Dear Parents and Friends, it's hard to believe it's already December, and Fall semester classes are ending. The Spring 2016 Schedule is online; some of you have already seen it. You can find not only the schedule but also syllabi for most classes at www.aceslearningcenter.com. We've worked hard to improve the English Enrichment program, and that work includes a careful revision of class syllabi to include sufficient homework and ensure that classes are challenging for even the brightest ACES students. In particular, Critical Reading classes now use readings carefully correlated for difficulty using Lexile levels. You can find out more about these levels at www.lexile.com.

Last Chance to Take the Current SAT!

As many of you know, the College Board has made huge changes to the format of the SAT, effective March of next year. The last chance to take the current version of the SAT is January 23rd, 2016. We recommend that 10th and 11th graders not risk their future on this new format; we believe that ACES students will show the results of their hard work in school, their intellect, and their talent most effectively on the current version of the SAT. Sign-up now!

In This Issue:

- Winter SAT and ACT Intensive Workshops.
- Format and scoring of the new SAT
- Spring Course Schedule course descriptions
- Explanation of Lexile levels—new tool for Critical Reading
- The Ultimate Preposition List: a must-read for all students and writers!

Enjoy!

Upcoming Dates:

12/28: Registration deadline for the 1/23 SAT Test
12/19: First Day of Winter Intensive Workshops
1/08: Registration deadline for the 2/6 ACT Test

Addendum to Fall Schedule:

There will be Winter Intensive Workshops for both the SAT and ACT tests beginning 12/19. Contact chrisamilbaker@gmx.com or aces4kids@gmail.com for more information and to register.
The SAT: New or Current Format?

Some Differences Between the Current and New Formats:

1. Hard vocabulary is absent in the new format.
2. Reading and writing sections are more focused on analyzing passages- this focus includes the grammar and essay sections, not just reading.
3. There are fewer but longer sections.
4. Math now counts for ½ of the new total of 1600, and the math sections now include more Algebra II, but the most challenging (Level 5) math questions are absent from the new test.

Which One is Right for Your Student?

Students might be excited to hear about the absence of obscure vocabulary on the new test, but don’t pack the suitcases for Harvard yet! The changes to the math section may make it more difficult for ACES students to distinguish themselves from the general populace. And the new format is also still untested; we just don’t know how accurate a measure of students’ abilities it will be, and neither does the College Board. Finally, since the test will be new, there are no preparation materials based on actual released tests. Students who can either take the current SAT or wait until next summer or fall, may do well to do so.
The ACT: The Up-and-Coming Challenger to the SAT

The ACT, begun in 1959, originally stood for American College Testing. Although I said “Challenger,” the ACT test is actually taken by more students each year than the SAT, and has been since 2012. Why would anyone take the ACT? Many students take advantage of the chance to have a different set of scores to send to colleges; some students will score higher on the SAT, while others may score higher on the ACT.

Some highlights of the ACT Test:

1. Problems that more closely resemble problems from high-school coursework.
2. Longer, fewer, sections, and less time per problem - speed and stamina are important!
3. A science section that tests logical reasoning and the ability to interpret charts and graphs more than specific knowledge of science; it includes reading passages that explain scientific concepts, then tests students on their understanding of the passages.

The Winter ACT Intensive Workshop

The Winter ACT Intensive Workshop takes place alongside the SAT Workshop during the Winter Break and on Saturdays in January. The ACT Intensive Workshop uses the same time-tested format as the SAT Workshop: accelerated review of material, test-taking strategies, and practice, practice, practice! If your student is interested in taking the ACT, I strongly encourage you to have your student enroll! 熟飽生巧！

Grammar Tip:

Affect vs. Effect

Everyone has mixed-up these two words at one time or another. Here’s a mnemonic to help distinguish them:

RAVEN Remember, Affect is a Verb and Effect is a Noun. (most commonly)

“That tree was affected by the storm. The effects are still apparent!”

