

Everything College Admissions

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NACAC Admissions Trends Survey 2008:

Factors Influencing Admissions decisions

Importance	Considerable	Moderate	Limited	None
Grades in college prep	79.9%	14.4%	2.9%	2.7%
Strength of curriculum	63.8	23.9	8.0	4.3
Admission test scores	58.5	30.9	8.0	2.7
Grades in all courses	51.6	40.1	6.1	2.1
Essay or writing sample	25.8	37.9	19.9	16.4
Class rank	23.4	43.8	23.4	9.4
Demonstrated interest	22.0	30.3	23.9	23.9
Counselor recommendation	21.1	40.4	28.1	10.4
Teacher recommendation	20.8	40.0	28.6	10.5
Interview	10.8	23.7	35.8	29.8
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	6.8	32.2	34.9	26.2
Extracurricular activities	6.5	45.7	32.8	15.1
SAT II scores	6.2	13.8	28.2	51.8
State graduation exam scores	4.4	13.7	28.7	53.3
Work	1.9	24.2	46.8	27.2

Grades and Schedule Strength Come first!

94.3% Schools Assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Grades

87.7% Schools Assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Schedule Strength

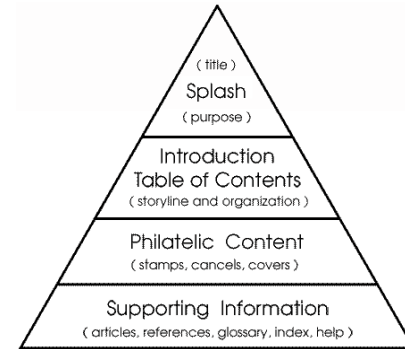
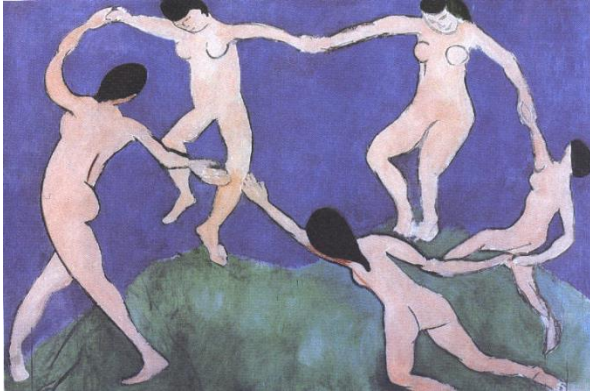
- Take a challenging course load that will allow you to achieve a strong GPA.
- Don't reach so far that GPA suffers
- Take a challenging curriculum in the context of your school.
- Did you “max out” **your** school's curriculum?

College Essay

63.7% Schools Assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to the Essay

- Single most important essay most students will write in high school
- For students on the margin, essay can be a deciding factor in admissions
- Essay offers the student a chance to come alive as a human being
- A well-crafted essay can turn an admissions reader into a vocal advocate in committee.

College Essay versus SAT/ACT essay



Passion

Creative/Take real risks

Find your personal voice

Specificity

Content informs structure

Writing process: 10-15 hours

Reason

Formulaic/Be conservative

Flex your analytical skills

Specificity

Established structure

One shot essay: 25 minutes

Writing a Better College Essay

- 1) A student must write the essay that only he or she could write
- 2) Student must find his/her own voice
- 3) Take artistic risks
- 4) Narrow the scope: “thin slice of life”
- 5) Could you be more specific?
- 6) Using the hook: dynamic introduction or cut the intro altogether. Start *in medias res*
- 7) Wielding the Samurai sword: the art of editing

Activities

52.2% Schools assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Extra-Curriculars

- What you do outside of class matters too



Well rounded class or well rounded applicants

- admissions trend: building a "well-rounded class" selecting students expert or deeply versed in 1 area
- **Depth** of experience trumps breadth of experience



Well- rounded student
blends in well
easier to forget



"Spikey" student
better "story"
more memorable

Counselor and Teacher Recs

61.5% Schools assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Counselor Recs

60.8% Schools assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Teacher Recs

- Forge those relationships early: personal connection
- Choose teachers who will have your best interest at heart, want to see you succeed, and write well
- Teachers with whom you have a strong relationship-several years can be better



To interview or not to interview

34.5% Schools assign Considerable to Moderate Importance to Interviews

- Not relevant for majority of students
- Varying degrees of importance: can help some borderline applicants
- Will not make a significant difference for most applicants
- Useful to get information about the school
- Convey enthusiasm and interest
- Must have a good answer for, “Why our school?”

Building your school list

Out of State Schools

Community Colleges

Small Schools

Large Schools



In-State Schools

Colleges that Change
Lives

Ivy League

Applications to the “name” schools have gone nuts: class of 2013

- Harvard: 29,112 applications for 2,046 admits (7.0%)
- Princeton: 21,964 apps for 2150 admits (9.8%)
- Yale: 26,000 apps for 1951 admits at (7.5%)

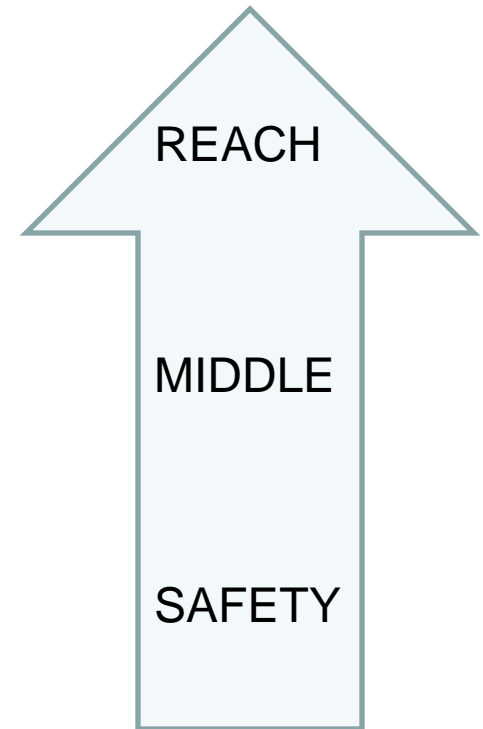


You cannot just apply to the name schools, you need to hedge your bets

Develop a robust list of schools

Things to consider:

- likelihood of admission
- location
- class size
- student body
- Fit is first. Finance is also a factor.



Be sure to have back-ups.
The name schools are very competitive!

College visits are essential

- Enhances motivation: nothing gets students more invested in the process
- Informs the application (why Tufts?)
- Narrows the list
- Chance for an on-campus interview



How to Apply

- **Early decision**—a binding agreement due Oct/Nov.
- **Early action**—a non-binding agreement. The benefits of early decision with none of the binding obligations.
- **Early admission**—student applies earlier in the year than usual, thus receives his or her results early as well.
- **Rolling admission**— school keeps accepting applications until all slots are filled.
- **Regular decision**— no restrictions
- **Wait list**—to protect schools from not having enough students enroll. If you are accepted from the wait list, schools have to notify you by August 1st.

Jed Said: The Ins and Outs of Early Admissions

Latest test dates that will be counted for applications

- Rolling Admissions (most recent scores)
- Early Decision 1 (October, sometimes November)
- Early Decision 2 (December)
- Regular admissions (December and often January)

Some schools will wait on results if you let the office of admissions know new scores are coming.

Does Early Decision Matter?

2003-2004	% of ED pool admitted	% of regular pool admitted
U Penn*	33	17
Yale	37	16
Columbia	40	14
Amherst	35	19

There is a clear quantitative edge for those who apply ED

*Penn typically fills 40% or more of its class ED.

