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Open Doors College Preparation Program

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Open Doors College Preparation Program

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The *Open Doors College Preparatory* curriculum and project implementation was a true collaboration between Kenyon College faculty, students and administrators, Mount Vernon community members, and our incredible participants and their families. Clara Román-Odio, Professor of Spanish and Director of the Latino/a Studies Program, worked tirelessly alongside students Patricia Mota and Amelia Dunnell through the *Latinos in Rural America* (LiRA) Ohio Humanities project to collect oral histories of Latino/a families in Knox County. Without their efforts, the Kenyon community may never have heard the voices of these students and families asking for this resource.

While all of the students in the community-engaged learning (CEL) course Spanish 380, Introduction to Chicano/a Cultural Studies, provided important feedback, Andrés Herrera, Alexa McElroy, and Bridget Murdoch must be acknowledged for their significant contributions to the first drafts of our curriculum and the implementation of our first year of college prep classes. Without them, this project would never have come to fruition. Daniel García-Archundia and Catalina Odio, the rising leaders of this initiative, are fundamental to the continuing development and sustainability of this program.

The Salvation Army of Mount Vernon served as a trusted meeting space for the local Latino/a community and Kenyon College students. Adriana (Gigi) Gonzalez-Cottrell worked with Kenyon students to create a sustainable opportunity for this project, reach out to local Latino/a families and identify specific needs pertaining to the Knox County Latino/a community. Kenyon Office for Community Partnerships created materials, such as our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and offered ample support that made our collaboration with the Salvation Army possible.

Lastly, Diane Keanely, co-author of this handbook and Associate Director of Admissions at Kenyon College, provided invaluable insight, resources and time to address the complicated college application process. Her admissions workshops conducted in both Spanish and English transformed college from a far-off dream to a tangible and available process for our students.

Two years into this experience, the program has expanded to include first generation students and others with a strong interest and /or need and moved to the bigger more central location Public Library of Mount Vernon and Knox County. In addition, two new student leaders, Daniel García-Archurdia and Catalina Odio, took over. Their original lesson plans have been included as "option 2" in the following curriculum, where applicable. We would like to thank the library director, Mr. John Chidester for his support.

It takes a great deal of collaboration and friendship to make a project like this happen. We extend special thanks to all of the community members who so warmly welcomed us into their homes and workplaces. Our deepest appreciation to the Latino families who generously shared their stories with us as residents of Knox County. Additional thanks to various offices of Kenyon College, including the Office of Admissions, the Center for Innovative Pedagogy, the Rural Life Center, the Office of Public Affairs, and Kenyon Library and Information Services for their strong support and endorsement. We gratefully acknowledge those individuals whose perspectives and commitment to community-based projects have guided our efforts. Thanks especially to Rob Colby from Ohio Humanities, and to Meg Galipault, Howard Sacks, Ric Sheffield, and Peter Rutkoff for their guidance and support throughout the creation of this project. To all of these friends, as well as the many faculty and staff at Kenyon that mentored my peers and me into thoughtful, inquisitive and critical citizens, I thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Bilingual College Preparation Program for Latino/a Youth* at Kenyon College was established in 2015 with the mission to empower Latino/a students to achieve at the highest levels in order to gain acceptance to, attend and graduate from institutions of higher learning. Envisioned by the Knox County Latino/a community, a college professor, four students enrolled in SPAN 380, and a local community partner, the program emerged as part of *Latinos in Rural America* (LiRA), a public humanities project that sought to broaden knowledge, engagement with and understanding of the Latino/a experience in rural Ohio. As a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) course project, Kenyon students applied their academic research on education inequalities, the Latino/a Civil Rights Movement, and standardized testing strategies to develop and facilitate a sustainable partnership with the Salvation Army of Mount Vernon, Ohio. Using bilingual pedagogies inspired by the Kenyon Intensive Language Model (KILM), Kenyon students work weekly with 6th through 12th graders to improve their critical reading, math, vocabulary, science and test-taking skills in preparation for the SAT and ACT. The collaborative efforts of Kenyon administrators, faculty and students empower first-generation students and their families to successfully navigate the complicated college admissions process.

Not only a meaningful asset for the local community, this CEL project provided students with an opportunity to apply academic understandings of inequity to produce a local strategy for community mobilization. Over the course of the year, the program evolved into an official student organization entitled *KABLE: Kenyon Enables- A Bridge to the Community*. This experience has also served as a mechanism to further equip students with the professional

experiences necessary for careers in bilingual education, non-for-profit collaboration and minority rights activism.

Two years into this experience, the program has expanded to include first generation students, students from diverse backgrounds, in addition to Latinx students, and others students with a strong interest and /or need. Hence, the program is now called *Open Doors College Preparation Program.* We still offer bilingual (Spanish-English) instruction when needed, to support learning skills.

This handbook seeks to broaden the current scope of this project by providing a replicable framework for interested students, professors, administrators and community organizers. The handbook is divided into four parts. The first focuses on the barriers that many Latinos/as face in their college application journey, and the tools that we used in courses to help students navigate this complicated process.

In the subsequent part, we detail the curriculum of our program, which encompasses the four subject areas that students are expected to master for the ACT and SAT: math, science, reading, and writing. Five lesson plans are provided at the end of each subject area section, as well as other resources accumulated over the development of this project that have successfully improved SAT and ACT scores of our students.

The third part of this handbook details college preparation workshops developed by Diane Kenealy, the Assistant Director of Admissions at Kenyon College. These bilingual facilitation guides and materials are designed for both parents and students to prepare them to write a personal essay, strategically craft Common Applications, and apply for financial aid regardless of legal status.

The fourth and final section of this manual provides a framework to establish a sustainable community partnership and train new student tutors. With the understanding that these three elements constitute the cornerstone of our successful implementation of KABLE at Kenyon College, our hope is that these resources will empower more administrators, students and community members to develop programs to meet the needs of first-generation, minority students around the country.

PART I
Understanding the Barriers to Success
Why are Bilingual College Preparation Programs Important?

In the beginning stages of our project, we found that the demographics and resources of Knox County, Ohio were critical barriers to the success of our students. The population of Knox County in 2016 was cited as just over 60,000 people. Poverty affects a significant number of these families, with the median income in Mount Vernon, the county's largest city, at just over thirty-five thousand dollars, roughly thirteen thousand dollars lower than the state average. Given the national correlation between SAT/ACT scores and affluence, many students in our community, regardless of minority status, face significant barriers to reaching institutions of higher learning.

These economic barriers are of particular consequence to Latino/a students in Knox County's struggling public education system. With only 1.8% of the county's entire population identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a, Hispanic students represent the smallest ethnic group at Mount Vernon High School. In interviews with Latinos/as attending the school, students disclosed that only one bilingual aid was available to support students who needed extra help functioning in English-only classrooms. The lack of resources for these students is evident when we turn towards college preparation: Latinos/as attending the high school have the lowest level of math and reading proficiency out of the two minority groups represented at the school.

Having researched and identified the particular barriers to success for Latino/a students on both the national level and in Knox County's local public school system, a team of four students enrolled in Kenyon's Introduction to Chicano/a Cultural Studies (SPAN 380) set out to create a program that would empower Latino/a students to go to college. Whereas we saw that

local and national systems seemed to frame being Latino/a as a disadvantage in the college application process, we believed that certain facets of this community should be posited as an advantage.

Specifically, we believed that being bilingual could be an advantage when it came to improving the SAT/ACT vocabulary, writing and reading sections, parts of the test with which Latino/a students have traditionally struggled. While much of the curriculum offered in this handbook is standard for any student preparing for college, the sections of the course dealing with English language skills heavily involve Spanish. In doing so, we hoped that students would be able to use their Spanish as a tool to help them identify new vocabulary that may have similar Spanish cognates. We learned during our time as Apprentice Teachers of Spanish in the Kenyon Intensive Language program that work in small groups encouraged peers to take risks in a low-anxiety setting. By adapting this collaborative approach to teaching to the bilingual college preparatory program, we were able to break down critical learning barriers. This collaborative approach supported students in working through problems regardless of their prefered language, and empowered students to take risks and talk through other sections of the exams, including science and math.

The college process can be very complicated for families in any socio-economic, linguistic or ethnic situation. For many first-generation families, neither parents nor guardians may know where to start. Ultimately, we understood that no amount of test preparation would be sufficient if the families of our students did not only feel included but also empowered in the college preparation and application process. Through the LiRA project, we learned that both Latino/a parents and students identified family as one of the key values among this community. With the help of the Kenyon Office of Admissions, we took advantage of both the community

identified need for a college education program to empower not only students but also their families to take control of their dreams of higher learning.

With limited bilingual resources at the local high school, we recognized the critical need to provide primarily monolingual parents with opportunities to engage thoughtfully with their children about why going to college was important and how they, as a family, could facilitate admission, attendance and graduation from colleges or universities. The third part of this project, *Navigating the College Application Process*, addresses this specific need, outlining in both Spanish and English how to prepare and apply for college, including how to craft the common application essay, what courses a student should take to prepare for admission, and how to apply for financial aid regardless of legal status.

II. CURRICULUM

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Two nationally-administered exams are used by admissions counselors to determine if a student would succeed at their particular school: the ACT and the SAT. While some colleges require the SAT and a select number of others require no standardized test at all, the ACT is extremely popular around the country. Some students find that they perform better on the ACT, while others will find that they excel on the SAT. Students should take several practice tests in each to determine which test will best showcase their abilities to colleges. Regardless of which test they elect, students should plan on taking the test at least twice before sending in their scores with their college application.

The curriculum included in the following chapter outlines the basic expectations of the ACT and SAT tests. Following each test subject you will find five activities that we employed in our college preparation program to best prepare students to tackle these tests. At the end of this chapter, you will also find links to websites that provide free preparation to students and further lesson ideas for instructors. Our hope is that the lessons found in this chapter will serve as a model to be adapted for the specific needs and challenges of students in new communities.

NAVIGATING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

In addition to material designed to help students master the ACT and SAT, you will also find included in each lesson plan an activity designed to prepare students to take on the college application process. For many first-generation students and their families, the lexicon of the

Common App is a foreign one. When our students learned how to talk about college, they also began to envision their future success in applying, attending and graduating from institutions of higher education. Perhaps what we learned most from our students was that only when we name our dreams can we truly realize them.

INDEX OF COLLEGE APPLICATION VOCABULARY

The following is a list of vocabulary that is important for students to know in order to successfully navigate the college application process. It will be referenced as a resource throughout the lesson plans found in this manual.

Acceptance: an application status designating that a student has been permitted by a college or university to attend said institution.

ACT: "American College Testing" is one of the standardized tests a student may need to get into a four-year college.

Admissions Office: the section of a college that determines if a student is allowed to study at a given college or university.

Articulation Agreement: an understanding between two-year and four-year colleges that allow for credits to easily transfer towards a degree at the four-year institution. It will also specify the grades you must achieve in order to be assured said credits. (Definition courtesy of the College Board).

Associate's Degree: a diploma granted to a student who has successfully completed their schooling at a two year institution. This is usually a community college.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA): an agreement between colleges and applicant that the student will let colleges know by May 1st if they will be accept or turn down their offers of admission. (Definition courtesy of the College Board).

Class Rank: a number comparing the weighted GPA of all students in a given grade in a specific high school. It shows how you performed in high school compared to your peers in your grade.

College Counselor: an employee of a high school that helps you navigate the college application process. The support you get from this person can vary greatly depending on the size of your high school and location.

Community College: an institution of higher education that grants associates degrees. Usually, you can only attend this institution for two years. Many students choose to transfer to a four-year undergraduate institution after these two years.

Core Curriculum: classes that students are required to take by graduation regardless of major or minor.

Diploma: a certificate that is given to a student upon graduation from a college or university.

FAFSA: the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid." Students and their families fill this out during their college application process in order to qualify for financial aid based on their demonstrated need for it. This is independent of any merit-based, or achievement-based, money that a student could receive for a given school.

Financial Aid: Money that is given or loaned to a student to allow them to attend college. Financial aid can be granted by the government, private organizations, or colleges themselves. (Definition courtesy of the College Board).

First Generation Student: A student who is the first in their facility to go to college (i.e. neither of their parents attended college). Many students in this category can receive financial aid and other resources to allow them to succeed during the application process and once they have enrolled in college.

Graduate Degree: also known as a master's degree, this can be earned after receiving a bachelor's degree.

Guidance Counselor: a professional employed by the school to give students advice on a variety of topics. These topics can be related or unrelated to college.

Liberal Arts: an institution of higher education that focuses on the integration of a variety of different disciplines. Students attending this kind of institution will often be required to take a certain number of courses in the natural sciences, humanities, fine arts and social sciences. This would be a good fit for someone who is curious about many different subjects, or who is not yet sure about the academic discipline or career they wish to pursue after college.

Merit Aid: Money that a school gives to a student based of their achievements in high school or, in rare instances, during their time at college.

Need-Based Aid: Money that a school grants you based on your family's demonstrated need. A student who is an American citizen would need to fill out the FAFSA to receive need-based aid, such as federal student loans. Students who are not American citizens should not fill out the FAFSA, but may receive need-based aid, such as private loans or grants, directly from a college or university.

Need-Blind Admission: a policy put in place by a college that states admissions counselors will make admissions decisions without considering the financial status of a student or their family. However, only colleges that have a policy of meeting 100% of need-based financial aid will be

guaranteed to offer enough financial aid to meet the full needs of their students. (Definition courtesy of the College Board).

Open Admissions: a college policy that states that all students who apply to this college will be guaranteed acceptance until all spots are filled. Most two-year colleges have an open admissions policy. (Definition courtesy of the College Board).

PSAT: a standardized test usually taken in 10th or 11th grade. This test will not only give you a good idea of how you will score on the SAT, but also may automatically qualify you for scholarship money through the National Merit Scholar program.

SAT: a standardized test administered by the College Board which tests your math, reading and writing skills.

Standardized Test: a test administered by a national organization that gives colleges an idea of your academic standing compared to other students in the country. These include the SAT and ACT.

Undergraduate Degree: a diploma granted after attending most four-year colleges. This is also referred to as a Bachelor's Degree.

University: An educational institution that offers many different kinds of schools within it. For example, this one institution could contain an arts conservatory, a school for scientists, a school for engineers and a liberal arts school. These institutions offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Vocational School: post-high school education that focuses on training students for specific careers. Mechanics, nurses, and dental hygienists all go to this kind of institution to learn how to do their jobs.

Wait List: a list of students who may be accepted to a college if space becomes available.

Weighted GPA: a number that takes into account how well you did in your classes as well as how difficult those classes were.

LESSONS FOR NAVIGATING THE COLLEGE PROCESS

LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE APPLICATION VOCABULARY

Lesson objective: The first lesson will introduce the expectations of this course, while also giving the group time to begin to form peer relationships. Peer learning is at the cornerstone of this curriculum as it lowers anxiety and promotes student engagement, critical thinking and language skills. We will use icebreakers to assess students' current understanding of the college application. This lesson should be facilitated bilingually, when possible, to best gauge the level of comfort that each student has in both Spanish and English.

Materials: ball, course outline in Spanish/English, flashcards with 10 college application vocabulary words in Spanish and English, 10 cards with corresponding definitions.

I. **Personal Introductions and Icebreaker.** *Requires a tennis or similar sized ball.* Students introduce themselves in the language of their choice and say their name, their grade and their favorite activity/sport before passing the ball to another student. When the ball has been tossed around the room once, students then throw the ball to each other. They must say the name of the person that threw the ball to them, their own name, and the name of the person to whom they then toss the ball.

II. **Explanation of the Class.** Instructors describe the course in English and Spanish, if possible. Each course adapted from this manual will have its own needs and goals. Still, instructors using this handbook should stress that this is a bilingual course that uses both English and Spanish as a means to empower students throughout middle school, high school, the standardized testing process, college applications and their college careers. The skills that are learned in this course will be applicable to all parts of their academic lives.

III. **Introduction to College Vocabulary.** *Requires college application vocabulary flashcards.* This activity is designed to give students an introduction to vocabulary relevant to the college application process, the college search and standardized tests. For this activity, instructors write out ten words related to the college process onto separate note-cards. Instructors then write the definitions on separate cards. The group tries to match the cards with the definitions. When disagreements arise, instructors should encourage thoughtful and respectful debate so students can arrive at the meaning of the word as a collective. Students then present the words to the instructors. Following each word, instructors should correct the definitions when necessary. Then, they should help elaborate on the words, discussing why they are important and how they will be referenced moving forward in the class. Using personal anecdotes about our own college processes, this activity will help to illustrate why this is an important word to understand. Words for this activity could include any of those listed in the "Index of College Application Vocabulary."

IV. **Closing Activity: "Roses and Thorns."** Students restate their name and grade in the language of their choice. Students then say one thing that they learned today, what they are most nervous about for the course, what they are most excited about. Take note of the things that students are most nervous for— they will be important confidence-building points moving forward.

OPTION 2:

LESSON ONE: ICE BREAKER AND COLLEGE APPLICATION VOCABULARY

I. Introduction
   a) Head tutors introduce themselves and course
   b) Tutor Introduction: Name, Who helped you the most during your college application process (*Note: Introduction in Spanish and 30 seconds max*)
   c) Students introduce themselves: Name, Age, Grade, School, Why do you want to participate in the course?
   d) Ball of yarn game* (10-15 min)
II. Sign Photo Release Form
III. Take Pre-Test, Part 1 (10-15 min)**
IV. Discuss Test (Remainder of class time)
   a) Distribute answer key
   b) Kids self-grade tests
   c) Kids ask for clarifications
   d) Check of understanding: How would you explain this to your parents in Spanish?
   e) If time allows: Answer Competition
   f) After course: collect tests and evaluate students' current level

*Students introduce themselves in the language of their choice and say their name, their grade and their favorite activity/sport before passing the ball to another student. When the ball has been tossed around the room once, students then throw the ball to each other. They must say the name of the person that threw the ball to them, their own name, and the name of the person to whom they then toss the ball.

**See "Materials" section, page 131 of handbook, for pre-test, part 1.

LESSON TWO: GOAL SETTING AND THE COLLEGE APPLICATION TIMELINE

Lesson objective: This lesson is designed to help students set concrete goals for this course. In addition, students will identify the networks of support that they have on their journey to college. It will also introduce new vocabulary important to navigating the college application process.

Materials: pencils, goal setting handouts.

I. Introduction and Icebreaker. Students re-introduce themselves stating their name, grade and a game of "two truths and a lie." In this game, students say two things that are

true about themselves and one thing that is a lie. The other students must then guess which "fact" is a lie.

II. **Goal Setting Activity.** *Requires pencils and a handout with the questions in this activity printed onto it.* Instructors ask questions to explain what a goal is, and what makes a good goal. After students are done brainstorming, instructors introduce the concepts that goals should be *specific, time-bound and measurable*. It should also include specific *action steps* to achieve this goal. Students work individually to answer the questions below. When students are done working individually to answer the questions, they can share their goals in pairs. Volunteers can then share their goals with the whole group.

- What are your goals for this course?
- By when will you complete these goals?
- How will you know when you have achieved these goals?
- What are the action steps that you will take to achieve this goal?
- How will you hold yourself accountable to this goal?
- What are the resources you have to help you reach this goal?
- What challenges might you face while reaching this goal? How will you respond to these challenges?

