

Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT®:

A Step to the Future: October 15, 2014

- Skills Tested on the PSAT/NMSQT
- Sample PSAT/NMSQT Questions
- Scoring the PSAT/NMSQT
- Test Preparation Strategies





What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

- Measures academic skills you'll need for college
- Co-sponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation
- Serves as an entry point to National Merit Scholarship Corporation competitions for juniors and practice for the SAT
- Approximately 3.5 million students participate each year (44% eleventh-graders and 56% tenth-graders or younger)



Benefits of the PSAT/NMSQT

- Preparation for the SAT®
- Scholarship and recognition opportunities (11th grade only)
- College and career planning tools
- Admissions and financial aid information from colleges
- Feedback on academic skills



What Skills are tested on the PSAT/NMSQT?

The test assesses the academic skills that you've developed over the years, primarily through your course work.

These skills are considered essential for success in high school and college:

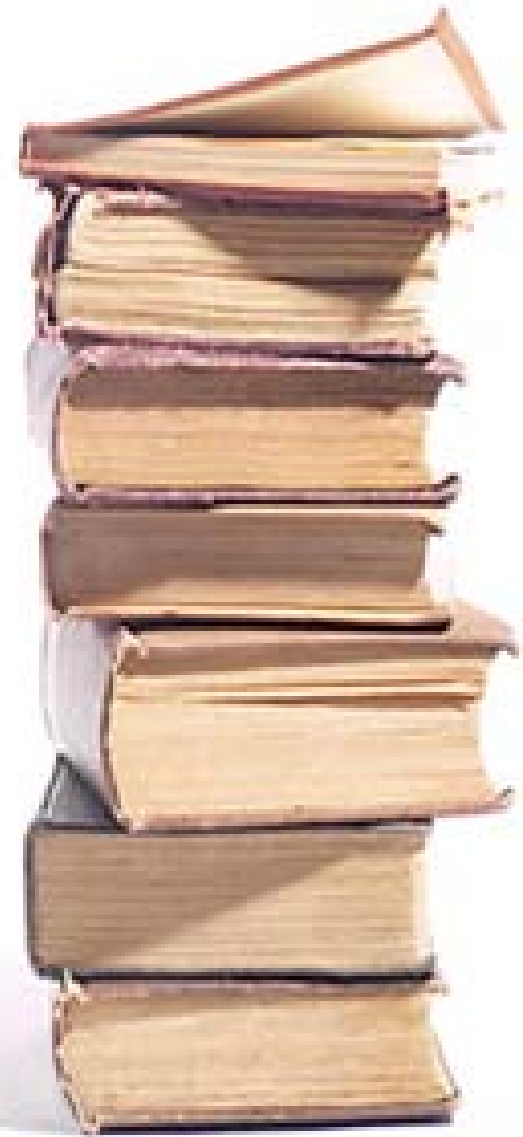
- Critical Reading
- Mathematics
- Writing Skills

Critical Reading Questions

Use content from:

- humanities
- social studies
- natural sciences
- literature

- 13 Sentence Completions
- 35 Passage-Based Reading Questions
(100- to 800-word passages)



