

# PREPARING FOR THE CHANGES IN THE NEW SAT

AZMIN AZRAN

For high school students seeking higher education in the USA or Canada, the SAT Reasoning Test needs no introduction. The College Board, which regulates the SAT, has recently announced changes in the syllabus which has created much speculation and concern among would-be examinees.

The main objective of this massive revamp is to create a test that is more in line with what is taught in American high schools. What used to be an exam with a perfect score of 2400 will now have a perfect score of 1600 (800 each for Mathematics, and Evidence Based Reading and Writing). Effective from March 2016, these changes will make preparation quite different from what it has been in the past. The overall time for the test has now increased by 5 minutes to 3 hours and 50 minutes, with 50 minutes for the essay. The number of options for multiple choice questions has now been reduced to 4.

The changes in mathematics will make preparation a little more difficult than before, but local students don't need to panic because it still remains within the realms of what they are taught at school. The syllabus includes 'Heart of Algebra' and 'Passport to Advanced Math', and from the way the College Board defines these two terms, it seems to be in sync with the mathematics taught in schools in Bangladesh. Topics include data analysis using graphs; exponential problems; forming and solving linear, quadratic, rational, and radical equations; high school geometry and trigonometry.

OLD SAT VS NEW SAT	
2005-2015	2016 →
600-2400 points	Scoring Range: 200-1600 points
Penalty for wrong answers	Scoring Method: No wrong-answer penalty
3 hrs and 45 mins	Time Length: 3 hrs (+50 min Essay)
Mandatory Essay	Essay Required?: Optional Essay
Argumentative Essay	Essay Type: Analytical Essay
Allowed on all math	Calculator Use: One non-calculator section
Many topics tested briefly	Math Topics: Fewer topics tested in depth
Unpredictable topics	Reading Topics: Set Subjects

etry. Another notable change is that calculators will be available on only some math sections.

In the evidence-based reading and writing part, 'Sentence completion' is no longer a thing, and the passages that help the students answer the questions now increase in size. All passages in the new SAT will range from 500 to 750 words, whereas passages in the old SAT were much smaller. All questions in the writing test will also be pulled from prose of 400-450

words. None of the tests stress on having an extensive knowledge of obscure English words, but students need to have the ability to define a word in any given context, to understand certain ways of expression as well as being able to put across information in an efficient manner. The mandatory essay has now been made optional. Students will have to analyse a given source document, and there will be an added importance to the correctness of any fact included in the essays. A lot of reading will be involved with the questions in the new SAT, and so time management will now have to be different.

While changes in the SAT syllabus are disconcerting for a lot of people, the biggest worry for many is the fact that volumes of study material developed in the last decade are now rendered useless. The lack of study material is a major issue but because the test has been redesigned to include components from high school, it shouldn't be that big of a problem for those who go about learning their high school curriculum the right way. Even then, the College Board has struck a deal with Khan Academy to provide free assistance to everyone for the new SAT, to create a level playing field. The Khan Academy website will first use a set of diagnosis tests to understand the strengths and weaknesses of a student and then prepare a personalised preparation programme. That certainly is good news.

*When he's not obsessing over football, Azmin spends his time devising ways of not getting mugged, only to fail miserably. Give him advice at fb.com/azminazran*

## Surf Excel presents “Emerged from Unknown”

SHOUT Desk

HANS (HELLO's Association of Neophyte Students) is a non-profit students' organisation. The aim of this organisation is to create awareness on autism and to eradicate misconceptions about autism. “Emerged from Unknown” is a supportive initiative taken by HANS in this regard. It is an art exhibition where paintings by children with special needs from different schools are displayed. The main purpose of the exhibition is to introduce general people to their latent talents as well as their thoughts and imaginations.

In 2007, HANS arranged “Emerged from Unknown” for the first time at Drik Gallery. More than 70 paintings were exhibited at the show. The unique initiative was praised by all. Grameenphone was proud to support the successful event.

HANS arranged the event for the second time in July, 2010. Since then, Surf Excel has been sponsoring the event. Surf Excel's brand purpose is to unleashing a child's potential through activities that encourage the child to express him/herself – be it through painting or other creative works. “Emerged from Unknown” fits perfectly into Surf Excel's brand vision. It was a weeklong art exhibition at Drik Gallery. More than 60 paintings by 40 young painters made the gallery colourful.

