



Building Better Learners for Life



How to Use This Guide

Calling all juniors! This will be a big year with a lot to juggle, including advanced classes, extracurriculars, and SAT/ACT prep. Applerouth is here to help jumpstart your junior year with our road map to college admissions testing success.

Follow these steps to pick the right test, build your prep plan, and hit your goals.

Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT | pages 1-4

- → Check out our handy SAT vs. ACT infographic.
- It summarizes key differences between the tests and will bring you up to speed in minutes.

Step 2: Figure out which test is best for you | pages 5-8

- It's a good idea to pick one test and focus on it: don't split your time!
- → What's the best way to choose a test? Take a full-length, official practice SAT and ACT, then compare your scores.
- Understand your 10th or 11th grade PSAT scores to enhance your planning.

Step 3: Make a Plan | pages 9-16

- Now that you've chosen your test, build a plan to reach your score goals.
- Get the facts on test-optional admissions and how it affects your plan
- Choose test dates and a prep timeline that make sense for you.

Step 4: Prep with Applerouth | page 17

- Your Applerouth tutor will help you make the most of your plan.
- Increase your score with targeted strategies designed just for you and your goals.

Contact us at 866-789-7737 to get personalized advice and a custom testing plan.

Use the color bar at the bottom of each page to follow the steps.



Step 1

Pages 1 - 4

Step 2 Pages 5 - 8

Step 3 Pages 9 - 16

Step 4
Page 17

THE SAT (VS) THE ACT

- · Fewer Geometry Questions
- · More Time per Question
- No-calculator Math Section



- Lots of Geometry
- Faster Paced
- Tough Science Section



TIMING & SCORING

Overall Time 2h

Reading

65m

Writing

35m

200 - 800 points

Math (No Calculator)

25m

Math (Calculator)



200 - 800

points

1-36

1-36

1-36

1-36

35m

Reading

45m

English

60m

Math

35m

Science

Total Points

400 - 1600

1 - 36

Total Points

Time per Question



48s Writing











Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



MATH

Number of Questions

SAT ACT

58 60

SAT ACT

SAT ACT

Time Per Question

ACT

SAT

60s

83s

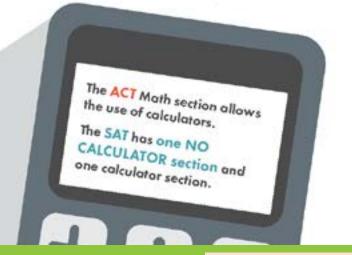
Formulas

The SAT provides a reference table of common formulas.

The ACT does not provide formulas for reference.



The SAT Math sections include 45 multiple choice questions and 13 student-produced response questions (i.e., grid-in questions).



Geometry Focus

The ACT has a much greater emphasis on Geometry. In contrast, the SAT focuses more on Algebra, word problems, and Data Analysis questions that ask you to incorporate information from tables and charts into your calculations.

SAT

6%

ACT

23%

Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



READING



Time Per Question



75s

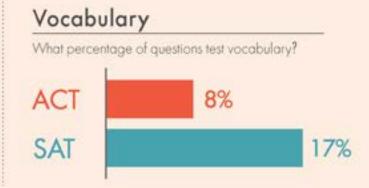
Number of Questions

SAT

ACT

52

40



Do the Reading sections have

Graphs and Charts?

SAT

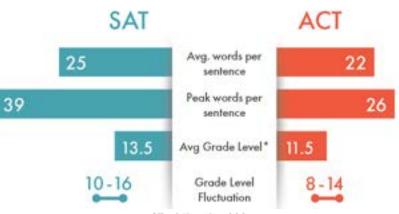


Yes, relating to two passages



No, only on the Science section

Passage Complexity



*Flesch-Kinopid readability assessment

Number of Passages

SAT

5











Topics Covered

- Literature
- . Science (2)
- · History/Soc. Studies (2)

