

The College Board Announces Bold Plans to Expand Access to Opportunity; Redesign of the SAT

College Board and Khan Academy partner to provide free SAT test preparation for the world

05/03/2014

AUSTIN, TX — College Board President David Coleman today laid out the organization's plans to move beyond delivering assessments to delivering opportunity — announcing initiatives designed to be used in concert with assessments to propel students toward college success. As part of those initiatives he presented changes to the SAT® exam. Coleman was joined by students, community leaders and College Board members at the announcement event in Austin, Texas.

"What this country needs is not more tests, but more opportunities," said Coleman. "The real news today is not just the redesigned SAT, but the College Board's renewed commitment to delivering opportunity."

Citing input from College Board members in the K–12 and higher education communities, as well as students and parents, Coleman outlined two bold new actions the organization would take to deliver opportunities to students.

The College Board's first action expands the organization's recent outreach to college-ready, low-income students to provide them with customized, targeted support in the college application process. Coleman announced that **every income-eligible student who takes the SAT will directly receive four fee waivers to apply to college, removing a cost barrier faced especially by low- and middle-income students.** This news builds on the College Board's substantial opportunity efforts to improve the academic preparation of students by ensuring that those with demonstrated potential to succeed in the Advanced Placement Program® have access to those classes.

"We can cut through so much red tape and hesitation by giving students the admission fee waivers they need, information they understand and the encouragement they need to apply more broadly," said Coleman. "This is only possible through the support and generosity of our member colleges."

The College Board's second announcement directly confronts one of the greatest inequities around college entrance exams, namely the culture and practice of high-priced test preparation. Coleman revealed that the **College Board is partnering with Khan Academy to provide the world with free test preparation materials for the redesigned SAT.** College Board and Khan Academy will build this material together for launch in spring 2015. This means for the first time ever, all students who want to take the SAT will be able to

prepare for the exam with sophisticated, interactive software that gives students deep practice and helps them diagnose their gaps at absolutely no cost. In the meantime, students who will take the current SAT can now go to Khan Academy to work through hundreds of previously unreleased practice problems from actual SAT exams, accompanied by more than 200 videos that show how to solve the problems step-by-step.

"For too long, there's been a well-known imbalance between students who could afford test-prep courses and those who couldn't," said Sal Khan, founder and executive director of Khan Academy. "We're thrilled to collaborate closely with the College Board to level the playing field by making truly world-class test-prep materials freely available to all students."

As a critical component of the organization's robust initiatives to deliver equal opportunity, the College Board is redesigning the SAT to focus on the few things that evidence show matter most for college and career readiness.

Of the redesigned exam Coleman said, "We will honor the qualities which have made the SAT excellent. We will build on the remarkable care and expertise which statisticians have used to make the exam valid and predictive. While we build on the best of the past, we commit today that the redesigned SAT will be more focused and useful, more clear and open than ever before."

Each change in the redesigned SAT draws upon evidence of the knowledge and skills that are most essential for readiness and success, and the exam is also modeled on the work that students do in challenging high school courses.

The redesigned exam will:

- have three sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math, and the Essay.
- return to the 1600 scale. The essay will provide a separate score.
- be approximately three hours in length, with an additional 50 minutes for the essay. The precise time of the exam will be affirmed through research.
- be administered both in print and by computer in 2016.

The first administration of the redesigned exam will take place in spring 2016. The College Board will release the full specifications of the exam along with extensive sample items for each section on April 16 of this year.

Major changes to the exam include:

1. **Relevant words in context:** "SAT words" will no longer be vocabulary students may not have heard before and are likely not to hear again. Instead, the SAT will focus on words that students will use consistently in college and beyond.

2. **Evidence-based reading and writing.** Students will be asked to support answers with evidence, including questions that require them to cite a specific part of a passage to support their answer choice.
3. **Essay analyzing a source:** The essay will measure students' ability to analyze evidence and explain how an author builds an argument to persuade an audience. Responses will be evaluated based on the strength of the analysis as well as the coherence of the writing. The essay portion of the writing section will no longer be required. Two major factors led to this decision. First, while the writing work that students do in the reading and writing section of the exam is deeply predictive of college readiness and success, one essay alone historically has not contributed significantly to the overall predictive power of the exam. Second, feedback from College Board member admission officers was split; some found the essay useful, many did not. The College Board will promote analytical writing throughout their assessments and instructional resources. The organization will also sponsor an awards program modeled after the Pulitzer Prize for the best student analytical writing. *The Atlantic* magazine has agreed to publish the winners.
4. **Math focused on three key areas:** The math section will draw from fewer topics that evidence shows most contribute to student readiness for college and career training. The exam will focus on three essential areas: problem solving and data analysis; the heart of algebra; and passport to advanced math. Students can study these core math areas in depth and have confidence that they will be assessed.
5. **Source documents originate from a wide range of academic disciplines, including science and social studies:** The reading section will enable students to analyze a wide range of sources, including literature and literary non-fiction, science, history and social studies.
6. **Analyzing data and texts in real world context:** Students will be asked to analyze both text and data in real world contexts, including identifying and correcting inconsistencies between the two. Students will show the work they do throughout their classes by reading science articles and historical and social studies sources.
7. **Founding Documents and Great Global Conversation:** Each exam will include a passage drawn from the Founding Documents of America or the Great Global Conversation they inspire — texts like the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers and "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
8. **Scoring does not deduct points for incorrect answers (rights-only scoring):** The College Board will remove the penalty for wrong answers — and go to the simpler, more transparent model of giving students points for the questions they answer correctly. Students are encouraged to select the best answer to every question.

Moving forward, the College Board will also support the practice of excellent work in classrooms by working with teachers and college faculty to design course frameworks and modules for use in grades 6–12.

Of this work Coleman said, "Research will guide our efforts to enhance the work students already do in their classes in grades 6–12. And that research shows that mastery of fewer, more important things matters more than superficial coverage of many."

On April 16, the College Board will share for the first time the complete specifications of the exam, as well as sample items, two years before any student will take the exam. The College Board will continue to present updated information over the course of the two years leading up to the first administration of the redesigned exam. Updates will also be available on the organization's new microsite, <http://deliveringopportunity.org>.

To read this press release in Spanish, please click [here](#).

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

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About Khan Academy

Khan Academy is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission of providing a free world-class education for anyone, anywhere. Khan Academy provides free online educational materials (e.g., practice exercises, instructional videos, dashboard analytics, teacher tools) that support personalized education for users of all ages in a scalable way. In the last two years, the organization has delivered over 360 million lessons and 1.6 billion exercise problems. Currently it has 10 million users per month and over 4 million exercise problems completed each day. Khan Academy covers subjects from basic Math to college level Biology and Art History. For more information visit www.khanacademy.org.