A high-angle photograph of a student's desk. On the left, a silver laptop is open. To its right is a stack of books, with the top one being 'AP European History'. A teal notebook is placed on top of the stack. A smartphone is visible on the far left. The student's legs and white sneakers are visible at the bottom of the frame.

The
Princeton
Review®

SAT, ACT, OR BOTH?

SAT[®], ACT[®], or Both?

- 1 Truths and Misconceptions
- 2 Similarities and Differences
- 3 Improving Your Scores

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A top-down view of a person sitting on a patterned rug. A silver laptop is open in front of them, and a smartphone is on the rug nearby. The person is wearing dark clothing. The scene is lit with warm, natural light.

TRUTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

WHAT DO STANDARDIZED TESTS MEASURE

| Do College Admission Tests Like the SAT and ACT | True | False |
|---|------|-------|
| ... measure a student's intelligence? | | ✓ |
| ... reflect a student's high school GPA? | | ✓ |
| ... predict a student's college GPA? | | ✓ |
| ... test what you've learned in HS? | ? | ? |

STANDARDIZED TESTS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL TESTS

HIGH SCHOOL TESTS

Limited Subject Matter

Content Knowledge

Plenty of Time

Partial Credit or Extra Credit

Human Graded

One Element of Overall Grade

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Years of Material

Memorization and Strategy

Rigorously Timed

Right or Wrong Answers

Machine Graded

Only Your Final Score Matters



TOP FACTORS FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

1. Grades
2. High School Curriculum
3. Test Scores

TOP FACTORS FOR FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN

Most Important:

- High School Transcript
- Test scores

Less Important:

- Essay/writing samples
- Teacher & counselor recommendations
- Class rank

Smaller institutions are more likely to rank subject tests, portfolios, interviews, and work experience as important.

- “**Test-Optional**” does not mean test-prohibited, that is **Test-Blind** or **Test-Free**
- **Test-Optional** means different things at different schools
- If you don’t submit test scores, **everything else** matters even more
- If you have any school on your list that requires tests, your application process is *not test-optional*

