

Test Prep for Parents:

**How to Get Your Child into
College With High
SAT Scores (Without Losing
Your Mind in the
Process)**

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New York's Best SAT Tutor

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How to Use This Manual

Dear Parent,

I've spent my entire career teaching families how to conquer the SAT. This exam, when approached properly, can be one of the easiest aspects of your entire college process. When approached improperly, it can be a nightmare. Proper parental involvement is often the difference between the two, and I've learned precisely what parents must (and must not) do to turn things in their favor.

This book was originally written for friends and colleagues of my New York City clientele. I made them read this book before I would work with them. It has made more of an impact on my results as an SAT tutor than almost any other piece of work I've ever produced.

Recently, I started selling Test Prep for Parents on Amazon. It has received nothing but 5-Star reviews, with over 1,000 downloads. I've also been including it with my Teach Yourself the SAT programs. There is something extremely important you need to understand about the writing and presentation of this guide:

Your reading of this book presupposes that you are using my programs. While you do not need to purchase my programs to glean boundless insight from the following pages, my language will often reflect the assumption that you will, or are already, using my programs.

Because of the demand on my schedule (I'm booked over 18 months in advance), I can no longer take new clients. As a result, I decided to turn my exact system into an online program that any student, anywhere in the world can use on his or her own schedule.

These programs are the exact programs I put my own students on to achieve industry-beating results. I've tutored over 320 students 1-on-1, with an average score improvement of over 400 points. Many of my students improve by 700 points or more. These programs have been delivering similar results.

You can learn more about my programs by visiting:

<http://www.GreenSATsystem.com>

Your purchase comes with two programs - a 30-day program for last-minute students, and a 60-day program for students with more time to prepare. Each program contains 30 or 60 days' worth of precise, step-by-step instructions which show students EXACTLY what they need to do, day by day, to improve their SAT scores by hundreds of points. The programs are accessible online through any internet-connected device, and come with the simplest, boldest guarantee in the industry.

Whether or not you decide to use my programs, this manual will teach you droves about the proper ways to be a good "test prep parent." The information within this book will erase much of the uncertainty you're feeling about the college and SAT prep process, and give you plenty of actionable advice that you can use TODAY to improve your child's SAT scores.

My programs allow you to be extremely hands-off, and leave the hard work to your child by removing doubt and opinion from the equation. In fact, if you weren't involved at all, my programs would still deliver incredible results.

Something tells me, however, that if you're the type of parent reading this book, you're going to want to get *every* edge possible. I'll show you how to do just that. Simply follow the advice in these pages, and I guarantee that you'll know everything you need to in order to provide your child with the best college opportunities imaginable.

This book is broken up into three sections:

1. Read This First

These introductory chapters are essential to your understanding of my programs. I'm sure you're anxious to get started, but please take the 30 minutes to read this introductory section, which will educate you on how my programs are developed, and the overall strategies you can use to help your child complete them effectively.

2. The Things You Need to Know

This is your primer on college admissions, test prep, and effective learning practices. Before you start taking any action, you need to learn the concepts within. Once you're finished, you'll have an entirely different perspective on SAT prep, college admissions, and your role as a facilitator. At the end of each chapter, I'll give you a quick summary of the section's main points, along with any key action steps you need to take in order to put this information to use.

3. Action Steps

This is where the fun really begins. I'll show you *what* you can do, when, and how, to improve your child's test scores *and* enhance his/her chances of college admission. As soon as you're done with sections 1 and 2, read each chapter in **Action Steps** and then *take action*. I've eliminated all the guesswork. Simply follow these directions for optimal results. Where necessary, I've concluded each chapter with summary checklists and action checklists so that you can go back and review the key points without re-reading the entire thing.

Let's get started!

With your guided assistance, your child will be able to accomplish incredible things. Now that you know how this guide is set up, let's launch right in.

Anthony-James Green

www.NewYorksBestSATtutor.com

P.S. I always want to hear from my readers. If you have ANY questions or feedback, great or small, don't hesitate to email me at Anthony@GreenSATsystem.com. I'll get back to you as soon as time allows.

Section One: Read This First

I. Who The &%\$# Am I!?

I'm not a childhood psychologist. I'm not a parent. I don't have a degree in education, and I don't have a PhD in developmental science. I'm also very young. So who am I to write this book?

I'm someone with thousands of hours of test prep experience who has seen the direct, empirical results of test prep parenting on nearly 1,000 students' SAT scores. I know beyond a doubt what works, and, much more importantly, what doesn't work.

I've personally tutored over 320 students in the SAT, and in each case, I've seen the effects of their parents' actions on their morale, their performance, and their scores. I've also run an SAT prep company which, at its peak, employed over 30 tutors and worked with hundreds of families. I've interacted with countless parents as the "point man" of the company, interacted with the tutors who worked for them, and seen how their parenting styles and actions affected the scores of their children.

I would argue that there is almost no one else on Earth who has had as much experience observing test prep students, their parents, and the outcomes of their interactions as me.

I'm not here to tell you how to raise your child, to give you nuggets of parental wisdom, or even to tell you how to apply to college. I am a **specialist**, and I specialize in **test prep**. In this book, I'll show you what to do if you want your child to get good test scores. That is all.

Additionally, **I know the best specialists and resources in every related field.** I don't help

my students to pick colleges because I don't know nearly enough about the intricacies of different colleges to do so. But I know the people and resources that do. Throughout this book, I'll point you in the right direction when necessary.

This is a book I've wanted to write for years, and that I feel every parent with an adolescent child needs to read. Your intentions are one thing, but your actions are another. If you have the best intentions for your child, and if you want your actions to match them, I recommend that you read my book.

II. Your Child Has to Want This

By the time you finish reading this manual, you'll know *exactly* what you have to do to get your child into the best college possible. I leave nothing to chance.

However, before we begin, there's something you need to understand:

If your child isn't motivated to complete this program in its entirety, nothing is going to make a difference.

Make no mistake: my program is intense. I built it that way on purpose. In addition to 5 or 7 full-length, timed practice tests, which take roughly 4 hours each to complete, my program demands that your child spend about 60-90 minutes per day on homework for the additional 25-53 days.

Notice, however, that I didn't say "difficult" - I said "intense." Discouraging, overwhelming lesson plans do nothing but de-motivate and crush students. That's why my programs remove optionality - students never have to figure out WHAT to do, or WHY. They just need to do it.

Furthermore, my programs break every task into incredibly small chunks, and provide students with consistent, encouraging feedback. Studies have shown that simply installing a visual "progress bar" on a language learning website can encourage people to spend 35% more time on the program than

they otherwise would. My entire program is one giant progress bar.

When students see their work paying off - when they see their scores go up, and up, and up, and when they see their weaknesses and confusion start to melt away, they become more and more motivated.

But they need some degree of motivation in the first place.

My one-on-one clients, all extremely successful entrepreneurs and executives, pay me \$500/hour for my services. They pay me this rate **not** because I'm so good at fractions, but because I **motivate** their children by creating a program around them that **allows them to learn**.

The **first** step of the learning process is **attention**. Without attention, no one can learn anything - it doesn't matter how good the program is - it won't make a difference.

Attention comes from interest. When you're interested in something, you pay attention to it. Unfortunately, this obvious fact is something that many educators seem to ignore. They fail to generate interest first, and hence they fail to generate attention - it's no wonder why so many educational products and programs fail.

My program will motivate your child to work hard and to get incredible results, but only if he or she **STARTS** the program in the first place.

Your job, as a parent, is to provide the “kindling” that will lead to initial motivation, and to sustain that motivation throughout the learning process.

I don't expect you to learn multivariable algebra, nor do I want you to participate in any way in the actual SAT process (unless your child requests your help). Instead, I simply want you to realize that **motivation is the key to any successful learning program**.

Unfortunately, most parents, with the best of intentions, focus on **external motivation**. External motivation looks like this:

“Do this program, or else....”

“If you do this, I'll be happy.”

“If you don't get into Harvard, your father and I will be so angry...”

“If you don't finish your homework, you're grounded.”

The problem is that **external motivation is literally 5% as effective as INTERNAL motivation**, which is all about *getting your child to WANT to work harder*.

When your child wants this for himself or herself, you'll see results unlike anything you'd ever expect. If your child is only doing this because you want him/her to, not much will happen.

So this manual, in addition to showing you the procedures and action steps you'll need to take in the next few months, also teaches you something much, much more important:

The one true key to college success is in building your child's internal motivation.

That's your job as a “test prep parent.” As much as I hate old clichés, “teach a man to fish” is the philosophy behind most of this book.

When parents rely on external motivation, they're relying on short-lived, ineffective fuel. As a result, the "fire" (their children's motivation) needs to be stoked constantly. They're constantly throwing more coal into the flames in the form of threats, scoldings, and "I'm not mad - I'm just disappointed."

This process is exhausting. Wouldn't it be easier to simply put a "self-winding battery" in your child instead?

Once your child's motivation is internally generated, all your hard work is done for you.

Read on to find out how easy this actually is to accomplish.

II. You Need to Be a TEAMMATE - Not a Boss

The brain is not a box, and knowledge is not a packet that can be dropped into it.

Knowledge is not something that can be given or forced - it is something that must be *received*. Every great teacher knows this. As John Milton Gregory said in The Seven Laws of the Learner, "one may as well talk to the deaf or the dead as to attempt to teach a child who is wholly inattentive."

Before I ever start teaching my students material, I make sure I achieve two very key objectives:

1. Make sure I have the student's attention.

2. Make sure they are receptive to the lessons I am teaching.

Let me ask you a question: were you forced to take a language class in high school or college? And if so, how much of that language do you remember? If you're like 99.9% of Americans who are force-fed a language in school, you won't remember 99.9% of what you learned. Why? **Because you didn't care.** You were forced to learn, and as a result, you didn't learn.

For students to make progress in their test prep, they must be completely receptive to the idea of test prep, want to do well on their exams, and possess INTERNAL MOTIVATION.

When I start working with students, there are only two types that I ever come across:

- 1) Students who are internally motivated, want to get their work done, are attentive, caring, and dedicated to the task at hand.
- 2) Students who are externally motivated and nearly impossible to teach.

Students who are internally motivated always make freakish progress, are easy to teach, and generally score incredibly well on their tests. Students who are externally motivated aren't providing me with their attention, and therefore cannot possibly learn. My first job with these students is to switch their motivational systems. Any SAT lessons delivered before this is accomplished are literally useless.

Here's where I drop the bomb:

I have found that in the vast majority of cases, externally-motivated students are a product of their parents' attempts at discipline and motivation.

Here's what depresses me:

Parents push their children out of love and care, yet their results are counterproductive. Often, the harder a parent tries to motivate his or her child, the less motivated the child becomes.

If your child is extremely self-motivated and really wants to attack his/her test prep, congratulations: you have a much easier task ahead of you. If your child is externally motivated, that needs to change.

Why are some students externally motivated?

You might think that this is an "it depends" sort of answer but it isn't. Here it goes:

Externally motivated students become that way because someone has led them to

believe that they are serving someone ELSE'S interests, rather than their own, when they study or work.

Here are the things that I hear out of Externally Motivated Students' mouths all the time:

“My dad wants me to go to Harvard, but I don't.”

“Can't I just be an artist? What the &%^\$ does this test have to do with that?”

“I don't think my scores will be good enough for my mom.”

“I'm not a very good tester, so why even try?”

“What does the SAT have to do with real life anyway? It's a stupid test.”

All of these statements, which I hear more frequently than you'd care to know, share one characteristic: they're coming from the mouths of people who have never been shown why THEY want to study for these tests.

Trying to “force” your child to study, or, worse, asking them to study to further goals that they perceive as your own, is the surest way NOT to attain high test scores.

Sure, from time to time I encounter terrified, beaten-down students who study like crazy with “pleasing their parents” as their only motivation, but these students are the exception that makes the rule.

Your CHILD has to want to learn this stuff for his or her OWN purposes. Otherwise, you're swimming upstream.

The key to learning is understanding. In this case, students must *understand why THEY should want to study*. In my years as a teacher, I have found one method, and one method only, that is consistently able to pass on this understanding. Here it is:

The step-by-step process to creating an internally-motivated learner (and becoming a teammate rather than a boss):

1. Ask your child what he or she wants. And I don't just mean what school he/she wants to go to. I mean: what does he/she want out of life? If you haven't had this talk, it's time. Sit down in a low pressure environment (maybe grab a pizza or go bowling, whatever) and get a good answer. Really listen. At no point during this conversation should you EVER chime in. Just listen. Figure out what it is your child really wants out of life, whether it's to become a billionaire mogul, a GreenPeace volunteer, a famous author, or a professional surfer. Just listen.

Now here's the hard part: make this the only objective you accomplish on this day. Don't talk about college. Don't talk about grades. Just muse on life. Figure out what it is that your child really feels will help him/her to add meaning to this world. Once you understand this, then you can move on to step

#2:

2. Now that you know what your child wants, ask him/her what qualities of a college would help to further these goals. Don't ask "what college your child wants to go to," because here's the big thing:

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT COLLEGE THEY ACTUALLY WANT TO GO TO.

They haven't been there, they don't know what it's really like, and they don't know how they'll behave once they get there. All high school students have is an IDEA of what college they want to go to. *Names* of colleges are meaningless - start to figure out what *qualities* your child is looking for in college - then you can really get somewhere.

Make a list of these qualities. A great school newspaper? In a city? Incredible English program? Award-winning professors? Fantastic athletics? Write it all down.

Work with your child to figure out what he or she is looking for in a college based on QUALITIES, not NAMES or RANK, and get this list down.

If you earnestly go through this process, your student is not seeing you as an "oppressor" - he is going to start seeing you as a teammate.

If you want a better college application process, and a better relationship with your child, have them view you as a teammate rather than as a boss. You're in this together. When your child sees that you're listening to what she wants and trying to get it for her, the results will be incredible. You'll start to see walls of resistance melt as your child realizes that she isn't being forced into anything, and that you're working WITH her to help her.

Think about it for a moment. Which is more motivating:

A) "You need to get into a top school. I've picked UPenn, Pomona, and Amherst. They're the best schools possible with your grades. Now study for the SAT or you won't get in!"

B) "What do you want out of life? To be an author? Fantastic! Let's find schools with amazing English and Creative Writing programs! Hopefully we can get your SAT scores high enough to gain admission - it would be amazing if you could study with Professor Hollis!"

3. Make a list of 20 schools that share these qualities. Do your research.

College Data is the best resource available for this purpose. You can access the site here:

<http://www.CollegeData.com>

College Data has an *insane* amount of information on every college in the world. You can use this site to figure out which colleges have which qualities, ranging from academic opportunities and scholarship programs to sports competition levels and location.

I'm not saying you can't use US News and World Report's ranking system to match the

colleges that your child finds appealing with some top-notch schools. I'm just saying that you should *start* with school qualities, then *correlate* them with rankings. Going by ranking alone is an absolutely terrible idea.

The real key is to focus on colleges that *provide your child with ways to further his or her life goals*. Start to implant the idea of "the dream school" into your child's mind. Make him realize that you listened to what he wants and took time to find the places that share those qualities. Get as much information as you can about these schools - pamphlets, brochures, websites, statistics, pictures, student testimonials, descriptions of programs, etc. and give them to your child. Let your child know that he can check them out whenever he wants to.

Let your child spend a week fantasizing about the places where he could be spending the next four years of his life. Once *your child* is burning to get into a particular college, 90% of your work is done. Then comes the punchline:

4. Let your child know that high test scores will improve his chances of getting into his dream schools.

Most students are resistant to test prep because *they feel that they don't have a choice*. "Why am I studying for this stupid test? I'd rather be hanging out with Frank."

Now is your chance to let him know that this is in fact *all about choice*. The better his scores are, the more dream schools he'll get into, and the more scholarships he'll win. Put simply, higher SAT scores will lead directly to dream school admission.

In my experience, this approach works **100% of the time**.

When my students don't do their homework, I don't get mad at them. There's no point. Instead, here's what I always say:

"John, listen, don't apologize. It doesn't affect me if you do or don't do your homework. It just affects you. Last time I checked, you really wanted to get into a school with a good science program. If you keep skipping your assignments, your scores are going to stink. If you think you're going to get into MIT, Cal Tech, or Northwestern with terrible SAT scores, you're kidding yourself. I'm not mad at you - I just don't see your actions and your goals lining up in any way, shape, or form. I thought these were your dream schools, but if you're not doing your work, clearly they're not. If you actually want to go, you'll *earn* your spot, and that won't happen unless you commit to this test."

I can't emphasize enough how effective this methodology is in my own teaching, because it's all about INTERNAL MOTIVATION rather than EXTERNAL MOTIVATION. An angry teacher leads to rebellion - a disappointed teacher leads to pity and lack of self esteem. A brutally honest teacher who simply tells students the truth gets results.

