Knowledge Skills Behaviors Awareness

Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT®:

A Step to the Future

PSAT/NMSQT®

A Brief Overview of the Presentation

- What is the PSAT/NMSQT?
- Skills Tested on the PSAT/NMSQT
- Sample PSAT/NMSQT Questions
- Test Preparation Strategies

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What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

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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 and practice for the SAT
- Approximately 3.5 million students participate each year (44% eleventh-graders and 56% tenth-graders or younger)

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Benefits of the PSAT/NMSQT®

- Preparation for the SAT®
- Scholarship and recognition opportunities (11th grade)
- 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)

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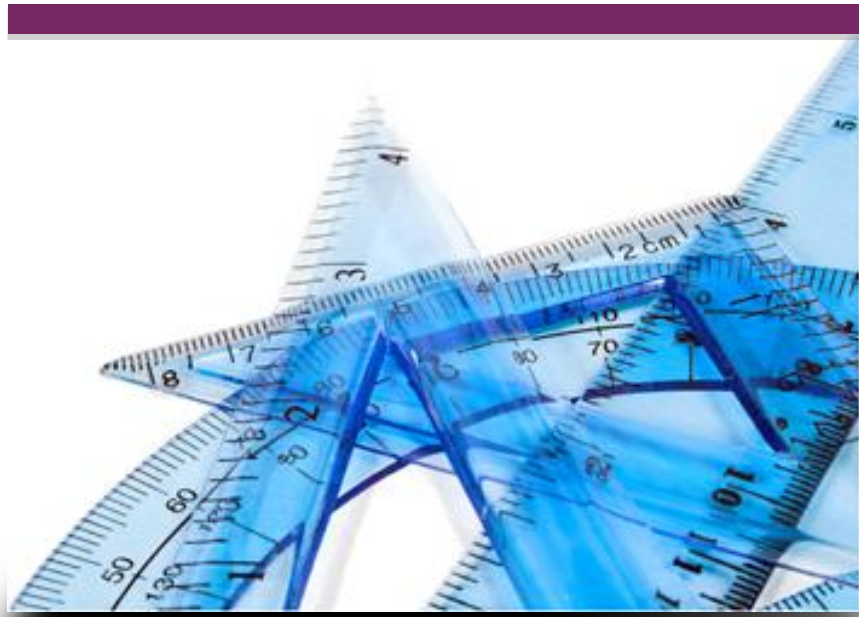
Mathematics Questions

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”)

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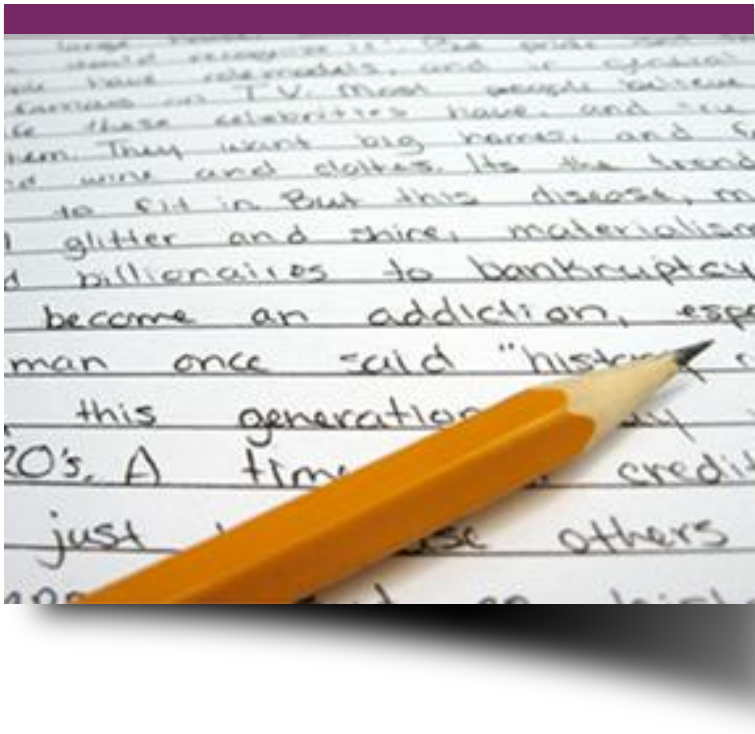
Writing Skills Questions

Focus on editing, grammar, usage, and organization.