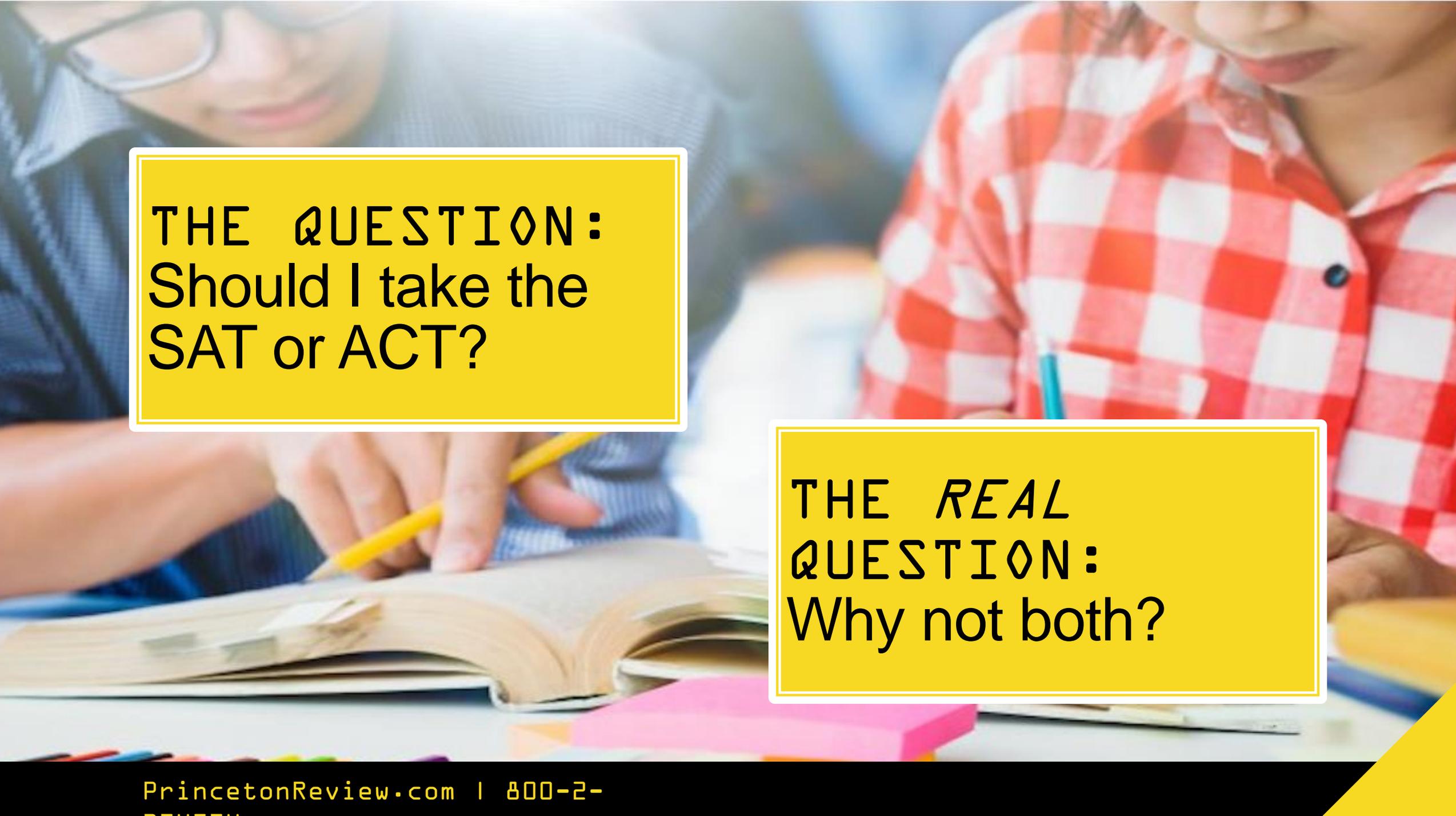
WHAT ABOUT
TEST-OPTIONAL
SCHOOLS?



DID YOU KNOW?

Colleges have no preference between the SAT or ACT.

Many merit scholarships are directly tied to a student's SAT or ACT score.

A background image showing two students sitting at a desk. The student on the left is wearing glasses and a blue shirt, looking down at an open book. The student on the right is wearing a red and white checkered shirt, also looking at the book. There are pink sticky notes and a yellow pencil on the desk.

THE QUESTION:
Should I take the
SAT or ACT?

THE *REAL*
QUESTION:
Why not both?

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a student with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt, sitting at a wooden desk. The student is holding a black pen and writing in a white notebook. To the right of the notebook is a silver laptop, and to the left is a tablet. The background shows a window with wooden frames, letting in bright, natural light. A black horizontal bar with yellow text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



THE TESTS

AT-A-GLANCE

BOTH THE SAT & ACT:

- Over **3 hours** of testing time
- **Limited time** per question
- **Multiple Choice** Questions (mostly)
- **Math, Reading, Grammar, and Science** Questions

ACT SECTION BY SECTION

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| English | 45 minutes | 75 questions |
| Math | 60 minutes | 60 questions |
| Reading | 35 minutes | 40 questions |
| Science | 35 minutes | 40 questions |
| Writing (optional essay) | 40 minutes | 1 essay |
| Total with Writing | 3:35 | 215 questions |

SAT SECTION BY SECTION

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|
| Reading | 65 minutes | 52 questions |
| W&L | 35 minutes | 44 questions |
| Math (No calculator) | 25 minutes | 20 questions |
| Math (calculator) | 55 minutes | 38 questions |
| Essay (optional) | 50 minutes | 1 essay |
| Total with Essay | 3:50 | 154 questions |