ACT

4







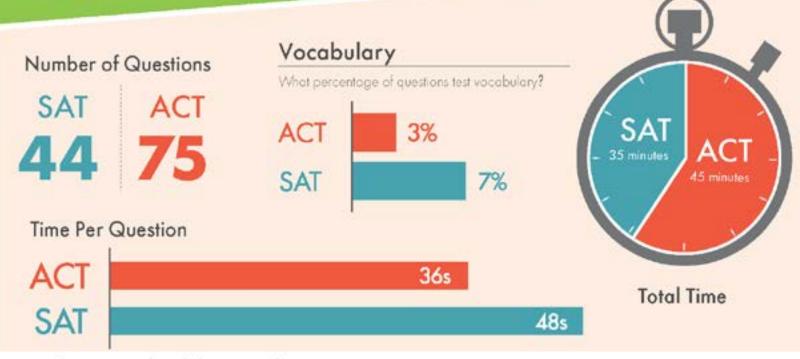


- · Prose Fiction
- Humanities
- Social Science
- Natural Science

Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT



WRITING/ENGLISH



Do the Writing/English sections have

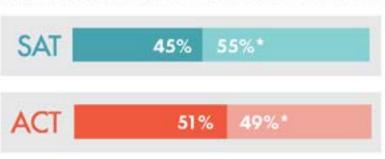
Graphs and Charts?

Yes, relating to one or two passages

ACT

No, only on the Science section

GRAMMAR VS. RHETORICAL SKILLS



"The difference between the 49% Rhetorical Skills on the ACT and 55% on the SAT feels even greater in practice, as the questions on the SAT require a fuller understanding of the passage.



www.applerouth.com



Step 1: Learn about the SAT + ACT





Choosing a Test

Now that you've learned about both tests, it's time to choose the test that's right for you. Neither the SAT nor the ACT is easier than the other, but the two tests focus on slightly different skills and have different timing and question styles. Many students have a preference for the SAT or the ACT, and you can decide which test is best for you by following a few easy steps.

- → Take full-length, official SAT and ACT practice tests, then compare your scores. This is the best way to choose a test. You may score significantly higher on one test than the other, which makes the decision easy. Even if you don't see a significant score difference between the two, you'll still get a clear sense of what each test feels like.
- You can also review your PSAT scores—from 10th or 11th grade—for a greater understanding of the SAT's timing and content. Note that PSAT scores aren't quite as useful in determining test type, since the SAT is longer and more challenging than the PSAT. Also, your 10th-grade PSAT score won't be as accurate, since you've had a lot of academic growth since then.

Over the next few pages, you'll find information on how to interpret your PSAT scores, as well as a concordance table comparing SAT and ACT scores.

Sign up for free online practice tests at www.applerouth.com/calendar or contact us at info@applerouth.com for help.

"I can't thank my daughter's tutor enough!

My daughter has improved so much not only in her scores but also in her confidence."

— New York Tri-State Area parent

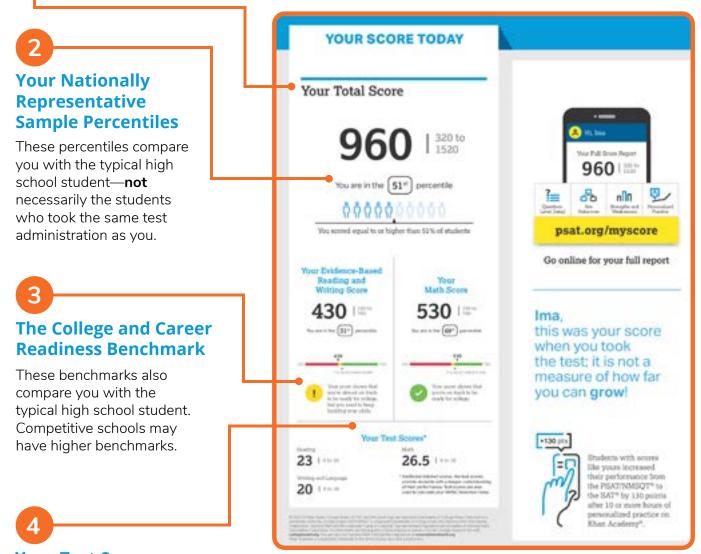




Understanding Your PSAT/NMSQT Score Report

1 Your Total Score

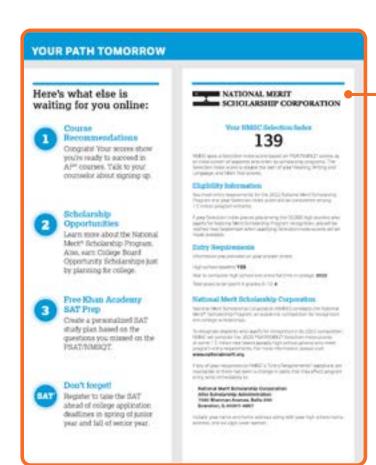
The PSAT and SAT share a common scale, so you can compare your scores directly. Keep in mind, the PSAT maxes out at 1520 whereas the SAT is scored out of 1600.



