



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

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SAT Score Choice Update

We have previously written about The College Board's new policy called "Score Choice" which allows students to selectively report to colleges their best overall SAT scores from one, several, or all SAT test dates or their best individual test for an SAT Subject Test.

Confusion continues to swirl around this new policy, and students and parents continue to struggle with whether such selective self-reporting is advantageous or not in the college application process.

Moreover, there is no consensus among colleges on "Score Choice," and tracking down a particular school's policy about it can be challenging at best. Some colleges state their positions on their websites, while others don't address it at all.

[Click here](#) to see a blog post by Nancy Griesemer, an independent college counselor, about the frustrating and, at times, humorous results of her quest for "Score Choice" information.

Featured Student: Nick Auerbach



We are pleased to report on an outstanding achievement by one of our students. Nick Auerbach, a senior at Chestnut Hill Academy, increased his score by 300 points between the October 2008 PSAT and the May 2009 SAT! Nick had done no preparation at all for the PSAT but felt that he could improve his performance significantly on the SAT, so he signed up last spring for A+'s test prep program. He was tutored by Pam Milligan (Critical Reading/Writing) and Michael Rothschild (Math).

Pam reports that Nick was a diligent and focused student who always did all of his homework. Moreover, Nick was remarkable in his willingness to be instructed and in his openness to trying various strategies. He also went to

great lengths to improve his vocabulary beyond the standard flashcards by doing extra reading and creating his own vocabulary book.

Mike recognized that Nick was very motivated, but that he struggled with time management in the math section, so he worked with him to improve his efficiency. They worked together to identify which problems to answer and which ones to skip, and to be mindful of questions which were more time-consuming.

Nick describes both Pam and Mike as being "fantastic" and "phenomenal" tutors who really cared about his progress and gave him every opportunity to succeed. Inspired by his earlier improvement, Nick is currently taking our A+ SAT refresher program to try to improve his scores even more on the October test! He is interested in history, English, and political science and is considering applying to colleges such as Georgetown, George Washington University, American University, Muhlenberg, Colgate, Hamilton, and others.

Congratulations to Nick on both his work ethic and his outstanding SAT performance, and kudos to his A+ tutors as well!

Free Proctored ACT and SAT Practice Exams



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring is once again offering free, no-obligation, proctored practice exams to current students and to members of the community.

Two proctored practice exams are scheduled for this fall on the following dates:

ACT Proctored Practice Exam -- Saturday, October 31 from 8:45-1:00 PM

SAT Proctored Practice Exam -- Saturday, November 21 from 8:45-1:00 PM

Both proctored exams will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 120 N. Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038.

This is a great opportunity for students to take the ACT or SAT under actual test-like conditions, prior to sitting for the "real" thing. Students will receive a detailed score report which includes an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses on the exam.

Space is limited, so call our office today at 215.886.9188 or [email us](#) to register and reserve your spot!

A+'s Pick of Reference Books



Every home should have on hand a good collection of reference books, including at minimum a dictionary, a thesaurus, and an atlas. Although students today are often prone to looking things up on-line, such virtual sources are unfortunately not always reliable. The following is a sampling of some of the best reference books--some serious, some quirky--that may be new to you!

On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition, by William Zinsser (Harper Collins). The 30th anniversary edition of this classic volume on writing non-fiction contains a new introduction and a new chapter on writing a family history or a memoir. Academic but accessible to general readers interested in learning to write well, this work has been praised for its sound advice, its clarity, and the warmth of its style. Whether you want to write about people or places, science and technology, business, sports, the arts, or about yourself, On Writing Well offers you fundamental principles as well as the insights of a distinguished writer and teacher. Zinsser, a former writer for the [New York Herald Tribune](#) and the author of more than seventeen books, teaches at the New School in New York and at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. (Ages 14 to adult)

Ultimate Visual Dictionary (DK Publishing). This book provides more than 6,000 color photos, illustrations and visual definitions of more than 33,000 terms. This updated, expanded, and easy-to-use reference covers everything from academic subjects, such as prehistoric Earth and science, to popular culture, such as sports and music. The dictionary analyzes all aspects of the natural world and human achievement in stunning visual realism. Cutaways and exploded views provide an illuminating new perspective on everything from the inside of a volcano to the inner workings of a car. This dictionary is geared toward younger children and visual learners in particular. The stunning photos and illustrations grab the reader's attention and will undoubtedly spark your child's interest in a wide range of topics. (All ages)

Descriptionary: A Thematic Dictionary, by Marc McCutcheon (Facts on File: Writer's Library). The subtitle of Descriptionary says it's "the book for when you know what it is, but not what it's called." But that description is also a bit limiting, as this handy reference guide can be just as easily used as a standard dictionary when you do know what the word is. Rather than the alphabetical arrangement found in dictionaries and thesauruses, the words are grouped according to general categories, such as

animal and insects, food and drink, the human body and mind, and occupations. Within these broad areas are subheadings; for example, "environment" has been divided into thirty categories ranging from atmosphere to wind. The word listings in these short sections are alphabetical, and while each has a straightforward explanation, you won't find alternative spellings, a pronunciation guide, or any of those dictionary-standard accompaniments to the definition. (All ages)

How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines, by Thomas C. Foster (HarperCollins). What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface--a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character--and there's that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you. In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, How to Read Literature Like a Professor is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun. (Ages 14 to adult)

New Fowler's Modern English Usage, 3rd Edition, by H. W. Fowler (Oxford University Press). This volume remains the classic guide to English usage worldwide. A charming blend of information and good humor, Fowler's offers advice and background information on all aspects of English language, from grammar to spelling to literary style. Users will find practical help with grammar, syntax, style, and choice of words. Whether you have a question about split infinitives, unattached participles, or political correctness, you will find a clear and reliable answer here. (Ages 14 to adult)

The Big Book of Boy Stuff, by Bart King (Gibbs Smith). Written by a middle-school teacher and aimed at readers aged 8-14, this award-winning, mischievous book contains the answers to such burning questions as:

- What do I do if I get a bean stuck up my nose?
- How can I make lightning without killing myself?
- Where can I find new practical jokes to play on my friends and family?
- How can I make a rocket?
- How do I tell a girl I like her?
- Why would I tell a girl I like her?
- How many mosquitoes does it take to suck all the blood out of a person?

The book also contains tips for dealing with bullies, ideas for outdoor activities, and much more. Bart King has also written the girl's counterpart to this volume, The Big Book of Girl Stuff.

Free College Admissions Workshop for Parents and Students

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.



Attention parents of high school juniors and seniors....

A+ is hosting a FREE College Admissions Workshop on Tuesday evening, October 6th at 7:30 PM. The workshop will include information about:

- What parents and students need to know about selecting a college.
- Finding the college that is the *right fit* for your child.
- How to deal with all that stress!
- Creating a college application timeline.
- Is the ACT "easier" than the SAT?
- What about taking both the SAT and the ACT?
- Do colleges prefer the SAT to the ACT?
- Should my child take the SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II exams)?

The workshop will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 120 North Easton Road, Glenside, PA 19038. Please call 215.886.9188 or [email](#) to RSVP, or with questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you for your interest in A+ and our newsletter. Feel free to contact us at 215.886.9188 or on the web at www.aplustutoring.com.

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.

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.

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