SAT

Reading and
Writing
200-800

Math
200-800

Total
400-1600

ACT

English
1-36

Math
1-36

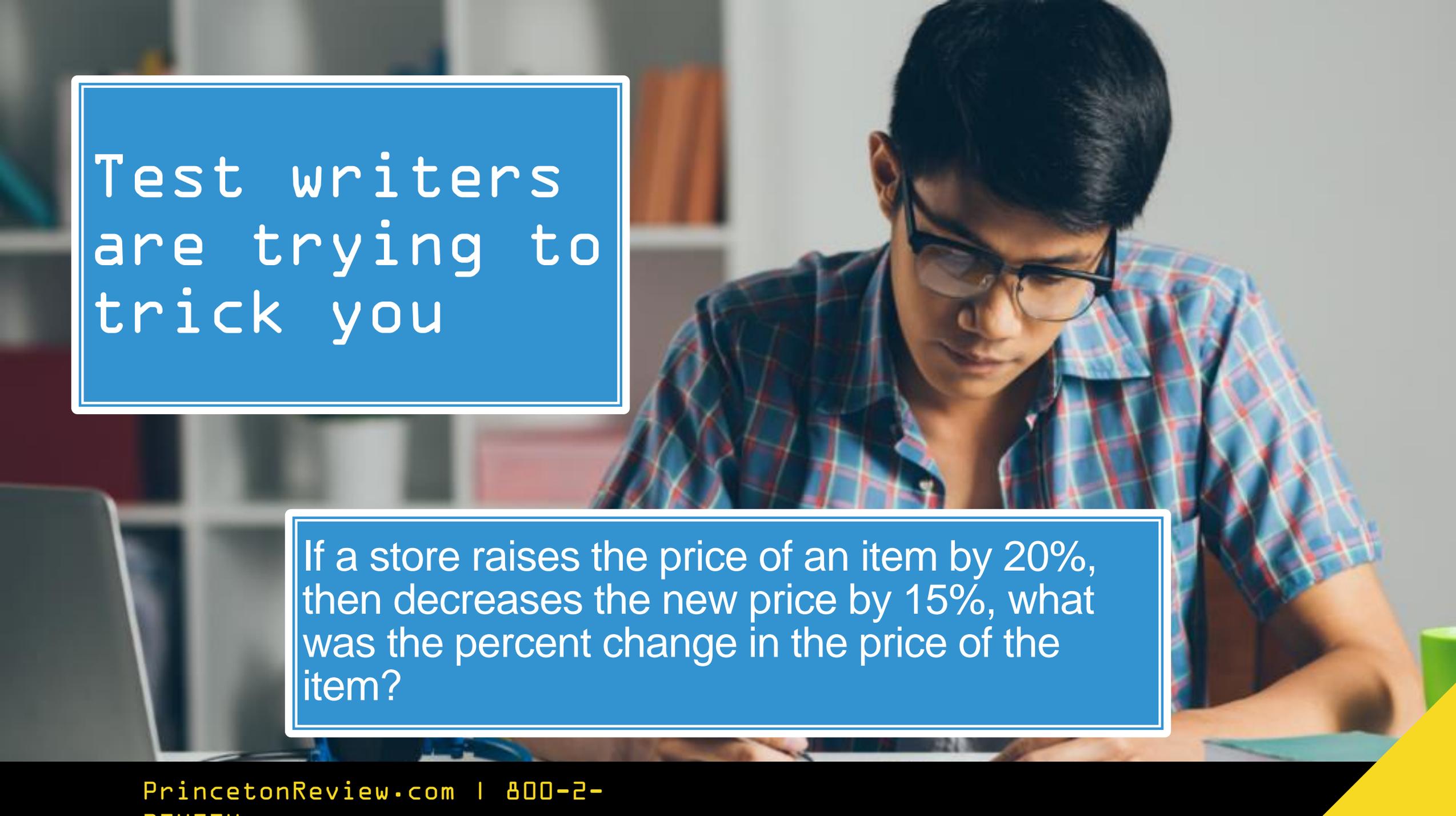
Reading
1-36

Science
1-36

Total
1-36

SAT AND ACT

SCORING



Test writers
are trying to
trick you

If a store raises the price of an item by 20%, then decreases the new price by 15%, what was the percent change in the price of the item?