Source: *The Early Admissions Game* Avery, Fairbanks & Zeckhauser

Jed Said: The Ins and Outs of Early Admissions

Why schools privilege ED apps

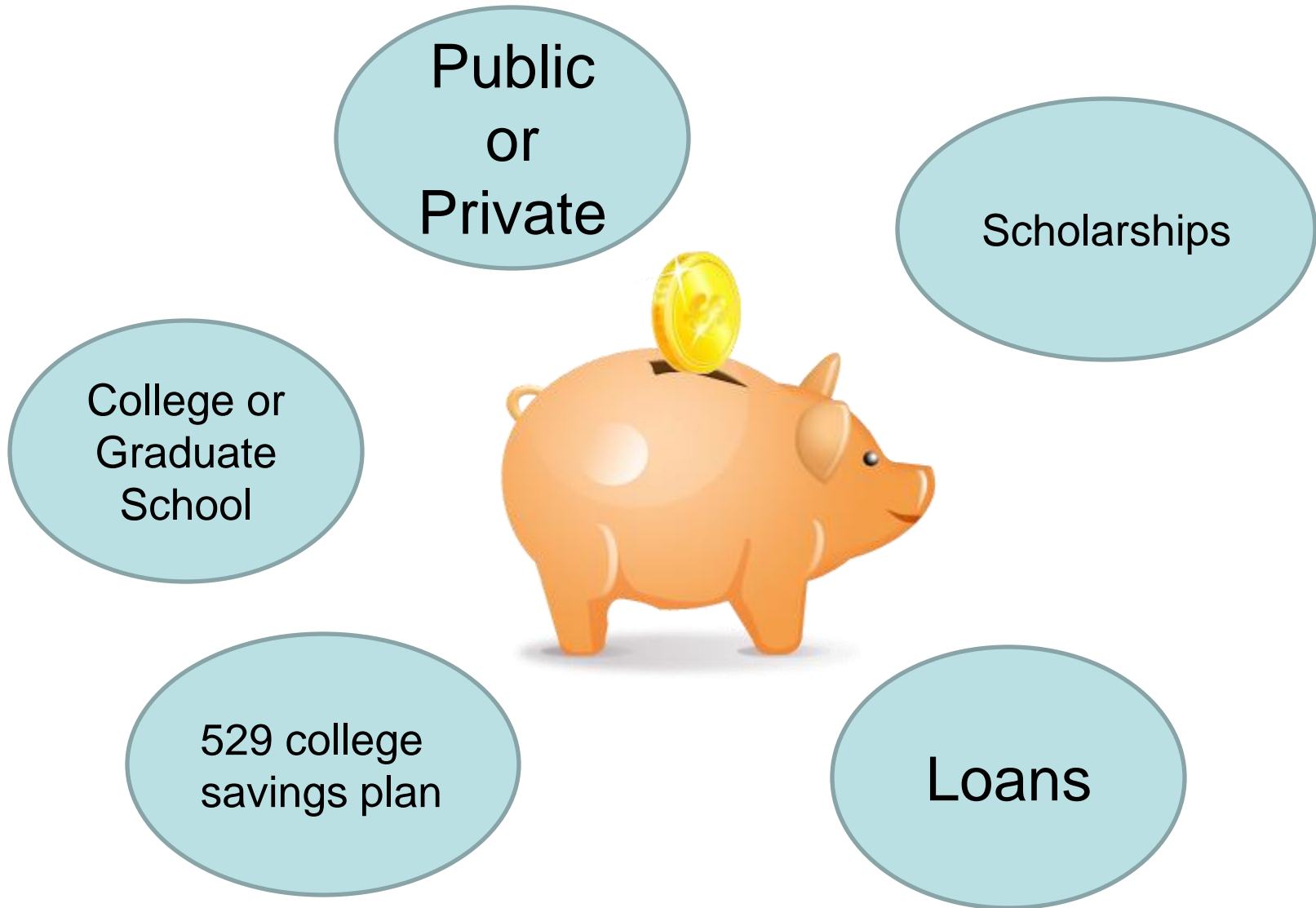
- **Economic factors:** Every student admitted ED saves colleges money
- **Selectivity:** Managing the U.S. News & World Report rankings
- **Managing class size and composition:** Tom McManus, (U Penn) ED is a “yield” tool for schools to manage incoming classes
- **Resource Management for Admissions Offices**

Remember: ED should only be used when there's an **outstanding match** between a school and a student.

Learn more about Early Decision

- *The Early Admissions Game*
- *A is for Admissions*
- *Admissions Confidential*

The Economics Of Education



Looking for Value

- Skyrocketing cost of tuition
- Range of options: annual tuition
 - \$25,143 for students in a private institution
 - \$6,585 for in-state students at public universities
 - \$2,300 for students at community colleges
- Community Colleges with feeder relationships to state Universities
- Incredible interest in state schools
- Some families opting to go cheaper on undergrad and go big for graduate school



Financing College: Loans

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): ONLINE
Determines eligibility for Federal Loans, work-study & Pell Grants

Federal Loans

❖ Student Loans (Best)

- Subsidized Stafford (5.6% and dropping each year till 2012). Need based, deferred interest:
- Unsubsidized Stafford (6.8%). No deferred interest
- Perkins Loan: (5.0 %) Exceptional Need Based Only

❖ Parent Loans (Next Best)

- Parent Plus (8.25%). Non-need Based, interest accrues upon dispersal.

Private Loans (Worst)

“Avoid these if possible, least favorable terms” – Clark Howard

Financing College: Scholarships & Grants

❖ Online Resources

- FastWeb.com (1.5 million scholarships worth \$3.4 billion)
- Sallie Mae's free Scholarship Search (2.9 million, \$16 billion)

❖ Local/Special Scholarships/Grants

- Community Church Groups, Business Associations
- Ethnicity/gender, Area of interest, Parent's employer (Coke, HD)
- Run cost-benefit analysis for smaller grants: is it worth applying?

❖ Merit Money

- Leverage PSAT Scholarship to get more \$ from schools

❖ Georgia's Hope Scholarship

- GA Public College/University: free tuition
- GA Private Hope Scholarship \$3.5k year, Tuition Equalization Grant \$1200/year

Financing College: Resources

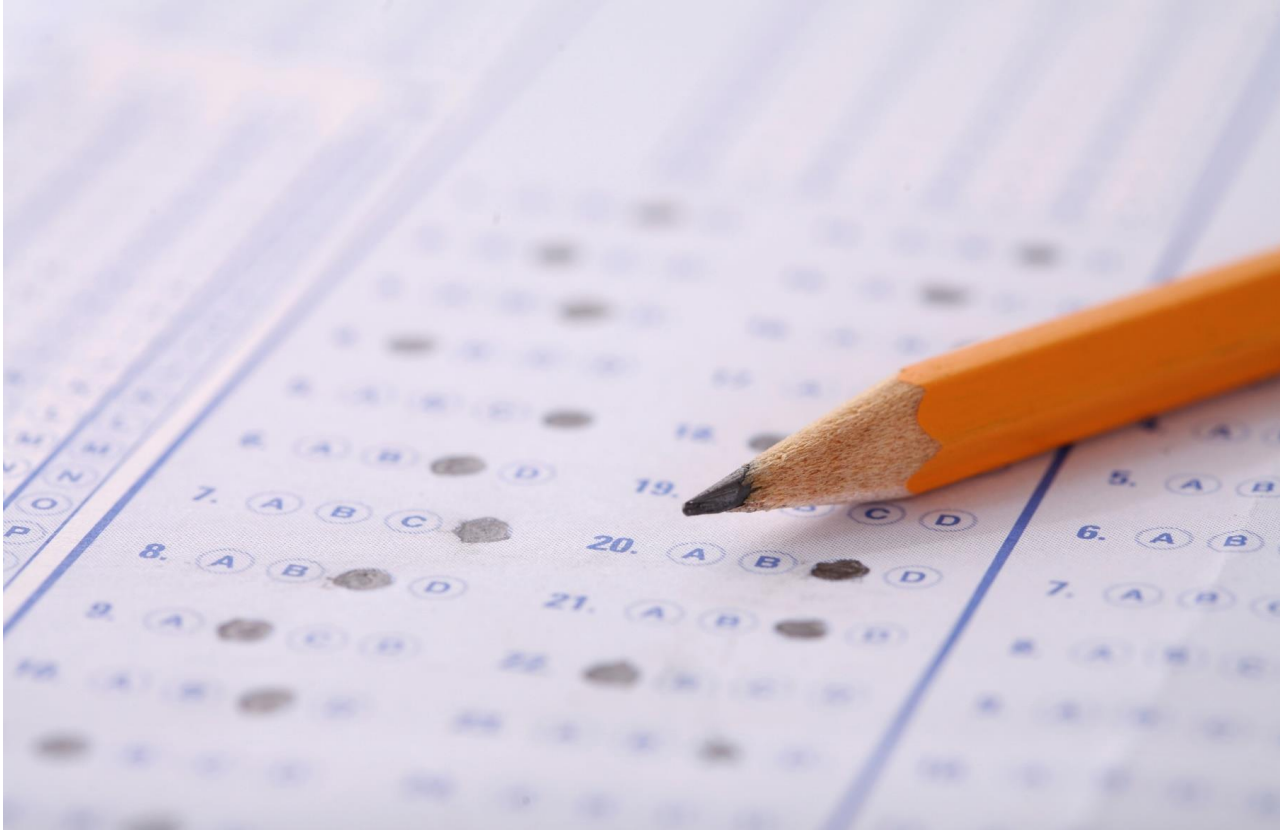
- Finaid.com
- Clark Howard.com
- The financial aid office at the college where you are accepted: best source of information out there. They'll work with you.

Start the search early and leave plenty of time to apply for grants and scholarships

Testing



How important are the tests?



Over the last decade, the tests have become a more significant part of the admissions process.

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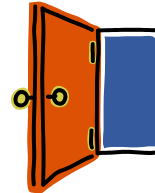
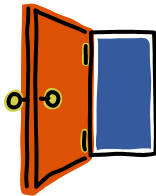
In 1993, 46% of Colleges rated test scores as considerably important. Today the figure is 59%

Putting the SAT/ACT in Context

**Greatest return on investment
of time and resources**



**SAT
ACT**



H.S. Grades in
the Context of
Schedule
Strength and
Academic
Strength of
School

Teacher
Recommendations

SAT Subject Tests

Admissions Essay

Activities
(Leadership, Depth)

You walk through these doors one at a time. A super high SAT score cannot make up for a 1.5 GPA. A beautifully written essay will rarely trump an SAT score below a school's minimum range.

