

ACADEMIC BULLETIN

Volume 27 No. 1



Published by the Tustin Unified School District

September 2013

PSAT/NMSQT Frequently Asked Questions

1

What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). This Test is a co-sponsored program by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

PSAT/NMSQT is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT. The test is divided into 3 sections: critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. The test also gives you the opportunity to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs. You have developed these skills over many years, both in and out of school. This test doesn't require you to recall specific facts from your classes.

2

Why and when should I take the PSAT/NMSQT?

- To see how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college. **(Grade 10)**
- To help prepare for the SAT. Become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT. **(Grade 10)**
- To enter the scholarship competition from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. **(Grade 11)**
- To receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.

3

How do I sign up?

You must sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT at your high school or at another high school in your community. This year's dates are October 16 and 19, 2013.

Contact your high school counselor for registration information and cost. Also, ask for a copy of the **Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT** to help you prepare before test day. The Student Guide has three main sections:
1. Test-taking help **2.** Information about National Merit Scholarship Corporation scholarship competitions
3. A full-length practice test.

Source: www.collegeboard.com

Test Dates & Deadlines 2013-2014 School Year

2013 PSAT TEST DATES

OCTOBER 16 (WEDNESDAY), OCTOBER 19 (SATURDAY)

Register for the PSAT/NMSQT at your high school

SAT & SUBJECT TESTS DATES

TEST DATE	REG. DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION*
Oct 5, 6, 2013	Sept 6, 2013	Sept 20, 2013
Nov 2, 3, 2013	Oct 3, 2013	Oct 18, 2013
Dec 7, 8, 2013	Nov 8, 2013	Nov 22, 2013
Jan 25, 26, 2014	Dec 27, 2013	Jan 10, 2014
March 8, 9, 2014	Feb 7, 2014	Feb 21, 2014
May 3, 4, 2014	April 4, 2014	April 18, 2014
June 7, 8, 2014	May 9, 2014	May 23, 2014

*Additional late fee required

Sunday test dates usually immediately follow each Saturday test date for students who cannot test on Saturday because of religious observance. The only test offered in March is the SAT, and it is only administered in centers located in the U.S. and U.S. territories.

ACT TEST DATES

TEST DATE	REG. DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION*
Sept 21, 2013	Aug 23, 2013	Aug 24–Sept 6, 2013
Oct 26, 2013	Sept 27, 2013	Sept 28–Oct 11, 2013
Dec 14, 2013	Nov 8, 2013	Nov 9–22, 2013
Feb 8, 2014	Jan 10, 2014	Jan 11–24, 2014
April 12, 2014	March 7, 2014	March 8–21, 2014
June 14, 2014	May 9, 2014	May 10–23, 2014

Register online at www.actstudent.org

*Additional late fee required



ACT vs. SAT: Which College Admissions Test Should You Choose?

The decision of which national college admissions exam to take may be determined simply by whatever admission criteria is laid out by your school of choice. Although there is no hard science that proves that the ACT or SAT is easier, you probably want to determine which test format is better suited to your strengths. Take a look at the following comparison of the ACT and SAT to help you decide.

About the ACT

The ACT sports four trademark multiple-choice subject tests covering English, Math, Reading, and Science. These are designed to evaluate your overall educational development and your ability to complete college-level work. You'll have 2 hours and 55 minutes of dedicated test time to complete the subject tests, not including breaks.

As far as scoring goes, your subject test scores (ranging from 1 to 36) are determined after throwing out any incorrect answers — only correct responses count! The four areas are then averaged together to come up with your overall, or composite, score.

The ACT also includes an optional 30-minute writing test designed to measure your skill in planning and writing a short essay. This segment is your chance to highlight your writing skills! If you opt to take it, the additional scores will be reported, along with comments about your essay. These scores are reported separately.

So, if writing is a weak area, you might want to take the ACT and skip the writing section, since it's currently optional (although some schools require it). If writing is your strength, having extra kudos passed on to your choice of schools may benefit you.

Helpful Tips!

