

## Frequently Asked Questions: Understanding PSAT/NMSQT Scores for Parents, December 2016

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### ***Where can my child get their PSAT/NMSQT® scores?***

Students can access their scores online [here](#). They'll need to create a free College Board account if they don't already have one. Watch [this video](#) that explains the PSAT/NMSQT score report.

### ***How are the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT® related?***

The SAT Suite of Assessments is made up of the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9. Each test measures the same content for different grade levels, from eighth grade through senior year. The tests use a common score scale, so educators and students get consistent feedback to help monitor growth across grades and find areas in need of improvement. You can read more about the score structure here:

[collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/scores/structure](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/scores/structure).

### ***Why does the PSAT/NMSQT have a maximum score of 1520 points and the SAT have a maximum score of 1600 points?***

The tests in the SAT Suite use a common score scale. The ranges reported for each assessment are grade-level appropriate within the common scale. While the total range for the SAT is 400–1600, the total range for the PSAT/NMSQT is 320–1520.

This common score scale means that a student who took the PSAT/NMSQT and received a Math section score of 500 would be expected to get a 500 on the Math section of the SAT or PSAT 8/9 if they had taken either of those tests on that same day; a score of 500 represents the same level of academic achievement on all three assessments. This also means that student growth is easy to see across the full suite. If a student takes the PSAT/NMSQT this year and gets a 500 Math section score, and then takes the SAT next year and earns a 550 Math section score, that student has shown a growth of 50 points, likely because they worked hard both in and out of school.

### ***Can a student take the PSAT/NMSQT in ninth grade?***

The PSAT/NMSQT is designed for 10th and 11th graders. However, some schools may offer the [PSAT 8/9](#), which is designed for eighth and ninth graders. Check with the school counselor to find out which tests your child's school offers.

### ***What math level should a student complete to be successful on the SAT?***

PSAT/NMSQT score reports show students' college readiness benchmarks that indicate if they are on track to be ready for college when they graduate from high school. If their math score is below that benchmark, the "Skills Insight" section on their report has recommendations for how they can improve. They can also sign up to use free practice tools, including a personalized SAT study plan based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores, on [Official SAT Practice](#). [Watch this video](#) to learn how your child can share their PSAT/NMSQT scores with Khan Academy®.

### ***When should a student take the SAT?***

Most students take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and again in the fall of their senior year. The SAT will be offered in spring 2017 on Jan. 21, March 11, May 6, and June 3; and in the new school year on Aug. 26, Oct. 7, Nov. 4, and Dec. 2. Find all the dates and deadlines [here](#).

***What are the key differences between the new SAT and the current ACT?***

The SAT is the only test to offer free, world-class practice tools to all students with [Official SAT Practice](#) on Khan Academy. In addition, students get 43% more time per question on the SAT than on the ACT. The test content and structure differences are detailed on this [chart](#).

***How does a student qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program?***

When students take the PSAT/NMSQT, they're automatically screened for the National Merit Scholarship Program, an academic competition for recognition and scholarships. For more information about entry requirements, please visit the [National Merit Scholarship Corporation website](#).

***Is there a website where a parent or student can find scholarships?***

Families can search for scholarships, financial aid, and internships from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion with BigFuture™ Scholarship Search. Explore scholarships and more [here](#).

***When should students start applying for scholarships?***

Most students apply for scholarships during their senior year—the year before they start college. We encourage students to start looking for scholarships sooner than that to explore potential opportunities. They can search for scholarships based on family income level, academic strengths, career goals, extracurricular activities, and more. It's important that students complete their scholarship applications fully and submit them on time. Learn more about paying for college [here](#).

**For more information about the PSAT/NMSQT, visit [psat.org](#).**

**For more information about Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy, visit [satpractice.org](#).**

**For more information about the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, visit [jkcf.org](#).**

**For more information about our other scholarship partners, visit [this site](#).**

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