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✓ Answering questions too quickly
- ✓ Careless answers
- ✓ Doing work in your head
- ✓ Misreading the problem
- ✓ Don't understand what to do

WHAT IS A GOOD SCORE?

A good score is the score that gets you into your dream

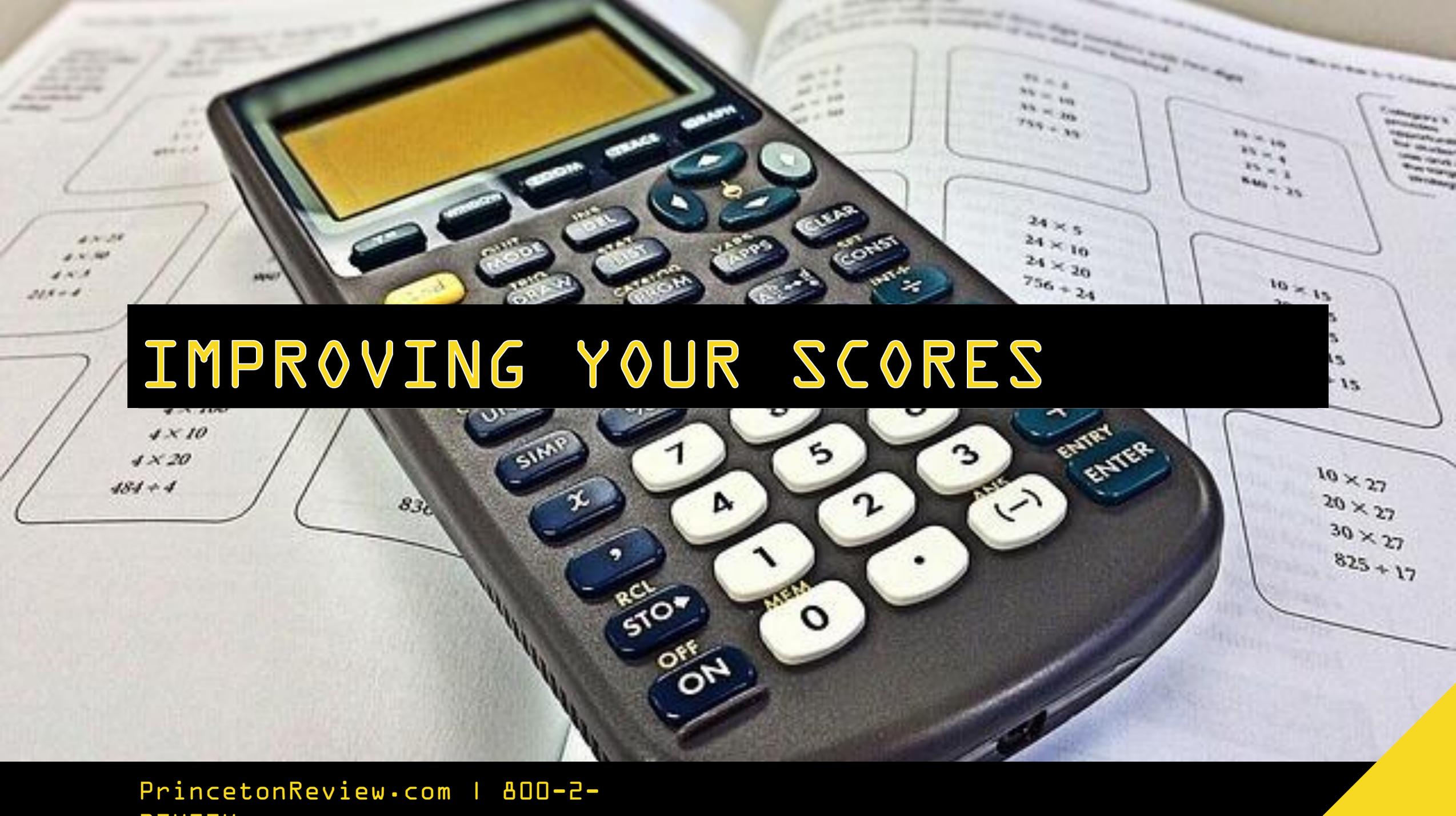
college

WHERE WILL
YOUR SCORES
TAKE YOU?