Your Test Scores

These scores are for the different sections of the test: Reading, Writing and Language, and Math. To get your total Evidence Based Reading and Writing Score, add your Reading Test Score and Writing Test Score, then multiply by 10. To get your Math Score, multiply your Math Test Score by 20.







5

National Merit Scholarship Corporation

As a junior, your PSAT score will be considered for the National Merit Scholarship Program by the NMSC (National Merit Scholarship Committee). The NMSC Selection Index ranges from 48 to 228, and about 50,000 students each year earn scores high enough to qualify for recognition. For entry requirements and information on the steps in the competition, see the annually updated PSAT/ NMSQT Student Guide or visit www.nationalmerit.org.



6

Your Question-Level Feedback

Here you can see which specific questions you got right and wrong, as well as their difficulty level. You can use this feedback to identify trends related to timing, fatigue, careless errors, and issues with gridin questions.

Get your full score report at psat.org/myscore

Sample Score Report from https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/sample-psat-nmsqt-score-report.pdf





SAT/ACT Concordance Table

Colleges do not prefer the SAT over the ACT or vice versa. Here is a concordance table of comparable SAT and ACT scores. The SAT has a greater score range (400-1600), so multiple SAT scores often correspond to a single ACT score.

SAT	ACT
Total Score	Composite Score
1570-1600	36
1530-1560	35
1490-1520	34
1450-1480	33
1420-1440	32
1390-1410	31
1360-1380	30
1330-1350	29
1300-1320	28
1260-1290	27
1230-1250	26
1200-1220	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1030-1050	20
990-1020	19
960-980	18
920-950	17
880-910	16
830-870	15
780-820	14
730-770	13
690-720	12
650-680	11

Data from the College Board and ACT, Inc.'s Guide to the 2018 ACT/SAT Concordance released June 2018.

Already took practice tests and need help comparing them?

Contact an Applerouth Program Advisor at 866-789-7737 for personalized advice.





Official SAT/ACT **Test Dates**

SAT DATES

The SAT is offered ~7 times in an academic year, between late August and early June. Registration deadlines are usually ~1 month in advance of the test date and scores are usually available ~2 weeks afterward.

To see available test dates and locations, register directly at www.collegeboard.org.

ACT DATES

The ACT is offered ~7 times in an academic year, between September and July. Registration deadlines are roughly ~5 weeks in advance of the test date and scores are usually available within 2-8 weeks following the test administration.

To see available test dates and locations, register at www.myact.org.

Take a practice test before your official test.

Sign up for a free, online practice test with Applerouth at applerouth.com/calendar and you'll get a detailed score report with personalized insights to help you make an optimal plan.



Understanding Test-Optional Admissions

With frequent news about colleges going test-optional, you're probably wondering, "Do I really need to take the SAT or ACT?" For many students, the answer is yes: you should at least consider taking the tests. Test-optional policies are an opportunity for you to decide how to best present yourself to each college on your list. You might decide to withhold your scores from a school where they wouldn't help make your case for admission, but if you skip testing entirely, you may be preemptively eliminating an important asset in your application.

As <u>Carol Lee Conchar</u>, <u>Associate Director for Regional Programs at GW</u>, <u>explained in an Applerouth webinar</u>, students "should take the test for experience and to see how well they perform," because having a score "in your back pocket" is valuable.

Perhaps your test scores will help show that you're academically competitive at a more selective school, or perhaps your scores will help you earn a merit scholarship. You take yourself out of the running for these possibilities if you prematurely decide not to take the SAT or ACT at all. This doesn't mean that testing is for everyone, but it does mean that each student needs to make an informed and individualized decision about testing.

To help you do this, here are some FAQs about test-optional admissions and test planning. With these questions answered, you can decide what role testing will play in your college admissions journey.

What does test optional really mean?

With test-optional policies on the rise, **informed college applicants need to understand what test-optional is and what it isn't**. A test-optional policy does not mean that ACT and SAT scores are not factored in as part of the admissions decision, only that they are not a prerequisite for submitting an application. In other words: **test-optional does not mean test-blind**. Test-blind schools do not accept or consider standardized test scores at all. Test-optional schools consider scores if they are present but do not hold it against students if they are not.

