

The Parent Perspective

PSAT/NMSQT®

2004

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

Cost: _____

For more information, contact: _____

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should students take the PSAT/NMSQT?

The PSAT/NMSQT® is great practice for the SAT Reasoning Test™, and juniors who take the test may qualify to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation programs. Most important, the PSAT/NMSQT is a comprehensive tool that gives valuable feedback to the student and the school. Students will receive scores in critical reading, math reasoning, and writing and will see how their scores compare to those of other sophomores or juniors across the country. Through a question-by-question review of answers, students will be able to see which answers they got right or wrong and will be able to refer to the original test booklet for additional practice. Best of all, with their Score Report, students receive a personalized statement of specific academic skills that need attention, along with suggested steps to improve those skills.

2. Who should take the PSAT/NMSQT?

Typically, students take the PSAT/NMSQT in their junior year of high school. It is also beneficial for sophomores and younger students to take the test to get a head start on improving academic skills needed for success in college.

3. Will the PSAT/NMSQT prepare students for the new SAT®?

Yes. The 2004 PSAT/NMSQT is the best preparation for the new SAT®. A new PSAT/NMSQT will be administered in October 2004. The changes to the test will parallel many of the changes to the new SAT, which will be administered for the first time in March 2005 (for the class of 2006). For more information on the new SAT and the 2004 PSAT/NMSQT, please visit collegeboard.com/newsat.

4. What should be done to prepare for this test?

The PSAT/NMSQT *Student Bulletin* is full of useful information, including a full-length Practice Test. Students should review the *Bulletin* and take the Practice Test to be sure they understand all the directions and are familiar with the types of questions that will be asked. Classroom learning is the basis for test questions, so the best way students can prepare is to get familiar with the test and its format.

5. If students don't do well on this test, will it hurt their chances of getting into college?

Absolutely not. If anything, the PSAT/NMSQT will improve their chances, since it provides information on the types of skills that the student needs to improve to prepare for college and the SAT. This is a practice test, so scores are not sent to colleges.

6. How many times can a student take this test?

Only once a year, but there is no limit on how many years a student may participate. It is important that juniors take the test so that they have the potential to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Corporation competitions, as well as to prepare for the SAT. For younger students, the main benefit is to gain valuable skills feedback and get a head start on improving their academic skills.

7. When can we expect to see results from the PSAT/NMSQT?

Schools will receive Score Reports in mid-December and will notify students regarding when, where, and how to get their individual reports. Schools also receive an extra copy for the student's file.

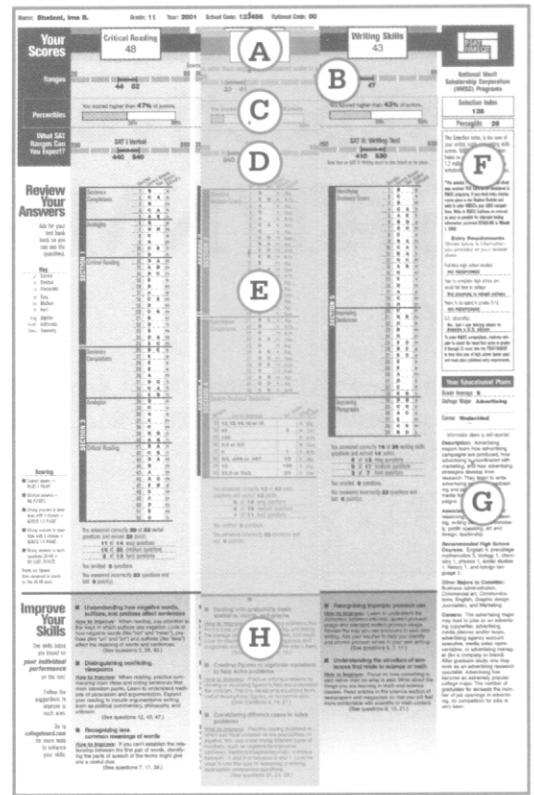
8. What else should students be doing to have college as an option after graduation?

Refer to the calendar on the back of this brochure. At collegeboard.com, you'll find more information about the PSAT/NMSQT, planning for college, and paying for college, as well as information on other College Board programs, such as the SAT and the Advanced Placement Program®.

PSAT/NMSQT Score Report

The Score Report includes not only scores and itemized feedback on test questions, but an "Improve Your Skills" section. For each section of the test—critical reading, math, and writing skills—students will receive personalized skills feedback based on their performance on the PSAT/NMSQT as well as suggestions for improvement.

- A** PSAT/NMSQT Critical Reading, Math, and Writing Skills Scores
- B** PSAT/NMSQT Score Ranges
- C** Percentiles
- D** Expected SAT score ranges
- E** Overview of PSAT/NMSQT answers
- F** National Merit Scholarship Corporation information
- G** Educational Plans
- H** Personalized "Improve Your Skills" section



Important Dates and Reminders

September 2004

- PSAT/NMSQT registration.
- Students should review the *Student Bulletin* and take the Practice Test.
- On collegeboard.com, students can create My Organizer, a tool that will guide them through the PSAT/NMSQT process and other College Board programs.

December 2004

- Score Reports are sent to schools in mid-December. Remind your son/daughter to review the "Improve Your Skills" section and follow the suggestions on how to improve the academic skills needed for college.
- Look for the follow-up to this flyer, which will provide additional information about how to help your son/daughter make the most of the Score Report, along with more strategies to help your family with the college-planning process.

March 2005

- Students should select four, preferably five, solid academic courses for next year.

October 2004

- PSAT/NMSQT test administration: Make sure your son/daughter eats breakfast and brings #2 pencils, a calculator, a watch (with alarms off), and an e-mail address to the test administration.
- On test day, encourage your son/daughter to check "Yes" for Student Search Service® on the PSAT/NMSQT answer sheet, so he/she will receive information from colleges, universities, and scholarship programs.

January 2005

- Students may visit www.collegeboard.com/psatextra to get explanations of the answers to this year's PSAT/NMSQT test questions.

April 2005

- Check with counselors about college summer programs designed to introduce high school students to college courses.

November 2004

- Talk with your son/daughter about programs of study that interest him/her. Juniors should research colleges and universities.
- Visit collegeboard.com to search for scholarships and learn more about funding a college education.

February 2005

- Juniors should consider registering for the SAT this spring.

May/June 2005

- Have your son/daughter request a summer reading list from his/her English teacher.