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Future editions of the Academic Bulletin will be available on the IUSD website.
(Previous editions are also available online.)
http://www.iusd.org/parent_resources/academic.htm



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Early Decision vs. Early Action

Early decision plans allow you to apply early (usually by November 1) and get an admission decision from the college well in advance of the usual notification date. But there is a catch. Early decision plans are "binding," meaning if you apply as an early decision candidate, you agree to attend the college if it accepts you and offers an adequate financial aid package. Although you can apply to **only one college for early decision**, you may apply to other colleges under regular admission. If you're accepted by your first-choice college early, you must withdraw all other applications. Usually, colleges insist on a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1.

Early action plans are similar to early decision plans (apply by November 1) in that you can learn early in the admission cycle (usually by January or Feb.) whether a college has accepted you, before regular applicants. But unlike early decision, most early action plans are not binding, meaning you do **NOT** have to commit to a college to which you've applied for early action. Under these plans, you may apply to other colleges. Usually, you can let the college know of your decision in the late spring or whenever you've decided.

Single-Choice Early Action

Some colleges (Harvard, Yale and Stanford are a few) have begun offering a new admissions option called single-choice early action. This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but with single-choice, candidates may not apply early (either early action or early decision) to any other school.

You can still apply to other schools regular decision and are not required to give your final answer of acceptance until the regular decision deadline. This allows you to compare offers of financial aid in the spring before making a commitment.

Should I Apply Under One of These Plans?

You should apply under an early decision or action plan only if you are very, very sure of the college you want to attend. These plans make a lot of sense if one college is your clear preference and if your profile closely matches that of the students at that college. If so, you're the type of student for which early decision was created.

Do not apply under an early decision plan if:

- You're confused about which college is your first choice.
- You need to compare financial aid packages in the spring.
- You haven't taken all of the tests required by the college.
- You do not meet the school's academic profile or have a special talent.
- You're indecisive, and may change your mind later.



Also, you shouldn't apply early if it is to your advantage to have more of your senior year work to show a college. If you plan to woo an admission office with your excellent grades this year, you may want to wait until after the semester ends to apply to colleges.

More than 400 colleges offer an early decision plan, an early action plan, or both. You can search online at www.collegeboard.com to see if your college choices offer this option.



Letters of Recommendation

Many college applications request two or three recommendation letters from people who know you in and out of the classroom.

Read the application carefully. Often colleges request letters of recommendation from an academic teacher (sometimes a specific discipline) and/or your school counselor. If a non-specified academic teacher is requested, your English or math teachers usually make good candidates. Also, you should use a teacher from junior year, or a current teacher if he/she has known you long enough to form an opinion. It is best not to go back too far, as colleges want "current" perspectives on their potential candidates. All the better if you get a recommendation from a teacher who's also been involved with you outside the classroom, but unless a college specifically requests it, don't use a coach or someone who can't speak to your academic achievements and potential.

It is VERY IMPORTANT to give your recommendation writers plenty of time — at least one month before letters are due — to complete and send your recommendations, but as with anything, the earlier the better. Start asking today!! Many teachers like to have the summer to write recommendations, so if you asked last spring, you're doing great. If you apply under early decision or early action plans, you'll need to ask today!!

Helpful Tips

- Don't be shy. Teachers and counselors are usually happy to help you, as long as you respect their time constraints.
- Include addressed and stamped envelopes for each school to which you're applying.
- Provide teachers and counselors with deadlines for each recommendation that you are requesting, especially noting the earliest deadline.
- On the application form, waive your right to view recommendation letters. This gives more credibility to the recommendation in the eyes of the college.
- Follow up with your recommendation writers a week or so prior to your first deadline, to ensure recommendations have been mailed or to see if they need additional information from you.
- Once you have decided which college to attend, write thank-you notes to everyone who provided a recommendation and tell them where you've decided to go to college. Be sure to do this before you leave high school.