Mathematics Questions

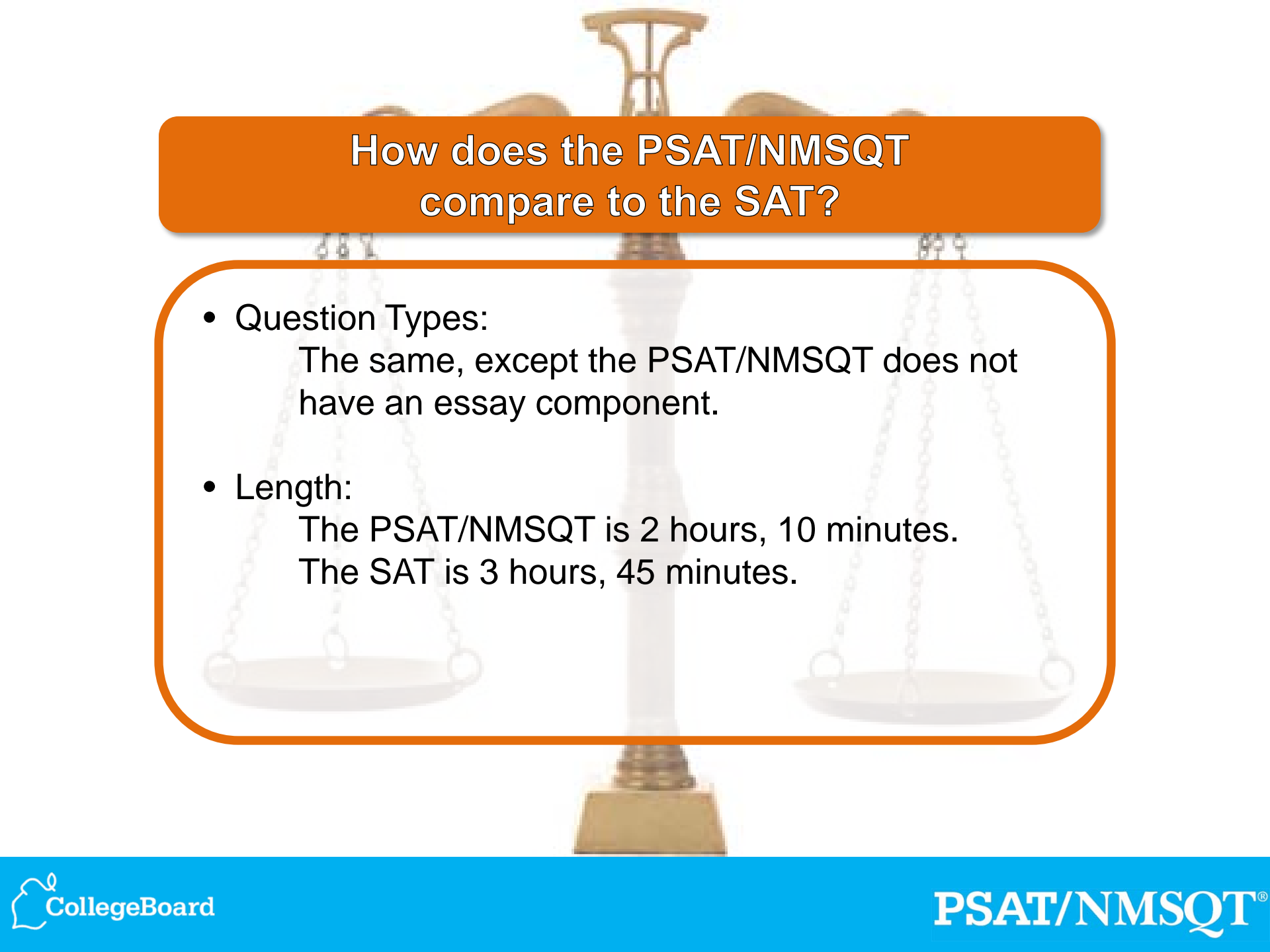
Use content from:

- number and operations
 - algebra and functions;
 - geometry and measurement
 - data analysis
 - statistics
 - probability
- 28 Multiple-Choice Questions
 - 10 Student-Produced Response Questions (“Grid-ins”)

Writings Skills Questions

Focus on editing, grammar, usage, and organization.

