



Comprehensive Digital SAT/Enhanced ACT Study Timeline & College Application Schedule

Timeline Overview by Grade Level

Freshman Year (9th Grade)

Focus: Foundation building and exploration

Academic Preparation

- Fall Semester:
 - Focus on strong grades in core subjects
 - Build reading habits (30+ minutes daily)
 - Take challenging courses when ready
- Spring Semester:
 - Continue building an academic foundation
 - Consider accelerated/honors courses for next year
 - Start exploring potential interests and career paths

Test Prep (Minimal)

- Optional: Take PSAT 8/9 for practice (offered in fall)
- Reading: Focus on vocabulary building through reading
- Math: Master Algebra I concepts thoroughly

Sophomore Year (10th Grade)

Focus: Skill development and preliminary planning

Fall Semester

- Academics: Maintain a strong GPA, take the PSAT/NMSQT in October
- Exploration: Research college types and potential majors
- Activities: Develop meaningful extracurriculars

Spring Semester

- Test Prep Introduction:
 - Take a diagnostic practice test (Digital SAT or Enhanced ACT)
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses
 - Begin light prep (2-3 hours per week)



- Planning: Create preliminary college list

Summer Before Junior Year

- Test Prep Intensive:
 - 6-8 weeks of focused preparation
 - Take full-length practice tests weekly
 - Consider prep course or tutoring if needed
 - Goal: Ready for the fall junior year test

Junior Year (11th Grade)

Focus: Intensive test prep and college planning

Fall Semester (Critical Period)

September

- Week 1-2: Finalize test choice (SAT vs ACT)
- Week 3-4: Complete diagnostic test and create study plan
- Test Prep: 8-10 hours per week
- College Planning: Attend college fairs, begin research

October

- Test Prep: Peak preparation period (10-12 hours per week)
- PSAT/NMSQT: Take in mid-October
- College Visits: Start visiting nearby schools
- Applications: Research early admission policies

November

- First Official Test: Take SAT or ACT
- Test Prep: Continue if retaking (6-8 hours per week)
- College Planning: Narrow college list to 15-20 schools

December

- Optional Retest: If November scores need improvement
- College Applications: Begin working on applications
- Essays: Start brainstorming and drafting personal statements

Spring Semester



January-February

- Test Analysis: Review scores and decide on retakes
- College Planning: Finalize college list (8-12 schools)
- Test Prep: Light maintenance if retaking (4-6 hours per week)

March

- Second Test Attempt: If retaking (common timing)
- College Visits: Spring break college tours
- Applications: Work on essays and application components

April-May

- Final Test Attempts: If needed for target scores
- AP Exams: Focus on AP test preparation
- Summer Planning: Arrange visits to top-choice schools

Summer Before Senior Year

- College Applications:
 - Finalize college list
 - Complete application essays
 - Request letters of recommendation
 - Prepare activity lists and resumes
- Final Test Prep: Only if a significant improvement is possible
- College Visits: Visit top-choice schools

Senior Year (12th Grade)

Focus: Applications and final preparations

Fall Semester (Application Season)

August

- Applications: Finalize application materials
- Testing: Last chance for test retakes (October/November)
- Essays: Complete and polish all essays
- Recommendations: Follow up with recommenders

September

- Early Applications: Submit EA/ED applications



- Testing: Register for October/November tests if retaking
- Interviews: Begin scheduling college interviews
- Financial Aid: Research scholarship opportunities

October

- Early Deadlines: Submit Early Action/Early Decision (Nov 1-15)
- Testing: Final SAT/ACT attempts
- Regular Applications: Begin regular decision applications
- FAFSA: Prepare documents for financial aid

November

- Regular Applications: Continue working on RD applications
- Testing: Absolute final test dates for most colleges
- Interviews: Complete college interviews
- Financial Aid: Complete FAFSA when available (Oct 1)

December

- Regular Decision Deadlines: Submit by Jan 1-15
- Mid-Year Reports: Maintain strong grades
- Scholarships: Apply for merit-based scholarships

Spring Semester (Decision Time)

January-March

- Waiting Period: Focus on maintaining grades
- Additional Applications: Apply to rolling admission schools if needed
- Scholarships: Continue applying for awards
- Financial Aid: Complete CSS Profile and other forms

April-May

- Decision Time: Receive admissions decisions
- College Choice: Make final decision by May 1
- Deposit: Submit enrollment deposit
- Housing: Complete housing applications