- › Practice a little every day with the SAT Question of the Day and the ACT Question of the Day
- › Sign up online at www.collegeboard.com to receive a daily e-mail with the official SAT question of the day. (Parents can sign up too)
- › For the ACT question of the day, visit www.actstudent.org

About the SAT

When looking at the SAT in comparison to the ACT, a clear difference is that the SAT is designed to evaluate your general thinking and problem-solving abilities. It kicks things off with a required 25-minute essay. This is the start to the Writing section, which you'll complete in addition to the Critical Reading and Math sections. The SAT differs from the ACT in terms of the amount of time you'll have to complete it (3 hours and 5 minutes) and the format in which you provide your answers.

Similar to the ACT, the SAT has multiple-choice areas, but it also has a part in the Math section where you'll be required to produce your answers — no chance of guessing from a set of choices here! And unlike the ACT, the SAT doles out a slight penalty for wrong answers on the multiple-choice questions (but not on the student-produced ones).

When is the best time to take the SAT?

The SAT and other College Board tests are offered several times a year. Most students take the SAT for the first time during the spring of their junior year and a second time during the fall of their senior year.

When considering the ACT vs. the SAT, keep in mind that both tests allot ample time for completion, but the SAT has fewer questions — 140 compared to the 215 on the ACT. The SAT also focuses heavily on vocabulary, while the ACT hones in on grammar and punctuation.

SAT Subject Tests

The SAT also provides you with the chance to take Subject Tests. A few schools may require you to take some of these tests as additional requirements to your admission application. It's possible you won't need to take any, but you may want to consider it if you have strengths in particular areas.

ACT or SAT? It all depends on you

You may not even need to think in terms of ACT vs. SAT. If the colleges you're interested in accept scores from either test, you may want to consider taking both admissions tests. Each one tests you in a different way, so you might opt to take both to see which one you perform better on.

However, if you're short on time and money and want to put your efforts towards preparing for only one of the tests, your best bet is to take a few practice exams. There are free and low-cost practice exams available electronically and in print.



ACADEMIC BULLETIN

8 Reasons To Get to Know Your High School Counselor

Your Counselor Can:

- 1** Help you determine your abilities and interests in future educational and occupational choices.
- 2** Help you select the right courses and assure you are on the right track for the kind of post-secondary education and occupation(s) you would like to pursue.
- 3** Help you register for college admission tests and explain the results of these tests.
- 4** Give you information on different colleges (entrance requirements, curricular offerings, costs, etc.).
- 5** Inform you about a timeline so you won't miss any deadlines associated with the college admission process.
- 6** Write letters of recommendations for you.
- 7** Give you information about financial aid, such as scholarships, grants, and student loans.
- 8** Help you find assistance in filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

How Do You Get To Know Your Counselor?

Visit your counselor early.

You should develop a relationship during your freshman year.

Visit Often. Be sure to visit at least twice during your freshman and sophomore years. During your junior year you will want to visit more often, as college preparation becomes more critical. Give him a list of schools that interest you. Visit during your senior year as needed to ask any questions that may come up.

Edited from an article found at www.ecampustours.com



2013 SAT Preparation Classes

Sponsored by the Assistance League of Tustin

Session 2 Wed. 6:30-9 pm, Oct. 9, 16, and 23; Sat. 9-11:30 am, Oct. 5, 12

Session 3 Wed. 6-9:30 pm, Nov. 13, 20 and Dec. 4; Sat. 9-11:30 am, Nov. 9, 16, and 23

Session 4 Wed. 6-9:30 pm, Mar. 26 and Apr. 2, 9; Sat. 9-11:30 am, Mar. 2 and Apr. 5

Session 5 Wed. 6-9:30 pm, May 14, 21, 28; Sat. 9-11:30 am, May 10, 17, 24

\$50 per person, per session.

Includes: 15 hours of professional instruction,
Barron's SAT workbook and snacks.

Each session consists of 6 classes:

3 math and 3 critical reading and writing classes. Arrive early on the first day of class to sign in and pick up your SAT workbook. Bring pencils, paper, and a calculator.

