



# Full Passage

## Newsletter

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### March 2017

#### 11<sup>th</sup> SAT Reasoning Exam

9th, 10th and 11th grade students - Make plans for a productive summer. Investigate summer programs, jobs, internships

11th grade students – Create an initial list of colleges.

Prepare for spring SAT/ACT exams.

### April 2017

#### 8<sup>th</sup> - ACT and ACT plus Writing

(register by 3/3 -  
late registration 3/17)

Seniors should have their final letters of acceptance by the beginning of April

Juniors—Visit colleges

Prepare for AP Exams

Seniors—Compare offers of admission; revisit top choices

Evaluate financial aid packages and consider college funding options

## College Admissions Courtship

The college admissions process has occasionally been likened to an old-fashioned mating ritual.

It starts out with mutual flirtation: student flirts with colleges, requesting information and perhaps visiting campuses; colleges flirt with student, sending emails and a forest-full of brochures, mailings and catalogues.

It starts to get a little more serious: student may decide to “go steady” and apply as a binding Early Decision candidate which means that if they are accepted, they must attend. Many students choose to “play the field” and open up their search to include many colleges and universities.

Students apply, also known as the “proposal” period: this is when they desperately demonstrate their love. They solicit letters of recommendation, send in affirmations in the form of transcripts and test scores and write elaborate essays for each of their hopeful prospects. Colleges are now playing hard-to-get and are in hibernation mode, putting off making any decisions for months and months. Colleges hold all the cards in this phase and won’t share details on their commitment potential.

Students sweat through the waiting period and then the notifications start arriving. They are often pleasantly surprised at the number of colleges that have now decided they love them back, or they may be deflated by the break-up news when they receive rejection letters.

Then there are the colleges who just can’t decide and they inform students that they need more time, stringing them along with

no commitment at all. They ask students if they’re willing to wait; some students choose to wait and others turn them down because they received better offers. Wait-listed students need to decide how much energy they want to invest in these relationships, because wait-lists are very unpredictable.

Some students have unrealistic hopes and expectations of a “destined” relationship that perhaps was never meant to be; but alas, it is often a one-sided romance. Try to prevent yourself from getting hurt again and again by finding colleges that love you just as much or more than you love them.

Offers are now on the table; students are in control and colleges are now the suitors. They eagerly await decisions from students; often times making personal calls, sending gifts and welcoming them back to campus on “Accepted Student Days.” They serve the best food on these special days, food that students won’t see again until graduation weekend. Campuses are as clean as Main Street in DisneyWorld and everyone is happy.

After recovering from what can be a most devastating break-up, most students can identify which college represents the best fit for them. They pick themselves up, dust themselves off, make a solid decision and live happily ever after.

A favorite anecdote/statistic overheard at a college counselor conference is that by Halloween, 95 percent of students are at their “first choice” school! Kids are resilient and most are happy wherever they ultimately choose to go.

### Career Paths for Molecular Biology Majors

- Molecular Biologist
- Microbiologist
- Geneticist
- Environmental Technician/  
Consultant
- Biomedical Researcher
- Research Scientist
- Professor/Teacher
- Toxicologist
- Pharmaceutical Sales  
Representative
- Scientific Editor
- Technical Writer
- Laboratory Technician
- Product Safety Manager
- Patent Lawyer
- Bioinformatics Technician
- Nutrition Educator
- Clinical Diagnostics Specialist
- Crop Improvement Consultant
- Business Manager
- Scientific Supply  
Representative
- Veterinarian

## Majoring in Molecular Biology

Molecular biology is the study of biology at the molecular level. It focuses on the structure and function of the molecules that form the basis of life. Molecular biologists explore cells, their characteristics and parts, chemical processes, and how molecules control cellular activity and growth. They frequently focus on certain types of molecules or work to define the biological processes that cause genetic defects.

Majoring in this field prepares students for a wide range of careers in scientific research, medicine, bioengineering, and biotechnology. It is important to note that there will be a high demand for science and engineering jobs in the future. Government agencies such as the EPA, the NIH, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration hire graduates to work in research, analyze samples of food, air, water, and drugs, and head programs that review the safety of new medical devices, foods, and drugs. In the field of biotechnology, molecular biologists work to improve therapies, vaccines, drugs, and medical diagnostic testing. They assist in the design of environmental biotechnological products, which are used to clean up hazardous waste. They also work in quality control, manufacturing, production, and information systems.

Jobs are also available in education. Chemistry and biology teachers are currently in demand at both the junior high and high school levels. With a doctoral degree, students can become university professors. Professors perform research in laboratories and write up the results of their research findings. They also spend time writing grant proposals to support their research and teaching efforts. In the field of agriculture, molecular biology graduates work to create more disease resistant genetically-engineered crops. In the pharmaceutical industry, jobs are available in the design and manufacturing

of drugs and vaccines. Other employment options include writing and reporting on scientific policy, biological and medical illustration, and forensic science.

While specific coursework varies among colleges, students planning on majoring in molecular biology can expect to take classes in chemistry, biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, cell biology, biostatistics, physics, and mathematics. It is important to note that some college programs focus on preparing students for medical school while others prepare students for careers in the biotechnology industry. Decide which path you prefer and pick a college that is consistent with your career plans. Students should be ready to record and analyze data using computers, perform research and laboratory work, attend lectures, and work cooperatively with other students. To enhance job prospects, it is recommended that students spend an additional year at a college that offers training programs for specialized lab techniques, such as cell culture and DNA sequencing and synthesis. This is often known as a “certificate program”, and can give students the added research experience that is crucial to finding jobs in their field.