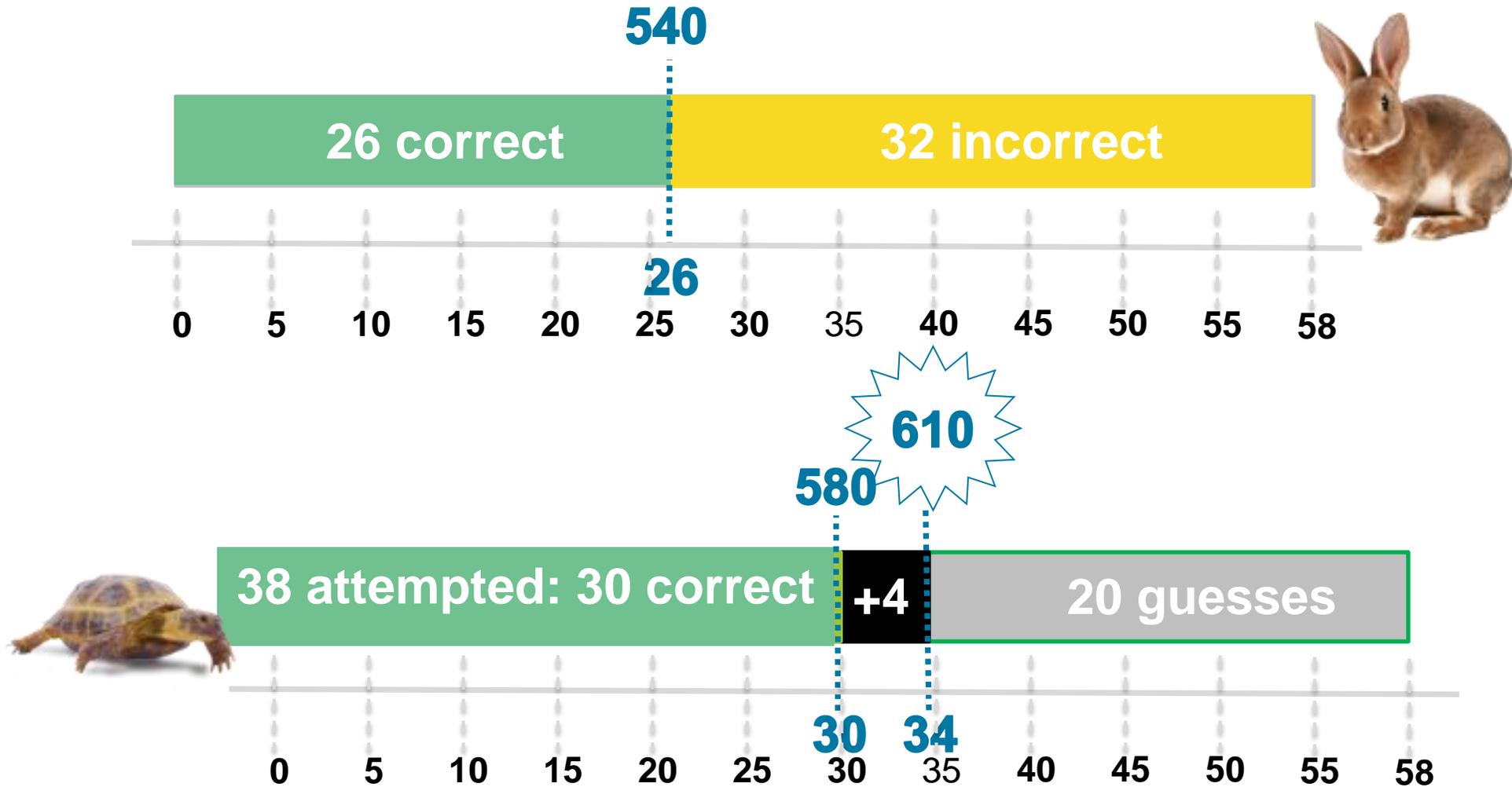
| SCHOOL | SAT 25% | SAT 75%* | ACT 25% | ACT 75%* |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Northwestern University | 1440 | 1550 | 33 | 35 |
| Amherst College | 1410 | 1550 | 31 | 34 |
| University of Virginia | 1340 | 1520 | 30 | 34 |
| Stanford University | 1440 | 1570 | 32 | 35 |
| Harvard University | 1460 | 1570 | 33 | 35 |
| University of Texas | 1230 | 1480 | 27 | 33 |

