
Woke Colleges vs Testing

Video Length: 5:02

Lesson Description:

Why are some top universities eliminating standardized tests like the SAT and ACT from their admissions policies? Do these tests actually predict success in college? Explore the debate over test-optional admissions policies and whether or not this leads to more diversity in college classrooms or to more failure for students who are not equipped for the rigor of some schools.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- identify the main arguments for and against the use of standardized tests in college admissions.
- compare the impact of standardized testing on different demographic groups, as discussed in the video.
- analyze the potential consequences of removing standardized tests on college diversity and academic success.
- evaluate the effectiveness of test-optional policies in achieving educational equity based on the evidence presented in the video.

Concepts & Key Terms:

Aesthetics: Concern with outward appearances or surface qualities, often prioritizing visual appeal over substantive or functional elements.

Disparity: A great difference between things, often referring to unfair inequalities between groups of people.

School Mismatch: A situation where students are placed in educational institutions that do not align well with their academic abilities or needs, potentially hindering their success and growth.

Standardized Testing: Tests administered and scored in a consistent manner, used to evaluate students' academic abilities across different regions and schools.

Preview Activity:

Use Think, Pair, Share to have students answer and discuss these preview questions: What are the main purposes of standardized tests like the SAT and ACT in college admissions? How might removing these tests affect students from different backgrounds? Can you think of any alternatives to standardized testing for college admissions?

OR

Distribute copies of the K-W-L worksheet to the class. Have students fill in the K and W sections. After showing the video, have students complete the L section and answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

Viewing Guide:

We recommend that teachers show the video twice: first to allow students to view the video and focus on the issues presented, and second to allow them time to

complete the viewing guide. After they complete the viewing guide, allow students a few minutes to work in pairs to share and verify answers.

Answers to Viewing Guide

1. SATs
2. inferior
3. success
4. aesthetics
5. control
6. fail

Woke Colleges vs Testing

Viewing Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

Directions: As you watch the video, fill in the blanks with the correct words.

1. George Washington University is ditching the _____.
2. Well, the test makers themselves admit that the SAT and ACT are _____ predictors of college performance.
3. Better test scores strongly predict _____ in college.
4. It's about _____.
5. Woke educators want to eliminate tests to make it easier for them to _____ which racial groups are admitted.
6. No, they won't and they're being set up to _____.

Take a few moments to reflect on the video and answer these questions.

Should standardized tests be considered as part of college admissions? Why or why not? _____

What impact could "school mismatch" have on a student? _____

Is diversity just for the sake of diversity, not considering the skills/talents of the individual (be it a job position or space at a specific college) a good thing or not?

Explain. _____

Discussion and Analysis

1. What are some reasons colleges are moving away from requiring SAT and ACT scores?
2. How do standardized tests affect a student's chance of getting into college?
3. What factors play into how well students do on standardized tests? How can students improve their scores without spending a lot of money?
4. What are the benefits of keeping standardized tests in the admissions process? What are the drawbacks?
5. How could test-optional policies impact students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds?
6. Bob Schaeffer says test companies just want to make money. What did he mean by that?
7. What did the MIT student mean when he Tweeted "the SAT is fairer than the alternative needing my parents to connect me with a professor"? Do you agree or disagree with his statement? Why?
8. If the test makers admit that high school grades accurately predict 33% of college grades, and tests accurately predict 32% of college grades, is one significantly inferior to the other? Based on this data, what would you suggest universities should do to predict student success before admission?
9. Why do some people argue that removing standardized tests could increase educational disparities?
10. What alternative measures could colleges use to assess applicants fairly?
11. How might test-optional policies harm those they intend to help?
12. What might be the consequences of a college misalignment with a student's academic level? ("school mismatch")
13. What are the ethical implications of universities choosing students based on aesthetics? What are the ethical implications of universities choosing students based on racial diversity?
14. Is the shift toward test-optional admissions a trend that will continue or will it revert in the future? (Explore *recent* decisions by higher education facilities regarding standardized testing.)

Discuss These Lines from the Video:

Partly because richer kids often get tutoring that gives them an unfair advantage, and because some minority groups don't score as well.

Real learning is not standardized, so why judge children just by test scores?

These are businesses selling products. The college board is a billion dollar a year business. Its president was paid over a million dollars.

If you're a Latino immigrant who goes to a lousy high school, but you test well, you got a shot.

...college board data shows that students with C+ grades, but with great SAT scores...do better in college than A+ students with lower test scores.

That's true for all grade levels...better test scores strongly predict success in college.

If you eliminate the test, John, you're just going to delay where it shows up elsewhere in this child's life. You're not doing that child any favor.