Private Tutoring

One-on-one and small-group tutoring is available from Rice graduate Chris Baker and Harvard Mellon Fellow Carrie Kaplan. Tutoring can help younger students who want to get a head start in Spelling, Reading, and Vocabulary, and older students can get help with the SAT, PSAT, and ACT, and college admissions essays. Tutoring takes place at ACES. Contact chrisamilbaker@gmx.com or Principal Wang, aces4kids@gmail.com for rates and scheduling, or visit: http://www.aces4kids.com/aceslearningcenter/programs/private-tutoring/
English Enrichment Spring Classes

We are pleased to present to you this sampling of spring semester classes. They include both brand-new classes like Creative Writing: Applied Grammar and careful revisions of existing classes, such as in the case of Critical Reading classes.

**W106 Creative Writing: Applied Grammar**

In this course, students first review the language used to talk about grammar, then study some of the more advanced topics in English grammar. Students reinforce concepts and apply their new knowledge to specific grammar-related creative writing exercises in a technique called sentence-composing. Using this technique, students emulate the grammar and diction of some of the most famous contemporary authors in the United States.

**V105 Vocabulary Foundations**

In Vocabulary Foundations, students learn the Latin and Greek roots that form the backbone of English vocabulary. Using their understanding, students are able to decipher the meanings of new words and more easily memorize words they study. This class also teaches a special technique to aid memorization.

**E104B and V104B**

These classes continue from the fall semester but are open to new students in the spring. E104B Reading and Writing will focus more on writing in the spring semester. V104B will continue learning National Spelling Bee words; in the spring the focus is on spelling 6th, 7th, and 8th grade words and learning the meanings of words through 5th grade.

**Our ‘New’ Teacher, Carrie!**

We are pleased to welcome back Carrie for her second semester with ACES. Carrie is a graduate of Dartmouth, is a Harvard Mellon Foundation Fellow, and her writing has been published by Yale University Press. Carrie will be teaching Writing 108B, the Persuasive Essay (so important for success on the SAT and ACT!), and Critical Reading 108, Intermediate Critical Reading II.

**What are Lexile Levels?**

Lexile levels are a tool used to measure both the difficulty of specific reading passages and the reading ability of readers. ACES Critical Reading classes now use this metric to match readers with appropriate-level texts and, more importantly, gauge when readers are ready for more advanced texts. For example, the classic children’s book *The Cat in the Hat* has a Lexile level of 260L and is well-suited for students in 1st grade-and-younger, whereas Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring* has a Lexile level of 860L and is suitable for academically-advanced 4th graders. Here is a break-down of Lexile levels by ACES English Enrichment class:

- E103 700-900
- E104 900-1000
- E105 1000-1075
- CR106 1075-1125
- CR107 1125-1175
- CR108 1175-1250
- CR109 1250-1325
- CR110 1325-1425

