



“Inside the Redesigned SAT”

Presentation Script

FOR PARENTS

SLIDE 1

Say:

Welcome to the workshop, “Inside the Redesigned SAT.” Today we’re here to talk to you about the new SAT college entrance exam and how the redesign of this test impacts your teen as he or she gets ready to apply to colleges.

I’m [NAME], the [TITLE] of the Huntington Learning Center in [TOWN]. [Customize introduction]

Before we get started, I wanted to share some background on Huntington with all of you.

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Our company was founded in 1977 with a simple vision in mind: to give every student the best education possible. Today, we are one of the nation's oldest and longest-running supplemental education services providers, and we work with kindergartners through high school students—and even adults—in phonics, reading, math, study skills, writing, enrichment, and—of course—SAT and ACT exam prep.

For more than 37 years, Huntington has had great success with thousands of students—and the reason is because we develop targeted, individualized learning programs for every one of our students. When it comes to SAT and ACT prep, that customized approach includes a diagnostic of students' skills before we begin instruction—this way, we ensure that we target students' strengths and weaknesses as they prepare for the exam.

Huntington's curriculum is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Also, we are accredited by the [add appropriate accrediting body].

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So, if you're here today, you probably know already that the SAT is changing pretty significantly. Let me share with you a bit of background on *why* the College Board decided to change the SAT. The College Board is the organization that administers the SAT, PSAT, and Advanced Placement programs.

The big reason behind the redesign of the SAT is the fact that the College Board felt that the SAT had become too disconnected from the work done in high schools. They listened to parents, teachers, school administrators, and college admissions officers who were all saying the same thing: the current SAT simply does not reflect the most important skills taught in a rich high school curriculum.

The bottom line: the new SAT that will be introduced in spring 2016 will be much more focused on testing the knowledge that students need in college and in their careers.

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As you would expect, the College Board did extensive research that led them to shape the design of the new exam. That evidence along with extensive feedback from the education community helped them decide exactly what changes to make.

For the Reading, Writing and Language, and Essay Tests, the College Board decided to...

1. Incorporate texts spanning a range of difficulty
2. Assess whether students are able to analyze source texts and use textual evidence effectively to support claims and points
3. Include informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts
4. Devote considerable attention to word meanings and the impact of word choice
5. Focus on language that is associated with clear and effective communication
6. Present texts in a range of subject areas (including U.S. and world literature, science, history/social studies, the humanities, and careers)

(continued on next slide....)

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For the Math Test, the College Board decided to...

1. Focus the exam on the math knowledge, skills, and understandings that are most strongly linked to readiness for and success in college.
2. Emphasize problem solving and data analysis.
3. Include both calculator and no-calculator sections, allowing students to show that they can use a calculator without being overly dependent on it.

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Before I go into this slide, first, a quick survey: How many of you have a teen who has already taken the SAT *or* have an older son or daughter who took the SAT in its current design? [pause while parents raise hands]

All right, so some of you are familiar with the SAT. Based on what you know, are there any components of the exam that you or your teen found confusing or odd? [wait for answers, if none come, say the below]

Probably the first thing that comes to parents' minds about the SAT today is the exam's emphasis on vocabulary—and often pretty obscure vocabulary words. That's going away.

Another thing we hear parents talk about often is the complex scoring system, where students are penalized for wrong answers.

So, let's get down to it. **What exactly is changing on the redesigned SAT?** Here's the quick summary, and we'll go into each of these in detail in a moment.

1. The components of the exam will be different, which we'll go into shortly.
2. The total testing time is planned to be shorter if a student opts out of the optional Essay.
3. That said, the SAT essay is now optional, but the focus, length, and structure of that essay will also be different.
4. The overall areas of emphasis of the exam will change.
5. And finally, the score reporting will change.

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Show slide “Change #1: Exam Components”

Let’s go into the **components** of the SAT that are changing with the redesign.

Currently, the SAT has four main sections: Critical Reading, Writing, Math and a required Essay.

The redesigned SAT has a Reading Test, a Writing and Language Test, a Math Test, and an optional Essay.

