



Admissions

What you won't hear anywhere else

PREPMATTERS™ EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING, TEST PREP & SUBJECT TUTORING

WHO AM I?

1) I opened in 1740 as a school for studying business and public service; it was in a sense the first liberal arts curriculum.

2) My other firsts include opening the country's first medical school (in 1874), first student union, and first double-decked college football stadium. I also introduced the world's first electronic, large-scale, general-purpose digital computer (in 1946).

3) Fifteen of my scholars have received Nobel Prizes.

4) Today, my urban campus is home to over 20,000 full-time students.

5) I attribute much of my success to my visionary founder, Ben Franklin.

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WHO AM I?

The University of Pennsylvania
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

What Students Say

Michael Sidgmore is living in a flat in London, England, enrolled in the first year of his three-year program at the London School of Economics (LSE). He's loving it too. He wanted to attend LSE because of its program in social policy, a field in which LSE excels. He has found it to be academically all that he'd hoped to find and more, and the bonus for him is living in an activist community of "change agents." Arriving as a transfer after spending a year at Middlebury College and a gap year prior to that, he has found that these two years have given him valuable experience on a number of fronts and have also given him the ability to see the respective strengths of each experience.

Michael describes LSE as high quality but has only positive things to say about Middlebury too. He loved his time at Middlebury, finding the work challenging and his classes stimulating. In fact, it was a comparative politics professor at Middlebury who made Michael realize he wanted to earn his degree in the field of social policy and to earn it at LSE, where several professors had written key books in the field.

Michael described some of the key differences between Middlebury and LSE. One difference is the length of time it takes to get a degree. LSE's degree program, typical in the U.K., is three years instead of the four years that is typical in the U.S. He thought the work at Middlebury was demanding, but he says that even more is expected at LSE. At LSE, again typical of U.K. universities, grades depend solely on the final exam. It's incumbent on the student to study and keep pace throughout the semester. Another difference is how reading assignments are handled. At Middlebury, there were plenty of reference texts and reading assignments; at LSE, students are given textbooks but no specific reading assignments. They are expected to read the entirety of the texts and determine for themselves what is important and relevant. An extra measure of independence and responsibility is required to be successful.

Although that describes his education inside the classroom, Michael believes it's his education outside the classroom that sets apart his LSE experience. Michael is already deeply involved in social change and traces his interest to John Wood's book, *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World*, which he read during his gap year. Michael was sufficiently impressed to contact the author, and their subsequent email exchanges led to an offer to work in the London office of his organization, Room to Read, a non-profit devoted to global education. Michael accepted the offer and spent the next six months deeply involved in fund raising, charity

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The London School of Economics is a self-described social science university located in London, England, with a total of 8,700 undergraduate and graduate students.

Middlebury College is a liberal arts college located in Middlebury, Vermont with an enrollment of about 2,350 undergraduates.

TRAPS AND AMBUSHES

Education comes in many forms: sometimes in a structured classroom setting and sometimes not. The lessons to be learned during one's first semester of college are many, and they don't all come from textbooks. Even some of the brightest students may receive failing grades in other subjects such as time management, roommate relations, sleep and nutrition or even laundry and tidiness. Low grades in these subjects can cause you to lose momentum and become a distraction to your studies.

If you're one with sub-par performance in one or more of these subjects, you should ask yourself what lessons you can learn from the problems you've experienced with missing class or roommate friction. That's the best way to bring up your grades in these life subjects and to rid yourself of distractions that drain your performance in the area that really counts!



What Now?

Seniors, hopefully the holidays gave you a period of rest following a stressful and rigorous fall filled with applications and essays. Of course, a certain amount of relaxation can be restorative, but now it's time to get back to work and think about your next steps.

Your first order of business should be to take another look at your list of colleges and see if you need to add any safeties. Don't be sidetracked by the thought that they're not at the top of your wish list. Identify a couple of true safeties and submit completed applications to them. It's the perfect application of the old maxim: "Hope for the best and plan for the worst."

You should also make sure that you keep working in all of your classes and keep up your grades. Remember that some schools will ask to see your spring grades, and you will want yours to shine.

Finally, you can follow-up on applications you've submitted, either by checking online or by calling to ask if your application is complete. You can also send updates with your first semester grades, if you did well, or with other noteworthy accomplishments. It's another chance to express your interest in attending the colleges on your list.

If you're not already accepted by your school of choice, don't think the game is over. Keep working right up until the buzzer sounds.

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Keep working until the buzzer sounds.
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What Students Say (continued)

events, learning about the developing world and doing his part in effecting change. The experience affected him deeply and led to an interest in social policy and eventually to his decision to study at LSE.

At LSE he has found a cultural diversity he hadn't even imagined before. He has countless friends from all corners of the globe and believes the cultural and social education he has received from them is priceless. He has also found LSE to be an organic community of dynamic activism. Students aren't just studying what they will do some day but are doing it now. Michael's own days are exhausting but terribly rewarding. He's on the committee of two societies, one of which he founded himself with the goal of expanding the cultural and social experiences of University of London students. Michael is also his class's student representative and, in his spare time, is starting a Room to Read chapter on campus and arranging for John Wood to speak on campus.

He says this is what LSE is like, and it's this kind of involvement that gives the school a "special buzz." There's a vibrant social life and a true sense of community among students who are already trying to make a difference.

Michael is grateful for all of his experiences -- for the top-notch education he received from Georgetown Day School, for his gap year, which opened his eyes to what can be done for the developing world, and for his year at Middlebury, whose emphasis on reading, writing and critical analysis skills gave him what the 'Brits' would call a 'foundation year' and made him a better student. He's also grateful that his path led him to LSE because living and studying abroad has been a tremendously valuable experience, one that he wishes more U.S. students would consider.

