

## Sorting Out the College Entrance Exams

Spring is coming, and along with the Spring rains comes the dreaded college entrance exams. Starting in March your college bound Junior will begin taking the first of their college entrance exams, and you will begin the arduous task of sifting through the mounds of pamphlets and websites to determine which tests they need to take. In an ideal world our children would take on this responsibility, but we don't live in an ideal world. In fact we live in a world where our children are so overwhelmed with the pressures of classes, driving and their always hectic social life, that any added pressure will more than likely send them into a nervous breakdown. This unfortunate fact means that it becomes our responsibility to insure our children are taking the right tests and headed in the right direction.

So which test is the right test, and what is the difference between the ACT and the SAT? If you haven't asked these questions yet, you soon will be, and hopefully we can answer a few of these questions for you and take a little stress out of your life.

ACT or SAT, that is the question. Many parents and their children want to know which test is easier, and which one gives them the best chance of getting a higher score. Unfortunately the answer is not that simply. Originally the ACT test was developed and used as the standard entrance exam for the majority of Mid-Western colleges and universities, and the SAT was the test used by the vast majority of colleges in the Eastern and Western extremes of the United States. Today the vast majority of colleges accept either the SAT or the ACT when making their admissions decisions. So again the question arises, which test is better, and the answer is, it depends. The major differences in the tests involve the types of questions that are being asked. The ACT test tends to ask questions that are very content based and tests the knowledge that one would gain through a typical high school education. The SAT on the other hand asks questions that are more based on a student's reasoning and problem solving skills. This test is less concerned with what the student has learned and more concerned with how the student can apply their own problem solving skills. The ACT also contains a "Science Reasoning" section, and the SAT has no science questions. The SAT also places a heavy emphasis on vocabulary skills as well as grammar; while the ACT's English section places its emphasis almost completely on grammar skills. In the end it is your son or daughter's specific skill set that will determine which test is better. If your child is very logical and a good problem solver then the SAT is the best option, but if they are better at memorization and the regurgitation of facts then the ACT is the better choice.

Whether you choose the SAT or the ACT, you do not have to go it alone. Here at Math Support Services we offer both tutoring and classes designed to prepare your Son or Daughter for whichever test they choose to take. We are happy to counsel you on which test is right for your situation, and our classes can help prepare them for all sections of the tests including the English and grammar sections. If you have any questions on our ACT or SAT programs please call (661) 255-1730 and ask for Jared, and watch next month for another article in our continued series on college preparedness.