



Choosing the Right Online Prep

and How to Grill Companies
on What They Really Offer

By the PrepScholar Team

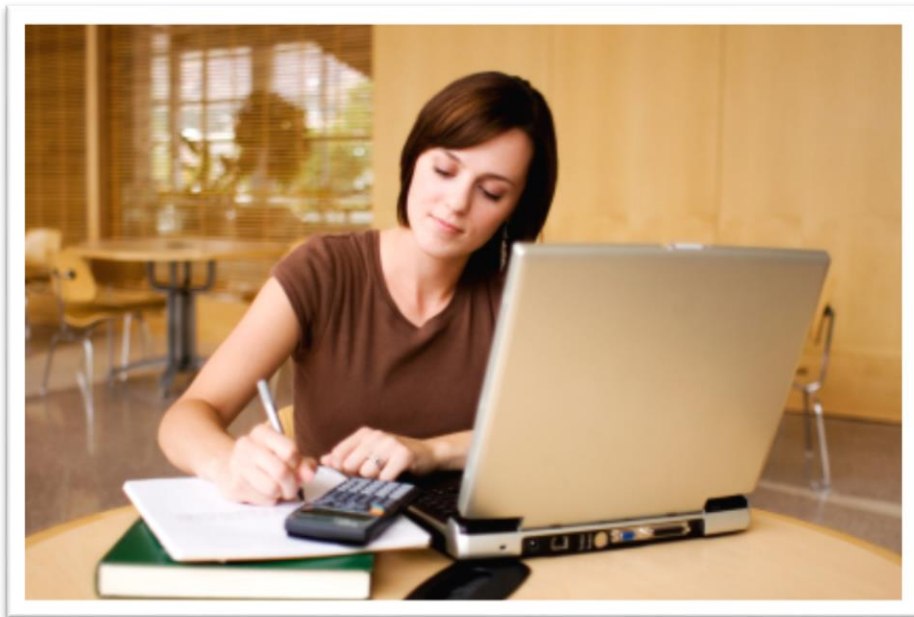


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INTRO

The Ideal Online Prep System

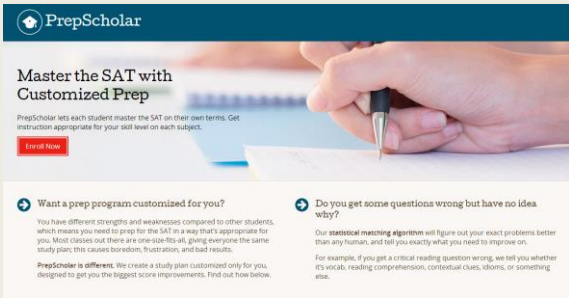


With the spread of the internet, online test prep programs have become more popular. These programs try to use technology to innovate beyond the classroom and tutoring techniques that have existed for centuries.

Online prep has the **potential** to be extremely effective. **The IDEAL online prep program is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the student's learning.** It guides the student through a structured study program so the student knows what to work on at every point in time. It customizes the learning to the student's strengths and weaknesses so the student can make the most progress. It's multimedia, using text,

pictures, and video to engage the student. It contains enough practice questions and lessons so the student doesn't have to scramble other resources together. It also motivates the student so the student doesn't lose interest and browse Youtube or Facebook instead.

Sounds great? It can be. **But most online SAT prep programs don't come close to delivering on these promises.** In this buyer's guide, we warn you about major problems and how to avoid them, and how to research prep programs. We'll give you questions to ask companies about their programs to decide what's right for you. We'll also talk about why our PrepScholar Complete program succeeds where others fail. We believe we've created the best prep program available, but even if you don't work with us, these guidelines will help you make the right decision for you and your family.



PrepScholar

Master the SAT with Customized Prep

PrepScholar lets each student master the SAT on their own terms. Get instruction appropriate for your skill level on each subject.

[Enroll Now](#)

Want a prep program customized for you?
You have different strengths and weaknesses compared to other students, which means you need to prep for the SAT in a way that's appropriate for you. Most classes out there are one-size-fits-all, giving everyone the same study plan; this causes boredom, frustration, and bad results.
PrepScholar is different. We create a study plan customized only for you, designed to get you the biggest score improvements. Find out how below.

