

SAT & Other Standardized Test Prep Vocabulary Building Tips - Part 1

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1. **AVOID THE #1 MISTAKE:** Bright and articulate parents who have extensive vocabularies often believe their child has benefited from an enriched home and school environment. A language-rich atmosphere is a general advantage to a student, but it doesn't always translate to school or test success. The reason? A **STRONG VOCABULARY IS NOT NECESSARILY AN SAT-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY.** Your student needs to know the "hit words" that are the foundation of the SAT and other standardized tests. You can access lists of these words in books, on CDs, online, or in SAT classes.
2. **START EARLY:** Vocabulary development takes time. A busy high school sophomore or junior is often daunted by having to suddenly upgrade his/her vocabulary by learning hundreds of words in a short period of time. To prevent stress and enhance long-range retention, many of our families enroll their students in our weekly 7th grade SAT classes (curriculum includes SAT vocabulary). You can start your student in building vocabulary on your own, however, at any time. Use SAT-specific words as a family. Your teenagers and younger children will all benefit.
3. **LET YOUR CAR BE THEIR CLASSROOM:** Travel time can be spent playing SAT word games. **Example:** "What word begins with an *a* and refers to *beauty*? Answer: *Aesthetic*. Relate the answer to other words such as *aesthete*. **Example:** "Who knows the difference between an *aesthete* and an *ascetic*?"
4. **BUILD ON THE FAMILIAR:** Connect challenging newer words to simpler, better-known synonyms. **Example:** *Acumen* = *Insight*.
5. **WHEN IN ROME:** Utilize Latin and Greek roots, prefixes and suffixes. **Example:** The prefix *ambi* means *both* or *two*. *Ambidextrous*: Using both hands with equal ease. *Ambivalent*: Simultaneous and contradictory attitudes or feelings (of two minds). Know the language. Make "word families" part of your family!