Why are these tests so important to admissions?

- Standardized- easy to compare across geographic and demographic lines
- Efficient way to make big cuts
- Moderately useful predictor of success in college



Predictors of Freshman Year GPA

<u>Predictor Variable</u>	<u>R value</u> Correlation Coefficient	<u>R² value</u> Explained Variance	<u>1- R²</u> Unexplained Variance
High School GPA	.36	.13	.87
SAT Critical Reading Score	.29	.08	.92
SAT Math Score	.26	.07	.93
SAT Writing Score	.33	.11	.89
SAT CR + M	.32	.10	.90
SAT CR + M + W	.35	.12	.88
HS GPA + CR + M	.44	.19	.81
HS GPA + CR + M+ WR	.46	.21	.79

R_{value}: a score of 1 means a perfect correlation

R² value: a score of 1 means 100% of variance is explained

SAT- a “fixed” standard?

SAT may be acting as a
hedge against grade
inflation

1990, average high
school GPA was 2.68.

2000, it was 2.94*

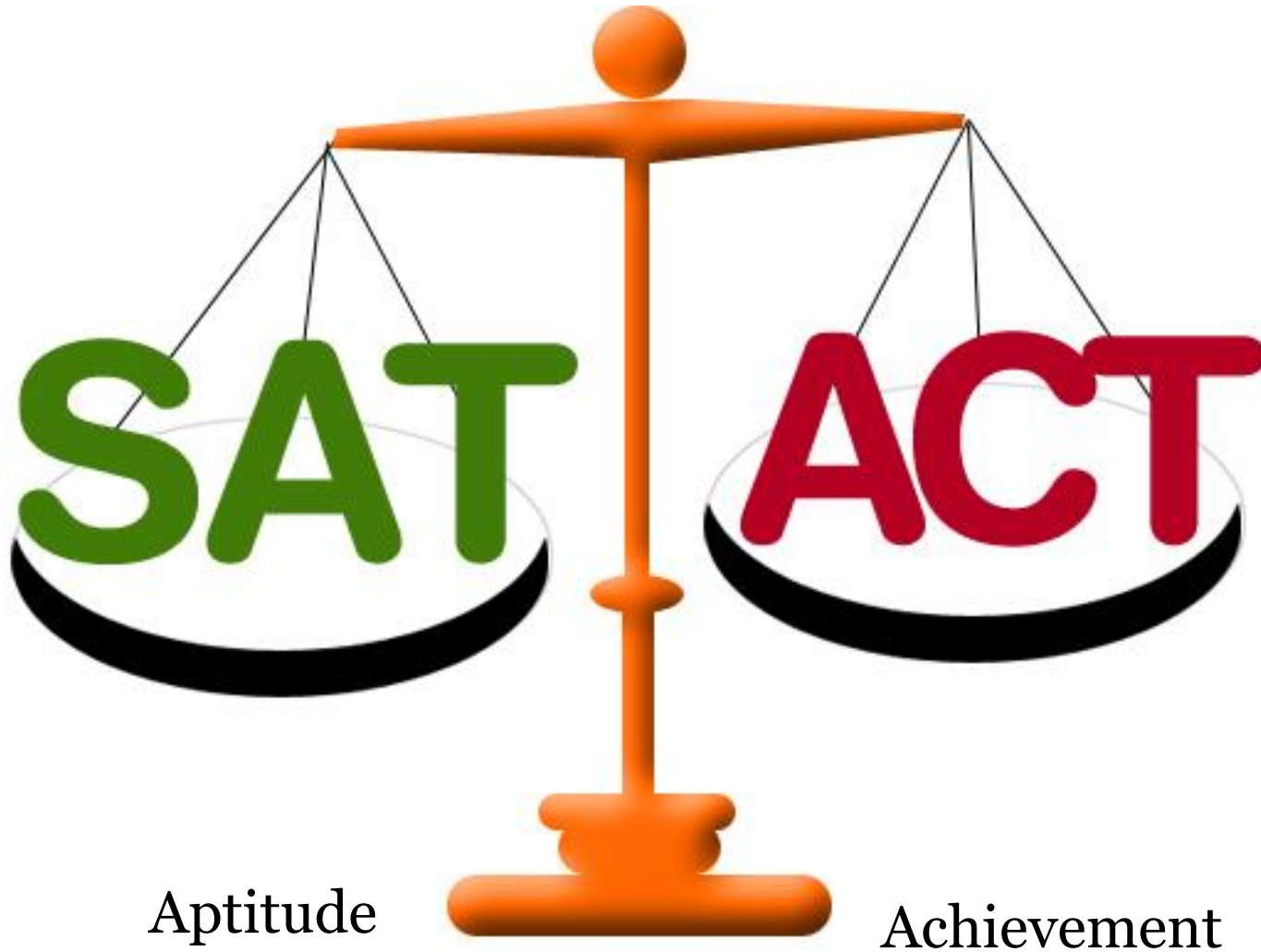
*...the following is a list of the...
...the following is a list of the...
...the following is a list of the...
...the following is a list of the...*



Baby Boomers are very involved in their children's
education. And student grades show it!

*2008 State of College Admissions annual membership survey from NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

Quick Intro to the Assessments



SAT Origins (IQ tests)



Carl Brigham

1920s worked on Army Alpha Tests

1923 wrote A Study of American Intelligence

1926 converted Army Alpha into Standard Aptitude Test, under the auspices of the College Board, administered test to 8,040 high school students

1934 Harvard uses SAT to select scholarship recipients



Henry Chauncey

1930 Assistant Dean at Harvard

1934 uses SAT to select scholarship recipients

1943 contracts to administer SAT (Army-Navy Qualification Test) to 316,000 high school seniors

1945 Becomes first President of Education Testing Service, ETS

1970 Retires, SAT given to 1.4 million students annually

SAT had its foundations in :
abstract intelligence and aptitude testing

ACT Origins (Iowa tests)



Everett Franklin Lindquist (1901–1978)

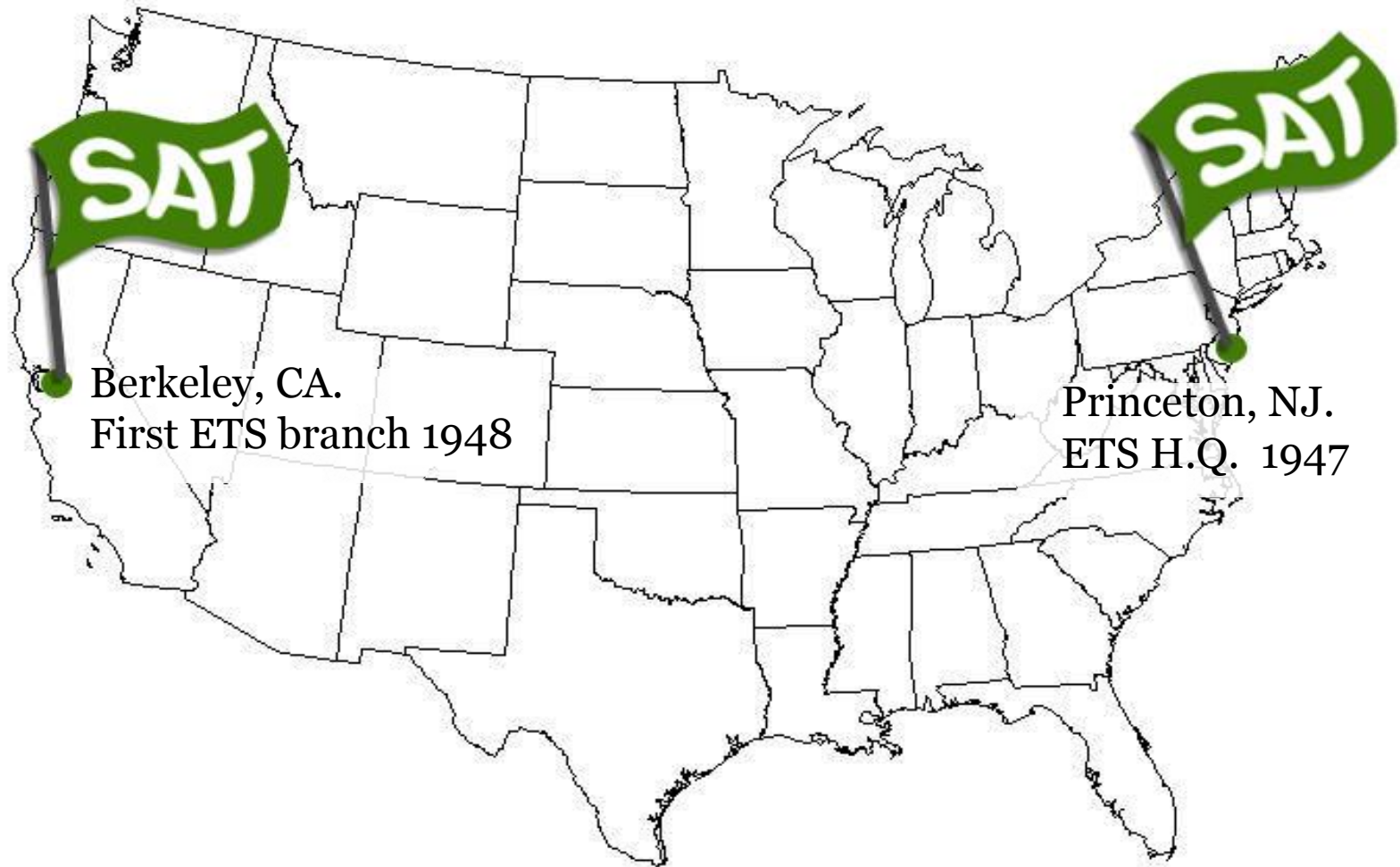
Psychology professor, educational researcher at the University of Iowa