College Admission Game Plan

Freshman

- **#1 IMPORTANT...Get to know your counselor.** Talk to him/her about your goals after high school. Your counselor can be an invaluable resource for you in planning and choosing colleges that best suit you. Counselors are often asked to submit letters of recommendation for you.
- **Take the most rigorous courses you can handle.** Colleges like students who have taken the most challenging courses available to them.
- **Work hard at developing your writing skills.** Many universities require you to write several essays as part of the application process. Push yourself in your English classes to improve your writing as much as possible because writing skills are crucial to success.

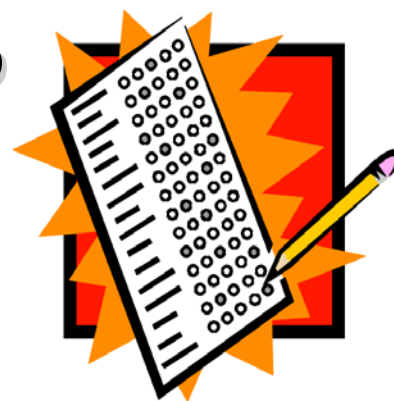
Sophomore

- **Prepare for and take the PSAT on October 15th....you can also take the ACT and/or SAT this year, although it's not necessary.** Do not put this off until your senior year! Establish a test-taking timeline with your counselor and update it each year of high school to be sure that you're on track.
- **Think quality, not quantity when it comes to your extra-curricular activities.** Seek out leadership positions in a few activities that truly interest you. Colleges are more interested that you dedicated yourself to a few select activities than boast a long list of clubs, sports, groups, and interests.
- Private schools like to see a commitment to *community service*.
- **Seek out college or university information.** Attend College Night at University High School on Wednesday, Oct. 26, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- **Update plans for high school courses and activities.** Be sure you are on the right track and have a "game plan" in place.

Junior

- **Prepare for and take the PSAT.** The PSAT in your Junior year is the National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test.
- **Put together a list of 10 colleges that you would like to attend.** Plan to apply to at least 3 of those schools, if not all. Research their requirements necessary.
- **Check dates for SAT, SAT II and ACT test registration deadlines** (in this issue). You'll want to take at least one or two SAT tests before the end of your junior year.

SAT AND THE CLASS of 2006



In March 2005, the SAT was modified and lengthened. The name has changed from SAT I: Reasoning Test to SAT Reasoning Test, and the SAT II: Subject Test to SAT Subject Tests.

The SAT is typically offered seven times a year: October, November, December, January, March/April, May, and June. Students may take either the SAT Reasoning Test or up to three SAT Subject Tests on any given test date, except the March/April test date, when only SAT Reasoning Test is offered. Students must register at least three weeks before the test date. (See test dates in this issue.)

SAT Reasoning Test (Formerly SAT I)

- Required by most 4-year colleges/universities for admission purposes.
- 3 hours and 45 minutes test - multiple choice and writing.
- Measures math, reading, writing, and vocabulary: Math: Geometry and Algebra II. Reading: sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comprehension. Writing: an essay. Vocabulary: grammar usage, and word choice.
- Scoring is 200-800 per area - Perfect score 2400.
- Students should take the test in the spring of junior year and again before December of senior year.
- California State Universities take the best two of all the times you take test.
- University of California takes the best combined score taken at one sitting.
- Register on-line:
<http://www.collegeboard.com>.
You'll need a major credit card.

SAT Subject Test (Formerly SAT II)

- Achievement tests
- Required by University of California and some private colleges
- Take after completing accelerated courses in mathematics, science, foreign language, and Literature.
- One-hour tests
- May take up to three at one testing session
- Scoring is 200-800 per subject
- Take from 2 different subject areas

Note:

- The questions generally go in order of difficulty, so students are best served by focusing on the easy and the medium questions.
- If students answer about 67% of the questions correctly on the New SAT, the score will probably be around 1800. 50% correct is about a 1500. (500 - Math, 500 - Reading, and 500 - Writing).
- The May SAT is the weekend before the AP exams begin. Students taking multiple AP exams should be careful not to over stress themselves by taking the May SAT.
- Colleges count the highest scores on these exams, so no stress is permitted.

