

HIGH SCHOOL  
PARENT

## All about the new SAT

**B**eginning in March, teens with college dreams will tackle a whole new SAT. The new exam will have substantial changes in the math and verbal sections – and for the first time will include a writing component.

The new exam will debut on March 12, 2005. According to the College Board, which produces the SAT and test-prep materials, the new SAT will reflect the higher level learning expected in most high schools today.

The SAT (short for Scholastic Aptitude Test) is widely believed to be a good indicator of how well students will do with college-level learning. For this reason, most four-year colleges and universities — including those in the SUNY system — require applicants to take and report their scores on the SATs.

**What the new SAT will include**

The new test has three sections: math, critical reading (formerly the verbal section) and a new writing section. Here is a look at each section:

**MATH** The new math section will have fewer “quantitative comparisons” (problems where students compare equations in “column A” and “column B” and decide which is larger) and more higher-level math problems (Algebra II). Students will be given more time to complete this section.

**CRITICAL READING** In this portion of the new SAT, students will read brief passages (100 to 200 words) and answer multiple-choice questions about them. Gone from this section are analogies — test questions that ask students to figure out the relationships between phrases or terms, such as “bird is to nest” as “beaver is to dam.”

**WRITING** The new SAT essay question is designed to show how well students use writing to express their thoughts and support their ideas about a topic in a limited amount of time. The writing section will also include multiple-choice questions on improving sentences and paragraphs and identifying grammar errors.

**SCORING** Each of the three sections will now be worth 800 points. The maximum a student can score is 2,400 (vs. 1,600 on the current test.)

**PRICE** The cost of taking the new SAT will be \$41.50 — an increase of \$10 to \$12 over what is charged for the current exam.

**Should every teen take the SAT?**

Any teen who plans to apply to a four-year college should take the SATs, as well as the PSAT/NMSQT.

Though many community colleges and vocational programs do not *require* the SAT, teens heading to two-year schools should consider taking the exam. Many of these students end up transferring to four-year schools. Moreover, SAT scores may be high enough to put students in line for a scholarship or acceptance at a school they

thought was out of their reach.

Students in the class of 2006, this year’s juniors, will generally be the first group of teens to take the new SAT.

Seniors graduating this June who are taking the SAT for the first time, or who plan to retake the test to try to improve their scores, should check with the colleges where they are applying before deciding which version of the test to take. Though colleges may take scores from either test, some may prefer to see results from the new SAT since it includes the writing assessment. Either way, it’s important to know that the current version of the SAT will be administered for the last time on January 22, 2005.

For more information or to register for an SAT exam date, visit the College Board Web site at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).



## Preparing for the new test

Some suggestions that can help teens do their best with the new version of the SAT are as follows:

**Read.** Much of the SAT involves reading. For this reason, teens who are avid readers (of both fiction and non-fiction) will do better with the exam.

**Write.** New York students from kindergarten through high school have many opportunities to hone their writing skills as they practice for state exams. Teens will do better on the writing section of the SAT if they are able to clearly state and support an opinion with real-life examples and can use good grammar and punctuation.

**Take higher-level math classes.** The new SAT will include questions from Algebra II. For

this reason, students who challenge themselves and tackle higher-level math in high school (courses leading beyond the basic “Math A” Regents graduation requirement) are likely to do better with this section of the test.

**Practice.** Taking the time to become familiar with the format of the test will help ease test anxiety. It can also show teens which skills they may need to work on. There are many SAT-prep classes, online tutorials and workbooks to help teens prepare for the SATs. Since all three sections of the test are timed, taking the practice exams under timed conditions can also help teens get a feel for how quickly they need to work through a section in order to finish the bulk of the questions.



## There are three ways to earn college credits for courses while attending Johnstown High School:

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- University in the High School (through SUNY Albany)
- Early admission to FMCC

### Why take AP courses in high school?

Through college-level AP courses, your child can enter a world of knowledge that might otherwise remain unexplored in high school. When taking AP exams, students have the opportunity to earn credit or advanced standing at colleges and universities all over the nation, as well as colleges and universities in 21 other countries. AP courses allow students to gain an edge in college preparation, stand out in the college admissions process and broaden their intellectual horizons. AP courses are also a good investment: Students who successfully complete courses and who score high enough on the exams may be able to save hundreds – possibly thousands – of dollars in college tuition fees.

### AP courses offered at Johnstown High School:

#### ► AP Composition

1 semester, 1/2 unit of credit

AP Composition is a college-level course open to students who wish to intensify their preparation for college writing. Recommended for juniors who intend to take AP Literature as seniors and for motivated seniors. The course will prepare students to take the AP examination in English Language and Composition. Students should expect extensive practice in writing expository, persuasive, narrative and descriptive essays.

