Applerouth's JUNIOR JUMPSTART





Building Better Learners for Life



How to Use This Guide

Calling all juniors! You have a lot to juggle – advanced classes, extracurriculars, the first-ever digital PSAT, and deciding whether you'll take the paper SAT, new digital SAT, or ACT.

Jumpstart your junior year with our road map to college admissions testing success.

Follow these steps to pick the right test, build your prep plan, and hit your goals.

Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT | pages 3–10

- → Understand the changes coming to the PSAT and SAT this year.
- → Compare the SAT, ACT, and new digital SAT.

Step 2: Figure out which test is best for you | pages 11–14

- → It's a good idea to pick one test and focus on it: don't split your time!
- → What's the best way to choose a test? Take a full-length practice SAT and ACT, then compare your scores. Visit www.applerouth.com/mocks to learn more.

Step 3: Make a Plan | pages 15-22

- → Now that you've chosen your test, build a plan to reach your score goals.
- → Get the facts on test-optional admissions and how it affects your plan.
- → Choose test dates and a prep timeline that make sense for you.

Step 4: Prep with Applerouth | page 23

- → Your Applerouth tutor will help you make the most of your plan.
- → Increase your score with targeted strategies designed just for you and your goals.

Contact us at 866-789-7737 to get personalized advice and a custom testing plan.

Use the color bar at the bottom of each page to follow the steps.

Step 1 Pages 3–10 Step 2 Pages 11–14

Step 3 Pages 15–22 Step 4 Page 23



Quick Facts About the New Digital PSAT and SAT

Strong SAT or ACT scores can set you apart in college admissions. The PSAT and SAT are changing and becoming digital, adaptive tests.



What about the ACT?

The ACT will continue to be offered as a paper-based test. There will be an option to take the test on a computer at select test centers starting in late 2023 and early 2024 but the computer-based test will be identical in length and format to the paper test.

"Our son is thrilled that he got a 35 on his ACT, and we are delighted for him. We just wanted to say thank you so much for all your help and encouragement. We will definitely be recommending Applerouth to our friends!"

— Applerouth Parent, New York





THE DIGITAL SAT AT A GLANCE





Reading and Writing baseline module 32 min

32 minutes

27 questions

Reading and Writing adaptive module (Easier or Harder)

32 minutes

27 questions

10-minute break

Math baseline module

35 minutes

22 questions

Math adaptive module (Easier or Harder)

35 minutes

22 question

- → Two sections: Reading & Writing and Math
- → Two modules per section
- → Section-adaptive: The difficulty level of the second module in each section depends on how you perform on the first.
- → Total testing time: 2:24 mins
- → More time per question: 59%+ more time per question compared to the ACT

Step 1: Learn about



SCORING

- → **1600** (800 on each section).
- → Concordance with the ACT will not change. That means a 1200 on the paper test is the same as a 1200 on the new digital test.
- → Your adaptive section will have a fixed level of difficulty (easier or harder) with a fixed score potential. This means that your performance on your baseline modules acts as an anchor for your total potential score.

SECTION BY SECTION DETAIL



Reading & Writing details: Short passages, 1 question per passage, wider variety of topics covered, heavy reliance on strong vocabulary.



Math details: Calculator always allowed, fewer words per problem (less reading skill required), built-in Desmos calculator.



WHAT'S CHANGING?