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

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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.

Level of Difficulty:

The PSAT/NMSQT does not have 11th grade-level math questions.

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Sample Questions

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Critical Reading: Sentence Completions

Roger said the report was significant; Heather contradicted him, saying that all the information presented was _____ .

(A) contemporary
(B) scintillating
(C) objective
(D) irrevocable
(E) immaterial

- Because Heather is contradicting Roger, the correct response is the word that is most nearly the opposite of “significant.”
- Choice (E) is correct.
- “Immaterial” means inconsequential or irrelevant.
- Information that is immaterial is by definition not significant.

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Critical Reading: Passage-Based Questions

Passage Excerpt:
After I left the room, I began to sift my impressions. Only the day before, an acquaintance had warned me to watch carefully for sleight-of-hand tricks, especially as the man had earlier been a stage conjuror.

Question: The "acquaintance" mentioned in line 2 can best be described as a

(A) skeptic
(B) hypocrite
(C) hoaxer
(D) confidant
(E) mystic

- The acquaintance mentioned in line 2 warns the author to "watch carefully for sleight-of-hand tricks."
- Choice (A) is correct.
- In warning the author to watch out for tricks, the acquaintance is showing that he is skeptical about the telepathist's supposed powers.

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Math Section: Multiple Choice

If $ax + bx = 36$, what is the value of x when $a + b = 12$?

(A) 3
(B) 6
(C) 12
(D) 24
(E) 48

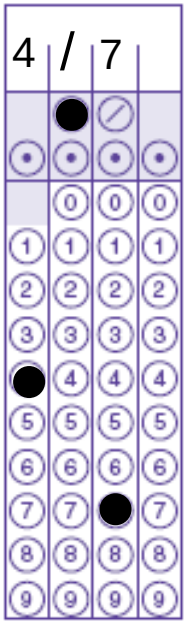
The expression $ax + bx$ is equivalent to $(a + b)\,x$, so the equation $ax + bx = 36$ is equivalent to $(a + b)\,x = 36$.

When $a + b = 12$, the equation becomes $12x = 36$, which can be solved to get $x = 3$.

Math Section: Student-Produced Response

Know the Student-Produced Response Directions! The correct answer must be ***gridded*** correctly to receive credit. What is written in the boxes is not scored.

If $\frac{h}{4} + \frac{1}{3} = \frac{5h}{6}$, then what is the value of h?



- Multiply each member of the equation by 12 (the common denominator) to get $3h + 4 = 10h$
- Subtract 3h from both sides to get $7h = 4$
- Divide by 7
- $h = 4/7$

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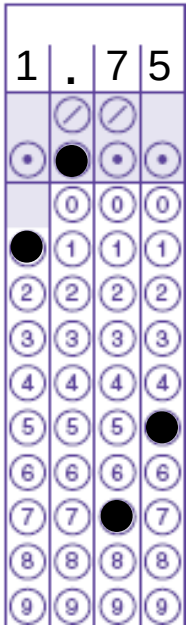
$1.75



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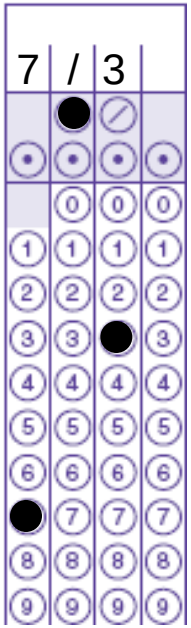

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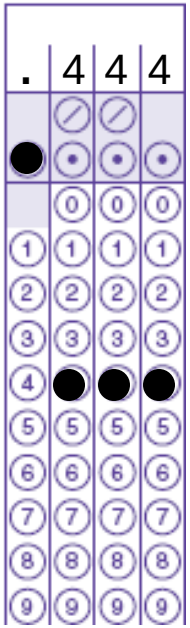

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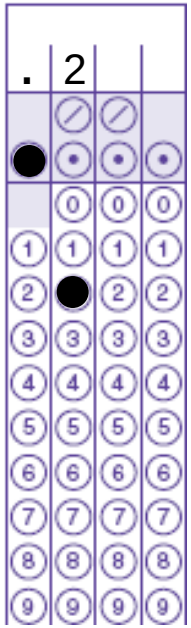

Student-Produced Responses – Sample Grids

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.

