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The Ins and Outs of the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT

About the Test

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is a program sponsored by College Board. It is a standardized test allowing you to practice for the SAT.

By taking the PSAT 10 at AHS as a sophomore, you are familiarizing and preparing yourself for taking the PSAT/NMSQT in your junior year. Taking the PSAT/NMSQT as a junior provides you with the opportunity to receive recognition and scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

After taking each test, you will receive feedback on your areas of strength and weakness. This will allow you to become familiar with the types of materials you will see on the SAT.

Inside the Test

The PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT include three test sections: Reading, Writing and Language, and Math.

Reading Test: This test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and measures Command of Evidence, Words in Context, And Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science. Questions are multiple choice and based on passages. Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages but no math is required. Prior topic knowledge is never tested.

Writing and Language Test: This test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and asks you to be an editor and improve passages that were written especially for the test which includes deliberate errors. The test measures Command of Evidence, Words in Context, Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science, Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions. Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages but no math is required. Prior topic knowledge is never tested.

Math Test – This test focuses on three main areas:

- The Heart of Algebra, which focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems.
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis, which is about being quantitatively literate.
- Passport to Advanced Math, which features questions that require the manipulation of complex equations.

Questions on the Math Test are designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling you'll do in: college math, science, and social science courses, the jobs that you hold and in personal life. Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some, called grid-ins, ask you to come up with the answer rather than select the answer. The Math Test is divided into two portions: Math Test – Calculator and Math Test – No Calculator. Some parts of the test include several questions about a single scenario.

~ Continue to the next page for **Test and Score Structure** and steps to **Access Your Scores** ~

PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT Test Structure and Scoring Structure

Structure: 3 Tests

Testing time: 2 hours and 45 minutes

Score range: Total Score 320-1520; Sum of two sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing sections with scale ranging from 160 to 760 and Math section with scale ranging from 160 to 760

Test length and timing: Number of questions: 139; Time per question: 1:24

Evidence Based Reading and Writing

Reading Test

60 Minutes

47 Questions

Writing and Language Test

35 Minutes

44 Questions

Math

Math Test

70 minutes

48 Questions

Use of calculator on some problems

Additional Information

- No penalty for guessing
- Visit [Understanding Scores](#) on the College Board website for more info.

Accessing Your PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT Results:

Your PSAT scores may be found on the official paper Score Report you received. On this Score Report, you may also find your Access Code, which you will need should you decide to access your scores online through the College Board website.

If you did not receive your PSAT Score Report, or if you do not have immediate access to your report, you may go [online](#) to see your scores by following these steps:

- Create a College Board account at <https://www.collegeboard.org/> if you haven't already. (If you already have an account, but you have forgotten your login info, **DO NOT** create a second account. Contact College Board if the password/username retrieval tool does not help.)
- Go to the "My Score Reports" login page <https://studentscores.collegeboard.org/home>
- Enter your login information and click "Sign In"
- Enter your 'Access Code' in the space provided to access your scores (if you do not know your Access Code, you may obtain it from your House Counselor or from the College and Career Center.)
- Send your scores from your College Board account to [Khan Academy®](#) for personalized practice recommendations. Steps to link your College Board account to your Khan Academy account are listed in the document library in Naviance "*Linking CollegeBoard KhanAcademy accts.pdf*."

PSAT Source: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/inside-the-test>

The Ins and Outs of the SAT

Please note, it is recommended that the ACT and the SAT be taken spring semester of your junior year.

Inside the SAT Test

Reading Test – This test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and measures Command of Evidence, Words in Context, And Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science. Questions are multiple choice and based on passages. Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages but no math is required. Prior topic knowledge is never tested.

Writing and Language Test – This test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and asks you to be an editor and improve passages that were written especially for the test which includes deliberate errors. The test measures Command of Evidence, Words in Context, Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science, Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions. Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages but no math is required. Prior topic knowledge is never tested.

Math Test – This test focuses three main areas:

- The Heart of Algebra, which focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems.
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis, which is about being quantitatively literate.
- Passport to Advanced Math, which features questions that require the manipulation of complex equations.

Questions on the Math Test are designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling you'll do in: college math, science, and social science courses, the jobs that you hold and in personal life. Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some, called grid-ins, ask you to come up with the answer rather than select the answer. The Math Test is divided into two portions: Math Test – Calculator and Math Test – No Calculator. Some parts of the test include several questions about a single scenario.

SAT Essay – *Optional*; however, colleges may require this section for scores to be considered. It is recommended that you register and complete the essay test.