1929 Created tests which became the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

1959 Created the ACT (American College Testing) in Iowa City, Iowa

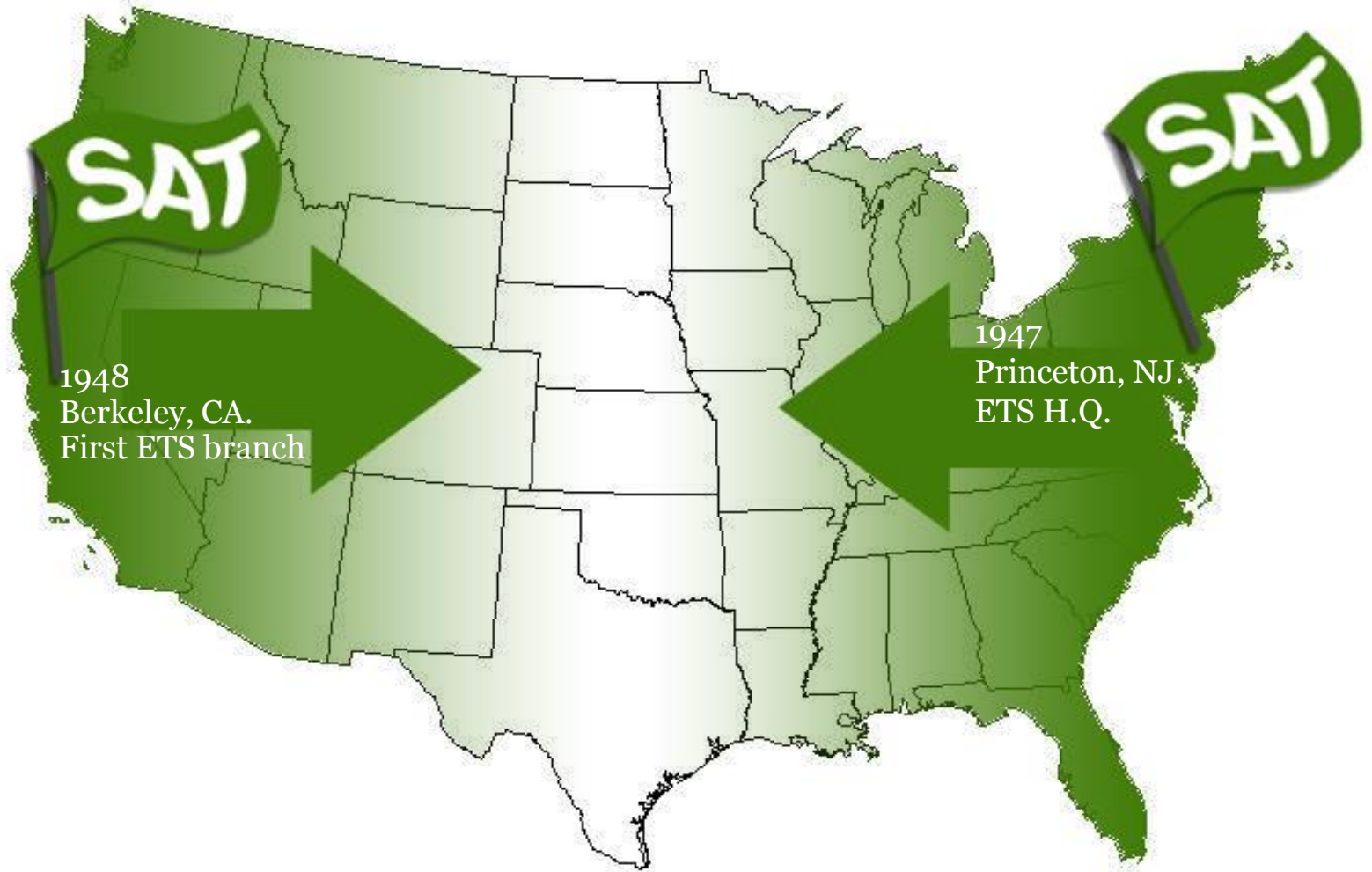
ACT had its foundations in:
Iowa standardized public school
achievement testing