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Slide “Change #1: Exam Components” continued...

The specific question types for each section of the redesigned exam are still being researched and refined. But the College Board has put together a very detailed document of the draft test specifications. You can view that document on their website—and that url is at the bottom of the slide—but here’s a quick snapshot of some of the key features of each new section.

We can start with the Reading Test and the Writing & Language Test.

You can see that the features of those tests are similar.

- **Emphasis on words in context.** This means that both the Reading and the Writing & Language Tests aim to measure students’ understanding of the meaning and use of words and phrases in the context of a text passage provided. We won’t see the testing of obscure vocabulary as we do on the current SAT, but rather, an emphasis on having students demonstrate their ability to understand how words can take on a range of meanings and implications—depending on how they are used.
- **Emphasis on command of evidence.** On the redesigned SAT, students are being asked to point out where in the text they find evidence for any conclusions they reach. The reason behind this is to encourage students to read carefully for details as they comprehend texts.
- **Inclusion of informational graphics.** By graphics, we mean tables, charts, graphs and other sorts of visual pieces that convey information related to a passage. Students are asked to interpret that graphic information and integrate it with the information they read in the text passage.
- **Finally, text complexity.** The Reading Test of the redesigned SAT includes passages that span a range of complexity levels from grade 9 to college level. The exam will feature a pretty wide range of passages of lower and higher text complexity.

Now, let’s talk about the Essay Test.

The new Essay will have three distinctive features:

- **Use of a common prompt.** Students will be asked to write a response based on their analysis and comprehension of a source text, supporting their points about the text with evidence that they pull from the text.
- **Emphasis on analysis of argument.** Students will need to analyze how an author uses evidence, reasoning, persuasion, or other elements to create an argument.

- **Use of clear, powerful evaluation criteria.** The redesigned SAT Essay holds students to a high standard, without a doubt. Students' responses will be assessed carefully for clarity and rich, robust writing.

Finally, the new Math Test on the redesigned exam is more focused on math topics that the students will use in many different college paths and careers. Big picture, the exam will emphasize problem solving, modeling, using tools to solve problems and making use of structure for algebra and other types of math. More specifically, the new Math Test will have four sections:

- Heart of Algebra
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- Passport to Advanced Math
- Additional Topics in Math

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Show slide “Change #2: Test Length and Timing”

Change #2 on the redesigned SAT is the total testing time.

This chart shows the lengths of the various sections and how those will change. The Critical Reading section is about the same length, but with fewer questions. The Writing section has around the same number of questions, but students will be given just 35 minutes instead of 60 to complete them. The Math section has about the same number of questions and 10 additional minutes.

And most notably, of course, the redesigned SAT will make the Essay Test optional...

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...and as you can see, the exam will go from a total test time of 3 hours and 45 minutes to a total time of 3 hours and 50 minutes if the student chooses to do the essay or their high school or college requires it. The test will be three hours without the essay.

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Show slide “Change #3: Optional Essay”

Change #3 on the redesigned SAT: the essay is now optional.

Currently, the essay is a required component of the exam that tests students’ writing skills. The new exam will make the essay optional, and the decision on whether to request the Essay for admission is left to each individual college or university.

The new Essay Test will be twice as long as it is currently at 50 minutes. And the essay will test not only writing, but reading and analysis skills.

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Slide “Change #3: Optional Essay” continued...

We’ve been getting many questions about the Essay, so I’ll go into this in just a bit more depth.

The redesigned SAT Essay asks students to read and produce a written analysis of a source text that is provided to the student during the exam. What kind of source text? An *authentic* text selected from high-quality, previously published sources. That means texts that represent arguments written for a broad audience and examine trends or debates in civic or cultural life. These will vary, but the Essay prompt itself will be consistent.

Then the Essay asks students to produce a written analysis of how the author builds their argument to persuade their audience. To be clear, students are *not* asked their opinion on a topic. Instead, they must analyze how an author develops their argument. Students will be evaluated on their reading, analysis and writing skills.