Go to altustin.org to register online with Paypal or mail a check to ALT, P.O. Box 86, Tustin, CA 92781, or drop a check off at the ALT office mail slot @ 455 El Camino Real. Make checks payable to "Assistance League of Tustin". Include session number, name of student, grade and email address. Enrollment fees non-refundable.

Visit www.altustin.org or
email satpreptustin@gmail.com
for more information.

Test Prep Resources*

Eureka

www.eurekareview.com
877-GO-EUREKA

Ivy West

800-489-9378
www.ivywest.com

Kaplan

949-756-2950
www.kaptest.com

Princeton Review

800-273-8439
www.princetonreview.com

Revolution Prep

877-738-7737
www.revolutionprep.com

College Prep: Checklist for Fall

12

SENIORS

Pull Your Applications Together

- Narrow your list of colleges to between five and ten and review it with your counselor.
- Get an application and financial aid info from each. Visit as many as possible.

Make a master calendar and note:

- Test dates, fees, and deadlines.
- College application due dates.
- Required financial aid applications deadlines.
- Your high school's deadlines for application requests, such as your transcript.
- Recommendations and transcripts deadlines.
- Ask for recommendations. Give each person your resume and any required forms.
- Write application essays and ask teachers, parents, and friends to read first drafts.

For Early Action or Early Decision:

- NOVEMBER 1: For early admissions, colleges may require test scores and applications in early November. Send in your SAT scores at www.collegeboard.com.
- Ask if your college offers an early estimate of financial aid eligibility.

Get Financial Aid Info

- Attend financial aid info events in your area.
- Talk to your counselor about CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®.
- Use Scholarship Search at www.collegeboard.com, review scholarship books, and ask your counselor about local and state funding sources.
- Don't Forget Cal Grant deadline: March 2 each year!

Social Security Number:

- You will need to obtain a Social Security number (or Resident Alien ID) to apply for college and financial aid, if you do not have one.

Search for Scholarships

- Surf the Internet for scholarships. Ask your counselor for a list of scholarships. Check with local financial institutions, your parents' employers, philanthropic organizations, and clubs for possible scholarships. Review the scholarships in each issue of the Academic Bulletin and on your school's Web site.

11

JUNIORS

- At school, sign up in September to take the PSAT/NMSQT® in October.
- Get PSAT/NMSQT tips and a free practice test.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October.
- Start with you: Make lists of your abilities, preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.
- Start your college search.
- Jumpstart your college planning by reading about majors and careers.
- Search college Web sites to find colleges with the right characteristics.
- Start thinking about financial aid.
- Talk to your counselor and attend college night and financial aid night at your school. Use financial aid calculators to estimate your aid eligibility and costs.

10

SOPHOMORES

Plan for the years ahead

- Meet with your counselor and review your schedule with him or her to make sure you're enrolled in challenging classes that will prepare you for college. Colleges prefer four years of English, history, math, science, and a foreign language.
- Start a calendar with important test and application dates and deadlines.
- Get more involved with your extracurricular activities.
- Use College Search to find out the required courses and tests for colleges that you might be interested in attending.
- Go to college fairs in your area.

Consider taking the PSAT/NMSQT® as a sophomore

- Sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT in September, which is given in October.
- Get PSAT/NMSQT tips and a free practice test.
- If you're taking the PSAT/NMSQT, check 'yes' for Student Search Service® to hear about colleges and scholarships at www.collegeboard.com.

9

FRESHMEN

Plan for the years ahead

- Meet with your counselor and review your schedule with him or her to make sure you're enrolled in challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. Colleges prefer four years of English, history, math, science, and a foreign language.
- Use College Search at www.collegeboard.com to find out the required courses and tests for colleges that you might be interested in attending.
- Start a calendar with important dates and deadlines.
- Get more involved with your extracurricular activities.
- Go to college fairs in your area.

College Essay Writing Tips

Write an Effective Application Essay

A great application essay will present a vivid, personal, and compelling view of you to the admissions staff. It will round out the rest of your application and help you stand out from the other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of your application over which you have complete control, so take the time to do a good job on it. Check out these tips before you begin.

