

Could Students Today Pass the 1919 SAT Exam?

With the holidays over and graduation fast approaching, many students are preparing for a final crack at the SAT.

In light of this test preparation, it's interesting to consider whether or not today's students would be able to take one of the earliest SAT exams. Judging from the [1919 English Literature test](#) from the College Entrance Examination Board, the same organization which operates today's SAT tests, today's students would be prepared for the exam only if they had the following 3 characteristics:

1. A Wide Repertoire of Memorized Works

As the poetry section indicates, students were not given the luxury of having an entire poem printed out for them to analyze. Instead, the questions take for granted that students will be able to draw on their memories by quoting and comparing various poems (see Group II – Topic 1 of the 1919 test).

2. A Great Familiarity with Classic Works

The test regularly draws on the famous works of authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Emerson, Carlyle, Macaulay, Burke, and Washington. Given the in-depth questions asked, a student would be unable to ace this test unless he had been thoroughly grounded and familiarized with the content and background of the work or author.

3. The Ability to Write Well

Although the current SAT does have an essay portion, much of the exam centers around the multiple choice question. The multiple choice question is strikingly absent in the

1919 exam. Instead, every single question requires an essay response – an essay response that was expected to be well-written, well-developed, and revised before the exam was completed.

Considering your high school education, would you have been able to pass this 1919 exam with flying colors? Furthermore, do you think today's high school seniors be able to do so?