SAT/ACT Geographic Origins

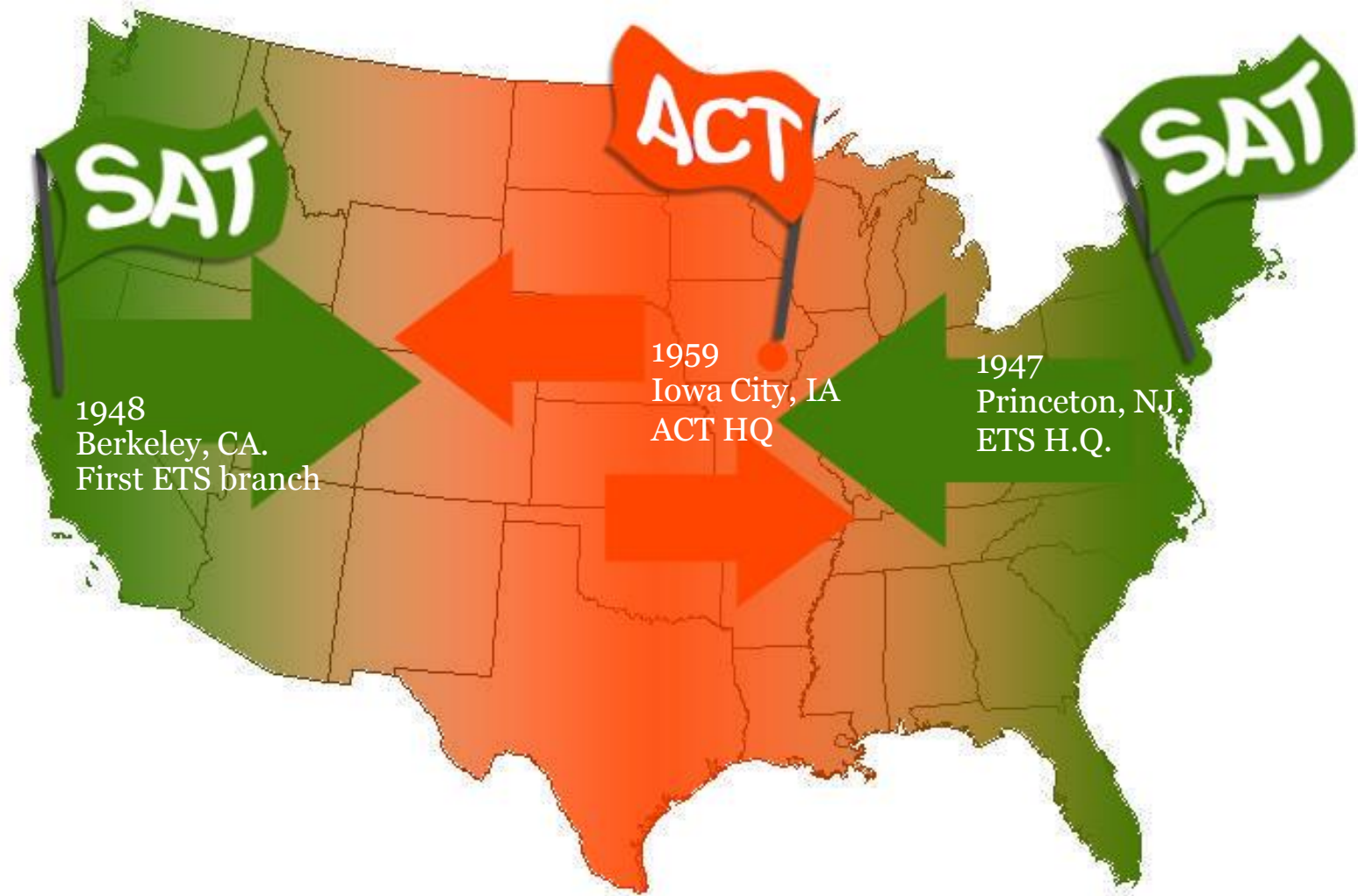


The SAT was first on the scene

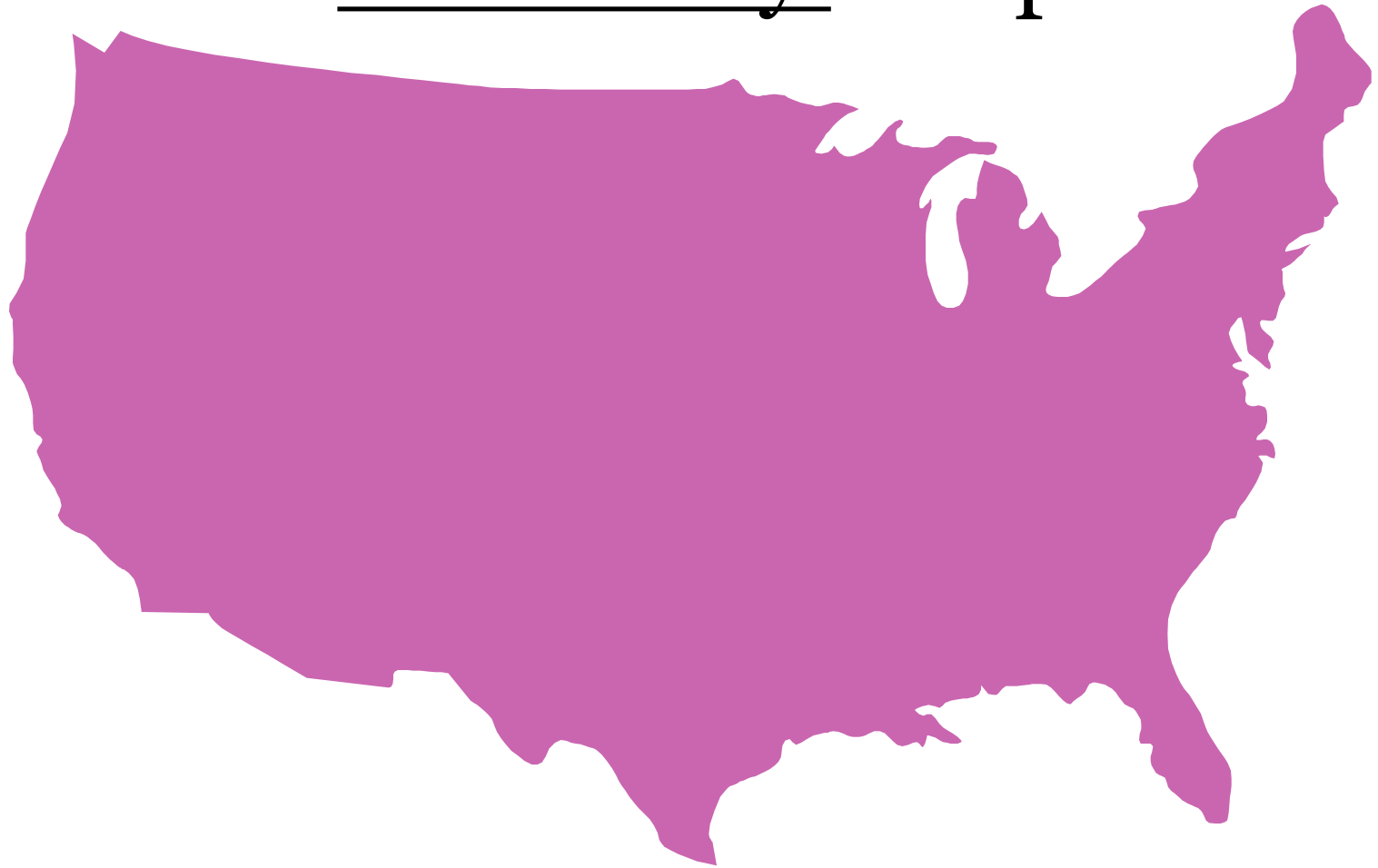
And took over the coasts



The ACT took the heartland



Today the SAT and ACT
are universally accepted



Any college will take either the SAT or ACT without prejudice

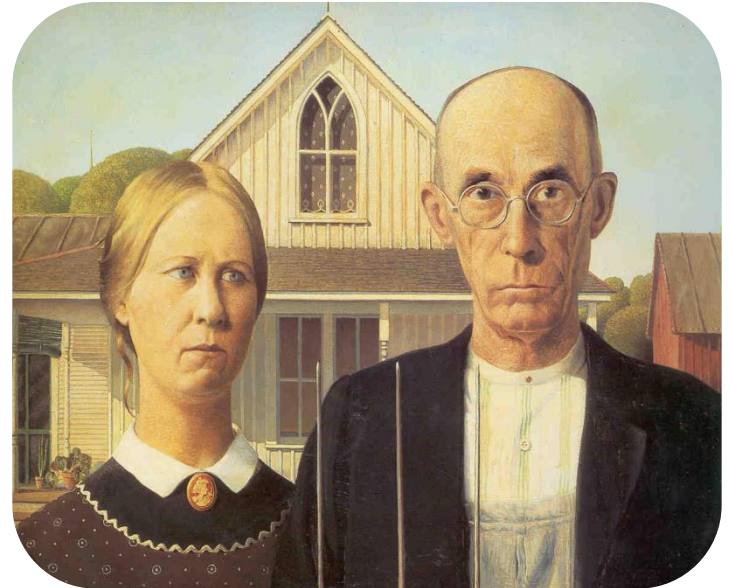
A Quick anatomy of 2 tests

SAT



- Abstract
- Foreign
- Easier to coach
- Learn the language of, solve the mysteries of the test

ACT



- Concrete
- Familiar
- Comparatively less coachable
- Practice, get more familiar with the test

SAT vs ACT basics

	SAT	ACT
Duration	3:45	2:55
Structure	10 sections	4 sections
Content	Critical Reading Math Writing (grammar + essay)	Reading Math English (grammar) Science Reasoning

The SAT looks more like the ACT then ever before with the 2005 changes

Deeper comparison

	SAT	ACT
Vocabulary	Greater Emphasis	
Abstraction	Greater Emphasis	
Math Content Covered	Geometry Algebra I Algebra II (advanced functions & graphs)	Geometry Algebra I Trigonometry
Math Style	More tricks- unique language	Simple, straight forward, more academic

	SAT	ACT
Reading Comprehension	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Analogous thinking</p> <p>Interpretation</p> <p>Vocabulary questions</p> <p>How might the author respond?</p>	<p>Straightforward</p> <p>More content based</p> <p>What did I read?</p> <p>What happened to the character?</p>
Grammar	Will count for most students. The essay is lumped in with the grammar for your writing score	Grammar counts for all students. The essay is optional
Science	No	Graph and Table analysis
Speed		Greater Emphasis
Mental Endurance	Greater Emphasis	

Which test should I try first?

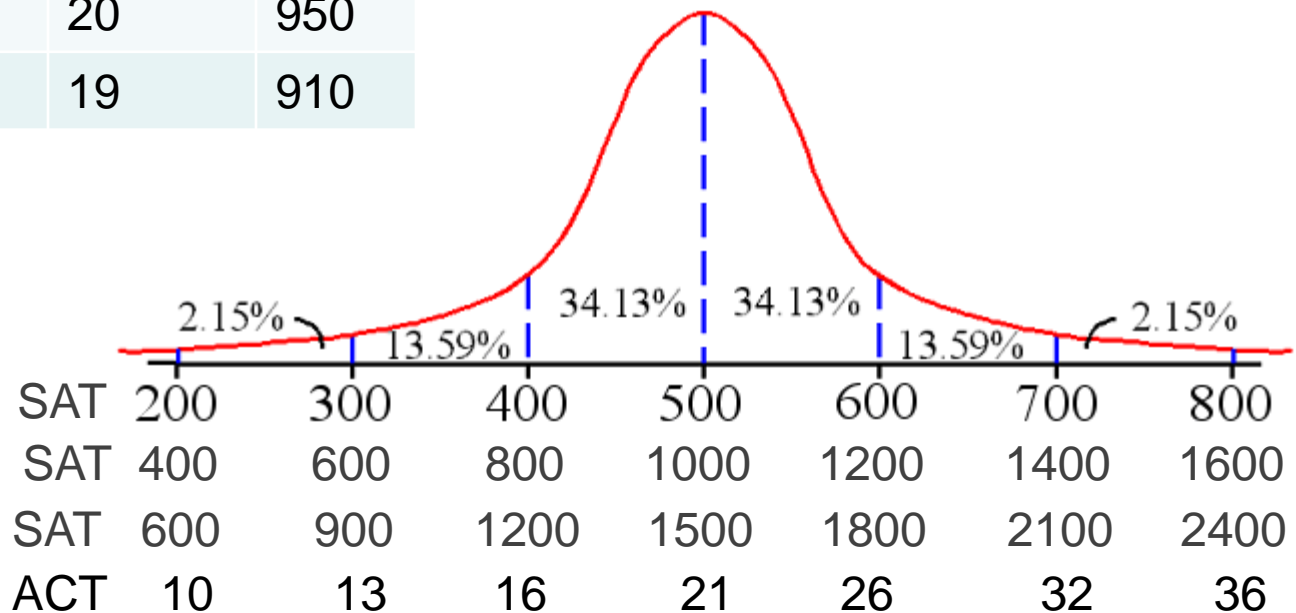
- Both ideally to establish dual baselines
- If PSAT is strong- stick with the SAT
- If PSAT is weak- take an ACT (mock) to compare baselines
- If baselines are similar- go with the SAT- the more coachable test
- If SAT prep is not yielding results- switch to the ACT (good to find this out early)
- If you switch, 80% of content transfers

