

College News

February 2015

Important College Dates & Deadlines for Seniors:

- **February:** Mid-Year transcripts must be sent to many colleges and universities as part of their application process. See the section below for more details.
 - **Feb. 15, 2015:** Many private schools also require the CSS Profile to apply for privately endowed scholarships. It can be accessed at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp> complete the CSS PROFILE before your earliest college or program priority filing date. At the very latest, you must submit your PROFILE Application by February 15.
 - **March 2, 2015:** Deadline to submit the Cal Grant GPA verification form to apply. Click for more information: <http://www.oakparkusd.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1080>
 - **Mid-March, 2015** is when most UC and CSU schools begin notifying applicants of admission or denial. Berkeley and UCLA are the last to send notices (surprise, surprise)
 - **Spring Break 2015:** Spring Break is the time to make final visits to schools that have made them offers of admission. This is also the month students will begin notifying schools of their decisions. Information about scheduling trips to UC & CSU campuses can be found at the following link on our website [UC Campus Events & Tours](#)
 - **May 1, 2015: Commitment Deadline!** Students must formally confirm acceptance or declination of an offer of admission by this date.
 - **May & June, 2015:** are critical months for seniors because last semester grades do count! Spring semester classes (that were listed on the student's admission application) that are dropped or not passed with at least a "C" may result in a college rescinding its offer. Most competitive universities expect seniors to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA in the senior year
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THE NEW REDESIGNED SAT (*R-SAT*)

In September 2012, it was announced that for the first time in history more students took the ACT than the SAT (and that trend continued in 2013). A few months later in February, College Board President David Coleman announced that major changes would be coming to the SAT test. In February of 2014 he announced that that beginning in the **spring of 2016**, the SAT will return to its previous 1600-point scale, will have its essay portion made optional, and will drop some of the obscure vocabulary it has traditionally used. The math section also will narrow its focus, students will not be penalized for incorrect answers and reading comprehension questions will weave in information from other subjects, such as history and science. Upon announcing the changes, Coleman said they were the result of an attempt to level the playing field for students and better align the test with what students actually learn. He said both the SAT and the ACT have become "far too disconnected" from American schools.

So what does this mean?

It will be a game of wait-and-see when it comes to how effective the revamped SAT is in terms of predicting student success in college, but we do know the following about who the changes will affect:

- If students are currently in the class of 2017 or younger, the changes will affect them.
- Students can continue take the current SAT and/or ACT through January of 2016.
- Starting in March 2016, students will begin taking the Redesigned SAT aka *R-SAT*.
- Students could decide to take both the current SAT and the *R-SAT* as well as the ACT, but that's a lot of testing!
- Students will also be able to take the Redesigned PSAT (first time in October 2015).
- If you are in the classes of 2015 or 2016 now, the changes to the SAT DO NOT affect you. You can take the current SAT or ACT or both.
- If you are in the class of 2016, you can still take the current PSAT in October 2014 if you choose – especially if you plan to sit for the "old SAT" before the *R-SAT* goes live in March of 2016.

Important Note for current 10th grade students:

Although we haven't heard yet from colleges about how they will use test scores from the two different test formats – we know that they will have to allow a "grace period" where students can still submit scores from the "old SAT" if they believe it shows them in a better light. So, for members of the class of 2016 their appears to be no harm in sitting for both the old SAT and the new *R-SAT* to see which one they do better on.

Should we take the Optional Writing section?

The UC system has always required a live writing assessment as part of their admission process, and there is no reason to believe that will change. So, just as we have always advised students taking the ACT to register for their optional writing test – we are recommending that students do the same with the new optional writing portion of the *R-SAT*.

PRIMARY CHANGES AND IMPACTS IN THE *R-SAT*

Change	Impact
Fewer sections, but each section will be longer than on the current SAT. The longest one will be the Reading Test at 65 minutes.	Students who like working in uninterrupted, longer blocks of time will appreciate the change. Others, however, will need to learn how to stay focused over a longer period of time. This change aligns the SAT more with the format of the ACT.
Elimination of the penalty for wrong answers.	This is a win for students! They'll be able to guess without worrying about losing points if they're wrong.
Multiple-choice questions will have 4 answer choices instead of 5.	Another win for students. It takes less time to consider the answer choices and there's a higher probability of guessing correctly.
Charts and graphical elements throughout the Redesigned SAT, including the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Test.	Students will need to be comfortable deciphering information in non-textual formats.
Redesigned SAT will feature certain historical documents and speeches.	Students unfamiliar with these elements will require additional time to read and process the passages
The Redesigned SAT will provide multiple sub-scores within each test and across the entire exam.	The score reports will contain a lot of noise for students and may cause anxiety. Ultimately the 2 area scores (200-800) for Math and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing) and the composite score (sum of the area scores) are all that will matter to colleges.
Scoring scale goes back to 1600.	Students will be able to compare their scores to those of their parents.