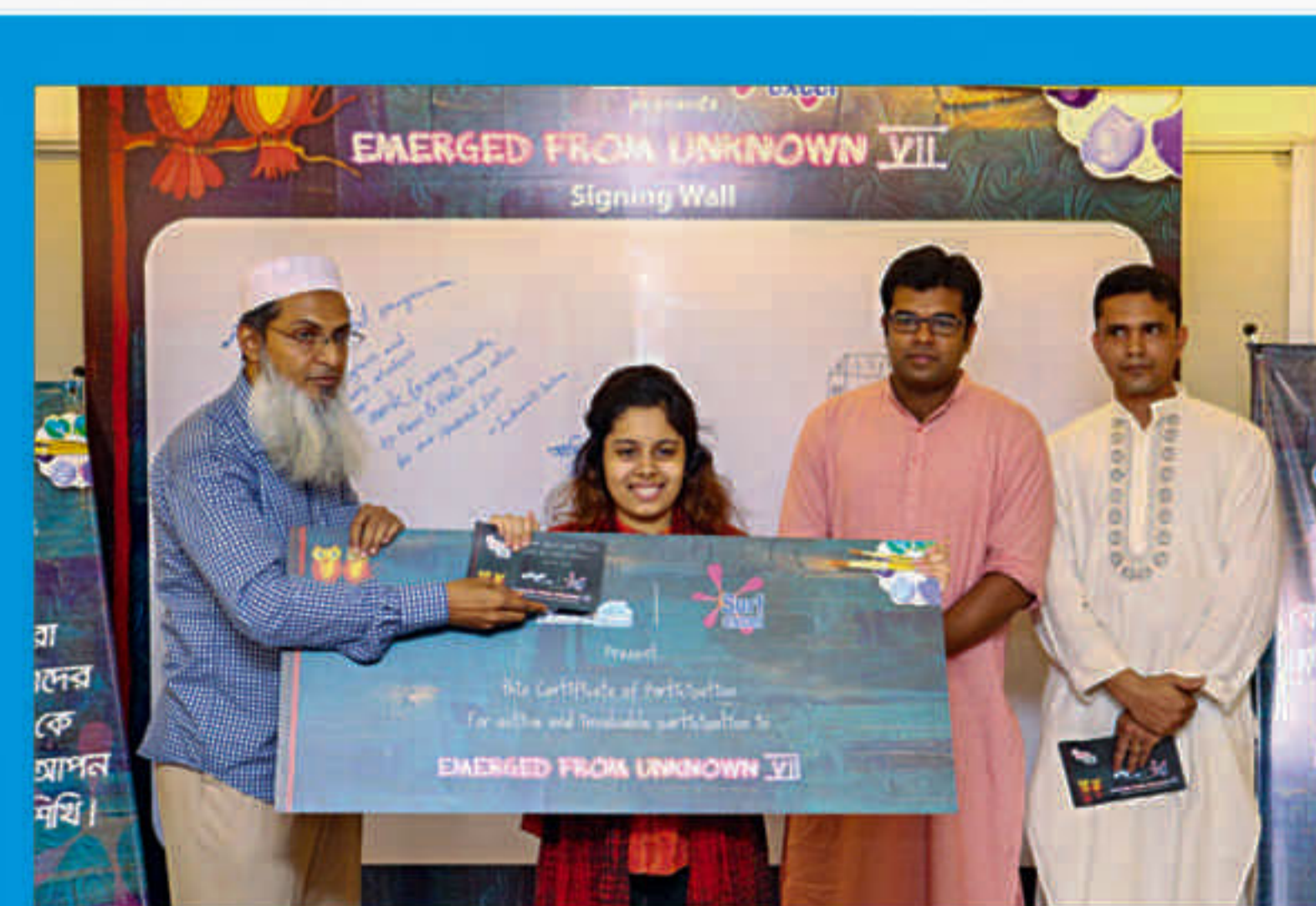
The third instalment of the exhibition was held in



2011, from July 15 to 21. This time the exhibition was decorated by more than 65 paintings drawn by children with special needs from 7 different schools and again in 2012, (June 22-29) HANS arranged “Emerged from Unknown” for the fourth time. Seventy-two paintings were exhibited at the programme.

In the year 2013, the exhibition was arranged for the fifth time from June 22 to 28 and in 2014, from November 7 to 14. Both events were proudly sponsored by Surf Excel.

Keeping the aim of HANS in mind, in partnership with Surf Excel, the 7th edition of “Emerged from



Unknown” was arranged from August 7 to 14, 2015. The exhibition featured 123 paintings by special children from 10 schools. Total number of artists was 92. The inauguration ceremony was held on August 7, 2015. It started with a press conference where the Chairman of HANS, Meer Sohrabul Hossain; Abul Barq Alvi, Professor, Printmaking Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka; and Zaved Akhter, Brand Building Director, Unilever Bangladesh Limited were present. Followed by the press conference, Abul Barq Alvi along with the other guests inaugurated the 8-day art exhibition.