Prerequisite – Successful completion of Advanced Composition with a suggested grade of 80 percent or higher. Teacher Recommendation

#### ► AP Literature

2 semesters, 1 unit of credit

AP Literature is a college-level course open to motivated English students. The course will prepare students to take the AP examination in Literature and Composition. Success on this exam, given in May, may earn the student college credits and/or placement at a high level of study in college. The course emphasizes a close study of works of literary merit and provides lessons and practice in writing literary analyses. AP students must recognize that the reading, writing and critical thinking skills are necessary beyond those expected in regular high school English courses.

Prerequisite – Teacher recommendation

#### ► APUSH History

2 semesters, 1 unit of credit

The AP program in United States History is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in United States history. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making course work equivalent to full-year introductory college courses. Students should learn to assess historical materials – their relevance to a given interpretive problem, their reliability and their importance – and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. An AP United States History course should develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present the reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in an essay format.

Prerequisite – Teacher recommendation

#### ► AP Computer Science

2 semesters, 1 unit of credit

AP Computer Science is a one-year elective open to all students in grades 10-12 who have passed Math A and are enrolled in a higher level mathematics course. It is a lecture/lab course in which an equal amount of time is spent on "hands-on" use of the IBM computer. The course syllabus follows that of the AP Computer Science A program. Taking the AP exam in May is optional. This course is highly recommended for the student who wishes to attend college with a major in mathematics, science, computer science or business.

### New SAT Test Dates

March 12, 2005	February 7, 2005
May 7, 2005	March 25, 2005
June 4, 2005	April 29, 2005

### Registration Deadline

#### ► AP Physics B

2 semesters, 1 unit of credit

AP Physics B utilizes a college-level textbook and laboratory investigations to study Newtonian mechanics, thermal physics, electricity and magnetism, waves and optics, and atomic and nuclear physics. Laboratory work, a major component of the course, must be successfully completed. A strong background in trigonometry and algebra is required to solve rigorous problems throughout the course. Students may receive non-calculus-based college physics credit dependent on the results of the AP examination. AP Physics B meets seven and one-half periods per week, including the laboratory.

#### ► AP Biology

2 semesters, 1 unit of credit

AP Biology utilizes a college-level textbook and laboratory investigations to study molecular biology, the biology of organisms and the biology of populations. Successful completion of the laboratory work and satisfactory written laboratory reports are required. Students may receive college biology credit dependent on the results of the AP exam. AP Biology meets seven and one-half periods per week, including the laboratory.

Prerequisite – Successful completion of Regents Biology and Regents Chemistry

#### ► AP Music Theory

AP Music Theory covers a variety of topics from diatonic modes and scales to chord symbols for jazz and commercial music. The AP exam is approximately three hours and covers a full-year introductory college course. The exam contains a multiple-choice section, a free-response section and a sight-singing performance section.

Prerequisite – Music Theory I

### What is University in the High School?

The University in the High School is a program through SUNY Albany that is open to all students. Classes are held during the regular school day at Johnstown High School. Students pay \$120 to take the course, which goes toward college credit. The credits can be transferred to most colleges on the east coast. The benefits of the University in the High School are similar to that of AP courses. Students can get a head start on college and save money in the process.

#### ► University in the High School Courses Include:

230 Psychology, 1 semester, 3 credits	506 French 4, full year, 4 credits
232 Sociology, 1 semester, 3 credits	508 French 5, full year, 4 credits
315 Calculus, 1 year, 4 credits	536 Spanish 4, full year, 4 credits
	538 Spanish 5, full year, 4 credits

### Early Admission to FMCC

In the spring a representative from FMCC meets with students who are interested in attending FMCC part-time during their senior year. Every effort is made to accommodate both high school and college courses. Students are responsible for their own transportation to the college and must pay regular tuition costs. It is a great way for students to obtain college credits while still in high school.

### HELPFUL TIPS TO KEEP STUDENTS ON TRACK

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**SENIORS:** Stop into guidance regularly to check for new scholarship applications.

- Write to colleges for application materials, financial aid materials and scholarship information (or go online; most colleges have all their information on the Internet).
- Visit with college representatives in the guidance office.
- Check to see if you need a profile form (Financial Aid) or NCAA eligibility information.

**SENIORS & JUNIORS:** Check in guidance for college open houses, visits by college and military representatives.

**JUNIORS & SOPHOMORES:** Begin reviewing college guides, catalogs and/or other sources of information. Attend college fairs.

**FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORES:** Visit the guidance office to become acquainted with the guidance staff and resources available.