"You want something, right? Well, right now, you're not doing the necessary things to get it. If you want it, do the work."

Once your child realizes that HE wants to go to these schools, that HE is the only one who can get himself in, and that if HE wants the opportunities that HE asked for, HE has to work, watch what happens.

We'll discuss motivation in much more depth later on, but for now, if you take away just three things from this chapter, let it be these:

1. Students who don't want to learn can't learn.

2. It's impossible to "force someone to learn" or to motivate someone to learn externally.

3. The only way to make a student want to learn is to create a clear path in his or her own head from the work of learning to the ultimate goals that he or she wants to achieve.

Take these steps before you use the rest of this program and you'll multiply its effectiveness 1000 times over.

I recommend coming up with your list of colleges on your own FIRST, then vetting this list with a college professional.

Your school's college counselors are most useful for giving you an accurate picture of what is and isn't *realistic*. They've seen countless students get accepted and rejected to different schools, and most of them have a *pretty* good idea of what's a reach, a 50/50, and a safety.

More importantly, your counselor will be able to make *peripheral recommendations* that you and your child might not be able to find on your own. For instance, if you find Williams to be one of your top choices, your counselor might advise you that Amherst is a very similar (and equally as excellent) choice. When it comes to selecting schools, your own research is vital, but it doesn't hurt to supplement it with the insights of someone who researches colleges all day for a living!

In summary: before you do ANYTHING else, find your CHILD'S "dream schools".

The value of this step cannot be overemphasized. You'll build internal motivation within your child and come closer and closer to being your child's "teammate" rather than her boss.

Next, "vet" your results with a professional to make sure that you've come up with the best, most accurate list possible.

Now that you know how to get your kid on your side and build her internal motivation, it's time to start laying the foundation for an action plan...

Summary Notes:

- For a child to learn, he/she needs to be paying attention, and he/she must be *receptive* to the lessons being taught.
- If someone does not care about what is being taught or studied, he will retain almost nothing of what he "learns."

-Students are either “internally” or “externally” motivated.

-Internally motivated students are driven, easy to teach, and generally require very little guidance or pushing. Externally motivated students are nearly impossible to teach and don't retain any of their lessons.

-In almost all cases, students who are externally motivated have become that way because of their parents.

-Parents push their children because they love them and care about them, but, paradoxically, their pushing often makes children feel as if their parents *don't* care about them.

-Students become externally motivated when they feel that they are serving *their parents'* interests rather than *their own interests*.

-Trying to “force” your child to study, or to achieve goals that you've established as *your* goals, is counterproductive and will result in poor test scores.

-Until you let your child know that you're “on his side” and are working to achieve HIS goals, you won't get very far. Once you do, your child will be off to the races.

-The best way to do that is to listen to your child, find out what he wants, pick colleges that match your child's desires, and then define the test scores he needs to attend them.

-No child really knows what school he wants to go to. If you define the qualities your child is looking for in a school, finding a specific school that matches those qualities is quite easy.

-When your child, not you, names the schools that he wants to apply to, he will immediately become more motivated to take the steps necessary to gain admission. Better yet, your pushing will not be seen as “nagging” - it will be seen as “support,” since you will have reframed the entire process.

-Try to become your child's teammate rather than his boss - this entire process will become much easier once you do.

-Seeking the advice of a college professional is always a good idea during the college selection process, if for no other reason than to get a second perspective.

Action Steps:

1. Realize that it is *your child* who has to want higher test scores, not you. Until this is the case, no real progress can be made.

2. Stop pushing your child and stop framing his/her goals as your own. You need to let your child “own the process.”
3. Sit down with your child and ask him what he wants out of life. Do not interrupt - listen attentively and take note of everything he says. This process will let him know that you care about what *he* wants, and not about what *you* want.
4. Ask your child what QUALITIES he is looking for in his future college. Not *what college he wants to go to*, but what *qualities of a college* he is looking for. Again, listen very attentively. Show him that you care about what he wants out of life, and that you want to *help* him find a college that will provide him with the opportunities and options that *he* is seeking.
5. Make a list of these qualities, and show your child that you’re listening and care about *everything* that he wants out of his future college.
6. Use <http://www.collegedata.com> to find a list of 20 schools that match these qualities. Again, you’re not looking for school ranking - you’re looking for schools which match the qualities your child has defined as his “most wanted.”
7. Let your child know that high test scores will help him to get into the schools HE has just identified as the schools that HE wants to go to. Actively reframe the issue so that you are no longer “nagging” about SAT and ACT scores - you are simply “reminding” him that he needs those scores to go to the places where HE wants to go.
8. Take your list of selected schools and tack it on your wall as a motivator for all future college activities.
9. Take your list of schools and bring it to your school’s college counselor. Have your third-party advisors help you to refine your list and add schools in line with your child's goals, desires, and aspirations.

IV. College is What You Make of It

When I applied to college, I definitely drank “the ranking Kool-Aid.” I’ve always been a guy who loves small, tight-knit communities, who enjoys knowing everyone and being known by everyone, and who likes to get involved in as many aspects of my school as possible.

I like one-on-one lessons much more than I like classroom lectures (in fact - I’d rather die than sit in another lecture hall). I’m extremely Type-A, but I always feel happiest, calmest, and most productive when I’m surrounded by nature. In short, I should have gone to a small, community-based liberal arts college with small classes, tons of school spirit, and a lot of natural activities.

Instead, I went to Columbia University.

I got a lot out of Columbia, and in some ways it was great for me. Columbia “throws you to the wolves,” so to speak - it teaches you to grow up and be an adult, or else.

Columbia teaches you the value of a buck, since you’re always worried about money in a city-school environment. And more than anything, it teaches you to work your behind off at all times of the day and night. I think Columbia quintupled my work ethic and was largely responsible for the launch of my first company. But I want to make one thing clear:

I was not happy at Columbia.

Some people were thrilled to be there. They loved the large lecture environment, the hyper-independent atmosphere, and the Manhattan pace of life. It was the perfect school for them. But it wasn’t the perfect school for me. I went to Columbia over all the other schools I was admitted to for one reason, and one reason only: it had the highest rank in US News & World Report.

When you’re going through the college selection process, I need you to realize something: the

rank of your child's school has very, very little to do with how successful he's going to be in life. And it has NOTHING to do with how happy he's going to be.

I've met kids who go to colleges I've never heard of who run *multi-million dollar businesses*, who work for the best consulting and legal firms in the nation, and who have saliva-inducing jobs at some of the best production studios and media firms in the world. I've known social outcasts who go to the right college and end up meeting like-minded people and becoming total social butterflies.

I also know Harvard grads who are half-suicidal, and Columbia grads who are still unemployed over 4 years after graduation. Of course, I also know plenty of extremely successful Columbia and Harvard grads who were very happy during their undergraduate experience. My only point is this:

College is what you make of it. If your child goes to a top-ten college, it doesn't mean he'll be a success, and if he goes to a no-name college, it doesn't mean he'll be a failure. The activities, students, faculty, environment, and opportunities provided by each college can be seized or ignored by every student, and only those students who seize as many opportunities as possible will end up happy, fulfilled, and successful.

As you read through this book, you'll notice that I'm rather "tough-love." I'm not like this because I think you need to go to an Ivy League to be worth a damn. I'm like this because **good test scores give you options, and the more options you have, the more likely it is that you'll be able to go to a school that's right for you.** That's it. Nothing more, nothing less. So as you read on, be sure to realize that test scores are a means to an end, and that end is **options, not rankings.**

For some students, Pomona would be an absolute dream, and Cal Tech would be a living hell. For other students, quite the opposite is true. But you're not getting into either school without incredible SAT scores.

V. An Overview: What to Expect from My Programs

My students improve their scores by over 400 points on average, and many improve their scores by 600, 700, or even 800 points.

I'm very good at explaining concepts and strategies, motivating my students, and figuring out which weaknesses to focus on and eliminate. That's why parents pay me \$500/hour for my services, and why I'm booked over 18 months in advance.

However, as much as I'd love to toot my own horn, my personal qualities as a teacher aren't the reason for my continued success.

My system is the reason for my success.

I'm a big believer in systems. A broken watch might be right twice a day, but a well-programmed, well-designed watch will be right all day, every day for centuries to come.

I take very little pride in doing something well *once*. As Aristotle said,
"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

When I do something well, I want to do it again. When I do something poorly, I want to avoid

the same mistake permanently. I cherish and value my mistakes, because they allow me to create better systems and to become a better person.

My 30-Day and 60-Day programs are the EXACT systems I've been developing, refining, and perfecting for years. While I am the one who delivers the systems, the systems themselves are the true keys behind my success as an SAT trainer. When I use my systems with my students, I can be sure that even if I'm tired, or hungry, or absent-minded, my systems never miss a beat.

No learning can take place without action. Learning is most simply defined as "the alteration of thoughts, beliefs, and skills through action and observation." If you take the right steps in the right order, you'll learn the right things.

[My 30-Day and 60-Day programs](#) are recipes for SAT success which rely on *the perfect actions in the perfect order*. Students no longer have to wonder *what* to do, or *when*, or *how*. I've cracked the SAT, and I've created *an action-based system which allows ANYONE to do it*.

Every time I teach a student, I look for possible improvements to my system. While my students are solving problems, I'm making notes on what they're learning, what they're not learning, and why. To say that my system is an obsession would be an understatement. Am I teaching things in the wrong order? What time of day are my students studying, and how is it affecting their grades? Why doesn't strategy X work without the previous introduction of strategy Y? Why is student Z's Writing score going up even though we're not focusing on Writing?

These are the questions I ask myself every day. I try to learn as much during every tutoring session as my students do. There IS a perfect way to study for and take the SAT. Through thousands of hours of research, application, experimentation, and observation, I've found it.

I'm so obsessed with systemization that I even got myself certified in Six Sigma (Google "Six Sigma Black Belt" to see what it's all about).

When you purchased my program (both the 30-Day and the 60-Day programs come with any purchase of my Teach Yourself the SAT program), you purchase my system. The system I've been perfecting my entire career, and that I've kept secret for nearly a decade. I might not be with you to deliver the system, but by God, if your child follows it, she'll get results.

When you go to McDonalds, you know you're going to get an identical Big Mac whether you order it in Tucson at noon or Beijing at 3am. Why? Because McDonalds has perfected a system - a way of creating an identical product, no matter who makes it, where, or when, every single time. My programs might not be as tasty as a Big Mac, but they're just as consistent. ALL of my students experience enormous SAT score improvements because they ALL follow my exact system. Your child is about to experience the same system.

The only difference? I'm not the chef - your child is.

The ingredients, the recipe, and the oven are exactly the same.

As you read this introduction, your child is reading an introduction of his or her own. The "Read Me First" packet that comes along with my programs emphasizes one thing above all else:

When you follow a perfect system, you get perfect results.

But, conversely,

When you stray from a perfected recipe, your results will be sub-par.

There's a reason I call my 60 day program "The Prescription" - it is meant to be followed EXACTLY. When you get a prescription from your doctor, you don't take ¼ the pills, go to ½ the treatments, and "try some other things out on your own." You do EXACTLY what he tells you to do, because he's the one who knows how to cure what ails you.

Consider me your SAT prep doctor. Your child's sickness? Sub-par SAT scores. The cure? My programs - the systems I've been perfecting for years to help students of any age, level of advancement, or learning style to get insanely high SAT scores.

All you need to do is make sure your child follows the program. In total, these programs involve either 30 or 60 days of work (depending on how much time your child has to study). These days can be spread out over as long a period as necessary, but are most effective when they're condensed into as short a time period as possible. While there will always be vacations, giant tests, family emergencies, etc. that get in the way, these programs work best when they are accelerated.

If you want to learn more about the intricacies of the program, simply go to <http://www.GreenSATsystem.com> or email me at Anthony@GreenSATsystem.com. However, the basics are simple:

1. The programs' beginnings are intentionally designed to "agitate" your child. I don't teach by immediately launching into facts, figures, and lectures. Instead, I force my students to uncover the things that *they don't know*, and to *collect, label, and accurately identify these unknown facts and concepts*. Spending time focusing on things you don't know is very frustrating. It's also essential to the learning process.

Know thy enemy. Once a student knows what he doesn't know, he can go about filling the gaps. Until then, he'll never be sure what to focus on, and he won't be nearly as receptive to the lessons taught.

EXPECT your child to be agitated by the first 1-2 weeks of the program. If you hear things such as, "Ugh, I just NEED to start getting to the strategies," you know your child is ready to learn. It's rare to have a high school student begging for lessons. I force this behavior.

2. The programs are based on intensive application. Your child will be reading very little. I hate lectures, and I hate long, draw-out lessons. Instead, your child will be given a tidbit of information, an example or two, and then immediately be thrown into the fire.

You don't learn by hearing or seeing - you learn by doing. These programs are incredibly "action-based." Your child won't be spending hours watching videos and reading guides. Your child will spend about 85-90% of his time actually DOING things and applying what he or she is learning to real SAT problems on a constant basis.

This is what works.

3. The programs are based on intensive review and weakness focus. I'm a total chess fanatic. My chess instructor once said something to me that changed my life:

"You know what the difference is between an amazing chess player and a crappy chess player?"

A crappy chess player spends all his time focusing on the games he's won. The amazing chess player spends all his time focusing on the games he's lost."

You don't learn things by succeeding - you learn by failing. These programs *encourage your child to fail, because failing is the only true way to learn.*

Once your child makes mistakes, uncovers weaknesses, and fails, these programs do what most programs don't: they force your child to ask "why?"

Why did I not get that problem right? Why am I running out of time on Critical Reading? Why do I keep getting tricked by that sort of problem? Why does "deleterious" not fit as the definition of that word?

Your child will be reviewing like a maniac. Half her time will be spent practicing with real material. The other half will be spent carefully reviewing the material, looking for instances of frustration and failure, and then figuring out how to improve based upon those failures.

Doing lots of practice problems with no review and no reflection is *useless*. I take the opposite approach. Your child will gain an incredibly accurate view of his or her weaknesses, and will focus on them almost exclusively. My programs will then teach your child how to fix them.

They're different than most programs out there. And they're a lot more effective.

4. These programs rely on independence and self-instruction. I never, EVER tell my students how to do ANYTHING. Instead, I simply ask them questions.

"How do I solve this problem?"

"Well, what do you need to know to solve it?"

"I need to find the area of this triangle."

"And how do you find the area of a triangle?"

"Base times height times one half."

"And which of those don't you have?"

"I have the height, but I don't have the base."

"So how would you find the base?"

"I'd need to know how long line segment AC is....."

And so on and so forth. If you tell someone how to do something, they rely on you to do it for them. If you teach them how to figure it out for themselves, they'll get in the habit of figuring things out for themselves.

At the start of the program, your child might say things like: "I keep getting this type of problem wrong, but the program hasn't taught me how to solve it correctly yet." This is VERY intentional. My programs don't walk your child to the finish line - they show them how to find it on their own.

By the time your child has finished all 30 or 60 days of my program, he won't just have a much higher SAT score - he'll be a much better learner. My system has been designed to *teach children to teach themselves*. No skill is more valuable, or more effective at raising SAT scores.

If your child is looking for more hand-holding, *do not provide it*. This isn't "me being tough" - this is "me knowing exactly what does and does not produce an effective learner."

Trust me - your child will find all the instruction he needs throughout my program. But notice that I said **find**, not "be given." There's a big difference, and that difference is the difference between a 50-point score increase and a 500-point improvement.

5. The Practice Tests Assigned Are Essential.

These programs require that your child take 5 or 7 full-length, timed practice tests straight from the Official College Board manual. These tests take anywhere from 4 to 6 hours, depending on whether or not your child qualifies for extra time (which you'll find out shortly).

These are not optional. My programs are based upon these practice tests. Without them, your child will never get an idea of his actual progress, will never be able to focus on the right things at the right time, and will walk into the testing center a nervous, unprepared wreck.

Make sure you speak with your child and find out when he is taking these exams. They need to be scheduled in advance and put on his calendar. They need to be treated as religious obligations.

Using my programs without taking practice tests is like going on a diet without eating less food or exercising. It just doesn't work. Taking this many tests is arduous and brutal, but when your child sees how quickly his score is improving, the light at the end of the tunnel will become increasingly bright.

6. My programs let you play "good cop, bad cop." Make no mistake: this system is a lot of work.

Fortunately for you, they're MY programs, not yours! Whenever your child is getting tired, or frustrated, feel free to demonize me.

"I know, dear, I know - Anthony is a total jerk, but his system works and we need to get through this together if you want to go to your dream schools."

This is a bit tongue-in-cheek, but not really. Sometimes, having an arch-nemesis can be very inspiring. You can play teammate - I'll play evil test prep taskmaster. So long as you and your child understand the most important part of all:

7. These programs only work if they're followed. Every day, every step. No ifs, ands, or buts. If you finish 90% of either program, you'll get far less than 90% of the intended results.