Many colleges that have chosen to become test-optional have done so in the hopes of evening the playing field for all applicants. A test-optional policy provides an opportunity for students to customize their application process while ensuring that testing does not systematically deny students a shot at admission, whether due to access to educational resources, a learning difference, a mental health concern, or any other life circumstance that may make it difficult, if not impossible, to take the tests and get scores that show their best abilities.



How will test-optional colleges look at my application if I do (or don't) submit scores?

Over five hundred colleges and universities took a <u>pledge</u> through the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, stating that they would not penalize students who did not submit scores.

That said, test-optional schools still value strong test-takers who submit scores. If your scores are competitive at a college or university, sending them will undoubtedly prove beneficial. Your scores will either affirm the narrative presented by your high school record—that you are a strong student with high potential to succeed in college—or they will improve your case as an applicant. By junior year, boosting your GPA will be a steeper climb, and with a less dramatic result, than boosting your score on a college admission test. In other words, if freshman and sophomore grades are dragging down your GPA, high performance on the SAT or ACT might better reflect who you are as a student right now. Additionally, admission tests can attest to your preparation for college-level work if you feel that the university to which you are applying may not be familiar with your high school. In this case, scores lend credibility to your transcript.

It's important to remember that at most selective colleges, the admissions process is "holistic." This means that, whether you submit scores or not, colleges are evaluating your whole application, including your test scores (if you submit them), your high school records (GPA, course rigor, an extracurricular portfolio), your essay or writing sample, and letters of recommendation.

If you choose not to submit scores, the admissions decision will be based solely on the non-testing aspects of your application. Rick Clark, Georgia Tech's Director of Undergraduate Admissions, describes the admissions approach as a "stool" with different legs, including GPA, course rigor, extracurriculars, and letters of recommendation:

"[l]f you choose not to have some of that support on the testing leg, we're just going to look a little closer and put more weight on the rest of the stool."

Continued on the next page.



At a test-optional school you have the option of choosing where some of the admissions weight will fall. Clark advises you to ask yourself, "Do [l] want some of the weight on testing, or do [l] want it removed from that?"

As Ginger Fay, Applerouth's Director of IEC Engagement and former Duke University admissions officer, explains, things that enhance your application are worth including, even if not required:

"You want to consider how well your whole application speaks to your preparation for college. In truth, many aspects of your application are "optional" - you don't have to take challenging classes or earn top grades, you don't have to play sports or lead organizations, but if you've done these things, you'd certainly want to include them."

Fay notes that the decision about test scores boils down to whether they are a good reflection of your potential to succeed in college. "If they are, you will want to include them. And if they aren't, you will opt not to submit them when they are not required. The term test-optional is a little misleading; I think submission-optional might be more to the point." Carol Lee Conchar of GW recommends that you ask yourself whether your "test scores reflect you in the best way possible plus support your academics." What students are "doing in the classroom is really, really important," she says, "but test scores add that additional information for us."

How would I do on the SAT or ACT?

<u>Taking full-length practice SAT and ACT exams</u> is a great way to find out. To ensure reliable results, be sure that your practice tests are full-length, official tests (written and released by the College Board and ACT, Inc.), and make sure to take them under timed conditions that mimic those of a real test day.

What are the testing policies at the colleges on my list?

Take some time to look at current testing policies and score ranges at schools that interest you. Testing information can typically be found on each college's admissions website and will vary from school to school and can change from year to year, so make sure to **pay special attention to time frames** for any current policies.

Do I need test scores to qualify for scholarships?

While you're researching colleges and testing policies, you should also look at merit scholarship opportunities. Many colleges offer <u>merit scholarships</u> to students who meet certain academic criteria. **Often, SAT or ACT scores are required to qualify, even at test-optional schools**. It is not uncommon for students to discover that their current test scores (or a very small increase in those scores), combined with their GPA, make them eligible for tens of thousands of dollars in merit aid.

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What is my testing timeline?

Your timeline will depend on a variety of factors, including admissions deadlines at your colleges of interest and commitments you have throughout the year. Ideally, you'll map out a timeline that comfortably allows for two to three test dates and 10 to 12 weeks of preparation before the first official test. For more detail on testing timelines, see pages 14-16.