For more information, go to [www.asmb.org](http://www.asmb.org), the website of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. This organization publishes scientific journals and supports research funding and education. To see job listings and read about current events, another helpful website is [www.cellbio.com](http://www.cellbio.com), the Cell and Molecular Biology Online informational resource.



## Financial Matters: Comparing Financial Aid Packages



If you've applied for financial aid and filed all the paperwork by the appropriate deadline, an award letter outlining a college's offer of financial assistance should arrive close on the heels of your notification of acceptance. Here's a guide to understanding what that package really means.

The bottom line in comparing financial aid packages is the final cost of your education to you and your family. Since the total cost of education varies for each college, you'll need to compare your packages in terms of several factors. First, compare the ratio of grants

(gift money) to loans for each school. Packages with larger grants than loans are obviously more desirable. Next, consider how much you and your family are expected to contribute and compare this amount to your total grant award. Are you and your family comfortable with this *Expected Family Contribution*? Will you be able to provide the expected amount?

Now, compare loan types offered and their terms. The most desirable loans are student loans with their low, deferred interest; these loans do not have to be repaid until after you have completed your education. Private, unsubsidized family or student loans generally require that repayment begins within sixty days of receipt of funds.

Most financial aid packages also include work-study. Keep in mind that you are free to decline this type of aid; although there may be significant

benefits to work-study employment, some students prefer to find their own jobs on or near campus.

Call the college's financial aid office to learn how outside scholarships may affect your financial aid package. While some colleges allow students to use these in place of loans, other colleges subtract this amount from any grant aid that you've been awarded. Ask, too, if you are likely to be awarded a similar package in succeeding years, assuming family finances remain at the same level. Some parts of your package may not be renewable, and this could affect your cost of attendance in subsequent years.

The final decision about college choice is a family decision, made by weighing numerous factors to determine the best choice for all of you. With skyrocketing college costs, finances may count heavily in your final college selection.

## SAT or ACT? Which is Right for You?

A year ago, the SAT was revamped and now students wonder, should they take the new SAT or the ACT? Keep in mind that a 1600 on the new SAT is the same as a 36 on the ACT. While experts say that the new SAT is more straightforward and now more similar to the ACT in format and subject matter, there are still some important differences to consider before making your decision.

The new SAT returns to its original 400-1600 point scale. It has eliminated the wrong answer penalty. The SAT essay portion, like the ACT's, is now optional. There is still no Science section, but science questions appear in each individual section of the exam.

The new SAT Reading section includes only longer passages and does not contain sentence completions, making it more similar to the ACT

Reading section. Unlike the ACT, its questions follow the same order as information in the paragraph. While the ACT focuses more on reading comprehension, the new SAT focuses on analyzing specific concepts and understanding how the authors construct their arguments. The new SAT Reading portion consists of 52 questions in 65 minutes, while the ACT Reading portion consists of 40 questions in 35 minutes.

The new SAT Writing section utilizes the same passage-based format as the ACT English section, and now includes more grammatical concepts such as punctuation. It is important to note that although both tests give roughly the same amount of time, the ACT asks almost twice as many questions. The SAT Writing portion consists of 44 questions in 35 minutes and the ACT English portion consists of 75 ques-

tions in 45 minutes.

The new SAT Math section has been redesigned to be more straightforward and focuses on math taught in high school, with a heavy emphasis on algebra and data analysis. The ACT Math section includes far more geometry and trigonometry, and does not provide formulas like the SAT does. The new SAT allows more time for the Math section, but the questions are more challenging. It includes both calculator and no-calculator portions. The ACT Math section is all multiple choice, and allows use of a calculator throughout the section. The new SAT Math portion consists of 20 no-calculator questions in 25 minutes plus 38 calculator questions in 55 minutes, and the ACT Math portion contains 60 questions in 60 minutes.

(continued p. 4)

## SAT or ACT? Which is Right for You? (continued)

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The Essay section is similar in the new SAT and the ACT. They are both given about the same amount of time and they are both optional. However, according to the College Board, “you can count on seeing the same prompt no matter when you take the new SAT with Essay, but the passage will be different every time.” In the new SAT, you must evaluate an argument, whereas in the ACT, you must come up with your own argument and support it. It is important to find out whether or not colleges on your list require or recommend the Essay portion before preparing for the test. The new SAT allows 50 minutes to answer one prompt, while the ACT allows 40 minutes to answer one prompt.

So which test is best for you? The SAT is still a critical thinking test, with no penalty for guessing incorrect answers. While many consider it to be the easier of the two, since they are both graded on a curve, it is important to pick the one that will give you the strongest competitive

edge. If you are able to stay focused for longer periods of time and work at a fast pace, the ACT might be your best bet. There is more practice material available for it and the content is presented in a consistent manner. If you are a slower test-taker, the new SAT may be a better option, as it is far less time intensive and allows more time per problem. It also emphasizes creative thinking over memorizing content. To decide which test to take, obtain a copy of both exams and examine the rules, format, and questions in depth. One style may resonate with you over the other. Once you have decided which would be a better fit, start preparing as early as possible for the exam. Advance preparation will help you earn your best scores on either test.