NEW DIGITAL FORMAT



FIXED

TEST RESPONDS
TO YOUR
PERFORMANCE

ADAPTIVE



SHORTER TEST





MORE TIME PER QUESTION





SHORTER READING PASSAGES



Shorterquestion per passage



CALCULATORS ALWAYS ALLOWED



WEEKS

FASTER RESULTS



Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



VS)

- Fewer Geometry Questions
- More Time per Question
- No-calculator Math Section



- Lots of Geometry
- Faster Paced
- Tough Science Section



TIMING & SCORING



65m Reading

Writing

35m

200-800 points

1-36

1-36

1-36

1-36

35m

Reading

45m

English

60m Math

35m Science

Math 25m (No Calculator)

Math (Calculator) 55m

200-800 points

Total Points

400-1600

1-36

Total Points



Reading



Writing



Time per Question



Reading



English



Math

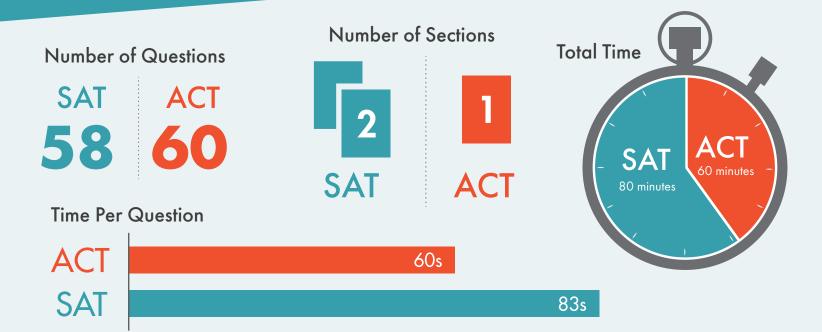


Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



MATH

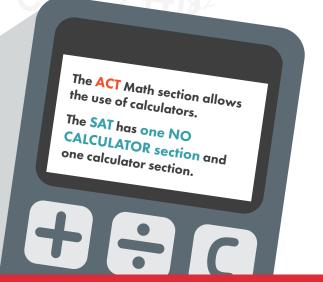




Formulas

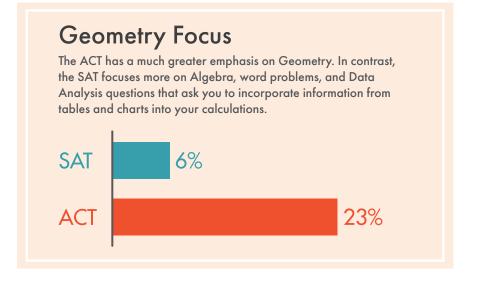
The SAT provides a reference table of common formulas.

The ACT does not provide formulas for reference.





The SAT Math sections include **45** multiple choice questions and **13** student-produced response questions (i.e., grid-in questions).



Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



THE ACT

READING





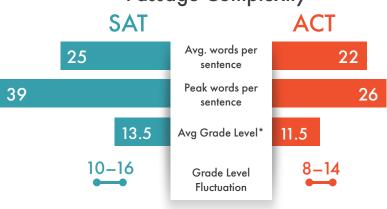
Yes, relating to two passages

SAT

No, only on the Science section

Passage Complexity

SAT



*Flesch-Kincaid readability assessment

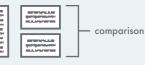
Number of Passages











Topics Covered

- Literature
- Science (2)

75s

17%

History/Soc. Studies (2)









comparison

• Prose Fiction

Humanities

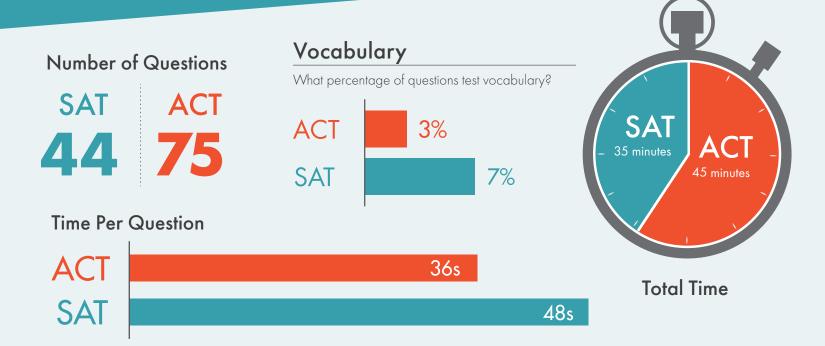
Social Science

• Natural Science

Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



WRITING/ENGLISH



Do the Writing/English sections have

Graphs and Charts?