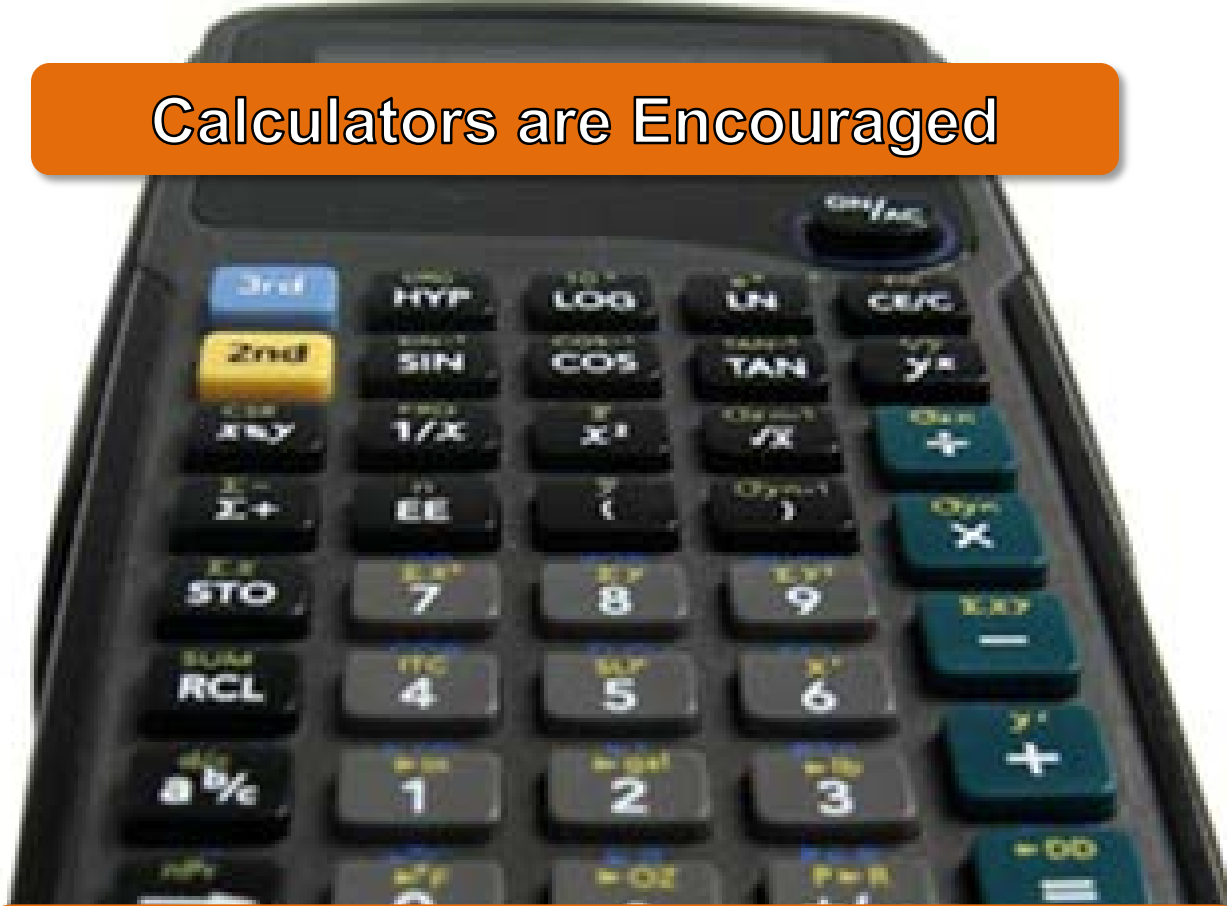
- 20 Improving Sentences Questions
- 14 Identifying Sentence Error Questions
- 5 Improving Paragraph Questions



How does the PSAT/NMSQT compare to the SAT?

- Question Types:
The same, except the PSAT/NMSQT does not have an essay component.
- Length:
The PSAT/NMSQT is 2 hours, 10 minutes.
The SAT is 3 hours, 45 minutes.

Calculators are Encouraged



A scientific or graphing calculator is recommended.

Bring a familiar calculator. Test day is not the time to figure out how to use a new calculator.

How is the PSAT/NMSQT Scored?

Multiple-choice questions:

- 1 point for each correct
- $\frac{1}{4}$ point deducted for each incorrect

Math grid-ins:

- 1 point for each correct
- 0 points for each incorrect

0 points for omitted questions

How is the PSAT/NMSQT Scored?

Scale:

- 20-80 for each test section

Averages:

- 11th Graders: 47-50
- 10th Graders: 43-46
- Younger Students: 38-42

Personalized Skills Information

The PSAT/NMSQT Score Report:

- contains information to help you improve your academic skills.
- lists skills that you have the best chance of improving with additional work.
- includes advice, written by teachers, on how to improve those skills.

Test Preparation: Long-Term

READ!