Students who complete CR110 are well-prepared for college-level readings.
Let's get it out in the open: English is strange, irregular, and arbitrary. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the choice of preposition to use with a particular verb or noun. Learning this list will open up doors for anyone for whom speaking fluent English is important. Here is Part I of a three-part list. Look for Part II in the next newsletter!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb or Noun</th>
<th>Prep.</th>
<th>Example Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>concern</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>I am concerned about his grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>care</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>I care about you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worry</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>I'm worried about your grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modeled</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>My project is modeled after work by Galileo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>protect</td>
<td>against</td>
<td>This new paint is advertised as protecting against rust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>prejudiced</td>
<td>against</td>
<td>We should not be prejudiced against anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defend</td>
<td>against</td>
<td>The soldiers defended against the onslaught.</td>
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<tr>
<td>depict</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>Emily Dickinson is depicted as meek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>regard</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>Einstein is regarded as one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>defined</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>Courage is defined as the willingness to do something difficult or dangerous.</td>
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<tr>
<td>acclaimed</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>She is acclaimed as one of the greatest writers of her time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>at least as</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>My homework is at least as hard as yours, if not harder.</td>
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<tr>
<td>perceive</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>She is perceived as strict but fair. (N.B. spelling of 'perceive')</td>
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<tr>
<td>view</td>
<td>as</td>
<td>She is viewed as the most capable candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aim</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>Aim carefully at your target if you want to succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>angry</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>I'm not angry at you; I'm just upset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rivalry</td>
<td>between</td>
<td>The rivalry between them spurred each to study harder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>profit</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>They profited by their labor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fascinated</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>I've always been fascinated by butterflies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>built</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>This house was built by union workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>judge</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>Juries give us a chance to be judged by our peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prized</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>The flower was prized by all for its delicate aroma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delighted</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>I'm delighted by your presence here today!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attended</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>The conference was well-attended by members of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embarrassed</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>I'm embarrassed by my mistake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accompanied</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>Minors must be accompanied by an adult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hindered</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>Progress was hindered by a fundamental lack of understanding of the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraged</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>I'm encouraged by your recent progress!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allows</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>This new model allows for real-time correction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>There is great potential for improvement here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>The potential of flooding this week-end is great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>I am responsible for taking out the trash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>call</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>The situation calls for immediate action!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rates</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>What are your rates for babysitting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(get) credit</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>He should get credit for his efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>There is no need for concern!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grounds</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>The president's misconduct is grounds for impeachment!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adapted</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>The movie was adapted for television.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rival</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>They were rivals for her hand in marriage, but only one would succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>account</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>The flat tire accounts for his tardiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>I'm concerned for your career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compensate</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>She should be compensated for her time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
guilty for I feel guilty for forgetting your birthday.
guilty of He is not guilty of treason.
give credit for We should give her credit for her work.
exchange for We exchanged the shirt for one that fit better.
craving for I have a craving for mushrooms. (But, “I crave mushrooms.”)
mistake for We mistook the man for someone else.
isolate from Scientists in Antarctica are isolated from the rest of humanity.
benefit from We can all benefit from your example.
suffer from My grandfather suffers from Alzheimer's Disease.
separate from Young children don't like to be separated from their parents.
prefect from The construction prevented me from turning right.
divergent from The varieties are divergent from one another.
differ from My answer differs from yours!
inherit from I inherited my good nature from my mother!
discourage from She should not be discouraged from trying again.
different from My answer is different from yours.
dwindle from The water dwindled from a mighty river into a tiny trickle.
escape from They tried to escape from the prison.
date from The old farmhouse dates from the 19th century.
away from I am away from the office.
descend from His DNA test shows he is descended from Genghis Khan!
independent from Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836.
Independent of Are the most abstract thoughts independent of language?
prohibit from We are prohibited from smoking on campus.
emerges from A new paradigm emerges from the wreckage of the old one.
originate in His love of reading originated in a love of comic books.
instill in We tried to instill in him a love of learning.
fluctuations in There are many fluctuations in temperature in Texas.
boom in There has been a boom in e-reader sales this year.
aim in Licorice aids in digestion.
invest in I wish I had invested in Apple when I had the chance!
concur in We concur in our opinion of the movie.
belief in I believe in you!
participate in He participates in club soccer.
decline in There has been a decline in e-reader sales.
localized in The pain was localized in her pinky finger. (also 'localized to')
dispose of Please dispose of your trash properly.
take advantage of We should not take advantage of people's kindness.
danger of The danger of flooding is serious in Texas.
rid of Get rid of that old, torn shirt!
choice of We have our choice of drinks at a party.
afraid of I'm not afraid of the dark!
chance of There is a 50% chance of rain this week-end. Rats!
repent of He repented of his crime and promised to change his life.
interaction of The interaction of atomic particles is studied by physicists.
instead of I'd like water instead of soda, please.
rate of Radioactive half-life is a measure of the rate of decay.
tolerant of The older dog was tolerant of the puppies' antics.