

# Prepare for the 2018 PSAT/NMSQT®

PSAT/NMSQT®

CollegeBoard / NATIONAL MERIT  
SCHOLARSHIP CORPORATION



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  - When Is the 2018 PSAT/NMSQT?
  - Skills Tested on the PSAT/NMSQT
  - How to Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT
  - Sample PSAT/NMSQT Questions
  - Resources

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# What Is the PSAT/NMSQT?

A blue-tinted photograph of four students jumping over a wooden fence in a grassy field. The students are wearing backpacks and have their arms raised in the air, suggesting a moment of triumph or joy. The background shows rolling hills under a clear sky.

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# Some Key Facts

**3.8+ million**

students take the PSAT/NMSQT each year to get feedback on their skills and practice for the SAT.

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Scores for the SAT<sup>®</sup> Suite of Assessments (SAT, PSAT/NMSQT<sup>®</sup>, PSAT<sup>™</sup> 10, and PSAT<sup>™</sup> 8/9) are reported on a common vertical scale, allowing **educators to measure students progress**

- Propels students toward **college and career readiness**
- Is cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation
- Serves as an entry point to over \$240 million in **scholarship dollars**

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# What to know about the PSAT/NMSQT



Test length: 2 hours 45 minutes



No penalty for guessing or blank responses, *also known as “rights-only scoring”*



Personalized SAT practice through Khan Academy<sup>®</sup> with students' own PSAT/NMSQT scores



Scale ranges for the scores are 320–1520 for the total score

# Benefits of the PSAT/NMSQT



Personalized SAT practice on Khan Academy based on students' PSAT/NMSQT answers



Aligned to the SAT



Increased access to additional scholarship providers



Online college and career planning tools



Admission and financial aid information from colleges



Majors and career exploration with College Board and Roadtrip Nation

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# PSAT/NMSQT 2018 Test Dates

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**Primary**  
Test Date

**OCT**  
**10**

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# Skills Tested on the PSAT/NMSQT

A blue-tinted photograph of three students working together on a project. They are focused on their work, with one student in the foreground using a tool on a small electronic device. The background shows other students, slightly out of focus, also engaged in their work.

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# Skills Tested



## Reading Test



## Writing and Language Test



## Math Test

- Each test assesses the academic skills that students have developed over the years, primarily through their coursework.
- These skills are considered essential for success in high school, college, and career.

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# Reading Test



- 
- 5 Passages
  - 47 Passage-Based Questions;  
60 minutes

## Quick Facts

- All questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with other passages or informational graphics such as charts, graphs, and tables.
- No mathematical computation is required.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.

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# Reading Test

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## What to Expect

In the Reading Test, students will encounter questions like those asked in a lively, thoughtful, evidence-based discussion.



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# Writing and Language Test

- 
- 4 Passages
  - 44 Passage-Based Questions; 35 minutes



## Quick Facts

- All questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with informational graphics such as charts, graphs, and tables.
- No mathematical computation is required.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.

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# Writing and Language Test

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## What to Expect

The Writing and Language Test puts students in the active role of an editor who is improving a written passage. Most questions ask students to decide which, if any, of the three alternatives to an underlined part of a passage most improves it.



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# Math Test

- 2 Test Sections; 70 minutes
- 48 Questions  
(40 multiple choice, 8 grid-ins)



## Quick Facts

- Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some will be student-produced responses (grid-ins).
- The Math Test is divided into two portions: Math Test – Calculator and Math Test – No Calculator.
- Some parts of the test will present students with a scenario and then ask several questions about it.

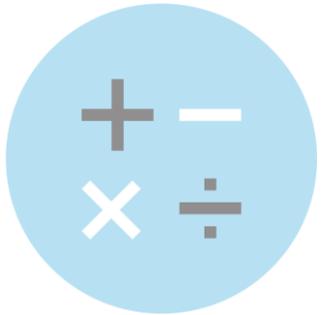
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# Math Test

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## What to Expect

The Math Test focuses on the math that matters most for college and career readiness. To succeed on the Math Test, students will need to demonstrate mathematical practices, such as problem solving and using appropriate tools strategically.