Do you get some questions wrong but have no idea why?
Our **statistical matching algorithms** will figure out your exact problems (better than any human), and tell you exactly what you need to improve on.
For example, if you get a critical reading question wrong, we tell you whether it's vocab, reading comprehension, contextual clues, idioms, or something else.

[Want to know if PrepScholar works for you? Start a 5-day trial!](#)

1: Where Most Fail

Big problems to avoid



We've purchased and used nearly all of the online SAT prep programs available. Unfortunately, **most online prep programs are simply glorified books**, taking minimal advantage of the capabilities of technology. One major publisher has an online SAT program that is literally the exact copy of the book it sells in book stores, copied word-for-word online – but it costs 10 times as much as the textbook. Another individual tutor has released an “online SAT system” that simply gives instructions to students on what books to use and how to use them without offering direct instruction.

Other online prep programs offer more content and technology, but they fail in major ways. One program offers more multimedia, using videos to do some instruction. However, once you sign up, you realize that it simply throws

1: Where Most Fail

all its content at you in no apparent order, giving **no direction** on what to study and when. As a result, you feel lost and don't know what to study.

Another program promises customization on its website, but when you buy it, you realize it doesn't actually customize the program to you in a meaningful way. You take a diagnostic and then it sends you to a book with a few sections highlighted. The "customization" is never to be seen again, beyond this very rough level.

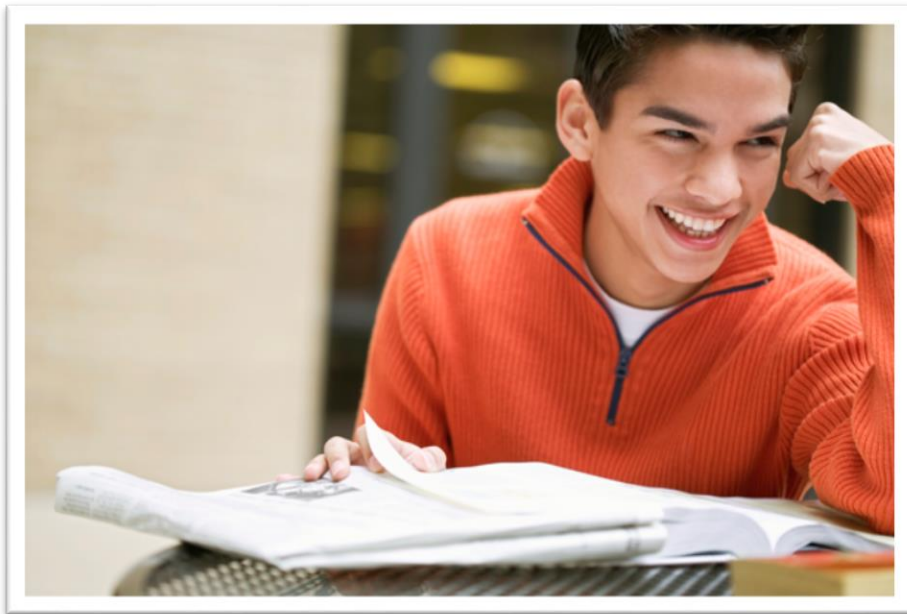
In an age where everyone wants to be "online" and profit from the growing popularity of online prep, it's unfortunate that so many companies are doing the bare minimum to qualify as online prep. Often, once you signed up it's too late – **the program doesn't even offer you a refund** if you're not happy. Watch out!

We see too many students and families fall for the traps of other companies, and we wrote this guide to explain the factors that really matter in an online SAT prep program.

From the next page forward, we'll explain **each major component of an effective SAT prep program**. If the program you're looking at doesn't have these features, you're not going to get good results.

2: Motivation

Must engage the student



Research shows that one of the major factors in improving your SAT score is the number of hours you study. You won't improve very much if you just spent five hours studying. However, if you find a program that can motivate you to put in 20, 30, or 40 and above hours, you'll make huge strides in your SAT score.

It's important then that the program you're looking for is **motivating and engaging**, and that means many things.

First, the program should **actively remind you of when to study**. You probably understand that the SAT is important, but even the best of us get distracted or forget to stick to the plan over time. The program should actively remind students and parents that there is work to be done,

2: Motivation

and hold the student accountable for the work they put in. **In PrepScholar, we accomplish this through our study scheduling system.** Every week, we ask you to schedule specific study times that you'll be using PrepScholar. We then email reminders to you and your parents so that we can all keep you on track.