But woke educators want to eliminate tests, that makes it easier for them to control which racial groups are admitted.

There's this assumption. We just get these kids in the door. They'll be fine. They'll do okay. No, they won't, and they're being set up to fail.

Quotes for Discussion:

I had very little going for me as a kid except for the fact that I had demanding parents and was very good at filling out bubbles on standardized tests. I went to the Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University because I did well on the SAT. I went to Exeter because I did well on the SAT. – Andrew Yang

Standardized tests don't care if you're white or black, short or tall, or even the rate at which you learned the course material. – Steven Crowder

Sometimes, the most brilliant and intelligent minds do not shine in standardized tests because they do not have standardized minds. – Diana Ravitch

The SAT is not perfect. We all know smart, knowledgeable people who do badly on standardized tests. But neither is it useless. SAT scores do measure both specific knowledge and valuable thinking. – Virginia Postrel

Now the problem with standardized tests is that it's based on the mistake that we can simply scale up the education of children like you would scale up making carburetors. And we can't, because human beings are very different from motorcars, and they have feelings about what they do and motivations in doing it, or not. – Ken Robinson

Activities:

1. Have students complete the K-W-L chart in class or for homework. (Recall that the K and W sections are to be completed before watching the video and the L section after watching the video.)
2. Have students complete the political cartoon activity in class or for homework.
3. Have students complete the PMI chart in class or for homework.
4. Have students complete the Cloze activity in class or for homework.
5. Have students complete and submit the Exit Ticket as they leave class.
6. Divide students into groups and assign each a role: some research the historical context of standardized testing, others investigate current test-optional colleges, and another group explores the impact on diverse populations. Each group will present their findings to the class.
7. Organize a classroom debate where students take on roles as college admissions officers, high school students, and parents. Discuss the pros and cons of standardized testing in college admissions. This activity fosters understanding of different perspectives and encourages critical thinking.
8. Have students create infographics that visualize the data and arguments presented in the video about standardized testing and its alternatives. This visual project can help synthesize complex information into an accessible format.
9. Ask students to write a reflective essay on how the absence of standardized tests might impact their own or their peers' admissions opportunities. This personalizes the discussion, allowing students to connect more deeply with the material.
10. Students role-play as journalists interviewing a school administrator about the decision to go test optional. This activity helps students develop questioning skills and understand the rationale behind policy decisions.
11. Assign students to write a paper analyzing the arguments for and against test-optional policies, using evidence from the video and additional research. This writing exercise helps meet higher-level critical thinking and analysis objectives.
12. Students conduct a survey among peers or community members about their views on standardized testing and its importance in college admissions. Analyzing and presenting the results will help them understand broader public opinion.
13. Have students create posters arguing for or against test-optional policies. Set up a gallery walk where they can view and discuss each other's work, providing feedback and posing questions.

14. Have students research current trends in the standardized testing debate. Which schools continue to require testing? Have any that stopped standardized tests brought them back? If so, what reasoning did they give? Culminate the activity with a class discussion of what was discovered during research.

15. In groups, have students research, then create and present a detailed plan for preparing for standardized testing and strengthening college applications (or trade school applications) without spending money. They should research free resources for test preparation, such as online tutorials and practice tests, and identify activities that enhance applications, such as volunteer work, job experience, or personal projects. Discuss as a class. Have students create a personal plan for themselves that includes goals and a timeline for achieving those goals. In the end, compile a list of all these resources that can be shared with other students/schools.

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

Woke Colleges vs Testing K-W-L Chart

Directions: Complete the **K** and **W** sections prior to watching the video. After you have seen the video, complete the **L** section and answer the questions below the K-W-L chart.

K	W	L
What I know about college admission tests and student success...	What I want to know about college admission tests and student success...	What I've learned about college admission tests and student success...

Should standardized tests be part of college admission procedures? Why or why not? _____

How might a poor match between student and school affect the student's success? _____

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

Woke Colleges vs Testing PMI Chart

P = Plus: What might be some positive effects of using standardized tests for college admissions?
M = Minus: What might be some negative effects of using standardized tests for college admissions?
I = Interesting: What is interesting about using standardized tests for college admissions?

+ Plusses +	- Minuses -	I

Is it "fair" to use standardized tests for college admission? Why or why not? _____

If you oversaw creating a school's admission policy, how would you select students and why? _____

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Per _____

Teacher _____

Woke Colleges vs Testing

Cloze Activity

Directions: Read the entire passage first. Then fill in the blanks with words from the box.

increased	debated	decide	optional
right questions	once	face value	pandemic
admitted	hold	require	option
strong	throw away	withhold	above
administered			

Standardized testing is one of the most fixated upon and _____ aspects of the college admission process. It is also one that generates great angst and skepticism among applicants and their supporters. Trying to understand it all can feel like being in the darkness on a train bound for nowhere. Required testing, _____ testing, test-free, test-based scholarships, SAT vs. ACT, self-reported testing, fee waivers, extended testing, digital testing...one needs a degree in assessment to make sense of it all.