Example: I want to raise my ACT score by 3 points. I will do this by the time I take the ACT for the second time in March. I will do one section (or 10 questions) of practice problems each evening in rotating categories to strengthen my math, reading, science and writing skills. I will take a practice test every third Saturday in order to measure my progress. I will know that I have achieved this goal when my ACT score increases from 25 to 28 two times on practice tests before the real ACT in March. I will hold myself accountable by tracking what I study each evening on the calendar in my room that is visible to me while I am doing my homework. My older brother who took the ACT already could be a resource for me. I also can bring questions to my college preparation class, ask questions of my math teacher at school or reach out to my college counselors. Sometimes, I have too much homework to do a full ten questions every evening. When I don't, I will work for at least 15 minutes as a break from my other work.

III. **Vocabulary.** In pairs, students are given 3 words each from the vocabulary index. Students must then create a skit in which they use these words. They will then present their short skit to another group or to the entire group, depending on the size of the class.

Example: Student 1: Have you submitted your FAFSA yet? It took me a while to fill mine out with my family, but now that it's in, I feel so much better about being able to pay for college.

Student 2: Of course! My top choice school has a policy of providing 100% of demonstrated financial need if I'm accepted, so it was very important for me to complete the FAFSA. They also said that they may be able to give me some merit scholarships for all of the spelling bees I've done in high school.

Student 1: That's so exciting! I'm so excited to get our bachelor's degrees!

III. The College Application Timeline. In a large group, students brainstorm all of the different elements that they think go into graduating college on post-it notes. Then, use a wall to have students order the sticky notes from the earliest event to the latest one. What do the students see as the most important components of applying to college? How early do students see themselves truly preparing to graduate from an institution of higher learning? This activity will not only allow instructors to get a good idea of what students do and do not know about applying to college, but also demonstrate that it is never too early to start developing the skills one needs to succeed at the university level.

OPTION 2:

LESSON TWO: INTRODUCTION TO COLLGE APPLICATION VOCABULARY, CONT.

V. Introduction (5 min)
   a) Re-welcome students and possibly new students
   b) Collect Photo Release Forms and Provide New Ones if Needed

VI. Pre-Test (30-40 min)
   a) Tutors provide students with 20 minutes for pre-test, part 2*
      1) Tutors can look over pre-test if they have not already
   c) Students self-correct pre-test based off provided answer key
   d) Time for students to ask clarifying questions
   e) Students will pretend to explain a question to their parents in Spanish (if time allows)

VII. Classroom Beautification (Remainder of class time)
   a) Provide Poster Paper and Markers for Students to Decorate Classroom
   b) Tutors will assist student in brainstorming ideas and will assist as necessary
      1) Tutors will be matched up with students by head tutors

*Part 2 includes all of the terms from part 1 (to solidify the information) as well as ten new terms. See "Materials" section, page 133 for pre-test, part 2.

OPTION 2:

LESSON THREE: CONCLUDING COLLEGE ADMISSIONS VOCABULARY

I. General Info and Help (5-10 min)

A. Tutors should exchange emails with students and inform students of their availability to review college essays both at the beginning of each class session and via email.
B. Tutors may also use this time to answer general questions relating to college.

II. Vocabulary Review

A. Introduce students to the remaining terms on the full-length pre-test.* For each question, ask the student what they believe the term's definition is (the bolded word in each set of answers). Identify which parts of the student's definition are correct and explain why.

Note: Praise correct portions of definition, if any, or provide encouragement if student is unsure. Praise throughout lessons is crucial, as it builds students' confidence.

B. Provide the rest of the definition and repeat as needed.
C. Ask the student to repeat the definition in their own words.
D. Restate the definition and their own words and confirm with student.
E. Ask them to explain its meaning in Spanish, as if explaining it to their parents.
F. Repeat for each of the terms.

*For full-length pre-test, see "Materials" section, page 138.

ACT

The American College Testing Program, known as the ACT, is one of two tests that can be used to enter into most institutions of higher education. Most students take the ACT in the spring of their junior year, and will often continue to prepare to take it again in the fall of their senior year. The ACT lasts for three hours and is offered regularly throughout the year. Consult the ACT website to determine when and where this exam is being offered in your area. Website: http://www.act.org/

The ACT is broken up into five sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science and Writing. The ACT is an achievement test, meaning that it test what students have learned in school. There are no penalties for incorrect answers, so it is to students' advantage to fill in every bubble even if they are unsure of the answer. Each of the four sections receives a score between 1-36 with 36 being a perfect score. These scores are compiled into what is called a composite score. Most colleges will report on the median composite score of their incoming class on their website to give you an idea if your ACT scores would qualify you for admission to that institution.

The ACT official website, www.ACT.org, includes information on how to register, receive a fee waiver when eligible, view scores, study tools and practice tests.

Kaplan Testing provides more information on the exact type of question asked in each sub-section of the test and short practice quizzes to give students an idea their initial strengths or weaknesses. This can be a particularly useful resource if tutoring session scheduling does not allow for a full practice test to be taken at the beginning of the year. In addition, this handbook offers a shortened pre- and post-test to track students' progress.

The following sections go into detail about each portion of the test. After each section, activities are provided (that we used) to give students an introduction to the ACT sections and the test-taking strategies needed to achieve a high score.

ACT ENGLISH

The ACT English test is forty-five minutes long and includes 40 mechanics, or grammar, questions and 35 rhetorical, or literary style, questions. The ACT English section can be particularly challenging for Latinos/as who struggle with reading, writing or speaking in English. For this reason, we paid the most attention to this section, along with ACT Reading, in our preparation class. We found that when our students were given the opportunity to engage with these questions in a low-anxiety setting, they were able to confidently and correctly solve the puzzle at hand. More importantly, our students said that they felt more prepared to use the skills they learned in our class to help them succeed in their English classes back at school.

LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COMMON GRAMMAR RULES

Lesson objective: This lesson will introduce students to common grammar rules found on the ACT test. It will also reinforce the goal setting activities that students completed in the previous weeks.

Materials: pencils, paper, and a printout of this great resource courtesy of Prep Scholar for each student.

I. **Introduction and Icebreaker.** Students break into pairs and report on how their goals for the course are developing. What has gone well? What can they still work more on? After sharing in pairs, students can share in the larger group if they feel comfortable.

II. **Grammar Rules.** In pairs, students are each assigned one grammar rule. They will read the description of the grammar rule provided in the Prep Scholar printout. They will then need to brainstorm ways to explain that rule in their own words. Students should come up with one explanation in Spanish and another in English. Then, students will explain the grammar rule to their peers and provide an example. Students in the larger group are called on randomly to restate the grammar rule, how it is used and to come up with their own example. Instructors can ask follow-up questions like "how does this grammar rule differ in English from Spanish?" or "How might this rule be particularly tricky or easy on the ACT?"

III. **Practice Activities.** Students work in new pairs to answer three questions on the ACT English section. After they respond to each question, they should try to apply a grammar rule that they just learned to explain why their answer is correct.

IV. **Closing Activity.** Students go around in a circle and say one thing they are proud of from the week before and one thing they are looking forward to in the week to come.

OPTION 2:

LESSON ONE: REVIEW OF VOCABULARY
&
INTRODUCTION TO GRAMMAR RULES

I. Review Vocabulary (5-10)

Tutors: using the pretest, quiz the students on vocabulary terms. Read definitions and ask the students to provide the term that best fits without looking at the options. Begin with terms that

students seemed to have a handle on last time (to build confidence) and progress to the more difficult ones.

II. ACT English Day 1

Tutors read the following with students: "The ACT English test is forty-five minutes long and includes 40 mechanics (or grammar) questions and 35 rhetorical (or literary style) questions. The ACT English section can be particularly challenging for Latinos/as who struggle with reading, writing or speaking in English. They also challenge native English speakers just as frequently. Mastering these skills is not only essential to succeeding on the ACT test, but can also help students excel in their English classes back at school. This lesson will introduce students to common grammar rules found on the ACT test."

A. Tutor-Student Pair Practice (20 minutes)

Read and print out the attached grammar rules,* which cover the use of commas, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, dashes, and end punctuation. Each student and tutor pair will be assigned one set of rules. Tutors should review the rule with their students and work together to create an example sentence that illustrates each rule. To be assigned on-site.

Example:
Commas, Rule 1: use commas to separate words in a series of three or more items.
Illustrating Sentence: We were excited, well-rested, and ready to work.

B. Group Work (20 minutes)

Bring the whole class together. One at a time, each tutor-student pair should explain their rule to the class and give an example sentence illustrating the rule. They can also call on other students to try to produce an illustrating sentence.

*Please find grammar rules in the "Materials" section, page 145.

LESSON TWO: IDENTIFYING GRAMMAR MISTAKES IN CONTEXT

Lesson objective: This lesson will allow students to become more comfortable with identifying grammar errors in passages similar to those they will find on the ACT.

Materials: Handout with three sample passages from ACT practice English tests.

I. **Introduction and Icebreaker.** This activity will allow students to begin envisioning themselves in a college setting. On a piece of paper, students complete the following prompts with words, pictures or symbols. Students can then share their work. How has their view of themselves and their achievements changed since the beginning of the course?

- When I go to college, I will study…
- When I go to college, I will be successful when I…
- I contribute _____ to my family, my school and my friends. I know that I will be a great asset to the any school because of this contribution.

II. **Grammar Rules in Context.** Students are split into pairs and provided with one of the English passages from a practice test. In pairs, students must identify the mistakes shown in the passage without looking at the answer sheet. They must then use one of the grammar rules from the previous lesson to explain why they say that something is correct or incorrect. Students then look at the questions and attempt to answer them. Pairs then present their logic, successes and challenges to the group: why do they understand something to be right? Why did they get a question wrong? What patterns of error did they notice as they moved through the handout?

III. **Identifying Common Errors.** In new pairs, students design sample prompts for their peers in the style of the ACT. They then present these prompts and questions to their peers. All students will debate the answer and identify the grammar rules apply to the prompt. Pairs should then explain their own logic behind their questions. Instructors should note any continuing pattern of mistakes for the next class.

IV. **Closing Activity.** Students look back at their drawing or notes from the first activity. What were they most proud of? What could they continue to work on to make their drawing more complete? This is a great opportunity to create action steps for students to think about making their application more competitive moving forward: what new activities, service programs, classes or family responsibilities could they take on to better prepare them for college?

OPTION 2:

LESSON TWO: BASIC GRAMMAR RULES AND A PRACTICE ACT PASSAGE

Goal: Review last week's grammar rules (20 – 30 min):

Last week, student-tutor pairing were asked to focus on one grammar rule. Subsequently, the class came together and everyone presented on their individual rules, thus providing general insight on all of them. However, we want students to know all of them.

I. Students will review all grammar rules individually (3-5 minutes per rule)

*Print out last week's materials to ensure your understanding (attached to email)
*These rules might seem simple to tutors, but they should review them meticulously with students to ensure student comprehension.

Goal: Apply last week's grammar rules to an ACT English practice passage (30-40 min):

II. Grammar Rules in Context

Student-Tutor Work

- Student will read the entire ACT passage* once all the way through

With each question:

- Student should attempt to identify the mistake without looking at the answer sheet
- In providing his or her answer, the student must use the grammar rules to explain why something is correct or incorrect

Class Work

- A tutor or student should read each question aloud for the class
- Each student should share their answer
- Ask a student who got it right to explain their logic
- Ask students who answered incorrectly (or all students) to repeat that logic
- Repeat this process for each question

*For practice ACT passages and questions in English, Math, and science, please visit: http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/english-practice-test-questions.html?page=0&chapter=0

LESSON THREE: IDENTIFYING RHETORICAL AND GRAMMAR MISTAKES OUT OF CONTEXT

Lesson objective: This lesson will reinforce the concepts needed to identify common grammar and rhetorical mistakes on the ACT by allowing students to apply tools they have learned to contexts other than the ACT. This will further empower students to succeed in their classroom settings. This will also introduce the test-taking strategies necessary for succeeding on the ACT in preparation for the practice test next week.

Materials. Before class, bring articles or passages from books that have rhetorical mistakes in them common to the ACT. This may require you to edit passages. Passages should cover a wide range of genres.

I. **Introduction.** Students go around in a circle and mention one way in which they have prepared for the ACT English in the past week. What do they still need to work on? What have they felt they have improved on? How can they begin to apply the tools from this unit to their classrooms?

II. **Rhetoric.** Introduce the concepts of rhetoric. In pairs, students should have conversations about tools such as *tone, transitions, organization,* and *style.* Then, students are assigned a simply theme to write about (i.e. family, school, friendships) and must write good and bad examples for each rhetorical tool. Students then present these texts to the class, explaining why these are correct or incorrect.

III. **Identifying Errors.** Students read through the incorrect passages provided by the instructor. In pairs, students read for rhetorical mistakes. Students should outline the passage, summarizing each paragraph in one to two sentences. Does the article make sense? How is it organized? Is there an introduction, argument and conclusion?

IV. **Editing Rhetoric.** In a large group, students brainstorm how they could fix the problems they identified in the previous activity. Read through the edited version of the article. What is the tone? What makes the transitions good or bad? Now have students do a new outline of the article. Does the piece flow better? Does the article make sense? How is it organized? Is there an introduction, argument and conclusion?

IV. Wind Down: Bringing it Back To the Classroom. In a group, students brainstorm ideas in response to the following questions. One volunteer will write down these ideas. The instructor should mark all of these down and turn them into a handout that students can reference in the future.

- How does my teacher talk about rhetoric?
- When do I use informal tone in my own writing? When do I use a formal tone?
- Where in my daily work and activities can I practice using good transitions and organization? (This could be in conversations about abstract concepts as well as in written English)
- When else other than the ACT and SAT can I take an educated guess? Do I take educated guesses often?
- What do I struggle the most with when I write? What am I really good at when I write in English? How can I practice the things I struggle with outside of this class?

Finally, each student picks one idea that they will apply in their English classes this week. Students will report back the next week.

OPTION 2:

LESSON THREE: ACT PRACTICE

Goal: Continue to practice grammar rules with the use of two more ACT passages.

Student-Tutor Work (60 minutes)

1. Have student read the passage all the way through.
2. Read the first question with the student and have them identify which grammar rule is being tested and what the rule requires.
3. Have student attempt to answer the question.
4. Review the answer.
   - For wrong answers, ask the student if they initially identified the correct grammar rule. If not, which grammar rule was the question testing?
   - If yes, how did they misapply the grammar rule to get the wrong answer?
   - Have the student articulate the rule and the logical application of the rule that would lead to the correct answer.
5. Repeat the process until all questions have been answered and reviewed.
6. Repeat the process for the second passage.

LESSON FOUR: TAKING THE ACT ENGLISH TEST

Lesson objective: This class will prepare students to take this section of the test in real-time.

Materials: Practice test, number two pencils, timer.

I. **Introduction.** Students share how they applied what they learned with ACT English in their daily lives throughout the past week. Did they feel like they had a particularly successful moment using these new tools? What did they struggle to apply? How could they continue to work on the more challenging components of application in the future?

II. **Test-Taking Strategies.** Begin with a discussion about test-taking strategies that they have learned in their own experiences. What helps them succeed when they prepare for a test? What things do they do when they get high scores in tests of any kind at school? When do they struggle?

Ex. I always do better when I eat breakfast. Feeling confident helps me do well, even if I haven't studied too much. Sometimes I get anxious, but when I am calm I do better.

Now move on to a discussion of the ACT English section. Read the instructions from a practice test together. Remind students that these instructions will not change from test to test. They can save time by just memorizing these instructions beforehand. Students should discuss the following questions:

- How long will I have to complete the test?
- How much time will I have for each question?
- What is the format of the test?
- What part is most difficult for me?
- Should I ever leave a question blank?

Introduce new test-taking tools. Have students use practice problems to explain the following concepts:

- *Answer what you know.* Have students briefly look through the ACT English exam. Students should always answer the questions they know with certainty first before returning to questions that they may not know. **Students should not linger on questions that they are not certain about.** If they are spending more than the allotted time per question, they should make an educated guess, mark the problem, and come back to the question if they have time at the end.

- *Taking an educated guess.* On the ACT, there is no penalty for guessing. Students can use the *process of elimination* to make an educated guess about a question they are not completely sure about.

III. **Practice Test.** Instructors proctor the ACT English section. This could either be abbreviated to fit the time allotted or offered as its own session. Instructors grade the tests for next week. *Students should mark questions where they guessed for review later on.*

IV. **Wind Down.** Students talk about what it felt like to take the test. What were they surprised about? What was most challenging? What parts were easier? What will they work on for next time?

OPTION 2:
LESSON TWO: ENGLISH ACT ON-YOUR-OWN

Goal: Students will practice grammar rules by taking ACT English test sections <u>on their own</u> for the first time.

Individual Student Work (15-20 mis)

Have the student complete the entire exercise on their own, using the previous week's method (i.e. read the passage all the way through; for each question, identify which grammar rule is being tested and what the rule requires) (advise them to take their time, and not worry about anyone else as it is an individual exercise).

Tutors Review Answers with Students

Do not immediately tell the student if their answers are wrong. Instead, ask them to justify the answer they gave, according to the rules they have worked on the last two lessons. Identify what is correct in their reasoning and what is wrong, then ask them to try again if they got the incorrect answer. If they give the right answer, ask them to justify it. If they still don't give the right answer, provide it to them and ask them to try to reason out why it is correct. Repeat for all questions.

Group Debrief

Using the ball of yarn game, ask the students and tutors to share what they have most enjoyed during this semester, and how they can work to improve as students or as tutors. If time allows, Danny will add another question.

LESSON FIVE: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

While grading the previous ACT English tests, instructors should look for patterns of errors. What kinds of questions are students consistently struggling with? Identify the tools and concepts necessary for success on these questions to support students moving forward.

Lesson Objective: Students will have the opportunity to recognize certain patterns of error. By recognizing individual and group patterns of error, students have the possibility to set new goals for improvement and celebrate milestones from this unit.

I. **Introduction**. Rose and Thorns. What did students enjoy about this week (this could be in their academic or personal lives, depending on their preference)? What did they struggle with? What are they looking forward to this coming week?

II. **Patterns of Errors.** Instructors address the patterns of errors found in the practice tests. They should re-introduce the concepts that students consistently struggled with before reviewing similar questions from other practice tests in order to solidify this new knowledge. In pairs, students then create their own examples that have to do with the question type identified and have another group solve it. Students discuss why this correct or incorrect. Instructors may wish to assign several practice problems for students to work on during the week to provide further practice with these challenging concepts.

III. **Individual Successes and Errors.** Instructors meet with individual students while pairs are collaborating. Instructors should give them their score and identify students' strengths. What question type did they consistently get right? Celebrate this success! Now, identify individual patterns of error or test-taking difficulty. Some questions to think about when discussing ways to improve moving forward are:

- Did the student answer every question?
- How can they improve their time management skills?
- Where did they guess?
- When were they sure?
- How can they practice question types where they demonstrated a pattern of errors?