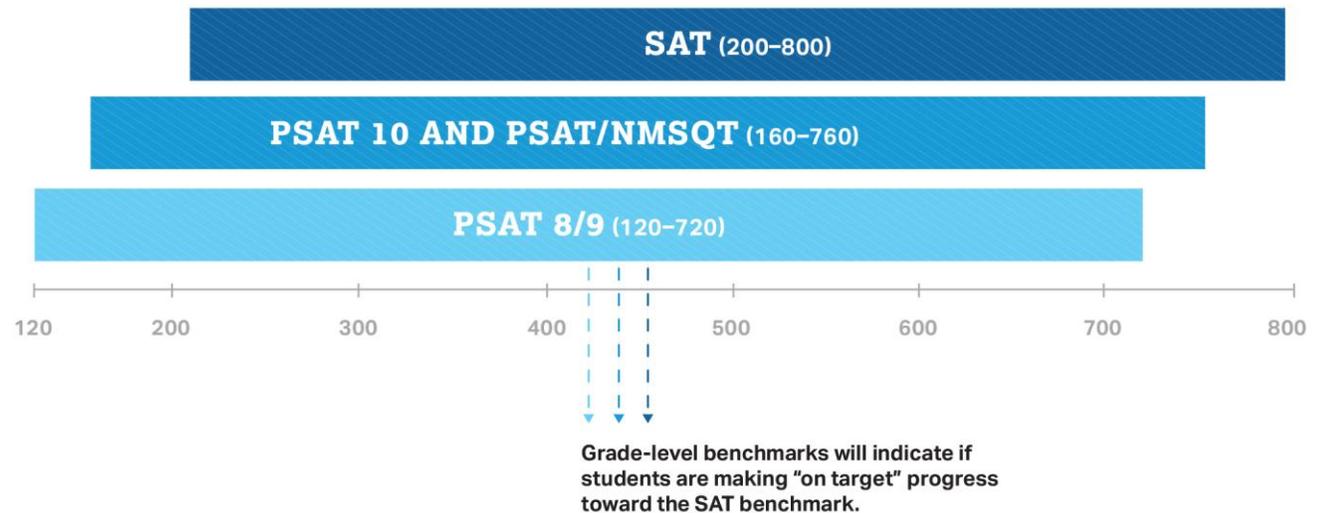
# How Does the PSAT/NMSQT Connect to the SAT?

## Content and Domain Alignment

All tests in the SAT Suite of Assessments (SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9) are aligned to the same research backbone and focus on the same domain of knowledge and skills.

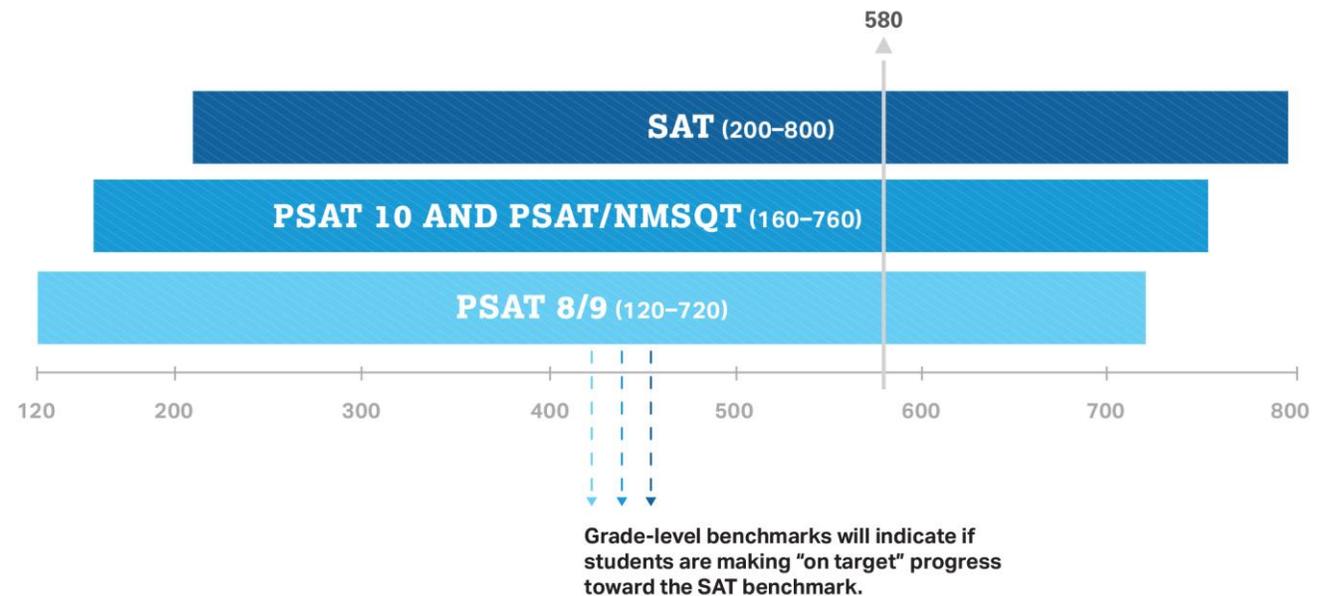
## Scoring

All tests in the SAT Suite of Assessments are on a common score scale that provides consistent feedback, enabling teachers to adjust instruction to better support students who are ahead or behind.



# How Does the PSAT/NMSQT Connect to the SAT?

That means the score students get on the PSAT/NMSQT is the same score they would have gotten on the SAT if they'd taken it on the same day.



