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Major Changes Coming to SAT Test

A redesign of the SAT changes content, scoring and how students prepare

Des Moines, IA., March 12, 2014 – The Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) wants students and families to be aware of major changes coming to the 2016 SAT, a standardized college admissions exam that assesses critical reading, math and writing skills needed to be successful in college. College Board, the owner and developer of the SAT, recently announced that a redesign of the SAT will involve many changes to the exam. According to College Board, “The redesigned SAT will focus on the knowledge and skills that current research shows are most essential for college and career readiness and success.”

Some of the changes scheduled to take place beginning in 2016, include:

- The writing portion of the test will now be optional.
- The length of time to take the test will be reduced to three hours, with additional time allotted for students taking the optional essay portion.
- The writing portion will now require test takers to respond to a passage of writing as opposed to responding to a statement using their experiences.
- The reading section will center on source citations. Students will need to support their answers using evidence from readings.
- Obscure vocabulary words will be replaced with those more widely used in college and the work place.
- Scores will now be based on a scale of 1600, rather than 2,400.
- Algebra, problem solving and data analysis will be the new focus in the mathematics section.
- The math section will no longer allow calculators to be used on every portion.
- In the multiple-choice section, points will no longer be lost for wrong answers.
- Writing passages from significant moments in American history and science will be used in different sections.
- For income-eligible students, application fee waivers will be available for up to four colleges.
- Digital and print versions of the test will be offered.

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“Some of the changes to the SAT, ending the penalty for guessing incorrectly, eliminating obscure vocabulary words and making the essay optional, are being done to better realign the exam with schoolwork,” stated Karen Misjak, executive director for Iowa College Aid. “Keep in mind that these changes won’t take effect until 2016. The free test prep program available through Iowa’s state-designed career and information planning system, I Have A Plan Iowa[®], will help students prepare now for the SAT, ACT or GRE.”

For more information on the changes to the SAT, visit www.collegeboard.org. In addition, more information to help Iowa families plan, prepare and pay for college is available on Iowa College Aid’s website, www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy and outreach services to Iowa’s students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$68.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education’s College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa’s students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.