IV. **Goal Setting.** Thinking of their personal and group errors, students write out new goals and action steps specifically for the ACT English test. Students should follow the format provided the goal setting activity in lesson two of "Navigating the College Application" section. If students are comfortable, they should share their goals with their peers. Now, return to their original goals from the beginning of the course. What have they accomplished? What else do they need to continue to be proactive about moving forward?

OPTION 2:
LESSON FIVE: REVIEW, PUT-IT-ALL-TOGETHER

Goal: Refresh students' memories of basic ACT English rules and put them into practice with ACT passages.

Student-Tutor Review

1. Tutors, present students with the fill-in-the-blank list of grammar rules. Read the example sentences together and see if students can complete the corresponding rule (help them if needed).
2. After completing each rule, have the students write it out in its entirety on a separate piece of paper.

Student-Tutor Practice

1. Have student read the ACT passage all the way through.
2. Read the first question with the student and have them identify which grammar rule is being tested and what the rule requires.
3. Have student attempt to answer the question.
4. Review the answer.
   - For wrong answers, ask the student if they initially identified the correct grammar rule. If not, which grammar rule was the question testing?
   - If yes, how did they misapply the grammar rule to get the wrong answer?
   - Have the student articulate the rule and the logical application of the rule that would lead to the correct answer.
5. Repeat the process until all questions have been answered and reviewed.

ACT READING

The ACT reading section is thirty-five minutes long and tests students' ability to read, understand and analyze different kinds of writing. Students will be tested on four passages each of a different genre: Social Studies, Natural Sciences, Humanities and Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction. After each passage, students will be asked to answer 10 questions to show that they understood and can draw conclusions based on what they read. Much of the ACT reading section allows students to "read between the lines." Even when our students had strong reading skills in English, we found that this was the section of the ACT that required the most practice for our students. With very little time per question, students will not have the time to read passages over and over again. As such, it's important to teach students active reading skills so that they can reference the most important parts of the passage without reading through the entire section again. Many students prefer to read the questions before reading the passage. Furthermore, the skills that students hone in preparation for ACT Reading also prepares them for success on the ACT Science section, as students are again asked to analyze scientific articles. Working in groups and pairs to analyze passages and respectfully challenge different opinions supported our students in feeling more confident in their ability to independently articulate what they had read.

ACT Reading is often one of the most difficult sections for students who did not grow up with English in the home or who acquired English later. It will likely be necessary to repeat the lessons in this section. In addition, it may be helpful to assign reading passages in English or Spanish (whichever the student is more comfortable reading in) for them to further hone their reading skills throughout the year.

LESSON ONE: ACTIVE AND CRITICAL READING SKILLS

Lesson Objective: This lesson will give students the basic tools necessary for success on the ACT Reading section. Through the development of critical reading skills, students will better be able to comprehend and respond to passages from multiple genres. These skills will not only prepare them for the ACT Reading section, but also for success outside of the classroom.

I. **Introduction.** What is critical reading? What does it mean to actively read? Brainstorm ideas and write them up on the board. Then combine similar ideas into sentence-long definitions of what it means to read critically and actively.

II. **Tools for Critical Reading.** Using the ideas generated by the class, the class thinks of specific tools to read actively. These could include circling unknown words, putting a star next to the thesis, or main argument, of a passage, or underlining important supporting arguments. A more detailed list of active reading strategies can be found on Princeton University's McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning website. Remind students that the goal of using active reading strategies on the ACT is to help them remember and analyze what they read on the ACT questions. However, active reading is just as important in the classroom and can help you become a better critical thinker and writer.

III. **Applying Tools:** Each student is given a short paragraph to apply the active reading tools to. Afterwards, students split into pairs and show which tools they used and why. Then they must explain, without looking at the paragraph, what the thesis of the paragraph was, and what supporting arguments were made. Review as a group what the successful strategies were by analyzing one of the sample paragraphs as a group. If possible, project an image or give a handout with what the ideal paragraph would look like after it has been actively read and annotated.

IV. **Assign Homework and Set Goals:** Students will read at least one article from a college-level source, such as the newspaper or a magazine (i.e. Times, National Geographic, The New Yorker). They will use the active reading skills they learned in today's class. They will then present an outline of the article in the next class, including rhetorical tools, thesis/hypothesis, supporting arguments and tone.

OPTION 2:
LESSON ONE: JUMPING RIGHT IN: ACT READING

Materials: ACT Reading practice passage.
Introduction to ACT Reading

1. Tutors, read the following description of the ACT Reading section with the student:

"The ACT reading section is thirty-five minutes long and tests students' ability to read, understand and analyze different kinds of writing. Students will be tested on four passages, each of a different genre: Social Studies, Natural Sciences, Humanities and Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction. After each passage, students will be asked to answer 10 questions to show that they understood and can draw conclusions based on what they read. Much of the ACT reading section requires students to "read between the lines." As such, **it's important to teach students active reading skills so that they can reference the most important parts of the passage without reading through the entire section again.** Many students prefer to read the questions before reading the passage.

Active Reading Strategies can include circling unknown words, putting a star next to the thesis, or main argument, of a passage, or underlining important supporting arguments. A more detailed list of active reading strategies can be found on Princeton University's McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning website. Remind students that **the goal of using active reading strategies on the ACT is to help them remember and analyze what they read on the ACT questions.**"

2. Discuss some of the active reading strategies listed and ensure the student understands and can apply them. In particular, discuss the concept of a thesis or main idea, and let the student know that after they read the practice passage, you will ask them what they believe to be the thesis of the passage.

Practice

1. Have the student briefly read the questions.
2. Have the student actively read the passage, employing active reading strategies such as starring, underlining, and circling. Ask them what they believe is the thesis of the piece
3. Have the student attempt to answer the question; if they have no idea, insist that they guess
4. When the student has finished, ask them to explain their rationale for each question. Then work through each question with the students, addressing mistakes and acknowledging correct inferences and instincts. **Take as much time as necessary to review each question**
5. If students answer a question correctly and give an appropriate rationale (demonstrating a clear understanding of the question and answer), feel free to move on.

LESSON TWO: ACTIVE READING IN CONTEXT- PROSE AND HUMANITIES

I. **Present Homework Articles.** Students teach the glass about what they read and *how* they read it. What active reading tools did they use to analyze their article? How did using active reading tools help students to understand the article?

II. **Active Reading Tools in Context.** Each student is given a full-length prose or humanities article taken from the ACT. Like in the previous lesson, students must actively read the paragraph. Afterwards, students split into pairs and show which tools they used and why. Then they must explain, without looking at the paragraph, what the thesis of the paragraph was, and what supporting arguments were made. Review as a group what the successful strategies were by analyzing one of the sample paragraphs as a group.

III. **Answering Questions.** Give students the questions from the ACT that went along with the passage at hand. Without referencing the article again, which of the ACT questions can they answer having actively read the passage? Have students review their annotations to see what other questions they can answer. If students cannot answer the rest of the questions by referencing their annotations, go back and reread the passage. Was there something a student should have marked that they did not while reading the first time? Next time, students will read the questions beforehand and have the opportunity to look for specific answers.

IV. **Set Goals:** Brainstorm about how this new or strengthened knowledge of critical reading can help them succeed in the classroom? For this week, what is one way that can students continue to use these tools? Instructors may assign students to use the active reading skills that they employed today in class to analyze at least one reading assignment that they are given in school in the coming week. This could be from a novel, a textbook, a poem or an article. Students will present what they did next week.

OPTION TWO:
LESSON 2: MORE ACT READING PRACTICE

Materials: ACT Reading practice passage

1. Tutor-Student Review

Remind students to use active reading strategies, such as underlining, circling, or starring information that relates to the thesis/main idea of the piece, as well as secondary information that supports it. Also let the students know that after they read the practice passage, you will ask them what they believe is the thesis of the passage.

2. Tutor-Student Practice

1. Have the student briefly read the questions.

2. Have the student actively read the passage, employing active reading strategies. Ask them what they believe is the thesis of the piece

3. Have the student attempt to answer the question; if they have no idea, insist that they guess

4. When the student has finished, ask them to explain their rationale for each question. Then work through each question with the students, addressing mistakes and acknowledging correct inferences and instincts. **Take as much time as necessary to review each question**

5. If students answer a question correctly and give an appropriate rationale (demonstrating a clear understanding of the question and answer), feel free to move on.

LESSON THREE: ACTIVE READING IN CONTEXT- NATURAL SCIENCES AND SOCIAL STUDIES

I. **The College Search.** The facilitator brings a profile of three different colleges to class. These colleges should vary in size, region, program strengths, campus setting (rural, urban, semi-urban, etc.), institution type (public, private, college, university, liberal arts, technical school, etc.) and price. Students read each profile and then discuss the pros and cons of each college. Finally, students should look at the ACT, SAT and GPA median ranges for each institution and decide if this would be a reach, safety or target school for them. Does it sound like a good fit? If they think so, have them do some more research on the school. Seniors or juniors might even consider applying to this institution.

II. **Breaking Down the Text.** Students actively read before outlining the passage(s) provided by the facilitator. What is the hypothesis and/or thesis of the writer? What supporting arguments do they make? What conclusions do they draw based on these arguments? What could we, as readers, infer from this article? Then, have students respond to the ACT science questions.

III. **Writing Like a Pro.** The facilitator provides several possible topics for students to write about. These should be relatively easy subjects that will allow students to work more on their form rather than on their content. Topics could include sports, theater, daily routines or nutrition. Students need to outline a thesis, three supporting arguments, address counter-arguments and provide a conclusion. The class should then discuss how they would present their arguments like a social or natural scientist. How do their articles compare to the ones on the test? What did they do well? In what ways could they improve their writing?

IV. **Cool Down.** Next week, students will take the ACT reading test. How can they prepare themselves to do well? What did they learn when they took the writing test? How can they improve on those things that were difficult for them last time?

OPTION 2:
LESSON THREE: APPLYING ACT READING SKILLS TO REAL-WORLD CONTEXTS

Materials: Select 3 news articles or op-eds, comparable in length both to each other and to typical ACT reading passages. Tutors should print bring two copies of each article, annotating one (starring, underlining, circling) so that students can see an example of active reading strategies—and leaving the other untouched so that students can try their hand at annotating.

1. Ask the student to explain what a thesis is, and correct/tweak as necessary.

2. Ask the student to apply active reading skills to each piece of writing.
3. For example, circle unknown words, put a star next to the thesis, or main argument, of a passage, or underline important supporting arguments

4. Ask students to explain which tools they used and why
5. Have students decide/identify the function of each particular tool (underlining, starring, circling), in order to keep their use and utility consistent.
6. For example: * = thesis, circling = evidence, etc.

7. Have student, without looking at the piece, write down the thesis of the paragraph and what supporting arguments/evidence were presented.

8. Show your mentee what portions you annotated and explain why.

LESSON FOUR: TAKING THE ACT READING TEST

Lesson objective: This class will prepare students to take this section of the test in real-time.

Materials: Practice test, number two pencils, timer.

V. **Introduction and Homework Review.** Students share how they applied what they learned with ACT Reading in their daily lives throughout the past week. Did they feel like they had a particularly successful moment using these new tools? What did they struggle to apply? How could they continue to work on their active reading skills moving forward?

VI. **Test-Taking Strategies.** Begin with a discussion about test-taking strategies that they have learned in their own experiences. What helps them succeed when they prepare for a test? What things do they do when they get high scores in tests of any kind at school? When do they struggle?

Ex. I always do better when I eat breakfast. Feeling confident helps me do well, even if I haven't studied too much. Sometimes I get anxious, but when I am calm I do better.

Now move on to a discussion of the ACT Reading section. Read the instructions from a practice test together. Remind students that these instructions will not change from test to test. They can save time by just memorizing these instructions beforehand. Students should discuss the following questions:

- How long will I have to complete the test?
- How much time will I have for each question?
- What is the format of the test?
- What part is most difficult for me?
- Should I ever leave a question blank?

Review the test-taking tools used in the ACT English section. Have students use practice problems to explain the following concepts in the context of the ACT Reading section:

- *Answer what you know.* Have students briefly look through the ACT Reading exam. Students should always answer the questions they know with certainty first before returning to questions that they may not know. **Students should not linger on questions that they are not certain about.** If they are spending more than the allotted time per question, they should make an educated guess, mark the problem, and come back to the question if they have time at the end.

- *Taking an educated guess.* Remember that on the ACT, there is no penalty for guessing. Students can use the *process of elimination* to make an educated guess about a question they are not completely sure about.

VII. **Practice Test.** Instructors proctor the ACT Reading section. This could either be abbreviated to fit the time allotted or offered as its own session. Instructors grade the tests for next week. *Students should mark questions where they guessed for review later on.*

VIII. **Wind Down.** Students talk about what it felt like to take the test. What were they surprised about? What was most challenging? What parts were easier? What will they work on for next time?

LESSON FIVE: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES AND APPLICATIONS FOR BROADER SUCCESS

While grading the previous ACT Reading tests, instructors should look for patterns of errors. What kinds of questions are students consistently struggling with? Identify the tools and concepts necessary for success on these questions to support students moving forward.

Lesson Objective: Students will have the opportunity to recognize certain patterns of error. By recognizing individual and group patterns of error, students have the possibility to set new goals for improvement and celebrate milestones from this unit.

V. **Introduction**. Timeline check-in. While referring to the college-application timeline that they created and/or received at the beginning of the course, where are they in the process? Recognize the significant achievements that they have made having prepared for two of the ACT sections-- that's already half of the test! What are the steps that will happen moving forward?

VI. **Patterns of Errors.** Instructors address the patterns of errors found in the practice tests. They should re-introduce the concepts that students consistently struggled with before reviewing similar questions from other practice tests in order to solidify this new knowledge. In pairs, students read new sample passages (these could be from the ACT practice test or from other ACT level reading materials) then create their own examples that have to do with the question type identified and have another group solve it. Students discuss why this correct or incorrect. Instructors may wish to assign several practice problems for students to work on during the week to provide further practice with these challenging concepts.

VII. **Individual Successes and Errors.** Instructors meet with individual students while pairs are collaborating. Instructors should give them their score and identify students' strengths. What question type did they consistently get right? Celebrate this success! Now, identify individual patterns of error or test-taking difficulty. Some questions to think about when discussing ways to improve moving forward are:

- Did the student answer every question?
- How can they improve their time management skills?
- Where did they guess?
- When were they sure?
- How can they practice question types where they demonstrated a pattern of errors?

VIII. **Goal Setting.** Thinking of their personal and group errors, students write out new goals and action steps specifically for the ACT Reading test. Students should follow the format provided the goal setting activity in lesson two of "Navigating the College Application" section. If students are comfortable, they should share their goals with their peers. Now, return to their original goals from the beginning of the course. What have they accomplished? What else do they need to continue to be proactive about moving forward?

ACT SCIENCE

The ACT science section is also thirty-five minutes long and, like the ACT reading section, requires students to make inferences about biology, physics, chemistry and other scientific fields. While students may have learned about these topics in school, they will not be primarily tested on their knowledge of science. Instead, the ACT science section challenges students' skill in reading comprehension, interpretation and problem-solving that are necessary to succeed as a scientist. Six passages with ten follow-up questions will ask students to analyze scientific data based on published experiments. Oftentimes, the language and content of this section can be very challenging for students. Bringing in articles found in scientific journals or magazines encouraged students to debate topics of interest to them. In doing so, students became more comfortable analyzing and discussing science in their own words among their peers. When we turned to passages from practice tests, students already felt confident independently understanding and articulating what these complex passages said. For some students, we needed to fill in specific holes in the scientific education such as specific formulas, units of measurement or conversions. You will need to supplement the follow lessons based on what hard skills students have not learned in their local science classes.

LESSON I: INTRODUCTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

I. **Brainstorm and Define.** What is the scientific method? In what contexts have you heard this phrase used before? When students have formed a conceptual understanding of the scientific is, you can watch this video from Khan Academy, or find a similar handout that explains with examples what the scientific method is. Now, define each phase and component of the scientific method.

- Purpose/Question
- Hypothesis
- Experiment
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Independent Variable
- Dependent Variable
- Control

II. **The Scientific Method in Context.** Read a passage from the ACT. In addition to applying the active reading techniques learned in the ACT Reading section, students should also identify each part of the scientific method. The instructor may also choose to have particular students for groups look for specific elements outlined above. Then, students present with the class which elements they identified and why they identified them as such.

III. **Designing an experiment.** Using objects, drawings, pictures or written words, small groups design their own experiment. The experiment can be fun or serious. The goals is to get students to produce the above vocabulary independently. This activity will also allow students to employ different kinds of learning methods (kinesthetic, auditory, visual, etc.) to memorize this complex vocabulary.

OPTION 2:
LESSON ONE: JUMPING RIGHT IN TO ACT SCIENCE

Materials: ACT Science practice passage

1. Review

In tutor-student pairs, remind students of the main format of the ACT. It is 35 minutes long and consists of six passages, each with ten follow-up questions. The section as a whole requires students to make inferences on scientific topics. These inferences are based on reading comprehension, interpretation, and problem solving.

Next, review the following key terms related to scientific experimentation. First allow students to explain them in their own words, then fill in any gaps. Have the student restate the definition.

-Purpose/Question
-Hypothesis
-Experiment
-Analysis
-Conclusion
-Independent Variable
-Dependent Variable
-Control

2. Practice

Have students quickly read the questions, then slowly read the entire passage. Then allow the students to work through the questions and provide an answer for each one. Discuss their answers, helping them to understand where mistakes were made. After helping the students correct, ask them to restate in their own words why a given answer was wrong and identify the merits of the correct answer.

LESSON II: INTERPRETING SCIENTIFIC WRITING

I. **Financial Aid.** The facilitator comes prepared to explain the different types of financial aid (merit aid, federal aid, grant, loans, etc.). Students are then given the profiles of 5 different merit scholarships. Would they be able to apply for this scholarship? How and when? This is a great way to get students thinking about the *how* of college. Many students do not even know how much scholarship money they are actually eligible for, regardless of citizenship.

II. **Contrasting Hypotheses**. Oftentimes, the ACT will ask students to compare the differing views of two scientists. In this activity, students read two contrasting passages from a sample test. Students will then have a mock debate (either in groups or individually) to defend their scientist's point of view and respond to the arguments presented by the other group. Students will then answer the questions in the sample ACT test based on their discussion and the passages that they read.

III. **Tailoring Active Reading Skills for Science.** Students read a passage from the ACT science section. They then respond to the following questions in pairs, before sharing with the group.

A. What words do you not understand? What can you figure out what they could mean by looking at the words in context (i.e. based on the words around them)?

B. Who are the primary subjects in the piece? In other words what are the researchers studying? Why is this important?

C. How is the experiment designed? What is its objective? What steps must be taken to carry out the experiment? In other words, what is the scientist's *hypothesis* and what *technique* did they use to come to their *conclusions*?

D. What is the piece trying to argue? What does the experimenter conclude?

E. What did you learn from the text? This could be something that is explicitly stated, or something that you can infer from the piece but that the writer never specifically says.

F. Based on the text, what would the scientists likely study next?

IV. **Cool Down.** On a scale of one to five, how comfortable do they feel with analyzing and responding to the science questions on the ACT? What do they struggle with? What do they excel at? What new tools have they learned in the past two lessons to help them succeed? How can they apply these skills to their coming week?