What if I am experiencing testing anxiety?

Test anxiety is very common, so if you are feeling anxious while taking a test, you're not alone. When it comes to health and safety, it's important that every student choose what's right for them. For some students, that may mean not testing or testing less than the 2-3 times we recommend in a typical cycle. If you have an official diagnosis of anxiety, you may qualify for special accommodations, like distraction limited testing, that can help manage your symptoms.

For anxiety about the test itself, there are helpful strategies that you can use to self-regulate during the exam. As a career college admissions officer and a parent, GW's Conchar understands that you may feel undue pressure and "fear of how you're going to be judged by the score that you receive." Still, she advises that testing "is a good practice to go through." This is especially true if you anticipate applying to graduate or professional school someday or entering a field that requires high-stakes testing at some point. We believe, like Conchar, that, with the right support, students can use the testing experience in high school to work through test anxiety in a healthy way and gain confidence that will serve them well for years to come.

Want reliable practice scores?

Sign up for a free, online practice test with Applerouth at <u>applerouth.com/calendar</u> and you'll get a detailed score report with personalized insights to help you make an optimal plan.

"My son was accepted into his dream school, and I'm confident that would never have happened if it weren't for his tutor. I gladly recommend Applerouth to anyone who asks!"

— Seattle Metropolitan Area parent



SAT + ACT Testing Timelines

When should I take the SAT or ACT?

As a general rule, we recommend that students prepare for and complete their college admissions testing during junior year. The exact timeline varies from student to student, with some students starting as early as the summer after sophomore year and others completing testing in the fall of senior year (although that's cutting it close!). If you are a current junior and haven't yet started your test planning, now is the time to begin!

Making a Plan

Here at Applerouth, we generally recommend that students plan to take the SAT or ACT up to three times. You may not need this many test dates in your plan—you might make your score goals the first or second time you take the test!—but it's important to have backup dates in reserve, if you can.

Having multiple planned test dates reduces test anxiety by preventing any one test day from becoming a make-or-break situation. Doing so also helps you hedge against any test date cancellations. Finally, lots of schools superscore the SAT or ACT, which means that multiple test sittings can only help you.

Your score improvement will depend on how much time and energy you put into prepping. If you're hoping for significant gains on the SAT or ACT, you can expect to spend between 50 and 70 hours preparing. That includes:

- → Time spent in tutoring sessions, group classes, or in a self-paced course
- → Completing homework
- Taking practice tests

Generally speaking, we recommend you complete your prep hours in the 10-12 weeks before your first test date, and then brush up before subsequent test dates.

As you map things out, you'll want to keep application deadlines in mind. They vary from school to school but, in general, early admission deadlines tend to be in early November, which means you'll need to complete your final test by October of your senior year. Regular decision deadlines tend to be in January, allowing for testing through December of your senior year. For exact deadlines, check the admissions websites of the colleges on your list.



Putting Your Plan Into Action

With the above guidelines in mind, here's a handy reference tool that will help you put an effective testing plan into action.

Test Prep Planning Checklist for Juniors

- → Allow for 2 to 3 test dates (if possible) by the end of fall semester senior year (October if you plan to apply for early decision or early action)
- → Prep for 10 to 12 weeks before your first test
- → Brush up before subsequent tests

Early Summer After Sophomore Year



Midsummer Before Junior Year



Late Summer of Junior Year



Fall of Junior Year



PICK A TEST + SET A GOAL

Take a practice SAT and ACT test and decide which is best for you. Then, set a goal score based on your list of target colleges.

If your practice test scores stack up, great! If not, let's make a prep plan. Applerouth offers 1:1 prep, group tutoring, and self-paced prep.

SELECT YOUR TEST DATE(S)

The only way to balance academics, extracurriculars, testing, and family responsibilities is to look at the year as a whole. Start with your application deadlines and work backwards.

Plan for up to 3 test dates – you may or may not need them, but this way, you have a plan if you need to take the test more than once, and you'll get to superscore, via the highest per-category score from all test dates!

Consider your academic history. The SAT and ACT cover Algebra I, II, and Geometry, so complete these classes before you test.

PLAN YOUR PREP

It's best to choose test dates that allow you time to prep beforehand, and to focus without the distractions of AP exams, sports tournaments, etc.

Contact Applerouth to get personalized advice and a custom testing plan.

