

Plan for College with the 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: _____

Go to collegeboard.com/psat to learn about the PSAT/NMSQT

- Key dates
- How to prepare
- Sample test questions
- What test scores really mean
- Expert advice on planning for college

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Don't rule out college because of cost. Nearly all colleges offer financial aid to students who need it. Ask your counselor what kinds of financial aid opportunities exist: on-campus work, loans, grants, scholarships.



5 Steps to Success

1. Take Tough Courses

Choose college-prep, honors, or Advanced Placement Program® courses if you can. In general, for college-prep you'll need:

- 4 years of high school English
- 3–4 years of math (at least algebra and geometry)
- 3–4 years of science (at least two lab courses)
- 2–4 years of history and social studies
- 2–4 years of foreign language

2. Take the PSAT/NMSQT

The skills tested on the PSAT/NMSQT® are the skills you'll need in college. The PSAT/NMSQT lets you:

- assess your skills in critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing
- get specific suggestions on how to improve your skills
- compare your academic skills with those of other college-bound students
- practice for the SAT Reasoning Test™
- enter scholarship competitions
- ask colleges to send you information
- get information about a college major of interest to you

3. Prepare for College Work

- Read. Read. Read.
- Write a lot—it's a critical college skill.
- Get involved in problem solving in your math and science classes.
- Go to the library, museums, aquariums—places to learn about literature, art, history, and science.

4. Think About You

What subjects do you like to study? While in college, you'll choose a major to study in depth. Your major might be related directly to a career such as nursing or engineering. Or you might choose liberal arts, such as history, foreign languages, or social studies. Think about what interests you and what you do well as you plan for college and a career.

5. Find Out More

Talk to teachers and counselors about college, and ask older students about colleges they attend. Visit campuses near home.

Academic Calendar for Sophomores and Juniors

September 2004

- Plan to take the PSAT/NMSQT. Prepare by reading the *Student Bulletin*, taking the full-length practice test, and reviewing the PSAT/NMSQT section of collegeboard.com.
- Review your course selections; be sure you are preparing for college with solid academic courses in at least four or five areas.
- If you plan to request testing accommodations due to a disability, pick up a College Board Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Brochure and Form and talk with your teachers and counselor. Eligibility Forms must be submitted by September 10.

October 2004

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT at your school. Get a good night's sleep, and remember to eat some breakfast. Bring #2 pencils, an approved calculator, a watch (with alarms turned off), and your social security number. Be sure to check "yes" on the answer sheet for Student Search Service® to get college planning information.

November 2004

- Juniors: Continue your search for colleges. Use collegeboard.com to find schools that meet your criteria.
- Look over your extracurricular involvement. It's important to develop more than just your academic skills. Remember: Colleges prefer quality (depth of involvement) over quantity.
- If high school alumni visit during the holidays, be sure to talk with them about their college experiences.

December 2004

- PSAT/NMSQT Score Reports are sent to schools. Use the "Improve Your Skills" section to help build the skills you need in high school and college. Use your test, the correct answers, and your responses to help prepare for the SAT®.
- Juniors: Create a file to manage your college search, testing, and application information.

January 2005

- Explore financial aid possibilities with your counselor, through your career/college center, online resources such as collegeboard.com, your library, and through your parents' connections (employers, professional organizations, religious affiliations, etc.).
- Visit collegeboard.com. Explanations of the answers to this year's PSAT/NMSQT questions will be posted on www.collegeboard.com/psatextra.

February 2005

- Talk to your counselor and/or teachers about taking SAT Subject Tests this spring. Even if a college does not require them, SAT Subject Tests can often support an application.

March 2005

- When registering for next year's courses, be sure to select strong college-preparatory courses. Consider honors and AP® courses.
- Juniors: Register online at collegeboard.com to take the SAT this spring. While you're there, you can get help with preparing for the test.
- Juniors: Create an initial list of colleges and contact them for additional information.

April 2005

- Prepare for AP Exams, if applicable. Visit collegeboard.com for more information.
- Attend college fairs in your area. Plan ahead to ensure you target the colleges that interest you.
- Visit colleges; if possible, attend classes on campus.
- Consider applying for a college summer program designed to introduce high school students to college majors/courses. (Financial assistance may be available.)

May 2005

- Take AP Exams, if applicable
- Create a résumé—record all your accomplishments, involvements, and work experiences.
- Juniors: Review material received from colleges and refine your potential list.

June 2005

- End the year with strong grades.
- Ask your English teacher for a suggested summer reading list.
- Juniors: Talk to teachers now about writing letters of recommendation you'll need in the fall.
- Juniors: Register online for fall SAT Program tests to ensure your choice of test site.

Summer

- Stay involved:
- Work to help pay for college.
- Attend a summer program on a college campus.
- Get involved in an internship relevant to your career interest.
- Read!