

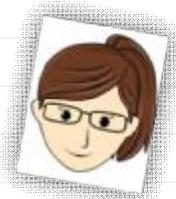
The Thinking Cap

Summer 2009

Volume 1, Issue 3

Alexandra in Tutorland

alexandra's musings



Feeling Grateful

As we wrap-up another great academic year, I'm thankful to so many. First of all, I am very thankful to the incredible TCT team of tutors who continue to teach and inspire. Your energy and enthusiasm have been both an encouragement and a model for your students. I am grateful to all those who have supported TCT and helped spread the word about our work. The A+ on top of my paper is the knowledge that we're doing our bit in making learning fun. I am most grateful for the opportunity to have worked with all of our wonderful students. I am excited to see how much you've learned and achieved this year. A special "shout out" to Alyssa K., Jake M., Eric B., and Allie S., who really kept me on my toes this year!

I'm putting on my sunblock and picking up my favorite beach read but definitely looking forward to seeing you this summer and next year. THANK YOU for a super 2008-2009! :)

Send your questions to:

info@thinkingcapstutoring.com

Sense and Sensibility

you ask, we answer

Q: Third time's the charm? I have taken the SAT two times but think that I can do better if I take it a third time. Is there a limit to how many times I should take the test?

A: You can take the SAT as many times as you want. However, before you sign away the next many weekends think about your realistic target score and what you've done to prepare for the exam. If you have already spent ample time getting ready for the test and have nearly hit your target score, think about bolstering your application in other ways. On the other hand, if you've gone into the test with no prep and after a night out on the town than you may want to take the test again once you've done the appropriate preparation. Consider your situation and the purpose of retaking the exam.

Q: Interviews...I'm a rising senior and plan on spending some part of the summer writing my college essays and filling out applications. I feel like if I start the process early, I will be in good shape for the fall. The only thing that I'm worried about is the interview. I don't know what to expect and am nervous about getting ready for the interview. What should I be doing to prepare?

A: Our pals at Collegiate Compass have put together a great DVD with admissions and interview tips. "The Inside Scoop" series is a frank discussion on what to expect and how to prepare for a college interview. Good Luck!

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Great Expectations

- ü ThinkingCaps Summer programs begin in June. We will be in NYC, Long Island, and Connecticut
- ü Visit the new TCT website www.thinkingcapstutoring.com
- ü Check out Alexandra's articles on Root & Sprout and Dyslexia Discourse
- ü NYS Regents June 2009
- ü ACT June 13, 2009
- ü SAT June 6th, 2009



Much Ado About Learning

our tips and helpful hints

Not your typical reading list. Books that have inspired us.

Absolutely Normal Chaos by Sharon Creech. An absolute BLAST, a teenager faces a lot of hilarious (but realistic) troubles of middle school-teenhood. I am in hysterics every time I read this book.

--Michelle Kuchuk

My favorite book in high school was Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. I loved it first when I thought I knew what Gregor Samsa was going through. I loved it later when I realized I had been the butt of the joke. A good book always reminds you how much you have left to learn.

--Macy Todd

My favorite book in high school was *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison because it was the first book that examined the African-American experience in school and fostered great discussion in our high school class.

--Diana Rivers

My absolute favorite book in school was *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. I read it in ninth grade, just as I really began to gain a real interest in literature. The characters are interesting and dynamic and so is the action. This is a great book for anyone interested in history because it provides some background on the segregation and racial problems that existed in this country in the 1930s. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a great summer read, especially for anyone about to enter high school, as it will help to prepare you for the mind-expanding literary challenges that are soon to come!

--Joey Kopriva

In middle school I loved *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams because it always made me laugh.

--Rohini Dhand

1984 by George Orwell really gave me a lot to think about and stuck with me.

--Dan Katt



A Tale of One Tutor

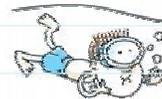
lessons we learned along the way

A Walk in the Park

It was my daily ritual to walk through Central Park from my school on the West Side to my home on First Avenue. It was usually a solitary practice—most of my friends thought I was crazy to enjoy such a long walk—but the last day of school filled my fellow East-Siders with exuberance and we would charge into a sun-drenched Central Park together. The afternoons that felt fleeting just a few months earlier now seemed to stretch on forever, luxurious and full of possibility. There was no homework to complete, no looming tests, and no school to wake up for in the morning.