Second, **the program should give you feedback on how you're doing and whether you're on the right track.** If you're studying for the SAT over several weeks, you want to make sure that you're not doing anything wrong and that you're putting in enough time, before it's too late. That's why PrepScholar sends out **weekly progress reports** to students and parents detailing the amount of work they've done and giving suggestions on how to improve. This way, everyone's on the same page about how much progress is being made.

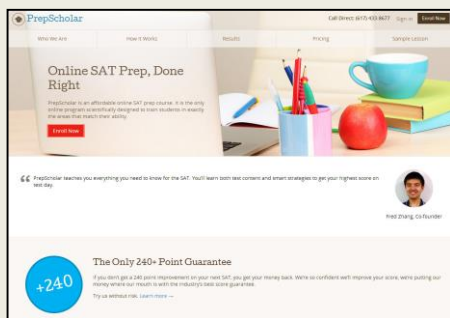
“ We can't thank you enough for all the attention that you have given Billy. The emails he receives from you each week are always so positive. ”
—Eileen H., parent

Last, the program should make an active effort to keep you interested in learning. PrepScholar accomplishes this through motivational features and effective content. You can see your specific progress every time you log into PrepScholar, and you'll see yourself getting better and better at each SAT skill. We also know that it's easy to lose

2: Motivation

attention with boring content. At PrepScholar, you'll benefit from our engaging and interactive lessons, as well as our detailed answer explanations written by the nation's top SAT instructors.

All these factors combine to motivate you to study more, ultimately resulting in a better score.



[Want to talk more about motivation or anything else? Schedule a Consult!](#)

Read onward to find the next major component of a good online prep program.

3: Real Customization

You need your own program



Every student has different strengths and weaknesses, based on the education they received up to this point and their own interests. Because of this, **every student should have a different study program**, designed to help overcome weaknesses and build on strengths.

This is really important for studying efficiency. If you customize your SAT prep, you can achieve in **40 hours** what it would take **someone else 120 hours** to do. That's because every minute that you spend studying gives you the best result possible, compared to wasting time.

3: Real Customization

This just seems like common sense, but nearly every prep program fails to deliver on this.

At PrepScholar, we take this seriously because it's how we learned to master the SAT. To accomplish this for you, we've divided the SAT into over 30 skills to learn across reading, writing, and math. When you sign up for PrepScholar, you take a diagnostic. We use advanced statistics and run thousands of calculations to find your **unique strengths and weaknesses**.

Next, you receive a **customized study plan** so that you work on what YOU need to work on. For every one of those 30 skills, we place you into a level depending your ability – Core, Advanced, or Expert. Depending on your level, you get a different lesson and a different set of practice questions for every single skill. Every time you take one of our lessons, you're working at the skill level that's right for you – not so easy that it's wasting your time, but hard enough that it's pushing your limits of understanding. Doesn't this make sense to do?

“ I'm loving how it suits my level of SAT skills. I'm not wasting time studying things I already know. ”

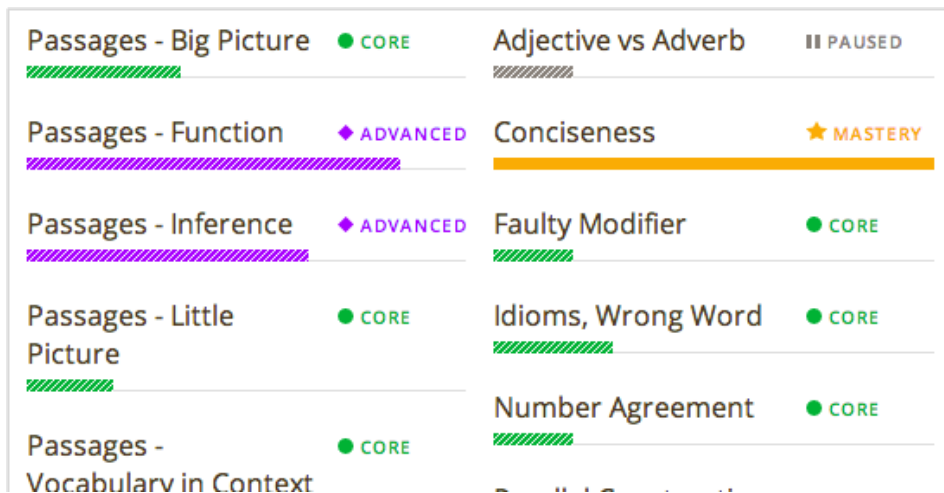
–Tatiana B., student

This takes a lot of work and resources for us – we've had to write custom lessons for every skill and level, and assign

3: Real Customization

each one of our thousands of practice questions into a specific level. This is why so many companies fail to deliver on this promise. But we care deeply about student results, and that's why we've taken the care to make it right.