Detailed Test Preparation Schedules

6-Month Intensive Plan (Recommended for Most Students)

www.scholarsedge.co
admin@scholarsedge.co
682-235-9465



Months 1-2: Foundation and Diagnosis

- Week 1: Take a full diagnostic test, identify weak areas
- Week 2-3: Review fundamental concepts in weak areas
- Week 4-6: Begin content review (Math: algebra/geometry, English: grammar rules)
- Week 7-8: Practice basic test-taking strategies
- Study Time: 6-8 hours per week

Months 3-4: Skill Building

- Week 9-12: Intensive content review and practice
- Week 13-16: Strategy application and timing practice
- Practice Tests: One full test every 2 weeks
- Study Time: 8-10 hours per week

Months 5-6: Test Mastery

- Week 17-20: Advanced strategies and weak area focus
- Week 21-24: Full-length tests and final preparation
- Practice Tests: One full test weekly
- Study Time: 10-12 hours per week (peak preparation)

3-Month Accelerated Plan

Month 1: Rapid Assessment and Review

- Week 1: Diagnostic test and weak area identification
- Week 2-4: Intensive content review of biggest weaknesses
- Study Time: 10-12 hours per week

Month 2: Strategy and Practice

- Week 5-8: Test strategies and timing practice
- Practice Tests: One full test every 1.5 weeks
- Study Time: 12-15 hours per week

Month 3: Final Preparation

- Week 9-12: Polish strategies and take practice tests
- Practice Tests: One full test weekly
- Study Time: 15-20 hours per week

Test Registration Timeline

Digital SAT Dates (2025-2026)

www.scholarsedge.co
admin@scholarsedge.co
682-235-9465



- August: August 23, 2025
- September: September 13, 2025
- October: October 4, 2025
- November: November 8, 2025
- December: December 6, 2025
- March: March 14, 2026
- May: May 2, 2026
- June: June 6, 2026

Enhanced ACT Dates (2025-2026)

- September: September 6, 2025
- October: October 18, 2025
- December: December 13, 2025
- February: February 14, 2026
- April: April 11, 2026
- June: June 13, 2026
- July: July 11, 2026*

*Note: No test centers are scheduled in New York for the July test date. Science section is optional for April, June, and July 2025 (online only), then becomes optional for both online and paper testing starting September 2025.

Registration Deadlines

- SAT Regular Registration: 5-6 weeks before test date
- SAT Late Registration: 2-3 weeks before test date (additional fee)
- ACT Regular Registration: 5-6 weeks before test date
- ACT Late Registration: 2-3 weeks before test date (\$40 additional fee)
- Standby Testing: Day of test (limited availability, additional fees)

Tutoring Timing and Strategy

When to Start Tutoring

Optimal Timing by Grade Level:

Sophomore Year (Spring):

- Best for: Students scoring below grade level in math or reading
- Focus: Foundation building in core skills
- Duration: 6-12 months of consistent sessions

www.scholarsedge.co
admin@scholarsedge.co
682-235-9465



- Frequency: 1-2 hours per week
- Goal: Build a strong academic foundation before intensive test prep

Summer Before Junior Year:

- Best for: Most students planning to take tests junior year
- Focus: Comprehensive test preparation without academic pressure
- Duration: 8-12 weeks of intensive preparation
- Frequency: 2-4 hours per week
- Advantage: More time available, no competing academic demands

Fall of Junior Year:

- Best for: Students taking their first official test in November/December
- Focus: Intensive test-specific strategies and content review
- Duration: 8-16 weeks leading up to the first test
- Frequency: 2-3 hours per week
- Timeline: Start in August/September for the November test

Spring of Junior Year:

- Best for: Students retaking after fall attempt or first-time spring test takers
- Focus: Targeted improvement in specific weak areas
- Duration: 6-10 weeks before test date
- Frequency: 2-3 hours per week
- Note: Must balance with increased academic workload

Tutoring Duration Guidelines:

Short-term Intensive (6-10 weeks):

- Best for: Students within 100-200 points of target SAT score
- Schedule: 2-3 sessions per week, 1.5-2 hours each
- Focus: Strategy refinement and targeted practice
- Cost-effective: Concentrated effort with quick results

Medium-term Preparation (3-6 months):

- Best for: Most students needing comprehensive preparation
- Schedule: 1-2 sessions per week, 1-2 hours each
- Focus: Content review, strategy development, extensive practice
- Balanced: Allows for steady progress without an overwhelming schedule