* SAT scores are reflective of the Critical reading and Math scores. The data is self-reported from the schools and represents data during the 2018-2019 school year. * ACT scores are self-reported from the schools and represent data during the 2018-2019 school year.

A close-up photograph of a dark grey scientific calculator with a yellow LCD screen, resting on a math worksheet. The calculator's keypad features various function keys like 'MODE', 'DEL', 'VARS', 'CONST', and 'MATH', along with a numeric keypad and 'ON/OFF' buttons. The worksheet in the background contains several boxes with math problems, including multiplication and addition exercises. A black horizontal bar with yellow text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

IMPROVING YOUR SCORES

STRATEGY: PACING



MATH STRATEGY: PLUGGING IN

10

If Claire is ~~C~~ years old and is 6 years younger than Alan, \longrightarrow 16
~~in terms of C~~, how old will Alan be in 3 years?

10



A. $C - 6 = 4$

B. $C - 3 = 7$

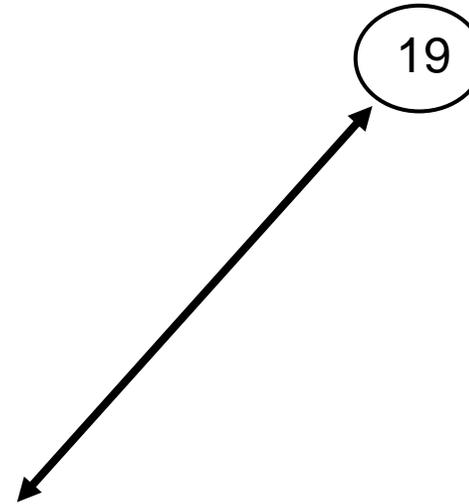
C. $C + 3 = 13$

D. $C + 9 = 19$

E. $C + 5 = 15$

19

Target Answer



GRAMMAR STRATEGY: USING CONTEXT

The scientist's work in the field of physics continued to influence the public's understanding of the subject.

Watch the context.

- A. No change
- B. Continue
- C. Will continue
- D. Has the ongoing effect of continuing

GRAMMAR STRATEGY: USING CONTEXT

The scientist's work in the field of physics continued to influence the public's understanding of the subject. His research will redefine a common misconception held by many people. By conducting this experiment, the scientist will become more famous than Albert Einstein.

Keep it Consistent

- A. No change
- B. Continue
- C. Will continue
- D. Has the ongoing effect of continuing