OPTION 2:
LESSON TWO: MORE PRACTICE WITH ACT SCIENCE

Materials: 2 practice ACT Science passages

Tutor Student Practice

<u>Passage One</u>

- Have students read over questions
- Have students thoroughly read the passage aloud and answer questions they may have
- Have students attempt to answer the question; if they have no idea, insist that they guess
- Have students explain their rationale and then work through the question with the students, addressing mistakes and acknowledging correct inferences and instincts
    - *Take as much time as necessary to review question
- If students answer a question correctly and give an appropriate rationale (demonstrating a clear understanding of the question and answer), feel free to move on

<u>Passage 2</u>

Same procedure as above

LESSON III: SCIENTIFIC WRITING IN CONTEXT

I. **Science Vocabulary**. Students look back over the words that they did not know from the previous ACT Science passages. Come up with a definition for each of them and three different ways that they can memorize this science vocabulary word. Share with the group to create a class vocabulary and "memory tools" bank specifically for the science section.

II. **Pre-Reading the Questions.** Using a sample test, students pre-read the questions provided. Do they understand the questions? In their own words, what are they looking for?

III. **Reading in Context.** Students read the passage provided using the active reading tools that they previously learned. They should pay particular attention to elements of the scientific method, as well as star any answers that they recognize according to the previous question pre-reading exercise. Then, students answer the questions in pairs. They should use educated guesses and the process of elimination for questions for which they are not sure. Why does the answer make sense, or why does the answer not make sense?

LESSON IV: PREPARING TO TAKE THE ACT SCIENCE TEST

I. **Understanding the Instructions.** Students read the instructions for the ACT Science section aloud. Remind students that these instructions will not change from test to test, so if they are comfortable with them now, they will not need to use any of the testing time to read them again. What are the keywords that they see in the instructions? How long will they have to complete the ACT Science section? How long will they have for each question? What should they have on their desks for the ACT Science section?

Review the test-taking tools used in the ACT English and ACT Reading sections. Have students use practice problems to explain the following concepts in the context of the ACT Science section:

- *Answer what you know.* Have students briefly look through the ACT Reading exam. Students should always answer the questions they know with certainty first before returning to questions that they may not know. **Students should not linger on questions that they are not certain about.** If they are spending more than the allotted time per question, they should make an educated guess, mark the problem, and come back to the question if they have time at the end.

- *Taking an educated guess.* Remember that on the ACT, there is no penalty for guessing. Students can use the *process of elimination* to make an educated guess about a question they are not completely sure about.

IX. **Practice Test.** Instructors proctor the ACT Science section. This could either be abbreviated to fit the time allotted or offered as its own session. Instructors grade the tests for next week. *Students should mark questions where they guessed for review later on.*

X. **Wind Down.** Students talk about what it felt like to take the test. What were they surprised about? What was most challenging? What parts were easier? What will they work on for next time?

OPTION 2:
LESSON FOUR: FULL-LENGTH SCIENCE SECTION PRACTICE

Materials: 1 practice ACT Science Section

Tutor Student Practice: Science Exam

• Have students take the full exam on their own

• Have students explain their rationale and then work through the question with the

students, addressing mistakes and acknowledging correct inferences and instincts

- o Take as much time as necessary to review question

• If students answer a question correctly and give an appropriate rationale (demonstrating a clear understanding of the question and answer), feel free to move on

LESSON V: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES & IDENTIFYING ROOM FOR GROWTH

While grading the previous ACT Science tests, instructors should look for patterns of errors. What kinds of questions are students consistently struggling with? Identify the tools and concepts necessary for success on these questions to support students moving forward.

Lesson Objective: Students will have the opportunity to recognize certain patterns of error. By recognizing individual and group patterns of error, students have the possibility to set new goals for improvement and celebrate milestones from this unit.

IX. **Introduction**. Timeline check-in. While referring to the college-application timeline that they created and/or received at the beginning of the course, where are they in the process? Recognize the significant achievements that they have made having prepared for three of the ACT sections-- they have almost completed the test! What are the steps that will happen moving forward?

X. **Patterns of Errors.** Instructors address the patterns of errors found in the practice tests. They should re-introduce the concepts that students consistently struggled with before reviewing similar questions from other practice tests in order to solidify this new knowledge. In pairs, students read new sample passages (these could be from the ACT practice test or from other ACT level reading materials) then create their own examples that have to do with the question type identified and have another group solve it. Students discuss why this correct or incorrect. Instructors may wish to assign several practice problems for students to work on during the week to provide further practice with these challenging concepts.

XI. **Individual Successes and Errors.** Instructors meet with individual students while pairs are collaborating. Instructors should give them their score and identify students' strengths. What question type did they consistently get right? Celebrate this success! Now, identify individual patterns of error or test-taking difficulty. Some questions to think about when discussing ways to improve moving forward are:

- Did the student answer every question?
- How can they improve their time management skills?
- Where did they guess?
- When were they sure?
- How can they practice question types where they demonstrated a pattern of errors?

XII. **Goal Setting.** Thinking of their personal and group errors, students write out new goals and action steps specifically for the ACT Reading test. Students should follow the format provided the goal setting activity in lesson two of "Navigating the College Application" section. If students are comfortable, they should share their goals with their peers. Now, return to their original goals from the beginning of the course. What have they accomplished? What else do they need to continue to be proactive about moving forward?

ACT MATH

The ACT math section is comprised of fifty multiple choice questions to test students on trigonometry, coordinate and plane geometry, pre-algebra, elementary algebra and intermediate algebra. During our tutoring sessions, we found that the ACT math section was, at first, the least conducive to group learning: students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 all had very different levels of math coming into the course. Still, the varying levels of ability also allowed for older students to cement their practice of these concepts by teaching them to their younger peers. Similarly, students from middle school who were just now learning elementary and intermediate algebra were able to remind their older peers about basic concepts that high school juniors and seniors may have forgotten, but are still crucial for success on the test.

LESSON ONE: PRE-TEST

I. **Knowing What They Know.** This section of the test is perhaps the most technical as it requires not only test-taking skills, but highly specific knowledge of different kinds of math. As such, it's important to know what students know and do not know so that you can meet them where they are. Have students bring a copy of their syllabus or their final, midterm or other exam from this or last years class. If applicable, students can bring in their current textbook to see what they have covered in class already. If the instructor has a good relationship with the local school, they may even be able to reach out to students' classroom teachers to talk about where students are and what they will have covered by the time they take the ACT.

II. **Pre-Test.** Proctor a full-length practice test of the ACT Math section. Make sure that students are only allowed to use a calculator when permitted by the test.

As instructors are grading these practice tests, it is extremely important to note the kinds *of questions that students get right or wrong. Which type of question is it-- elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry or trigonometry? For more information on how to recognize what category of skill a question falls into, please refer to this article from prepscholar.*

Just like in the normal ACT, you should make sure to calculate students' subscores for each of these categories. A low subscore will mean that students will need to focus on improving those specific skills that pertain to the question type. Those that have a high subscore on a certain area may help take the lead in teaching those skills to other students on that day's lesson.

LESSON TWO: ELEMENTARY ALGEBRA AND INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA

I. **Introduction to Elementary Algebra.** What does it mean if a question falls into the "elementary algebra category? Show students five problems of this type. What are the similarities and differences? Have they ever learned this material? If so, when? If not, why is it useful or important? What can you *do* with in your everyday life?

II. **Practice with Elementary Algebra.** Students that had a high score on the elementary algebra portion work one-on-one with students that struggled in this area. By teaching another person these concepts, the more advanced student will also benefit, while also filling in the gaps of their peer. The instructor circulates through the class to support. When necessary, instructors can work one-on-one, in small groups, or in the full group to master a specific skill.

III. **Skill Review.** Students identify particular skills related to elementary algebra that they are struggling with. They then work with the instructor to create a new problem to address that skill, before solving it in the group. Then, students solve another new problem in pairs, and then finally individually. Instructors should make note of any students still struggling with a concept so that they can work one-on-one.

This lesson should be repeated with the concepts from intermediate algebra. Depending on the group's grade and skill level, this can either be combined with the above lesson, or done as a day in and of itself.

LESSON THREE: COORDINATE AND PLANE GEOMETRY

I. **The College Search.** This activity is repeated from a previous lesson in order to broaden further the number of schools students may be familiar with. The facilitator brings a profile of three different colleges to class. These colleges should vary in size, region, program strengths, campus setting (rural, urban, semi-urban, etc.), institution type (public, private, college, university, liberal arts, technical school, etc.) and price. Students read each profile and then discuss the pros and cons of each college. Finally, students should look at the ACT, SAT and GPA median ranges for each institution and decide if this would be a reach, safety or target school for them. Does it sound like a good fit? If they think so, have them do some more research on the school. Seniors or juniors might even consider applying to this institution.

II. **Introduction to Coordinate and Plane Geometry.** What does "coordinate" mean? What about when it refers to math? What is a plane? What do we often use when we tackle math problems that use coordinate or plane geometry? Looking at an ACT practice test, what problems do you think fall into this category? Why is it important to know coordinate and plane geometry? When can we use it in our daily lives?

III. **Practice with Coordinate and Plane Geometry.** Students that had a high score on the elementary algebra portion work one-on-one with students that struggled in this area to answer practice problems. The instructor circulates through the class to support. When necessary, instructors can work one-on-one, in small groups, or in the full group to master a specific skill. For some students, especially those who are dysgraphic, using a 3-D model or a grid printed on colored paper may be helpful.

IV. **Skill Review.** Students identify particular skills related to coordinate and plane geometry that they are struggling with. They then work with the instructor to create a new problem to address that skill, before solving it in the group. Then, students solve another new problem in pairs, and then finally individually. Instructors should make note of any students still struggling with a concept so that they can work one-on-one.

V. **Homework: Formulating the College List.** Students look up five schools on a list of twenty that the instructor thinks could be a good fit based upon the institutions that students gravitated towards in the "College Search" activities. Students should identify if a school is a reach, target or safety school. If they find the school appealing, they can add it to that category on their college list and come prepared to explain why they believe it will be a good fit. If not, they should cross it off their list and be prepared to explain specific reasons for not applying.

VI. **Practice with Trigonometry.** Students that had a high score on the trigonometry portion work one-on-one with students that struggled in this area to answer practice problems. Often, students do not learn trigonometry until their sophomore or junior year of high school. For this reason, it may be necessary for the instructor to give more traditional lessons on how to go about solving trigonometry problems. Preferably, a tutor should be identified who has taken a college class on the subject. The instructor circulates through the class to support and/or teach the concepts. When necessary, instructors can work one-on-one, in small groups, or in the full group to master a specific skill.

VII. **Skill Review.** Students identify particular skills related to trigonometry that they are struggling with. They then work with the instructor to create a new problem to address that skill, before solving it in the group. Then, students solve another new problem in pairs, and then finally individually. Instructors should make note of any students still struggling with a concept so that they can work one-on-one.

LESSON FIVE: TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES AND TAKING THE ACT MATH TEST

II. **Understanding the Instructions.** Students read the instructions for the ACT Math section aloud. Remind students that these instructions will not change from test to test, so if they are comfortable with them now, they will not need to use any of the testing time to read them again. What are the keywords that they see in the instructions? How long will they have to complete the ACT Math section? How long will they have for each question? What should they have on their desks for the ACT Math section?

Review the test-taking tools used in the ACT English, ACT Reading and ACT Science sections. Have students use practice problems to explain the following concepts in the context of the ACT Science section:

- *Answer what you know.* Have students briefly look through the ACT Math exam. Students should always answer the questions they know with certainty first before returning to questions that they may not know. **Students should not linger on questions that they are not certain about.** If they are spending more than the allotted time per question, they should make an educated guess, mark the problem, and come back to the question if they have time at the end.

- *Taking an educated guess.* Remember that on both the SAT and the ACT, there is no penalty for guessing. Students can use the *process of elimination* to make an educated guess about a question they are not completely sure about.

XI. **Practice Test.** Instructors proctor the ACT Math section. This could either be abbreviated to fit the time allotted or offered as its own session. This could also be designed according to question type so that students can work on individual question types (trigonometry, plane geometry, coordinate geometry, etc.) before taking a test with all of the different question types included. Instructors grade the tests for next week. *Students should mark questions where they guessed for review later on.*

XII. **Wind Down.** Students talk about what it felt like to take the test. What were they surprised about? What was most challenging? What parts were easier? What will they work on for next time?

LESSON SIX: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

While grading the previous ACT Math tests, instructors should look for patterns of errors. What kinds of questions are students consistently struggling with? Identify the tools and concepts necessary for success on these questions to support students moving forward.

Lesson Objective: Students will have the opportunity to recognize certain patterns of error. By recognizing individual and group patterns of error, students have the possibility to set new goals for improvement and celebrate milestones from this unit.

XIII. **Introduction**. Timeline check-in. While referring to the college-application timeline that they created and/or received at the beginning of the course, where are they in the process? Recognize the significant achievements that they have made having prepared for three of the ACT sections-- they have almost completed the test! What are the steps that will happen moving forward?

XIV. **Patterns of Errors.** Instructors address the patterns of errors found in the practice tests. They should re-introduce the concepts that students consistently struggled with before reviewing similar questions from other practice tests in order to solidify this new knowledge. In pairs, students read new sample passages (these could be from the ACT practice test or from other ACT level reading materials) then create their own examples that have to do with the question type identified and have another group solve it. Students discuss why this correct or incorrect. Instructors may wish to assign several practice problems for students to work on during the week to provide further practice with these challenging concepts.

XV. **Individual Successes and Errors.** Instructors meet with individual students while pairs are collaborating. Instructors should give them their score and identify students' strengths. What question type did they consistently get right? Celebrate this success! Now, identify individual patterns of error or test-taking difficulty. Some questions to think about when discussing ways to improve moving forward are:

- Did the student answer every question?
- How can they improve their time management skills?
- Where did they guess?
- When were they sure?
- How can they practice question types where they demonstrated a pattern of errors?

XVI. **Goal Setting.** Thinking of their personal and group errors, students write out new goals and action steps specifically for the ACT Math test. Students should follow the format provided the goal setting activity in lesson two of "Navigating the College Application" section. If students are comfortable, they should share their goals with their peers. Now, return to their original goals from the beginning of the course. What have they accomplished? What else do they need to continue to be proactive about moving forward?

SAT

Students may also choose to take the SAT as their standardized test of choice during the college application process. Whereas the old SAT attempted to test students' ability to solve novel problems, the new SAT, released in March of 2016, is more akin to the ACT, which tests skills students learn in school (Princeton Review). Furthermore, while an important component of the SAT, the vocabulary included on the new SAT will likely be more familiar to students than previous versions of the test. The SAT is scored out of 1600, with 800 points for the math section and 800 points for the evidenced-based reading and writing section. Sub-scores are available that will point to students' strengths and weaknesses within these two broad categories. The essay is scored separately.

Most students enrolled in both private and public high schools will find that they are familiar with the format of the test by the time they are registering for the SAT. This is because the CollegeBoard, the institution that creates and administers the test, also creates the PSAT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9. For preparation courses that include students from 6th through 12th grades, preparing for the SAT may be more beneficial for everyone in the classroom. This is because younger students will also be able to apply what they learn to scoring well on the PSATs, as well as improving their performance in their classrooms. If students have high scores on the PSAT, they can become eligible for National Merit Scholarships and other merit-based aid.

Like the ACT, the SAT is divided into several sections, including a reading test, a writing and language test and a math test. In addition, students may choose to take the essay component

of the test. Instructors should encourage students to take the essay: some colleges require the score in order to gain admission into the school.

Many students may also need or elect to take a SAT subject test. Subject tests are required by a handful of colleges. Even when they are not required, SAT subject tests can be a good way of showing exceptional skill in a particular area. Bilingual students are at a distinct advantage when it comes to the SAT subject tests— they are already fluent in another language! We encouraged all of our students to take the SAT subject test as the vast majority were literate in the language. Even when students choose not to continue with their Spanish-language education at the high school level, the SAT subject test is an exceptional way to demonstrate mastery of a foreign language. Often, a good score on the SAT subject test can be used to test into upper-level literature courses once in college. For more information on SAT subject tests, please go to this page on the College Board website.

To find more information on the SAT and PSAT including how to register, receive fee waivers, view scores and access practice test, visit the College Board website. The College Board also offers an exceptional website in Spanish that includes information on College Board exams, choosing a competitive high school curriculum, enrolling in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, seeking scholarship money, choosing a college and applying to college.

ADAPTING LESSON PLANS FOR THE SAT

While the format of the SAT differs from that of the ACT, the hard skills that the test targets are nearly identical to the ACT. For this reason, instructors may use SAT preparation as an opportunity to the strengthen skills already targeted in the above lesson plans. The SAT will ask students to go into even more detail regarding inference, detail and evidence support. For this reason, instructors may use the same lesson plans from the ACT section while substituting passages and questions from SAT to further reinforce the knowledge that will help students succeed in and outside of the classroom. In addition, supplementary activities are provided below each section to target the differing requirements of the SAT.

SAT EVIDENCE-BASED READING AND WRITING

The Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing section is broken into two sub-sections, a 65-minute reading section and a 35-minute Language and Writing section. There are 4 possible answers for each multiple choice question. Like in the ACT Reading and Science sections, the SAT reading and writing section will ask students to read, understand and analyze several passages between 500 and 700 words. Students will be tested in several genres including U.S. and World Literature, History and Social Studies and Natural Sciences. The Writing and Language section asks students to look at passages related to careers, history and social studies, humanities and science between 400-450 words. However, rather than analyzing the content and intent of the author, students will pick apart the "Expression of Ideas" and "Standard English Conventions" found in the passages (kaptest.com). In other words, students will answer questions about the way in which an author writes rather than what he writes about, including rhetorical devices and grammar.

SUPPLEMENTARY SAT ACTIVITIES

Expression of Ideas. Students read a passage from an SAT Reading and Writing practice test using the active reading strategies learned in the ACT section of this handbook. Instructors should vary the genre of the passage to allow for a high level of comfort with the the different ways authors express ideas in accordance with their field (science, fiction or social studies). Then, students flip the passage over before spend five minutes silently writing about their reactions to the passage. Students should think about the following questions:

- What surprised them about the passage?
- What confused them?
- What choices did the author make that students liked? What did they dislike?
- What was the author's tone? Was their writing formal or informal?
- To which genre did the passage belong (science, social studies/humanities, or fiction?) How do you know this?
- What was the author trying to prove, or what was their hypothesis? What pieces of evidence did the author give to prove this point?
- Did the author address counter arguments? If so, how did they defend their stance against these arguments?

After five minutes, students share with the class what they thought about the piece. Then, students read together the questions specifically pertaining to the expression of ideas. After acertaining as a group the answers for each question, students go back to their written reflections. What did they notice about the passage before even looking at the questions that helped them successfully answer them? What did they miss that they should pay attention to next time?

Interpreting Graphs and Data. Give students a raw data sample, or have them poll their peers about a mundane subject. Use the data provided or collected to organize the information into a coherent visual representation. What do we immediately notice about the data based upon the presentation of this graph or table? In what ways could this representation be misleading? In what ways does it correctly convey the results of the survey.

