

PSAT/NMSQT



Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship
Qualifying Test

Basics

Takes place in October of sophomore and junior year

Length: 2 hours and 45 minutes

Highest Score: 1520

Sections: Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing (no essay)

160-760 points possible for each section

There is no longer a penalty for incorrect answers

Evidence-Based Reading

60 Minutes

47 Multiple-Choice Questions

5 reading passages or paired passages:

- 1 U.S./World Literature passage
- 2 Social Studies/History passages (or 1 passage + 1 passage pair)
- 2 Science passages (or 1 passage + 1 passage pair)

Does not require outside knowledge

Writing & Language

35 Minutes

44 Multiple-Choice Questions

Identify and correct areas where the passage does not comply with standard English conventions, such as grammar, usage, and punctuation

Identify errors in the passage, and determine the necessary revision among the answer choices

Math

48 Questions

25 minutes: No Calculator

45 minutes: Calculator

Includes grid-in questions where you enter an answer and multiple-choice questions with 4 answers choices

Math Level: Up to Algebra 2

**Why is the PSAT
important?**

National Merit Scholarship

“Each year, approximately 50,000 students (out of 1.4 million juniors) qualify for recognition based on their high PSAT scores. Around 34,000 of these students receive Letters of Commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

The remaining 16,000 students or so—those whose scores put them in the top 99th percentile in their state—become National Merit Semifinalists. Of these, around half win scholarships after submitting their high school records, as well as recommendations from teachers and a personal essay. Some students win a \$2,500 scholarship from the National Merit Corporation, while others may win larger awards from colleges hoping to attract top scorers.”

Standardized Test Prep

In order to apply to college, you will need to take either the SAT or ACT, and possibly SAT Subject Tests (if you are applying to a private university).

We will discuss these tests more in the future.

You will need to prepare yourself for these tests as colleges and universities consider your scores during the admissions process.

Taking the PSAT (and taking it seriously) will help you begin to understand how the SAT is structured, and learn what your areas for improvement are.

Resources

Understanding the PSAT/NMSQT:

- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/psat-information>
- <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/k12-educators/psat-nmsqt-dates>

Understanding the National Merit Scholarship:

- <http://www.nationalmerit.org/s/1758/interior.aspx?sid=1758&gid=2&pgid=424>
- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/psat-nmsqt>

Resources

PSAT Prep:

- <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/practice/full-length-practice-tests>
- <http://blog.prepscholar.com/psat-practice-tests-free-questions-and-full-length-tests>