Grammar Tips for the SAT and ACT

- When in doubt, take it out. Make sure that everything is written as concisely as possible. If you think something doesn't belong in a sentence, it probably doesn't, so choose an answer that leaves it out.
- Make it make sense. Grammar allows language to communicate

meaning clearly. Most grammatically faulty sentences on the ACT don't say what the author obviously intended to say. If a sentence has more than one possible meaning, figure out what the author intended to say, and fix the sentence so it conveys that meaning properly.

- Trust your ear. Mistakes in grammar often sound bad to your ear. Trust that instinct. Don't choose the answer that "sounds fancy" - choose the one that "sounds right." Keep in mind, though, that there are some errors your ear won't catch. For these, use a flag list of common errors.

SAT & Subject Test Dates 2005/2006

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Late</u>
November 5	Sept. 30	Oct. 12
December 3	Oct. 28	Nov. 9
January 28	Dec. 22	Jan. 4
April 1**	Feb. 24	Mar. 8
May 6	Apr. 3	Apr. 12
June 3	Apr. 28	May 10

**SAT ONLY

PSAT

Saturday, October 15

ACT Test Dates 2005-2006

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Late</u>
October 22	Sept. 16	Sept. 16-30
December 10	Nov. 4	Nov. 5-17
February 11	Jan. 6	Jan. 7-20
April 8	Mar. 3	Mar. 4-17
June 10	May 5	May 6-19

The IUSD website contains parent resources including information on college entrance requirements, online services, financial aid, and test preparation.

Please see the following web page:

http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/parent_resources/college.htm

PSAT/NMSQT

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are:

- to receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.
- to see how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college.
- to enter the competition for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. (Junior year only)
- to help prepare for the SAT by becoming familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
- to receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.

You must sign up for the test at your high school. The test is administered by high schools, **not** through test centers. Online registration for the PSAT/NMSQT is **not** available. If you want to take the PSAT/NMSQT, it is being given at IUSD high schools on Saturday, October 15th. If you have not already received information from your school, contact your high school counselor to find about registering for the test, paying test fees, times, etc. Also contact your guidance office for a copy of the Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT and/or go online to www.collegeboard.com to help you prepare.

Preparing... Long Term Strategies

- Spending your school years taking challenging academic courses and reading widely is the best way to get ready for the PSAT/NMSQT.
- The PSAT/NMSQT includes the same types of critical reading, math, and writing skills and multiple choice questions as the SAT® Reasoning Test.
- Get involved in problem-solving activities through clubs, sports, hobbies, part-time jobs, etc.

- Check your answer sheet regularly to make sure you're in the right place.
- Write your answers to grid-ins in the boxes above the ovals.
- Try educated guessing when you can eliminate at least one answer to a multiple-choice question. Be sure you understand the difference between educated and random guessing. See below.
- Take a calculator.



About Guessing

Educated guessing means guessing an answer whenever you are able to eliminate one or more of the choices as definitely wrong. Educated guessing may help you.

Random guessing probably won't help you because of the way the test is scored. Random guessing means that you have no idea which answer choice is correct. Don't waste time on that kind of question. Move on to the next one.

Ready to give the questions a test run?

Pick a section continued on page 2, and you'll find information for each type of question. Go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html> for practice questions with answers and explanations.

Critical Reading



Sentence Completion: questions measure your knowledge of the meanings of words and ability to understand how the different parts of a sentence logically fit together.

Passage-Based Reading: questions measure your ability to read and think carefully about a single reading passage or a pair of related passages.



Math

The math section of the PSAT/NMSQT requires a basic knowledge of number and operation; algebra and functions (though not content covered in third-year math classes — content that will

appear on the new SAT); geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics, and probability. You can use a calculator to answer math questions, but no question on the test requires a calculator.

- **Multiple Choice** questions ask you to decide which is the best of the five choices given.
- **Grid-ins**, or student-produced response questions, require you to solve a problem and to enter your answer.



Writing Skills

The multiple-choice questions on writing skills measure your ability to express ideas effectively in standard-written English, to recognize faults in usage and structure, and to use language with sensitivity to meaning.