Long-term Foundation Building (6-12 months):

- Best for: Students significantly below target scores or with learning differences
- Schedule: 1-2 sessions per week, 1-1.5 hours each
- Focus: Fundamental skill building, then test-specific preparation
- Comprehensive: Addresses underlying academic gaps

Tutoring vs. Other Prep Methods

Choose Individual Tutoring When:

- Student has specific learning differences or needs accommodations
- Large score improvement needed (300+ SAT points, 6+ ACT points)
- Previous self-study or group classes haven't been effective
- Student needs accountability and personalized attention
- Family can afford \$50-150+ per hour investment

Choose Group Classes When:

- Student is self-motivated and works well in group settings
- Target score improvement is moderate (100-250 SAT points)
- Family wants a structured curriculum at a lower cost (\$300-800 total)
- Student benefits from peer interaction and competition

Choose Self-Study When:

- The student is highly motivated and disciplined
- Target improvement is modest (50-150 SAT points)
- Family wants the most cost-effective option (\$50-200 for materials)
- The student has already built a strong academic foundation

Maximizing Tutoring Effectiveness

Before Starting Tutoring:

- Take a full-length diagnostic test to identify specific weak areas
- Set realistic score goals based on target colleges
- Establish a clear timeline with test dates in mind
- Gather previous PSAT scores or practice test results

During Tutoring:

- Complete assigned homework consistently between sessions
- Take regular practice tests to track progress
- Focus on understanding strategy, not just getting right answers



- Communicate with the tutor about areas of confusion or difficulty

Transitioning from Tutoring:

- Plan 2-4 weeks of independent practice after tutoring ends
- Take final practice tests to maintain timing and strategy
- Schedule brief check-in sessions if needed before test day
- Have a clear plan for potential retakes

College Application Timeline Integration

Early Application Deadlines

- Early Decision I: November 1-15
- Early Action: November 1-15
- Early Decision II: January 1-15

Regular Decision Deadlines

- Most Private Colleges: January 1-15
- Public Universities: Varies (November - February)
- Rolling Admissions: Throughout fall/winter

Test Score Submission

- Early Applications: October/November junior year or August/October senior year
- Regular Decision: Through December of senior year
- Score Choice: Check individual college policies

Optimal Test Taking Strategy

For College-Bound Juniors:

1. First Official Test: November junior year
2. Second Test: March junior year (if needed)
3. Final Test: August/October senior year (if significant improvement possible)

For High Achievers Targeting Top Schools:

- Additional Attempts: May be beneficial for 50+ point SAT or 2+ point ACT improvements
- Subject Tests: Consider if required by target schools (limited availability)

Score Improvement Guidelines

- Retake if: Below the target range for preferred colleges

www.scholarsedge.co
admin@scholarsedge.co
682-235-9465



- Consider stopping if: Within target range or improvement plateaus
- Maximum attempts: Generally 3-4 attempts maximum

Study Schedule Customization

High Achievers (Current scores 1400+ SAT, 32+ ACT):

- Focus: Fine-tuning and specific weak areas
- Timeline: 2-3 months of targeted preparation
- Study Time: 4-6 hours per week

Average Students (Current scores 1200-1399 SAT, 26-31 ACT):

- Focus: Comprehensive review and strategy development
- Timeline: 4-6 months of preparation
- Study Time: 6-10 hours per week

Students Needing Significant Improvement (Below 1200 SAT, 26 ACT):

- Focus: Fundamental skill building and extensive practice
- Timeline: 6-12 months of preparation
- Study Time: 8-15 hours per week



Final Reminders

Key Success Factors:

- Start early: Begin serious preparation by the spring of sophomore year
- Be realistic: Set achievable score goals based on college targets
- Stay balanced: Don't let test prep overwhelm academics and activities
- Take breaks: Avoid burnout with scheduled rest periods
- Practice conditions: Simulate actual test conditions regularly

Backup Plans:

- Test-Optional Schools: Research schools that don't require standardized tests
- Community College: Consider starting at a community college and transferring
- Gap Year: Take time to improve scores and strengthen applications
- Rolling Admissions: Apply to schools with flexible deadlines
- Official Practice: Use College Board (SAT) or ACT materials first
- Prep Courses: Consider if self-study isn't effective



- Tutoring: For targeted help with specific weaknesses
- Apps and Online: Supplement but don't replace comprehensive preparation