SAT

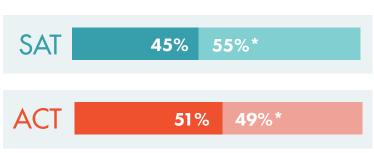
Yes, relating to one or two passages

ACT



No, only on the Science section

GRAMMAR VS. RHETORICAL SKILLS



*The difference between the 49% Rhetorical Skills on the ACT and 55% on the SAT feels even greater in practice, as the questions on the SAT require a fuller understanding of the passage.





Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT





Choosing a Test

Now that you've learned about the ACT, SAT, and upcoming changes, it's time to choose the test that's right for you. Colleges don't have a preference between the SAT or ACT but you might.

The tests focus on slightly different skills and have different timing and question styles. Many students have a preference for the SAT or the ACT, and you can decide which test is best for you by following a few easy steps.

- → Take full-length, SAT and ACT practice tests, then compare your scores. This is the best way to choose a test. You may score significantly higher on one test than the other, which makes the decision easy. Even if you don't see a significant score difference between the two, you'll still get a clear sense of what each test feels like.
- → You can also review your PSAT scores—from 10th or 11th grade—for a greater understanding of the SAT's timing and content. Your 10th-grade PSAT experience will mirror, to some extent, what you might expect on the paper SAT, while your 11th-grade PSAT experience will help you get a feel for the new digital SAT coming in March.
- → Note that PSAT scores aren't quite as useful in determining test type, since the SAT is more challenging than the PSAT. Also, your 10th-grade PSAT score won't be as accurate, since you've had a lot of academic growth since then.

Over the next few pages, you'll find information on how to interpret your PSAT scores, as well as a concordance table comparing SAT and ACT scores.

Sign up for free online practice tests at www.applerouth.com/mocks or contact us at info@applerouth.com for help.

"I can't thank my daughter's tutor enough!

My daughter has improved so much not only in her scores

but also in her confidence."

— New York Tri-State Area parent





Understanding Your PSAT/NMSQT Score

Your Total Score

The PSAT and SAT share a common scale, so you can compare your scores directly. Keep in mind, the PSAT maxes out at 1520 whereas the SAT is scored out of 1600.

National Merit Scholarship

As a junior, your PSAT score will be considered for the National Merit Scholarship Program by the NMSC (National Merit Scholarship Corporation). Eligibility is determined by converting your PSAT score into a National Merit Selection Index score. The Selection Indiex formula multiplies your Reading & Writing score by 2, adds it to your Math score, and divides the total by 10, allowing for a maximum Selection Index score of 228. Note that this formula puts double weight on Reading & Writing, making this section particularly important for National Merit hopefuls.

A very small percentage of PSAT students each year earn Selection Index scores high enough to qualify for recognition. For entry requirements and information on the steps in the competition visit www.nationalmerit.org.

"My daughter's scores came back. She got a 1560. She's ecstatic. We are so grateful."

— Applerouth Parent, Atlanta, GA

Applerouth offers expert advice throughout the year.

Learn more about test anxiety, college admissions testing, AP exams, and more.

Our free events can be found at applerouth.com/calendar.





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIGITAL PSAT

Your PSAT scores can open doors to scholarships and give you insight into your future scores for college admissions. Here's what you need to know about the new test.



When is the PSAT Going Digital?

The first digital PSAT will be offered in October 2023. If you're in the high school class of 2025 (or younger), you'll take this test.



Where do I take the test?

You'll take the PSAT at your school in October 2023 on a laptop or tablet that you bring (or that your school provides).



What's on the test?

It has two sections – Reading & Writing and Math – each broken down into two modules, a baseline module and an adaptive module.



The test is "adaptive." What does that mean?

