

# COLLEGE CORNER

## What You Need To Know To Prepare For College

(NAPSA)—Here's news many parents may be happy to hear: Parents don't have to invest thousands of dollars in prep courses to help their children get ready for the SAT college entrance exam.

The SAT is the most widely used college admission test. It is administered seven times a year in the U.S., with more than 2 million students taking it every year.

Although test prep companies would like you to believe they can dramatically improve your performance, studies have shown that the benefit may be minimal.

Several recent studies show that short-term test preparation only increases scores by about the same amount as taking the test a second time.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) released an analysis last year showing that, contrary to the claims of test prep companies, coaching had minimal impact in improving SAT scores—about 10 to 20 points on average in mathematics and five to 10 points in critical reading.

The best way to get ready for the SAT, say experts at The College Board, is to do well in school, take challenging courses, study hard and read as much as possible. There are no tricks or shortcuts to testing success.

One way to do your best on test day is to familiarize yourself with the SAT format and question types in advance. Understanding the test format can help students feel more relaxed, but that doesn't necessarily require expensive test



**There are many free and low-cost materials that can help students prepare to do their best on the SAT.**

prep. In fact, test prep courses may not have access to actual SAT questions.

Students can familiarize themselves with the SAT by utilizing the College Board's official SAT practice materials available at <http://sat.collegeboard.com>. This site offers many free and low-cost practice options for the SAT, including a free, full-length official practice test, the SAT Question of the Day and the only study guide on the market that uses real test questions from the test maker.

There's also an 18-lesson online course featuring 10 SAT practice tests and more than 600 questions that students can access from any computer with an Internet connection.

The site also offers plenty of helpful tips and test-taking approaches for all three sections of the SAT for students who want to do their best on test day.