Remember: **the order of the content in this system is just as important as the content itself.** It's cumulative, and its effects are exponential.

These programs can't be used piecemeal. You can't do days 1, 8, 14, and 30 and expect big results. Every day's assignments must be completed in the order I've assigned them.

Learning only occurs when your brain can connect *what it already understands* to *the new material being presented*. When your child skips steps, the chain is broken, and the entire learning process is broken along with it.

Remember: these programs don't need to be completed in the 30 or 60 days assigned - they're just 30 or 60 days' worth of work. If your child can't do work on a particular day, that's fine - but DO NOT let him skip a day's worth of material in the program. Always have him pick up where he left off.

So long as you understand all of the above, the system will take care of itself. Now let's find out how to become the best Test Prep Parent imaginable!

**Section Two:
The Things You Need to
Know**

Chapter 1: How Important is the SAT?

Students, as a whole, do not pay NEARLY enough attention to their standardized testing. When most parents tell me that their students are “bad testers,” what they really mean is that “their students spend about 1/500th as much time on their standardized test preparation as they do on nearly every other activity in their busy lives.”

Despite the fact that **test scores make up a wildly disproportionate percentage of admission criteria**, most people act as if they’re some marginal application element that can be swatted away. Here are the things that I routinely see being placed above test prep in the application hierarchy:

1. Homework and academic performance (which is more important *overall*, but during the test prep process, it is secondary)
2. Sports and athletics
3. Extracurricular activities such as clubs, student office, etc.
4. Jobs and money-earning work

All four of these should take a serious back-seat to test prep. When most college consultants, parents, and students hear me say that test prep is more important than academics, they think I’m some sort of lunatic. Instead of offering opinions, I prefer to offer facts:

The SAT is vastly more important, proportional to the time it takes to master it, than academics.

Saying that “test scores are pretty important to school admissions” is like saying that “eating food is pretty important if you don’t want to die of starvation.” Both are massive understatements.

Depending on what school you’re applying to, **standardized test scores make up anywhere from 15-50% of all admissions criteria**. If you don’t believe me, call up one of your target schools and ask.

I want you to process that fact for a moment. Different schools weigh tests differently, of course. For instance, there are some “test-optional” colleges out there, but they’re “test-optional” in the same way that job positions are “cover letter optional” - you don’t *have to* submit anything, but you’re still much better off if you submit a strong test score.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, some larger schools and state schools use SAT scores as up to **50% of their admissions criteria - sometimes more.**

This number varies by school, but you get the idea: standardized test scores are very, very important. Now that you see the numbers, I want to drive home the point a bit further:

SAT scores aren't just "a percentage of criteria" - they are "do or die" cut-off points that either elevate you above the competitive field or bury you entirely.

When you apply to college, any scores below a certain level are pretty much a deathblow to your chances of admission. Using Columbia University, my alma mater, as an example, I want to show you how this principle applies to your application:

Columbia publishes its "25-75" range score for the Math SAT as "680-780." What that means is that 25% of all admitted applicants to Columbia are below a 680 on their Math section, 25% scored above a 780, and everyone else scored somewhere in between those two ranges. If you're thinking: "well, that means a lot of kids scored below a 680 and still got in!" you're missing the point. The students who scored below a 680 and still received admission are probably:

-Recruited athletes, musicians, or "special talents"

-Sons and daughters of heavy-donating alumni

-Highly sought-after minorities

-People who scored extremely well on the other portions of the test with 4.0 GPAs

-People with "liaisons" pushing for them behind the scenes (we'll get to this later)

-Lucky as &^%\$

As far as you should be concerned, if your child isn't scoring at least a 680 on her SAT Math section, forget her chances of going to Columbia unless she happens to be in one of the categories above.

Let me sum this up simply: **if you don't get the cut-off score expected by your target schools, you're probably out of luck.**

Let's say that a certain school weighs the SAT as 25% of its application criteria with a minimum cut-off of 600 points per section. Your son has an A+ average, brilliant essays, great extracurriculars, and SAT scores of 450 in each section.

A lot of people think that they'll get "all 75 percentage points in the other areas, and 15 for the SAT (if you assume that you're getting 3/5ths credit), adding up to a 90%!" Nope - you basically get sliced off the rack.

If your scores aren't high enough, schools usually don't look at your application in the first place. Admissions committees are extremely busy, and they're flooded with far more applications than they can possibly handle. As a result, they use GPAs and test scores as a shortcut. If a student's scores and grades aren't high enough, they'll toss her application in the trash and move on to another application, rather than wasting their time reading the essays, qualifications, etc. of a student who doesn't have the right metrics.

Standardized tests are more of an eliminator than they are a qualifier - in other words, if your scores aren't up to snuff, make sure you apply to a lot of other schools.

And it gets worse. As if this cut-off system wasn't bad enough, you have another serious factor to consider:

Your child's application is NOT viewed in isolation - it is compared with the application of every other applicant.

Having terrible test scores is sort of like having a drunk driving felony on your resume - sure, you might be a pretty qualified applicant, but guess what? There are a lot of other applicants that don't have drunk driving charges on their record. This might seem like a brutal analogy, but the college application game is brutal, too.

If your child is a "great applicant, aside of course from those pesky test scores," I can promise you that the admissions committee is looking at 450 other applications from "great applicants with test scores that don't stink."

By this point, I hope I've given you a proper fear of the Test Prep authorities. They're very powerful...

Now I want to point out the different elements that take priority over the SAT and look at them a little more closely:

The Un-deserving Winners of Attention and Time:

1. Homework and Academics. No matter where your child applies, her grades will ALWAYS be the most important factor in your application. This being the case, how can I possibly say that test prep is more important? Because **the time that she needs to allocate to test prep makes up only a fraction of the time taken up by the scholastic experience in general.** In other words, she only needs to devote a few months to test prep, whereas a full 3.5 years of high school attendance and performance are evaluated by each college.

Let's say that academics make up 50% of a certain school's admissions criteria. Over the course of 3.5 years, at 2 terms a year, this makes up 7 terms. If a student takes 5 classes a term, this means that a college would weigh performance across 35 classes when judging a student's application. This means that each class is worth ~1.4% of that college's admissions criteria. Now imagine that each class has 4 major graded assignments. This means that each graded assignment counts for ~0.35% of a college's admissions criteria. The more classes you take, the lower these numbers get.

This is why I get so frustrated when my students blow off a night of SAT studying because they have a biology presentation due, or when they pull an all-nighter two nights before their test because of

a big history paper. Based on the numbers, it just doesn't make any sense.

The entire SAT prep process will take up only a term of academics. That term is worth, at most, less than 7% of admissions criteria, and each class within it is only worth a little more than 1%. Your child has two options:

A) Suck it up, maintain his grades, and put in the extra 60-90 minutes a day of SAT prep. Don't tell me "there's no time." Your child can always find time, especially for something this important.

B) Focus a little less on school for one term, knock the SAT out of the park, and then get back on the horse.

Option A is much better than option B, but both are acceptable. Option C: "not spending enough time on the SAT," is simply not acceptable.

2. Sports and Athletics. Here's the big caveat here: **IF YOUR CHILD IS GETTING RECRUITED FOR A SPORT**, then by all means put a lot of attention into that sport. If your child is **ACTIVELY** being recruited, there's almost no better way of getting a good seat at a good college (and a nice scholarship, to boot!). I was recruited by Columbia for rowing, and it made a serious difference in my application process. My GPA was pretty bad in high school, but the power of an active recruitment (along with near-perfect SAT scores) washed that all away.

HOWEVER, if your child is not **ACTIVELY** being recruited, or you don't think he/she will be, sports do not deserve a front seat to test prep. By "actively recruited," I mean that coaches are *coming to you*. Some coaches might "put in a good word" for your child, but if a coach hasn't told you that he or she is recruiting your child, then your child is not being recruited. In this case, forget sports as a major college admissions factor. Yes, they're healthy, and yes, they teach great life lessons, but sports aren't very important to colleges unless your child is a truly stellar athlete. As we'll discuss later, colleges don't want "well rounded students" - they want "well rounded classes." If your child is not being recruited, view his sports the same way that you'd view his involvement as student government treasurer - nice, but not a big factor.

3. Extracurricular Activities. Colleges like to see that students are engaged with their school communities and active participants in realms outside of the classic "meat and potatoes" academic sphere. However, realize that extracurriculars are a "bonus," and not an essential factor in admissions. When I gained acceptance to Columbia University and Cornell University, here's what I had going for me:

-A sports recruitment

-Near-perfect SAT scores

-I was an assistant editor on my school newspaper

-Absolutely awful grades

What got me into two Ivy League universities were the strong backing of my specialization (I could pull on an oar insanely hard) and my strong scores. When admissions committees looked at my resume, here's probably what they said:

“The coach wants him, and his scores show that he's of capable intellect. Sure.”

If you think that the newspaper participation was the “make-or-break” factor in my application, you're off base.

From time to time, some of my students will cancel a session with me because they have to decorate a haunted house for charity, or buy pasta for their club's pasta dinner, or help to edit a portion of their newspaper. This is not acceptable. These activities aren't primary college magnets, so they shouldn't be treated as such.

As we'll cover later on in this guide, **being a specialist is essential to college admissions**. If your child isn't a specialist, he needs to find a speciality right away. If your child's extracurriculars all contribute to one incredibly well-defined specialty, this is different.

For instance, if your child is president of the Investment Banking club, has launched a charity to help little kids learn how to invest in the stock market, has won a portfolio prize from Motley Fool, has had research papers published in The Wall Street Journal, and is applying to UPenn specifically because he wants to enroll in their business and investing major, then sure - these activities are all definitely contributing to his application.

If your child does one hour of community service a week, is in the baking club, plays JV soccer, writes one article every two weeks for the school paper, attends the creative writing club once a week, and participates in Model UN twice a term, NONE of these activities are doing ANYTHING to help your child get in. She needs to specialize.

We'll cover this more later on, but extracurriculars without focus are totally useless, and should NEVER replace test prep.

4. Work. Teaching kids the value of a dollar is essential, and if your child has a part-time job to earn some extra cash, that's fantastic. But again, it is simply **not a priority**. Do not EVER let the \$8/hour your child is earning come in the way of proper test prep. Not only is this terrible practice if you want to get into college, but realize something else as well:

Good test scores lead to big scholarships. I will make the following statement with absolutely no reserve whatsoever: **there is no high school student in the world who has an earning capacity 1/20th as high as the potential scholarships that he/she could earn by working on test prep instead of working at Dunkin Donuts.** If your family needs the extra money, this still applies. No high schooler is ever going to earn the **\$10-50,000 extra dollars** at a job that he/she could earn in scholarships with fantastic test scores.

We'll cover this in more detail later on, but for now, just know that big scores equal big scholarship dollars, whether you're struggling financially or whether you're very comfortable.

Work is good, but it's not a priority.

It's time to get our priorities straight. If you want your child to get into an excellent university, and if you want to get scholarships to that university, he/she needs to start using my Teach Yourself the SAT program NOW, and he/she needs to take it seriously. The sooner your child gets started, and the sooner this process is out of the way, the better off you'll be in the application game.

My program will take care of the entire SAT picture. The rest of this book will show you how you can help.

Summary Notes:

- There are no "bad testers." Children just don't study these tests enough, and when they do, they don't study them in the right ways.
- Test scores are disproportionately important to college admissions.
- The required time invested for SAT prep vs. its effect on college admissions is heavier than any other college consideration, including academics, sports, and extracurriculars.
- Test scores make up 15-50% of most colleges' admissions criteria
- Test scores are "cut off points" - if your child doesn't get the scores required by his target schools, they *won't even open* his application
- Your child's grades, extracurriculars, and special achievements won't even be considered if he/she doesn't have high test scores
- Good test scores lead to enormous college scholarships. These scholarships justify enormous investments of time and money in these scores, since high scores pay financially, not just in terms of college admissions.

Chapter 2: When Should Your Child Get Started?

Now. As in, today, if possible.

The sooner your child begins either my 30-Day or 60-Day program, the better. If your SAT is coming up in the next 60 days or less, use the 30-Day program. If you have 60+ days, use the 60-Day program. It's as simple as that. The program comes with everything you need - there's nothing else to buy - and everything can be done from home.

If there's one reservation I usually hear about start SAT prep sooner rather than later, it's this:

“Is My Child Too Young?”

If your child is just a freshman, good. That means he can get this test out of the way BEFORE he has to deal with SAT 2s, applications, essays, recommendations, and on...and on...and on...

Junior year is the worst year of most students' lives. Why? They're taking the SAT on top of the ten thousand other things they need to do to get into college.

Senior year is a VERY bad time to take the SAT. You have one shot at it, and if your score isn't high enough....whoops.

Freshman year would be the best time to start. Your scores will count, the process will be out of the way, and you can move onto bigger and better things (such as enhancing your child's specialization in his or her chosen field).

Also, **grades matter more as time goes on.** Freshman year grades aren't seen as important as Sophomore grades, which aren't as important as Junior grades. Schools look for trends, and it's MUCH better to have grades start at the B+ range and move to the A range than the other way around. The earlier you knock out test prep, the sooner your child will be able to devote more time to schoolwork, meaning that the trend will be moving in the right direction.

If someone tells you that your child is too young to "get the SAT," that is complete and utter BS. I've gotten freshmen (plural) above 2250 multiple times before. They weren't uber-geniuses. This material isn't particularly difficult. If they don't know it, they can learn it.

In general, schoolwork has nothing to do with the SAT, and in fact, a lot of the stuff covered in school that DOES help with the SAT is taught in *middle school* and *freshman year of high school!*

DO NOT WAIT. Start now. Not next week, or a month from now. Start now. I can list 10,000 other reasons why this is so important, but I think you get the point. No matter where your child is in high school or what else is going on, make the time and begin.

Chapter 3: The Right Level of Supervision

Perhaps the most beautiful thing about my programs is that they make your life as a parent incredibly easy. You don't need to track 100,000 variables and activities to make sure your child is doing the right things, nor do you need to come up with a gameplan. You don't need to drive her to classes, arrange meetings with your tutor, or do anything else.

All you need to do is make sure that your child is completing the assignments in the program.

That's it. If your kid does everything I tell him/her to do, there will be an enormous score increase. Both of my programs are broken down into two very basic elements:

- 1. Learning.** Guides, assignments, homework, etc.
- 2. Practice Tests.** Gauging progress and getting real testing experience.

Here's how you can track both without nagging your kid:

Learning: Ask to take a look at your child's "test prep calendar".

Have your child keep this calendar in a public place that you can both see. The idea behind this calendar is very simple: your child will be planning which days he/she will do what days of my program as far in advance as possible (my program shows him/her exactly how to set this up).

So, if your child has **Day 29** planned for Tuesday, and you're worried that your child isn't following the program, simply ask: "did you do **Day 29** today?"

If he says yes, ask: "excellent - what did you go over?" Have your child tell you.

Mind you - none of this is really necessary. If you trust your child, and if you'd done a good job of becoming his/her teammate and motivating him/her to study, then this won't even matter.

If you want to get even more draconian, you can simply ask *when* your child is planning on doing the tasks assigned for **Day 29** in advance. Then, step in and observe. I'll have your child planning each day NOT just by date, but also by time. Specifics lead to adherence. So your child *should* be able to tell you: "I'm doing **Day 23** today at 6pm."

Check in at 6:15 and see if he's working on SAT prep. If he isn't, that's a problem. Of course:

I do NOT recommend that you nag your child. Nagging leads to the feeling of external motivation, which is counter-productive. In the next chapter, I'm going to give you an incredible *excuse* for your questioning: rewards! When your child asks, "why do you want to know?" you can simply say, "because I want to reward you for completing your work!"

Ta-Da! It's much better than "because I don't trust you."

I've set up my programs so that your child will need to plan out each day in advance, which makes things very easy for you to track. You don't need to ask for proof of finished homework, and you shouldn't - this will really tick your kid off, and will probably backfire. There's a better way to see whether he or she is actually doing the work: tracking practice test results.

Practice Tests: Your child will be taking 5 or 7 full-length, timed, graded diagnostics over the course of my program (depending on whether he uses the 30-Day or 60-Day program).

He will be entering all of his scores into my software, which contains a goal-setting and score-tracking system. After each diagnostic, he'll be recording his scores, along with the number of questions omitted / not reached, and resetting his goals if necessary.

More important than your child's homework days are his test days. It might be difficult to "observe" your child while he's working on **Day 11**, since he might be able to complete his work at school, or while you're not home, etc. But since all practice tests will need to be taken at home (if possible), and since they take 4+ hours each, it'll be very easy to figure out:

- A) When your child is planning to take these tests
- B) How to make sure he's taking them

Just figure out when your child is planning on taking these practice tests, then make sure they actually happen.