1600 scale

ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT
36	1600	27	1220
35	1580	26	1180
34	1520	25	1140
33	1470	24	1110
32	1420	23	1070
31	1380	22	1030
30	1340	21	990
29	1300	20	950
28	1260	19	910

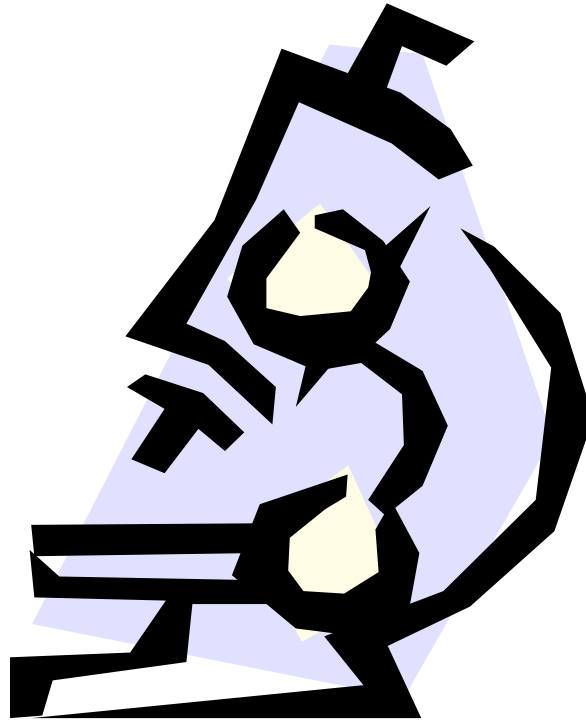
SAT-ACT concordance table

Section
1600 scale
2400 scale

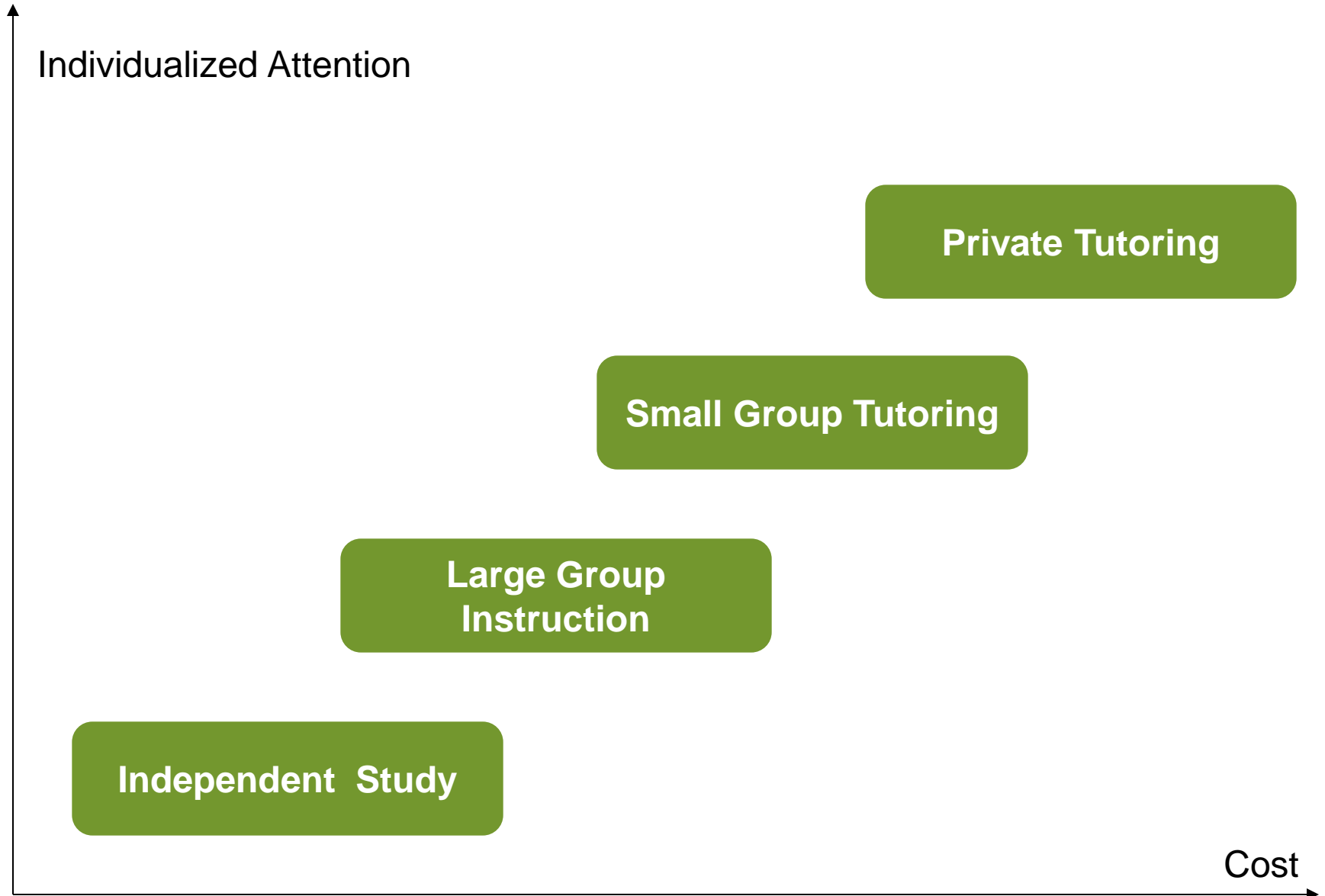


Test Preparation

- Need picture



Finding the fit for your child



Independent Study



Individualized
Attention



Appropriate for students who are

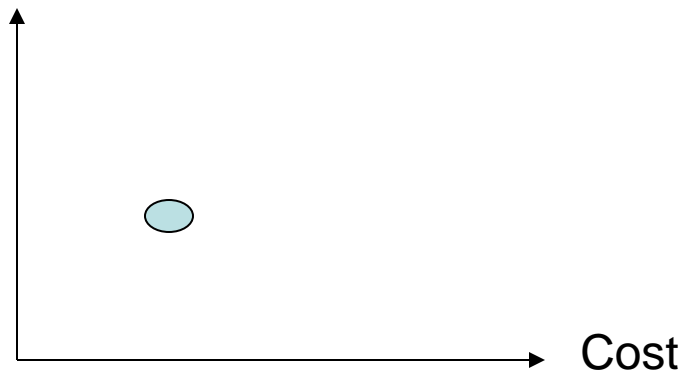
- Highly Independent
- Self-motivated
- Able to structure their own program of study
- Scoring well on the PSATS
- Generally good testers and good readers

Most students who get 2400s on the SAT study by themselves! These super Self-Regulated Learners just need the materials.

Large Group Instruction



Individualized
Attention



Appropriate for students who

- Are able to follow a more generalized curriculum
- Need minimum personal attention to succeed
- Will seek additional help if necessary
- Are able to meet at scheduled times

Not recommended for students with
scores below 950

Small Group Tutoring



Individualized
Attention



Cost

Appropriate for students who

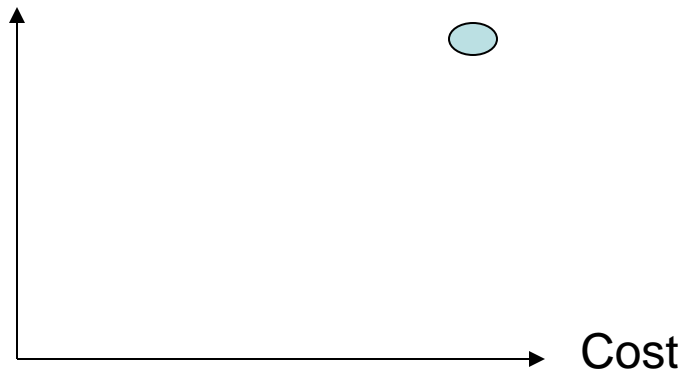
- Can meet at regularly scheduled group sessions
- Need less personal attention than private tutoring
- Will thrive in a group environment
- Are fairly well balanced in their scoring profile (CR, M, W)

Not recommended for students with
scores below 950

Private Tutoring



Individualized
Attention



Appropriate for students who

- Work well one-on-one
- Need focused prep in one or more areas
- Need a more significant score increase
- Would benefit from individualized attention
- Have very low or very high scores
- Have erratic schedules