The SAT Essay is a lot like a typical college writing assignment in which you're asked to analyze a text. The test measure reading, analysis and writing. You will see the same prompt no matter when you take the SAT with Essay, but the passage will be different every time. All passages have these things in common: written for a broad audience, argue a point, express subtle views on complex subjects, use logical reasoning and evidence to support claims, examine ideas, debates, or trends in the arts and sciences, or civic, cultural, or political life and are always taken from published works.

~ Continue to the next page for Test and Score Structure and Steps to Access Your Scores ~

SAT Test Structure and Scoring Structure

Structure: 3 tests + optional essay

Testing time: 3 hours + 50 minute optional essay

Score range: Total Score 400-1600; Sum of two sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing sections with scale ranging from 200 to 800 and Math section with scale ranging from 200 to 800

Optional SAT Essay: report in 3 dimensions: Reading, Analysis, and Writing, Score 2 to 8 on each of the three dimensions

Test length and timing: Number of questions: 154; Time per question: 1:10

Evidence Based Reading and Writing

Reading Test

65 Minutes
52 Questions

Writing and Language Test

35 Minutes
44 Questions

Math Test

80 Minutes
58 Questions
Use of calculator on some problem

Optional SAT Essay

50 Minutes
1 Prompt and 1 Passage; 1 Essay

Additional Information

- No penalty for guessing
- Essay results reported separately
- Visit [Understanding Scores](#) on the College Board website for more info.

SAT Subject Test: Specific subject tests: may be required for admission to some universities. Subject tests include: Writing, Literature, American History, World History, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and several languages

Accessing Your SAT Results

- If you registered for the SAT online or you registered by mail and set up a College Board account, you'll get an email telling you how to sign into your online score report when scores are ready.
- See the [Getting Scores](#) page on the College Board website for release dates and score information.

The Ins and Outs of the ACT

Inside the ACT

English – Multiple choice; measures standard written English and rhetorical skills covering six elements of effective writing: punctuation, grammar and usage, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Questions covering punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure make up the Usage/Mechanics subscore. Questions covering strategy, organization, and style make up the Rhetorical Skills subscore

Math – Multiple choice; measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12. The test presents multiple-choice questions that require you to use reasoning skills to solve practical problems in mathematics. Three subscores are based on six content areas: pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry, and trigonometry. You need knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills to answer the problems, but you are not required to know complex formulas and perform extensive computation.

Reading – Multiple-choice; measures reading comprehension. Questions ask you to derive meaning from several texts by referring to what is explicitly stated and reasoning to determine implicit meaning. You will be asked to: determine main ideas, locate and interpret significant details, understand sequences of events, make comparisons, comprehend cause-effect relationships, determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements, draw generalizations and analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method.

Science – Multiple choice; measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. The test presents several sets of scientific information, followed by multiple-choice test questions. Information is conveyed in one of three formats: data representation, research summaries, and conflicting viewpoints. The questions require you to: recognize and understand concepts related to the provided information, think critically about the information provided and the conclusions drawn/hypotheses developed, and generalize information to gain new information, draw conclusions, or make predictions. You are not permitted to use a calculator on the science test.

Writing – Optional; however, colleges may require this section for scores to be considered. It is recommended that you register and complete the essay test.

The ACT essay consist of one writing prompt that measures a student's writing skills—specifically those writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. The test describes an issue and provides three different perspectives on the issue. You are asked to "evaluate and analyze" the perspectives; to "state and develop" your own perspective; and to "explain the relationship" between your perspective and those given. Your score will not be affected by the perspective you take on the issue.

~ Continue to the next page for Test and Score Structure and Steps to Access Your Scores ~

ACT Test Structure and Scoring Structure

ACT: Includes 4 test sections + optional writing test

Structure: 4 tests + optional writing test

Testing time: 2 hours 55 minutes + 40 minute optional writing test

Score range: Composite 1–36; the average score of the four tests. Subscores range from 1 to 18 and do not necessarily add up to your score for a test.

Optional Writing Test Range: A total of five scores for this test: a single subject-level writing score reported on a range of 2-12, and four domain scores, also 2-12. The subject-level score will be the rounded average of the four domain scores. The four domain scores are: Ideas and Analysis, Development and Support, Organization, and Language Use and Conventions.

Test length and timing: Number of questions: 215; Time per question: 49 seconds

English Test

45 Minutes

75 Questions

Mathematics Test

60 minutes

60 questions

Reading Test

35 Minutes

40 Questions

Science Test

35 Minutes

40 Questions

Optional Writing Test

40 Minutes

1 Prompt; 1 Essay

Additional Information

- No penalty for guessing
- Visit [Understanding Your Scores](#) on the ACT website for more info.

Accessing Your ACT Results

- You will access your scores online by logging into your secure ACT web account.
- See the [Your Scores](#) page on the ACT website for release dates and score information.

ACT Source: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>;
Test Description Section; Your Scores Section