

# Shopping For SAT Test Help

By Cathy Tyson

It's that time of year, when high school juniors start to feel the pressure of the looming SAT Reasoning Test. While no one looks forward to this marathon four-hour exam, nearly every college and university in the country requires it for admission. It's possible to pay your \$43.00 registration fee and just show up with your sharpened #2 pencil in hand, but many students choose to take advantage of some kind of test preparation prior to taking the exam. Go to [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for specific test registration information.

In a nutshell, the registration deadline is generally a month before the test date. Tests for this school year will be offered on 10/6, 11/3, 12/1, 1/26, 3/1, 5/3 and 6/7. There is no penalty for taking it more than one, so it's quite common for students to take it in March, check their results, and perhaps take it again in June.

Two SAT Subject tests are required for UC system and a variety of other universities. Subject Tests are offered on all of the dates above, except for 3/1. According to College Board, "students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science and language." If your son or daughter is planning on taking both the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests, it's not too early to get started.

To help out confused parents and their equally confused students, here are some of the local test prep options worth considering.

The Moraga Library is partnering with Kaplan Test Prep to offer a series of free workshops to help students prepare for the SAT. Students who at-

tend the full-length practice test on November 10 or Test Secrets Seminar on November 14 are eligible for Kaplan class discounts and for free SAT prep online. Call 1-800-KAPTEST to register.

Free classes by the People's Test Preparation Service are open to all high school students, classes are held at UC Berkeley, the downtown Berkeley YMCA and at other east bay locations. Call (510) 642-4951 for more information.

College Board, the maker of the exam, offers study guides for tenacious students who are self-motivated. "The Official SAT Online Course" for \$69.95 has 18 critical reading, writing and math lessons, along with six practice tests. For \$19.95 "The Official SAT Study Guide" has 900 pages chock-full of sample exams, math, critical reading and writing sections, and practice essay questions. While \$20 is a bargain, not very many teenagers have the diligence to go this route. But for busy students who play a sport, and are involved in lots of extracurricular activities, this could be an option.

Private tutoring is another alternative. Nancy Molay of TestPrep has specialized for five years in tutoring students one-on-one in her Happy Valley home. She just recently stopped working in the Career Center at Acalanes High School; this position gave her unique insight into teenagers. She currently tutors freshman and junior students in writing at the school. "I work seven days a week (tutoring), so I can be incredibly flexible. I recommend that juniors who have completed algebra 2/trig start prep now and avoid spring stress," says Molay. She sug-

	# Of Sessions	Students Per Class	Location	Cost	Point Guarantee	Different others?
Ivy West 1-800-Ivy-West	15 - 1.5 hour sessions	1	Your home	\$2700 Sign up before end of Sept \$2160	No. 200 point average gain	They customize according to student need
Kaplan Classroom 1-800-Kap-Test <a href="http://www.kaptest.com">www.kaptest.com</a>	12 sessions, 8 instruction 4 exam	5 - 20 depending	Campolindo Berkeley Kaplan Center, Jewish Comm. Center	\$999 financial aid available	No, but they have a satisfaction guarantee, can retake class gratis	Their teachers scored in the 90% or better on SAT
Lafayette Academy 925-284-1644 Laf. 925-376-0747 Mor.	9-3hr. classes, 3-4 hour practice exams and 3 hours of free tutoring	Max of 11 Classes divided by ability level	Lafayette Moraga Danville	\$999	No, but if you're not happy - get money back, can retake gratis	Ability level grouping, and have private tutoring as part of their prep package
Live Oak 925-944-9455 <a href="http://www.liveoaklearningcenter.com">www.liveoaklearningcenter.com</a>	8-2x/week for 4 weeks	Around 10	Acalanes Saint Mary's	\$595	No, satisfaction guarantee, can retake gratis	Small classes, professional teachers, very personal approach
Princeton Review 1-800-2-Review <a href="http://www.PrincetonReview.com">www.PrincetonReview.com</a>	12 total - 8 instruction, 4 practice exams	Maximum of 12	Orinda, Walnut Creek Berkeley	\$999	No, but you can retake class for free or if scores don't improve at all - get money back	Class size, great average score improvement
Revolution Prep 1-877-Rev-Prep <a href="http://www.revolutionprep.com">www.revolutionprep.com</a>	6 weeks - 6 classes and 5 practice exams	Average 15	Miramonte, Acalanes	\$499 financial aid available	Yes, if score doesn't improve by 200 pts, retake for free	1 of 108 test prep firms chosen by Calif. to help with high school exit exam
Ames Seminars 925-937-2280 or 1-800-799-0700 <a href="http://www.amesseminars.com">www.amesseminars.com</a>	12-2.25 hour classes plus reading, writing and math refresher classes available	15	Lafayette	\$855	No, but they will help stents, "to the end of time," says Bill Ames	Quality of teachers, truly care about the students, small local business
Huntington Learning Center 925-377-0737 <a href="http://www.huntingtonlearning.com">www.huntingtonlearning.com</a>	# of sessions depends on colleges student prefers usually 10-16 2 hr sessions	1	Moraga Rheem Shopping Center	\$195 for diagnostic SAT and conference with parents, \$75/each hour	No	Individually tailored to student's needs, very flexible scheduling of appointments

gests 9 - 90 minutes sessions to prepare for the exam and charges considerably less than either Ivy West or Kaplan's private tutoring. Call for information, 925-708-4501. In addition, Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte parent club websites all have test prep tutors listed in their classified sections.

For students that do well in a classroom situation, there is no shortage of test preparation companies in the area that would be more than happy to help your student and take your money. See chart below for specifics. At this point in the school year many companies still haven't finalized their spring schedules, but because that is the busiest time of the year, they expect

to have many classes available. Prices range from \$499 for Revolution Prep to \$999 for both Kaplan and Princeton Review. Kaplan also offers private tutoring as noted above and an on-line course. Revolution Prep has a Hybrid version that includes four hours of private tutoring in addition to their classroom course. Call or check respective websites for information.

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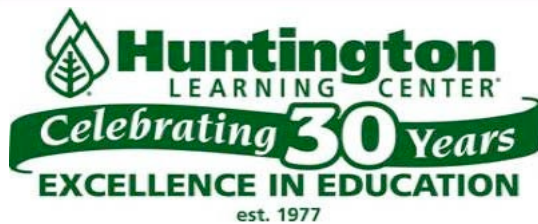
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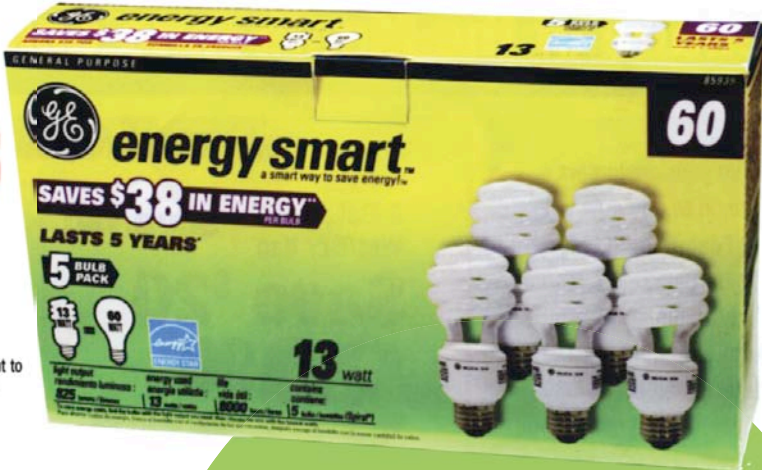
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