Again, I can't emphasize this enough: none of this is necessary. But if you WANT to make sure your child is doing all his or her work, this is how you'll know.

Once your child takes a diagnostic exam, he or she will enter his/her results in the program. If you want to, you can ask for your child's login information to see how his/her scores are progressing (when you order my program, you'll have the option to set the login details for your child - I recommend doing so).

This is much easier than hovering over your child and watching him/her take tests or do homework. In fact, **PLEASE do not "hover" when your child is working.** It's annoying, stressful, and weird. You can pop in for 3 seconds, but that's it.

Rather than constantly asking your child whether or not he has been doing homework or taking practice tests (which, let's face it, will come across as nagging), you can simply check the software and find out on your own.

Log in and check the scores, their dates, and their progression. If your kid hasn't taken a test in 5 weeks...something is very wrong. If your kid isn't improving...maybe he isn't doing his homework.

This is a totally hands-off way to check in. Simply log into the software once every few weeks and see how your kid is going. If there's no activity, THEN you can ask.

Honestly, that's really all there is to it. To summarize this chapter in its entirety:

1. Nagging is bad. The more you ask your kid about his or her work, the more resistant he/she will be to doing it. Do not hover, and do not ask questions when you don't need to.

2. If you must nag, blame it on rewards. If your kid asks "why you keep asking," say it's because you care, because you're "just making sure everything is okay and that you're doing everything you can to help," and because you want to reward him/her for his efforts.

3. Check your child's account to see your child's diagnostic test dates and results. This is, by far, the path of least resistance. This will take you 20 seconds a month, and if all is well, then this is all you need to do. Doesn't get much easier.

4. If your child ISN'T doing his work (if the scores aren't being updated), THEN you can nag. But don't go in "guns blazing" - just ask what's up. If nothing is getting accomplished, and your kid isn't doing the work, then sit down and reaffirm how important it is for YOUR CHILD to get good scores so that HE/SHE can get into the schools of HIS/HER dreams.

If you launch in with "what the hell is wrong with you!?", don't expect much in the way of internal motivation.

5. All your child's assignments are calendar-based. You'll be able to see when each part of my program is being accomplished. If you want, you can check the calendar, then confirm that each day's assignment is actually being done.

I designed these programs to require pretty much zero parental supervision. Please do your child a favor and do NOTHING more than the steps above when supervising his or her efforts.

The remaining chapters will show you how to ENHANCE those efforts rather than obsess over them. It's all cherry pie from here.

Chapter 4: Love the Reward

External motivation is all about punishment, fear, and shame. Internal motivation is all about accomplishment and reward. If you want your child to be self-motivated during the test prep process, you'll create a strong system of bite-sized rewards.

Punishment doesn't work for SAT prep. Want your child to get a terrible score? The first step is to terrify him, berate him for not studying enough, and then set up a series of threatened punishments that you'll apply if he doesn't do his work diligently. If you're looking to create a student who has no internal motivation whatsoever, and whose only goal is to avoid your punishment (as opposed to actually succeeding), then I highly recommend taking this route. Otherwise, keep reading.

Students who do well on their standardized tests have clear-cut goals, and when they reach them, they're rewarded for their efforts.

There are three types of rewards that people react strongly to. They're listed below, from most to least important:

1. Recognition. The most overwhelming human desire is the desire for recognition and respect. Once people have their basic needs of food, water, and shelter provided for, this is the first thing that they seek.

When your child reaches his goals, you need to recognize that those goals have been met and congratulate him for his good work. It's amazing how much a "pat on the back," can do for a child's motivation and self-esteem. The biggest error I see many parents make in the test prep process is forgetting to congratulate and recognize their children when they're doing good work.

A recent study showed that employees rank "lack of recognition on the part of their employers" as THE biggest reason for workplace dissatisfaction. Conversely, they ranked a "boss who recognizes them" as THE most important factor to job satisfaction - more than salary, benefits, or vacation days.

Apply this same principle to your child - constantly congratulate him whenever he finishes all of his homework, gets a score improvement, completes a full diagnostic exam, and any other benchmark imaginable. The more of an effort you make to do this, the more your child is going to thrive.

2. Self-Satisfaction. This is out of your control, but it deserves to be briefly mentioned. When you work with your child to set clear goals and benchmarks, he will be the one providing *his own* reward via immense feelings of self-satisfaction. It's an incredible feeling when you set a goal and stick with it, and my programs are designed to instill this within your child.

3. Material and External Rewards. Remember: we're dealing with teenagers here, and, just like everyone else, they love a good "treat." These shouldn't be handed out willy-nilly, but when your daughter accomplishes certain big goals and hits certain benchmarks, treat her. These treats can come in multiple forms: a trip to McDonald's, a new set of headphones, a "get out of mowing the lawn for a

day” card, etc. - they don’t necessarily have to be expensive, or even cost anything. Just make sure that you throw these into the mix and size them appropriately for the accomplishment. Finishing one’s homework for the week merits a tasty dinner; raising one’s SAT scores on a diagnostic exam by 350 points might merit an iPad.

The main idea is to keep your child in a “studying for rewards” mindset at all times. When children feel that they’re *moving towards a reward*, they’re much more motivated than when they’re *running away from a punishment*. Especially considering that *attention is purely a function of willingness to receive information*, you need to realize that nothing improves attentiveness and eagerness to learn more than a positive and “points gaining” attitude.

Break goals up into the smallest benchmarks possible, and be sure to reward all of them.

Study after study has shown that people are much more motivated when they have lots of small goals to accomplish than when they have one huge goal. If you think about it, your whole life is lived this way. Imagine if you were told that you’d never be given a paycheck until you were 75 years old, and then you’d be paid for your life’s work in one lump sum. How hard do you think you’d work?

Same thing goes for test prep. You should set up at least 20 different benchmarks throughout the process.

Ideas for benchmarks:

1. A full week in which your child has completed all homework assignments
2. A diagnostic exam completed
3. A diagnostic exam showing an improved score
4. A weakness eliminated
5. A better score on a real test
6. 100 new vocabulary words memorized
7. A high PSAT score

Certainly don’t limit your benchmarks to just these, and adjust your rewards to match the seriousness of each one. But all of these different things should be rewarded, whether through recognition or external rewards. If you get in the habit of setting these up as expectations, and then rewarding them when they’re met, your child is going to be a force of nature, and this whole process will be much more pleasant for everyone involved.

This involves a total switch in mindset. You’re no longer “nagging” your child and “making sure he’s doing what he has to.” Instead, you’re “checking in on your child so that you can congratulate him for a job well done.” Big, big difference.

Remember: you want to be a teammate, not a boss. When you’re at dinner, you can ask things like:

“How’s the SAT prep going? Any big news? Anything I can help with?”

That’s it. There’s nothing annoying about that question. You’re just checking in. And when your child realizes that you’re handing out congratulations and rewards like a pinata, he’ll be more than happy to pony up as much information as he can muster.

But what if you need to punish your child? That’s the question I always get asked when I recommend this system: “what if my child just isn’t doing any of this stuff, and she doesn’t care about any of the rewards?”

The answer is that, in my experience, **I have never met a child who reacts as strongly to a punishment as he does to lack of a reward. EVER.** If your child is so stubborn and unmotivated that he is directly defying you and spitting on your encouragement, then that’s a problem beyond the scope of this book, and is a more appropriate issue for a therapist or relationship counselor.

When your child comes to expect rewards for his progress, and starts chasing after them, you’ve done everything you can to create the kind of positive, internal motivation necessary for test success. Now he wants to do well to get into his dream schools, and he knows that your only role is as an encourager, helper, and rewarder.

Doesn’t this seem a little better than the “Tiger Mom” BS you’ve read about elsewhere? And doesn’t it make a lot more sense? I’ve seen both philosophies in action, and trust me: this one works better. I wouldn’t be recommending it if it didn’t.

Summary Notes:

-External motivation is powered by fear and punishment. Internal motivation is powered by reward and inspiration.

-If you reward your child as often as possible for his/her accomplishments, you’ll create a much smoother and more effective test prep process.

-Rather than building your child’s fear of “losing points” and “messing up,” turn the SAT into a game in which he can “win points” by accomplishing certain goals.

-Threatening punishment for failing to hit outcome-based goals is, without a doubt, *the* worst way to motivate your child.

-Children are motivated most by the following three factors, ordered from most to least important:

A) Recognition

B) Self-Satisfaction

C) Material and External Rewards

-Keep your child in a “studying for rewards” mindset and he/she will exceed your wildest expectations.

-Breaking tasks and goals up into the smallest chunks possible is incredibly motivating and enhances the test prep process (and every other process, for that matter).

-You should never punish your child for failing to achieve *outcome* based goals, but you should always reward your child when he/she does!

-By breaking the test prep process into the smallest chunks possible, you're giving your child lots of opportunities to succeed, and success begets more success. Nothing builds motivation quite like the feeling that "you're really doing it," and when your child keeps knocking down barriers, he/she will feel this way.

-Remember that simple, verbal recognition (i.e. "I'm proud of you!") is always more effective than gifts and other external rewards, and it solidifies your position as a "teammate" rather than as a "boss."

-Children ALWAYS react well to this system. When your child starts seeking rewards rather than avoiding punishment, you will almost never deal with resistance. If you do, that points to a larger psychological issue that is beyond the scope of this book.

Action Steps:

1. Start getting in the "reward" mindset as soon as possible. Immediately remove any threatened punishments and stop making them. Instead, start promising and delivering rewards whenever your child hits certain action or outcome-based benchmarks (remember - you can't punish for NOT reaching outcomes, but you can certainly reward FOR reaching them!).

2. Break up your child's goals into the smallest, most manageable tasks possible.

Examples of these "complete tasks" include:

A. A full week in which your child has completed all homework assignments

B. A diagnostic exam completed

C. A diagnostic exam showing an improved score

D. A new weakness eliminated

E. A better score on a real test

F. 100 new vocabulary words memorized

G. 1,000 practice problems completed

H. A new readjustment of goals in which new goals are set even higher

I. A high PSAT score

3. Make a point of rewarding your child constantly, and of actively seeking rewards to give to your child. The best reward you can possibly give is verbal recognition.

4. If, despite your best efforts to constantly reward your child for accomplishments, and to completely eliminate punishment and negative commentary, your child is still reacting negatively to the process, it is your responsibility to get psychological counseling for your child, as this speaks to a larger issue.

Chapter 5: Get Your Kid Some Sleep

If there's one thing you can do to instantly improve your child's performance, not just on her test prep but on every single thing she does, it's this:

Make sure your child is getting AT LEAST 7 hours of sleep per night.

This isn't optional. This isn't something to be negotiated. If your child is getting less than 7 hours per night, she is going to be a total mental wreck. I want to start this chapter by talking about the "Performance Breaking Point."

Sleep researchers, neuroscientists, and performance experts have all identified a magic number which I'll call the Performance Breaking Point: 6 hours of sleep. If you get less than 6 hours of sleep per night, your mental and physical performance can literally be cut in half. If you're getting less than 6 hours of sleep per night, you might as well not even try.

Try at what? At anything.

Two studies will be of particular interest to you:

1. In a recent Israeli study, researchers found that adults who got less than 6 hours of sleep per night for only *three nights in a row* were more dangerous behind a wheel of a car than someone who was *legally intoxicated*. When you're sleep deprived, your judgment, your reflexes, your motor skills, your perception, and your general cognitive abilities all fall below the level of someone with a blood alcohol percentage of 0.08%.

If you're letting your child study while sleep deprived, you might as well let him study

while he's drunk. He'll get just about the same amount done.

2. In another recent study, researchers found that when people get less than 6 hours of sleep per night for more than five nights in a row, *their IQ drops by over 20 points*. Just in case you're not aware, the difference of 20 IQ points is the difference between someone categorized as "Average Intelligence" and someone categorized as a "Genius," or the difference between someone of "Average Intelligence" and of someone who is "Mentally Handicapped."

If your child is sleep deprived, he is only 4/5ths as intelligent as he should be.

Sleep deprivation makes you slow, stupid, non-retentive, exhausted, and inefficient.

The most shocking thing about all this research is that **most people feel that 6 hours is a sufficient level of sleep**. It's not. Not even close. Below 6 hours, your brain is running on fumes.

Before we get into *what you need to do about it*, I want to bring up a very common objection I hear from parents and students alike:

"If I sleep for 7 hours a night, I won't have the time I need to get everything done!"

False. In fact, if you spent more time sleeping, you'll achieve far more in far less time. Here's why:

When your brain is sleep deprived, which is defined as "getting less than 6 hours of sleep for more than 2 nights in a row," your brain is only operating at 70% of its maximum capacity. And that number drops *dramatically* the less hours you get, or the more nights in a row that you only sleep for 5.5 hours or less.

Let's assume that your brain can produce "100 widgets of thought" per hour when it's operating at full capacity. This is a simplification, but it's important to look at this numerically. If you get 8 hours of sleep a night, that means you have 16 hours to think. In that time, you can produce 1,600 "widgets of thought" in an average day.

Now imagine that you try to produce more "thought widgets" by sleeping less. So you start sleeping for only 6 hours a night. Wow! Two extra hours of production! Sounds like you'll be getting a lot more done! Until you look at the numbers....

18 hours X 70 widgets per hour (reflecting your reduced efficiency) = 1,260 widgets of thought per day.

Even though giving up sleep can allow you to work for 12.5% more hours per day, you're actually reducing your mental output by 21.25% a day!

The scary thing is that this isn't just some hypothetical situation - this is science, pure and simple. When you're tired, you don't get as much done. You might *think* you're getting more done, because you're working more hours, but you're not. You're actually a shadow of your potential self.

“But Anthony - I routinely only get 6 hours of sleep a night, and I feel totally fine!”

This is something I hear all the time from my students and from their parents, whom I expect to set a good example (we’ll get into that in a moment). I have two responses to this claim:

1. You might FEEL fine, but you’re not PERFORMING fine. At all. There’s a big difference between *feeling* tired and *being* tired. Some people are able to go through life in a state of pure sleep deprivation without feeling exhausted. But that doesn’t mean they *aren’t* exhausted. In fact, when you *feel* tired, it’s not just a sign that you’re “a bit sleepy” - when you *feel* tired, you are *extremely sleep deprived*. It’s much like hydration. You can be completely dehydrated without actually feeling thirsty. Once you feel thirsty, you’re actually already dangerously dehydrated. So you might *feel* like you don’t need more sleep, but trust science - you do.

2. You’ll feel a lot BETTER if you get some more sleep. I issue you a challenge. If you’re used to getting 6 or less hours of sleep a night, take the next three nights and sleep for 8 hours. Force yourself to do it. Then see how you feel. If you’re like every human being alive, you will end up feeling happier, more energetic, more enthusiastic, sharper, clearer, healthier, more outgoing, and more physically powerful. Once you get used to being properly rested, you’ll quickly realize how “not fine” you actually feel most of the time.

This is a book about test prep, not physical health, but test prep performance only improves when your child’s mind and body are working at optimal levels. If your child’s brain is functioning at 70%, do you think she’ll be able to perform in the 99th percentile on *anything*?

When your child is sleep deprived, the sleep deprivation has a COMPOUND effect. Because every aspect of his mental functioning is going to be at or around 70%, he’s actually going to perform at far lower than 70% of his total potential. Think about it in terms of two very simple variables:

If your son is only 70% as *attentive* as he would be when rested, and if his *retention*, or memory capabilities, are only at 70% of what they should be, then a session of studying will only yield **49%** of the results that it should. He’ll only pick up 70% as much, and he’ll only remember 70% as much of what he does pick up, meaning that he’ll end up learning less than half of what he should.

Sadly, attention and retention are only two of hundreds of variables at play when it comes to mental performance. But they are the two most important factors at play. When it comes to test prep, there are three gears that need to be switched on in your child’s brain:

1. Attention capabilities, which will allow your child to notice what needs to be studied and study it effectively.

2. Calculation and reasoning capabilities, which will allow your child to apply material properly to his or her studies.

3. Retention capabilities, which will allow your child to remember what he/she has learned.

#3 is arguably the most important. What is the point of studying if you’re not going to remember

anything that you've learned? I'm going to get into the practical applications of this information shortly, but I do need to bring up one last extremely important point:

THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF SLEEP IS TO ORGANIZE AND SOLIDIFY YOUR MEMORIES. While you're in the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) stages of sleep, your brain moves the information it has come across during the day from short-term to long-term memory. Without REM sleep, you literally don't remember anything. Researchers have shown that **the longer you sleep, the more REM you get proportionally.**

In other words, if you sleep for 8 hours, you're not just getting 1.33 times as much REM as if you sleep for 6 hours. You're actually getting vastly more. The longer you sleep, the more time your brain spends proportionally in an REM state.

If your child doesn't get at least 7 hours of sleep a night, she'll barely remember anything that she studies. This is damning if she's trying to do better on the SAT. This test isn't one that you can "cram" for - it requires the integration of thousands of long-term memories that students need to be able to access at the drop of a hat.

