



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

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In This Issue

[5 Mistakes Even the Savviest Parents Make](#)

[Featured Student: Samantha Williams](#)

[Now is a Good Time to Start Thinking About the SAT and ACT](#)

[2009-2010 SAT and ACT Test Dates](#)

[Featured Tutor: Anne-Marie Mettus](#)

5 Mistakes Even the Savviest Parents Make

How to Raise Academically Successful Children and Have a Peaceful Home



1. Lack of Afterschool Structure

A 30-minute break after school is optimal, followed by homework, chores, and then privileges. Create a schedule with your child for these afterschool activities and post it in a highly visible location.

2. No Limits on Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 2 hours per day of TV, though many students feel that TV, computer time, video games, and cell phones are a given, rather than a privilege to be earned. Consider granting screen time as a reward for homework completion or other agreed upon

behaviors/tasks. One technique is to use a [homework contract](#) that is completed by both student and parent that includes rewards (e.g., one hour extra of Wii time).

3. Not Having a Plan for Summer

Don't wait until the middle of August to start tackling summer reading assignments or projects. The summer is for downtime, but it's also important to keep learning alive. Talk to your children now about what types of activities (tutoring, reading, camps, vacations, etc.) they can expect over the summer, and create your schedule now.

4. Making Idle Threats

By making empty, unrealistic threats such as "get another D on your report card and you're grounded for the rest of the school year" or "if your homework isn't done by 9PM you're not leaving this house for the rest of the week," your child knows you're not serious, and the behavior will most likely continue.

5. Over Involvement

It's easy to get caught up overseeing and influencing your child's academic life. Constantly nagging

them about homework, missing assignments, or upcoming projects can be detrimental to the parent-child relationship. Consider bringing in a neutral third party (like a tutor) when nightly battles repeatedly ensue.

Featured Student



Samantha Williams

Samantha Williams is another example of an A+ success story. Samantha, who is going into her senior year at Abington Friends School, began our SAT prep program last winter in anticipation of taking the March SAT. Although she had done fairly well on the PSAT, Samantha knew she could do better, plus the PSAT had not prepared her for the essay writing component of the SAT.

When Samantha's verbal tutor, Kathy Astrue, phoned Samantha to set up their initial meeting, her new student's eagerness to do well was apparent--when Kathy suggested that Samantha sign up immediately at www.collegeboard.com for the [SAT Question of the Day](#) to be emailed to her, she replied that she had already been doing it daily for years! Indeed, Samantha's motivation and diligence were integral to her success: Kathy reports that not only was Samantha very engaged during their sessions together, but that she came prepared to each session with all homework completed, and that she even requested additional work and practice sheets which were happily provided to her.

Initially her weakest area, Samantha's essay writing skills improved immensely over the course of the program. Her verbal tutor practiced brainstorming with her and showed her how to support her position with multiple, concrete examples. In addition, Kathy helped her brush up on grammatical concepts that were "fuzzy" or unfamiliar, and taught her important reading passage strategies. Finally, knowing her tutor would drill her on the vocabulary each week prompted Samantha to commit the words to memory!

Math was already a fairly strong subject for Samantha, but math tutor Michael Rothschild helped deepen Samantha's math knowledge. When reviewing homework, Samantha reports that Mike went over the problems she got wrong in detail and was very good at explaining the correct way to approach them. He also created extra problems to reinforce those weak areas and, with his sense of humor, made it enjoyable too!

Samantha decided to take the SAT in both March and May, and was extremely pleased with her final scores: 670 Critical Reading, 710 Math, 690 Writing, and an essay score of 10 (out of a possible 12). Her total SAT score of 2070 represents an increase of almost 200 points from her total PSAT score. Congratulations to Samantha on her achievement, and kudos to her tutors as well!

