

The Four Types of College Entrance Exams

PRE-ACT (American College Testing Program)

This **paper** test is given in November to high school **sophomores**. The format is similar to the ACT, although it is slightly shorter in length for the timed portion. There is a brief career assessment that is also administered. It can be a useful indicator of ACT scores and as test practice. This test is available only in the paper format for weekend administration.

Why take the PreACT? This is the first opportunity students have to take a test of this nature. Students can experience what it is like to come in on a Saturday morning, take a test that assesses understanding in English, math, reading and science reasoning, under strict timing conditions. Students will also receive a detailed report in a few weeks with their scores, the answers they provided as well as the correct answers and their test booklet so they can review what worked and where they might need more work. This test is a low stakes test that can help prepare students to take higher stakes tests like the ACT and SAT in spring of their junior year. Scoring mirrors the ACT so students know where they can improve.

Digital PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (College Board Program)

This test is given on a national test day in **October** to high school **juniors**. It is a similar format as the SAT. It can be useful as an indicator of SAT scores and as test practice. It is the basis of some merit scholarships, including National Merit. This test is only available in the digital format.

Digital SAT (College Board Test Program)

The SAT is a college entrance exam for which students will receive two scores, a reading/writing score and a math score for a combined total of 400 – 1600. The reading/writing section includes documents from various disciplines including science and social studies and students are asked to define vocabulary that is used commonly in college. The math questions focus on linear equations, complex equations and functions, ratios, percentages and proportional reasoning. Students are allowed to use their own calculators on the math sections (which we recommend) or there is a calculator built into the program. Some math questions require a student produced response (there are not multiple choice answers). Students will be provided scrap paper which must be turned in at the end of testing. Students' scores will be based on the questions they answer correctly only. There are several test dates throughout the school year. We recommend that students take this test for the first time in **spring of their junior year (May or June)**. If students wish to repeat this test in their senior year, the recommended test dates are August, October or November. This test is only available in the digital format.

ACT – Assessment – (American College Testing Program)

The ACT is a college entrance exam that consists of four primary test areas: English, which measures standard written English and rhetorical skills, Mathematics, which measures math typically taken up to the beginning of twelfth grade, Reading, which measures overall reading comprehension & Science Reasoning, which measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences. An optional essay component is also available. Colleges may require the optional essay component. Beginning fall of 2025, the science section will be optional as well. Check with your school counselor for additional information. We recommend that students take this test for the first time in **spring of their junior year (April or June)**. If students wish to repeat this test in the senior year, the recommended test dates are September or October.