The second modules on each of the two sections (Reading & Writing and Math) will be easier or harder depending on your performance on each of the first modules.

"I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for your invaluable guidance and support during our SAT tutoring sessions. I was overjoyed to see that I achieved a score of 1530 on the SAT! I couldn't be happier with the outcome, and I genuinely believe that your expertise and dedication played a significant role in helping me reach this milestone."

— Applerouth Student, Washington, DC





SAT/ACT Concordance Table

Colleges do not prefer the SAT over the ACT or vice versa. Here is a concordance table of comparable SAT and ACT scores. The SAT has a greater score range (400–1600), so multiple SAT scores often correspond to a single ACT score. This table is valid for both the paper SAT and digital SAT

SAT	ACT
Total Score	Composite Score
1570–1600	36
1530–1560	35
1490–1520	34
1450–1480	33
1420–1440	32
1390–1410	31
1360–1380	30
1330–1350	29
1300–1320	28
1260–1290	27
1230–1250	26
1200–1220	25
1160–1190	24
1130–1150	23
1100–1120	22
1060–1090	21
1030–1050	20
990–1020	19
960–980	18
920–950	17
880–910	16
830–870	15
780–820	14
730–770	13
690–720	12
650–680	11

Data from the College Board and ACT, Inc.'s Guide to the 2018 ACT/SAT Concordance released June 2018.

Already took practice tests and need help comparing them? Contact an Applerouth Program Advisor at 866-789-7737 for personalized advice.





Official SAT/ACT Test Dates

SAT DATES

The SAT is offered ~7 times in an academic year, between late August and early June. Registration deadlines are usually ~1 month in advance of the test date and scores are usually available ~2 weeks afterward. The College Board has indicated that it will have faster score turnaround for the digital test —possibly within days instead of weeks—but exact timeframes are still TBD.

To see available test dates and locations, register directly at www.collegeboard.org.

ACT DATES

The ACT is offered ~7 times in an academic year, between September and July. Registration deadlines are roughly ~5 weeks in advance of the test date and scores are usually available within 2–8 weeks following the test administration.

To see available test dates and locations, register at www.myact.org.

Take a practice test before your official test.

Sign up for a free, online practice test with Applerouth at www.applerouth.com/mocks and you'll get a detailed score report with personalized insights to help you make an optimal plan.

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Step 3: Make a Plan

Understanding Test-Optional Admissions

With frequent news about colleges going test-optional, you're probably wondering, "Do I really need to take the SAT or ACT?" For many students, the answer is yes: you should at least consider *taking* the tests. Test-optional policies are an opportunity for you to decide how to best present yourself to each college on your list. You might decide to withhold your scores from a school where they wouldn't help make your case for admission, but if you skip testing entirely, you may be preemptively eliminating an important asset in your application.

As Carol Lee Conchar, Associate Director for Regional Programs at GW, explained in an Applerouth webinar, students "should take the test for experience and to see how well they perform," because having a score "in your back pocket" is valuable.

Perhaps your test scores will help show that you're academically competitive at a more selective school, or perhaps your scores will help you earn a merit scholarship. You take yourself out of the running for these possibilities if you prematurely decide not to take the SAT or ACT at all. This doesn't mean that testing is for everyone, but it does mean that each student needs to make an informed and individualized decision about testing.

To help you do this, here are some FAQs about test-optional admissions and test planning. With these questions answered, you can decide what role testing will play in your college admissions journey.

What does test-optional really mean?

With test-optional policies on the rise, informed college applicants need to understand what test-optional is and what it isn't. A test-optional policy does not mean that ACT and SAT scores are not factored in as part of the admissions decision, only that they are not a prerequisite for submitting an application. In other words: test-optional does not mean test-blind. Test-blind schools do not accept or consider standardized test scores at all. Test-optional schools consider scores if they are present but do not hold it against students if they are not.