Don't expect noticeable results from your child if you're not forcing him/her to get enough sleep.

The more sleep you get earlier in life, the healthier your brain and your body will be. It's upsetting that students sleep the least at a time when they should really be sleeping the most. Lack of sleep can lead to depression, anxiety, weight gain, poor performance, and aggression. Worse yet, **lack of sleep can cause or severely exacerbate many of the most common learning disabilities.** If your child has ADHD, put him to bed for 8 hours a night and see what happens to his symptoms. Most of the time, the extra sleep will do more than any prescription possibly could.

Hopefully, you're convinced by now that your child needs to get more sleep. A quick note on how much:

7 hours is considered the "Performance Leveling Point." In other words, if you sleep for 7 hours or more a night, then you won't notice a *drop* in your potential performance. You could theoretically sleep for 7 hours a night every night for the rest of your life performing and feeling perfectly fine.

8 hours is considered the "Performance Enhancement Point." If you can get 8 hours or more of sleep a night, you'll actually perform at a *higher* level than your base level of cognitive performance. If you really want to do well in life, try to get 8 hours of sleep. You might feel like you're giving up "time to live your life," but in fact, the life you do live will be happier, livelier, more productive, and vastly more enjoyable.

If you sleep 8 hours a night, one interesting thing you'll notice is that your *friends will start to notice*. You'll suddenly be told that you "look healthier," that you're "a better listener," that you "seem happier," and that "you're back to your old self." That's because extra sleep makes you more outgoing,

more attentive, healthier, happier, and more prone to be around others. Just a nice little fringe benefit...

I would highly recommend that you pick up a copy of the book [Be Excellent At Anything](#). The title is terrible, but the book is incredible, and is chock-full of tips to help you improve your performance. Sleep is, naturally, a large focus.

How To Get Your Kid to Sleep More

Now that you understand how essential sleep is, we need to delve into ways in which you can ensure that your kid gets enough of it. In my experience, nothing is more important than **setting the right example yourself**.

There is NOTHING that drives adolescents more insane than parents who don't "practice what they preach." If you think you can tell your child to go to bed early, then stay up watching Conan, you're dead wrong. They will resist you like crazy, because they'll (easily) realize that you don't believe in the very thing you're telling them to do.

If you want your kid to sleep more, the first step is to get to bed at a reasonable time yourself. You can't skip this option. If you work a night shift, or if you have incredible demands on your time, then make sure that you illustrate to your child that, while you're not sleeping at the same time that she is, you're still getting just as much of it.

If you don't get 7 hours of sleep a night, don't expect your child to, either.

Make sleep a non-negotiable part of your parenting style.

My mother forced me to go to bed at 9pm every single night all the way through 8th grade. We'd usually wake up at 7 or 7:30 to get ready for school the next morning. *For the first 14 years of my life, I was getting a minimum of 10 hours of sleep per night.* Does this seem excessive? To a lot of my friends, it did. But a lot of my friends didn't have straight A averages, perfect health, and 99th percentile test scores, either (my brother and I are also about 6 inches taller than anyone else in our family, even though we look exactly like everyone else, which I think sleep had a lot to do with).

Children react best to well-defined rules that are consistently applied. Childhood psychologists have shown that two factors are more important than ANY others in producing healthy, happy, productive members of society:

1. "Separating the child from the deed." In other words, when your child does something bad, let her know that you love her, and that *she* is good, but that her *action* was bad. On the other hand, when your child does something good, never miss the opportunity to let her know that she did that good thing *because* she is so good. Children who grow up in an environment of unconditional love, who realize that their parents will always support them, but not their bad behavior, grow up happier, healthier, and more socially adjusted.

2. Well-defined rules with consistent application. If you want to raise a messed up kid, do

the following:

A) Tell them they can't do something.

B) Watch them do it.

C) Don't punish that behavior.

Or, even worse:

A) Tell them they *can* do something.

B) Punish them for that behavior.

Kids feel more comfortable when they have an exact idea of what you expect, and when you consistently and rigorously enforce your expectations. This is extremely relevant to sleep.

From now on, you are a "7 hours a night" family. Your children will sleep for seven hours a night. Every night. No exceptions.

You want them to sleep more because you want them to be happier, healthier, and to perform better in school. You really need to make sure that this isn't seen as a punishment, because it's not. This is a gift, not a curse. Treat it like such.

"What if my child doesn't agree?" Here's where I might step into "insulting territory," but I have to say this: YOU are the parent, and YOU are the boss of your household. Not your child. Sleep is one area where there is no debate. If your child won't do this on his own, turn off his lights, take his cell phone, unplug his laptop, and steal his MP3 player. I'm not kidding. *Don't let your kid push you around.* Especially not on this issue.

That's all there is to it. Make it happen. All your other efforts will be watered down and ineffective unless you can make sure that your child is getting a healthy amount of sleep.

"But what if my kid insists that he/she can't meet all his/her demands without staying up later?"

Let me answer this in the most poetic and sophisticated terms possible:

BULL&%\$#

High school is hard. It's not *that* hard. If your child can't fulfill all his or her duties in 17 hours a day, and still have a healthy social life, then I'm George Clooney.

If your child has:

School: 6 hours a day

Homework: 4 hours a day

Sports: 2 hours a Day

Extracurriculars: 2 hours a Day

SAT Prep: 1.5 hours a Day

Sleep: 7 hours a night

Total: 22.5

That still leaves him/her with plenty of time to hang out with friends, pursue hobbies, etc. Notice that I assigned 4 hours of homework A DAY. That's a lot of homework....and I already included sports and extracurriculars into the mix.

Put another way, if your child sleeps 7 hours a night, he has 119 waking hours a week. With the exception of sports matches, weekends have none of the demands that weekdays do. Subtract 30 hours for school, 28 hours for homework (I'm adding 4 hours to each day during the weekend), 15 hours of sports (I'm adding in a 5-hour Saturday match), and 14 hours a week of Extracurriculars (I'm adding in a 4-hour debate meet on the weekends), then he still has 32 hours a week to mess around with friends, play the guitar, surf the web, and screw around.

If your child doesn't think he has enough time to sleep, it's probably because he's inefficient and delirious from lack of sleep. I'm not kidding.

If you just read the last few paragraphs, and you honestly think your child can't *possibly* function without depriving himself of sleep, then maybe you need to get some more sleep, too!

To sum this chapter up in a few key bullets:

- 1. If your child doesn't get at least 7 hours of sleep a night, test prep is pointless.**
- 2. If your child gets 7 hours or more of sleep a night, she'll be happier, healthier, and better at every single thing that she does.**
- 3. You need to set a good example and get 7 hours of sleep a night yourself.**
- 4. You need to make sleep an inviolable part of your family's rules - no exceptions.**
- 5. Your child has enough time to get enough sleep.**

Perhaps you should put this book down for a minute and get a good night's rest. You'll remember all the main points tomorrow!

A Quick Note on Nutrition

While sleep is the *key* contributor to your child's mental performance, nutrition is also absolutely essential. If your child eats chicken nuggets, french fries, chocolate pudding, and Pepsi every day for lunch...that needs to change.

If you want to grab a book on the topic right now, I highly recommend:

[Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating](#)

It was written by a bunch of Harvard-ites, so you know that the authors must be wicked 'smaht. Considering how much info is packed into that book, it's a surprisingly easy read, too.

Also, on a side note...get your kid some sleep.

Chapter 6: Testing Anxiety (and how to kill it with ease)

Testing anxiety is a difficult subject. Some students are over-confident, and have quite the opposite of anxiety. Other students are calm, cool, and collected, and don't have anxiety issues at all. But many students have levels of anxiety ranging from "slightly nervous" to severe and overwhelming breakdowns.

When I first started tutoring, and didn't know how to tackle anxiety, I repeatedly had students drop 300 points between their diagnostics and their real test scores based purely on nerves. Anxiety is very real, and very pernicious, and if you don't manage it properly, it will do more to damage test scores than any math disability possibly could.

Fortunately, there is a guaranteed, simple, and easy-to-follow method for eliminating anxiety entirely. By the end of this chapter, you'll know how to handle the issue.

Note: if your child has an actual anxiety disorder, you need to address this issue with a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist. I am neither of these things. I know how to handle "non-medical" anxiety, the natural anxiety that every student feels when confronting the understandably nerve wracking test-prep process. But if you know or suspect that your child might have a legitimate psychological issue, take him or her to a licensed professional as soon as possible.

What is anxiety?

Medical science defines anxiety as "a state of uneasiness or apprehension, *as about future uncertainties*."

Understanding that last bit is incredibly important. The reason?

Anxiety is caused by uncertainty.

Think about it for a moment: is it possible to be anxious about something in which you're certain of the outcome? Answer: no.

If you know *exactly* what to expect, then you'll never feel anxious. All nervousness and anxiety comes from *not knowing what to expect*.

If you're in any situation with an uncertain outcome, you'll feel anxious. If you're waiting to see whether you've gotten a job, you're going to feel anxious. If you've just bet \$1,000 on the spin of a roulette wheel, you're going to feel anxious. If you're going on a blind date, you're going to feel anxious. In each of these situations, you're anxious because *you are not sure what is going to happen*.

Have you ever felt anxious about an event in which the outcomes are certain? If you don't have an anxiety disorder, then no. In fact, someone with an anxiety disorder is diagnosed as one who "feels irrational or overwhelming anxiety about events that are *both in and out of his or her control*". In other words, people with anxiety disorders have *disorders* because they don't really have *anxiety* - they just

have a perpetual, irrational fear of the future.

When you put food in the microwave, are you anxious that it won't heat up? When you send someone an email, are you anxious that they won't receive the message in their inbox? When you drink water, are you anxious that it won't quench your thirst? Of course not! The reason is that *it is impossible to feel anxious about anything when the outcome is completely certain!*

If you understand this fact, then you should start to get an idea of how to tackle anxiety in any area of your life:

If you limit uncertainty and improve familiarity, you eliminate anxiety completely.

Think about the experience of most public speakers. The first time they have to give a speech, they're nervous, anxious wrecks. They're anxious because *they don't know what to expect*. Will the crowd boo them? Will they forget their lines? Will they stumble and stutter? Will they look silly? They don't know, and because they don't know, they're anxious.

But what happens once someone has given 100 speeches? He knows what to expect. He knows how he'll perform. He knows how the audience will react. He knows how the microphone works. So he isn't nervous.

If you know what to expect, you will not be anxious.

This lesson can be easily applied to test prep. When students know what to expect from a test, they won't feel nervous about it.

Students become anxious before taking tests for only four reasons:

- 1. They don't know what the test will be like.**
- 2. They don't know what will be on the test.**
- 3. They don't know what the testing experience itself will be like.**
- 4. They're not sure how they'll score.**

Because they don't know all of these things, they are anxious. So how do you kill anxiety? Eliminate the uncertainty surrounding these four elements.

Here's how you tackle all four of these sticking points, one by one, to completely kill anxiety. I can promise you that if you handle all four of them, your child will be confident, relaxed, and alert when going into his or her SAT:

1. What's the test like?

The most nervous students are those who are totally unfamiliar with the SAT. My most nervous students are always the ones who come to me with zero or near-zero experience with these tests. As I

mentioned earlier, a lot of students and their parents think of the SAT as some unknowable, terrifying monster. The reason? They have never “met” the test before.

If you’ve never met the SAT, you’re going to be scared of it. How do you solve this problem?

Meet the test. Over, and over, and over again.

If there’s one activity that improves test scores and reduces anxiety more than any other, it’s repeated, constant practice with real test material. If a student doesn’t know what each section of the SAT tests, *of course* he’s going to be nervous! Once he’s been through 4 or 5 full-length SATs, he won’t be.

This seems simple, and it is. If you want your daughter to feel less nervous about her SAT, have her take a full-length SAT. Then have her practice for her SAT using real test material constantly.

You’d be amazed by the results you’ll see in a very short period of time. Students who are initially terrified will quickly become cool, confident, and collected *just* by “meeting” the exam.

Remember: it’s impossible to feel anxious when you know what to expect. If your child continually works with real test material, he’ll know what to expect. Hence, anxiety will be drastically reduced.

Both my 30-Day and 60-Day programs were built with this concept in mind. By the time your child finishes his program, he’ll have taken *either five or seven full-length, timed, actual SATs under realistic, “pressure-cooker” conditions.*

When I was in high school, my (extremely talented) SAT tutor had me take 10 full-length practice SATs before I took the real thing. I ended up getting a 99th percentile score on my first try (even though I got a 70th percentile score on my PSAT). I’m not “naturally gifted” at tests, and I was an insanely nervous wreck when I took my PSAT. It was the first time I’d ever dealt with the material before. When I took the actual SAT, my friends were all freaking out. I might as well have been getting a massage. I couldn’t have been more relaxed.

If you simply make sure that your child finishes his program, from start to finish, you’ll be making sure that the “unknowable” nature of this exam is totally eliminated. You’ll have a much less nervous student.

2. What, exactly, will be on this test?

This is simply an extension of #1, but it has important implications. Once students realize how the SAT is structured, what each section tests (generally), and what types of problems they can expect, they can form a new and more specific form of anxiety centered on these two questions:

What if I see a problem I’ve never tried before?

There are two ways to kill this form of anxiety. The first is simple: practice, practice, practice. The more problems your child solves, the fewer problem types she’ll be unfamiliar with. While the SAT is extremely good at coming up with new, unique ways of testing students on material, there’s a limit to how many different ways they can spin things.

This goes for math, grammar, and reading comprehension. A particular kind of problem involving a pattern sequence might be tough the first time - by the fifth time, it’s a walk in the park. A question about *tone* or about *the intentions of the author* might seem strange and confusing at first,

but not after the hundredth time you've answered it.

If your child solves 2,000+ practice problems for the SAT, he will have seen almost every imaginable permutation of every problem on this test. Practice makes perfect, and it also kills anxiety. Again, this all boils down to **familiarity**.

Also, it might help to tell your child something that might at first seem pessimistic: *no matter how much you study, you'll always run into something you've never seen before.* When this happens, and it will, don't sweat it! PROMISE your child that she'll see a couple quirky, random problems. But so what? Expect them, know they'll be there, and try your best. That's it. You're not aiming to get *every* problem right, you're just aiming to get *almost all of the problems right*. If you see something weird, try your best. That's all there is to it.

What if I'm tested on material that I don't know?

It doesn't matter how familiar you are with a type of problem if you don't know the material required to solve it. For instance, if you can't find the slope of a line, then you'll never be able to answer a slope problem, regardless of how many times you've seen this problem type before.

But here's the thing: when students figure out what they need to know, they'll be able to catalog these deficiencies and knock them out. My program actually *forces* your child to identify both *the material* AND *the problem types* on the SAT. All the material, and all the problem types. In fact, the first third of these programs is devoted almost exclusively to doing nothing more than identifying all of these elements. The rest of these programs is devoted to mastering them.

My programs are based on the concept of "know thy enemy." I don't teach students random facts, tips, and tricks from day one. Instead, I force them to figure out which facts, tips, and tricks they need to know. Once they have a complete idea of what they're missing (and realize how minimal this deficiency actually is), this entire process will be a walk in the park.

Most material-based anxiety exists because students aren't sure what their weaknesses are, and because they're uncertain of their own weaknesses. When you don't know what you don't know, you get very, very anxious. Once you learn what you don't know, you become much more effective at studying. When your child has a perfect idea of what he needs to know, he'll understand precisely what to study, and he'll stop being anxious *because he'll stop being uncertain*.

That's all there is to it.

3. What will taking the test be like?

Here's how to teach your child what the SAT will be like: make him take a full-length, timed SAT under realistic conditions.

How can you be scared of something you've done 5-7 times before?

Sure, the real test might be in a gymnasium rather than in your living room. And sure, it might be "the real deal" - but your child will have still done it before multiple times. I was a *nervous wreck* when I took my PSAT, but after my tutor forced me to take countless practice SATs, I was cool as a cucumber when I went in to take my actual SATs.

Lots of diagnostic exams completely kill anxiety. Fact. If you'd like to, you can search online to find "in gymnasium" tests offered near you. Most test prep companies offer proctored exams with other

students under hyper-realistic conditions. While the exams given aren't real SATs, the *experience* can be very difficult for nervous students.

The last issue concerns the "real deal" aspect. Even if your student has taken diagnostics before, he'll still be nervous about what his score will be, right? Wrong.

4. What will my score be?

If your child takes her diagnostic exams in official testing booklets, she'll know *exactly* how she's scoring and what to expect. The hundreds of students I've tutored all show a remarkable consistency when it comes to their scores. They usually go up, up, up, perhaps slightly down, up, up, up, slightly down, etc. But overall, their scores continue to go up on a steady, reliable basis, and the scores they get on their diagnostic tests are nearly identical to the scores they get on their actual SATs.

