

PSAT/NMSQT[®]

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

The PSAT/NMSQT[®] measures skills important for college success and provides students with the tools they need to start planning for the future. Each year, millions of students worldwide take the PSAT/NMSQT to enter scholarship competitions, prepare for the SAT[®], and gain access to valuable college and career planning tools.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation uses the PSAT/NMSQT as an initial screen of entrants in its annual academic competitions for recognition and college scholarships. Typically, entrants are in their third year of high school.

Who takes the PSAT/NMSQT?

- Approximately 3.5 million students take the PSAT/NMSQT each year.
- Eleventh-graders constitute the single largest group of test-takers, and the remainder of participants are in 10th and lower grades.

What does it measure?

The PSAT/NMSQT measures the critical thinking skills students develop through years of study in a wide range of courses. It assesses students' ability to reason with facts and concepts rather than their ability to recall them. The test measures skills in three basic academic areas:

- **Critical Reading:** Assesses students' abilities to draw inferences, synthesize information, distinguish between main and supporting ideas, and understand vocabulary as it is used in context.
- **Mathematics:** Deals with number and operations; algebra and functions; geometry and measurement; and data analysis, statistics, and probability.
- **Writing Skills:** Measures the ability to identify appropriate expressions in Standard English, detect faults in usage and structure, choose effective revisions to sentences and paragraphs, and recognize appropriate writing strategies.

The PSAT/NMSQT Helps Students

Prepare for the SAT[®]

The PSAT/NMSQT and SAT measure the same skills and have the same format, directions and question types. On average, students who take the PSAT/NMSQT earn higher scores on the SAT than those who do not.

Enter Scholarship and Recognition Programs

High school students who take the test (usually in their junior year of high school) may be eligible to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation's competitions for recognition and scholarships. High-achieving Hispanic and African American high school juniors may also enter other programs that give special recognition.

Plan for College and Careers

Students who take the PSAT/NMSQT receive free access to **My College QuickStart[™]**, a personalized online college-planning kit, and **MyRoad[™]**, a comprehensive major and career exploration tool that includes a personality profiler to help students find programs that fit their interests. Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/quickstart.

Receive Information from Colleges

Through the **Student Search Service[®] (SSS[®])**, PSAT/NMSQT participants can receive free admissions and financial aid information from colleges, universities and scholarship programs. The materials students receive help them start thinking about and exploring higher education opportunities.

Improve Their Skills

The PSAT/NMSQT **Score Report Plus** gives students comprehensive, personalized feedback on their test performance, allowing them to see which questions they answered incorrectly and which academic skills they should work to improve.

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
cosponsored by



The PSAT/NMSQT Helps Educators

Build a College-Going Culture

Offering the PSAT/NMSQT to all students helps create a college-going culture. The online college and career planning tools provided with the PSAT/NMSQT spark college-going aspirations and introduce students to opportunities available after high school.

Increase Access to AP® Courses

The online **AP Potential™** tool helps educators identify students who are likely to succeed in the Advanced Placement Program® but may have been overlooked for advanced courses in the past. Using PSAT/NMSQT results, the tool allows educators to generate rosters of students likely to succeed in AP. Learn more at

www.collegeboard.com/appotential.

Identify Strengths and Weaknesses

The **Summary of Answers and Skills (SOAS)** report provides an analysis of aggregate test question performance and skills feedback, helping educators identify specific areas where their students are struggling. Learn more at

www.collegeboard.com/reports.

Collect and Utilize Valuable Data

Summary Reports provide an at-a-glance look at participation and performance, while the **Roster of Student Scores and Plans** provides specific information about each participating student. The electronic Student Data File (an optional report available for \$50) allows educators to manage PSAT/NMSQT data to fit their needs.

Prepare Students for the SAT Essay

ScoreWrite™: A Guide to Preparing for the SAT Essay, complements the PSAT/NMSQT writing skills section by providing everything schools need to administer a practice essay session. It also trains teachers to score essays holistically using the SAT Scoring Guide.

What makes the PSAT/NMSQT a strong assessment?

- All test questions are rigorously reviewed by test development experts and content specialists and pretested within the SAT. Comprehensive reviews and analyses ensure that test questions are fair for different groups of students.
- Scores are equated to adjust for possible differences in difficulty between test forms or test years, making it possible to compare scores of students who have taken different editions of the test.
- Research shows that if a student were to take different forms of the test under identical conditions, the student would likely earn scores within four points of one another.

How can schools get the most from the PSAT/NMSQT?

- Offer the test to 10th- and 11th-graders. Students must test in 11th grade to qualify for scholarships and recognition, but testing in 10th grade provides early feedback while there is still time to plan and prepare.
- Include all students. By testing all students, schools can build a college-going culture and bring more students into the college-planning process. Additionally, tools and reports are much more valuable and actionable when all students test.
- Take advantage of free tools and reports. Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/psattools.
- Promote use of My College QuickStart. This free tool helps students understand their performance, prepare for the SAT, and explore colleges, majors and careers.

2009 Dates, Fees and Ordering

- **Dates:** Wednesday, Oct. 14, or Saturday, Oct. 17
- **Fee:** \$13 (Fee waivers are available for eligible juniors.)
- **Ordering:** Each school identifies a PSAT/NMSQT Coordinator to order tests online at www.collegeboard.com/school.

Inform Students and Parents

Free PSAT/NMSQT resources, publications and tutorials are available at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads to help educators, students and families get the most from the PSAT/NMSQT.