There is nearly nothing as

empowering as facing a day with no set agenda. When I was at home during the summer, I did plenty of socializing and sleeping-in, but almost every day I would pack a bag full of books and blank paper and spend a few hours reading and writing in a shady spot in the grass. The moment I realized I had always wanted to be a poet was after finishing William Carlos Williams's *Selected Poems* under a large tree on Cedar Hill. I learned many other important things on summer breaks. Part-time jobs taught me that I liked office work, detested being a hostess, but liked serving coffee. I learned to bake bread, bike the city streets, and dance ballet.



The learning we do in school is invaluable, but vacation allows us to develop some of our most important life skills. With no set curricula or predetermined schedules, summer gives us a chance to make our own decisions about what to do with our own time. All through school, our lives are scheduled almost from minute to minute. Before we go to college, nearly all of our responsibilities are chosen for us. We don't decide what classes we will take, what our essays and projects will be, or what time we will wake up in the morning. Summer allows us discover our own interests and organize our time to develop and enrich those passions.

--Allyson Paty





The (academic) Odyssey

review of education news

To Sleep or Not to Sleep

The situation: a very important exam is coming up. As the test date approaches your schedule is getting busier and busier: your softball team made the quarter finals, the school play's opening night is fast approaching along with a million other things you'd rather be doing. Your options: spare some time over the next couple of weeks to prepare or spend the two nights prior to the exam doing the exam cram. The question: what's a little loss of sleep given the larger picture?

Well, actually, studies have shown that losing two nights of sleep is a really bad idea. While you are "wasting time" curled up under your comforter, snoring, your brain is busy learning, remembering and making those oh so very important connections. Whether you are

memorizing historical dates or figuring out thermodynamics getting some sleep after digesting the material will boost your performance the next day.

A Harvard study showed that although the retention of facts is not necessarily dependant on sleep, the ability to retain those facts after any type of disruption – say French class prior to your test – is hugely dependent on sleep. It seems that while we sleep the brain is replaying the experiences, strengthening the memories and rendering you less vulnerable to screwing up your lines, your softball game and your test. So unless you plan on studying a bunch of facts all night and then reciting them first thing the next morning, you really ought to get some sleep.

And that's not all. Memories are dealt with by two separate parts of

our brain – the hippocampus and the neocortex. The hippocampus takes an imprint of the experience as it happens deleting all previous memories. The neocortex retains and processes the memories. In order for us to have long term, complex memories the information must be transmitted from the hippocampus to the neocortex. During sleep when no new info is distracting the hippocampus, the memories are shuttled off to the neocortex which does its weaving magic – putting past with present and creating a smarter you.

So, while you sleep, not only does your body regain its strength, your brain is thinking and preparing you for the day ahead. The answer to the exam cram question: skip the all-nighter, plan ahead and get some sleep. —Gretchen Kail

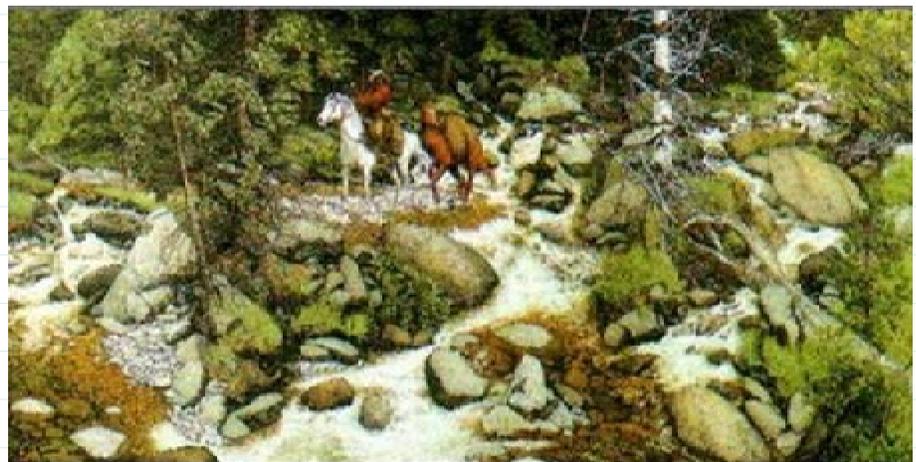


Cat's Cradle

tantalizing brain ticklers

Take a close look.

There are 11 human faces in this picture. Can you find them all?



Thinking Caps Tutoring is an innovative, after-school educational company that helps students acquire the skills and confidence needed to succeed in school, college, and beyond. TCT, through an individualized, descriptive screening process, matches students with student tutors best capable of overcoming a child's weak points and emphasizing strengths. Services provided at TCT include subject tutoring, skills coaching, homework support, standardized test prep and more.

For more information about TCT or any of the programs, please call us at 917.779.8183 or send an email to info@thinkingcapstutoring.com.



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