MATH CHANGES AND IMPACTS

Change	Impact
Of the 2 math sections, students will be allowed to use calculators on only one.	Students will need to get comfortable doing calculations on their own, without a crutch. This may be a source of concern for some students, and this will make practice even more important.
More advanced math topics including trigonometry.	Math geeks will be psyched to see the higher level content that they're currently doing in school.
Questions will require multiple-steps to reach the correct answer. They will also require that students understand the fundamental math underlying the problems.	Math problems will take longer and students who have gaps in foundational knowledge will be at a disadvantage.

READING CHANGES AND IMPACTS

Change	Impact
Reading test will be a 65 minute long section.	None of the Critical Reading sections on the current SAT are longer than 25 minutes. It will be a challenge to simply stay alert for over an hour – maintaining focus and acuity will require a great deal of practice and determination.
Some passages will be made intentionally more complex by employing unfamiliar vocabulary, uncommon sentence structure and references to other texts.	Students who already struggle with Reading Comprehension will find the Redesigned SAT even more challenging and will need to determine which passage(s) and/or questions are worth investing their time.
Elimination of Sentence Completions.	Impact depends on how well a student did on this type of question.
Vocabulary words will be more familiar. However, students will need to know multiple meanings and not just primary definitions.	Not only will students need to study vocabulary, but they'll now also need to derive the correct meaning from context clues.

WRITING & LANGUAGE CHANGES AND IMPACTS

Change	Impact
The Writing & Language Test is 44 questions to be completed in 35 minutes – that's a serious time crunch.	Pacing is going to be of utmost importance and that requires a lot of purposeful practice.
Grammar is still tested, but in passage form.	Students will be required to read even more, which is both tiring and time consuming. Making sure they understand the rules that will be tested will be important.
Grammar will include punctuation.	Students will need to remember (or learn!) the rules of punctuation like commas, parentheses and dashes.

ESSAY CHANGES AND IMPACTS

Change	Impact
The essay will double in length to 50 minutes.	Stamina will be important. Students will already be tired by the time they get to the essay (3 hours of testing before essay), and they'll need to plow through another 50 minutes of work.
The essay will have a separate score that is not part of the composite score.	
The essay will be at the end.	
The essay passage is extremely long (650-750 words).	A larger portion of students' time will be spent reading and processing the passage before they even start writing the essay.
Task will be to explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience.	There is a reading comprehension component built into this exercise. In order to provide an analysis of the passage, rather than just an opinion of the conclusion, students will need to understand both what the author is saying and how he or she persuades tries to persuade the reader.
Essay will be optional.	Students will be tempted to skip it. However, if they do and then apply to a school that requires it, they'll have to retake the entire exam.

THE NEW *R-SAT* FORMAT

MATH	
Score	200-800
Total Time	80 minutes
Total Questions	57
Calculator Allowed Section	55 minutes, 37 questions 30 multiple-choice 5 grid-in (student produced response) 1 extended thought grid-in (worth 4 points)
No Calculator Allowed Section	25 minutes, 20 questions 15 multiple-choice 5 grid-in (student produced response)
Topics	Heart of Algebra: 21 questions (35%) Problem Solving & Data Analysis: 14 questions (28%) Passport to Advanced Math: 16 questions (27%) Additional Topics: 6 questions (10%)

EVIDENCE-BASED READING AND WRITING	
Score	200-800
Reading Test Time	65 minutes
Reading Test Total Questions	52 questions (all multiple-choice)
Reading Test Passages	4 single passages and 1 pair of passages 750 words each, some include graphics
Reading Test Content	Literature (1), History or Social Science (2) and Science (1)
Reading Test Questions	Words in context (vocabulary) Command of evidence (support your answer) Informational graphics Range of text complexity
Writing & Language Test Time	35 minutes
Writing & Language Test Total Questions	44 questions (all multiple-choice)
Writing & Language Test Passages	4 passages (11 questions per passage) 400-450 words each, some include graphics
Writing & Language Test Content	Careers History or Social Science Humanities Science
Writing & Language Test Questions	Words in context Command of evidence Informational graphics

ESSAY (Optional)	
Essay Time	50 minutes
Essay Passage	650-750 words General form of argument for a broad audience
Essay Task	Explain/Analyze how the author builds an argument.



