



Gaining
Early Awareness
and Readiness
for Undergraduate
Programs

For more
information, contact
Kathe Taylor, Ph.D.,
Director,
GEAR UP
The Evergreen
State College,
Olympia, WA. 98505
360-867-5136

Test Your TEST Knowledge!

In order to be admitted to most four-year (baccalaureate) colleges nationally, students must submit test scores from the:

- a. SAT
- b. ACT
- c. WASL
- d. a and b, but not c
- e. all of the above

Passing the WASL is a high school graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2008. Passing the WASL will also make you eligible for specific scholarships at each of Washington's six public four-year colleges. But the correct answer is d. Now find out why.

College Entrance Tests

Four-year (baccalaureate) colleges consider many factors when deciding to admit a student. Grades, types of courses taken, scores on college entrance exams, and extracurricular activities are all taken into consideration.

The two most common college entrance tests are the **SAT** (pronounced by its letters, S-A-T) and the **ACT** (pronounced by its letters, A-C-T). Although the SAT is more commonly known in the northwest, the ACT is very well known nationally, and is accepted by Washington colleges.

The tests measure different types of skills. The SAT[®] measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning and writing skills, and is considered more of an *aptitude* test—a test of your ability to develop skills or acquire knowledge. The ACT covers four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading and science, and is considered more of an *achievement* test—a test of what you've learned in school.

About 50% of your SAT score is based on mathematics, while 25% of your ACT score is based on mathematics. A writing component is mandatory with the SAT and optional with the ACT.

Because the tests measure different skills, students may score higher on one test than the other. *This is a good reason to take both tests.*

Paying For College Entrance Tests

Tests Cost Money. Sad, but true. In 2006-2007, the basic fee for the ACT is \$29.00 (\$43.00 if you take the writing portion), and for the SAT, \$41.50.

Can I get a Fee Waiver? Possibly. If you qualify for free and reduced lunch, and have submitted the paperwork to the district to establish your eligibility for free and reduced lunch, then you can apply for a fee waiver. **See your high school counselor for the appropriate forms.**

This is important! If you qualify for a fee waiver for the SAT or ACT tests, you are eligible to waive up to four college application fees. Every time you apply to a college, there is a fee for processing your application e.g., \$50.00 to apply to a public four-year college in Washington.

Bottom line: If you think you may qualify for free and reduced lunch (even if you never eat lunch at school), complete the paperwork. Your eligibility will open doors to fee waivers that can **save you money**.

Caution: The fee waiver process takes extra time. Don't wait until the last minute to ask for a waiver!

Registering For College Entrance Tests

When are the SAT and ACT administered?

Both tests are administered 6-7 times a year, roughly once a month, beginning in September (ACT) or October (SAT). Registration deadlines are a month ahead of the test date. Students can take the tests in their junior and senior years. Actual test dates are posted for the SAT at: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees.html> and for the ACT at: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/currentdates.html>

How do I register?

You can register online, but you need a credit card or a fee waiver (get the form from your high school counselor). Or you can mail in registration, and pay by check, credit card, or money order.

Okay, now that you know all that stuff, try this next question.

Students must take college placement tests:

- a. *after* they have been admitted to a community and technical college
- b. *before* they can be admitted to a community and technical college
- c. *after* they have been admitted to a four-year (baccalaureate) college
- d. *before* they have been admitted to a four-year (baccalaureate) college
- e. a and c only
- f. b and d only
- g. I hate multiple choice tests!

Oops, you didn't choose "g", did you? "E" is the correct answer. Only students who have already been admitted to college take placement tests. Here's a little more detail.

College Placement Tests

Colleges often require students to take tests in math, reading, and writing in order to place them in math and English courses where they are likely to be most successful. Students may be placed in courses that are not considered college level in order to help them build the skills they need to do college level work. "ASSET" is an example of a common placement test.

GEAR UP is a federally-funded grant program that partners with the community to encourage students to aim high, stay in school, study and develop the skills needed to go to college. The five-year, Evergreen State College GEAR UP project has been working since 2002 with the Clover Park and Oakville School Districts.

Test Taking Strategy Secret #714

To guess or not to guess? That is the question.

Some standardized tests take off points for wrong answers, so it's better not to guess if you really don't have the foggiest idea what the answer is. That's the SAT.

The ACT counts only correct answers, so there is no penalty if you guess and get it wrong.