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Show slide “Change #4: Areas of Emphasis”

Less of a tangible change but more of a theoretical change is the SAT’s purpose and overall components.

When the College Board President David Coleman addressed the press about the College Board’s decision to redesign the SAT, he talked about some of the troubling statistics around this assessment of high school students’ knowledge.

(Refer to pie graph) In 2013, a whopping 57 percent of SAT takers lacked the skills to succeed in college course work. In other words, they did not meet the SAT’s “benchmark score,” which is associated with a 65 percent probability of achieving a first-year college GPA of a B- or higher.

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At the same time, the College Board wanted to achieve **three goals with the redesign of the SAT**:

1. First, to provide a better picture of student readiness for college. Basically, the College Board wanted this exam to better predict a student's ability to succeed at college.
2. Second, they wanted an exam that is more clearly focused on the knowledge and skills needed for college readiness.
3. And finally, they want to ensure that the new SAT better reflects the type of rigorous class work that students must take in high school. The point is to tie the exam to actual class instruction.

So, the redesigned SAT will have a much **stronger focus** on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that are most important for **college and career readiness**. In addition, it will **emphasize the meaning of words** and focus a lot on how the choice of word really shapes the meaning of a sentence, passage or section. And the exam will move for the first time ever to a **rights-only scoring system**. That means that students will receive a point for each correct answer but **NO** deduction for an incorrect answer. Blank responses will have no impact on a student's score. Currently, incorrect answers result in a deduction.

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Show slide “Change #5: Score Reporting”

Change #5 is *Score Reporting*.

The way that the SAT will be scored is going to be different—however, the College Board is still saying that the score reporting structure is subject to research.

You can see on the slide that the overall scale will go to 1600: that’s 800 possible points on the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and 800 possible points on the Mathematics section. Because the Essay will be optional, it will not factor into a student’s Total Score. The Essay will be scored and reported separately.

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Show slide “Change #5: Score Reporting (contin.)”

Another change we’ll see on how the redesigned SAT is scored is that students will receive much more in-depth score information. In addition to their Total Score (made up of two Section Scores for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math), students will receive more detailed Test Scores:

- A Reading Test score
- A Writing and Language Test score
- A Math Test score

An Essay Test score will be reported separately and will give individual scores for three domains: Reading, writing, and analysis.

And to dissect students’ performance even further, each test will be broken down even further into **cross test scores** and **subscores**.

The chart on the slide shows how the College Board is explaining the scores that will be reported on the redesigned SAT, pending the results of their research.

Bottom line: the College Board hopes to report for each student:

- One **total** score
- Two **section** scores: for Evidence-based Reading and Writing and Math
- Three **test scores** AND additional **Essay** scores
- Two **cross-test** scores
- Seven **subscores**

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OK, so we've talked today about the specific elements of the SAT that will be revised. Let's turn now to the **eight key changes** to the SAT's content. These are the concepts upon which the SAT redesign is centered—areas that research has shown matter most for college and career readiness.

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First: the redesigned SAT will focus on relevant words and the meanings of those words in different uses.

Students will be asked to master relevant vocabulary—words that they use in their lives and will continue to use in college and beyond. Gone are the times where students must memorize obscure words used on the SAT and only the SAT!

Second is command of evidence.

- Students taking the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Essay sections will be asked to demonstrate their ability to interpret, synthesize and use evidence found in different places. What kinds of sources? Informational graphics, texts in the humanities, sciences, history, social studies, or other sources, and of course, passages excerpted from literature and literary nonfiction.
- In the SAT Reading Test, students will be asked to select a quote to support the answer they've chosen. In some passages, students will be asked to integrate information conveyed in informational graphics to find the best answers.
- In the Essay, students will be asked to analyze a provided source text to determine how the author builds a persuasive argument. They will be asked to write an analysis of that argument using evidence drawn from the source passage.

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Third: the new essay will analyze a source document—very different than the essay on the current SAT. Students will read a passage and explain how the author builds an argument to persuade. The idea here is to give students a much better idea what college writing assignments are like.

The essay encourages students to read closely, analyze carefully and write clearly. Students will need to learn how to analyze as they read and be able to articulate how authors make their points when writing.