After having discussed the students' own data sets, the class will then turn to an example from the SAT itself. Without reading the passage, what do you as a reader immediately notice about the data provided? Students should note the following:

- What units are used?
- What does the graph suggest is the independent variable?
- What does the graph suggest is the dependent variable?
- What conclusions can you immediately draw from looking at the graph?

Then, have students read through the passage aloud. Do the written findings support their initial understanding of the graph? What discrepancies do they see between the data presented in the graph and the author's interpretation of it? Then, students go through in pairs to answer the questions posed, using their own initial findings to justify their answers.

Building Vocabulary. Oftentimes, Latino/a students who have not yet had an opportunity to develop high level English vocabulary skills can balk at the words that the SAT asks students to identify and apply. However, when we began to use bilingualism as a tool for empowerment, we saw that our students were able to more easily tackle high-level vocabulary more easily than perhaps their monolingual peers would. When looking at SAT questions that target vocabulary students should ask themselves the following:

- Does this word sound like any word in Spanish that I know? Does it contain a word similar to the Spanish?

- Break down the word into syllables. Are any of the syllables familiar, in either Spanish or English? Where else have I seen these syllables (or roots), and what do they mean? It can often be beneficial for students to learn to identify the building blocks of words so that they can craft an educated guess of its meaning.

If students do not know the answer, review methods for them to memorize it in future. Some tools that they can utilize include:

- Finding a similar word in Spanish
- Using the word in their own words or in a story
- Drawing the definition or visual representation of the word
- Coming up with a mnemonic device

SAT MATH

The SAT Math test is broken into a 55-minute section that permits the use of a calculator and another 25-minute section that must be completed without a calculator. The math section focuses on solving algebraic problems and analyzing data provided in the test. Many questions will be word problems that students might be required to solve in a real-life scenario. Other questions will provide informational graphics that students must use to answer the question at hand. Unlike other sections of the test, students will be asked to fill in multiple-choice bubbles as well as write numbers that they compute themselves into a grid. The SAT math section primarily targets algebra skills, as well as data analysis. For this reason, it is important to focus on the skills developed in the ACT algebra lessons rather than those outlined in the ACT geometry and trigonometry sections.

SAT ESSAY

The optional essay section of the SAT is fifty minutes long. This section asks that students read and respond using an essay form to a 650-750 word passage. This will require that students not only understand what they are reading, but also their ability to analyze and succinctly and eloquently respond to the passage. Specifically, students are asked to articulate how the author builds their argument in the designated passage. As such, the critical reading and grammar skills developed throughout this curriculum will help prepare students to succeed on this portion of the exam. In addition, students should be given the opportunity to practice their own English writing skills. Peer-editing will help writers further their own skill through editing, while also allowing readers to learn from the successes and weak points in their classmates' work.

LESSON ONE: WHAT MAKES A GOOD ESSAY?

Introduction to the Essay. For five minutes, students free write on sticky notes in either Spanish or English or draw pictures about what it means to write well. Then, students place all of their sticky notes on the wall. As a group, students then group similar sticky notes together. Looking at the students, what do they see emerge as the central components of a good essay? Write these broader categories on a board or in a handout that students can hold onto. The instructor should add any other elements that students miss or are not familiar with, such as writing a thesis, organizing an essay, or including supporting arguments.

Identifying the Dos and Don'ts of Essay Writing. The instructor brings in three different essays. One is of high quality with a engaging introduction and strong thesis, a well supported and organized argument, and an engaging conclusion. One is of medium quality: while it possesses some of the aforementioned attributes, it may be lacking in organization or supporting arguments, or contain spelling and grammar errors. The final essay does not have a coherent argument or organization. In pairs, students read all three articles and mark down what is great, okay and needs improvement about each article. Then, each pair shares with a different pair, before the instructor works with the students to analyze these essays in groups.

Responding to the Prompt. The instructor brings in several prompts offered by the SAT or ACT writing sections, depending on what you are preparing the students for in the current lesson. The students read the prompt using the active reading skills acquired throughout this course. The students then discuss orally how they would respond. What elements of the good essays could they apply to answer this prompt themselves? What might be challenging about responding to this prompt, and what are some techniques students can use to avoid the pitfalls of the poor essays?

LESSON TWO: MAPPING AN ESSAY

Instructors may consider doing all of these activities first in Spanish (either orally or written depending not students' needs), and then in English, so that students can focus on the structure of the essay rather than the language in which it is written.

Understanding Essay Writing Visually. The instructor should bring in a visual representation of the essay format. These include the essay pyramid or the essay map. Whichever visual representation the instructor chooses, it should highlight good organization of an essay (introduction, thesis, supporting arguments, counter arguments, conclusions and takeaways). In a group, students review this visual representation

Understanding Essay Writing Kinesthetically. The instructor hands out different excerpts of a single essay to different students. Students must decide if their personal section of the essay is the introduction, the thesis, a supporting argument, a counter argument, or the conclusion. Then, students must stand up and organize themselves in order from introduction to conclusion. Beginning at the introduction, students read their different sections in order. Does the essay that they rebuilt make sense? If not, what do they need to change, and why? Is there another way that this author could have chosen to organize them same essay more effectively?

Mapping for the Prompt. The instructor brings in several prompts offered by the SAT or ACT writing sections, depending on what you are preparing the students for in the current lesson. The students read the prompt using the active reading skills acquired throughout this course. Then, students have ten minutes to do an outline of the essay that they would write. The instructor may consider giving a blank copy of the previously explained visual representation to support students in organizing their thoughts for the first time in this format. Students then share and offer critiques in pairs, followed by smaller groups, before workshopping their outline with the whole class.

LESSON THREE: PUTTING PEN TO PAPER

Putting Pen to Paper. The instructor brings ACT or SAT essay prompts. Students may choose the prompt to which they wish to respond. Before they begin, students actively read their prompt, putting into their own words what this prompt is asking. Students then use the visual representation provided in the last class to map out their essay. This map should include the "hook," introduction, thesis, supporting arguments, supporting details, counterarguments and the conclusion. The writing of the essay can be timed or untimed, completed in class or as homework, depending on the needs and preferences of the students.

Workshopping. Students all pass their essays to the left. Each student reads their peers essay. With a green highlighter or pen, students underline those parts of the essay that are very strong. On a separate piece of paper, editors describe why they highlighted or underlined these sections. Students should also highlight or underline parts that are good but could be improved in yellow or orange, and parts that are not coherent or relevant in red. Again, students should explain on a separate piece of paper why they colored coded they way they did.

Editing. Using the feedback provided by their peers, students take the time to edit their essays. This can either be done at home or in class. Then, students meet individually with the instructor to review both drafts. What great changes did they make? What do students still need to work on? Make sure that the instructor records these goals so that the next time this activity is offered, instructors can refer back to the sheet to best explain what progress has been made.

LESSON FOUR: WRITING THE SAT ESSAY SECTION UNDER TIME

Understanding the Instructions. Students read the instructions for the SAT Writing section aloud. Remind students that these instructions will not change from test to test, so if they are comfortable with them now, they will not need to use any of the testing time to read them again. What are the keywords that they see in the instructions? How long will they have to complete the SAT Writing section? How long will they have for each question? What should they have on their desks for the SAT Math section?

Review the test-taking tools used in the rest of the SAT sections. Have students use practice problems to explain the following concepts in the context of the SAT Writing section:

- *Responding to the Prompt.* In your own words, what is the prompt asking you? Label the different components of the prompt A, B, C, D, etc. so that you make sure you are responding to each part of the question.

- *Mapping an Essay*. Why is it important to map your essay before you write? How much time should you spend mapping your essay before you start writing?

XIII. **Practice Test.** Instructors proctor the ACT Writing section.

XIV. **Wind Down.** Students talk about what it felt like to take the test. What were they surprised about? What was most challenging? What parts were easier? What will they work on for next time?

LESSON FIVE: LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

While grading the previous SAT Writing tests, instructors should look for patterns of errors. What kinds of questions are students consistently struggling with? Identify the tools and concepts necessary for success on these questions to support students moving forward.

Lesson Objective: Students will have the opportunity to recognize certain patterns of error. By recognizing individual and group patterns of error, students have the possibility to set new goals for improvement and celebrate milestones from this unit.

XVII. **Introduction**. Timeline check-in. While referring to the college-application timeline that they created and/or received at the beginning of the course, where are they in the process? Recognize the significant achievements that they have made having prepared for the SAT: they have completed the test! What are the steps that will happen moving forward?

XVIII. **Patterns of Errors.** Instructors address the patterns of errors found in the practice tests. They should re-introduce the concepts that students consistently struggled with before reviewing similar questions from other practice tests in order to solidify this new knowledge.

XIX. **Individual Successes and Errors.** Instructors meet with individual students while pairs are collaborating. Instructors should give them their score using the rubric for the SAT writing section and identify students' strengths. What question type did they consistently get right? What has improved since the last, untimed essay? Celebrate this success! Now, identify individual patterns of error or test-taking difficulty. Was more challenging now that students were being timed? Some questions to think about when discussing ways to improve moving forward are:

- What do they believe they did very well on? What do they recognize themselves as an area for improvement?
- How can they improve their time management skills?
- How can they practice grammar, style or rhetorical errors found in their essay?

XX. **Goal Setting.** Thinking of their personal and group errors, students write out new goals and action steps specifically for the SAT Writing test. Students should follow the format provided the goal setting activity in lesson two of "Navigating the College Application" section. If students are comfortable, they should share their goals with their peers. Now, return to their original goals from the beginning of the course. What have they accomplished? What else do they need to continue to be proactive about moving forward?

LESSON SIX: PERSONAL ESSAYS

This lesson should be completed after the admissions workshop on writing the personal essay. Instructions for the workshop are included in the next section.

Defining the Personal Essay. Students receive two different essays. One is a personal essay, or the kind of essay that one might complete for the College Application. The other is an academic essay, the genre that students will be expected to complete on the SAT and ACT writing sections. How are the essays different? What are the similarities that remain between the two different genres? The teacher could either discuss this orally, or draw a venn diagram on the board that students can fill in before discussing the diagram as a group.

Who Am I? On a blank piece of paper, students free write or draw visual representations about who they are. What is important to them? What makes them unique? What are they passionate about? What upsets them in this world? How would their friends and family describe them? What have I accomplished that I am proud of? What are my goals. This activity can be done in Spanish, English or without written language depending on students' preferences.

Tell a Story. Looking at the product of their "Who Am I?" activity, students think of a story or anecdote that exemplifies the characteristics they included. Students turn to a partner, and tell the story orally.

For homework, students will write down this story in five hundred words or less. The instructor may choose to adapt the editing activity from the lesson three to workshop these essays throughout the year. By the end of the year, students should have a complete draft of their personal essay for their Common Application.

MORE RESOURCES FOR THE SAT

Khan Academy

One of the most exceptional resources I encountered during my research on the SAT, PSAT and the college application process was Khan Academy. This completely free online resource offers a full preparation course for high school students preparing for both the PSAT and SAT. Once students create an online profile, they can send their SAT or PSAT score directly to Khan Academy through the College Board Website. Alternatively, students may take a practice test on the website to see where their strengths and weaknesses lie. Furthermore, instructors can create a course and track students' progress online. While computer access during our first year of programming limited our ability to use Khan Academy to its fullest, this is an exceptional tool that will allow students to continue to prepare themselves for success independently from the prep class setting. In addition, the Khan Academy website offers resources on the college admission process including choosing a college, paying for school, navigating the college application process and developing a strong academic record in high school.

PART III
Admission Office Workshops for Students and Families

OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOPS

I. Mock Admissions Committee

- Understand how colleges decide
- Become familiar with the Common Application
- Recognize how applicants stand out for admissions officers
- Identify the importance of applying to multiple colleges

II. College Process for Parents

- Understand that college is an option for all
- Familiarize parents with the preparation and application timelines
- Highlight the requirements for admission
- Explore Financial Aid options for documented and undocumented students

III. Essay Workshop

- Recognize the importance of the essay
- Explore the types of questions
- Understand what colleges seek in an essay
- Develop a theme
- Learn tools for revision

WORKSHOP I: MOCK ADMISSION COMMITTEE

Date: March 23, 2016	**Location:** Salvation Army, Mount Vernon, OH	**Leader:** Diane Kenealy
Objective(s): ● SWBAT explain the admissions process, including in their explanation the following key terms: Common App, committee, admit, waitlist, and deny. ● SWBAT describe the key factors that play a role in admissions decisions for colleges and universities. ● SWBAT synthesize information to create a list of "stand-out" elements of strong college applications.		
Activity & Description	Time	Materials Needed
Welcome and Introductions ● Introduce yourself ● Candy – when and how ● Have students introduce themselves with the following info: name, grade, school, favorite animal and why	5 minutes 4:30-4:35	● Folders ● Pens
Statement of Objectives: Share the objectives for today's class	2 minutes 4:35-4:37	● Lesson Plan ● Powerpoint (if possible)
Introduction to Martin College Call on students to read the description of Martin. Then, ask the following questions: ● How big is Martin College? ● What are the strongest programs at Martin? ● What are the outstanding qualities of the educational program at Martin? ● What is the mean GPA? ● What is the SAT range? ACT range? ● What percentage of students who apply are admitted to Martin?	8 minutes 4:37 – 4:45	● Purple Martin College Description (back of right side of folder)
Review Vocabulary Review Terms: Common App, committee, admit, waitlist, deny Solicit student ideas, then give definitions ● **Common Application (Common**	3 min 4:45-4:48	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity (white sheet on left side of folder)

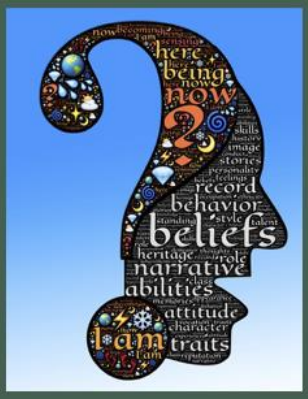
App): An application that students can fill out to apply for undergraduate college admission. The application is used by over 500 different schools. *By filling out the common app, you can apply to many schools at the same time!* ● **Admissions Committee:** A group of people at the college/university who is responsible for reading the applications, discussing why a student should or should not be admitted to the college/university, and making final decisions. ● **Admit:** The student is accepted to the university/college. ● **Waitlist:** The college may or may not admit the student. The student is basically "on hold" until the college figures out if they will have room. ● **Deny:** The student is NOT accepted to the university/college.		
Guiding Questions, or How do Colleges Decide? ● Have students read the different sections ● Describe ***fit*** and what it means	7 min 4:48-4:55	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet
Intro: Dive into Reading Applications- Pairings and Note-Taking ● Common App can be overwhelming, so we are going to break this down. ● Each partnership gets 1 applicant ● We'll start with Academics. You'll have time to work with your partner to take some notes (bullet points) ● We'll share ouR notes/take notes on all of the applicants for each section. Then, we'll continue.	5 min 4:55-5:00	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet
Academics:	10 minutes	● Powerpoint

Give students time to do each of the following: ● Review grades and trends ● Review coursework (remind students of school context) ● Review testing Then, review with all students.	5:00-5:10	● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet ● Individual Apps
Extracurricular Give students time to review extracurricular activities and length of involvement. Ask: is this student likely to contribute to our campus environment? Then, review with all students.	10 minutes 5:10 – 5:20	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet ● Individual Apps
Personal Give students time to read over personal aspects of the student: ● Family background ● Essay ● Letters of recommendation (scan for highlights or flags)	15 minutes 5:20 – 5:35	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet ● Individual Apps
Final Review: Have each group recap our students.	10 minutes 5:35-5:45	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet ● Individual Apps
Final Decisions Have students do the following: ● Admit 1 student ● Waitlist 1 student ● Deny 1 student	5 minutes 5:45-5:50	● Powerpoint ● Admissions Committee Activity Sheet ● Individual Apps
Takeaways and Questions Have students write down what they remember from this lesson; what they want to talk to parents about; etc. Have students write down and/or share questions	5-10 minutes 5:50 – 6:00	● Powerpoint ● Hot pink takeaways and questions sheet

MOCK ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

March 23, 2016
Diane Kenealy

Introductions!



- Name
- Grade
- School
- Favorite animal and why

Objectives:

By the end of our activity today, you will be able to:

- explain the college admissions process, including in your explanation the following key terms: **Common App, committee, admit, waitlist,** and **deny**.
- describe the key factors that play a role in admissions decisions for colleges and universities.
- synthesize information to create a list of "takeaways" that you will use to drive your own college application process.

Cannon Forest College

- How big is Cannon Forest College?
- What are the strongest programs at Cannon Forest?
- What are classes like at Cannon Forest?
- What is the mean GPA?
- What is the SAT range? ACT range?
- What percentage of students who apply are admitted to Cannon Forest?

Vocabulary

- **Common Application (Common App)**
  - An application that students can fill out to apply for college admission. The application is used by over 500 different undergraduate schools. *By filling out the common app, you can apply to many schools at the same time!*
- **Admissions Committee:**
  - A group of people at the college/university that is responsible for reading the applications, discussing why a student should or should not be admitted to the college/university, and making final decisions.
- **Admit:**
  - The student is accepted to the university/college.
- **Waitlist:**
  - The college may or may not admit the student. The student is basically "on hold" until the college figures out if they will have room.
- **Deny:**
  - The student is NOT accepted to the university/college.

How do colleges decide?

Diving In: Application Review

ACADEMIC REVIEW

Grades:

- What are the student's grades?
- What is the trend for the student's grades? Are grades going up or down?

Coursework:

- Has the student taken challenging or "hard" classes within the context of his/her school?
- Do the classes make sense given the student's interests?

Testing:

- What are the student's test scores?
- Do the scores fit with our historical testing score range?
- Do the scores "make sense" given the courses the student has taken and the grades he/she/ze has received?

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Max**
- **Daniel**
- **Abby**

EXTRACURRICULAR REVIEW

- What does the student do outside of class?
- Has the student been involved in these activities for a long time or just 1-2 years?
- What are the student's passions/interests?
- Does the student appear to be an active participant in school?
- Is the student working part-time?
- Does the student help with family responsibilities?
- Is this student likely to contribute to our campus environment?

EXTRACURRICULAR HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Max**
- **Daniel**
- **Abby**

PERSONAL REVIEW

Character

Kindness

Integrity

- Is there anything in the student's background that stands out?
- Are there any unique circumstances for this student?
- What qualities or talents did the student reveal in his/her/zir essay?
- How would you describe this student based on the letters of recommendation?

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- Max
- Daniel
- Abby

FINAL DECISIONS:

Who will we ADMIT?
Who will we WAITLIST?
Who will we DENY?

TAKEAWAYS AND QUESTIONS

THANK YOU!

MATERIALS FOR WORKSHOP I: ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

HANDOUT I: GUIDING QUESTIONS

Admissions Committee Activity

For today's activity, you will participate in a Mock Admissions Committee. You are a member of the Admissions Team at Cannon Forest College, and you receive three (3) applications. You will read over the files of each of these three candidates. As you read, you will take notes about each applicant to see if they are a great match with Cannon Forest College. Remember that the acceptance rate at Cannon Forest is 33%. By the end of our committee, you must:

- **Admit 1 student**
- **Waitlist 1 student**
- **Deny 1 student**

Guiding Questions

Use the questions below to guide you in your decision-making process.