If your child has taken a lot of official diagnostic exams, she'll already know what she's going to score. She won't be nervous if she's already gotten a 2100 four times in a row. She's probably going to get a 2100, or somewhere very near it.

Again, my programs are meant to make your life easy. This is all taken care of automatically. Just make sure your child follows the program, and you'll be good to go.

Conclusion:

Practice and familiarity kill anxiety.

1. Have your child take as many full-length, realistic, timed diagnostics as possible.
2. Have your child practice with real testing material as much as possible.
3. Have your child catalog and then wipe out weaknesses one by one.

Anxiety stems from fear of the unknown. Get rid of the unknown and you get rid of anxiety. And by doing the three things above, the unknown doesn't stand a chance.

Chapter 7: Motivation, Outcomes, and the Reptile Brain

In the last chapter, I discussed *anxiety*. In this chapter, I want to quickly address *stress*. I study brain science and educational principles on a daily basis. One of the most interesting things you'll learn in any book on education is this:

When you're scared, you literally cannot learn.

Put simply, your brain has only two modes: "input" and "output." When your brain is in "input" mode, it is receptive to new information. It is also able to process that new information and able to integrate it with the information already present.

When your brain is in "output" mode, all learning shuts down. It is literally impossible to learn new things. This is what most people know as "fight or flight" mode, a remnant from our genetic ancestors.

Back in the day, when a tiger ran into your cave, you didn't want to ponder the meaning of life, take careful note of the tiger's colors, or think about the area of a triangle. All these "input" activities would have gotten you killed. Instead, your brain had two very simple outputs:

- 1. Hit that thing with the largest rock you can find.**
- 2. Run.**

These two responses kept our species alive in times of danger for thousands and thousands of years of evolution. Unfortunately, we still carry the same software as our cavemen ancestors, but we no longer have to run away from tigers quite as often.

When your child is stressed, he is chronically in fight-or-flight mode

Studies have shown that students who are bullied or criticized in school end up getting grades far worse than their non-bullied peers. The reason is simple: because these students are in a chronic state of stress and fear, they're always in "output" mode. As a result, they rarely learn anything in class.

Our reptilian brain is responsible for the basic functions that keep us alive: keeping our heart beating, regulating our hormones, etc. It's also responsible for the fight-or-flight reflex.

What separates us from other animals is our neocortex, the part of our brain responsible for thinking and logical reasoning. It is our neocortex which allows us to learn, and, ultimately, to use language, build skyscrapers, and take the SAT. When the reptilian brain is engaged by fear or stress, it shuts down most of the functionality of the neocortex. As a result, when your child is feeling terrified or stressed, he's not thinking.

In case you were wondering: not thinking is very bad for SAT performance.

You already have the program you need to enhance your child's SAT scores. All you need to do is avoid triggering your child's reptilian brain.

Things that trigger the reptilian brain:

1. Criticism
2. Scolding
3. Comments along the lines of "you can't accomplish X"
4. Yelling
5. Stressful/loud/dirty study environments
6. Lack of sleep
7. Hunger and dehydration
8. Threats
9. Fear of failure
10. Fighting
11. Physical and verbal abuse of any kind

This isn't a book on "how to be a parent," and I won't go into the details here. Just take a look at the list above and minimize all eleven of these elements in your child's life. If your child is scared or stressed, the reptilian brain engages. When the reptilian brain engages, your child won't learn a thing.

My program will give your child all the action steps she needs to take. All you need to do is:

1. Make sure your child follows the program in its entirety.

2. As much as possible, avoid all the elements that lead to the activation of the reptilian brain.

Section 3: Action Steps

You have all the background information you need to begin taking action.

In this section, you'll learn:

- What materials are best for fast SAT improvement
- How to create the right study environment
- How to receive extra time and other accommodations if your child has a learning disability
- How to start the college process as efficiently as possible
- When to take the SAT, how to register, and how to prepare for test day

Chapter 8: Getting the Right Materials

My program is already completely “self-contained.” Everything you need is included with your purchase, from textbooks to software access. However, there are a few things you can pick up to that will amplify the success of the program.

When you sign up for my program, you’ll immediately be shipped the following three books via 2-day shipping:

1. The Official SAT Study Guide, 2nd Edition
2. Barron’s SAT
3. McGraw Hill’s 12 Practice SATs

Don’t start your child on my program until you have these books in hand. He/she will be using them almost every day. If you’re wondering why I haven’t written my own practice problems and practice tests:

The only practice tests your child will be taking are *real SATs*, directly from the College Board. I don't want your child taking "approximations" - the tests he/she will be taking, and the scores he/she will be getting on them, are real. If your child gets a 2140 in the College Board book, it means he would have gotten a 2140 on the actual SAT.

Why I didn't write my own practice problems: Barron's and McGraw Hill spend countless dollars developing their own practice problems, and have full-time experts designing and improving them on a daily basis. I use my time learning how to *use* these practice problems in a beneficial way.

These are the same books I use with my own students one-on-one, and they're the best.

In addition to these books, you'll need to print out the following free practice test:

https://satonlinecourse.collegeboard.org/SR/digital_assets/assessment/pdf/0833A611-0A43-10C2-0148-CC8C0087FB06-F.pdf

As well as the scoring sheet:

https://satonlinecourse.collegeboard.org/SR/digital_assets/pdfs/eri/scoring_2012-2013.pdf

Be sure to print these out as soon as possible. Your child will need them in printed form very shortly after he/she begins my program.

Aside from these printed materials, there are only a few more things you'll need:

SAT Prep Shopping List

A calculator. The SAT allows students to use a graphing or scientific calculator during the Math section, and I highly recommend taking that allowance.

While you can use any calculator allowed by the SAT (the full list is here:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/test-day/expect/calculators>)

I recommend using the granddaddy of all SAT-friendly calculators:

[The TI-83 Plus Graphing Calculator](#)

This thing is incredible, and, while a bit expensive, it'll save your child a lot of time and stress when he/she takes the exam.

Blank flashcards. Lots of them. Your child will be making an obscene amount of flashcards over the course of this program.

Any flashcards will do, but I prefer ones with lines on one side and blank space on the back.

Additionally, you might want to grab some rubber bands so that your child can keep his flashcards organized into piles. After a week or two with my program, he will have a LOT of them.

Stick-It Notes. These are essential for marking key sections in your texts. Don't get big guys - tiny ones will do. Here are my favorites:

Tons of pens and pencils. The more the better. This might sound ridiculous to include on this list, but I can't tell you how often my students run out of pens and pencils, or can't find the only pencil they own.

Get a ton of cheap ballpoint pens and #2 pencils. Any will do.

A few blank notebooks. I want your child taking tons of notes during this program. The more the merrier.

The best notebooks are ones that you can carry with you. In my opinion, giant notebooks encourage you to write notes, then leave them sitting there. Portable notebooks can always be taken with you, and hence encourage consistent review.

Last but not least:

Colored Sharpie Pens

As your child will learn during the program, your brain memorizes things more effectively when they're color-coded. Writing notes and creating flashcards in big, bold colors enhances retention. And it's kind of fun, too.

Once you have these items in hand, your child is ready to get started.

Chapter 9: Setting Up the Right Environment

If students don't have comfortable, clean, well-equipped studying environments, they're not equipped to raise their test scores efficiently. Giving your child a proper place to work on his test prep is essential if you want the best results possible. Here's what you need to know:

1. Don't let your child study in his bedroom. If you study productivity, you'll quickly learn that the bedroom is *the worst* possible place to get work done. People who work in home offices are

always encouraged to work outside of their bedroom, and possibly at a Starbucks or some other external location, and for good reason: bedrooms are rife with distractions and psychological land mines.

Two reasons why the bedroom is the worst place to study:

A) Bedrooms contain every imaginable distraction I'm about to warn you about. Guitar, TV, magazines, iPad, Facebook Chat, etc... There are simply too many distractions in the bedroom.

B) Bedrooms create "Environmental Confusion." When people work where they sleep, they end up working less efficiently and drastically reducing their quality of sleep. The human brain operates by context. Have you ever felt your heart start pumping faster *as you're walking* to the gym, but before you've actually started working out? You experience this because your brain starts sending signals to your whole body that you're in "gym mode" to best suit what it anticipates as your needs.

Same thing with studying - if you sleep where you work, your brain doesn't know whether it should be gearing up for mental exercise or gearing down for sleep. You end up with a sub-optimal brain pattern for both activities, since the wires get crossed.

Get your child out of her bedroom and studying somewhere else immediately.

2. Cluttered spaces lead to cluttered thoughts. Wherever your child studies, make sure that it's as sterile and uncluttered as possible. Countless studies have shown that when you work in a cluttered environment, your cognitive capacity diminishes.

A lot of people think that having a "nice view" where they work will help them to relax. In fact, looking at a view while you work can *drastically diminish* your productivity because your brain has to process and ignore extraneous information. While you should be focusing on your work, your brain can't help but continually take in the scenes and activity outside, which puts an unnecessary load on your processing capabilities.

Strangely enough, people who work in sterile, boring environments actually report that they're *happier and more engaged* in their work. When you work in a clean space with few distractions, your brain fully "buys in" to the activities it's working on. *Humans are always happiest when they are fully absorbed in whatever they're doing.* If you completely eliminate clutter and distractions, you'll put your child in what is known as a "flow state" - a mental state in which the activity currently being worked on is the only part of his or her consciousness. This state leads directly to remarkably fast progress.

Some tips for creating a "flow study" environment:

-Give your child a large, unadorned desk or workstation to use. Make sure that there's NOTHING on the desk that isn't necessary for his or her studying (loose paperwork, knick-knacks, decorations, etc.).

-Have your child face a wall rather than a window while he studies.

-Have your child study in a room with the fewest peripheral distractions possible. The less objects, artwork, decorations, etc. that he has in his 180 degree, front-facing field of view, the better.

-If at all possible, make sure that noise is kept to a minimum. Don't watch loud television

programs or vacuum in the next room!

3. Completely eliminate distractions. Point #2 was all about getting rid of visual distractions. This point is all about getting rid of *psychological* distractions.

If you have the following things available to your child, he won't be able to focus optimally:

-Cell phone

-TV

-Skype

-Radio (except for 60 beat-per-minute baroque string music, which we'll talk about later)

The cell phone is especially important. When your child studies, have him leave his phone in the other room. It's incredible how distracting cell phones are for most students. The solution is to get rid of them. If your child complains that "he won't be able to see texts from his friends," respond with: "why are you texting with your friends when you're studying for your SATs?" That should do the trick.

This is so important I need to say it again: **get rid of cell phones during study time.** Cell phones are to focus what microwaves are to ice cubes.

TV has no place at all in the study environment. Get rid of it. If people are watching it in other rooms, tell them to turn it off. Your brain automatically locks onto TV signals, which is why it's so easy to mindlessly watch the boob tube for 5 hours in a sitting.

While your child will need the computer to access my program, it's important that *only the relevant browser windows stay open*. If Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are only a click away, your child will click to them, guaranteed. Make a "one window at a time" policy - only one browser window can be open during study time, and only the window that contains my program.

As I'm sure you know, it's almost impossible to monitor your child's internet use, so this needs to be an unspoken agreement. Simply let your child know that multiple browser windows and instantly accessible distractions will ruin his progress and leave it at that. I'll be doing my part to let him or her know the same thing.

More importantly, get rid of the computer when it's not in use. When your child is working out of a book, have him shut down the laptop and force him to focus on just the book. A computer screen is a magnetic force and fiendishly difficult to ignore, so make sure it's not around when it's not in use.

If your child is studying in the living room, or some other public place aside from his bedroom, wasteful and distracting use of the internet will automatically be eliminated. When people feel like they're "being watched," they're always on their best behavior. You shouldn't "hover" when your child studies - ever - but the mere possibility of you walking in on a Facebook session is usually enough to discourage the behavior.

Music is actually very helpful for studying, but it needs to be right kind of music.

-Music with words is incredibly distracting. As humans, we automatically engage with the spoken word. When we hear someone singing or speaking in our language, we want to pay attention. Our brains are hardwired to do so. Any music your child listens to **MUST** be wordless. Songs containing English words are incredibly distracting, and lyric-based music drastically reduces mental

performance.

-The best music, again, is 60bpm baroque string music. Without getting into the science, which is *very extensive*, suffice it to say that this precise type of music alters the brain waves and has been shown to increase retention and focus by up to 250%.

Finally, **eliminate all traffic**. Walking through the room non-stop, or having your child study in the kitchen while you're cooking a meal, is not optimal. Try to disturb your child as rarely as possible while he studies. I realize this might be seen as a paradox: he can't be in his room, which is his most private area in the house, but he can't be distracted outside of his room, either. Remember that it's not going to kill all his progress if you walk by him a few times, but you should try to adhere by these rules *as much as you possibly can*. Be courteous and have all siblings and house members limit their noise and activity during your child's studying time and you'll see better results.

4. Make sure the designated study space is well-equipped. I can't tell you how much time I've wasted waiting for students to find their pencils, their calculators, their books, etc. You should pick a designated study space in your home where your child has everything he or she needs readily available.

If your child studies somewhere else, such as at the library or a local coffee shop, make sure that you have a "go bag" with everything he needs.

Here are the things that a properly equipped student can't do without:

- All books and texts that he's currently using
- Access to **The 30 or 60 Day Module** via computer or tablet
- Plenty of writing utensils
- A large notebook segregated into different topics
- A calculator
- A watch and/or timer
- Flashcards

If a student has all of these things, he'll be able to launch right into studying. Make sure that these things *stay at the desk* if your child studies at home, or that they *go right back into his bag* if he studies out of home. This sounds like an obvious step, but you'd be surprised; I have students who need to "find their calculator" at the beginning of EVERY session.

5. Make sure the study space is well-lit and comfortable. Invest in a high-quality desk lamp and a nice chair. *Uncomfortable and depressing work environments lead to decreased motivation, attention, and retention.*

If your child is squinting and crouched over every time she studies, she'll start associating this uncomfortable positioning with her test prep (and all of her homework in general). This isn't good. Your child should, at the minimum, have a nice desk chair, a big, clean desk (at the right height compared to the chair), and a bright lamp directly overhead. If you provide this minimum of comfort and ergonomic setup, you'll get much better results.

6. Clocks and timing are important. As you already know, students are most motivated when they can break large tasks into chunks. With that in mind, I highly recommend that your child use

the “pomodoro technique.”

Pomodoro is Italian for “tomato,” and this technique is thus named for the tomato-shaped kitchen timers you’ll find in most restaurants. The pomodoro technique is simple: set one hyper-specific goal for a very limited period of time, then set the timer and work on that one thing, and that one thing only, until the timer runs out.

Harvard Business School recommends this for all entrepreneurs as its #1 time management technique, and I use it religiously when I work. Let me give you an example: let’s say I have 50 things to do during a day. I can get overwhelmed easily, and since my time management is totally up to me, I’m often confused as to what I should focus on and for how long. I toggle back and forth between tasks aimlessly, and at the end of a 12-hour day, I can feel like I didn’t really get much done. Once I discovered the pomodoro technique, this all changed. I’ll say: “For the next 18 minutes, I’m going to work on Chapter 12 of Test Prep for Parents - at the end of the 18 minutes, I can do something else.”

I find that for those 18 minutes, I’m focused like a maniac. It gives me the “deadline feeling” - I really feel as if I only have 18 minutes to work on something I care about, so rather than languishing in the fact that I have so much more to write, I instead feel pepped up and motivated, and try to “beat the clock.” And since it’s only 18 minutes, I don’t feel overwhelmed because I know it’ll be over very soon. Once that 18 minutes is up, I reset the timer, and decide to re-code my website for the next 12 minutes - it’s remarkable how much coding I get done in those 12 minutes, and how engaged I am by the process.

Have your child use a timer when he or she studies. He can say, “for the next 16 minutes, I’ll do nothing but work on these percentage problems.” When he’s done with that, he can say, “for the next 20 minutes, I’m going to do nothing but read this primer on grammar and look at all the different examples.” Etc., etc.

When you use the pomodoro technique to break time into chunks, you not only get more done more efficiently, but you also feel more motivated and excited while you do it.

I’ll teach your child all about this strategy within the program, so it won’t be news to him. The more you break up studying time, the better.

If you make sure that your child has access to the resources above, and follows the processes described in this chapter, she’ll amplify her progress significantly.

As I said, you won’t be able to do all of these things all of the time. But it helps to know the ideal. If your child can adhere as closely as possible to these guidelines, she’s going to do much better.

Chapter 10: Learning Disabilities and Extra Time

If your child has a learning disability, psychological disorder, or physical disability, you should get him extra time and accommodations. This isn't a recommendation; it is a requirement. If your child does not have any of the above conditions, then move on - this chapter isn't for you.

