

# GREAT CHOICES™

# FALL

# 2010

**Great Choices quote of the month:**

**“In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily trivia until ultimately we become enslaved by it.”**



**ROBERT HEINLEIN**

Welcome to Great Choices™ quarterly e-letter, your source for timely college and career planning and readiness reminders, information, tools, and resources. If you would like to receive this newsletter each quarter, you can register for your free subscription at the website, [www.greatchoicesonline.com](http://www.greatchoicesonline.com). **Don't forget to check the website for other free resources from Great Choices™!**

## THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

The road to success is filled with hurdles, obstacles, hills, valleys and even a few blissful straight-aways. Regardless of the course you are on, traveling the road to college, career, and citizenship is easier when you do your best to adopt an open door policy. As much as possible, make choices that keep open all possible doors to the future. When you find great choices beyond high school, you'll be glad you did!

**Great Choices™  
Autumn Size Up**

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

All the introductions have been made, expectation made clear, and the year is underway. Even so, the year is still new, making this a great time to set and maintain habits of success –use your planner, study hard, stay organized, and do your homework. Remember, these are the years that set the pace for high school.

## HIGH SCHOOL

In between classes, football, and homecoming, be sure you have a plan for this year's activities. The slate of opportunities is great. Your ability to make good choices, qualify for scholarships, and build a standout application will require a strong involvement in life inside and outside of the classroom. Try a new activity or two until you find your niche.

**Great Choices™**  
**Autumn Size Up**  
**(continued)**

## ■ FRESHMEN

The freshman jitters are behind you now, and it is time to think about more than survival. Your world is more than new classes, new teachers, and new friends; it is also a world of new opportunities. This is a great time to join a club, pursue a new activity, or try a sports team. Keep your eyes out for new opportunities all year long. As a freshman, you will be able to learn and explore new skills, make new friends, and identify new passions that will help shape your future.



## ■ SOPHOMORES

Fall is testing time for the PLAN (for sophomores) and the PSAT, (for juniors)—the preliminary ACT and SATs. The PLAN is scheduled locally. Check with your counseling office for testing dates. The PSAT is only offered on two days in October each year. The PSAT provides a great way to get a quick take on your strengths and weaknesses for college admissions testing and places your name on college admissions mailing lists. If you have not registered, check with your counseling office to see if you can still sign-up and get materials to prepare.

## ■ JUNIORS

The PSAT/NMSQT is a test designed for juniors. The PSAT is offered only on October 13 and 16 this year. Any student can take the PSAT, but only the scores of juniors will qualify to compete in the National Merit Scholarship competition. For everyone else, the PSAT is the final practice exam for the SAT. This great low-cost test forecasts an approximate SAT score, providing a snapshot of your areas of strength and weakness. PSAT scores cannot be used for college admissions, but they help colleges identify you early as a potential match.

### Important Fall DATES!

**Test Dates:**

**ACT - 10/23; 12/04**

**SAT - 10/09; 11/06; 12/04**

**Registration Dates:**

**ACT - 11/5 for 12/04**

**SAT - 10/28 for 11/06; 12/23 for 01/22**

## ■ SENIORS

This is the year you've been waiting for since the reality of high school first entered your mind. While you are reveling in the glory of having reached this milestone, the reality of the next step can never be far from your mind. It is time for your college search and applications, time for defined career prep, or time for military or apprenticeship research. The sooner you dive into these tasks, the sooner you will shape your plan for next year, and the sooner you will be free to enjoy the remainder of your senior year.

## Great Choices Clinic: Testing Success

Pop quizzes, chapter tests, final exams, state assessments, college entrance exams—testing is a big source of challenge during middle school and senior high school. Relieve some of the stress and improve your testing results by taking time to better understand the different testing formats and success tips for each format.

**Note: Testing well in each of these situations requires that you first learn well. Be sure that you use all of the learning strategies in your study skills arsenal: Cornell note-taking techniques, flash card strategies, mnemonic devices, group study, research skills and organization strategies. To improve or build you study arsenal, see the study skills lessons from the “Inside guide to Building Strong Study Skills.”**

### KNOW YOUR TEST FORMAT

When a test is announced or scheduled, you need to gather information:

- What will be on the test?
- What are the important ideas and facts?
- What connections must be made between concepts, events, etc.?
- How will the important information be tested?

The answers to these questions may reveal the specific format, and then imply the way you prepare or study for the test.

### TIPS FOR DIFFERENT TESTING FORMATS

#### Essay

Essay questions may require a higher level of learning than other testing formats. You may be asked to perform one of many tasks in your writing. For example, discuss an event, describe characteristics and attributes of something or somebody, examine a topic by analyzing details and implication, etc.

**TIPS FOR ESSAY EXAMS:** Read all essay questions before you begin writing. Use this time to determine which questions you will answer (if given the choice) and how much time you will spend on each question or section of your essay.