# How Does the PSAT/NMSQT Compare to the SAT?

## PSAT/NMSQT

## SAT

2 hours  
45 minutes



Time

3 hours  
50 minutes

X



Essay

Optional

160—760



Section Score  
Range

200—800

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# How to Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT

The background of the slide features a photograph of three students walking in a hallway. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The students are walking from left to right. The student in the middle is looking towards the student on the right. The student on the right is looking forward. The student on the left is partially obscured and looking back over their shoulder.

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# Know How the PSAT/NMSQT Is Scored

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## Rights-Only Scoring

- 1 point for each correct answer
- 0 points deducted for each incorrect or blank question

## Math Grid-ins

- You can enter answers as (reduced) fractions or decimals.
- If rounding a decimal, make sure to use every box.

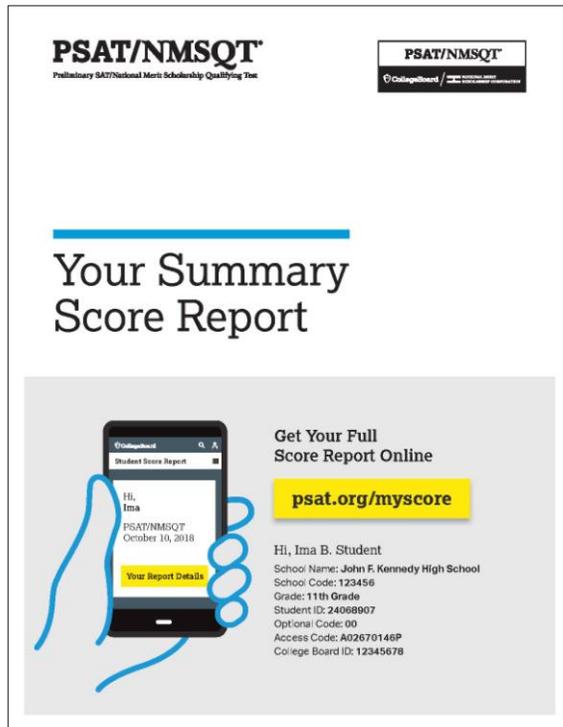
## Scale

- 160–760 for each test section
- 320–1520 for the total score

# Personalized Skills Information

## The PSAT/NMSQT Score Report

- Contains information to help students improve **academic skills**.
- **Lists skills** that students have the best chance of improving with additional work.
- Connects to **personalized practice** recommendations on **Khan Academy**.



The image shows a sample of a PSAT/NMSQT score report summary page. At the top left is the PSAT/NMSQT logo with the tagline 'Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test'. At the top right is a smaller PSAT/NMSQT logo with 'CollegeBoard' and 'www.collegeboard.com' below it. The main heading is 'Your Summary Score Report'. Below this is a graphic of a hand holding a smartphone displaying a 'Student Score Report' with a yellow 'Your Report Details' button. To the right of the phone is the text 'Get Your Full Score Report Online' and a yellow button with the URL 'psat.org/myscore'. Below the phone, the report content is displayed: 'Hi, Ima B. Student', 'School Name: John F. Kennedy High School', 'School Code: 123456', 'Grade: 11th Grade', 'Student ID: 24088907', 'Optional Code: 00', 'Access Code: A02670146P', and 'College Board ID: 12345678'.

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# Preparation Starts in School

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## Read

Continuous reading improves vocabulary and develops essential skills.

## Take Challenging Courses

This will help students to develop and strengthen their critical thinking skills.

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# Sample PSAT/NMSQT Questions

A young man with dark, wavy hair is sitting at a desk in a room. He is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. In front of him is a laptop. The room has a bed with a striped blanket on the left, a desk with a lamp and some papers in the background, and a window with curtains on the right. The entire image has a blue tint.

# Reading Test

## Passage-Based Questions

### Passage Excerpt:

[. . .] The coming decades will likely see more intense clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity in a smaller number of bigger cities and city-regions. Some regions could end up bloated beyond the capacity of their infrastructure, while others struggle, their promise stymied by inadequate human or other resources.

*Adapted from Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*.  
© 2010 by Richard Florida.*

As used in line 2, “intense” most nearly means

- (A) emotional.
- (B) concentrated.
- (C) brilliant.
- (D) determined.



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# Reading Test

## Passage-Based Questions



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*Adapted from Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*.  
© 2010 by Richard Florida.*

As used in line 2, “intense” most nearly means

- (A) emotional.
- (B) concentrated.**
- (C) brilliant.
- (D) determined.

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# Reading Test

## Passage-Based Questions

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This question asks students to determine word meaning within a social science context. While students may frequently use the word “intense” to describe personalities or emotions, the context of this sentence requires students to recognize that “intense” can also mean “concentrated.” The best answer here is choice B because the context makes clear that the clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity is expected to be denser, or more concentrated in a smaller number of bigger cities and city-regions, over the coming decades. In these ways, the question draws students back to the text rather than rewarding only isolated vocabulary knowledge.



