

TEST RIDE

The SAT and College Admissions

CUP



The SAT was first developed as a US Army enlistment test during WWI. Psychologist Carl Brigham adopted the test for schools to see who would be a good student.

In the Spring of 2015, CUP collaborated with teaching artist Max Allbee and curious students from Lyons Community School to look into standardized testing, focusing on the SAT. What is it like to take the test? How do SAT scores relate to college admissions? Who benefits from the SAT? To investigate, students examined their own test-taking experiences then interviewed stakeholders from the National Public Radio (NPR) and Columbia University.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org.

Teaching Artist: Max Allbee
Project Lead: Jenn Anne Williams
Project Support: Christy Herbes

Lyons Community School is a small school in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn committed to providing a broad, stimulating experience in the liberal arts, and preparing students for college, healthy adulthood, and life-long learning. To learn more, visit lyonscommunityschool.org.

Lyons Community School
Classroom Teacher: Kasi Addison

Students: Kiecha Alford, Brandon Barragan, Chris Barragan, Stefan Cato, Priscilla Clayton, Ezequiel Collado, Shawnay Crowder, Stefany Fajardo, Tahj Fox Elliott, Angelly Germosen, Michelle Gonzalez, Kashonna Green, Benjamin Hawkins, Autumn Hayes, Itai Hernandez, Kyle Joseph, Kemi Karim, Sylvia Lovell, Nataina Mervilus, Faith Redman, Kimani Smith, Tiara Santiago, Christopher Toledo, Bryan Torres, Lesainy Vargas, Benjamin Uhoh

The SAT was originally meant to be a psychological test that measured all of the talents and abilities of students. Based on the large cost it would take to analyze the results of the test, the SAT was narrowed down to a multiple-choice format of just math and English.



The SAT is equally a test of the process of elimination and how well you follow directions. "It's also a test of your motivation to do well. If you don't care about the test or understand why you're taking the test, you're not going to do well."
-Anya Kamenetz

A high test score on the SAT can show potential about a student that grades in school may not display. "You want to have that chance with people. On the other hand the idea that [a low test score on] the SAT would stop people [from going to college] seems to me to be a mistake."
-Anya Kamenetz



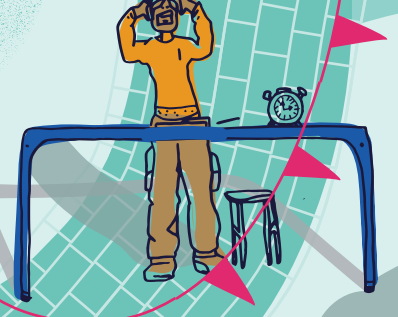
Like a rollercoaster, students have found in taking the SAT that there are a lot of ups and downs.

"Universities before the SAT were really just for a few, rich white men who got into schools based on family connections. The SAT was thought of as a fair way to open up colleges to smart people who may not have had the traditional connections to higher education."
-Anya Kamenetz
Author and NPR Lead Digital Education Reporter



Applying to college takes hard work and dedication. You can prepare for the SAT with the following:
-Study the SAT prep book
-Take a SAT prep course
-Practice for the SAT by taking the PSAT
-Ask your school for more prep resources
-Bring a calculator and snacks to the SAT testing site!
For more test information, visit: <https://sat.collegeboard.org>
If you don't do well, you can take it again!

Studies show that the more money your family makes, the higher score you're likely to get on the SAT. Some families can afford extra SAT test-prep classes and tutors. For free SAT resources visit your local library, Number2.com, and khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat



"[SAT] scores might tell part of the story, but not the full story. We need to look at qualitative measures such as personal statements, letters of recommendations, essays, student leadership, volunteer activities, community service, etc. to fully understand one's potential for success in higher education."
-Dr. Thomas P. Rock
Associate Provost for Enrollment Services
Teachers College, Columbia University

"Standardized tests are usually one piece of the puzzle to understanding an applicant, but many institutions are moving away from standardized testing and looking at other ways to evaluate one's potential for higher education."
-Dr. Thomas P. Rock

Robert Sternberg created a series of tests called Rainbow, Kaleidoscope, and Panorama. The universities that used these tests saw an increase in the quality of applicants, in terms of future grades and leadership participation, and an increase in the overall diversity of applicants. "[These tests] were able to pretty much eliminate every ethnic group difference in scores. These kinds of tools are widening what we're looking for [in students]. We want better citizens, better people, and not just people that are good at filling in bubbles."
-Anya Kamenetz



Typically universities that accept only students with higher SAT scores also have better resources to help students succeed. "In the world that we live in now, doing well on standardized tests gives people advantages. Why don't we enable everybody to have the resources that they need to get their education?"
-Anya Kamenetz



Currently there are more than 800 accredited, bachelor degree granting colleges and universities that don't require the SAT as part of the application process. To find out what schools are test optional, visit <http://ink.niche.com/list-test-optional-schools>

Thanks to our interviewees Anya Kamenetz and Dr. Thomas P. Rock. Special thanks to Oscar Nuñez, Kevin Park, and Sandy Xu. This project was made possible by the Bay and Paul Foundations and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Additional support was provided by City Council Member Antonio Reynoso.

