

The SAT is Being Dumbed Down, Big Time

Students around America are rejoicing.

Earlier this month, it was quietly announced that major changes were in store for the SAT—changes that would make America's most famous admittance exam *easier*.

If this sounds familiar, you're not having déjà vu. A quick Google search reveals that the test has undergone various cosmetic changes in recent years.

But this one is different.

The most recent changes, which debuted March 5, are significantly more pronounced. Mikhail Zinshteyn, writing at *The Atlantic*, [offers an overview](#):

"Many of the defining features of the SAT have been revamped. Obscure vocabulary, colloquially known as 'SAT words,' has been cut from the new test. The guessing penalty of yore that took off a fraction of a point for producing the wrong answer also has been banished. The test has fewer questions, asks students to at times explain their answers, reduces the number of multiple-choice options from five to four, and will provide more time for fewer sections. And the essay, which became mandatory in 2005, is optional now, though many colleges still will require it."

Translation: the test is shorter, the words are simpler, and you don't have to write an essay. (But you get more time!)

David Coleman, president of the College Board, which owns the test, said the changes are geared toward making the test more germane to information students get in the classroom. He hinted that test preparation centers, a lucrative industry

that charges fees in the ball park of \$500 to \$1,000 per hour, should be more concerned about the changes than students.

“If you’re wondering who should be worried about this new exam, I’ll be rather frank,” Coleman said. “Certainly not students. The changes we’ve made to this exam are welcoming to them. But it may be test-prep executives that are beginning to see a changing game.”

I was going to write a well-reasoned (re: long-winded) essay on why there is some reason for concern regarding these changes. But then I saw Stefan Beck’s piece [at the Daily Beast](#).

Just read that; it’s really good.

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