Most relationship focused, best for individual motivation

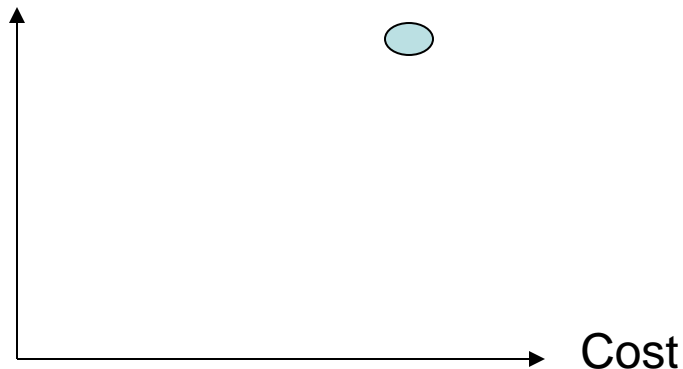
On-line Private Tutoring



Appropriate for students who

- Want all the benefits of private tutoring
- Want the convenience of working from home
- Live farther from our offices

Individualized
Attention



New technologies have finally made this mode of tutoring a reality

Key Components of Effective Prep

- Practice
- Adequate time
- Momentum before tests
- Motivation
- Relationship/Alliance (if you choose the tutoring route)

Mock tests: You've got to Practice

Mock tests reveal

- Wrong answer patterns (carelessness)
- Time management
- Mental fatigue
- Guessing efficacy

**It's not just about the
content!
The process is 50%.**



Allow enough time to Prep

- This is a process!!!!
Not a one-shot deal
- Cram jobs almost never work
- Plan on taking the test 3 times. Ideally twice junior year

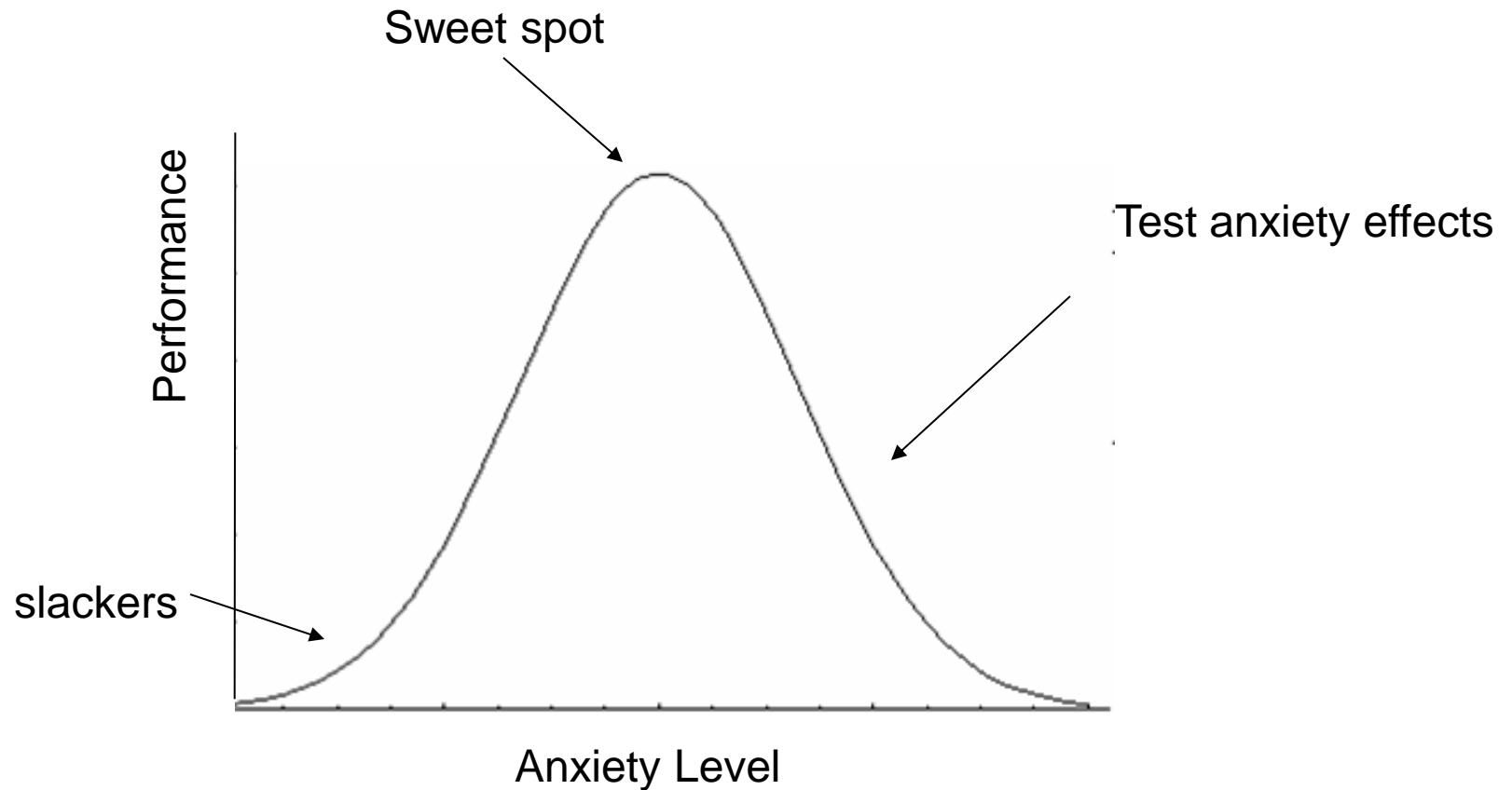


Momentum: Going in strong

- Don't spread this out evenly over the year; kids can and do burn out on testing
- Go hard before the actual tests
- Take a mock test within a month of every real SAT
- Give students breaks and time away from prep



Testing and anxiety



As a tutor, sometimes its my job to generate anxiety in the student, sometime my job is to decrease anxiety.

Motivation

- The SAT needs to be relevant
- College provides the context- makes it real
- Students have to understand how this serves their values



College visits are fundamental for getting students in the mindset of prepping for the SAT. Having a target school, a concrete goal, is often the only thing that creates the motivation needed to prep for the tests. (Especially for guys.)

Create a goal, a number

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the College Board website. The address bar shows the URL: <http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/CollegeDetail.jsp?collegeId=1464&profileId=6>. The page title is "College Search - University of Pennsylvania - Penn - SAT®, AP®, CLEP® - Mozilla Firefox".

The website header includes navigation links: "FOR STUDENTS | FOR PARENTS | FOR PROFESSIONALS", "About Us | Store | Help | En Español", and a search bar. The CollegeBoard logo is prominently displayed, along with a "for Students" link.

The main navigation bar contains five buttons: "College Board Tests", "Plan for College", "Find a College", "Apply to College", and "Pay for College".

The "College Search" section shows a breadcrumb trail: "Home > Find a College > College Search > Profile". A "Help" link is also present.

On the left sidebar, there are sections for "College MatchMaker", "College QuickFinder", "My College Search" (with links to "My College List", "My Saved Searches", and "My Recently Viewed"), and "My Organizer" (with a sign-in prompt and fields for "User Name" and "Password").

The main content area displays the profile for the "University of Pennsylvania", located in "Philadelphia, Pennsylvania", with a "College Board code: 2926". It includes links to "Add to List", "Compare", "Find Similar", "Map It", and "Apply". There are also links to "Print Full Profile" and "Send to a Friend".

The profile is organized into several categories: "At a Glance", "Admission", "Cost & Financial Aid", "Academics & Support", "Sports", "Deadlines", "SAT®, AP®, CLEP®", "Majors", "Housing & Campus Life", and "International Students".

A "Test Scores" section provides a table of scores for the University of Pennsylvania:

	Middle 50% of First-Year Students	Percent Who Submitted Scores
SAT Critical Reading:	650 - 740	97%
SAT Math:	680 - 770	97%
SAT Writing:	650 - 740	97%
ACT Composite:	29 - 33	26%

Below the table is a link to "Send SAT Scores".

The bottom of the browser window shows the Windows taskbar with the "start" button, several open applications (2 Firefox, iTunes, 2 Microsoft..., SAT lecture, Palm Desktop, Parents - Wi...), and the system clock showing "6:18 PM".

Use the College Board.com site to see what the average applicant's scores are and how you measure up.

