

PSAT/NMSQT Information and Test Preparation

Jill Kramer-High School Testing Coordinator

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) measures skills important for college success and provides students with the tools they need to start planning for the future.

The PSAT/NMSQT will be given to all Sophomores and Juniors on Wednesday, October 13th from 8:10-11:30. Sophomores testing will provide early feedback while there is still time to plan and prepare. Juniors are able to qualify for scholarships and recognition through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. This will be the only qualifying test for Juniors for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. We encourage all students to do their best.

The PSAT/NMSQT lets you:

- Assess your critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills
- Get specific suggestions on how to improve your academic skills
- Prepare for the SAT with a personalized study plan
- Request information from colleges and universities
- Use My College Quickstart to access free resources and information about college and career planning

What students should bring?

- Two No. 2 pencils with erasers
- An approved calculator (scientific or graphing is recommended)
- Social security number (optional)
- Email address (optional)

Prohibited items during the test:

- Watch alarms
- Handheld electronic devices, including cell phones and pagers (power must be turned off pagers, cell phones, and handheld devices)
- Protractors, compasses, rulers
- Dictionaries or other books (no exceptions)
- Pamphlets
- Papers of any kind
- Highlighters and colored pens or pencils
- Listening, recording, copying or photographic devices (including watches and cell phones that contain cameras)
- Food and beverages, including bottled water, unless approved for medical reasons

Tips for taking the PSAT/NMSQT

Although the best preparation for the PSAT/NMSQT is long term—such as taking solid academic courses and reading widely—students will perform better on the test if they know what to expect on test day.

Short-term approaches and strategies:

- Take the Practice Test in *The Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT*.
- Visit www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html for more test preparation
- Learn the directions for each type of math and critical reading question.
- Earn as many points as they can on easy questions.
- Read all the answer choices before marking their answer sheets.
- Do the scratch work in the test book.
- Work steadily without wasting time on hard questions- they can always go back to them later.
- Check their answer sheets regularly to make sure they're in the right place.
- Write the answers to grid-ins in the boxes about the ovals.
- Try educated guessing when they can eliminate at least one answer to a multiple-choice question.
- No random guessing when you don't know the answer only educated guessing
- Skip/omit test questions- only if you don't know the answer and educated guessing is not an option.
- Questions omitted (not answered) will not be counted against the student
- Take a calculator on test day.

About guessing:

- Educated guessing means guessing an answer whenever one or more of the choices can be eliminated as a definitely wrong. Encourage students to use educated guessing.
- Because $\frac{1}{4}$ of a point is deducted for a wrong answer to multiple-choice questions, random guessing is not recommended. Advise student to leave that question blank and move on to the next one.
- Students can earn an above-average score by getting only half the questions right and omitting answers for the rest of the questions.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank You,

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