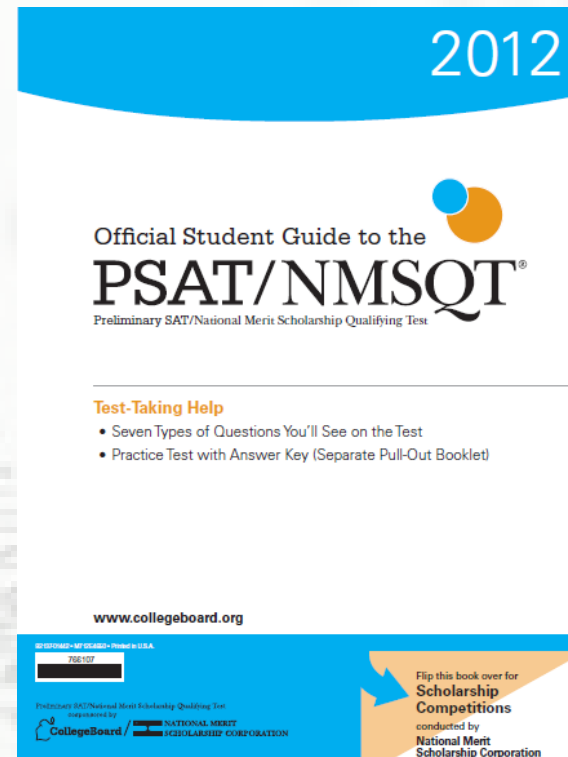
- Continuous reading improves vocabulary and develops essential skills.
- Read more books than just those required for class.

Take Challenging Courses!

- This will help you to develop and strengthen your critical thinking skills.

Test Preparation: Short-Term

- Take the practice test in the *Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT*.
- Understand scoring and “educated guessing.”
- Familiarize yourself with the test’s format, questions types, and directions.



Test Preparation: Test Readiness Strategies

When you sit down to take the test:

- Read all of the directions.
- Read all of each question's answer choices.
- Do scratch work in the test book.
- Work at a steady pace.

If you skip a question:

- Note it in the test book.
- Leave it blank on the answer sheet.
- Return to it if there is time.
- Remember: you don't have to answer every question to score well.

Test Preparation: Test Readiness Strategies

In most sections, the questions are arranged from easy to more difficult (except for passage-based reading in the critical reading section and improving paragraphs in the writing skills section).


Wild guessing is discouraged, but students should make *educated* guesses when answer choices can be eliminated.

To learn more, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The screenshot shows the College Board website interface for students. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for SAT, AP, College Planning, College Search, Professional Development, Store, and More. The College Board logo is in the top right corner. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads "For Students" in large, bold black letters. To the right of this heading is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search by keyword" and a magnifying glass icon. A blue banner below the heading contains the text: "Welcome to the College Board. Get information on our tests, find colleges, learn about financial aid and get application help." Below the banner, the page is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a "My Organizer" section with a "Sign In" button and a link to "Create a free account." Next to it is a "June SAT Scores" section with a close button (X) and text stating that scores are available for the June SAT and SAT Subject Tests. The central part of the page features a "College Planning" section with the "bigfuture by The College Board" logo and a link to "See what's new in BigFuture". Below this is a "Find Colleges" section with a link to explore interests. On the right side, there is a "SAT & SAT Subject Tests" section with a sub-section for "Upcoming SAT Tests" which includes a table with columns for Date, Deadline, and Status. Below the table is a link to "Practice for the SAT" and a "SAT Subject Tests" section with a link to showcase achievements.

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For Students

Search by keyword 

Welcome to the College Board. Get information on our tests, find colleges, learn about financial aid and get application help.

June SAT Scores

Most scores are now available for the [June SAT](#) and [SAT Subject Tests](#).

My Organizer


Username

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Sign In Forgot username or password?

Create a free account. [Sign up](#)

College Planning



See [what's new](#) in BigFuture
Introducing BigFuture™: Step-by-step advice and interactive tools to help you [get started](#) navigating the college planning process, [explore majors and careers](#), [get in](#) to schools you like, and figure out how best to [pay](#) for it.

Find Colleges

Explore your interests to find your college fit, learn about academic life and explore college campuses.

SAT & SAT Subject Tests

Upcoming SAT Tests

Date	Deadline*	Status
Oct. 6	Sept. 7	Register Now
Nov. 3	Oct. 4	Register Now
Dec. 1	Nov. 1	Register Now

*Deadlines expire at Midnight, EDT [See more dates](#)

Practice for the SAT

Get ready for test day with free official SAT questions. Find tips on how to do your best, and take a free practice test so you can feel confident on test day.

SAT Subject Tests

Showcase your achievements in the college admission