The fourth key change in the SAT is a focus on math that matters most.

What exactly is “math that matters most?” This means the areas of math that are used in a wide range of majors and careers. The redesigned exam will focus on three essential areas of math:

1. **Problem Solving and Data Analysis** – This is about being quantitatively literate, which means using ratios, percentages and proportional reasoning to solve problems—problems in areas like social sciences, science, and career contexts
2. **Heart of Algebra** – This focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems.
3. **Passport to Advanced Math** – This focuses on more complex equations and the manipulation that they require.

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Fifth: Problems grounded in real-world contexts. The redesigned SAT will engage with questions that are directly related to the work performed in college and in all types of careers.

In the Evidence-Based Writing section, reading questions will include both literature and literary nonfiction as well as passages like the ones students might encounter in many different majors and careers.

In the Math section, students will be required to not just answer questions, but also dig into those questions and think about them critically in order to model them mathematically.

The sixth key change on the SAT will be the exam's focus on analysis in science and history/social studies.

Although there are not specific social studies and science sections on the SAT, the College Board has moved toward making sure the SAT tests students' ability to apply their reading, writing, language and math skills to answer questions in the science, history and social studies contexts. Just as students will use these skills in their lives to make sense of new topics or global events, they must do the same on the SAT.

So, your teens can expect to encounter questions that require them to read and comprehend texts, synthesize information presented through texts and graphics, and solve problems based in the social sciences and science.

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The seventh key change has to do with some of the texts that will be used on the redesigned SAT. On the new test, students will read excerpts from the U.S. founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers.

These texts are so profound and continue to inspire conversations about important topics such as human rights, freedom and what it means to be an American citizen. The redesigned SAT will present these documents to encourage students to reflect on these important issues, better preparing them for the type of critical thinking they'll need in college and the real world.

Finally, the eighth change on the SAT is something we've already talked about: the redesigned SAT will remove any penalty for wrong answers. Students will earn points for any questions they answer correctly, but they will not be penalized for answers that the answer incorrectly.

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So, the purpose of this presentation is to give you an update on the redesigned SAT, not to go into the politics of what is happening with the SAT and ACT and standardized college entrance exams in general. However, many of you may already be aware that most colleges require either the ACT or the SAT—hence the reason you want to understand how the exam is changing.

Also, many colleges and universities have adopted an SAT and ACT optional policy for undergraduate applicants, instead choosing to focus on students' high school record as the primary factor of admissions decisions.

In any case, there are some important reasons that your teen should take the SAT. These reasons come both from us and from the College Board:

- First and most obvious: if the colleges to which your teens are considering applying require or strongly encourage the SAT or ACT, it's worth considering taking this exam.
- Second, the redesigned SAT will test the reading, writing and math skills that are learned in high school and are critical for success in college.
- The redesigned SAT will be much more straightforward. No mysteries, no confusing questions. The idea here is that students who do well in the classroom will be the same ones who do well on the SAT.
- And of course another reason to take the SAT—or perhaps better stated, a major benefit of taking the redesigned SAT—is that it will be a reliable predictor of college readiness and career success.

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We've covered quite a few frequently asked questions about the SAT redesign throughout this presentation, but here are just a few more that we haven't addressed—and the College Board's answers to them.

When will the redesigned SAT be given?

The new SAT will be administered for the first time in spring 2016.

Why is the essay now going to be optional?

Two reasons. First, the editing work that students do in the multiple choice Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section is predictive of college success, while the essay itself historically hasn't contributed to the predictive power of the exam. Second, the feedback that the College Board received on the essay was mixed and many admissions officers did not find the essay useful.

What is the College Board doing to ensure the SAT is a strong predictor of college success?

The redesign of the SAT is based on current research about the skills and knowledge that matter most in college. Their findings guide the design of the exam and its content. The College Board has already begun testing the technical quality of exam questions, test forms and the like. Also, they will launch a pilot study of the predictive validity of the SAT once the exam is rolled out, and they will launch a national validity study after the exam's launch to examine the relationship between SAT scores and college outcomes.