- Answer the question. If asked to compare be sure you don't just describe.
- Outline and Structure your topic. Plan before you start writing the actual essay.
- Write your essay. Stay focused and get to the point. Review the essay. Read it over and correct grammar, spelling, and legibility.

## Multiple Choice

Multiple choice test items contain at least one correct answer if it that choice is “none of the above.” These exams usually have so many questions, they often require that you are familiar with a broader range of topics that an essay exam.

### TIPS FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAMS:

- Before you read your choices, read the main questions and try to answer without looking.
- If you are having trouble with a question, rephrase it in your own words.
- Do not guess if there is a penalty for wrong answers.
- Guess if you do not know that answer and there is no penalty for wrong answers.

## True False

True/false exams usually assess your mastery of details. Some teachers require that you explain why a statement is false. This additional requirement raises the bar on the learning you must demonstrate. Always study as if you must explain why any statement is true or false.

### TIPS FOR TRUE/FALSE EXAMS:

- If part of the statement is false, the entire statement is false.
- Exams usually present more true than false statements.
- Statements with qualifier like always, never, and only tend to be false.
- Statements with qualifiers like often and frequently tend to be true.

## Matching

Matching sections require that you know almost all of the facts being tested. If you are well prepared, this section will go quickly.

### TIPS FOR MATCHING EXAMS:

- Read over the entire section to understand your choices.
- Match the items that you know best first,
- Cross out the used answers as you go.

## COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS:

**DESCRIPTION:** College entrance exams and preliminary exams start in grade 10 and keep coming all the way to the end of high school. Tests include:

**PLAN** – Preliminary ACT

**PSAT** – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

**ACT** – A college entrance exam based on content of a high school curriculum – includes math, reading, English, science, and writing sections.

**SAT** – Academic reasoning test – includes math, verbal, and writing sections.

**PREP TIP:** Preparing for college entrance exams can include self-directed preparation, personal tutoring, or group classes or training sessions. While there is not one “best” way to prepare for these exams, preparation is essential for virtually all students. Investigate the preparation opportunities available to you and make the most of them.

## EVERYDAY HEROES

A single kerosene lantern and a flickering fire were the only lighting in Evans Wadongo's childhood home. The son of a high school teacher, Evans knew that his education was important, but like many of his Kenyan peers, Evans had difficulty studying in the thick smoke and poor lighting that filled the hut that was his childhood home. Clinging to the hope that education could help him rise to a better future, Evans persevered and continued to ask himself, "Is there anything that can be done to improve this situation?"

In 2004, while attending a Kenyan university, Evans Wadongo discovered that there was. While working on an experiment involving LED Christmas lights, Evans realized that LEDs could be the perfect answer to the challenge of lighting rural homes.

Walking home, Evans found a broken piece of a solar panel, and quickly discovered that the blazing African sun could provide an economical, clean energy source for transforming the smoky huts of rural Kenya into well lit homes, free of the toxins of kerosene lamps and unburdened by the expense of the kerosene fuel needed to keep the lamps burning.

Today, 23 year old Evans Wadongo's "Use Solar, Save Lives" program is fueled by the organization, Sustainable Development for All-Kenya. Recycled metals and the solar panel refuse of a foreign corporation supply the materials for the lamps. To date, volunteers have produced and distributed more than 10,000 solar-powered led lamps, giving clean, sustainable lighting to poor rural Kenyans. Reducing poverty and hunger, the money that would have been spent on kerosene can now be spent on food, and the debilitating health effects of the toxic, smoky lamps are gone.

Evans Wadongo lives half a world away from students in the US, but his story of perseverance and service is a reminder that when small problems are met with a big vision, great things can happen.

Learn more about this organization at [http://sustainabledevelopmentforall.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=4&Itemid=10](http://sustainabledevelopmentforall.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=4&Itemid=10)

## INSIDE GUIDES™

Can be purchased individually or as a set at [www.greatchoicesonline.com](http://www.greatchoicesonline.com).

- Choosing High School Courses
- Choosing Winning Activities
- Developing Strong Study Skills
- Setting and Achieving Goals
- Standardized Testing
- Career Perspectives
- Choosing a College/The College Application
- Life Transitions

If you have questions call or e-mail us at 888-60THINK or [info@greatchoicesonline.com](mailto:info@greatchoicesonline.com)

Purchase your favorite  
Great Choices Inside Guide™ or  
Blueprints for Your Future™  
workbooks at  
<http://www.greatchoicesonline.com/cart/>

## BLUEPRINTS FOR YOUR FUTURE™

Great Choices new series for middle school students and their families can now be purchased at

[www.greatchoicesonline.com](http://www.greatchoicesonline.com).

- Blueprints for College and Career
- Blueprints for Classes
- Blueprints for Studying
- Blueprints for Activities