Dos

Keep Your Focus Narrow and Personal

Your essay must prove a single point or thesis. The reader must be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Try having someone read just your introduction to see what he thinks your essay is about.

Essays that try to be too comprehensive end up sounding watered-down. Remember, it's not about telling the committee what you've done—they can pick that up from your list of activities—instead, it's about showing them who you are.

Prove It

Develop your main idea with vivid and specific facts, events, quotations, examples, and reasons. There's a big difference between simply stating a point of view and letting an idea unfold in the details:

Okay: "I like to be surrounded by people with a variety of backgrounds and interests."

Better: "During that night, I sang the theme song from Casablanca with a baseball coach who thinks he's Bogie, discussed Marxism with a little old lady, and heard more than I ever wanted to know about some woman's gall bladder operation."

Be Specific

Avoid clichéd, generic, and predictable writing by using vivid and specific details.

Okay: "I want to help people. I have gotten so much out of life through the love and guidance of my family, I feel that many individuals have not been as fortunate; therefore, I would like to expand the lives of others."

Better: "My Mom and Dad stood on plenty of sidelines 'til their shoes filled with water or their fingers turned white, or somebody's golden retriever signed his name on their coats in mud. I think that kind of commitment is what I'd like to bring to working with fourth-graders."

Don'ts

Don't Tell Them What You Think They Want to Hear

Most admissions officers read plenty of essays about the charms of their university, the evils of terrorism, and the personal commitment involved in being a doctor. Bring something new to the table, not just what you think they want to hear.

Don't Write a Resume

Don't include information that is found elsewhere in the application. Your essay will end up sounding like an autobiography, travelogue, or laundry list. Yawn.

"During my junior year, I played first singles on the tennis team, served on the student council, maintained a B+ average, traveled to France, and worked at a cheese factory."

Don't Use 50 Words When Five Will Do

Eliminate unnecessary words.

Okay: "Over the years it has been pointed out to me by my parents, friends, and teachers—and I have even noticed this about myself, as well—that I am not the neatest person in the world."

Better: "I'm a slob."

Don't Forget to Proofread

Typos and spelling or grammatical errors can be interpreted as carelessness or just bad writing. Don't rely on your computer's spell check. It can miss spelling errors like the ones below.

"After I graduate *form* high school, I plan to work for a nonprofit organization during the summer."

"From that day on, Daniel was my best *fried*."

This article is based on information found in The College Application Essay, by Sarah Myers McGinty, which is available through the online store at www.collegeboard.com.

ACADEMIC BULLETIN

Scholarships

Below are just a few scholarships currently available. Visit Web sites for complete details and eligibility. For additional opportunities, search online for scholarships that best suit your personal criteria.

Dr. Pepper Tuition Giveaway Promotion and Contest

SPONSORED BY Dr. Pepper Corporation

DEADLINE Opening August 2013/Deadline TBD

WEBSITE www.drpepper.com

AWARDS Varies (Last year's prizes ranged from \$2,500-\$100,000)

DESCRIPTION Dr. Pepper is sponsoring a nationwide promotion for the 2013 college football season in which they will give away over \$750,000 in tuition assistance. Scholarship Management Services is partnering with Dr. Pepper to help distribute the tuition assistance payments. To enter the promotion, entrants must have access to the Internet and the capability to upload a short video. Information and submissions from the 2012 winners can be found at www.drpepper.com.

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Edison Scholars Program

SPONSORED BY Edison International

DEADLINE Opening Fall 2013/Deadline TBD

WEBSITE www.scholarshipamerica.org/edisonscholars

AWARDS 30, \$10,000 renewable up to 4 years/or the attainment of a Bachelor's degree

DESCRIPTION The Edison Scholars Program, sponsored by Edison International, is offering scholarships to aspiring scientists, mathematicians and engineers. Graduating high school seniors who show potential for success in college and have financial need are encouraged to apply. Eligible students must live in or attend a public or private high school in areas serviced by Southern California Edison (SCE) or attend an eligible high school in the designated area surrounding SCE's San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS).

