



## A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Newsletter

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### 2008 Pro Bono Program



We at A+ are committed to serving our community by providing help for students who may not be able to afford private SAT tutoring.

For the third consecutive year, we are offering a one-to-one SAT Prep program free of charge to a select group of students who have demonstrated both financial need and academic promise. These students will be taking the SAT on May 3, 2008.

Fourteen juniors were selected with the help of their guidance departments from the following Delaware Valley schools:

Council Rock North High School  
 Mount St. Joseph's  
 Penn Charter  
 Gwynedd Mercy Academy  
 Springfield Township High School  
 Wissahickon High School  
 Central Bucks South School District  
 Radnor High School  
 Germantown High School  
 New Hope-Solebury High School

### Featured Student



We are pleased to give recognition to Nicole Sabatino, a senior at Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School, for increasing her SAT scores by almost 300 points between her March and June 2007 test dates. Nicole is an A student at Gwynedd Mercy who is particularly strong in math and science. However, she was disappointed by her March scores because she did not feel they reflected her true potential. Shortly thereafter, she began A+'s 13-session SAT test prep program in order to prepare for the June 2007 test.

Nicole had weekly sessions, alternating between verbal tutor, Melissa Nash, and math tutor, Paul Lannutti, who both commented how motivated, focused, and hard-working Nicole was--essential qualities to a student's success in the program. Together, the tutors and Nicole set a reasonable score improvement goal of 210 points which was based on her previous SAT performance and grades in school.

Nicole not only reached that goal, but far exceeded it. Nicole has already been accepted to the University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University, Loyola (MD), and Providence College, and has also applied to Bucknell, Villanova, and the University of Delaware. She hopes to major in elementary or special education. Congratulations to Nicole and her tutors for a job well done!

### Featured Tutor

We'd like to thank our partner schools and the A+ tutors who participate in this program. Good luck to these deserving students on their May SATs.

## How to Build Your Vocabulary



How can high school students improve their vocabulary in order to do better on the SAT? Make no mistake about it-vocabulary is at the heart of both the Writing and Critical Reading sections of the SAT:

- In the Essay, you must be able to employ language effectively and persuasively to convey your point of view, using varied and accurate vocabulary.
- In the Reading Passages, you must be able to grasp the overall meaning of a passage and individual words and phrases contained therein.
- In Sentence Completion questions, you are asked to fill in the blank(s) in a sentence, using contextual clues, and select the most appropriate word(s) from a list of five.

It can be stressful trying to learn vocabulary a month or two before taking the SAT. This is especially true if the student's vocabulary is below average. We offer the following suggestions for expanding your student's vocabulary well before his junior year:

- Reading material: Create a "reading-rich" environment for your teen. If you don't already, buy or subscribe to *The Philadelphia Inquirer* or *The New York Times* and subscribe to magazines of general interest (such as *Time* or *Newsweek*), as well as to some more specialized ones that will pique your child's interest. Encourage your student to read editorials and magazine articles and discuss them together, including any unfamiliar words or terms. Many students feel overwhelmed by schoolwork and don't feel they have the time to read a book for pleasure on the side, but newspapers and magazines offer informative and entertaining articles of manageable length that can be read in their entirety while eating a bowl of cereal!



Bob Roach has been busily tutoring students at A+ Test Prep and Tutoring for almost three years. Like many of our tutors, Bob is employed full-time outside of A+. For the last 6 ½ years, he has been a Program Advisor for the College Network, Inc., a publisher of educational materials based in Indianapolis.

He also teaches a math course at Manor College in Jenkintown. Previously, Bob worked in the computer field; he began as a programmer, then branched out into computer consulting, sales management, and teaching courses in introductory computer programming.

With this varied background, it is no wonder that Bob tutors so many different subjects: both Math and Verbal SAT prep, all levels of high school math, physics, English, and even Spanish! He enjoys working with young people and seeing them succeed in reaching their goals.

In his spare time, Bob enjoys playing the violin and specializes in Celtic music. Although Bob had played the violin in high school, he had not played for many years until, about 8 years ago, a neighbor who plays in a band encouraged him to start playing again. Bob practiced with and eventually joined the neighbor's band, called "The Boys of County Bucks," and soon found himself playing traditional Celtic music regularly at various venues: vineyards, pubs, wedding receptions, charitable events, and the Pumpkinfest in Bucks County, among others. The band's Celtic music is especially in demand around St. Patrick's Day!

The band has produced two CDs and has its own website: [boysofcountybucks.com](http://boysofcountybucks.com) (check out their schedule of upcoming performances). Bob's rekindled interest in music has been a fun way of reconnecting with his past and has also been very therapeutic. Bob has even competed in the annual fiddle contest held at the Howell Farm in New Jersey.

Bob lives in Washington Crossing, Bucks County, with his wife of 28 years, Holly, and has 3 grown children. His other hobbies include skiing and sailing.

# College Prep Timeline



- Dictionary: Many teens now rely almost exclusively on on-line dictionaries to look up the meanings of words, but this is often an inconvenient and unappealing option when your teen is sitting at the kitchen table reading the newspaper. Have a dictionary handy in your main living area and in the area where your teen does most of his studying. Encourage him to use a dictionary by modeling this behavior yourself. If he is reading an article aloud to you, for example, ask him if he knows what the word "embargo" means. If he doesn't, then look the word up together.
- Library: Visit your local library with your teenager, even if it is just to browse at first. There is a wealth of material at the library - magazines, special "teen sections," CDs, DVDs, books on tape-that he will (eventually) find of interest. Don't be upset if he doesn't check out War and Peace on the first visit. Just get in the habit of going to the library on a regular basis. If your child is interested in a particular topic or genre, consult with the reference librarian for ideas.
- Study a foreign language. Encourage your child to study French, Spanish, German, Latin or any other foreign language your school may offer. Many of our English words stem from other languages, and his grasp of English grammar will be enhanced by studying the grammar of a foreign language.
- Word-a day calendars: This is a fun way of learning new and sometimes quirky language on a daily basis.
- Merriam-Webster Word of the Day: Follow this link and sign up to have this famous publisher of dictionaries email your student a "word of the day" for free: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/word/subscribe.htm> The word is defined, the part of speech is indicated, the word is then used in a sample sentence, and some background information about the word's origin is then provided.
- Crossword puzzles: Encourage your teen to try his hand at crossword puzzles by either buying a book of puzzles or suggesting he try the ones that appear in your favorite newspaper, or work together on one. Have him check his answers the following day or week.

## Seniors:

- By now you should have already submitted your applications to any colleges with deadlines of January 1 or January 15, but some colleges have deadlines of February 1 or even February 15. Finish checking these applications for accuracy and polishing the admission essays, and submit them on-line or by regular mail as soon as possible.
- Continue to work hard in your courses and keep up your grades; your final senior year transcript will be forwarded to all colleges.

## Juniors:

- If you haven't already done so, register for any standardized tests you will be taking this spring, including ACT or SAT, and any SAT Subject Tests. The longer you delay, the less likely you are to get your first choice of testing location.
- Now is a good time to begin planning to visit some colleges this spring. Many high schools have scheduled days off for various holidays (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, etc.), spring break, and teacher in-service days. Take advantage of these days off to visit colleges that interest you. Go on-line to each college's website to see if the school offers tours on the day you plan to visit - if the college is also on spring break, they may not offer campus tours and you would not get to see the school bustling with activity. Group the colleges geographically - visit the campus of Georgetown University in the morning, for example, and check out American University in the afternoon.

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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