

# A+ Test Prep and Tutoring

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## May, 2006 Newsletter

### What's New?

This spring A+ launched a pro bono SAT prep program for deserving, motivated students from the greater Philadelphia area who might not otherwise be able to afford this type of individualized, one-to-one tutoring. Nine students from the following high schools participated in this program:

Abington Friends School  
Cheltenham High School  
Germantown Friends School  
Mount St. Joseph's Academy  
Penn Charter  
Springfield High School  
Springside School  
St. Joseph's Preparatory School  
Upper Dublin High School

A+ offered each of these students an SAT test prep program consisting of seven 90-minute sessions with a verbal/reading/writing tutor, and six 90-minute sessions with a math tutor. Many of our excellent tutors volunteered their time for this worthy cause. Students in this program receive tutoring in one of our two office locations or at their schools (no at-home tutoring).

We will offer this pro bono program again next spring and hope to accommodate 15 students whom we will select with the help of their guidance counselors. Interested guidance counselors are encouraged to contact Dan Ascher at 215.886.9188.

### Featured Students

*Most Improved Student:* Congratulations to Alex Pester, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Enfield Elementary School in Flourtown, who has shown exceptional improvement in the area of reading. Two years ago Alex was only reading at kindergarten level, but he is now reading at a 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade level and has become an avid reader. He is currently reading The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, and also enjoys The Little House on the Prairie series. He gets 100's on spelling tests and his reading comprehension and overall grades have improved. We also applaud Alex's tutor, Dorothea Brown, who has been working with him for two years. Keep up the good work!

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505 Old York Road, Lower Level, Jenkintown, PA 19046-0611  
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*Excellent SAT student:* Drew Fullen, a junior at Penn Charter, has been selected by his SAT tutors, Carolyn Scott and Anne-Marie Mettus, as the outstanding SAT student of the month. Carolyn reports that Drew “was always attentive, always prepared with homework, grateful to be helped, courteous and pleasant.” Drew took the April SAT and achieved results of close to 1900. Most notably, he received a score of 10 (out of a possible 12) on his essay. Drew says he felt well prepared on test day for the questions. Specifically, he learned how to incorporate examples from history and literature into his essay, and learned several ways to arrive at math answers more quickly. Drew is enthusiastic about A+’s test prep program and “can not say enough good things about it!”

## **SAT Tip**

Timing is everything!

1. Check with your guidance counselor and the College Board website ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) about when to register for the SAT. Note that the SAT is typically offered about seven times a year. Although the majority of your classmates may be registering to take the test on one certain test date, it may not necessarily be advisable for you to take it on that day if it will conflict with other standardized tests you may wish to take--the SAT Subject Tests, for example--or Advanced Placement exams. Each SAT test date has its own registration deadline, so be sure to register on time for the date you have chosen. Otherwise, you will have to pay a late registration fee of \$21.00 and, if the testing location is full but you want stand-by status, there is an additional fee of \$36.00. The old adage applies here—time is money!
2. Allow yourself time the day before the SAT to relax a bit. The SAT is a long exam and it’s important to de-stress beforehand. Be sure to set your alarm clock the night before (have a parent do likewise as a back-up), go to bed at a reasonable time, and get a full night’s sleep. In the morning, eat a good breakfast and arrive about 20 minutes early to the testing location.
3. Wearing a watch on test day is also advisable. You never know where a clock might be located in the exam room and wearing your own watch avoids the awkwardness of having to crane your neck to see what time it is. Before the test begins, synchronize your watch with the clock in the room and keep track of your time during each section of the SAT.

## **Study Tip**

Does your child have trouble starting an essay or research paper? Have your student try some of the following brainstorming techniques to help hurdle this initial writer’s block.

Mapping (also referred to as a “web”): In the center of a sheet of paper, write down the topic or prompt. From this central point, draw lines to supporting ideas. For example, if the topic is “Our Solar System,” the nine planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, etc.) would be the subcategories. Under each of these subcategories, the student then adds supporting details such as the planet’s size, distance from the sun, number of moons, etc. This is an excellent way for visual learners to organize their ideas.

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**Listing:** Simply list anything and everything about the topic that comes to mind, from very broad statements to specific facts, dates, people, etc. The list does not need to be spelled correctly, be grammatical, or be in complete sentences. The important thing is not to worry about organizing these thoughts, but just to get them down on paper.

**Freewriting:** While listing is a vertical method of brainstorming, freewriting is its horizontal sibling and may be better suited to those who need to express their ideas in fuller prose. Again, the idea is to write freely across the page without focusing on grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

**Questions:** On a sheet of paper write down the 5 “w’s”—who, what, when, where, and why--plus “how.” The student then answers each question. Bear in mind that some questions may take on multiple forms. For example, “What events led up to the Revolutionary War?” and “What role did France play in the colonists’ defeat of the British?”

### **Summer Workshops for College-bound students**

College Pursuit, located in North Wales, PA, runs workshops in which college-bound students complete many of the tasks required throughout the college application process. The workshops are comprised of three two-hour sessions that are held in various locations in Montgomery County and run throughout the summer. Many topics are covered including outlining/drafting the college essay, filling out the Common Application, identifying potential references, completing a “brag sheet,” researching schools, and creating a preliminary list of colleges. Tips about campus tours and mock interviews are also part of the curriculum. Two experienced professionals facilitate these workshops. One is a director of college admissions, and the other is a high school guidance director. For more information, call Tina Gregor at College Pursuit, 215-542-7512.

### **Helpful Links**

Are you looking for summer activities or reading suggestions for your child?  
Check out these websites for ideas.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/librariesandyou/recomreading/recomreading.htm>

The American Library Association offers many reading suggestions, tips, and programs for readers of all levels, from children, to young adults, to adults. They even offer specialized reading lists such as “Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers” and “Harry-a-like Books” (books that may have similar story elements to Harry Potter but more importantly replicate the accessibility, tone and flavor).

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<http://www.crossword-puzzles.co.uk/>

Are you a puzzle buff? This site boasts a wide variety of crossword puzzles, including American crossword puzzles from notable newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post, educational puzzles, cryptic crosswords, foreign-language puzzles, themed puzzles, and links to Sudoku puzzles.

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

This excellent, comprehensive site of the National Geographic Society allows you to explore the worlds of geography, cartography, animals and nature, history, space and science. It includes special sections for kids and educators. There is something here for everyone—maps, videos, photography, music, and much more. Sign up for free newsletters and play games too.

[www.history.org](http://www.history.org)

Go back in time to Colonial Williamsburg. Take a history quiz. View slideshows and videos depicting everyday life in colonial times. Find out about 18<sup>th</sup> century manners, gardening, family, clothing, tools, the African-American experience, and much more.

### **Current A+ Promotions**

Register for a complete PSAT or SAT test prep program by June 9, 2006 and receive a \$100 registration discount. Please use offer code P0506.

\$50 off a summer Skill Builder Program if you register by May 31. These programs include: Math Booster, Vocabulary Booster, Write Better Essays, and Academic Coaching. Please use offer code: Summer2006.

Refer-a-friend Program: Do you know someone who might be interested in PSAT, SAT, or ACT tutoring? For students who have not previously enrolled in one of our test preparation programs, we offer a free 1-hour one-to-one strategy session. This is a great, no-obligation way to get to know us. A referral gift will be provided for referrals resulting in enrollment. Call or email us today!

Contact info:

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring

Tel. 215-886-9188

Tel. 610-520-0537

Email: [office@aplustutoring.com](mailto:office@aplustutoring.com)

Website: [www.aplustutoring.com](http://www.aplustutoring.com)

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