The SAT has nothing to do with your intelligence - it simply tests how good you are at taking the SAT. But this test is almost custom-tailored to be difficult for students with learning disabilities, which is part of the reason why it gets its bad reputation. If your child has *any* learning disability or physical impairment, he should apply for extra time and accommodations to level the playing field.

Before we get into the details, there are two things you need to know:

1. College admissions committees will not know that your child received extra time/ accommodations. Due to the Americans With Disabilities Act, they are prohibited from knowing or asking. So, on a college admissions level, there is only upside, no downside.

2. There is nothing wrong with getting extra time. I can't tell you how many parents I've spoken to who think that there's "something dishonest" about getting their children extra time. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let me state it as simply as possible:

If your child DOES NOT HAVE learning, psychological, or physical disabilities, and you apply for special accommodations, it's despicable. But if your child DOES have any of these things, it is irresponsible, unfair, and foolish for you NOT to get extra accommodations.

The SAT, "un-leveled," is very hard for students with learning disabilities. Let me share two quick stories with you to emphasize how important it is that you seek the appropriate level of assistance for your child.

A) I once taught a student with moderate to severe dyslexia. He was incredibly bright - he understood difficult concepts in seconds, had incredible logical reasoning abilities, and developed a fantastic vocabulary. But his on-page reading skills suffered due to his disability. In short, it took him a while to read passages. His mother, fearing that she would make him feel "handicapped" if she asked for special accommodations, refused to get him extra time and other help for his dyslexia. As a result, he scored a 310 on his Critical Reading section. Out of 800. Do you think he felt handicapped?

His father, taking matters into his own hands, went through hell and high water at the last minute, under incredible time pressure, to get him the special accommodations he needed. When he took the test again, months later, he scored a 680 on his Critical Reading section. But for the months leading up to his 680, I've never dealt with a more discouraged or heartbroken student in my entire career.

B) I once worked with a girl who had very bad ADHD. Smart as a whip, creative, perceptive, but she couldn't sit still. She would drift, and as a result, it took her longer than most of my students to

complete the sections that didn't engage her. She was interested in math, and hence her math scores were high and she always finished on time. But she hated grammar, and thus her Writing scores were very low. When I worked with her during sessions, and we spent 40-45 minutes on a Writing section, she could get 33/35 questions right. But when she was under time pressure, on her own, she'd only be able to complete about half the problems before time ran out.

This story doesn't have the happy ending that the first one did. Her mother and father refused to believe that she had ADHD, although it was clear from her behavior and academic performance that she did (in case you're wondering, one of the clearest signs of ADD is incredibly high grades in the areas in which your student is interested, and abysmal grades in the areas in which she is not). No extra time, no special accommodations, nothing. So while I brought her math score from a 620 to a 750, her Writing score went from a 470 to a 510. Not so hot.

It is your duty as a parent to get your child as many advantages as you possibly can.

With that in mind, let's go over which disabilities qualify, what types of extra help you can get, how you can diagnose these issues, and how to apply for these special accommodations.

What types of special help and accommodations can you get?

You can find a very comprehensive list of all special accommodations on the College Board website using the following link:

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ssd/accommodations/other>

The most common types of special accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Extended time, which adds 50% to 100% of the time usually given for these tests
- Computer usage, for students who have trouble writing
- Accommodations for students with reading impairments and disabilities, including someone to read the test out loud for them
- Accommodations for students with hearing impairments, such as someone to give them test directions in sign language
- Extra and extended breaks
- Special testing spaces, such as private rooms for students with severe ADHD, or screens to block out distractions

There are many more accommodations than these, but the above list represents the vast majority of what most people request.

What types of disabilities qualify for extra time and special accommodations?

Learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities of all kinds qualify for special accommodations.

To figure out if your child is eligible, use this page for the SAT:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html>

Who do you talk to to simplify the process?

Almost all schools, public and private, have a *Services for Students with Disabilities* department. You should talk to your *SSD Coordinator* as soon as possible to set up a meeting and figure out whether or not your child qualifies. Online forms are great, but speaking to a trained, professional expert is much better.

GET STARTED NOW. NOT TOMORROW, BUT NOW.

If you want to get your child special accommodations, you need to do so as early as imaginably possible. While the deadline for special accommodations is technically only four weeks from the test date, the process takes much longer than that. The reason is because **documentation is everything**.

If you don't have your child's disabilities documented, you will not be able to get these special accommodations. And setting up appointments, running tests, and getting results takes a lot of time. To document these disabilities, you'll need to follow the following processes:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html#documentation>

The first step in getting accommodations for any disorder is documenting the disorder in an official context. You should get started with this process immediately.

How do I actually apply for the extra accommodations?

You do that here:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html#apply>

The easiest way to do this is to work with your schools *SSD Coordinator* to make sure you do everything correctly. This is a process that *can* be done on your own, but if you can get help, you should. It's much easier to navigate these waters when you have a professional on your side.

Final Note:

Between the websites I've provided and your school's *Services for Students With Disabilities Coordinator*, you should have everything you need to get extra accommodations for your child. I just want to make it clear once again that these special accommodations are not a "cop out," nor are they "unfair." They're just a way of leveling the playing field and of making sure that your child has the most opportunities possible for his or her future.

If your child feels strange about these accommodations, let him know that they're just advantages that he is *entitled* to receive. The SAT isn't an intelligence or aptitude test - it's a bizarre, hyper-specific exam that only tests one thing: how good you are at taking it. Special accommodations make you better at taking it, so why not?

Chapter 11: Getting the College Ball Rolling

It's essential that you help with the college selection and application process.

I've helped hundreds of students through the college process, and I've spent over 1,000 hours interviewing and working with the best college admissions experts in the country. Unfortunately, while many of these experts charge upwards of \$50,000 for their services, I can boil down all their advice into two steps:

1. Get good grades and test scores. At liberal arts schools, your application won't even be opened without them. At larger state schools, your grades and your test scores ARE your application, accounting for up to 90% of the entire admissions criteria.

Fortunately for you, the "test scores" bit is already taken care of. You'll still need to handle APs and SAT 2s, but at least "the big guy" is soon to be out of the way.

2. Become a specialist.

As we've already discussed, colleges don't want well rounded *students* - they want well rounded *classes* full of incredibly talented *specialists*.

Great grades and test scores will get your child's application *opened*. At big state schools, this might be enough. When 75-90% of the admission criteria is based on grades and scores, your child doesn't have to have much "under the kimono." However, for competitive liberal arts schools and other schools which put more emphasis on the individual, you **MUST** have some sort of specialty if you want to get admitted.

No college wants a "Jack of All Trades" in attendance. People who are mediocre at a lot of different things don't make a difference in the world. Colleges want students who are *absolutely amazing at one thing*.

There are two elements to turning your child into a specialist that schools want to admit:

A) Identify and focus on your child's specialty. This requires focus and a lot of thought. What does your child love doing? What is he extremely good at? Whatever it is, he needs to

focus on that specialty, and that specialty alone, in order to impress colleges.

Is your child into art? Have him become the president of the school's art club. Have him take every art class imaginable (and ace it). Have him win art awards. Have him start a charity that brings art to the youth in your community. Art, art, art. This way, when your child applies to art school, the school will immediately see that your child is *exactly* the type of person who they want to attend,

Is your child into science? Have your child win awards in science. Have your child take AP science classes (and ace them). Have your child start a science club, or become the president of the existing one. Have your child attend science programs at high-quality colleges around the country. Science, science, science. This way, when your child applies to MIT and Cal Tech, the message will be loud and clear: "I'm a scientist."

Again, there's a lot to this, and my mailing list and resources will help you to go the extra mile. It's your job as a parent to help focus your child and turn her into a specialist so devoted, passionate, and skilled in her area of expertise that colleges are DYING to pick her up.

There's another element to this:

Have your kid STOP doing non-specialist activities!

The key to college admission is *focus*. Your kid is getting absolutely *no benefit* from clubs, sports, and activities in which she is not already shining. Things such as JV sports, club membership (as opposed to leadership), and "once in awhile" activities, like writing an article every two weeks for the school newspaper, or volunteering for charity twice a year, don't impress colleges.

Colleges care about *quality*, not *quantity*. If your child is class president, colleges care. If your child is on the yearbook board as "picture organizer," colleges don't give a crap.

If your child belong to 45 clubs, but is not the president of any of them, colleges couldn't care less. It just looks like an attempt to impress them, and it actually turns them off.

Writing three articles for the school paper over the course of three years is not impressive and does not make a writer.

Volunteering at the local animal shelter two times does not make your child a philanthropist. Including this on your child's application makes him look desperate, not caring.

Help your child pick his area of expertise and *focus, focus, focus*. Have him do as much of it as he possibly can, and excel in it as much as he possibly can. Drop everything else. I'm amazed by how much time some of my students spend on activities that they're pursuing because they think colleges will be impressed. But colleges aren't impressed by "activities" - they're impressed by things a student is absolutely incredible at. That's it.

B) Leverage your child's expertise.

Once your child get the grades, the scores, and the expertise, you're halfway there. The second step in getting your child into the best possible schools is *matching your child to the schools to which he/she is applying!*

If you're raising William Shakespeare, he might get flat-out rejected from MIT.

Conversely, your incredible science student will be absolutely MISERABLE at a school like Amherst. And he probably won't get in, either.

Figuring out your child's specialty and focusing on it makes the college selection process much

easier. Once you know what your child loves and is best at, you can easily find the colleges which will match these passions and attributes.

The sooner you start picking the right schools, the sooner you'll be able to alter your child's application to suit their needs and desires.

Different schools want different things. More importantly, *every* school wants its applicants to show how much they want to attend those schools. When you pick your schools early, you can go on visits, learn more about the classes they offer, set up interviews, etc.

This is a process that needs to be started early. Don't wait until your child's senior year to begin college visits. This is WAY too late.

As soon as you have an idea of your child's specialty, follow these steps:

- 1. Start to find a list of schools that match that specialty.**
- 2. Get the help of a guide or expert to find even more schools that match that specialty.**
- 3. Find out what those schools require for admission (grades, test scores, special attributes, etc.).**
- 4. Get as much information about those schools as you possibly can online, through their websites, through their mailers and brochures, and through third-party guides and books.**
- 5. Visit the schools as soon as possible.**
- 6. Interview with the schools as soon as possible.**
- 7. Do everything in your power to court those schools and match your child's application to their standards.**

Of course, all of the above is easier said than done.

This is a book on test prep - not college admissions. However, since SAT scores are just a means to an end (getting your child into college), I wanted to touch on the general action steps you need to take right away.

Mull these concepts over and start working on them to the best of your abilities. Enlist your school's college counselors to help.

You've just read the most boiled-down guide on college admissions ever written. Now get started!

Chapter 12: Dates, Timing, and When to Take the SAT

You already know when your child should start *studying* for the SAT: now. As in, today. But when does your child *take* the SAT?

The answer to this question is actually remarkably simple. If you already purchased my program, and your child has start using it:

- 1. Your child will already know - test date selection is built into the program.**
- 2. Your child will be ready as soon as he finishes his program.**

Once all workdays have been finished, your child should take the SAT as soon as possible. Furthermore, your child should space the program out to coincide with an actual SAT date (the program teaches your child exactly how to do so).

The 30 Day Module is 30 days of *work*, while the 60 Day Module is 60 days of work (again, remember that *both* programs are included in your purchase); however, these do not have to be completed in exactly 30 or 60 days. These workdays should be spread out so that your child “lands” on an SAT date. This is very easy to do, and I give step-by-step instructions on how to do this within the program.

When is the SAT offered? You can find that out here:

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-us-dates>

In general, the SAT is offered every January, March, May, June, October, November, and December. The precise dates change, but the months don't.

Before we get any further, I want to emphasize something very, very important:

You should ALWAYS plan a backup day for the SAT. ALWAYS.

Your child's knowledge and level of preparedness are the major factors in his or her performance, but there are other factors at play as well:

1. Fatigue
2. Sickness
3. Terrible testing conditions (really hot room, dude sitting next to you chewing gum really loudly, etc.)
4. Depression or recent shakeups (just broke up with significant other, friend was just in an accident, etc.)
5. "Bad Day Syndrome." Some kids just have "bad days" - they get up on the wrong side of the bed and then take their SATs in a foggy mental state.

In the next three chapters, I'll be showing you how to avoid these situations and get your child's mind and body optimally primed for the SAT. But even with all the preparation in the world, things can still go slightly awry.

In fact:

If your child's grades aren't all within or above the 25-75 range for your target schools, you should ALWAYS take a second SAT after an intensive month of review.

This all comes down to the concepts of *variability* and *super-scoring*.

1. Variability. No matter how consistent a student's performance is, he will always do better on certain sections on certain days. The SAT mixes up their tested material. One test might be full of functions problems - if your child is amazing at functions, he'll score well. If not...yikes. One test might feature words that your child knows. Another might have a bunch of vocab words that your child doesn't.

I've never had a student get exactly the same score on the SAT in any section when he/she takes it twice in a row. The same student's scores might look like this:

Test One:
Math: 760
Reading: 690
Writing: 750
Total: 2200

Test Two:
Math: 700
Reading: 740
Writing: 720
Total: 2160

“Why on Earth would I want my child to take the test a second time if the total score was lower the second time around?” To answer that question, we move on to the next point:

2. Super-Scoring. When colleges receive your child’s SAT scores, *they take the aggregate score of your child’s best three sections.*

They don’t see each SAT individually. They see *how many times your child has taken the SAT* (which is why you should never take the test more than 3 times - it looks weird/bad). The score schools see is the combination of your child’s best scores on all three sections.

So, in the above example, your child’s best scores in all three sections were:
Math: 760
Reading: 740
Writing: 750
Total: 2250

Taking the test a second time improved your child’s score by 50 points overall - a significant bump at this score level (by the way - these scores are taken from an actual student of mine who just finished her second round of tests).

There’s something else you should also notice here: in her initial test, her best scores were in Math and Writing. In her second test, the Math and Writing scores both dropped significantly, while her Reading score improved significantly. Why?

After the first test, focus EXCLUSIVELY on your WORST section!

Think about it: after you get good scores in two sections, those scores “stick.” They’ll be added to the aggregate no matter what. Now is the time to take the WORST section and focus on it like a maniac. Once the girl in the example above got a great Math score, I spent the next month drilling her on Reading non-stop. She improved by 50 points, and she was already *very* well trained in Reading. Hence the power of focus.

The swings in your child’s scores will be even more intense if he/she isn’t scoring at such a high level.

Because this girl was already scoring at a near-perfect level, there was very little room for improvement. If you're shooting for an ~1800, then there's simply a lot more room for variability. The lower your target score, the more this effect matters.

Don't worry about the second test review process - it's all taken care of in the program and its accompanying materials. Just be VERY sure that when you register your child for the first SAT, you're also registering him/her for a backup as well.

Register As Soon As You Pick a Date

You can register for the SAT here:

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/>

If your child is getting extra time or other special accommodations, make sure to ask for them during registration and confirm that all necessary arrangements are in place.

What if my child isn't ready by the time of his/her planned date?

Your child will be taking plenty of timed, graded, actual SATs during my program. Therefore, you'll have a very precise idea of where he/she is scoring. When your child is taking plenty of timed, graded diagnostics, there's very little need for guesswork - you'll know what he's scoring on all three sections.

If you did your homework, you'll also know what he needs to score to get into his dream schools. For instance, if you're applying to a school with a 25-75 range like this:

Reading: 620-700

Math: 600-680

Writing: 630-690

You'll want your child to have at least a 620 in Reading, a 600 in Math, and a 630 in Writing if you want a realistic chance of admission.

If your child is following [The 30 or 60 Day Module](#), then she will hit those marks (so long as you've set realistic goals - if your child is starting with 400s in each section, it's not wise to shoot for a 780 in each section. My programs are effective, but there are limits to what can be done in a short time period).

However, if your child *isn't* hitting those marks for whatever reason, he/she can simply complete "in-between days" (your child will know exactly what these are - sets of precise, guided review days that continually enhance areas of greatest weakness). After completing my program, your child will know all the strategies, facts, figures, and tactics necessary to get a fantastic SAT score. All he/she has to do after the program to further his/her score is to keep reviewing. There's plenty of review

built into the program, but if you want to shoot even higher, I provide extra review tips after the program has been completed.

Work With Your Child

The 30-Day SAT Crash Course and The 60-Day SAT Prescription put a lot of responsibility in your child's hands. Work with him to make sure you're on the same schedule and know exactly what scores you're shooting for and when. Your job isn't to pick your child's colleges for him, or to hover over him while he works - but you do need to make sure that you're on the same page and working toward the same goal.

Now that you know *when* you'll be taking the SAT, it's time to learn *how to prepare your child for test day*. The following chapters are based on years of research and empirical experimentation, and the tips within will show you *exactly* how to limit the "bad day" factors listed earlier and maximize your child's scores using every trick in the book.