Can students take the old and the new SAT?

When the College Board switches to the redesigned exam in spring 2016, the current SAT will not be offered any longer. However, some might choose to take the current SAT before spring 2016 and then the redesigned version later.

Is the PSAT/NMSQT also changing?

Yes! The redesigned SAT will launch in October 2015.

Who weighed in on the redesign?

The College Board gathered feedback from admissions officers, college professors, leaders in higher education, school counselors, K-12 leaders and teachers, students and parents. A higher education working group also was formed to ensure that colleges and universities were involved in the conversation and would provide feedback on elements of the test's redesign, scoring and more. That group includes deans, VPs and directors of admissions and enrollment management.

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A few things to **keep in mind** as your teen prepares to take the SAT and apply to colleges.

First, the SAT is certainly not the only factor that colleges consider when evaluating applicants! Is it important? Yes, but so are things like your teens' GPAs and overall portfolios or resumes as well as their transcript of challenging courses.

To give you a sense of what colleges look at when evaluating applicants, let's use Rutgers University as an example. Their admissions website says that they place emphasis on each applicant's academic promise as demonstrated by...

- Completion of all required high school courses.
- Academic performance in high school, which means the strength of classes, grades, GPA and cumulative rank.
- SAT and/or ACT scores
- Other factors, like a talent assessment for arts students and other qualitative factors—the personal essay, extracurricular activities and the like.

Second, while the SAT redesign is major, big picture, it is actually a good change. The new SAT will align more closely with the content that your teens are being taught in school.

Third—and we will go into this in a moment—the timing of when your teens will take the SAT definitely affects how or if they'll be impacted.

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So, will your teen be impacted by this overhaul? Here's a quick reference chart to help you determine when your test-taker will be affected. This assumes that your student will take the SAT as a junior or senior.

- If you have a senior who graduates in 2015, he or she will take only the current SAT.
- If your teen is a junior—the class of 2016—he or she will take the current SAT up until March 2016. And of course, it is unlikely that your teen would take the SAT after that point since graduation is probably in June 2016.
- If your student is currently a sophomore—the class of 2017—he or she will take the current SAT up until January 2016. Then, in March 2016 or thereafter, your teen will take the new SAT.
- If your student is a freshman this school year—the class of 2018—he or she will only take the new SAT as a junior or senior.

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Certainly, an option is to avoid the SAT altogether and take the ACT!

The SAT is making major changes that will affect students in the coming years. If your student prefers to avoid dealing with the changing SAT, the ACT is absolutely a good alternative. The ACT is accepted by all U.S. colleges and universities.

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One of the best ways for your teen to prepare for the SAT—both now and when it is redesigned—is to enroll him or her in a customized test prep program. Huntington is a leader in the college entrance exam preparation industry and we are well informed of the changes happening with the SAT. We've helped thousands of students achieve their best on this important exam.

Whether your teen is gearing up to take the SAT now or will be taking the redesigned exam in 2016, we are prepared to help your teen succeed. Here are a few of the benefits of our SAT prep program:

- Condensed – We offer three excellent programs: a premier program, a 28-hour program and a 10-hour program. Each of these includes in-class instruction plus full-length practice tests.
- Comprehensive – Our program focuses on key subject areas tested, considering your teens' strengths and weaknesses.
- Personalized – We offer small classes with a 10:1 student-teacher ratio as well as 1:1 instruction for those who prefer completely individualized instruction.
- Monitored – Students' progress is monitored and communicated to parents throughout the program.
- Expert prep – All of our teachers are college educated, and many have teaching certificates.
- Online prep – We offer access to Huntington Online Prep, which offers online, video-based test prep tools.

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Thank you so much for coming today to learn more about the redesigned SAT.

I hope this was a helpful presentation that gives you a sense of the changes to come. If you have additional questions or comments, please feel free to come see me. And if I can ever answer any specific questions about the best way to prepare for the SAT or other aspects of the redesigned exam, you can always call us at Huntington. My contact information is on the screen.

Thank you for your time!