

UNDERSTANDING PSAT/NMSQT SCORE REPORTS

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) provides a standardized view of your scholastic skills, regardless of the school attended, and helps you compare your performance to other college-bound students nationwide.

Please note that the PSAT is not used directly for college admissions, but high scores can earn you scholarship offers, including the highly reputable National Merit Scholarship. Additionally, PSAT scores are a good predictor for how you may score on the SAT.

What does the PSAT/NMSQT measure?

The assessment includes the Reading Test, the Writing and Language Test, and the Math Test. A student's scores on the Reading Test and the Writing and Language Test are combined to arrive at a section score for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing. The Math Test score is also reported as a second section score.

How is the PSAT scored?

First, the student's raw score is computed as the number of questions correctly answered. The scores included on score reports are based on raw scores. There is no longer a penalty for guessing, so nothing is deducted for incorrect answers or for unanswered questions.

Next, the raw score is converted to a scaled score of 160 to 760. This conversion process adjusts for slight differences in difficulty among versions of the test and provides a score that is *equated*, or consistent, across forms. This process ensures that no student receives an advantage or disadvantage from taking a particular form of the test on a particular day.

The total score shown in the report reflects the combination of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section score (160-760) with the Math section score (160-760). **The total score reported range for the PSAT/NMSQT is 320-1520.**

In addition to the total and section scores, students will see three test scores in the range of 8-38, reflecting performance on the content covered in each of the tests (Reading, Writing and Language, Math). Students will also see two cross-test scores in the range of 8-38. These scores represent student performance on items across the three tests that were in the domains of either Analysis in History/Social Studies or Analysis in Science.

Finally, students receive subscores in the range of 1-15 that offer feedback on their performance in the following skill areas: Command of Evidence, Words in Context, Expression of Ideas, Standard English Conventions, Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, and Passport to Advanced Mathematics.

What are the PSAT/NMSQT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks?

College and career readiness benchmarks are used to predict a 75% likelihood of achieving at least a C in a set of first-year, credit-bearing college courses. The benchmarks below are separated by grade level, since both 10th and 11th grade students take the same test.

	<i>Evidence-Based Reading and Writing</i>	<i>Math</i>
<i>Students testing in 11th</i>	390	500
<i>Students testing in 10th</i>	360	470

How does the PSAT/NMSQT predict SAT scores?

While the SAT is scored on a scale of 400–1600, the PSAT is scored on a scale of 320–1520. Although the PSAT and SAT are scored on slightly different scales, your TOTAL PSAT score is a direct indicator of your total SAT score. For example, a total PSAT score of 1200 means that, if you took

the SAT on the same day, you would have gotten a total SAT score of 1200. This also means that student growth is easy to see across the tests. If a student takes the PSAT/NMSQT this year and receives a 500 as his or her 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, which likely resulted from hard work both in and out of school. The projected score ranges provided in the online score reports for students reflect typical growth.

How is the Selection Index calculated?

Reported on a scale ranging from 48 to 228, the Selection Index is calculated by doubling the sum of the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Test scores. For example, a Reading score of 18, a Writing and Language score of 20, and a Math score of 24 would result in a Selection Index of 124 [$2(18+20+24)$].

How does the National Merit Scholarship Corporation use the Selection Index?

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) uses the Selection Index score of **juniors** to designate groups of students to receive recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Of the 1.5 million NMSC entrants, about 50,000 will earn scores high enough to qualify them for recognition. Around 16,000 will become National Merit Semifinalists.

NMSC arranges the Selection Index scores of all National Merit Program participants within each state in descending order. The score at which a state's allocation is most closely filled becomes the Semifinalist qualifying score. Entrants with a Selection Index at or above the qualifying score are named Semifinalists.

Semifinalist **qualifying scores vary from state to state and from year to year**, but the scores of all Semifinalists are extremely high. This past year, the seniors in Missouri who received recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program as **Semifinalists** earned a **selection index of 217+** on their junior year PSAT. Students earning recognition in Missouri as **Commended** students earned a **selection index of 211-216**. Although Commended Students do not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships, some of these students do become candidates for Special Scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.

While juniors will have access to their Selection Index on their score report, we will not know the annual cutoff for National Merit recognition until September of their senior year. Information about the competition is provided at www.nationalmerit.org.

How can students improve their score for the SAT?

- Develop academic skills through challenging course work.
- Read extensively and develop strong writing skills.
- Engage in deliberate practice in the three math areas that are emphasized the most in the assessments.
- Create a Khan Academy account at satpractice.org and link it to your College Board account to get free, personalized practice for the SAT.
- Utilize the free online SAT preparation available through [Testive](#) (Parkway link found in Family Connection).

What are the next steps for students?

- Visit studentscores.collegeboard.org to create a College Board account to get full PSAT/NMSQT score report.
- Consider registering for the SAT. Spring of junior year is the perfect time to take the SAT for the first time if it is something that you choose to do.