



INFORMATION CAPSULE

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THE NEW SAT

The College Board is making significant changes to the SAT beginning with the March 2005 administration. According to The College Board, the new SAT will “improve the alignment of the test with current curriculum and institutional practices in high school and college.” The SAT, which measures student reasoning based on the knowledge and skills developed through coursework, is used by colleges throughout the United States to make admissions and placement decisions.

Changes to the SAT include:

- A Writing section, with a student-written essay and multiple-choice questions on grammar and usage, will be added to the test.
- The Verbal section will be renamed “Critical Reading.” Shorter reading passages will be added to the existing long reading passages. Analogies will be eliminated.
- The Mathematics section will be expanded to include content from third year college preparatory math. Quantitative comparisons will be eliminated.

Field trials conducted by The College Board indicate that the difficulty levels of the current Verbal and Mathematics sections will not be affected. New SAT scores will be comparable to current SAT scores. (For example, a Mathematics score of 600 on the new SAT will be equivalent to a Mathematics score of 600 on the current SAT. A score of 500 on the new Critical Reading section will be equivalent to a score of 500 on the current Verbal section.)

Controversy has arisen over which SAT the graduating class of 2006 should prepare to take. The class of 2006 has been termed the “transition” group because they will be eligible to take both the current SAT in the winter of 2004 and the new SAT in the spring of 2005. Most colleges are leaning toward allowing these transition students to submit scores from either the current or the new SAT and, if a student submits scores from both tests, considering the highest ones.

Many educators see the opportunity to submit two sets of scores as a distinct advantage and are urging these students to take both SATs. Others feel students will spend too much time and energy preparing for two different tests and that students who take only the new SAT in the spring will have the benefit of several extra months of learning and growing. Dr. Natalie Roca, Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ Executive Director of Student Assessment and Educational Testing, recommends that transition students take only the new SAT, citing the benefits of focusing their preparation on the new skills they will be required to master.

Sources:

The College Board, New York, NY, 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

Lewin, Tamar. “Confusion Is Rampant With Change in the SAT’s.” *The New York Times*, New York, NY, May 23, 2004.

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