

PSAT OVERVIEW

- All sophomores will take the PSAT (Practice SAT) on Wednesday, October 15th. The entire test takes about 2 hours and 15 minutes.
- Students will be assigned to a classroom prior to the testing day. Bring a calculator!
- It is important to take this test seriously – it will help prepare you for the actual SAT, which many of you will take in the spring of your junior year.

What's on the test?

The PSAT/NMSQT includes five sections:

Two 25-minute critical reading sections

Two 25-minute math sections

One 30-minute writing skills section

Critical Reading

Two 25-minute critical reading sections = 48 questions

Math

Two 25-minute math sections = 38 questions

Writing Skills

One 30-minute writing section = 39 questions

These multiple-choice questions on writing skills measure a student's ability to express ideas effectively in standard-written English, to recognize faults in usage and structure, and to use language with sensitivity to meaning.

Short-Term Approaches and Strategies

- Take the practice test in the Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Learn the directions for each type of math and critical reading question.
- Try sample questions from past tests.
- Earn as many points as you can on easy questions.
- Read all the answer choices before marking your answer sheet.
- Do your scratchwork in the test book.
- Don't feel you have to answer every question.
- Work steadily -- don't waste time on hard questions. You can always go back to them later.
- Check your answer sheet regularly to make sure you're in the right place.
- Write your answers to grid-ins in the boxes above the ovals.
- Try educated guessing when you can eliminate at least one answer to a multiple-choice question. Be sure you understand the difference between educated and random guessing. See below.
- Take a calculator.

About Guessing

Educated guessing means guessing an answer whenever you are able to eliminate one or more of the choices as definitely wrong. Educated guessing may help you.

Random guessing probably won't help you because of the way the test is scored. Random guessing means that you have no idea which answer choice is correct. Don't waste time on that kind of question. Move on to the next one.