Now is a Good Time to Start Thinking About the SAT & ACT Tests

It is not too early to start thinking about when your child should take college entrance exams. Provided below are the SAT and ACT testing dates for the coming school year. Some factors to consider are:

* Which standardized test your child will take (some students try their hand at both the SAT and ACT to see which they do better on); [see our side-by-side comparison of the 2 tests](#)

* What extracurricular activities (sports, musical performances, or drama productions) may conflict with a testing date

* What other tests your child anticipates taking (SAT Subject Tests, AP exams)--note that the SAT may NOT be taken on the same day as SAT Subject Tests, although up to 3 SAT Subject Tests may be taken in one sitting

* The timeline for preparing for the SAT or ACT, whether your child prepares on his own, takes a group class, or signs up for A+'s one-on-one tutoring

2009-2010 SAT and ACT Test Dates

SAT Test Date	Test	Regular Registration Deadline
October 10, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	September 9, 2009
November 7, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	October 1, 2009
December 5, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	October 30, 2009
January 23, 2010	SAT and Subject Tests	December 15, 2009
March 13, 2010	SAT	February 4, 2010
May 1, 2010	SAT and Subject Tests	March 25, 2010
June 5, 2010	SAT and Subject Tests	April 29, 2010

For more information about the SAT and SAT Subject Tests, visit
www.collegeboard.com

ACT Test Date	Regular Regis. Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 12, 2009*	August 7, 2009	August 8-21, 2009
October 24, 2009	September 18, 2009	Sept. 19 - Oct. 2, 2009
December 12, 2009	November 6, 2009	November 7-20, 2009
February 6, 2010**	January 5, 2010	January 6-15, 2010
April 10, 2010	March 5, 2010	March 6-19, 2010
June 12, 2010	May 7, 2010	May 8-21, 2010

* The September 2009 test date is offered only within the 50 United States and D.C.

** No test centers are scheduled in New York for the February test date.

For more information about the ACT, visit www.act.org

Featured Tutor



Anne-Marie Mettus and Her Family at Her Daughter's Graduation in June

Anne-Marie Mettus leads a double life at A+ Test Prep & Tutoring. For five years, she has excelled as one of our most versatile tutors: she teaches a wide range of subjects including SAT and ACT Math and Verbal, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and biology. In addition to tutoring, Anne-Marie is also a part-time Director in the A+ Jenkintown office where she is responsible for a variety of administrative duties such as customer service, tutor support, bookkeeping, and marketing. She graduated with a B.S. in Biology from Allegheny College and holds an M.S. in Genetics from Penn State.

Prior to her career with A+, Anne-Marie worked for two years as a researcher in a microbiology lab at North Carolina State, and then worked for twelve years as a scientist at Ecogen, a Langhorne-based company that made biological pesticides. One of her main responsibilities there was genetic engineering of the microorganism BT and BT genes that Monsanto has used to put into their genetically modified corn and cotton.

As a tutor, Anne-Marie truly enjoys working with young people and getting to know each student and his or her family. She finds it satisfying to help students realize that they know more than they thought they knew and to see their confidence grow. With her approachable, friendly style, it is no wonder her clients enjoy working with her as well!

In her free time, Anne-Marie enjoys photography as both a hobby and a freelance occupation (she specializes in portraits of children and families), plays the piano, and likes to read and garden. She lives in Feasterville with her husband, her two children, and her dog Buddy, a lovable golden retriever mix.

School and Community Partnerships



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring provides in-home One-to-One Test Prep and Academic Subject Tutoring throughout the Delaware Valley.

We also partner with schools to provide test preparation, remedial reading and math, and study

skills courses to students throughout the region. Courses offered include SAT, ACT, SSAT, and ISEE. For more information please contact me at 215.886.9188.

Daniel Ascher, M.Ed.
President
A+ Test Prep and Tutoring

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And don't forget to visit the [A+ Blog](#), which is updated weekly with articles relating to a variety of education-related topics including college admissions, test prep, learning disabilities, reading skills, etc.

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