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GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program

SPONSORED BY General Electric

DEADLINE Opening Fall 2013/Deadline TBD

WEBSITE www.reaganfoundation.org/scholarships

AWARDS Up to \$10,000

The GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program, sponsored by The Ronald Reagan Foundation and GE, is offering scholarships to high school seniors in the United States. Scholarship is open to students who demonstrate the attributes of leadership, drive, integrity, and citizenship similar to those exhibited by President Ronald Reagan. Like President Reagan, candidates use the formative experiences of their youth to lead, serve, and pursue a life of purpose and significance, both individually and for their communities. Renewable scholarships are offered for full-time study at an accredited four-year U.S. college or university.

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Coca-Cola Scholars Program

SPONSORED BY The Coca-Cola Scholars Program

DEADLINE October 31, 2013

WEBSITE www.coca-colascholars.org

AWARDS 200

DESCRIPTION High school seniors with a minimum GPA of 3.0 unweighted, complete online application-list of grades, school, community activities and employment. No additional material required. Coca-Cola scholars are well rounded, bright students who excel academically and are involved in their schools. They are leaders who are passionate, service oriented and demonstrate a sustained commitment to bettering their community. For more eligibility requirements visit coca-colascholarsfoundation.org

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www.fastweb.com

www.scholarships4Student.com

www.gocollege.com

www.scholarships101.com

www.embark.com

www.collegenet.com

www.scholarshipproviders.org

www.scholarships.com

www.scholarshipExperts.com

Annual Create-A-Greeting-Card \$10,000 Scholarship Contest

SPONSORED BY The Gallery Collection

DEADLINE January 15, 2014

AWARDS 1

WEBSITE www.gallerycollection.com

DESCRIPTION Applicants are asked to design the front of a greeting card that could be sold as an actual greeting card in the Gallery Collection line. Designs may consist of original photographs, artwork, and/or computer graphics. The student with the winning design will be awarded a \$10,000 scholarship and his or her design will be made into a greeting card to be sold. Review the cards currently sold on the website to get a better idea of designs the judges will be looking for.

You can design a Christmas card, a generic happy holidays card, a seasons greeting or a card ranging from birthday, to thank you, to get well soon. Visit www.gallerycollection.com for idea, one entry per person.



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Average yearly income by educational attainment

LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	\$23,600
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	\$32,550
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE	\$39,500
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	\$53,300
GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	\$65,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: May 4, 2011

COMPARE ACT & SAT SCORES

SAT CR+M (Score Range)	ACT Composite Score
1600	36
1540-1590	35
1490-1530	34
1440-1480	33
1400-1430	32
1360-1390	31
1330-1350	30
1290-1320	29
1250-1280	28
1210-1240	27
1170-1200	26
1130-1160	25
1090-1120	24
1050-1080	23
1020-1040	22
980-1010	21
940-970	20
900-930	19
860-890	18
820-850	17
770-810	16
720-760	15
670-710	14
620-660	13
560-610	12
510-550	11

The ACT and SAT are different tests that measure similar but distinct constructs. The ACT measures achievement related to high school curricula, while the SAT measures general verbal and quantitative reasoning.

ACT and the College Board have completed a concordance study that is designed to examine the relationship between two scores on the ACT and SAT. These concordance tables do not equate scores, but rather provide a tool for finding comparable scores.

www.act.org



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www.tustin.k12.ca.us

Academic Bulletin

The Academic Bulletin is published and distributed monthly (September through June) to high school families of the Tustin Unified School District. The newsletter has been created for the purpose of disseminating information only. No recommendation is made or intended by the editor or distributor of this publication.

Si desea recibir esta publicación en Español, por favor comuníquese con su escuela.

DESIGNED & EDITED BY

Beth Mehlberger & Patricia Prescott Sueme
 in cooperation with the TUSD
 high school counselors

PUBLISHED BY

TUSD Communications Office

SPONSORED BY

Beckman High School PTO
 Foothill High School PTO
 Tustin High School PTO