GA and Regional Schools

25-75% Ranges	CR Range		Math Range		Writing Range		ACT Range	
GA Southern	510	590	510	600			21	24
GSU	490	590	490	590			21	25
UGA	560	660	570	660	560	660	24	29
GA tech	590	690	650	730	580	670	27	31
Emory	640	740	670	760	650	740	30	33
Charleston	570	650	570	650			23	26
Furman	590	690	590	680	590	680	26	30
Clemson	550	640	590	680			25	30
Wake Forest	610	690	630	710			27	31
Duke	660	750	680	790	680	780	29	34

Using Naviance

(when available)

powered by NAVIANCE

Main

- :: home
- :: sign out

About College

- :: college search
- :: college lookup
- :: college compare
- :: scattergrams
- :: acceptance history
- :: visit schedule

From Your School

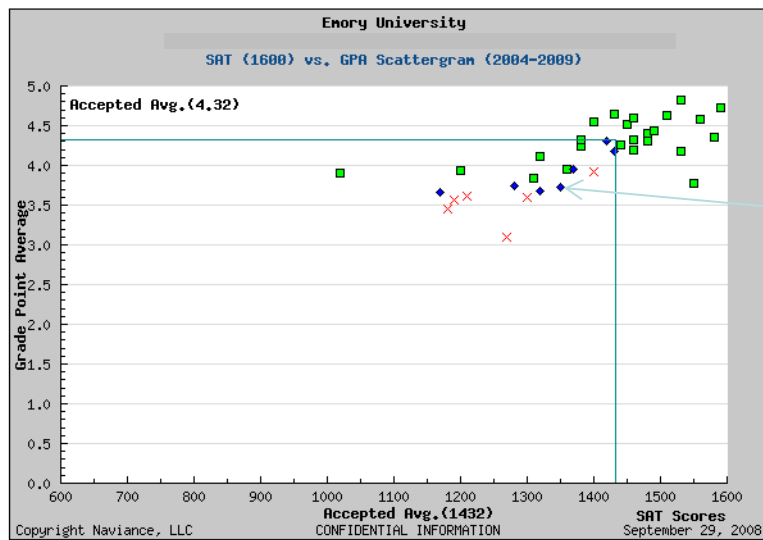
- :: document library
- :: resources
- :: contact us
- links to other websites --
- :: school home page
- :: gac college website
- :: collegeboard website
- :: act website
- :: naac clearinghouse

College Scattergram

College:

Test type:

[Printer-friendly page](#)



Graph Legend

- Accepted
- × Denied
- ◆ Waitlisted or Deferred
- ◆ Waitlisted or Deferred (Accepted)
- ◆ Waitlisted or Deferred (Denied)

Looking for the trend lines, you can begin to see whether schools privilege GPA or SAT

Done

start

End of the SAT Jed-s...

View Scattergram - M...

Microsoft PowerPoint ...

Writing: does it matter?

- More and more schools are using Writing in their Admissions Process
- Every additional “Objective” measure helps admissions officers make more informed decisions
- Writing is also used to sniff out bogus college admissions essays

Ease of Coaching

Writing

Math

Critical Reading

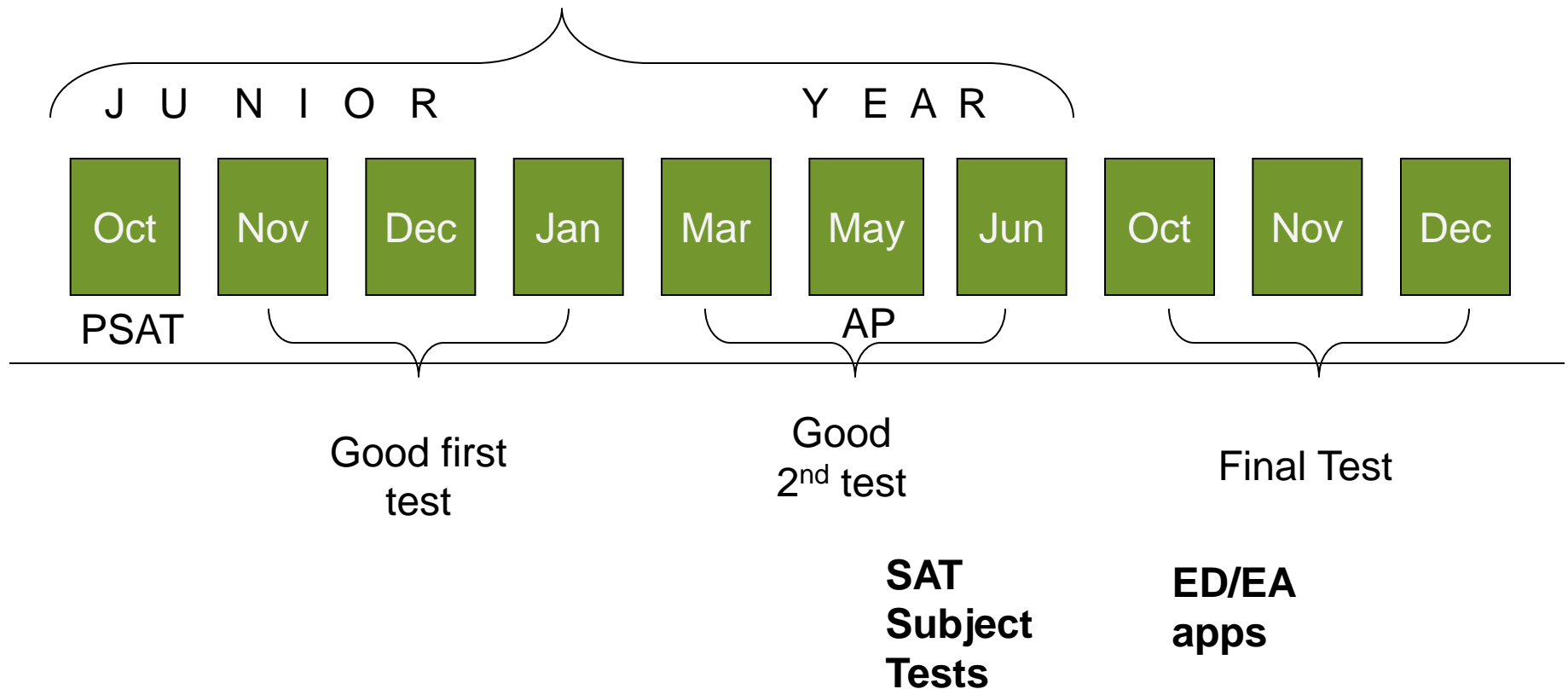
Easiest

Hardest

Writing is the **most coachable** section, by leaps and bounds

The ideal time to prep

- Junior Year is the absolute best time to start this process. The earlier the better



Prep for the SAT Subject Tests

- 3,000 + US colleges, roughly 100 use Subject Tests for admissions
- How many to take: 2. Harvard, Georgetown, Princeton: 3
- Timing: May and June are ideal, aligned with APs
- Some schools accept the ACT as a replacement for the SAT+ SAT subject tests: Yale, Brown, Penn, and Duke
- Math 1: easier questions, harder curve.
Math 2: harder questions, easier curve, ideal post Pre-Cal.
- UC Systems dropped Subject Tests for class of 2012 and beyond.

Score Reporting

- Score Choice: changes nothing
- Cherry Picking scores: rewards multiple iterations
- No prejudice against multiple sittings

What matters is **that** you get the score, not **how** you get the score

Prep for the PSAT?

- Only if you are National Merit Bound
- Prep hard for Writing: it's only about the overall index, not the parts
- 2009 NM Index for GA: 215
- NM can translate into serious money- Families can leverage the tiny NM award for merit scholarships worth 10,000K + annually

Suggested Timelines

- Doing the right thing at the right time



JR Year Timeline

- **Summer:** stay involved in extracurricular activities. Show consistency and depth.
- **August:** Take a challenging schedule. Add as many APs as you can realistically handle. Jr. year grades must be solid.
- **October:** PSAT. PSAT prep course if you are a potential National Merit Scholar or want to jumpstart SAT prep.
- **November – January:** Take first SAT or ACT. Prepare 8 to 12 weeks prior to scheduled test date.

JR Year Timeline continued

- **January - February:** Register for spring AP exams.
- **December - May:** Explore financial aid/ scholarships/ grants for college.
- **May – June:** APs, SAT subject tests, ACT, SAT: prep courses as needed.
- **June - August**
 - ☐ Make a college list and collect applications
 - ☐ Begin applications/essays
 - ☐ Set up interviews and college visits

Senior Year Timeline

- **Summer:** Stay involved in extracurricular activities.
- **August:** Strong academic schedule. APs are ideal. Keep grades solid.
- **September-November**
 - ☐ SAT/ACT final push if needed
 - ☐ Meet with your guidance counselor for application advice
 - ☐ Finish early applications

October: ED deadlines

SR Year Timeline continued

- **November - December:** Complete remaining applications.
- **December:** ED responses arrive
- **March- April:** Responses from colleges
- **May:** Deposits due
- **June:** Graduate and send final transcript to your school of choice!



Our Services

- SAT & ACT prep (online, private, group)
- SAT Subject and AP prep
- HS subject assistance
- Study Skills
- Essay Writing support/coaching

Additional Resources

Websites

- AdmissionsAdvice.com
- CollegeConfidential.com

Educational Consultants

- provide personalized attention and support with the college selection and application process

Books to read

- The Thinking Parent's Guide To College Admissions: Ostrum
- The Gatekeepers: Steinberg

www.appletutors.com Resources

Questions?