Many colleges that have chosen to become test-optional have done so in the hopes of evening the playing field for all applicants. A test-optional policy provides an opportunity for students to customize their application process while ensuring that testing does not systematically deny students a shot at admission, whether due to access to educational resources, a learning difference, a mental health concern, or any other life circumstance that may make it difficult, if not impossible, to take the tests and get scores that show their best abilities.

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How will test-optional colleges look at my application if I do (or don't) submit scores?

Over five hundred colleges and universities took a pledge through the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, stating that they would not penalize students who did not submit scores. **That said, test-optional schools still value strong test-takers who submit scores.**

If your scores are competitive at a college or university, sending them will undoubtedly prove beneficial. Your scores will either affirm the narrative presented by your high school record—that you are a strong student with high potential to succeed in college—or they will improve your case as an applicant. By junior year, boosting your GPA will be a steeper climb, and with a less dramatic result, than boosting your score on a college admission test. In other words, if freshman and sophomore grades are dragging down your GPA, high performance on the SAT or ACT might better reflect who you are as a student right now. Additionally, admission tests can attest to your preparation for college-level work if you feel that the university to which you are applying may not be familiar with your high school. In this case, scores lend credibility to your transcript.

It's important to remember that at most selective colleges, the admissions process is "holistic." This means that, whether you submit scores or not, colleges are evaluating your whole application, including your test scores (if you submit them), your high school records (GPA, course rigor, an extracurricular portfolio), your essay or writing sample, and letters of recommendation.

If you choose not to submit scores, the admissions decision will be based solely on the non-testing aspects of your application. Rick Clark, Georgia Tech's Director of Undergraduate Admissions, describes the admissions approach as a "stool" with different legs, including GPA, course rigor, extracurriculars, and letters of recommendation:

"[I]f you choose not to have some of that support on the testing leg, we're just going to look a little closer and put more weight on the rest of the stool."

Continued on the next page.



At a test-optional school you have the option of choosing where some of the admissions weight will fall. Clark advises you to ask yourself, "Do [I] want some of the weight on testing, or do [I] want it removed from that?"

Things that enhance your application are worth including, even if not required. Many aspects of your college application are "optional." You don't have to take AP classes, lead a student organization, or play a sport, but if these are areas where you excel you will pursue them an include your accomplishments in your application.

The decision about test scores boils down to whether they are a good reflection of your potential to succeed in college. Carol Lee Conchar of GW recommends that you ask yourself whether your "test scores reflect you in the best way possible plus support your academics." What students are "doing in the classroom is really, really important," she says, "but test scores add that additional information for us."

How would I do on the SAT or ACT?

Taking full-length practice SAT and ACT exams is a great way to find out. To ensure reliable results, be sure that your practice tests are full-length, and make sure to take them under timed conditions that mimic those of a real test day.

What are the testing policies at the colleges on my list?

Take some time to look at current testing policies and score ranges at schools that interest you. Testing information can typically be found on each college's admissions website and will vary from school to school and can change from year to year, so make sure to pay special attention to time frames for any current policies.

Do I need test scores to qualify for scholarships?

While you're researching colleges and testing policies, you should also look at merit scholarship opportunities. Many colleges offer merit scholarships to students who meet certain academic criteria. Often, SAT or ACT scores are required to qualify, even at testoptional schools. It is not uncommon for students to discover that their current test scores (or a very small increase in those scores), combined with their GPA, make them eligible for tens of thousands of dollars in merit aid.

What is my testing timeline?

Your timeline will depend on a variety of factors, including admissions deadlines at your colleges of interest and commitments you have throughout the year. Ideally, you'll map out a timeline that comfortably allows for two to three test dates and 10 to 12 weeks of preparation before the first official test. For more detail on testing timelines, see page 20.

What if I am experiencing testing anxiety?