Here's an example of how a student's skill level can vary across skills:



This student needs very different strategies and practice problems compared to another student. On PrepScholar, this student gets exactly what he needs to make the most progress.

4: Authentic Practice

Make your practice genuine

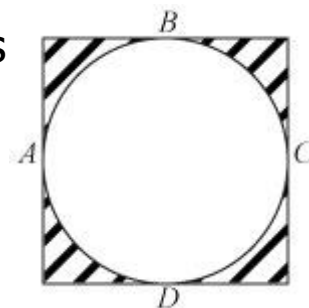


The SAT is a strange test. **It's purposely designed to trick the average student**, so questions will be worded in strange ways, and answers will trick students into picking the wrong answers. Here are a few examples of how this happens:

- In the writing section, the SAT uses technically correct English that no one would ever say in normal conversation. Students often make mistakes because the correct answer "sounds weird." Without training on realistic questions, the student doesn't learn the right concepts.

4: Authentic Practice

- In the math section, the SAT tests concepts that most students know, but in **very convoluted ways**. For example, one SAT question asks you to find the area of the shaded region to the right. Most geometry classes will never teach you how to do this specifically.



The SAT has a very specific style, and questions and answers are written in a very specific way. Therefore, it's incredibly important that you practice using realistic practice questions.

Most companies and books fail to provide realistic questions because it's hard to do it right. The authors at other companies often haven't actually scored well on the SAT themselves, so they don't understand the subtleties of SAT questions. The companies get by with just a mediocre job, not a stellar one.

“ Practice only with the most realistic SAT questions you can get. ”

Imagine that you wanted to join a baseball team. Instead of practicing with baseballs, you decided to train using a wiffle ball, and you got really, really good at hitting wiffle balls. You understood how they moved and how to hit them in just the right way. Come tryout day, the pitcher throws a baseball at you, and it's a total surprise. Swing and a miss, over and over again.

4: Authentic Practice

At PrepScholar, we take this problem seriously. That's why we give you two sets of realistic practice questions. First, we incorporate **10 REAL practice tests published by the College Board itself**. These are actual tests from previous administrations of the SAT, containing over 1,700 questions. PrepScholar integrates these into your study schedule and tells you exactly the right times to take these practice tests.

Secondly, we've hired the best SAT experts in the country to craft thousands of the most realistic SAT questions available. These experts have scored in the **top 1% of all students on the SAT** (many earning full scores), have graduated from top schools like Harvard and MIT, and have earned multiple university teaching awards. They know the SAT in and out, and the questions they write are better than anything else out there (aside from the official SAT practice tests). Furthermore, every single question has a **detailed answer explanation** designed to help you figure out your mistakes.

This is really expensive for us to do, which is why no other online prep program bothers to do this right. But it's one of the most important parts of effective test prep.

“ By training with PrepScholar, you'll be training with baseballs, not wiffle balls. ”

Summary

PrepScholar delivers where most online SAT prep fails.

We build in features to motivate you to study more, and we give feedback so you can be sure you're on the right track. We actually customize your prep program to your strengths and weaknesses, so that you're always working on what is most effective for you. Finally, we use realistic SAT questions and official SAT practice tests so that you train on what's actually being tested on the SAT.

We do all this because we actually care about improving student scores. After working with thousands of students, we understand what problems students grapple with, and we know what can get a student passed a sticking point to improve the score.

You shouldn't just take our word for it. As you're deciding between the best SAT prep program for you, **we recommend asking each company the questions on the following pages.**

Questions to Ask

Get on the phone and ask each company these questions. Our answers are given for your reference. If other companies can't answer these questions, it's a bad sign!

Use this to make your final decision on the best online prep for you.

How does your program guide me so I know exactly what to work on at every time?

