

Snohomish girl outscores college-bound on SATs

Early education focused on phonics and 'old fashioned grammar'

By Jana Alexander

Katrina Black has read her way to youthful success.

The 14-year-old Snohomish student was asked to take the Student Aptitude Test (SAT) recently after doing exceptionally well on her California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), the standard test Snohomish schools administered last year to fourth through eighth grade students.

On the SAT, Katrina placed with distinction, achieving a score of 960 out of 1,600 this spring.

"The test didn't seem extremely hard when I took it," Katrina said. "It was challenging, but it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be."

Katrina turned 14 June 29. So she was only 13 when she took the SATs. After the test, she received

a certificate from Johns Hopkins University.

Katrina learned to read when she was 4 1/2, her mother, Barbara Black said. Katrina "just had fun in Kindergarten and first grade," Barbara said.

Then it was down to business.

Katrina was home-schooled from second to fourth grades: the most essential years of her education, Barbara said.

During her home-schooling, phonics and "old-fashioned grammar" were emphasized, Barbara said.

"I figured if she could sound out a word" she could read anything, Barbara said.

The focus on grammar helped also.

"She can write anything," Barbara said.

Katrina proved that on her SAT test, scoring 520 on the verbal portion. The average college-bound senior scores 503.

"She reads a book a day," Barbara said.

Katrina is currently perusing



Katrina Black

her way through the House of Winslow series, which uses fictional characters to tell of historical issues.

The series is part of the Christian historical fiction genre. It covers the Salem Witch Trials, the Yukon Gold Strike, and the Spanish-American, Civil and Revolutionary wars.

Despite her academic talents, Katrina is going to go through school without skipping grades. And though she plans to attend Seattle Pacific University, Katrina hasn't decided on a major.