Test anxiety is very common, so if you are feeling anxious while taking a test, you're not alone. When it comes to health and safety, it's important that every student choose what's right for them. For some students, that may mean not testing or testing less than the 2–3 times we recommend in a typical cycle. If you have an official diagnosis of anxiety, you may qualify for special accommodations, like distraction limited testing, that can help manage your symptoms.

For anxiety about the test itself, there are helpful strategies that you can use to self-regulate during the exam. As a career college admissions officer and a parent, GW's Conchar understands that you may feel undue pressure and "fear of how you're going to be judged by the score that you receive." Still, she advises that testing "is a good practice to go through." This is especially true if you anticipate applying to graduate or professional school someday or entering a field that requires high-stakes testing at some point. We believe, like Conchar, that, with the right support, students can use the testing experience in high school to work through test anxiety in a healthy way and gain confidence that will serve them well for years to come.

Want reliable practice scores without the pressure?

Sign up for a free, online practice test with Applerouth at applerouth.com/calendar and you'll get a detailed score report with personalized insights to help you make an optimal plan.

"My son was accepted into his dream school, and I'm confident that would never have happened if it weren't for his tutor.

I gladly recommend Applerouth to anyone who asks!"

— Seattle Metropolitan Area parent

Step 3: Make a Plan



SAT + ACT Testing Timelines

When should I take the SAT or ACT?

As a general rule, we recommend that students prepare for and complete their college admissions testing during junior year. The exact timeline varies from student to student, with some students starting as early as the summer after sophomore year and others completing testing in the fall of senior year (although that's cutting it close!). If you are a current junior and haven't yet started your test planning, now is the time to begin!

Making a Plan

Here at Applerouth, we generally recommend that students plan to take the SAT or ACT up to three times. You may not need this many test dates in your plan—you might make your score goals the first or second time you take the test!—but it's important to have backup dates in reserve, if you can.

Having multiple planned test dates reduces test anxiety by preventing any one test day from becoming a make-or-break situation. Doing so also helps you hedge against any test date cancellations.

Your score improvement will depend on how much time and energy you put into prepping. If you're hoping for significant gains on the SAT or ACT, you can expect to spend between 50 and 70 hours preparing. That includes:

- → Time spent in tutoring sessions, group classes, or in a self-paced course
- → Completing homework
- → Taking practice tests

Generally speaking, we recommend you complete your prep hours in the 10–12 weeks before your first test date, and then brush up before subsequent test dates.

As you map things out, you'll want to keep application deadlines in mind. They vary from school to school but, in general, early admission deadlines tend to be in early November, which means you'll need to complete your final test by October of your senior year. Regular decision deadlines tend to be in January, allowing for testing through December of your senior year. For exact deadlines, check the admissions websites of the colleges on your list.



Putting Your Plan Into Action

With the previous guidelines in mind, here's a handy reference tool that will help you put an effective testing plan into action.

- → Allow for 2 to 3 test dates (if possible) by the end of fall semester senior year (October if you plan to apply for early decision or early action)
- > Prep for 10 to 12 weeks before your first test
- → Brush up before subsequent tests

	Your Test Prep Timeline Checklist
	☐ Start prep after you complete most of Algebra 2.
Tour P	☐ Prep when extracurricular and family commitments are lighter.
4	☐ Plan for up to three official tests to hit your goal score.
	☐ Finish testing by October senior year (for early decision) or December (for regular decision).*