ACADEMIC	*Grades:* ● What are the student's grades? ● What is the trend for the student's grades? Are grades going up or down? *Coursework:* ● Has the student taken challenging or "hard" classes within the context of the school? ● Do the classes make sense given the student's academic interests? *Testing:* ● What are the student's test scores? ● Do the scores fit with our students' historical testing range? ● Do the scores "make sense" given the courses the student has taken and the grades he/she/ze has received? *Essay:* ● Is the essay focused? ● Is the essay strong grammatically?
EXTRACURRI	● What does the student do outside of class?

CULAR	● Has the student been involved in these activities for a long time or just 1-2 years? ● What are the student's passions/interests? ● Does the student appear to be an active participant in his/her/zir school? ● Is the student working part-time? ● Does the student help with family responsibilities? ● Is this student likely to contribute to our campus environment?
PERSONAL	● Is there anything in the student's background that stands out to you? ● Are there any unique circumstances for this student? ● What qualities or talents did the student reveal in his/her/zir essay? ● Based on the letters of recommendation, how would you describe this student?

Candidate Rating Form

Use this form to make your ratings of the candidates. Consider all of the information available for each of these three sections. Make your notes and comments in the space provided.

NAME	ACADEMIC	EXTRACURRICULAR	PERSONAL
	May include: ● Grades ● Number of AP/IB/Honors/Advanced classes ● Testing scores ● Quality of writing in the essay	May include activities listed by the student and/or activities mentioned in the recommendation letters	May include information from throughout the application, including: ● Student background info ● The essay ● Recommendations
Max			
Daniel			
Abby			

Sample College Profile

Cannon Forest College

Founded in 1878, Cannon Forest College is a very selective liberal arts institution in Oregon. The school is located two hours south of Portland. Our 2,100 students hail from all 50 states and over 20 different countries. Approximately 70% of students receive financial aid.

While Cannon Forest is best known for its English program, the school offers over 35 different majors in a variety of fields. Most popular majors include biology, political science, sociology, modern languages, and music.

Cannon Forest is part of NCAA Division III. There are 26 Varsity sports offered on campus. Cannon Forest students are very engaged in community service work, both on campus and in the surrounding area. In fact, 80% of students participate in at least 15 hours of community service each year.

Cannon Forest has received praise for its rigorous classes. Most classes are discussion-based, and students are expected to complete their own research during the senior year. 85% of students from Cannon Forest go on to pursue graduate school in their chosen field.

The acceptance rate for Cannon Forest College is 33%. The admissions process is holistic. We consider a student's academic and personal strengths when considering admission.

Mean GPA: 3.70

SAT Range (Middle 50%):	Critical Reading:	620-720
	Math:	600-700
	Writing:	610-710

ACT Range (Middle 50%): 27-31

TAKEAWAYS AND QUESTIONS

Name: _____

In the space below, please write down your reflections about today's admissions workshop. What are your "takeaways" that you want to remember as you start applying to colleges?

My takeaways are:

Are there any questions that you still have about the admissions process?

My questions are:

HANDOUT V: EXAMPLE APPLICATIONS

See Appendix.

HANDOUT VI: EXAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS AND FAMILIES (SPANISH)

23 de marzo, 2016

Queridos padres y parientes,

Para empezar, una introducción pequeña: Soy Diana Kenealy. Trabajo en la universidad de Kenyon como directora de admisiones. Me gradué de Kenyon en el 2008, y desde el 2008, he trabajado en el área de educación. He sido una maestra y subdirectora de una escuela secundaria. En todo lo que hago, estoy motivada por mi creencia que todos los estudiantes pueden asistir a la universidad y que todos merecen las mismas oportunidades para saber cómo es el proceso de escoger una universidad excelente.

Muchas gracias por permitirles a sus hijos estudiantes participar en la actividad hoy. Al involucrarse en actividades como ésta, sus hijos están dando el primer paso para entrar y tener éxito en la universidad.

La actividad de hoy es una actuación en la que los estudiantes adoptan el rol de los directores de admisiones. Ellos van a leer las aplicaciones de tres estudiantes. Después de que han leído las aplicaciones, yo voy a guiarlos por el proceso de admisiones que hacemos en universidades como Kenyon. Los estudiantes van a hablar sobre los requisitos para solicitar a la universidad. Además de eso, van a ver qué distingue una solicitud a la universidad magnífica para que en un futuro cercano puedan entregar sus propias solicitudes excelentes.

Les invito a que hablen con sus hijos sobre sus pensamientos y memorias de la actividad de hoy. Si ustedes tienen preguntas sobre el proceso de admisión, no duden en llamarme o mandarme un correo electrónico. Muchas gracias, otra vez, por el apoyo a los estudiantes en su búsqueda de una universidad perfecta para ellos.

Sinceramente,

Diana Kenealy
Kenyon College
Directora de Admisiones
303.596.6202
dianemkenealy@gmail.com

WORKSHOP II: FAMILIES' WORKSHOP
"EL CAMINO A LA UNIVERSIDAD"

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

¿Quiénes son ustedes?

Preguntas:

- ¿Cómo se llama?
- ¿Cuál es su estación (primavera, verano, otoño, invierno) favorita? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Cuántos hijos/hijas tiene?
- ¿Cuál es una de sus memorias favoritas sobre uno de sus hijos?
- Por favor completa la frase: en diez años, ojala que mi hijo/a_____.

Objetivos

Al final de esta presentación, ustedes podrían:

- tener conversaciones con sus hijos sobre la importancia de la universidad
- hablar con sus hijos sobre los pasos más importantes en el camino a la universidad
- hablar con sus hijos sobre cómo escoger una lista de universidades a cuales deben solicitar
- hablar con sus hijos sobre cómo solicitar ayuda financiera para asistir a la universidad
- ofrecer a sus hijos y otros miembros de su familia/comunidad algunos recursos para investigar las becas disponibles para sus estudiantes
- entender el proceso de solicitar a la universidad para los estudiantes indocumentados

LA IMPORTANCIA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD

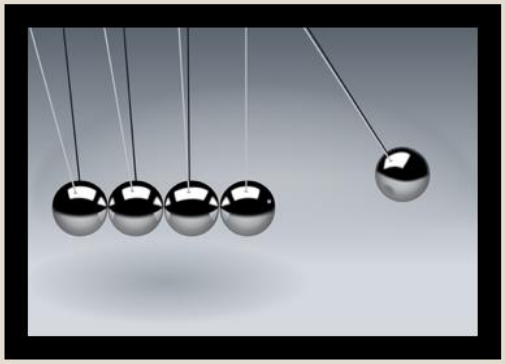
¿Por qué es importante la universidad?

Oxford University

- Lograr un ingreso más grande
- Lograr un acceso mejor a los servicios de salud
- Tener más posibilidades de escoger una carrera
- Tener más tiempo para participar en actividades recreativas

("Sección I: ¿Por qué es importante la universidad?")

¡Toma acción!



La importancia de la universidad

En la página 2 de su guía, crea una lista con su hijo/a de ideas de cómo es importante la universidad.

Los Requisitos de Admisión

- Un currículo rigoroso
- Las calificaciones buenas (un GPA de 3.0 es una buena meta)
- Las calificaciones de uno de estos exámenes: el SAT o el ACT
- Los actividades extracurriculares (deportes, servicio comunitario, trabajo)
- Por lo menos, una composición
- Por lo menos, dos cartas de recomendación (escrito por los maestros)

La preparación académica

- Los estudiantes deben asegurar que han tomado los siguientes clases al graduarse de la escuela secundaria:
  - 4 años de inglés
  - 4 años de matemáticas
  - 3-4 años de ciencias
  - 3-4 años de historia
  - 2 años de un idioma distinto (¡El español parece excelente en las solicitudes!)
- Los estudiantes deben tratar, lo más que es posible, a tomar clases rigorosos. Mount Vernon High School ofrece clases que se llaman **AP (Colocación avanvazada).** Estas clases proveen buena preparación para la universidad.
- Es importante que los estudiantes están recibiendo calificaciones buenas en todos sus clases (una A o B).

Los exámenes más importantes:

La mayoría de las universidades requieren uno de estos dos exámenes

ACT

- Un examen nacional de admisión a la universidad
- 3 horas y media
- "Examina los conocimientos de los estudiantes en inglés, matemáticas, lectura, y ciencias" ("Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad" 3).

Exámenes de Práctica: actstudent.org

SAT

- Un examen nacional de admisión a la universidad
- 3 horas y tres cuartos de hora
- "Examina el pensamiento crítico, el razonamiento matemático, y las habilidades de escritura" ("Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad" 3).

Exámenes de Práctica: sat.collegeboard.org

¿Cuándo deben tomar los exámenes?

**La mayoría de los estudiantes empiezan a tomar estos exámenes en la primavera de su onceavo año. A más tardar, los estudiantes deben tomar los exámenes en diciembre del último año de preparatorio.*

ACT

Fecha del examen:	Fecha para inscribirse:
10 de septiembre 2016	5 de agosto 2016
22 de octubre 2016	16 de septiembre 2016
10 de diciembre 2016	4 de noviembre 2016
11 de febrero 2017	13 de enero 2017
8 de abril 2017	3 de marzo 2017
10 de junio 2017	5 de mayo 2017

("ACT & SAT Test Dates (2016-2017)").

SAT

Fecha del examen:	Fecha para inscribirse:
1 de octubre 2016	1 de septiembre 2016
5 de noviembre 2016	7 de octubre 2016
3 de diciembre 2016	3 de noviembre 2016
21 de enero 2017	21 de diciembre 2016
11 de marzo 2017	10 de febrero 2017
6 de mayo 2017	7 de abril 2017
3 de junio 2017	9 de mayo 2017

*Estas fechas puedan cambiar.

*Los estudiantes puedan tomar los exámenes muchas veces, pero cada vez, tienen que pagar para tomarlos.

Los actividades extracurriculares

¿Qué va a ofrecer este estudiante a nuestra comunidad?

- Talento artistico: música, teatro, pintura, etcétera.
- Liderazgo: gobierno estudiantil, National Honor Society, trabajo en el anuario, etcétera.
- Atletismo: Los deportes
- Un espíritu de compasión: servicio comunitario
- Diligencia: empleos (pagados o que no se pagan)

**Los oficiales de admisión prefieren ver la participación continua en unas cuantas actividades en lugar de una amplia gama de actividades de corta duración*

La composición de presentación personal:

- La composición es su oportunidad de compartir su identidad autentico. Los oficiales de admisiones quieren entender qué tipo de persona es el/la estudiante.
- Hay muchas opciones de apuntes. Los estudiantes deben escoger el apunte que les parecen más importante.
- Corrígela minuciosamente, asegúrate que fluya bien, y pídeles a otras personas que le lean a ver si suena como ti. Tu debes ser la única persona que esta escribiendo y revisando la composición. La composición es una parte muy importante de su aplicación.

¿Cómo puedan ustedes apoyar a sus estudiantes con la composición?

¿Demuestra esta composición las características más importantes y distintas de mi hijo/a?

¿Cómo se describe su hijo/a? ¿Cuál es distinto sobre él/ella?

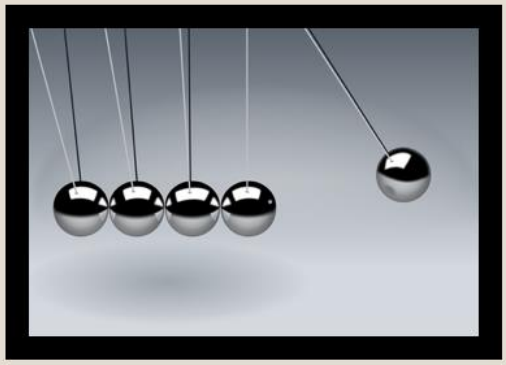
Otras Ideas:

- ¡Anime a su estudiante a escribir por algunos minutos cada día.
- Hable con su estudiante sobre sus ideas para la composición.
- Haga preguntas a su estudiante sobre cómo va la composición.
- Requiere que su estudiante lee su composición varias veces.

Preguntas:

- ¿Dónde puede encontrar la solicitud? → www.commonapp.org
- ¿Cuándo necesita entregarla? → Cada escuela tiene una fecha límite diferente. Es importante investigar cada escuela a ver cuándo necesitan entregar la solicitud.
- ¿Quién va a leer la solicitud? → Por la mayoría de universidades, la solicitud va a ser leído por dos personas. A veces, un grupo de oficiales van a hablar sobre la solicitud y hacer una decisión juntos sobre la solicitud.

¡Toma acción!



Los pasos importantes para estudiantes

- Examinar los requisitos académicos
- Tomar el examen ACT o SAT
- Pensar en las actividades extracurriculares
- Prepararse para la composición, escribir la composición, y revisarlo
- Pensar en quienes van a escribir las cartas de recomendación
- Llenar la solicitud

CREANDO LA LISTA DE UNIVERSIDADES A CUALES VAN A SOLICITAR

Preguntas para eligir una universidad

- Considera tus requisitos: ¿Qué características son absolutamente necesario para usted?
  - Las especializaciones que son disponibles en la escuela
  - El precio de la universidad y las formas de ayuda financiera que tienen
- Considera tus preferencias: ¿Qué características quieres en una universidad?
  - ¿Prefieres una escuela grande o pequeña?
  - ¿Qué tipo de actividades (deportes, servicio comunitario, teatro) son disponibles para los estudiantes?
  - ¿Es el campus diverso? ¿Hay algunos recursos para estudiantes de culturas distintas?
  - ¿Dónde está la universidad? ¿Prefieres vivir cerca de su familia? ¿Prefieres estar en una ciudad o en el campo?

Una Sugerencia

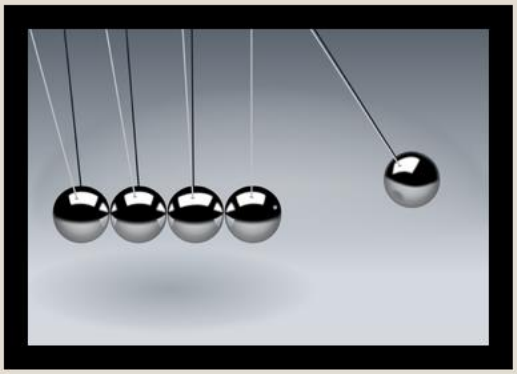
Solo tú puedes decidir qué tipo de escuela es mejor para ti. Recuerda que hay más que 4,000 universidades. Lo más importante es encontrar uno que te queda bien.

Tipos de Escuelas

Estudiantes deben solicitar a varias escuelas. Es importante preparar una lista de investigación con tres tipos de escuelas:

- Opciones probables: El estudiante está más que preparado para asistir a estas universidades. El estudiante tiene calificaciones y resultados de exámenes más altas que los requisitos de estas escuelas.
- Opciones realistas: El estudiante está bien preparado para asistir a estas universidades. El estudiante tiene calificaciones y resultados de exámenes que están en el medio de la gama para alumnos que han sido aceptados a esta universidad.
- Opciones asequibles: Es posible que el estudiante está preparado para asistir a esta universidad. Es posible que el estudiante tiene calificaciones y resultados de exámenes al bajo de la gama comparado a otros estudiantes que han sido aceptados a esta universidad, pero hay algo (un interés particular, los deportes, un programa excelente) que indica que el estudiante va a tener éxito en esta universidad.

¡Toma acción!



Lista de universidades

- Responder a las preguntas sobre lo que es necesario y preferible para los estudiantes.
- Crear la lista de opciones. Deben tener por lo menos 2 universidades de cada tipo (realistas, probables, y asequibles).

SOLICITANDO AYUDA FINANCIERA

Preparación financiera para ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos

Aunque puede parecer un costo demasiado grande, la universidad puede ser asequible para todos. Sólo tienen que seguir los pasos requisitos para recibir ayuda financiera.

Para ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos:

Llene la Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes que se llama FAFSA, que va a ser disponible el 1 de enero para los estudiantes que están en su final año de secundaria. **Necesita un número de seguro social para llenarlo. *Si el estudiante no es un ciudadano de los Estados Unidos, no debes llenar el FAFSA.*

- Después de llenar el FAFSA, ustedes van a recibir el SAR (Reporte de Ayuda Estudiantil).
- El SAR va a dar un cálculo de la ayuda que va a ofrecer el gobierno, y cuánto dinero ustedes van a necesitar pagar (solo es un cálculo – cada escuela puede ofrecer algo diferente).

(**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad"**).

Pueda llenar la FAFSA aquí: https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/es/fafsa

Opciones de Ayuda Financiera

Las Subvenciones (Grants)

"Son regalos en efectivo que no se tienen que pagar, basadas en la necesidad financiera, según lo determine la FAFSA" (**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad"**).

- "Pell Grant: La fuente más grande de dinero federal gratis para los estudiantes con necesidad financiera. Las cantidades varían desde $400 a hasta más de $4,000 al año" (**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad"**).
- Otras subvenciones federales

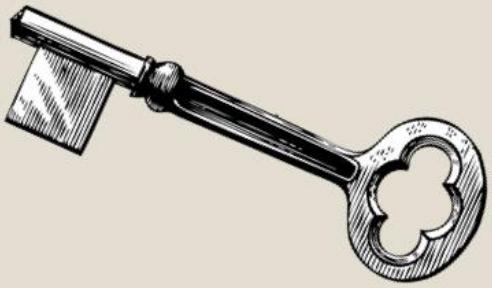
Becas (Scholarships)

- "Dinero que no se tiene que pagar, por lo general basado en las habilidades, intereses, áreas de estudio o desempeño escolástico del estudiante" (**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad")**.
  - "Subvenciones atléticas, musicales o por otros talentos especiales
  - Servicio comunitario
  - Buenas calificaciones
  - Altas calificaciones en exámenes" (**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad"**).

Opciones para pagar por la universidad

Opciones

- Empleo-Federal Estudiantil: Muchas universidades ofrecen oportunidades para que los estudiantes puedan trabajar en empleo en el campus. El horario es flexible; entonces los estudiantes puedan enfocarse en sus estudios y trabajar cuando tienen tiempo.
- Préstamos: Hay varios tipos de préstamos que ofrecen a los ciudadanos o residentes permanentes de los EE.UU. No importa su nivel de ingreso – hay préstamos disponibles para cada nivel (**"Manual de preparación para asistir a la universidad"**).

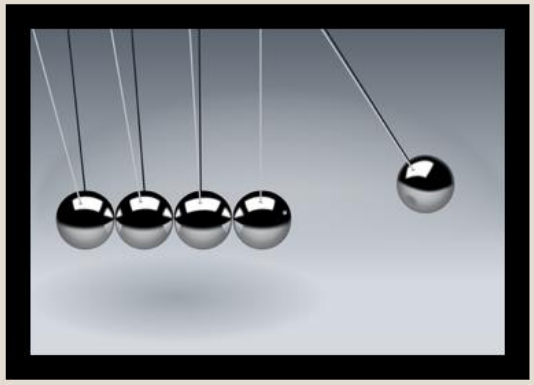


Recursos para becas

- www.fastweb.com
- www.scholarships.com
- www.latinocollegedollars.org
- www.maldef.org

("Keeping The Dream Alive")

¡Toma acción!