Over the past decade, the number of colleges and universities with test-optional policies has _____ exponentially—it was already on the rise and the _____ gave it an unexpected boost. At more institutions than not (around 80% of 4-year colleges), students can _____ whether they want their standardized test scores to be considered as part of their application.

For those colleges and universities that still allow students the _____ to submit or not, how should applicants approach this decision? In a recent [admission blog](#), Rick Clark, assistant vice provost and executive director of undergraduate admission at Georgia Tech tells applicants to look beyond the _____ of the numbers colleges provide and he emphasizes the importance of asking the _____ of schools while being good students and researchers.

It makes sense for most students to take the SAT and/or ACT at least _____. Even if it is not an official administration—there are a number of free practice/diagnostic tests that can give students a snapshot of their test-taking ability. By the middle of junior year, most high schools will have

_____ the PSAT and/or the PreACT (the practice version of each test). Try one, or both, and from there determine how to play your cards.

If you are applying to colleges or universities that _____ testing then you need to assess how your scores line up with the middle 50% of _____ students at those institutions. If your scores are toward the bottom or below their published range then you are going to want to engage in test prep (or choose other schools). If all the schools on your list have optional policies, then consider this gambling advice: know when to _____ `em.

If you are a _____ tester and your results are _____ the average for admitted students at the schools to which you are applying, then, by all means, share them.

The song reminds us what "every gambler knows." That is, "the secret to survivin' is knowin' what to _____ and knowin' what to keep." If you want to survive in an applicant pool you need to identify what aspects of your academic and personal profile will support your candidacy and what will not serve you. If the scores don't add value then fold up and move on. Unless there is some extenuating circumstance, all else being equal, _____ your scores and let your hard work and achievement in and out of class speak for itself.

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Per _____

Teacher _____

Woke Colleges vs Testing **Cloze Activity - ANSWER KEY**

Directions: Read the entire passage first. Then fill in the blanks with words from the box.

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Over the past decade, the number of colleges and universities with test-optional policies has increased exponentially—it was already on the rise and the pandemic gave it an unexpected boost. At more institutions than not (around 80% of 4-year colleges), students can decide whether they want their standardized test scores to be considered as part of their application.

For those colleges and universities that still allow students the option to submit or not, how should applicants approach this decision? In a recent [admission blog](#), Rick Clark, assistant vice provost and executive director of undergraduate admission at Georgia Tech tells applicants to look beyond the face value of the numbers colleges provide and he emphasizes the importance of asking the right questions of schools while being good students and researchers.

It makes sense for most students to take the SAT and/or ACT at least once. Even if it is not an official administration—there are a number of free practice/diagnostic tests that can give students a snapshot of their test-taking ability. By the middle of junior year, most high schools will have administered the PSAT and/or the PreACT (the practice version of each test). Try one, or both, and from there determine how to play your cards.

If you are applying to colleges or universities that require testing then you need to assess how your scores line up with the middle 50% of admitted students at those institutions. If your scores are toward the bottom or below their published range then you are going to want to engage in test prep (or choose other schools). If all the schools on your list have optional policies, then consider this gambling advice: know when to hold 'em.

If you are a strong tester and your results are above the average for admitted students at the schools to which you are applying, then, by all means, share them.

The song reminds us what "every gambler knows." That is, "the secret to survivin' is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep." If you want to survive in an applicant pool you need to identify what aspects of your academic and personal profile will support your candidacy and what will not serve you. If the scores don't add value, then fold up and move on. Unless there is some extenuating circumstance, all else being equal, withhold your scores and let your hard work and achievement in and out of class speak for itself.

This Cloze Activity is adapted from "The College Admission Testing Gamble"

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brennanbarnard/2023/12/06/the-college-admission-testing-gamble/>

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____ Period _____

Teacher _____

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Political Cartoon Activity

Directions: Use the political cartoon to answer the questions.



Briefly describe what is happening in the cartoon. _____

What is the central message of this cartoon? _____

How does the cartoon use irony or exaggeration to make its point? _____

How does this cartoon relate to the video? _____

Name

Admit One

If unprepared students are admitted to college, does that set them up to fail? Explain your reasoning.

Admit One

EXIT TICKET

Name

Admit One

If unprepared students are admitted to college, does that set them up to fail? Explain your reasoning.

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