



NEWS & INFORMATION ABOUT  
PLANNING FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

# The GEAR UP Gazette

MAY

FOR PARENTS OF 11<sup>TH</sup> & 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS

## TAKING THE SAT OR ACT

### WHY TAKE IT

Most four-year colleges consider applicants' scores on college admission tests (like the SAT or ACT) when deciding whom to accept. By taking the test, your student will have more options of colleges to attend. However, test scores are just one part of a college application. College admission officers give the most weight and importance to high school grades in challenging classes.

### WHEN TO TAKE IT

Most students take the SAT or ACT for the first time in the spring of junior year. If they choose to take it a second time, they typically do so in the fall of senior year.

### WHAT'S IN IT

The SAT has three major sections: math, reading and writing (which includes a written essay). The ACT has four major sections: English, math, reading and science (and an optional essay section).

### HOW TO PREPARE

The best way for your student to prepare for an admission test is to work hard both inside and outside the classroom by taking challenging courses and studying hard. In addition, there are free practice tests and questions available online at [academy.act.org](http://academy.act.org) and [sat.collegeboard.org/practice](http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice) that will help your student become familiar with the format and what areas might need attention.

### OTHER OPTIONS

There are many schools across the U.S. that do not require college entrance tests. Find the list of schools at [fairtest.org/university/optional](http://fairtest.org/university/optional)

Source: [BigFuture](http://BigFuture)

### MORE TESTS FOR SENIORS

After being accepted by a college, your student may need to take placement tests. Colleges use placement tests in subjects like math and English to check the academic skill levels of entering students. Then the college can place each student in classes at the right level. Almost all two-year colleges and many public four-year colleges require new students to take at least one placement test when they first get to campus. Some private four-year colleges also use these tests. Test results may mean that your student can skip some introductory courses or they can show that your student needs more preparation before taking on college-level work. Your student can check the college's website to find out if he has to take a placement test and how he can prepare.

Source: [BigFuture](http://BigFuture)

## DID YOU KNOW?

57% of students who took the ACT twice improved their score the second time.

Source: [ACT, 2013](http://ACT, 2013)

## COLLEGE MYTHS (AND REALITIES)

**MYTH:** A low score on an admission test will keep my student out of college.

**REALITY:** The range of test scores at many colleges is very broad and test scores are just one part of an application. But if your student doesn't take an admission test, he will limit his choices, as most colleges require test scores. Think of taking the test as opening doors, not closing them. A high test score doesn't guarantee admission, either. Colleges want well-rounded students – the tests are just one measure of your student's abilities!

Source: [BigFuture](#)

## PARENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ **JUNIORS – Prep for and take the SAT or ACT.** Have your student sign up with plenty of time to prepare. Visit [collegeboard.org/testing](http://collegeboard.org/testing) or [actstudent.org/regist](http://actstudent.org/regist) for a location near you. Talk to the counselor to see if your student is eligible for a fee waiver. Prep for the tests with free online test prep materials.
- ☐ **SENIORS – Complete all college forms and check for college placement exams.** Colleges send lots of information that require forms to be returned by a certain deadline. Help your student review the information and return them on time. Forms may include accepting financial aid, loan paperwork, housing and meal plans, and orientation and class registration. Encourage your student to check with the college about any placement exams needed; if possible, take them sooner rather than later so the information will be fresh.
- ☐ **Study for and take AP exams (if applicable).** Make sure your student gets a good night's sleep and healthy breakfast on the day of the test.

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs and is a federally-funded program that helps rural, low-income middle and high schools prepare students for education after high school.

Visit [oregongearup.org](http://oregongearup.org) to learn more and access resources to help your students make a plan. © 2016 Oregon GEAR UP

# COLLEGE. It's not a dream, it's a plan.