

## **College preparation**

Our goal is to prepare and encourage all students to attend a 2 or 4 year college of their choice after graduation. We have students research and visit colleges to prepare them for the decisions they must make in their senior year. We inform all students about when to take the SAT & SAT Subject tests, and the ACT so they have all the appropriate testing done to apply to 4 year colleges. We also strive to have every student enrolled in A-G (college preparatory requirements) throughout their years at El Capitan.

### **4 Year college information:**

Every college and university in the U.S. has a website, and they appreciate you visiting their websites. Some important ones to note are:

[www.calstate.edu](http://www.calstate.edu) access to all 23 CSU campuses.

[www.csumentor.edu](http://www.csumentor.edu) application site for all 23 CSU campuses.

[www.universityofcalifornia.edu](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu) access to all 10 UC campuses.

[www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply) application site for all 10 UC campuses

[www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) all private, state, uc, and religious college campuses in California.

[www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) application site for over 300 private universities across the US.

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) excellent site with a college search engine by major, location, etc.

[www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com) virtual tours of campuses.

[www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com) virtual tours of campuses.

### **2 year college information:**

Every student can attend a community college. Many of the ones in California are incredible and a terrific bargain! They all have transfer programs, and many have guaranteed transfer admission programs! This site lists all the community colleges in California with links to their websites.

<http://www.cccapply.org/KeyFacts/default.asp>

The most common community colleges our students attend are:

Cuyamaca College: [www.cuyamaca.edu](http://www.cuyamaca.edu)

Grossmont College: [www.grossmont.edu](http://www.grossmont.edu)

Miramar college: [www.sdmiramar.edu](http://www.sdmiramar.edu)

City College: [www.sdcity.edu](http://www.sdcity.edu)

Mesa College: [www.sdmesa.edu](http://www.sdmesa.edu)

Southwestern College: [www.swccd.edu](http://www.swccd.edu)

## **Testing information:**

### **Do I have to take the PSAT/PLAN/SAT/SUBJECT TESTS/ACT?**

If you intend to apply to most 4 year colleges, you need to take either the SAT or ACT. You may also have to take SAT subject tests (especially UC's). The only way to be absolutely certain to keep ALL your 4 college options open is to take the SAT or the ACT, and at least 2 (preferably 3) SAT subject tests.

More information and to register for these tests on these websites:

ACT & PLAN: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

SAT, PSAT and subject tests: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

### **What about the PSAT/PLAN tests?**

The PSAT is the “practice” test for the SAT and can be useful for diagnostic and preparation purposes. By taking it you will better prepare yourself for the SAT and discover your strengths and areas to improve upon. Juniors who take the PSAT, with a high enough score, may qualify for National Merit Scholarship consideration. This test is offered once a year at our school in October. Check back for the date and pay in the finance office.

See this website for full details: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

The PLAN is the “practice” test for the ACT. It is also a great tool to help prepare yourself for the ACT. You will discover strengths and weaknesses and that will help you study. This test is also offered at El Capitan once a year, usually in November. Check back for the date and pay in the finance office.

See this website for full details: <http://www.actstudent.org/plan/index.html>

### **Are there any colleges for which I do not have to take an ACT or SAT?**

You can enroll at a community college without taking the SAT or ACT. You can also apply at many colleges that do not require these standardized tests for entrance. Keep in mind that taking the tests and not needing them is better than not taking them and needing them in the end. See this website for more details on colleges that do not require standardized testing for entrance.

<http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>

### **When should I take these tests?**

- PSAT: 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> - for practice, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade for National Merit Scholarship consideration.
- Plan: 10<sup>th</sup> grade for practice.
- SAT/ACT: Spring of your junior year and fall of your senior year. In order to be prepared to apply to colleges in the fall of senior year, a student must have taken one of these tests before December of that year.
- SAT subject tests: Take the subject test as soon as possible after completing the course for which you intend to be tested. Ideally, the subject you completed should adequately prepare you for the subject tests. After the AP exams is generally a good idea.

### **How many times can I take these tests?**

As many times as you would like....but more than 2 or 3 tests appears somewhat desperate.

### **Should I sign up for some kind of test prep or tutoring?**

As with any test, content knowledge, practice and specific instruction about the mechanics of taking the test will surely improve one’s tests results. Because test prep from outside sources can be extremely expensive, El Capitan HS does not provide and cannot endorse any particular service or individual. Our school does offer a SAT prep course for a minimal fee taught by our teachers on our campus. This is usually offered in March/April each year. Check with Finance and counseling for the dates and fee.

To find other services in the community, simply type “SAT test prep” or “ACT test prep” on an internet search engine, and you will find dozens of companies that specialize in this. If you do not want to spend hundreds of dollars on a test prep class, many websites have free tests you can download, or you can simply go to your neighborhood library or bookstore and buy a practice guide book.