

COLLEGE BOUND

YOUR APPLICATION MENTORSM

Going for the Gold When Planning Your Classes and Tests

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Free Parent/Student Upcoming Seminars

Owning the Application Process: *Developing your College List without Going Broke*

February 25, 7:30 pm

Scotch Plains Library
1927 Bartle Avenue
Scotch Plains, NJ
(908) 322-5007

I was watching the Olympic downhill moguls and as I saw each contender balance speed, form, and difficulty, I began to think about creating a class schedule for the coming year. The skiers had to find that perfect balance of challenge and speed to win and avoid losing control. For students planning their schedules, it is a similar goal, to create a schedule that will challenge you, but not make you lose control. So how do you do this? Below are some tips to help manage the process.

Selecting Classes for the Coming Year

1. **Identify your goals for college.** If you know that you would like to be competitive for a highly select college (those schools accepting fewer than 50% of their applicants), then your schedule should be the most challenging for *you*. If you do not care about attending a highly select college, then you have more leeway in selecting your classes.
2. **Push yourself beyond your comfort zone in areas of strength.** Go through your current classes and identify which subjects come most easily to you. For those areas that come easily for you, it is important to push yourself further. If you are very strong in English and foreign languages, then you should be taking the highest level in those areas. If you spend all of your time studying an Honors Math class and are still barely getting a B, then you should drop down to a lower level. If, however, you are taking Honors Math, Spanish, and English and working hard, but not killing yourself, and getting a B or better, then that is the correct level. Just like the Olympic medal hopefuls, you get more points for rigor than for taking it easy, even if it is not perfect.
3. **Go for your interests.** Once you have fulfilled all of your graduation requirements, it is time to take classes that interest you. So if you have a passion for science and no interest in foreign languages, it may be okay to double up on science senior year and not take another year of foreign language. The key is to substitute equally rigorous classes in *your* area of interest.
4. **Know your limitations.** Some kids over shoot what they can handle and that can end up just as problematic. (Think missing the jump and crashing into the spectators!) Most college students take between four to five classes per semester. So if you have four AP classes along with all your other classes and activities, that may be too much. Determine if you do better under pressure with a lot going or if you get

DIANE'S VISITS TO BOSTON AREA COLLEGES

Diane explored some of the Boston area schools early October and experienced the beauty of New England during the fall. Below are some interesting facts about each school and some information about the level of support offered on campus for students with documented learning differences.

[Read Full Descriptions of Schools](#)

overwhelmed. The most successful students (and athletes) understand their strengths and weaknesses and work with them.

Should I take the SAT or the ACT with Writing?

Testing is a necessary evil for getting into college. So the key is to find the test that works best for you. Colleges accept both the ACT and the SAT. So what's the difference? The ACT tends to be more straight-forward and also has a science section. The SAT tends to ask trickier questions and students with a good vocabulary can shine. Check out the link to build your vocabulary while also feeding the hungry. It's a fun way to learn new words. [Difference Between SAT and ACT](#)

Preparing for Standardized Tests

- 1) **Know which test you are going to take.** Both tests are equally accepted so if you can focus your energy and time on the test that suits you best, you are ahead of the game.
- 2) **Decide if you do better learning in a group class or with one on one tutoring.** Both are effective, but some kids do better in a one on one setting.
- 3) **Allow enough time to prepare.** Most people do better when they have ample time to prepare. Allow at least three to four months of preparation before the test. As sophomores, you can also spread it out over time and do things like "SAT Question of the Day" or other sites to help you break it down over a longer period. However, some people only do well with a deadline hanging over their head. So get into a prep course and do the homework each week. This will give you a deadline each week and keep you on track.
- 4) **Figure out if you need and are eligible for extended time.** I've had several clients improve their scores by upwards of 300 points just by getting the proper documentation to prove they need extended time. (See Diane's info on how to do that below)

What's the Deal with SAT Subject tests? Commonly asked Questions and Answers

How do I know if I need to take the SAT subject tests?

"Do I have to take the SAT Subject tests?" is a question I often get asked and the answer is it depends. The subject tests or SAT II's are required by several select colleges and if you are applying to certain select schools, then yes you need to take them. Most schools require or recommend two additional subject tests in conjunction with the SAT I with writing or the ACT with writing. Certain schools require an additional three subject tests, like Georgetown. The best way to determine if and how many subject tests are required or recommended is to look on the college's website under admission

requirements. If your high school subscribes to Naviance, you can also find the information listed there.

What are the Subject Tests?

The subject tests are offered in several areas included Math, Language, History & Social Studies, English, and Science. It's best to take the Subject test in the spring after you have completed a the subject, for example if you are taking US AP History, take the subject test around the same time you are preparing for the AP exam. Take the Chemistry exam right after you've finished a full year of the course. Math 1 is best to take towards the end of honors algebra 2 and when you still have a good handle on geometry. For Math 2 you will need to be almost done with trigonometry. Also it is important to take a Math and Science subject test if you plan on majoring in engineering or something science or math related.

How are they used?

Subject tests are most often used by colleges for placement purposes. They also give the admissions committee another point of reference to determine your understanding of a given subject and readiness for college.

Do I have to study for them?

It's a good idea to review a test before going in, however if you take it in conjunction with an AP exam, most students do not typically require additional studying. If not, the studying that you do will help you prepare for your final, so either way it's a plus.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND/OR ADHD-TEST TAKING TIPS

(Advice from Diane)

Standardized Testing

Allow enough time (4-6 weeks) to process the necessary paperwork when applying for testing accommodations for the College Board or the ACT. If you will be applying for accommodations for the PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Test, or ACT you need to do the following:

1. Go to the College Board website and read through the Student Eligibility Form
<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>
2. View the ACT Policy for Documentation
<http://www.act.org/aap/disab/policy.html>

If you haven't already, please call to set up a sophomore or junior consultation to discuss classes for next year and debrief on college visits.

Phone/Fax 908-789-8566

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