Be sure to register for the official test at ACT.org or CollegeBoard.org.

TAKE THE OFFICIAL TEST

Juniors, ideally you'll take your first official test Fall semester, if you've completed Algebra II.

If you haven't completed Algebra II yet, plan to take your first official test in the Spring of your junior year.



Sample Testing Plans for Juniors

These sample plans are meant to help illustrate the overall flow of prep and testing. As these plans show, you should aim to be done with testing before your senior year starts; that way, you'll have the fall dates as backup, just in case something comes up. The exact test dates and timing of each step will be unique to each student.

Here are a few sample testing plans for current juniors:

Sample Testing Plan: Early Application (ACT)

Michael is a junior who plans to apply to at least one college in the early admissions period. He's looked up deadlines and knows his testing has to be completely done by October of his senior year.

Target Tests: Michael should plan to take the June and July ACTs, with the September test as a backup in case he doesn't meet his score goals.

Prep Window: Michael should start prepping in March of his junior year and finish most of his prep before the June test. He should do some review with his tutor before the July and September tests (if he ends up taking them).

Sample Testing Plan: Regular Application (SAT)

Brianna is a junior who plans to apply to schools in the regular application cycle. She's looked up deadlines and knows she needs to have her testing done before the end of the fall semester.

Target Tests: Brianna should plan to take the **June** and **August** SATs, with **October** and **November** as backups in case she doesn't meet her score goals. She can choose to take the **May** test as well, but that means beginning prep immediately.

Prep Window: If Brianna chooses to take the May SAT, she should start prepping right away. If she plans to wait until June, she should begin prepping in March and finish most of her prep before the June test. She should do some review with her tutor before the August test and before any fall tests she chooses to sit for.

Remember, no two students' prep plans are exactly alike. As a Junior, you have time to make adjustments along the way, and, if needed, you can use the summer between junior and senior year too. You're planning now, which means you are already on the right track.

Need help figuring out your testing plan?

Contact one of our expert Program Advisors at 866-789-7737 to get personalized advice.





About Applerouth



A high SAT or ACT score can open doors to the most competitive colleges and pave the way to merit-based scholarships.



With tutoring, students will get one-on-one, personalized support and a customized prep plan based on their strengths, needs, and schedule that is guaranteed* to raise their scores.

*Higher Score Guarantee: Conditions and restrictions apply, for complete guarantee eligibility requirements visit applerouth.com/policies/#guarantee.



With Applerouth, you get the smartest approach to tutoring. We use the latest research in cognition, memory and motivation to help students achieve a higher level of success.

Why Applerouth?

Student Focused Approach

The tests are standardized, our approach is anything but. We provide:

- Specialized advice to determine the best test prep plan for you
- Custom tutor matching
- → One-on-one, personalized tutoring sessions
- → Ongoing parent communication
- → Test-like practice

Better Results

Applerouth students earn higher tests scores—guaranteed.* Our students achieve superior results, improve their grades, and boost their confidence.

Flexible Locations and Online Tutoring

Wherever you are, our tutors are ready to help. Over the last 2 decades, we've helped over 40,000 students across the U.S. and internationally.



5 pts

Average ACT Increase

Applerouth tutors help students with each section of the ACT to bring their composite score up an average of 5 points.



130 pts

Average SAT Increase

Applerouth students taking the SAT see an average increase of 130 points.



\$28.8 million

Total accepted scholarship money by Applerouth students in the class of 2020.



49/50

Our students were accepted to 49 of the top U.S. colleges*

*based on US News and World Report Rankings of National Universities 2020.

All increase statistics are based on students completing at least 20 hours of private tutoring and 80% of their assigned homework.

Step 4: Prep with Applerouth



www.applerouth.com

About Applerouth

Applerouth Tutoring Services

www.applerouth.com info@applerouth.com 866-789-PREP (7737)

Atlanta Metropolitan Area 404-728-0661

Chicago Metropolitan Area 847-239-5247

Houston Metropolitan Area 281-946-7128

New York Tri-State Area 212-731-4676

Seattle Metropolitan Area 206-456-6864

Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area 202-558-5644

Online & International 866-789-7737

"My son's tutor connects with him unlike anyone ever has. I am beyond confident in Applerouth's program, and I love the specialized attention that my son receives."

Atlanta Metropolitan Area parent

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