PrepScholar creates a study program for you and assigns you lessons and quizzes every week. All you have to do is log in and put in time – you never have to worry about what to study and what resources to use.

Do you customize each student's study program? How specifically does your customization work? How will my study program differ from everyone else's?

When you start using PrepScholar, you take a diagnostic so that we understand your strengths and weaknesses. We then create a custom study schedule for you, which means we give you specific lessons at specific levels in a specific sequence. No two students ever have the exact same program.

How does your program adapt to my progress over time, instead of just at the beginning?

Every week, the rerun thousands of calculations to understand your changing skill level and how your study program should

Questions to Ask

change. You'll get assigned different lessons at different levels to adjust to you as you get better at the SAT. Again, you're always working on whatever's best for you to make the most improvement.

How are your practice problems customized to me based on my strengths and weaknesses?

We believe in the Goldilocks principle – you need practice questions that are not too easy or too hard, but just right for your ability. This means questions that you should be able to do at your skill level, but push you to get better and better. We assign you these practice questions automatically based on your skill level.

How do you motivate me to study? Tell me specific features.

PrepScholar does this in three ways. We help you schedule SAT prep into your weekly schedule, and we remind you when to study. We send feedback reports to you and your parents so that everyone understands your rate of progress and how much effort you're putting in. Finally, we make our lessons and questions engaging so that you don't get bored while studying.

Do you help me schedule SAT prep? How specifically?

At the beginning of each week, PrepScholar asks you to fill in your study schedule. We prompt you to schedule specific times and days, instead of vague promises of "5 hours this week." We then send reminders about these times.

How do you make sure I'm studying and hold me accountable if I'm not?

Our precise tracking technology only counts time when you're actually working on PrepScholar. If you login at PrepScholar, visit Facebook for an hour, and log out, we don't count that as any time spent toward studying. Only when engaging with PrepScholar and learning do we give you credit for your time. At the end of each week, we email the time you've spent to you and your parents.

How can I figure out whether I'm on track all the way to my test date? How do I know if I'm falling behind?

We give you detailed analysis of your skill levels so that you can see how your ability is changing over time. We assign you practice tests strategically throughout your study program so that we can see how your SAT score improves over time. Our instructor also checks into every single student three weeks before the test to give custom feedback on what they can improve.

Do you use real practice tests and questions in your program? If not, why not?

PrepScholar absolutely does. We believe that realistic practice tests are the best way to get used to the length and format of the exam, and to understand your current SAT score. We assign you these practice tests throughout your study program so that you work on them when it's most efficient for you.

If you use questions that are not official, what are the credentials of the people writing them?

At PrepScholar, we've hired the best SAT experts in the country to craft thousands of the most realistic SAT questions available. These experts have scored in the top 1% of all students on the SAT (many earning full scores), have graduated from top schools like Harvard and MIT, and have earned multiple university teaching awards. They know the SAT in and out, and the questions they write are better than anything else out there (aside from the official SAT practice tests).

How do I learn from my mistakes with your program?

Every single one of our thousands of questions has a detailed answer explanation that shows you how to find the right answer, and why the wrong answers are wrong. This is very important because real SAT questions have tricks that trap students into picking the wrong answers.

Do you have a refund guarantee? How specifically does it work? Do I get my money back? What are the requirements?

PrepScholar has a full money-back 160+ point guarantee. It's pretty simple to get this:

- take an official PSAT/SAT before signing up
- complete the PrepScholar program before your next test

If you do this and your score doesn't improve by 160 points, you get your money back, no questions asked. Other companies don't give you your money back and only let you use the program for more time, so watch out!

AND NOW WHAT?

Through this guide, you've learned a lot about online SAT prep programs. We encourage you to research each company you're considering. Use the questions in the last few pages to ask what each company really offers, and whether what they're doing makes sense to you.

We'd love to work with you to improve your SAT score. We believe we've developed the best SAT program in the world, and thousands of students have benefited.

The best way to see if it works for you is to try it out! We offer a 5-day risk-free trial, and the clock doesn't start ticking until the student uses it!

[Click Here to Start Your Trial!](#)

or **call us now** at **1(866) 811-5546**, where one of our Academic Advisers will walk you through the best options for you and your family.

We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, if you found this guide helpful, please share it with any other people who might benefit.

-The PrepScholar Team