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Writing Skills Section: Improving Sentences

A few barges still move oil up to Hartford, <u>but in the old days they had more traffic then</u>.

(A) but in the old days they had more traffic then

(B) but in the old days traffic was heavier

(C) but in the old days they had a lot more

(D) whereas the traffic was a lot more in the old days

(E) whereas then there was more traffic in the old days

(Note: In this question type, the first choice (A) always repeats the underlined phrase exactly, indicating that there should be no change.)

Choice (B) is correct. It avoids the errors of the original by eliminating both the unnecessary adverb, “then,” and the vague pronoun, “they.”

Writing Skills Section: Identifying Sentence Errors

The electronic computer is a technological triumph that scientists have developed,

mastered (A), and then put it (B) to constantly (C) increasing (D) use. No Error. (E)

The error in this sentence occurs at (B), where an unnecessary pronoun is used.

The object of the verb “have . . . put” (like the object of the verbs “have developed” and “have . . . Mastered”) is the relative pronoun “that,” which refers to “technological triumph.”

The pronoun “it” is therefore unnecessarily inserted after “put.”

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Writing Skills Section: Improving Sentences

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Writing Skills Section: Improving Paragraphs

(1) The last century was a time of great technological progress. **(2)** Life is more convenient, comfortable, and efficient today than ever before. **(3)** Yet this has created new concerns.

Which of the following versions of sentence 3 (reproduced below) is most effective?

Yet this has created new concerns.

(A) Although this has created new concerns.

(B) Yet this progress has created new concerns.

(C) Yet these have created new concerns.

(D) Yet this has created new concerns to worry about.

(E) New concerns have been created.

Choice (B) is correct. The vague pronoun "this" is replaced by "this progress," which clearly refers to the progress mentioned in sentence 1.

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Test Preparation Strategies

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Know How the PSAT/NMSQT Is Scored

Multiple-choice questions:

- 1 point for each correct
- ¼ point deducted for each incorrect

Math grid-ins:

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

0 points for omitted questions

Scale:

- 20-80 for each test section

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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!

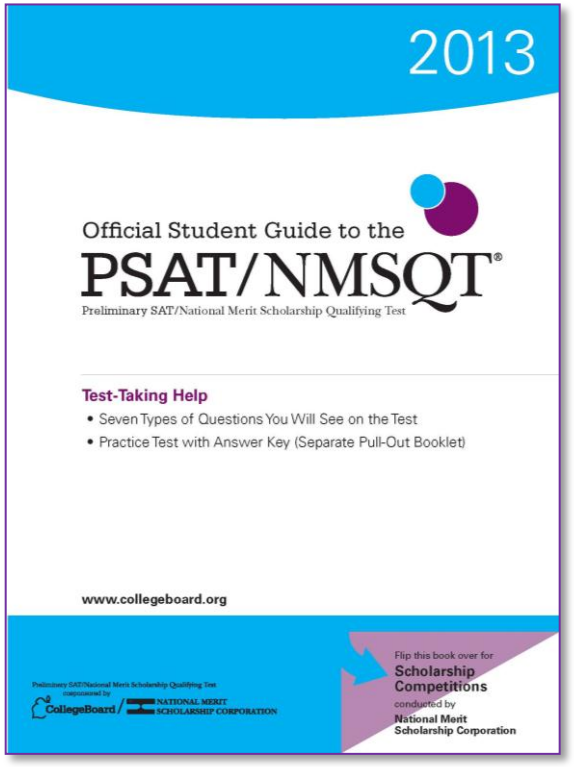
- Continuous reading improves vocabulary and develops essential skills.
- Read more books than just those required for class.

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.