It's clear that Michael is ready to make the most of his three-year experience both inside and outside the classroom. It's also clear that, when the time comes to leave LSE, he'll be well equipped for doing his part to change the world.

College Cousins

Their locations in and around Bethlehem on the eastern border of Pennsylvania isn't all that Lehigh University and Lafayette College have in common. Both are small in size but stand tall academically. Both have distribution requirements, ensuring a broad liberal arts education. The most popular majors at Lehigh are business and engineering, while popular majors at Lafayette are a bit more varied, encompassing social sciences, psychology and engineering. Lafayette also maintains a strong German Department, a heritage that goes back to its 1824 roots in a largely German community, even though the college was named for the French Revolutionary War hero, the Marquis de Lafayette. Later, its neighbor, Lehigh, was founded in 1865 in a spirit of rebuilding and expansion following the Civil War.

Lafayette and Lehigh

Strong science programs attract science-minded students to both schools. This contributes to a gender ratio skewed toward males, especially at Lehigh. The small size of the student bodies is a plus for students of these schools because it results in small-sized classes and ample opportunity for interaction with professors and students alike. Classes are rigorous, so students work hard - at least until the weekends when campus social life comes alive. Both schools have a lively Greek scene.

Sports are big at Lehigh, but the most popular sport isn't football or basketball: it's wrestling. As small as it is, Lafayette is a Division I sports school, which means that athletes represent a healthy percentage of its small enrollment. A highlight for both schools is the Lafayette-Lehigh football game, played every year since 1884.

Students at both Lafayette and Lehigh receive an excellent education while enjoying their proximity to Philadelphia and New York, their athletics and a lively social scene. They also get the particular benefits of a small school: a close social network that builds friendships for life.

| | Lafayette for Fall 2009 | Lehigh for Fall 2009 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of Applications | 5,635 | 11,170 |
| Percent Accepted | 40.9% | 33% |
| Number of Freshmen | 616 | 1,201 |
| Number of Undergraduates | 2,382 | 4,856 |
| SAT (Critical Reading Middle 50%) | 610 - 700 | 610 - 710 |
| SAT (Math Middle 50%) | 640 - 730 | 650 - 740 |
| ACT (Middle 50%) | 27 - 32 | 28 - 32 |
| Grade Average / Class Rank | A- average | 93% in top 10% |
| Ratio of Males to Females | 54% to 46% | 59% to 41% |
| Fraternities & Sororities | 33% | 37% |
| International Students | 8.2% | 5.7% |



STEREOTYPE THREAT

What is stereotype threat? It's a pretty interesting phenomenon. It seems that the way most of us perform on tests is the way we think we're expected to perform. In a way, that makes sense. If you have a lot of people who believe in you and cheer you on, you're probably going to have enough confidence to really do your best on test day. If, on the other hand, you've been told repeatedly that you're going to bomb this test, the odds are good that you won't feel up to giving it your all.

What does this have to do with stereotypes? Researchers have found that if you're a member of a group that is expected to perform poorly at a task, and you are repeatedly reminded of this, you have a greater chance of performing poorly on that task. For instance, if you're a girl and you've been told that girls do worse than boys on math tests, will it affect your performance on your next algebra exam? It could. Laboratory studies document poorer results on tests in academic environments and standardized tests. You can find fascinating research on this at www.reducestereotypethreat.com.

While most of the research has focused on racial groups and gender, stereotype threat can hit anywhere there's a stereotype and someone to believe it. The good news is that there's an antidote: it's confidence. If a negative expectation leads to negative results, a positive one can lead to positive results, no matter who you are. So pay attention to what you're hearing around you and, if you need to, send yourself a different message. If you're prepared for the exam, regardless of your ethnicity, color, or gender, you can do great on test day.

Don't let anyone tell you differently.

Admissions

What you won't hear anywhere else



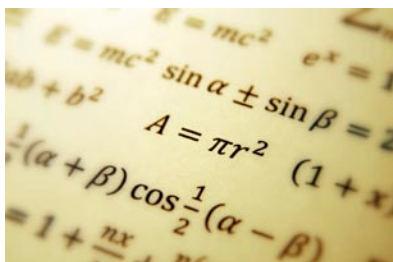
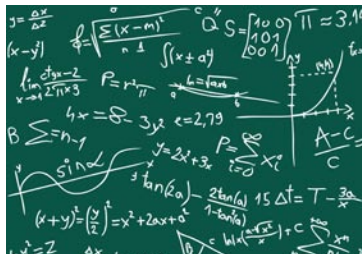
CATCHING UP IN ALGEBRA AND GEOMETRY

Worried about the math on the SAT or ACT? First of all, it's not as bad as you think. Whether you can't remember the math class you took last year or you haven't yet learned some of it, don't despair. Catching up in SAT and ACT math won't take as long as you think.

For one thing, the algebra and geometry on these tests is fairly limited. There's a finite and published set of math skills that can be tested for each exam, so there's no reason to try to learn all of geometry or all of algebra. You'll find that the requisite facts will all fit onto just a few pages of notes.

For another thing, you probably know more than you think you do. The SAT in particular relies more on logical reasoning skills than formula memorization, so your basic knowledge of arithmetic will get you pretty far. Some of the problems look tricky simply because the test writers are trying to make them look tricky, not because the math skills required are advanced.

So don't rush out and buy the thickest geometry textbook you can find! Ask your tutor for a rundown or check in a book that is specifically tailored to your test. Go through and check off the things you remember (which may be more than you thought) and then buckle down with what you don't remember or isn't clear.



Write down each concept you're working on and be sure to practice that concept on actual test questions.

In the end, you'll have compiled a working list of the math you need to brush up on, and a working knowledge of it too, and that's pretty logical.

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