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A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

November, 2007

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*The Philadelphia Inquirer* recently sponsored the first national Sudoku Championship on October 20 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, an event which was attended by 857 contestants and about 1,000 spectators. The host and commentator of the competition was Will Shortz, the renowned puzzle

### Featured Student



We are delighted to report that one of our SAT students achieved an almost perfect score on the Math portion of the October 2007 SAT. Michael Brister, a senior at Upper Dublin High School, scored an admirable 780. He opted to prepare for just the Math portion of the SAT over the summer. Michael worked with A+ tutor Melissa Nash for six 1.5-hour tutoring sessions. His previous SAT Math score

editor of *The New York Times*. The object of Sudoku, a puzzle which employs logic but requires no skill in mathematics, is to fill in all 81 squares in a grid divided into nine three-by-three boxes. With anywhere from 17 to 33 squares already filled in, players must complete the grids by correctly filling in each row, column, and section with every digit from one to nine. In each round, the contestants, who were divided into different skill levels-beginner, intermediate, and advanced-had a time limit of 30 minutes.

In this cerebral group of contestants whose ages ranged from 6 to 87 was none other than our very own A+ tutor, Michael Rothschild. Michael is currently in his final semester at Temple University and has been an A+ math tutor for the last two and a half years. He is an avid Sudoku puzzler and thought it would be fun and challenging to enter the *Inquirer* contest. Despite the grueling pressure of competing with top-notch players in timed sessions, Michael did well in the competition and took third place among the 150 advanced players in the third round, finishing in an impressive time of 11 minutes, 40 seconds, and was one person away from competing in the final round. While, unfortunately, Michael did not win the grand prize of \$10,000 or a place on the national Sudoku team, he was awarded a Philadelphia Sudoku Championship tee-shirt and had a great time!

If you are interesting in solving some Sudoku puzzles, here are two sites to explore:

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

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

### College Application Vocabulary Lesson



Winding one's way through the college application process can be daunting. Each school has its own unique requirements for standardized testing, application deadlines, application forms and fees, and essays. The following are some important terms you will encounter along the way:

- **Early Decision:** A binding process in which an applicant applies early (typically by November 1) to his top choice of school with the understanding that if he is accepted, he is required to attend that college. It is a way of making a strong statement of interest to his first-choice school and, when successful, it eases the stress and financial burden of applying to multiple colleges.
- **Early Action:** A non-binding process in which a student applies early to a college in order to be notified early in her senior year of that college's admission decision. This is an attractive alternative to Early Decision, since she can reap the benefits of finding out early if she is accepted or

from the March test was 660, but Michael is a very strong math student and felt he could improve that score, so he set a reasonable goal for himself-an 80 point increase.

Melissa describes Michael as an ideal student to tutor. He was a careful worker who needed improvement in interpreting the most difficult problems and in opening his mind to alternative methods of solving them. Michael reports that Melissa was great to work with and boosted his confidence. His greatest moment during tutoring was the day he scored an 800 on his final practice test. This set the stage for his official test score of 780. Michael raised his SAT math score by 120 points-an outstanding achievement that was the result of his hard work. He is now faced with the happy dilemma of looking into colleges that were once out of his reach. Some of the colleges that he is considering applying to are Bucknell, Penn State, University of Delaware, Syracuse, Gettysburg, Temple, and Cornell.

Congratulations to both Michael and Melissa on such an outstanding achievement!

### Enter A+ Essay Contest

In last month's issue of the A+ newsletter, we announced our first annual A+ Essay Contest, open to all students in grades 9-12 who are attending high school in Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks, or Delaware counties in Pennsylvania.

The submission deadline is December 1, 2007, and three winning essays will be

not, but there is no legal requirement to attend that college.

- **Single-Choice Early Action:** This is a special variation of Early Action offered by a handful of colleges, including Yale. Single-choice early action programs (as the name suggests) do not allow a candidate to apply to other schools during the early-action period. However, once a student receives EA (Early Action) decisions (mid-December), he is free to apply elsewhere, if he so chooses.
- **Regular Decision:** A non-binding process in which an applicant applies to a college by its regular admission deadline, which is a set date usually between January 1 and February 15. Colleges typically notify an applicant of their decisions by April 1.
- **Rolling Admissions:** A policy used by many colleges and universities whereby a student can submit an application to the school anytime within a large window. The window is usually over six months long. Some schools do not have a previously specified end date (the window simply closes when all spots are filled). The college reviews the application and notifies the applicant of its decision within a few weeks of submission. Some feel that those who apply earlier in the window have a better chance of being accepted, and that those early applicants fare better in being allocated financial aid and even housing.

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selected for a prize of \$200 each. For more information please call us at 215.886.9188.

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

We also provide in-school Test Prep courses through our School Partners program. For more information please contact me at 215.886.9188.

Daniel Ascher  
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