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Test Preparation: Test Readiness Strategies

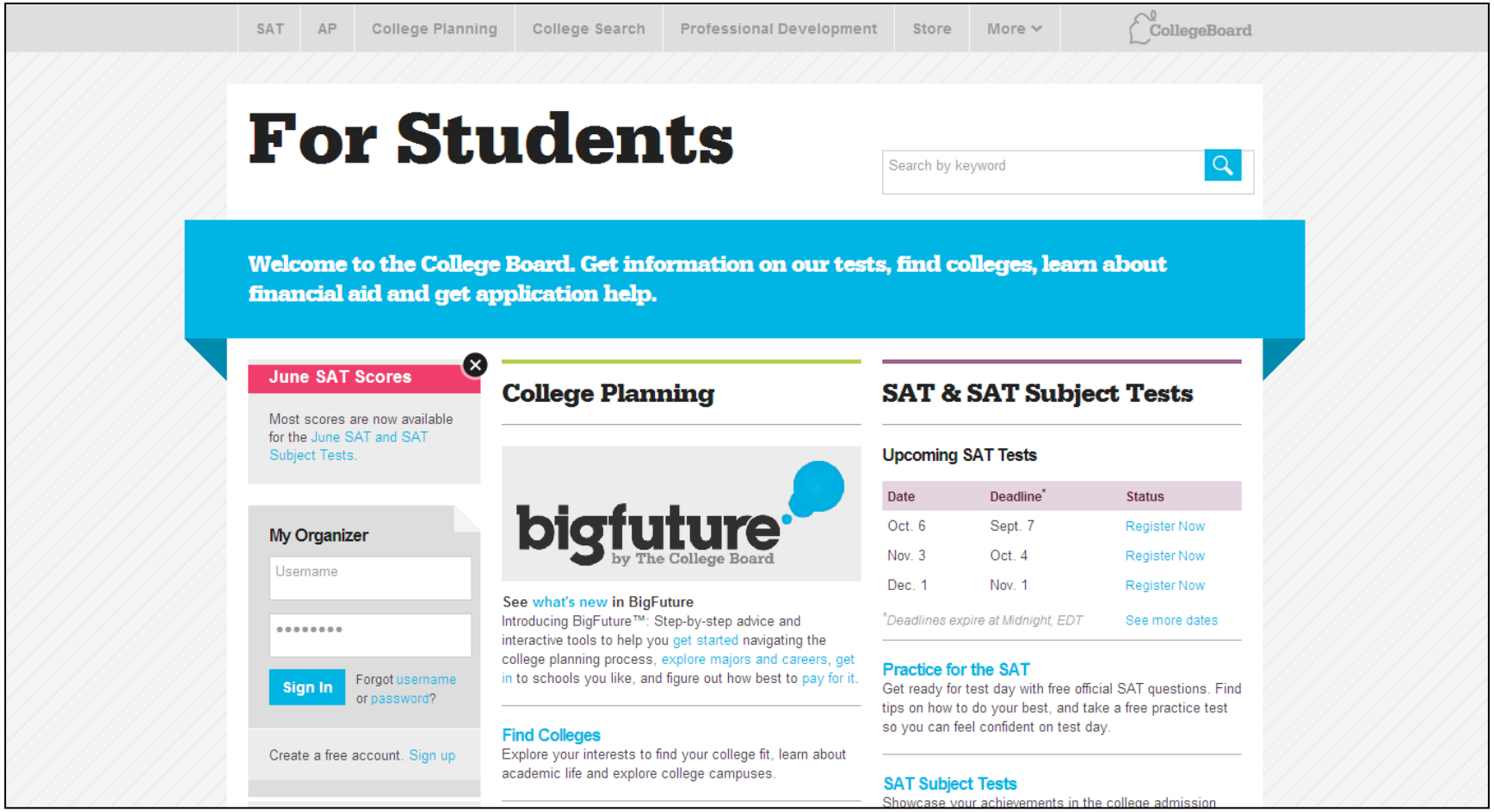
When you sit down to take the test:

- 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.

Visit collegeboard.org



Take the PSAT/NMSQT

How to Sign Up: _____

Test Day/Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Bring:

- Two #2 Pencils
- Calculator (optional)

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