Solicitando ayuda financiera

- Investigar los tipos de ayuda financiera en las universidades.
- Investigar las becas.
- Solicitar para las becas.
- Encontrar los documentos importantes.
- Llenar el FAFSA.
- Hablar con las universidades.

EL CAMINO A LA UNIVERSIDAD PARA LOS ESTUDIANTES INDOCUMENTADOS

¿Cómo puede llenar la solicitud sin documentos?

- Usted no debe preocuparse acerca de que su hijo/a les revele su estatus migratoria cuando llene las solicitudes de admisión.
- El Acto de Privacidad y Educación Federal (FERPA) protege la privacidad de los estudiantes en todas las instituciones educativas, incluyendo universidades y colegios. Este tipo de protecciones son las misma para TODAS las instituciones públicas y privadas.
- Sin embargo, es importante que los estudiantes estén honestos a cerca de su estatus migratorio para que pueden recibir ayuda financiera del institución.
- En la solicitud, la siguiente información se pide, pero no es requerida y las solicitudes se procesarán sin ella.
  - País de Ciudadanía: Eligir "Other" para su estatus de ciudadanía
  - Número de Seguro Social: No es necesario. Se les dará un número de identidad (Student ID Number) para que le usen durante el proceso de solicitud y cuando vayan a la universidad.

(Hernandez 9)

¿Qué tipo de apoyo financiero hay para estudiantes indocumentados?

Los estudiantes indocumentados no califican para la ayuda financiera federal/estatal. Sin embargo, hay otras oportunidades que ayudan a los estudiantes a financiar su educación como:

- becas
- préstamos privados
- colegiatura in-state (depende del estado)

(Hernandez 13)

Soy indocumentado, pero mi hijo/a es ciudadano/a de los Estados Unidos. ¿Le afectará mi estatus legal cuando solicite ayuda financiera?

No. Un estudiante que es ciudadano de Estados Unidos y solicita ayuda financiera calificará para ayuda financiera federal y estatal. El estatus legal de sus padres no importa (Hernandez 16).

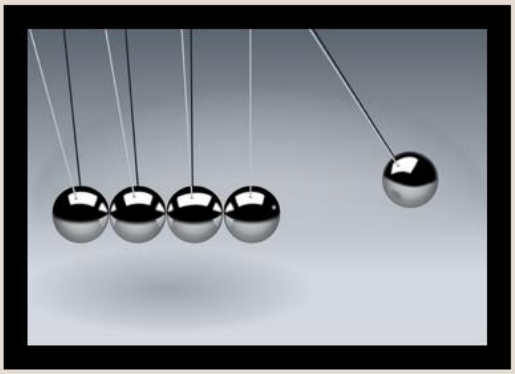
Las becas para estudiantes indocumentados

- Las becas son el medio más común en que los estudiantes indocumentados pagan la universidad. Hay varias becas que no requieren un número de seguro social. Existen sitios en internet que tienen información acerca de becas disponibles para los estudiantes indocumentados. Por ejemplo, hay este sitio excelente, que da una lista de todas las becas que no requieren un número de seguro social:

  http://www.e4fc.org/resources/scholarshiplists.html

(Hernandez 18)

¡Toma acción!



Pasos para estudiantes indocumentados

- Investigar las reglas de las universidades
- Solicitar a las universidades que tienen reglas flexibles o ayuda financiera para los estudiantes indocumentados
- Investigar las becas que son disponibles para estudiantes indocumentados

Preguntas y Respuestas

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GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS (SPANISH)

ESSAY WORKSHOP

Written by Jennifer Delahunty
Edited and revised by
Patricia Priest and Diane Kenealy

QUICK WRITE

Choose one of the following questions. Write your answer to the question honestly. Write in complete sentences. No one will read your writing – this is just for you to practice! You will have 5 minutes.

- What do you think about going to college, honestly? Are you excited? Nervous? What kind of school do you want to attend and why?
- If you were a body of water (lake, ocean, river, creek, etc.), what would you be? Why?
- Write a story using this as your first sentence: "I could hear the thunder rolling in the distance."

Jacobs, Lydia. *Bolt of lightning in a thunderstorm* [Photo]. http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=98917&picture=thunderstorm. Made available through Creative Commons Public Domain License

Want more practice with writing prompts? Check out some fun prompts at: *http://writingprompts.tumblr.com/*

OBJECTIVES

By the end of our activity today, you will be able to:

- explain what the college essay is and what a great essay can do for your application
- analyze strong and weak essays to identify the essential elements of the college essay
- Describe the typical audience for a college essay
- Brainstorm possible essay topics
- Establish a plan to complete your essay

THE COMMON APPLICATION PERSONAL ESSAY

Maximum length is 650 words. Don't go beyond it.

COMMON APPLICATION ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma. It can be anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

http://www.commonapp.org/whats-appening/application-updates/2015-2016-essay-prompts

WHAT CAN A GREAT ESSAY DO FOR YOU?

Distinguish you from the crowd

Show the real you

Highlight a hidden talent or characteristic

THE WEAK ESSAY

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https://www.flickr.com/photos/dukpix/6268070198/in/photostream/

What's missing from the weak essay?

THE EXCELLENT ESSAY

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https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcescobar1/98408751

What are the elements of an excellent essay?

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE ESSAY

- **Interesting Topic** and its meaning to you
- **Voice** – should be yours and yours alone
- **Stance –** what is your take on the topic/situation? How do you feel about it?
- **Mechanics –** The grammar and structure. Are you writing at a college level?

YOUR TOPIC

- What do you care about?
- What concerns/frustrates you?
- What surprises or delights you?
- What defines or distinguishes you?

HOW TO THINK ABOUT YOUR TOPIC

- It should answer one of the Common Application questions.
- It should be something you care about or want to understand.
- It should be something ONLY you could write – but that doesn't mean it has to be earth-shattering.

SPOTLIGHT ON: TOPIC

Let's read the essay entitled "Blank" by Harper Beeland. As we read, think about the topic the author chose.

- Why did the author choose that topic?
- What does the topic tell you about who the author was and who he hopes to be?

REMEMBER: A MOMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE MONUMENTAL…IT CAN BE SMALL!

- A favorite part of the day…
- A situation that made you happy/furious/sad
- The oddest/funniest/best thing about me…
- When I was 8…or 10..or 14…(but bring it back to now)
- *We know you are 17 – you have a lot of life yet to live!*

YOUR VOICE

- What defines your character?
- How do you see the world?
- Write in first person – always.

SPOTLIGHT ON: VOICE

Aditi Rao

For 16 years I have carried a burden heavier than most. From the day I was born this burden has followed me; I was attached to it you could say, inexplicably bound, irreversibly connected. It's the burden of an unpronounceable name. Allow me to explain.

My name is Aditi. It has five letters, two of which are the same, three syllables, and a simple balance of vowels and consonants. Yet this monstrosity of a word twists and torments the tongues of the most fluent speakers. Some eventually get it, some excel at making those strangely impossible sounds come together, some don't settle until phonetic perfection is reached, but that's not a typical case. Instead I'm left with diversity where there should be singularity. I've been asked if my name is Anita with a D, Audit with an extra I, and a personal favorite, Adidas with a T. Yeah, that's right, Adidas.

Aditi means one without limits, boundless, *free*. Ha, the joke is on you, name! You've trapped me in an identity crisis of mispronunciation. My entire existence has been marred by the human propensity to muddle these seemingly simple sounds, and there must be someone to blame.

SPOTLIGHT ON: VOICE

I have often blamed myself for not trying hard enough. In my optimistic days I assumed I could teach people how to say it. "Ah-dee-dee, right?" "Close, it's actually Udh-ith-ee" "So Ad-ith-ee" "Yeah but more like Udh-ith-ee," and after minutes of excruciating pain, and me unraveling into a didactic mess, "I've got it. Ad-ee-toe!" With no insult to the great apes, Jane Goodall probably had an easier time teaching gorillas to write than my futile attempts with my own name. Yet, I ultimately succumbed at the feet of overly hard T-sounds, and for that I am deeply regretful.

I have often blamed my parents for their lack of foresight. Did they just assume that Aditi would just roll off the tongue? Did they consider the limited linguistic palate of the various places we would settle? They say I was named for the meaning. "You are the one without limits, isn't that great?" No, I am not. I am a calamity of sounds, occasionally confused for a shoe company.

YOUR STANCE

The 3 B's:

- Be real.
- Be original.
- Be interested in your topic…and your topic will be interesting to your reader.

If you are interested and interesting in your essay, you reader will be interested, too.

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE: ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

WE, your audience, ARE:

- educated and discerning
- often tired and easily bored
- happy to be taken into your world
- liberal or conservative, it just depends
- humans with passions and pet peeves
- thrilled to read brilliant essays that POP off the page

BRAINSTORM

Options:

- Write down five or six adjectives that you would use to describe yourself.
- If you had a box and had to put 5 things in it that represented you, what would you include?
- Draw a sketch of a place or memory that fascinates you.

MAKE AN IDENTITY WEB.

MAKE A PLAN!

1. Brainstorm a few topics that might be interesting for you.
2. Free write about anything that fascinates, delights, frustrates, or puzzles you. Think about your identity map.
3. Claim your topic. Match your topic to a Common Application question.
4. Write a draft.
5. Read your draft. Do the adjectives describing you come through in your draft?
6. Revise.
7. Revise again.
8. Proofread.

CAUTION: A WORD ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.

- Your feelings are not an essay.
- Only share with us what you'd share with your parents.
- Your feelings should be appropriately expressed.

GOOD ESSAY VS. GREAT ESSAY

Good Essays

- Answer the question.
- Have solid grammar and mechanics.
- Are about a strong topic.
- Show competent voice.
- Contain no errors and nothing memorable.

Great Essays

- Answer the question in an *original* way.
- Have excellent grammar and mechanics.
- Are about an interesting topic.
- Show original voice.
- Demonstrate mature, confident writing.
- Take the reader into the writer's world.
- Are memorable!

ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED…

1. Read your essay out loud – several times.
2. Let a parent and your best friend read it. Does it sound like you? Is the topic appropriate? Ask them – what happens in the course of the essay?
3. Don't let people use their pencil to edit. You edit it!
4. Let the essay sit and give yourself time to rewrite.
5. Match your essay with the right college.
6. Proofread, proofread, proofread.

TWO WORDS ABOUT SUPPLEMENTS

…they count. A lot.

They tell colleges about students…

…and students about colleges.

ALL WRITING IN THE APPLICATION MATTERS!

- ❑ The background info
- ❑ The extracurricular activities
- ❑ The additional information section

The photo "I tend to scribble a lot" is copyright © 2008 Nic McPhee and made available under Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 license
https://www.flickr.com/photos/nicmcphee/2756494307

STANDARD SUPPLEMENT QUESTIONS

- What is there about you—your values, goals, interests, experiences, talents, style – that makes you a good match for XYZ college?
- Why do you want to attend XYZ College?

REMEMBER:

¡Sí se

- It will take time.
- It will take effort.
- You **can** do this!

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STRONG ESSAY

Prompt: Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Last fall, a particularly explosive argument between my Catholic mother and less than religious father ended abruptly with an all-mighty smack of Midwestern thunder. Discussion ceased, my mom went upstairs, and my dad stuck his head into my room.

"I'm going to go see what the wind and sky are doing," he said. A ghost of a smile crossed my face as I recognized his allusion to Tolkien's wandering ranger. He left, and I heard a whistle of angry wind slip in through the front door.

I waited a minute or so in my room, quiet and thinking, before I went to join him on the porch. Floorboards squeaked and groaned as I made my way through the otherwise silent house. A gust of chilling wind greeted me as I stepped outside.

My dad stood tall at the mouth of the porch, facing the street with his arms crossed and face upturned. Lightning ripped across the sky, stripping the world of color. The rain began to drizzle slowly, softly, solemnly downwards.

"It doesn't matter who they are or what they look like," my dad said over the rumbling. "Just make sure that person is someone you can sit and talk to on a random Tuesday night during a thunderstorm."

Then it started to pour. My dad stepped back to avoid the gale and joined me on the wicker couch. We sat in tense silence as the words wove themselves into the falling rain.

The storm's ferocity increased as I considered what he had said. Branches were buffeted and blasted, trunks creaked and swayed, and roots strained to hold themselves down to the still earth below.

I opened my mouth to say something, but closed it after a hanging moment. His message had been received, though I did not know what to make of it. Nevertheless, I felt the powerful truth behind his words, the eternal wisdom of his intention.

A small flutter in my chest grew slowly into a storm of its own; I saw my life and future stretch before me in a new and unusual way. Rather than a road reaching out to an unknown and dark horizon, I imagined my years on the earth superimposed onto a timeline of the entire history of mankind. I saw my existence as it truly is, insignificant and fleeting in comparison to the great expanse of the universe.

I was overwhelmed for a time, but I found myself after some much needed thought. Time was not on my side, nor on that of any human being. The words of another Tolkien creation, Gandalf the Grey, resounded in my mind: “All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you.”

I realized then and there that life is dangerously short. Whether I live to find a partner for that Tuesday night thunderstorm or if I die tomorrow, I promised myself that each moment ahead of me would be cherished and respected for its uniqueness and meaning.

I turned my head away from a particularly violent strike of lightning to glance at my dad’s face. A small trail of water made its way down his cheek to his jawline, still and held high. I’m sure he would insist it was nothing more than a raindrop. To most people, it looked suspiciously close to a tear.

I’m convinced it was a bit of both.

-By Connor Jacob

WEAK ESSAY

Prompt: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Our backgrounds, identities, and talents define us. This is definitely true for me. My background has shaped who I am. I grew up with two loving parents who supported me and cared for me throughout everything I did. Even when I made mistakes or did things I wasn't proud of, my parents were there for me and kept me going. They taught me to fight for want I wanted, never give up, and try my hardest. I am who I am because of them, especially my dad. He always teaches me important lessons about life. He used to go on long walks with me. When we would be walking by the lake at the nature park, he would always give me good advice.

I am interested in lots of different things. I have played field hockey since I was four, and I love the game. My teammates have always meant a lot to me. We accomplish so much more together than we ever could individually. I know I couldnt have gotten through high school without them. I also participate in theater which is really fun. My friends in theater are goofy and they always remind me to see the brighter side of life. I get to be playful around them. Beyond field hockey and theater, I get to do community service. This year, we raised funds for homeless teens. It was a great experience and I grew a lot in the process. Helping other people is really important. Empathy is a trait all people should have. Our world would be better if everyone cared a little bit more.

I don't have any special talents but I always try my hardest and keep going despite obstacles. My parents, friends, and teammates have taught me a lot in high school, and I am shaped by them. I will always be grateful for my background, which defines me.

Prompt: Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

"Blank" by Harper Beeland

I don't know how I did it.

Less than half an inch of snow fell that day; even that was the most I had ever seen in fifteen years of excruciatingly mild Southern winters. It was enough for the county to call off school at ten A.M. Both the bus and my parents were on their way to pick me up by then, but traffic was crushed to stillness by record lows that muzzled city sounds. After nine hours of being cradled in the high school's warm refuge, they released me into the cold. My bus had arrived.

My high school was secluded in the clouds above Chattanooga. It sat atop a hill, from which students could only see the tops of downtown towers, the humpback Appalachian sweep--the city's well-known features. But when I crossed the threshold, I stepped breathless into a dream of unfamiliar topography. I was unprepared for the ambush of blinding white suffocating the hillside down to Dallas Avenue, where cars glided over the lightly frosted asphalt in an orchestra of tapping bumpers. The snow yawned into the distant mountains and turned them so white they blended with the cloud cover, the horizon completely erased.

My world was then so fast and empty. It was so blank.

I could not help that this was the storm I was headed into. There were three more years until my eighteenth birthday, but my adulthood was already written down on paper -- I had decided to become a doctor. My plan was to follow a clear-cut safe route to success without any hurdles to jump over. I never thought I would have to live the day when the sidewalk would be veiled in white, when I would be left feeling naked and afraid.

I thought I had it all figured out long before the snow hit. I came from parents who said they were grown-ups because they each wrote their own story. I guess "doctor" was mine. It became my automatic answer when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. It was manufactured in the countless ranks of my peers who had also outlined their lives down to the minute. I knew my story by heart; that was probably because it was bare bones. It had never seemed complete.

It was missing the most vivid parts of me. I left out how my collection of piano books--Debussy to Beethoven to Ravel to Guaraldi--had been accumulating haphazardly beneath the piano for almost six years. And then there was my bookshelf at home, overrun by notebooks lined with my poems and short stories, each with impulses of their own. I couldn't ignore how a pen and paper kept me up late at night, how melodic phrases pervaded my daily thoughts. Here were the parts that would make my story one worth reading.

When the world went white, I saw a blank page. Flanked by young snow, staring at my chapped hands, I felt older than ever. I permitted myself to do what I was afraid of as my boot made its first imprint in the untouched white. This was the first word of my story, my own story. I was only fifteen, but had my parents been there, they would have told me how grown-up I looked. Wading aimlessly through the drifts, I realized that not knowing where I was going was something to smile about. The story was in the works.

Even under less than half an inch of snow, it seemed as though there was no Dallas Avenue anymore. If I squinted really hard, I could see the golden school bus parked on the corner, waiting to take me home. It was the only trace of color for miles.

Prompt: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

For 16 years I have carried a burden heavier than most. From the day I was born this burden has followed me; I was attached to it you could say, inexplicably bound, irreversibly connected. It's the burden of an unpronounceable name. Allow me to explain.

My name is Aditi. It has five letters, two of which are the same, three syllables, and a simple balance of vowels and consonants. Yet this monstrosity of a word twists and torments the tongues of the most fluent speakers. Some eventually get it, some excel at making those strangely impossible sounds come together, some don't settle until phonetic perfection is reached, but that's not a typical case. Instead I'm left with diversity where there should be singularity. I've been asked if my name is Anita with a D, Audit with an extra I, and a personal favorite, Adidas with a T. Yeah, that's right, Adidas.

Aditi means one without limits, boundless, *free.* Ha, the joke is on you, name! You've trapped me in an identity crisis of mispronunciation. My entire existence has been marred by the human propensity to muddle these seemingly simple sounds, and there must be someone to blame.

I have often blamed myself for not trying hard enough. In my optimistic days I assumed I could teach people how to say it. "Ah-dee-dee, right?" "Close, it's actually Udh-ith-ee" "So Ad-ith-ee" "Yeah but more like Udh-ith-ee," and after minutes of excruciating pain, and me unraveling into a didactic mess, "I've got it. Ad-ee-toe!" With no insult to the great apes, Jane Goodall probably had an easier time teaching gorillas to write than my futile attempts with my own name. Yet, I ultimately succumbed at the feet of overly hard T-sounds, and for that I am deeply regretful.

I have often blamed my parents for their lack of foresight. Did they just assume that Aditi would just roll off the tongue? Did they consider the limited linguistic palate of the various places we would settle? They say I was named for the meaning. "You are the one without limits, isn't that great?" No, I am not. I am a calamity of sounds, occasionally confused for a shoe company.