Identifying Sentence Errors: questions test your knowledge of grammar, usage, word choice, and idiom. You are required to find errors in sentences or to indicate that there is no error.

Improving Sentences: questions ask you to choose the best, most effective form of an underlined portion of a given sentence.

Improving Paragraphs: questions require you to make choices about improving the logic, coherence, or organization in a flawed passage.

- Cost at UHS is \$25 at registration and \$30 before Oct. 12th.
- PSAT is highly recommended for all **College Bound Students**.
- Students should be in Algebra 2 or higher levels of math.
- PSAT is a practice SAT but not part of student's permanent record.
- PSAT is only offered once a year in October.
- Sample questions and more information can be found at : <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

Sources: collegeboard.com; Barbara Schultz, Beckman H.S. Counselor.



ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR UC?



Grade Point Average: To determine your eligibility, the University calculates your GPA in the "a-g" subjects by assigning point values to the grades you earn, totaling the points and dividing the total by the number of "a-g" courses. Points are assigned as follows: A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, D=1 point, and F=0 points. (Pluses and minuses are not calculated in the grade point average.)

Only the grades you earn in "a-g" subjects in the 10th and 11th grades — including summer sessions — are used to calculate your preliminary GPA. Courses you took in ninth grade can be used to meet the Subject Requirement if you earned a grade of C or better, but they will not be used to calculate your GPA.

Honors Courses: The University assigns extra points for up to eight semesters of University-certified honors-level and Advanced Placement courses taken in the last three years of high school: A=5 points, B=4 points, C=3 points. No more than two year-long UC-approved honors level courses taken in the 10th grade may be given extra points. A grade of D in an honors or advanced placement course does not earn extra points.

The courses must be in the following "a-g" subjects: history/social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, language other than English, and visual and performing arts. Also, they must be certified as honors courses by the University. In these subjects, as well as in computer science, acceptable honors-level courses include Advanced Placement courses, Higher Level and designated Standard Level International Baccalaureate courses, and college courses that are transferable to the University.

D and F Grades: If you have earned a D or F in an "a-g" course, you must repeat the course with a grade of C or better. The original D or F grade will not be included in the GPA calculation, and the new grade will be used. If you repeat a course in which you initially

earned a grade of C, the second grade will not be used.

Test Score Total: The University calculates your test score total as follows: If you took the SAT Reasoning Test, the University uses your highest scores in critical reading, math and writing from a single sitting and adds them to your two highest SAT Subject Test scores from two different subject areas. The total of

all five exam components (critical reading + math + writing + subject test 1 + subject test 2) equals your test score total.

The University uses an Eligibility Index - a combination of GPA and test scores - to determine if you meet this requirement. The minimum GPA is 2.8 for California residents, 3.4 for nonresidents.

To find out whether you are eligible, follow these steps:

step 1 Compute your Test Score Total by filling out the boxes below.* Students submitting ACT scores should convert each of their scores to the equivalent SAT score using the translation table provided.

ACT	ACT SCORE	TRANSLATED SCORE
Reading		
Science		
Math		
SUBTOTAL		
MULTIPLY SUBTOTAL BY 0.667 <small>Round up 0.5 & above</small>		1
English/Writing		2
ACT TOTAL (1+2)		

OR: SAT Reasoning Test

Reading		1
Math		2
Writing		3
SAT TOTAL (1+2+3)		

PLUS: SAT Subject Tests

Enter your highest score		b
Enter your 2nd highest score (from different subject area)		c
TEST SCORE TOTAL <small>(SAT or ACT total plus two SAT Subject Tests)</small>		

step 2 Enter the GPA** from your "a-g" courses GPA
Then go to the Eligibility Index shown at right and find where your GPA falls in the ranges listed. If your Test Score Total meets or exceeds the minimum score shown for your GPA, you are UC eligible.

*If you took both the SAT and ACT, or if you took either exam more than once, compute your total for each sitting to ensure you've identified your best result. You cannot, however, mix and match scores from separate test dates.

