

Effects of Coaching on SAT Scores

		Pre-test Mean Score	Pre-test Mean Score	Gain	Coaching Effect
Verbal	Coached	500 (92)	529 (97)	29 (59)	29 – 21 = 8
	Uncoached	506 (101)	527 (101)	21 (52)	
Math	Coached	521 (100)	561 (100)	40 (58)	40 – 22 = 18
	Uncoached	505 (101)	527 (101)	22 (50)	

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

Points to Note

- Coaching companies' current estimates of the benefits of coaching for the SAT are much too high. Coached students are only slightly more likely to have large score gains than uncoached students. In addition, about 1/3 of students experience no score gain or score loss following coaching.
- The typical gain associated with coaching is 8 points for verbal and 18 points for math. Coaching seems to result in about one more verbal question correct for 25–30 hours of effort and one more math question correct for 8 or more hours of effort.
- Results are based on a survey of 1995–96 SAT test-takers of whom 427 were coached and 2,733 were uncoached. For purposes of this study, coaching is considered to include any and all activities conducted in special preparation programs offered to students outside their schools.

Source References:

“*Preparing for the SAT—An Update*” by D.E. Powers, College Board Report No. 98–5, College Entrance Examination Board, New York: 1998, ETS Research Report No. 98–34, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ: 1998; also see “*Effects of Coaching on SAT I: Reasoning Test Scores*” by D.E. Powers and D.A. Rock, College Board Report No. 98–6; ETS Research Report No. 98 – 35, College Entrance Examination Board, New York: 1998; “*Effects of Coaching on SAT I: Reasoning Test Scores*” by D.E. Powers and D.A. Rock, *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 36 (1999), 93–117.