Step One: Choose Your First Test

Step Two: Prep For Your First Test

Buy a Book Self-Prep Online

Take a Class Work With a Tutor

Step Three: Take Your First Test

Get an Official Score

Step Four: Prep For Your Second Test

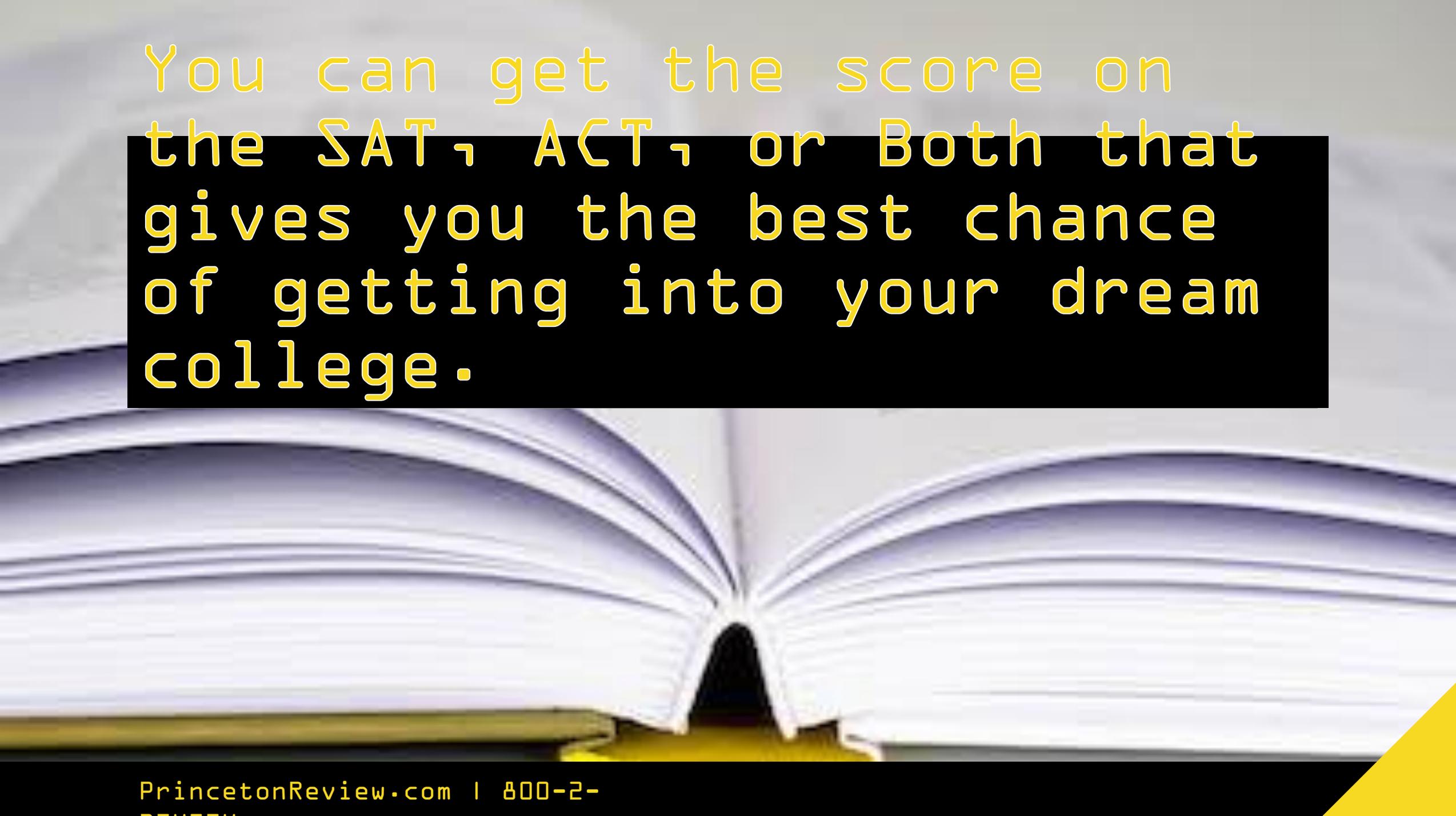
Take a Different Test or the Same Test *Readjust Your Plan*

Step Five: Take Your Second Test

Step Six: Take Another Test to Get the Score You Need



CREATING
YOUR TEST
PREP PLAN



You can get the score on
the SAT, ACT, or Both that
gives you the best chance
of getting into your dream
college.

QUESTIONS?

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