.

This article is the work of author, Jean Burk. It is the property of Maven of Memory Publishing