I have often blamed the HIndu scriptures for their cultural exclusiveness. Why couldn't these supposed diviners of the future see a globalization and westernization so strong that even vocal cords forget they are capable of making certain sounds? Instead India built a fortress of un-sayable names, impenetrable to the tongues beyond and sometimes even within. Yes, HInduism, we get it--you're unique--but tune the strange phonetics down a bit.

I have most often blamed you, the general population, for your egregious violations. However, it is you I must thank for one important thing: giving me deep insight into the word "identity." I understand in the most visceral of ways that I am capable of defining myself, even if that definition is in stark contrast to society's own. To the world, I'm not Aditi; I am a strange derivative, a title spoken more common than not. Alas, to myself that mellifluous name has never been in jeopardy of extinction. I *am* Aditi: unwilling to allow flawed utterances determine who I am.

I rest knowing that the closest homophone to my name is “oddity,” a beautiful word describing that which is comfortable and charming in its idiosyncratic peculiarity. David Bowie’s masterpiece and personal anthem *Space Oddity* may best capture the bittersweet experience, “Here am I sitting in my tin can. Far above the world. Planet Earth is blue. And there’s nothing I can do.” There is a clear inevitability to the mispronunciation, and thus I have learnt to relish in the raw humanity of the situation, understanding both identity and human complexity on a deeper, more satisfactory level. I know now there are limitations to being limitless.

But for the love of God please do not say Adidas.

PART IV: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND TRAINING TUTORS

ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINING TUTORS

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly: What it Means to Teach. In this activity, students free write or draw visual representations of what made they appreciated about their teachers as students. What does their favorite teacher do well? How do they make them feel in the classroom? Individually, students reflect upon how they want to interact with students and facilitate learning as instructors. Then, students share these ideas with a partner. Finally, future tutors write down three goals they have in respect to their philosophy for instruction during this program.

Good and Bad Lesson Plans. Future tutors write down on sticky notes what components make up a good lesson plan. Place all of the sticky notes on the wall. Then, group similar sticky notes together. Using these different groups of ideas, write overarching statements about what it means to craft a good lesson plan. Some qualities of a good lesson plan should:

- Include clear lesson objectives.
- Include clear transitions, rather than abrupt shifts in topic.
- Include differentiated activities. In other words, instructors should incorporate *all* different types of learning, including activities for visual, auditory, kinesthetic and read-write learners.
- Be thoroughly prepared and edited before each lesson.
- Include spare activities in case there is unforeseen time at the end, or if an activity isn't working well.
- For the purposes of this course, tutors should strive to include at least one element of the college process in each lesson, rather than just the standardized test, where time permits.

This activity should then be done again, this time addressing what comprises a bad lesson plan. Compile the two sets of overarching statements into a document. This document will be used as the overarching ethic for lesson-planning for all tutors throughout the year. All tutors should sign it, stating that they will strive to achieve these standards as facilitators throughout the year. Consistent failure to do so could constitute dismissal from the tutoring program by the supervising faculty member and/or community partner.

Implementing Lesson Plans. In a pair, two students take one lesson plan from this handbook. They have half an hour to adapt and plan the lesson. Other students are each assigned a personality (quiet, outgoing, disruptive, enthusiastic, shy, etc.), learning type (visual, auditory,

kinesthetic or read-write) and language preference (preference for oral but not written Spanish, struggle with written but not spoken English, primarily Spanish, primarily English, etc.). Then, the two tutors who adapted the lesson will run the course for the other tutors.

At the end, all tutors give constructive feedback to the two facilitators. Questions for discussion include:

- What did the facilitators do well?
- What could they continue to work on?
- From that was challenging about the lesson?
- How did they meet the needs of each learning type, personality and language preference?
- What elements of good teaching did they include?
- Looking back at their own goals as instructors, what did they do well?
- What skills do they still need to hone throughout the year to achieve these goals?

GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING

1. All tutors are **required** to attend the orientation sessions offered by the community partner and trainings offered by previous tutors and/or the host institution.

2. All tutors should be trained to be sensitive to the needs of bilingual and minority students. Local experts that work with the Latino/a community, including the community partner, must be consulted so that tutors can come to fully understand the structural barriers of being a first-generation, Latino/a student in the local context. When possible, new tutors should shadow community experts and/or partner agencies to learn how best to communicate with families.

3. When possible, tutors should instruct those areas in which they are majoring or minoring. This means have an organized schedule for the curriculum and when each tutor will be coming into the classroom.

4. All tutors should sign the memorandum of understanding and be consistently communicating with the professor overseeing the project. **A teacher must be involved in supervision at all levels of the program to ensure students are meaningfully benefiting from the lessons.**

APPENDIX: REFLECTION

Reflection Questions

In an effort to foster productive introspection that will increase both mentors' sense of deliberateness and their understanding of the broader personal and community contexts, we would like to engage you with the following reflection questions.

I. General Personal Questions:

What do you bring to this experience?

How has your experience revealed your values, attitudes, and biases? How did it reinforce or challenge your values, attitudes, and biases?

What personal characteristics are you coming to understand better as a result of your service and reflection experiences?

II. Project-Based Questions:

What are the strengths and limitations of the project?

What problem does the community based effort seek to address? If the project continued, would the problem go away eventually?

Are there assets in the community that are not being tapped? Explain

III. General Analytical Questions:

How did differences between power and privilege emerge in this experience? What underlying systems influence the power dynamics? What are their effects?

What are the symptoms of the problem and what are the causes?

How do the ethical principles and practices of your program align (or not) with the core beliefs of the community you are working with?

What tensions between individual interest and the common good did you observe? What trade-offs between them occurred? To whom were these trade-offs beneficial or not? Were they appropriate? Why or why not?

IV. Questions to Explore Future Action:

Is enough known about the issue and this community, or is more research needed? Who needs to understand the problem better and be convinced to make a change?

**These questions are based on Barbara Jacoby's "Understanding and Facilitating Critical Reflection," in *Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons Learned*, foreword by Jeffrey Howard. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014, pages 34-36.

MATERIALS

1. College Application Vocabulary Pre-Test, Part 1 (answers in bold)

College Prep Course Pre-Test
Name: _____
Date: _____

Directions: Circle the term that best fits the description.

1. An application status designating that a student has been permitted by a college or university to attend said institution.

A. Associate's Degree
B. Diploma
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

2. An institution of higher learning that hosts many different kinds of schools (for example, an arts conservatory, a school of sciences, and a liberal arts school). These institutions offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

A. University
B. Vocational School
C. Liberal Arts School
D. Community College

3. A diploma granted after attending most four-year colleges. This is also referred to as a Bachelor's Degree.

A. Undergraduate Degree
B. Associate's Degree
C. Graduate Degree
D. Diploma

4. A certificate that is given to a student upon graduation from a college or university.

A. Class Rank
B. Weighted GPA
C. SAT
D. Diploma

5. A college policy that states that all students who apply to that college will be guaranteed acceptance until all spots are filled. Most two-year colleges have this policy.

A. Need-Blind Admissions
B. Open Admissions
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

6. The section of a college that determines if a student is allowed to study at a given college or university.

A. Admissions Office

B. Articulation Agreement
C. College Counselor
D. Need-Blind Admission

7. A number that takes into account how well a student did in his classes as well as how difficult those classes were.

A. Weighted GPA
B. Class Rank
C. Diploma
D. PSAT

8. A student who is the first in her family to go to college. Many students in this category can receive financial aid and other resources to allow them to succeed during the application process and throughout their college careers.

A. PSAT
B. Admissions Office
C. First-generation Student
D. Liberal Arts College

9. A list of students who may be accepted to a college if space becomes available

A. Open Admissions
B. Wait List
C. Class Rank
D. Undergraduate

10. A policy put in place by a college that states that admissions counselors will make admissions decisions without considering the finical situation of an applicant or his family.

A. Open Admissions
B. Need-Blind Admission
C. Candidate Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)
D. Articulation Agreement

2. College application vocabulary pre-test, part 2 (answers in bold)

College Prep Course Pre-Test 2
Name: _____
Date: _____

Directions: Circle the term that best fits the description.

1. An application status designating that a student has been permitted by a college or university to attend said institution.

A. Associate's Degree
B. Diploma
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

2. An institution of higher learning that hosts many different kinds of schools (for example, an arts conservatory, a school of sciences, and a liberal arts school). These institutions offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

A. University
B. Vocational School
C. Liberal Arts School
D. Community College

3. A diploma granted after attending most four-year colleges. This is also referred to as a Bachelor's Degree.

A. Undergraduate Degree
B. Associate's Degree
C. Graduate Degree
D. Diploma

4. A certificate that is given to a student upon graduation from a college or university.

A. Class Rank
B. Weighted GPA
C. SAT
D. Diploma

5. A college policy that states that all students who apply to that college will be guaranteed acceptance until all spots are filled. Most two-year colleges have this policy.

A. Need-Blind Admissions
B. Open Admissions
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

6. The section of a college that determines if a student is allowed to study at a given college or university.

A. Admissions Office
B. Articulation Agreement
C. College Counselor

D. Need-Blind Admission

7. A number that takes into account how well a student did in his classes as well as how difficult those classes were.

A. Weighted GPA
B. Class Rank
C. Diploma
D. PSAT

8. A student who is the first in her family to go to college. Many students in this category can receive financial aid and other resources to allow them to succeed during the application process and throughout their college careers.

A. PSAT
B. Admissions Office
C. First-generation Student
D. Liberal Arts College

9. A list of students who may be accepted to a college if space becomes available

A. Open Admissions
B. Wait List
C. Class Rank
D. Undergraduate

10. A policy put in place by a college that states that admissions counselors will make admissions decisions without considering the financial situation of an applicant or his family.

A. Open Admissions
B. Need-Blind Admission
C. Candidate Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)
D. Articulation Agreement

11. Money that is given or loaned to a student to allow her to attend college. This can be granted by the government, private organizations, or the colleges themselves.

A. Need-based Aid
B. Financial Aid
C. Merit Aid
D. FAFSA

12. A diploma granted to a student who has successfully completed his schooling at a two-year institution. This is the diploma usually offered by a community college.

A. Associate's Degree

B. Graduate Degree
C. Core Curriculum
D. FAFSA

13. An employee of a high school who helps students navigate the college application process. The support this person can offer may vary greatly depending on the size and location of the high school.

A. Admissions Office
B. Guidance Counselor
C. College Counselor
D. PSAT

14. This advanced degree can be earned after receiving a bachelor's degree. This term includes Master's degrees, PhDs, MDs, and JDs.

A. Undergraduate degree
B. Diploma
C. Graduate Degree
D. Associate's Degree

15. Money that a school grants a student based on her family's demonstrated need.

A. Need-Blind Admissions
B. Articulation Agreement
C. Financial Aid
D. Need-Based Aid

16. Post-high school education that focuses on training students for specific careers. Mechanics, nurses, and dental hygienists all attend this kind of institution to learn how to do their jobs.

A. University
B. Community College
C. Vocational School
D. Liberal Arts College

17. A standardized test administered by the College Board which tests students' math, reading, and writing skills.

A. FAFSA
B. SAT
C. Core Curriculum
D. Admissions Office

18. Classes that students are required to take by graduation regardless of their major or minor.

A. Open Admissions
B. Graduate Degree
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Core Curriculum

19. An institution of higher education that grants Associate's Degrees. Usually, students may only attend these institutions for two years. Many students choose to transfer to a four-year undergraduate institution after these two years.

A. Community College
B. Vocational School
C. Liberal Arts College
D. University

20. "American College Testing" is one of the standardized tests a student may need to get into a four-year college.

A. SAT
B. PSAT
C. FAFSA
D. ACT

3. College admissions vocabulary, full-length pre-test (Answers in bold)

College Prep Course Pre-Test
Name: _____
Date: _____

Directions: Circle the term that best fits the description.

1. An application status designating that a student has been permitted by a college or university to attend said institution.

A. Associate's Degree
B. Diploma
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

2. Scholarship money that a school gives to a student based on her achievements in high school or, in rare instances, during their time at college.

A. Candidates Reply Date Agreement

B. FAFSA
C. Merit Aid
D. Financial Aid

3. Money that is given or loaned to a student to allow her to attend college. This can be granted by the government, private organizations, or the colleges themselves.

A. Need-based Aid
B. Financial Aid
C. Merit Aid
D. FAFSA

4. An institution of higher education that focuses on the integration of a variety of different disciplines. Students attending this kind of institution will often be required to take a certain number of courses in the natural sciences, humanities, fine arts and social sciences. This would be a good fit for someone who is curious about many different subjects, or who is not yet sure about the academic discipline or career they wish to pursue after college.

A. Vocational School
B. University
C. Associate's Degree
D. Liberal Arts College

5. A college policy that states that all students who apply to that college will be guaranteed acceptance until all spots are filled. Most two-year colleges have this policy.

A. Need-Blind Admissions
B. Open Admissions
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Acceptance

6. A diploma granted to a student who has successfully completed his schooling at a two-year institution. This is the diploma usually offered by a community college.

A. Associate's Degree
B. Graduate Degree
C. Core Curriculum
D. FAFSA

7. An employee of a high school who helps students navigate the college application process. The support this person can offer may vary greatly depending on the size and location of the high school.

A. Admissions Office
B. Guidance Counselor

C. College Counselor
D. PSAT

8. A certificate that is given to a student upon graduation from a college or university.
A. Class Rank
B. Weighted GPA
C. SAT
D. Diploma

9. An understanding between two-year and four-year colleges that allows for credits from the two-year college to transfer easily towards a degree at the four-year college. This understanding will also specify the grades a student must obtain in order to be granted these credits.
A. Articulation Agreement
B. Candidates Reply Date Agreement
C. FAFSA
D. Open Admissions

10. A student who is the first in her family to go to college. Many students in this category can receive financial aid and other resources to allow them to succeed during the application process and throughout their college careers.
A. PSAT
B. Admissions Office
C. First-generation Student
D. Liberal Arts College

11. A number comparing the weighted GPA of all students in a given grade in a specific high school. It shows how a student performed in high school compared to his peers in his grade.
A. Class Rank
B. Weighted GPA
C. Diploma
D. ACT

12. This advanced degree can be earned after receiving a bachelor's degree. This term includes Master's degrees, PhDs, MDs, and JDs.
A. Undergraduate degree
B. Diploma
C. Graduate Degree
D. Associate's Degree

13. Money that a school grants a student based on her family's demonstrated need.

A. Need-Blind Admissions
B. Articulation Agreement
C. Financial Aid
D. Need-Based Aid

14. The section of a college that determines if a student is allowed to study at a given college or university.

A. Admissions Office
B. Articulation Agreement
C. College Counselor
D. Need-Blind Admission

15. Post-high school education that focuses on training students for specific careers. Mechanics, nurses, and dental hygienists all attend this kind of institution to learn how to do their jobs.

A. University
B. Community College
C. Vocational School
D. Liberal Arts College

16. A list of students who may be accepted to a college if space becomes available

A. Open Admissions
B. Wait List
C. Class Rank
D. Undergraduate

17. A standardized test administered by the College Board which tests students' math, reading, and writing skills.

A. FAFSA
B. SAT
C. Core Curriculum
D. Admissions Office

18. Classes that students are required to take by graduation regardless of their major or minor.

A. Open Admissions
B. Graduate Degree
C. Articulation Agreement
D. Core Curriculum

19. An institution of higher education that grants Associate's Degrees. Usually, students may only attend these institutions for two years. Many students choose to transfer to a four-year undergraduate institution after these two years.

A. Community College
B. Vocational School
C. Liberal Arts College
D. University

20. "American College Testing" is one of the standardized tests a student may need to get into a four-year college.

A. SAT
B. PSAT
C. FAFSA
D. ACT

21. A policy put in place by a college that states that admissions counselors will make admissions decisions without considering the financial situation of an applicant or his family.

A. Open Admissions
B. Need-Blind Admission
C. Candidate Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)
D. Articulation Agreement

22. A professional employed by a school to give students advice on a variety of topics (these may be related or unrelated to college).

A. College Counselor
B. PSAT
C. Guidance Counselor
D. Admissions Office

23. A number that takes into account how well a student did in his classes as well as how difficult those classes were.

A. Weighted GPA
B. Class Rank
C. Diploma
D. PSAT

24. A standardized test usually taken in 10th or 11th grade. This test will not only give students a good idea of how they will score on the SAT, but also may (depending on their score) automatically qualify them for scholarship money throughout the National Merit Scholar program.

A. SAT
B. ACT
C. FAFSA
D. PSAT

25. An institution of higher learning that hosts many different kinds of schools (for example, an arts conservatory, a school of sciences, and a liberal art school). These institutions offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

A. University
B. Vocational School
C. Liberal Arts School
D. Community College

26. An application that students and their families fill out during the college application process in order to qualify for financial aid based on their demonstrated need for it. This is independent of any merit-based or achievement-based money that a student may receive.

A. CRDA
B. FAFSA
C. PSAT
D. Need-Based Financial Aid

27. A diploma granted after attending most four-year colleges. This is also referred to as a Bachelor's Degree.

A. Undergraduate Degree
B. Associate's Degree
C. Graduate Degree
D. Diploma

28. An agreement between colleges and applicants that the applicant will let colleges know by May 1st if their will accept or turn down their offers of admission

A. Articulation Agreement
B. Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)
C. Acceptance
D. Need-Blind Admission

29. A test administered by national organization that gives colleges an idea of students' academic standing compared to other students in the country.

A. Standardized Test
B. ACT
C. SAT

D. PSAT

ACT Usage Skills: PUNCTUATION (taken from PrepScholar online resource)

The ACT only tests very specific uses of certain kinds of punctuation. Those rules, and only those rules, are detailed below.

4. English Grammar Rules

Commas

1. Use commas to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items.
We had coffee, cheese, crackers and grapes.

2. Use a comma to separate two adjectives when the adjectives are interchangeable.
It was a vibrant, massive painting.

3. When starting a sentence with a dependent clause, use a comma after it.
When Jim studied in the library for his chemistry quiz, it was very quiet.

4. Use commas to set off nonessential parts of the sentence.
The woman, knowing it was late, hurried home.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used two ways on the ACT: to show possession and to create contractions.

1. To form possessives of nouns:
Laura's hat
The kids' toys
The tree's leaves
**Note that the singular possessive Laura's has the apostrophe before the s, while the plural possessive kids' has the apostrophe after the s.

2. To create contractions (which show the omission of letters):
There's a clown.
You'd love it.
Who's there?

Colons

1. Use a colon after an independent clause when it is followed by a list, a quotation, appositive, or other idea directly related to the independent clause.
The vote was unanimous: the older candidate had won.

Semicolons

1. Use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.
I'm not sure how to get there; let's get directions.

2. Use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause begins with a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, etc.) or a transition (in fact, for example, etc.).
The basement is scary; thus, I do not go down there alone.

Dashes

1. Dashes are used to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within dashes or the content that follows a dash. Dashes place more emphasis on this content than parentheses.
Upon discovering the errors—all 124 of them—the publisher immediately recalled the books.

End Punctuation

1. Use a period at the end of a sentence that makes a statement.
He will try again.

2. Use a question mark after direct questions.
Where are we?

3. Use (rarely) an exclamation point at the end of a sentence to express strong emotion.
Stop it!