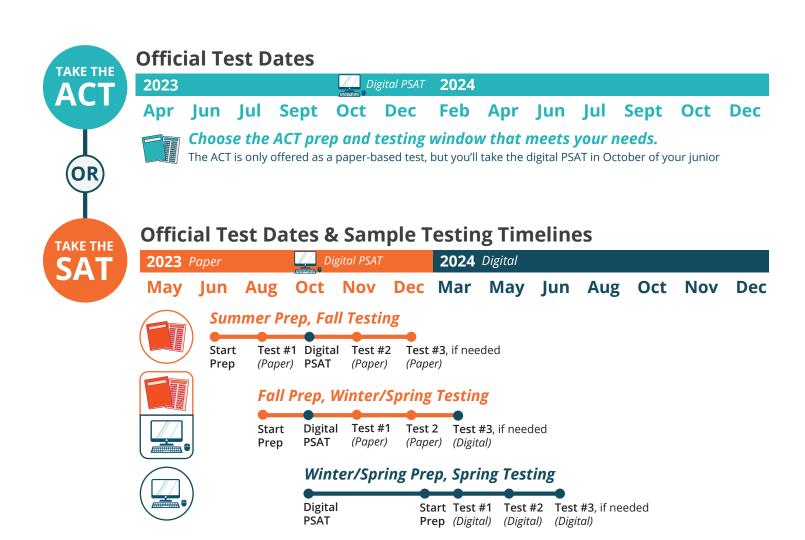
"I am just writing to say THANK YOU for believing in me and for being the best tutor ever. You gave me the confidence to know that this score does not define me, and that I can still follow my dreams. (Speaking of, I'm going to a summer film program!) I'm so grateful to have worked with you, thanks again!!"

— Applerouth Student, Washington, DC

Step 3: Make a Plan



^{*}Deadlines vary by school. Be sure to determine the specific deadlines for each school on your list.



"My daughter scored a 1440 on her SAT. This is up from the 1080 she scored on her first practice test. She is over the moon happy. You're the greatest. I hope you are still tutoring in 3 years when our middle kid is doing test prep!

Thank you, thank you!"

— Applerouth Student

Step 3: Make a Plan



^{*}There will be an option to take the ACT on a computer at select test centers starting in late 2023 and early 2024 but the computer-based test will be identical in length and format to the paper test.



About Applerouth



A high SAT or ACT score can open doors to the most competitive colleges and pave the way to merit-based scholarships.



With tutoring, students will get one-on-one, personalized support and a customized prep plan based on their strengths, needs, and schedule that is designed to raise their scores and increase their confidence.



With Applerouth, you get the smartest approach to tutoring. We use research in cognition, memory and motivation to help students achieve a higher level of success.

Why Applerouth?

Student-Focused Approach

The tests are standardized, our approach is anything but. We provide:

- → Specialized advice to determine the best test prep plan for you
- → Custom tutor matching
- → One-on-one, personalized tutoring sessions
- → Ongoing parent communication
- → Test-like practice

Better Results

Applerouth students earn higher tests scores. Our students achieve superior results, improve their grades, and boost their confidence.

Flexible Locations and Online Tutoring

Wherever you are, our tutors are ready to help. Over the last 2 decades, we've helped over 40,000 students across the U.S. and internationally.



5 pts

Average ACT Increase

Applerouth tutors help students with each section of the ACT to bring their composite score up an average of 5 points.



130 pts

Average SAT Increase

Applerouth students taking the SAT see an average increase of 130 points.



\$28.8 M

Over \$28.8 million

Total accepted scholarship money by Applerouth students in the Class of 2022.

All score increase statistics are based on students completing at least 20 hours of private tutoring and 80% of their assigned homework.

Step 4: Prep with Applerouth

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www.applerouth.com About Applerouth

Applerouth Tutoring Services

www.applerouth.com info@applerouth.com 866-789-PREP (7737)

Atlanta Metropolitan Area 404-728-0661

Chicago Metropolitan Area 847-239-5247

New York Tri-State Area 212-731-4676

Seattle Metropolitan Area 206-456-6864

Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area 202-558-5644

Online & International 866-789-7737

Schedule a time to talk to an Applerouth Advisor about our SAT/ACT prep programs.



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"My son's tutor connects with him unlike anyone ever has. I am beyond confident in Applerouth's program, and I love the specialized attention that my son receives."

— Atlanta Metropolitan Area parent





Building Better Learners for Life





