

### SAT's- An American Obsession

Why in America are people obsessed with labeling one's ability with a test score? Ask any high performing High School senior if SAT scores are a major factor in getting into their first choice colleges and they will undoubtedly answer with "of course". The SAT, which started as a Harvard test for scholarship money (Steinburg 144), has evolved into a necessity for college admission. Parents and students all over the country spend months and money preparing for this crucial test. Is it fair that colleges hold SAT scores so high in the admissions process? While SAT scores are primary criteria for college acceptance, these numbers are a biased representation of a student's ability. [excellent intro](#)

SAT scores are an easy way for comparing students and colleges. Jacques Steinburg, the author of *The Gatekeepers*, spent eight months observing the admissions process at Wesleyan College, one of the most selective colleges in the country, and found that colleges use the SAT exam to distinguish one A student from another. He says, "...the SAT offered the prospect of a common yardstick, however imperfect" (270). With so many applications from top notch students, the admissions officers go straight to the SAT scores to weed out the unqualified. Personal characteristics are secondary to some schools, and even nonexistent in others. Take for instance, Harvard Law School. In commenting about the relevance of students' personal essays, director of admissions, Dr. Marlyn McGrath Lewis states, "We never base our decisions on essays. We read them carefully, but we understand how easily they can be purchased or written by anyone. They can certainly illuminate a case, but we'd be foolish to base our decisions on

them” (Shor). A brilliant personal essay will not save one a spot in the admissions process, but a high SAT score will. This is a bigger problem in big public universities who rely heavily on SAT scores because they do not have the time or resources to consider other factors (Steinburg 270). Colleges use SAT scores to benefit themselves, saving time and money, instead of looking out for the student’s best interest. Colleges are more likely to admit a student with higher scores to also benefit their ratings. In discussing a candidate for Wesleyan College Steinburg explains, “Here was a candidate who would also help boost the median SAT score of the class, so U.S. News might be impressed in the bargain” (102). These selfish reasons for colleges to hold SAT scores so highly in the admission process are not fair. Ultimately, a student looks for a college that has an environment they will enjoy regardless of how highly the college ranks in the statistics. Therefore, colleges should not focus so intently on accepting high test score applicants. On the same note, a student that Steinburg follows in the Wesleyan admissions process, Jordan, explains how the Ivy League schools “...admit SAT scores rather than people...”(238). SAT scores are used for efficiency in the admissions process, but neglect the individual.

nice work... good argumentation... good MLA formatting

I like how you varied your writing of the citations...

Not only does the SAT score override the individual, but it also is bias to students who have more resources to prepare for such a test. In an article featured in USA Today it explains, “...the national tests still are inherently unfair. They favor students with highly educated parents, particularly those who can afford private tutoring to prepare students for the test. They also don't necessarily reflect what's being taught in any particular school”. Instead of being an evaluation of students’ skills and smarts, the SAT is becoming an evaluation of parents’ wealth and education. Statistics are finding that

more and more wealthy students are accepted into the highly selective colleges. The Washington Monthly writes "...wealthier students are displacing both low-income and middle-class students at the most selective colleges--where 74 percent of the students now come from the top socioeconomic quartile" (Morris). Just merely looking at SAT scores gives those who are wealthier and better educated a leg up on those who are not as fortunate.

Looking at a SAT score is only skin deep. Yes, it can distinguish one stellar student from another stellar student, but is it the right deciding factor? There are so many individuals who are amazing students, but because of either financial, family, or school environment, they suffer being labeled "denied". There are so many other aspects to a person than simply a score. This score has become an American obsession.

## Works Cited

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Well done, Beth.

Keep writing like this and you will pass the AP and you will have no problems in college.

GRADE A = 50/50