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## Take steps for test success Students seek ACT/SAT preparation

BY KURT MOORE - THE MARION STAR - OCTOBER 20, 2008

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MARION - Time may be the biggest enemy when taking college admissions tests, according to educators and students.

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The American College Testing (ACT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) examinations are the standardized tests used to determine how well students analyze data and solve problems, skills that are needed in college. The tests are often key in students' efforts to be enrolled in the undergraduate college program of their choice.

Students who have taken the tests say time management is key. Sylvan Learning Center representative Nisey Sebak agreed, suggesting that managing one's time is not only crucial in taking the test but in everyday learning as well.

"A lot of times high schoolers think of these tests being critical," said Sebak, president of a co-operative of central Ohio Sylvan centers including Marion. She said that students need to be life-long learners, to treat their daily studies and homework seriously because it is all practice for getting into college.

Sebak said the key is to help students learn in general so that it's a life skill. Parents and educator

If there are two essay questions that are worth 75 points, she said they may want to skip through and answer these first before going through the other questions.

Marion Catholic High School senior Logan Flowers and junior Andy Conway, who both have taken the ACT and plan to take it again, said time is a factor when taking the test. Conway suggests students should keep track of time and not waste their time on one problem.

"If I didn't know it I skipped a question and came back," said Flowers.

Conway said it is also good to get a good night's sleep the night before the test while Flowers said eating a good breakfast the morning of it also helps.

Marion's Sylvan Learning Center, located at 1199 Delaware Ave. Suite 105, offers classes to help students prepare for the ACT. The seven-week program costs \$560 for 28 session hours.

The center is currently registering students for the Dec. 13 test.

Practice books are available at the Marion Public Library.

The registration sites for the ACT and SAT offer samples of the types of questions that will be on the test.

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FOR HELP ON THE ACT AND SAT:

- CollegeBoard SAT prep: [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/prep\\_one.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html)
- The ACT, [www.actstudent.org/testpre/index.html](http://www.actstudent.org/testpre/index.html)
- The Marion Public Library has practice tests available. Library card owners may also go to the interactive learning site [www.learningexpresslibrary.com](http://www.learningexpresslibrary.com) and take practice SAT and ACT tests.
- Marion's Sylvan Learning Center offers classes to help students prepare for the ACT. More information on availability and cost is available by calling 740-382-9443. The seven-week program costs \$560 for 28 session hours.

The center is currently registering students for the Dec. 13 test.

REGISTER TO TAKE THE TEST

- ACT, registration deadline for Dec. 13 test is Nov. 7 while registration between Nov. 9-20 is available by paying a late fee. Registration for the Oct. 25 test has passed. More information on registration is available at [www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html](http://www.actstudent.org/regist/index.html)
- SAT, registration deadline for Dec. 6 test is Nov. 5 for regular deadline or Nov. 18 for late deadline. Registration for the Nov. 1 test has passed. More information on registration is available at [www.collegeboard.com/stu\\_dent/testing/sat/reg.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/stu_dent/testing/sat/reg.html)

- Carefully read the instructions on the cover of the test booklet.
- Read the directions for each test carefully.
- Read each question carefully.
- Pace yourself - Don't spend too much time on a single passage or question.
- Pay attention to the announcement of five minutes remaining on each test.
- Use a soft lead No. 2 pencil with a good eraser; do not use a mechanical pencil or ink pen.
- Answer the easy questions first, then go back and answer the more difficult ones.
- On difficult questions, eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess among those remaining.
- Answer every question. Your scores on the multiple-choice tests are based on the number of questions you answer correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.
- If you complete a test before time is called, recheck your work on that test.
- Mark your answers neatly. Erase any mark completely and cleanly without smudging.
- Do not mark or alter any ovals on a test or continue writing the essay after time has been called or you will be dismissed and your answer document will not be scored.

SOURCE: The ACT, [www.actstudent.org/testprep/tips](http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/tips)

Purchase this Photo  
River Valley High School student Jamie Roth practices math while taking an ACT prep course offered through Sylvan Learning Center. (The Marion Star/Kurt Moore)

SAT TIPS TO HELP YOU DO YOUR BEST

- Be well-rested and ready to go. Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.
- Eat breakfast. You'll be at the test center for several hours and you're likely to get hungry.
- Bring acceptable Photo ID and your SAT Admission Ticket.
- Bring two No. 2 pencils and a good eraser - a pencil is required for the multiple-choice questions and the essay. Mechanical pencils are not allowed because they may have the wrong type of lead or punch through the answer sheet. Pens are not allowed.
- Bring a calculator with fresh batteries.
- Bring snacks. You will get a short break at the end of each hour of testing time. You can eat or drink any snacks you have brought with you during these breaks. A healthy snack will go a long way toward keeping you alert during the entire test.
- Unless otherwise instructed, you need to arrive at your assigned test center by 7:45 a.m. Testing should be completed between 12:30 and 1 p.m.
- Make sure you use a No. 2 pencil on the answer sheet. It is very important that you fill in the entire circle darkly and completely. If you change your response, erase it as completely as possible. Incomplete marks or erasures may affect your score. It is very important that you follow these instructions when filling out your answer sheet.

SOURCE: CollegeBoard, [www.collegeboard.com/stu\\_dent/testing/sat/testday.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/stu_dent/testing/sat/testday.html)

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