The College Board is the company that administers all SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject & AP tests. Through this free website you can register for tests and release scores online. You can access the College board home page

at: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

► For more information on the new **R-SAT** go to the following link at the College Board website: <https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/redesign>

The Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT is aligned with the redesigned SAT and will launch in **October 2015**.

Like the SAT, the redesigned PSAT/NMSQT will measure the skills and knowledge that are essential for college readiness and success.

Taking the Current PSAT/NMSQT

The current PSAT/NMSQT continues to serve students in the high school class of 2016 and younger by:

- Helping them improve skills necessary for college success.
- Raising awareness about college planning and engaging them in the process.
- Supporting access to AP through AP Potential™.
- Providing educators with tools to monitor student performance and adjust curricula.
- Providing college planning resources such as Student Search Service® and My College QuickStart™.

In addition, the PSAT/NMSQT will continue to help students in the 11th grade prepare for the SAT and compete for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation in the fall.

The College Board is preparing concordance tables so students and educators will be able to relate scores on the current PSAT/NMSQT to scores on the redesigned PSAT/NMSQT.

About the Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT is an important part of the College Board's effort to deliver opportunity to all students. The redesigned exam will:

- Support college readiness and success for all students, with a clear focus on the skills and knowledge that matter most for college success.
- Encourage students to take full advantage of the opportunities they've earned through their hard work.

Fewer than half of the students who take the SAT are college ready. The redesigned PSAT/NMSQT will provide educators with an early opportunity to:

- Measure and follow student performance.
- Pinpoint areas for development.
- Prepare students for the redesigned SAT.

Overview Comparison: Current and Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT:

This high-level comparison between the current and redesigned PSAT/NMSQT highlights major design features of the two exams. The first table provides a comparison of the major features, the second table provides a comparison by test, and the third table compares the score components. It is important to note that while the information in these tables represents our best understanding of the nature and features of the redesign, some specific elements, such as timing, length, and reported scores, are subject to revision based on ongoing research. For even more information about the Redesigned PSAT go to: https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/redesigned-psat-nmsqt?ep_ch=PR&ep_mid=10940153&ep_rid=38378130

Category	Current PSAT/NMSQT	Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT
Total Testing Time* *Subject to research	2 hours and 10 minutes	2 hours and 45 minutes
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Reading Writing Mathematics 	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Test Writing and Language Test Math
Important Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on general reasoning skills Emphasis on vocabulary, often in limited contexts Complex scoring (a point for a correct answer and a deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued emphasis on reasoning alongside a clearer, stronger focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings most important for college and career readiness and success Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact Rights-only scoring (a point for a correct answer but no deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores)
Score Reporting* *Subject to research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale ranging from 60 to 240 Scale ranging from 20 to 80 for Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing 	Some scores will be reported on the same scale used for the SAT: this scale ranges from 400 to 1600 for the composite score, 200-800 for two area scores, and 10-40 for test scores
Subscore Reporting	None	Subscores for every test, providing added insight for students, parents, educators, and counselors

Comparison of Test Length and Timing: Current and Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT

Current PSAT/NMSQT			Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT		
Component	Time Allotted (min.)	# of Questions/ Tasks	Component	Time Allotted (min.)	# of Questions/ Tasks
Critical Reading	50	48	Reading	60	47
Writing	30	39	Writing and Language	35	44
Mathematics	50	38	Math	70	47
Total	130	125	Total	165	138

Comparison of Score Components: Current and Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT

Component	Current PSAT/NMSQT	Redesigned PSAT/NMSQT
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Composite Score	N/A	1
Area Scores	N/A	2
Test Scores	3	3
Cross-Test Scores	N/A	2
Subscores	N/A	7