



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

May, 2009

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Summer Tutoring



PLANNING FOR SUMMER 2009

Summer is an excellent time for tutoring! Without the stress and time constraints of school, homework, and extracurricular activities, students are better able to focus on learning. A+ offers a variety of summer tutoring options to strengthen your student's skills.

At A+ we can work with you to design a customized program of one-to-one instruction to meet the specific goals you have for your son or daughter this summer.

Tutoring is available for:

- PSAT, SAT, or ACT
- Academic subjects such as reading, math, sciences, etc.
- Organization, Study Skills, Note-taking, etc.
- College application essays

Note: Students considering preparing for the PSAT, SAT, or ACT this fall should contact our office as soon as possible to set up a tutoring program. Depending upon the test you are preparing for, you may

have to start tutoring sooner than you think. Don't wait until it's too late!

FREE CONSULTATION

Call A+ today at 215-886-9188 to discuss your ideas or to schedule a free consultation.

We're here to help. And the best part is you'll still have time for summer fun!

Reliving History Through a Mock Trial



Did you know that in addition to our specialty of one-on-one tutoring A+ Test Prep and Tutoring also offers its services selectively to some after-school group programs? One such program which A+ has been affiliated with for four years is run by the [Allegheny West Foundation](#), a community development organization in the Allegheny West section of North Philadelphia.

The students who attend this after-school program all reside in the neighborhood and are in 8th through 12th grades. These teenagers are given a wonderful opportunity to learn through instruction by A+ tutors and through hands-on work experiences (the students hold paying jobs at [Tastykake](#) Thrift stores). In the past A+ has offered SAT test prep to the group, but this school year A+ tutors Nneka Kirkland and Jason Tribble taught basic math and reading skills four days a week. As an extension of this program, A+ engaged the students in an innovative academic exercise--we had the students conduct a mock trial based on the facts of the famous [Amistad affair](#).

The Amistad incident occurred in 1839 when 53 West Africans were brought to Cuba from Sierre Leone aboard the ship *La Amistad* and were sold into slavery. Led by the charismatic slave Sengbe Pieh, the slaves revolted and killed all but two of the crew and ordered these two men to sail them back to Africa. Instead, the cunning hostages sailed the ship into American waters and *La Amistad* was eventually intercepted near Long Island, New York. The complex legal case that ensued centered on issues of piracy, murder, and whether the West Africans were actually free people or "property." The case cut to the heart of the issue of slavery that was dividing the United States at that time, and the leaders in the growing abolitionist movement latched onto the case. The case made its way to the Supreme Court and the surviving West Africans were declared free and eventually returned to their homeland.



The students watched a [documentary](#) about this important time in American history and this pivotal case. They were then assigned different roles in the trial: judge, defendant, defense lawyer, prosecutor, and jury members. Lawyer John O'Donnell, Senior Counsel for Temple University Health System, generously donated his time and spoke to the students about the judicial and trial process. Two different groups of students held mock trials in May. The trials centered only on the issue of slaves as "property." Interestingly, the two different groups reached different verdicts in the case, providing a real life lesson in the trial process! Overall, the mock trial was a valuable learning experience that brought history to life for this group of teenagers.

Featured Tutor



Andrew Cies

Andrew Cies has been a tutor with A+ for almost two years and specializes in SAT Test Prep (both Math and Verbal). He graduated in 2006 from Texas A & M with a B.A. in History, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Divinity at Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside. Upon graduation he expects to enter the ministry full-time by becoming an Air Force Chaplain. Andrew also works part-time at Grundy Insurance Company in Horsham where he sells insurance policies for antique, vintage, and collector cars.

One of Andrew's great passions is music from nearly every genre. In his spare time, Andrew enjoys both listening to and playing classical and popular music. His tastes range from Beethoven to Led Zeppelin to Radiohead. He loves passing the time by playing his guitar, bass, and mandolin both alone and with friends. Andrew enjoys following sports too, especially football, and being a Dallas native he can't help but love the Cowboys. However, living in Philadelphia during last year's World Series victory has given him a good appreciation for the Phillies as well.

As an undergraduate at Texas A & M, Andrew became involved in teaching as a volunteer tutor at a local

high school and also had an eye-opening stint as a school bus driver! At A+, he enjoys the personal, human element of tutoring; he finds it gratifying to build a rapport with students and boost their confidence over the course of the test prep program as they master skills and strategies for the SAT.

Andrew lives in Willow Grove with his wife, Elizabeth.

Philadelphia Young Playwrights



We at A+ are always looking for ways to connect our students with activities and resources that will widen their horizons. If your child is interested in writing, especially in creative writing, this article will be of particular interest. Founded in 1987, Philadelphia Young Playwrights is a unique non-profit organization dedicated to tapping the potential of Philadelphia-area youth through the vehicle of playwriting. Its mission is to promote self-esteem in students with diverse abilities and backgrounds by fostering young people's writing, critical thinking, and interactive skills.

[Philadelphia Young Playwrights](#) accomplishes this mission through a variety of programs including its Core Program of Playwriting Workshops, an Advanced Playwriting Group, an upcoming Touring Program, Student Playwrights Retreats, and the Annual Playwriting Festival. The latter is a contest open to students aged 18 or younger. The play's subject matter and style are up to the playwright. The play can be written by a single individual or have multiple authors. Each entry is evaluated by members of the Literary Committee and receives written comments which are then sent to the budding playwright(s).

Another contest that the organization introduced a few years ago in collaboration with [InterAct Theatre Company](#) is the Young Voices High School Monologue Festival. This year Philadelphia Young Playwrights received 333 monologues of which there were 17 winners. The winning writers then worked with professionals from both organizations to polish their works and the resulting monologues were then performed by professional actors at Adrienne Theater in Philadelphia, the home base of InterAct. What a gratifying experience it must be for these young writers to see their words come to life on stage! To find out more, read the [Philadelphia Inquirer article](#).

For more information about how your school or child can get involved in Philadelphia Young Playwrights' programs, visit their [website](#).

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

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.

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