**UC calculates your GPA using the grades earned in "a-g" courses in the 10th and 11th grades.

NOTE: Keep in mind that meeting the minimum admission requirements for UC does not guarantee admission to competitive campuses and programs.

ACT Score	Translated Score	ACT Score	Translated Score
36	800	20	480
35	780	19	460
34	760	18	440
33	740	17	420
32	720	16	400
31	700	15	380
30	680	14	360
29	660	13	340
28	640	12	320
27	620	11	300
26	600	10	280
25	580	9	260
24	560	8	240
23	540	7	220
22	520	1-6	200
21	500		

CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS	
"A-G" GPA	Minimum Test Score Total
< 2.80	ineligible
2.80 - 2.84	2860
2.85 - 2.89	2698
2.90 - 2.94	2548
2.95 - 2.99	2440
3.00 - 3.04	2338
3.05 - 3.09	2260
3.10 - 3.14	2188
3.15 - 3.19	2122
3.20 - 3.24	2050
3.25 - 3.29	1990
3.30 - 3.34	1942
3.35 - 3.39	1912
3.40 - 3.44	1882
3.45 & above	1858

NON CA RESIDENTS	
"A-G" GPA	Minimum Test Score Total
< 3.40	ineligible
3.40 - 3.44	1882
3.45 & above	1858



Calculate your eligibility online at www.UniversityofCalifornia.edu/admissions/scholarshipreq

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Students who demonstrate leadership abilities have a leg up with colleges, universities and employers because, like Superbowl tickets in January, leadership qualities are in demand.

Leading the pack is not always easy, but the ability to go first will help you stand out in a stadium-sized crowd of applicants and offer you plenty of other benefits.

Path to success

One student's college application was highlighted with distinctions like newspaper editor, assistant yearbook editor and public service club founder.

That got the attention of Harvard University admissions counselors and she went on to co-direct a public service program at the Ivy League school and serve as the brave co-leader of a local Brownie Troop. Today she's a successful author and workshop teacher.

"Colleges like to see leadership on applications because they want a campus community that is alive," she says. "They want students who will move and shake the campus in academics, athletics, the arts, politics and public service. Colleges are thinking to the future and know that these student leaders will make the largest impact on the world post-graduation."

As this former student illustrates, running for student body president is not the only way to demonstrate leadership qualities. You can put together an art exhibit, start a petition to have vegetarian lunches or collect canned goods for a food pantry.

You don't need an "official title" to be a leader. You just need the ability to set goals, to motivate others, and to lead a team to the finish line.

Source: Jennifer LeClaire for fastweb.com



Ready to work

Holding leadership positions also prepares you for the work world, where time management, team building and organization become critical factors to career success.

"Students who involve themselves in leadership opportunities become better organized," says Tania Castro, director of college counseling at Palmer Trinity School in Miami and former regional admissions director for the University of Pennsylvania.

"They gain an understanding of the politics of working within an organization and realize the benefits of teamwork," she adds. "Generally students also gain confidence in themselves and the ability to contribute to the bigger picture."

Of course, there are challenges and risks involved with leading at the high school level. Your skills are tested. Your character is refined. Your time is stretched. And not everyone will appreciate your efforts.

"You have to be ready not to be liked by some," says Joshua Estrin, president of Concepts In Success, a consulting firm in Hollywood, Fla. "You have to be ready to be scared because it's very scary leading the pack. When you are leading, you don't always have the answers."

Balance is key

Pursuing leadership opportunities in high school teaches you to find the answers and those problem-solving skills will take you a long way in life. At the end of the day, experts agree that balance is crucial. Before you embark on world-changing initiatives, make sure you have the time, passion and resources to be effective.

"Find something that you love doing, become a leader in that area and maintain excellence," says Estrin. "You don't have to hold 10 positions to get noticed. Avoid burnout because that's an issue you will face in the workforce. Colleges and employers both want well-rounded people in their organizations."

If you want to change the world the best place to start just might be your high school.

College Guidance Book

Now accessible on-line, the College Guidance Book is written specifically with Irvine students and families in mind. From annual checklists, to creating your Admission folder, the College Guidance Book will help you proceed with confidence.