



Kleitz Education Group

A Student's Competitive Edge

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PSAT, ACT, and SAT

Why do I need to take the PSAT/SAT/ACT?

- The PSAT is used to qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- SAT and ACT are used for college admissions purposes and sometimes for scholarship considerations.

When should I take the tests?

- The PSAT is administered as a practice test in October of sophomore year and as a qualification test in October of junior year. Registration and administration is handled by the school.
- ACT is administered six times during the school year: September, October, December, February, April, and June.
- SAT is administered seven times during the school year: October, November, December, January, March, May, and June.

Does it matter which test I take?

- All accredited four-year colleges and universities that used standardized tests for admissions will accept either the ACT or SAT.
- If a student qualifies as a National Merit Semifinalist, he must take the SAT as part of the qualification for Finalist status.
- Many students will find that they perform better on one test than the other because of the structure and strategies of the tests, and in general they will want to focus on preparing for that test.

How do I register for the tests?

- For students testing under regular testing conditions, parents are responsible for registering for the test and choosing when and where the students take the test.
- For information on registering for the ACT, visit ACT's website: www.actstudent.org
- For information on registering for the SAT, visit SAT's website: www.collegeboard.org
- For students testing under special conditions, please check with your school's college counseling office to see how to proceed with registration.

How are the tests structured?

- The PSAT is made up of five sections: two Critical Reading, two Math, and one Writing. The test is 2 hours,

10 minutes long.

- The ACT is made up of four sections: one each of English, Math, Reading, and Science, with an optional essay. It is 2 hours, 55 minutes without the essay, and 3 hours, 25 minutes with the essay.
- The SAT is made up of ten sections: one essay, three Critical Reading, three Math, two Writing (Grammar Skills), and one unscored experimental section that is used to test potential future test questions. It is 3 hours, 45 minutes long.

How are the tests scored?

- Each section of the PSAT is given a score from 20-80. The three sections are added together to yield a Selection Index ranging from 60-240.
- Each section of the ACT is given a score ranging from 1-36. The four sections are then averaged to yield a composite score, also between 1-36. If the essay is taken, two additional scores are generated. One is the essay score, which ranges from 2-12. The other is a score called “English with Writing” and is a combination scaled score of the English and essay scores. It ranges from 1-36. Some colleges use the English with writing score in place of the regular English score. For a list of colleges which require the essay to be taken, please talk to your college counselor.
- For the SAT, the Math and Critical Reading sections are each given a score of 200-800. The writing score is determined by scaling the Grammar Skills (20-80) and the essay score (2-12) for a score of 200-800. The overall score is the sum of the three categories and ranges from 600-2400.

How long will it take to get my scores back?

- PSAT scores will come back through your school in late December or early January.
- SAT scores are available online approximately 21 days after the test.
- ACT scores are available online approximately 10 days after the test.

What is a “good score” on the SAT and ACT?

- Each student’s “good score” is different! Simply put, a good score is the score needed to get into a student’s chosen school.
- The national average score on the ACT is 21.1, and the Missouri average for the Class of 2011 was 21.6. The national average score on the SAT is 1500.
- A score of 30 or above on the ACT or 2000 or above on the SAT is considered competitive.

How are National Merit Semifinalists selected?

- The PSAT is used to determine National Merit Semifinalists. State by state, the top 3% of students achieve National Merit Semifinalist status. In Missouri, the score needed to be in the top 3% is usually in the 210-212 range.