College Entrance Exams

ACT ~ SAT ~ PSAT

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Frequently Asked Questions

• What are the tests?
• When do students take the tests?
• Why take the tests?
• How do you register for the tests?
• How to students prepare for the tests?
What are the tests?

Why take them?
Admission Factors
What colleges consider...

• **Primary Factors**
  – Grades *(not necessarily GPA)*
  – Academic courses & strength of curriculum
  – Test Scores

• **Additional Factors**
  – Essay(s)/Personal Statement
  – Letters of Recommendation
  – Students Demonstrated Interest or “Demonstrated Knowledge”
  – Extracurricular Activities & Awards
  – Interview
  – SAT Subject Test Scores
Admission Factors

Percentage of Colleges Reporting “Considerable or Moderate Importance”

- Grades in all courses: 94.5%
- Grades in college prep courses: 93.4%
- Strength of curriculum: 85.2%
- Admission test scores: 72.7%
- Essay or writing sample: 68.3%
- Counselor recommendation: 54.4%
- Teacher recommendation: 50.2%
- AP/IB scores: 41.5%
- Student interest: 39.5%
- Extracurricular activities: 31.1%
- Interview: 27.4%
- Portfolio: 14.3%
- Work: 13.1%
- SAT subject test scores: 9.3%

Source: 2015 NACAC State of College Admissions
SAT

• Redesigned March 5, 2016
• 3 hour (+ 50 minutes optional essay)
• 5 long sections: Evidence-Based Reading & Writing, 2 Math Sections, Essay (optional)
• Test Format:
  – 4 answer choices per question
  – No penalty for incorrect answers
SAT

• Score Range:
  – Composite: 400-1600
  – Evidence-based Reading & Writing: 200-800
  – Math: 200-800
  – Essay score reported separately

• “Cross-Test Scores” report performance on Science & History/Social Science across entire test

• Register online at:
  – CollegeBoard.org
  – Cost: $45; $57 with Essay
  – Fee waiver available for eligible students (see Counselor)
ACT
ACT

• American College Testing

• 2 hours 55 minutes (+40 minute optional essay)

• 5 long sections:
  English
  Mathematics
  Reading
  Science
  Writing (optional essay)

• Test Format:
  – 4 answer choices
  – No penalty for incorrect answers
ACT

• Score Range:
  – Composite: 1-36
  – English: 1-36
  – Math: 1-36
  – Reading: 1-36
  – Science: 1-36
  – Writing (Essay): 2-12; Score not factored into Composite Score

• Register online at:
  – ACTstudent.org
  – Cost: $42.50; $58.50 with Essay
  – Fee waiver available for eligible students (see Counselor)
PSAT
PSAT/NMSQT

• Preliminary SAT

• National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
  – National Merit Scholarship Program for juniors who meet qualifying requirements

• 2 hours, 45 minutes

• 4 sections: 2 Math Sections, Reading, Writing; no essay

• Test Format:
  – 4 answer choices
  – No penalty for incorrect answers
PSAT/NMSQT

• Score Range:
  – Composite Top Score: 1520
  – All sections scored on a scale of: 160-760

• Register in September:
  – DVHS Web Store or with Bookkeeper, Peggy Thomas
  – Only offered in October
  – Cost: $35 (as of October 2016)
PSAT Scores...Now What?

• Princeton Review Free Webinar
  – PSAT Scores—Now What?
  – Tuesday, December 13 at 4-5PM
  – Sign up on Princeton Review website or https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/494579400576102659?source=website

• January Parent College Information Session
  – PSAT Interpretation & Next Steps
  – Monday, January 23 at 4-5PM
  – DVHS Library
Test-Optional

- Some applicants can choose not to submit SAT or ACT scores. The rules vary from college to college.
  
  – FairTest.org
Suggested Testing Timeline:

• Sophomores:
  – PSAT (optional)
  – Subject SAT tests (only if applicable)
  – AP tests (if applicable)

• Juniors:
  – PSAT - October 2016
  – SAT or ACT – Spring Semester
  – AP (if applicable)- May 2017
  – SAT Subject Tests (if applicable)- May, June, October, or November 2017
  – 2nd Semester Finals- June 2017

• Seniors:
  – SAT or ACT- September - December
Test Preparation:

• Free Practice Materials:
  – Booklets in College & Career Center
  – Online
    – CollegeBoard.org
    – ACTstudent.org
    – KhanAcademy.org

• Test Prep Companies:
  – Classes
  – One-on-one tutoring
Free Resources

- CollegeBoard.org
- ACTstudent.org
- Fairtest.org
- PrincetonReview.com
- Kaptest.org
- KhanAcademy.org
Questions?

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