Chapter 13: What to Do on Test Week

If you want your child to get the best SAT score possible, you need to prepare him for test day properly. The following routine is essential to this process. Starting *at least* a week before your child walks into the testing center, do the following for optimal results.

Note: Your child will be reading the exact same instructions in his/her program materials. All you need to do is reinforce it.

1. Get him/her some CONSISTENT sleep. Your child needs to get 8+ hours of sleep every night from now until the test. No cramming allowed. **Your child can't cram for the SAT, so make sure that he doesn't try.** It's a test of long-term memory and habits. If your child thinks that an extra few hours this week will make any difference in his score, make sure to reaffirm that this is not the case.

This week, your child needs to get 8-9 hours of sleep *every single night with no exceptions.*

Also, this week, it is ESSENTIAL that your child sleep with a regular rhythm! If he's taking the test at 9am, have him sleep from 10pm-7am every night from now until test day.

Sleeping for 8 hours a night is not enough - he needs to get that sleep at the same time every night. As you'll learn in the next chapter, your child will need to wake up exactly two hours before he starts his test.

If you reset your child's internal clock so that he's *used to going to bed at 10 and waking up at 7*, he'll feel fantastic on test-day. If he sleeps until noon every day, then wakes up at 7am on test day, he'll feel like death.

The body is a machine of rhythms. Your body always works best on a cycle. When your child has a week to establish a consistent, routine sleep cycle, he'll feel more rested than he's felt in years.

I also want to make something very clear: **there is no school assignment, work assignment, or social obligation that is 1/50th as important as your child's SAT score - ESPECIALLY this week.** Do not let your child's social life, school work, extracurriculars, or job interfere with her test performance. She needs to be well rested and on a consistent sleep schedule. Blowing months of preparation to edit a PowerPoint, write a slightly better essay, or hang out with Jimmy is a really, really bad move.

2. No partying. Let me make something clear: if your child parties in the next seven days, kiss her chances of a good SAT score goodbye. I'm not saying that she can't hang out with her friends (and she should - it's very relaxing), but she should do it during the day or early evening, and she should do it sober. If your child drinks/drugs/stays up late even one night this week, you wasted your time and money buying this program.

3. Make sure your child is following my test-week routine. The weekend before his SAT, I'll have your child take his last full-length, timed diagnostic test under realistic conditions. Make sure this happens.

As your child progresses through his program, he'll be spending more and more of his time shuffling through flashcards like a maniac. Your child has put in a lot hard work to get to where he is - don't let him slack now that he's at the finish line.

4. Make sure your child doesn't study for more than 90 minutes a day this week, and make sure she breaks her studying up into small chunks of ~30 minutes each. Once your child takes her pre-test diagnostic, she shouldn't be spending more than 90 minutes a day studying. You want her to stay "in gear," but you don't want her to burn herself out.

The 30 or 60 Day Module will tell her *exactly* what to do. I'll let her know that she shouldn't do anything other than what I recommend. But some students have a tendency to ignore this advice and "go the extra mile" anyhow. This is a bad idea.

Your child should be mixing brief bouts of studying with longer bouts of rest and relaxation. Remember: she can't cram for standardized tests, so there isn't any point in trying. Her brain will be fully saturated with information this month - now is the time to let it all settle.

If you see your child staying up late studying, or working around the clock, put an end to that. Remind her that anything beyond what I recommend is counter-productive.

5. Feed her like a sumo wrestler. Proper nutrition is essential for proper mental performance. You need to start fueling your child's body for the mental marathon as soon as possible. That means proper hydration and nutrition. She should be eating a big, healthy breakfast every single morning. Feed her tons of protein, healthy fat, and complex carbs. Limit her junk-food. Feed her lots of fruit and vegetables - especially vegetables. Your body is the temple of your mind - treat it that way.

Your brain burns an incredible amount of calories during periods of intense thought and stress, and the SAT will be a period of both. Make sure she's properly fueled. Pretend that this is a "marathon" and act accordingly.

6. Make sure he exercises (lightly) every day this week. Try getting him to do 20-30 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise every single day. It'll improve oxygenation to his brain and help him to relax. **Make sure he does NOT do intense weightlifting, sprints, etc., this week, even if he's an athlete.** Being physically exhausted can take a huge toll on your brain. Just do enough to get your blood flowing lightly. Take a walk with him, or have him walk to town with some friends. Have him go on a brief jog, play a bit of basketball, etc. - just make sure to keep his blood flowing throughout the week without doing anything too intense.

7. Treats help. You should treat your child like a king/queen this week. Nothing melts away stress quite like rewards, celebrations, and fun. You want to take his mind off any potential stress that might be dwelling there.

You should feed your child her favorite foods, watch her favorite movies, go on a mini-adventure, etc. Your child has worked hard, so start rewarding her now. This last-minute burst of positivity and celebration will make a big difference.

If your child is following all the steps in my program, and if you've followed all the steps in this book, you'll be better prepared as a team than 99% of your competition. If you use this week to put your child in a positive mindset and melt away his stress, you'll amplify your results.

Next up, we'll focus on what to do the night before your child takes the SAT.

Chapter 14: What to Do on Test Night

The night before the test, you should:

1. Know exactly where the testing center is, how to get there, and at what time your child needs to be there. If you need to, drive the route in advance.

Don't figure this out the morning of the test. Know it as far in advance as possible. Make sure you have a full tank of gas and directions to the testing center.

2. Set every single alarm in your house. Yours, your child's, the one on your microwave - every alarm. You don't want to wake up late tomorrow - the stress factor of doing so will be out of control.

3. Make sure your child has everything he/she needs for test day. These items include:

- Multiple sharpened or mechanical #2 pencils
- Calculator
- Extra batteries for the calculator
- Photo ID
- Printed testing ticket
- “Test Tear Outs” - I'll have your child working on some practice problems the morning of the test at the testing center, so make sure your child has the necessary materials with him.
- Snacks. Best are a bottle of water, some almonds, a granola bar, and a banana.
- All clothes laid out the night before. These clothes should be multi-layered and comfy.
- Headphones. I'll have your child listening to music before he/she takes his/her test. Make sure he has the proper playlist ready and everything set to go.

Don't do this 5 minutes before your child goes to bed. Have it all set up before you eat dinner.

4. Make your child put her materials away and start relaxing. If she has been following one of my programs, there's nothing she will learn between now and the test that'll help. It's time to start relaxing. Have her do nothing today but hang out; watch TV, eat with friends, read a relaxing book, etc. Your child is done studying.

Note: If your child is really feeling anxious, he/she can study for 15 minutes at a time.

If your child is having a freak-out and feels like he needs to do more, and thinks that studying will help him to relax, then he's allowed to spend 15 minutes at a time (up to 30 minutes) looking over review flashcards. But only have him do this if he feels like it will put him at ease. Otherwise, avoid studying at

all costs.

5. Carbo-Load. Marathon runners eat ludicrous amounts of carbohydrates the day before their races so that their bloodstreams are packed with glycogen (your body's main fuel source). You should do the same for your child. Your brain burns 20% of all your body's calories, and thinking hard for hours at a time is incredibly energy intensive. The day before your test, you should aim to feed your child about 1.25X the amount of calories she regularly eats, mainly composed of **complex carbohydrates**.

Whole grain pastas, breads, and cereals, combined with lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, will fill her up with all the energy she needs. Complex carbohydrates aren't great foods to eat long-term, but before a big day, they're very beneficial.

Also remember to feed her some healthy proteins and fats. Lean meats, fish, olive oil, avocados, nuts, legumes, eggs, etc. are all fantastic brain foods. Use the day before the exam as a day to fuel up.

6. Hydrate. You don't want your child to have to pee throughout her whole exam, but she will need to be hydrated to think properly. To deal with that paradox, your child should spend today drinking ludicrous amounts of water. Have her stop drinking about 2 hours before she goes to sleep, but aim for at least a gallon of fresh water today. If you saturate your child's body, her mind will function much more effectively tomorrow.

7. Get her in bed early. If she's been getting in bed every night at 10pm, try getting her in bed tonight at 9pm. She might be feeling a little bit anxious, so it's best to give her some extra time to fall asleep. Have her listen to a relaxing playlist, read a mindless magazine or novel, and lull herself into a coma.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CAN'T FALL ASLEEP?

If she can't fall asleep, I have three tricks that work incredibly well. Combining these will make your child pass out like a sack of bricks.

#1: Have your child use the cold shower trick. He will know what this is. It works. Well. The basic idea: take the coldest shower imaginable for 3-5 minutes, then dry off and hop in bed. You'll slow your body's metabolism down and will find it nearly impossible NOT to fall asleep. This is counter-intuitive, since people view warm showers as relaxing. In fact, the hotter your body is, the harder it is for you to fall asleep. I use this trick whenever I have a big morning, and the results are remarkable.

#2: Make sure his/her room is as cold, quiet, and dark as possible. Sleeping in high temperatures is difficult. Blast your child's AC, or at least keep his/her windows open (if you don't live in the city) to get some circulation. Hot room = bad sleep.

Also, make sure to completely cut your child's room off from light. Turn off all the lights, light-emitting electronics or devices with lit buttons, and shut off all computer monitors. Ideally, your child's room will be PITCH BLACK.

Finally, be sure to limit noise. If your child wants to listen to either a relaxing playlist (set to turn

off about 45 minutes after it begins) or 30 minutes of 60bpm baroque music (he/she will know what it is and how to find it), that's fine. But it's your job to be as quiet as a churchmouse. No TV. No vacuuming. No loud phone calls. No stomping around. Tell everyone in the house that tonight is the night of tomblike silence. No exceptions.

I'll also suggest some meditation/positive visualization recordings that your child can listen to the night before the exam. I'm as suspicious of "power of positive thinking" stuff as the next guy, but it works. Well.

#3: Limit access to monitors and screens 2-3 hours before bedtime. A lot of recent studies have shown that brightly-lit monitors and screens (your phone, computer, iPad, and TV) confuse your brain and make your brain think that it's still daytime. As a result, when you look at bright screens, it becomes very difficult to fall asleep for a few hours afterward (if you're wondering why you fall asleep watching the TV, it's because the TV makes you use so little of your brain that you're already in a sleep-like state. In fact, you use less of your brain watching TV than you do when you're sleeping!).

Two hours before bedtime, make sure all monitors, TVs, phones, etc. are off. It's time to eat dinner, read mindless magazines, take a shower, listen to music, and pass out

**I'll be giving your child plenty of other sleep tips within The 30 or 60 Day Module.
These are just the ones you can assist with.**

One more note: **do NOT give your child any drugs to help him fall asleep.** Your child will wake up groggy and out of it - not a good idea before a huge test. If he does take pills or sleep medication routinely, then continue on this course, but otherwise you should avoid sleep medication like the plague.

Chapter 15: What to Do on Test Day

Congratulations, test prep parent. It's your big day. Here's what you need to do:

1. Wake your child up 2 hours before his/her test. It takes the human brain over 90 minutes to “boot up” completely, so make sure your child is fully awake before taking the SAT. Set your alarms and don't rely on your child to get out of bed on his/her own.

2. Give your child a massive glass of water the SECOND she is out of bed. This will hydrate your child and give her a chance to pee before the test. Didn't think my book would be about urinating, did you? Well - it's a serious issue. Get your child hydrated early so she's not distracted by a full bladder when you she takes her test.

3. Feed him a big, healthy breakfast IMMEDIATELY upon waking up. Your child needs to be well-fueled for his exam, but you don't want him to be full and groggy. Therefore, you should feed him a nice, big breakfast full of complex carbs, healthy proteins, and fats as soon as you wake him up so that he'll have time to digest. Whole grain cereal, some eggs, yogurt, fruit, milk, and whole-grain toast would be perfect. **Taking your test on an empty stomach is TESTING SUICIDE - YOU NEED TO BE WELL-FUELED.**

A great trick is to bring your child breakfast in bed on the day of the test. This way, you can wake him up with a “treat” rather than being a stressful nag. It makes a big difference. While he's eating, you can reassure him that you have all the directions etc. to the testing center and give him a pump-up talk.

4. A note on coffee: If your child usually drinks coffee/RedBull, make sure he does so this morning. If he usually doesn't drink coffee, avoid it like the plague. He'll need the caffeine to function normally if he's a regular coffee drinker, but if he's not, avoid the stimulant - he'll be jittery and distracted. Follow his normal caffeine routine for optimal testing performance.

5. Make sure he gets in the shower. You want your child to be clean, fresh, and happy when he walks into his exam. Countless studies have shown that people who shower in the morning are more productive, more alert, happier, and less stressed. Even if he usually doesn't shower in the morning, he does today.

6. Make sure she wears really comfortable, layered clothing. You want your child to be comfortable during her exam. Have her wear soft, comfy clothes with layers. You don't know if the testing center will be too hot or too cold, so be sure she has clothes that can be altered to keep her comfortable and focused. Pajama pants, a t-shirt, sneakers, and a sweatshirt are usually perfect. No need to treat the test like a fashion show.

7. Have her go on her POWER WALK. When she's full, showered, and dressed, have her go out and take a nice, relaxing, 30-minute walk. **Make sure she listens to her favorite music while she walks.** This will do wonders to get her blood flowing, relax her, help her to digest her food, and get her test-ready. Don't ignore this step - she's about to be sitting down for the next 5 hours - trust me, she'll thank you for forcing this upon her.

8. Double-check for everything you need before you leave for the testing center, and bring snacks!

One thing to really emphasize is the "Tear Out Review" material your child will need to bring. I have my students do a few Math, Writing, and Reading problems right before they take the SAT to warm their brains up and get them back "in the testing zone." This step can make over 150 points of difference to my students' scores. Make sure it happens.

9. Leave for the test early. You don't want your child to stress out when she takes her test. Nothing will stress her out more than getting to the testing center with 2 minutes to spare (or late, God forbid). This will activate her reptilian brain. Leave early and get there early. Do everything possible to reduce your child's stress by avoiding the worry that comes with being late. If you don't think she has time to eat, shower, walk, and still get there early, then wake her up more than 2 hours before her test (and get into that schedule for 7 days before the test!).

10. Make sure to pump your child up and be an emblem of positivity. If your child is nervous, acknowledge this nervousness, but then shut it down. "Oh sweetie, everyone gets nervous on test day - do you know how well prepared you are? You're going to do AMAZINGLY well in there!"

Positivity works. It really does. Lavish your child with praise, affection, and encouraging prose before he/she walks into the testing center.

When you're speaking with your child, make sure to use POSITIVE language. "You're going to do incredibly well" works - "you're not going to mess up" is actually counterproductive. There's only

room in your brain for one thought process at a time: positive or negative. Make sure all the language you use is injecting positive imagery into your child's mind. Keep everything you say affirmative.

Remind your child of one key fact: **he/she is better prepared than 99% of the students taking the SAT with him/her.** If your child followed my program, this is true.

Be like the trainer from Rocky - PUMP YOUR KID UP. No matter what he/she says, keep telling him/her how well you KNOW things are going to go. Wish him/her luck at the door, and again, tell him/her how amazingly, brilliantly well things will turn out, and that *you're proud of all the work that he/she has done to get where he/she is today.*

GOOD WORK!

Your child will know exactly what to do once you get him/her to the testing center. Your job as a test prep parent is done.

Chapter 16: Now What?

If you follow all the advice within this book and put it into action, you're setting your child up for test prep success. You'll have done *everything* in your power to give your child the best college opportunities imaginable.

If your child has completed one of my programs, then he/she has done everything possible to get the best SAT score possible. You gave your child the blueprint, then helped to make sure that it was followed.

If you have NOT already signed up for my programs, you can do so at:

<http://www.GreenSATsystem.com>

A few very important things to know:

-The average user of my program improves by over 380 points, a number unheard of in this industry. This average includes students who come to the program with 2200+ SAT scores to begin with -

students have improved *by over 800 points* using this program, and as I continue to improve upon it and track results, I continue to see even better improvements.

-The program comes with an extremely simple guarantee: try the program for 21 days, and if you're not 100% satisfied for *any* reason, simply email me for a full refund. So long as you try the program, you're entitled to your refund for *any* reason.

-These programs are the exact, step-by-step systems I put my own 1-on-1 students on to achieve such remarkable score improvements. I invested very little in graphic design or "bells and whistles" - I simply crafted an easy-to-use, effective program that *works*.

Again, to learn more about the program and start using it, visit:

www.GreenSATsystem.com

P.S. Now that you've downloaded my book, you're on my mailing list. I'll be sending you updates, college advice, free resources, and more. If you want to unsubscribe, you can always do so with one click, but I recommend sticking around! You'll learn a ton about the SAT and college process by paying attention to these updates when they arrive.

P.P.S. If you found this book helpful, please feel free to share it with friends, family, and colleagues! I want it in the hands of as many parents as possible - the more parents who know and understand this information, the better!