The SAT was originally meant to be a psychological test that measured all of the talents and abilities of students. Based on the large test it would take to analyze the results of the test, the SAT was narrowed down to a multiple-choice format, of just math and English.

The SAT is equally a test of the process of elimination and how well you follow directions. It’s also a test of your motivation to do well. If you don’t care about the test or understand why you’re taking the test, you’re not going to do well.” —Any Kamenetz

A high test score on the SAT can show potential about a student that grades in school may not display. “I want to have that chance with people. On the other hand the idea that (a low test score) on the SAT would stop people [from going to college] seems to me to be a mistake.” — Anya Kamenetz

The SAT was first developed as a US Army enlistment test during WWI. Psychologist Carl Brigham adopted the test for schools to see who would be a good student. In the Spring of 2015, CUP collaborated with teaching artist Max Allbee and various students from Lyons Community School to look into standardized testing, focusing on the SAT. What is it like to take the test? How do SAT scores relate to college admissions? Who benefits from the SAT? To investigate, students examined their own test-taking experiences then interview stakeholders from the National Public Radio (NPR) and Columbia University.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, particularly among historically underrepresented communities. To learn more about CUP, visit welcometoCUP.org. Lyons Community School is a small school in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn committed to providing a broad, stimulating experience in the liberal arts, and preparing students for college, healthy adulthood, and lifelong learning. To learn more, visit lyonscommunityschool.org.

Standardized tests are usually one piece of the puzzle to understanding an applicant, but many institutions are moving away from standardized testing and looking at other ways to evaluate one’s potential for higher education.” —Dr. Thomas P. Rock

Typically universities that accept only students with higher SAT scores also have better resources to help students succeed. “In the world that we live in now, doing well on standardized tests gives people advantages. Why don’t we enable everybody to have the resources that they need to get their education?” — Anya Kamenetz

Applying to college takes hard work and dedication. You can prepare for the SAT with the following:
- Study the SAT prep book
- Take a SAT prep course
- Practice for the SAT by taking the PSAT
- Ask your school for more prep resources
- Bring a calculator and snacks to the SAT
- For more test information, visit https://sat.collegeboard.org

If you don’t do well, you can take it again!

Some studies show that the more money your family makes, the higher score you’re likely to get on the SAT. Some families can afford extra SAT test-prep classes and tutors. For free SAT resources visit your local library, number2.com, and khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat.

To find out what schools are test optional, visit http://ink.niche.com/list-test-optional-schools