# Writing and Language Test

## Passage-Based Questions



## Passage Excerpt:

[. . .] As Kingman developed as a painter, his works were often compared to paintings by Chinese landscape artists dating back to CE 960, a time when a strong tradition of landscape painting emerged in Chinese art. Kingman, however, **5** vacated from that tradition in a number of ways, most notably in that he chose to focus not on natural landscapes, such as mountains and rivers, but on cities. [. . .]

5

- (A) NO CHANGE
- (B) evacuated
- (C) departed
- (D) retired

# Writing and Language Test

## Passage-Based Questions



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- (A) NO CHANGE
- (B) evacuated
- (C) departed**
- (D) retired

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# Writing and Language Test

## Passage-Based Questions

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This question asks students to determine which word makes the most sense in the context of a sentence. "**Departed**" is the most contextually appropriate way to indicate that Kingman had deviated from the tradition of Chinese landscape painting in a number of ways. In this sort of question, students must demonstrate not only facility with language in general but also skill in using language in particular contexts to convey meaning clearly and precisely.

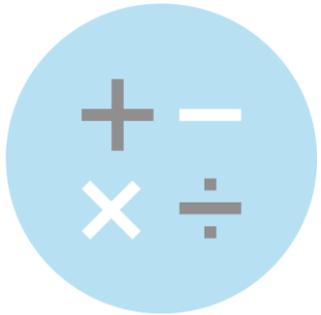


# Math Test

**Calculator: Permitted**

Aaron is staying at a hotel that charges \$99.95 per night plus tax for a room. A tax of 8% is applied to the room rate, and an additional one-time untaxed fee of \$5.00 is charged by the hotel. Which of the following represents Aaron's total charge, in dollars, for staying  $x$  nights?

- (A)  $(99.95 + 0.08x) + 5$
- (B)  $1.08(99.95x) + 5$
- (C)  $1.08(99.95x + 5)$
- (D)  $1.08(99.95 + 5)x$



# Math Test

**Calculator: Permitted**

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**(B)  $1.08(99.95x) + 5$**

(C)  $1.08(99.95x + 5)$

(D)  $1.08(99.95 + 5)x$



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# Math Test

**Calculator: Permitted**

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This problem asks students to interpret a situation and formulate a linear expression that represents the situation mathematically. The construction of mathematical models that represent real-world scenarios is a critical skill.

The total charge is the room rate, the 8% tax on the room rate, and a fixed fee. If Aaron stayed  $x$  nights, then the total charge is  $99.95x + (0.08 \times 99.95x) + 5$ , which can be rewritten as  $1.08(99.95x) + 5$ .



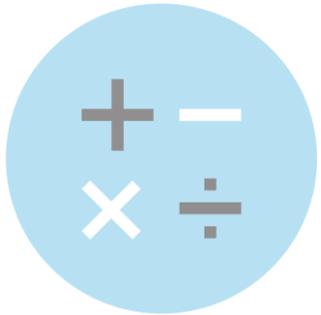
# Math Test

Calculator: Not Permitted

In this equation, what is the value of  $k$ ?

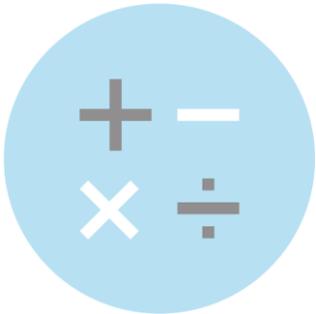
$$\frac{5(k+2)-7}{6} = \frac{13-(4-k)}{9}$$

- (A)  $\frac{9}{7}$
- (B)  $\frac{9}{13}$
- (C)  $\frac{33}{17}$
- (D)  $\frac{33}{13}$



# Math Test

Calculator: Not Permitted



In this equation, what is the value of  $k$ ?

$$\frac{5(k+2)-7}{6} = \frac{13-(4-k)}{9}$$

In this problem, students will demonstrate their fluency in solving equations in one variable.

Choice B is correct. Simplifying the numerators yields

$$\frac{5k+3}{6} = \frac{9+k}{9}$$

and cross-multiplication gives  $45k + 27 = 54 + 6k$ .

Solving for  $k$  yields  $k = \frac{9}{13}$

(A)  $\frac{9}{7}$

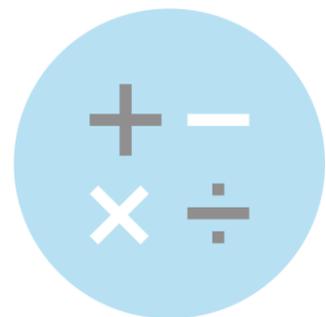
**(B)  $\frac{9}{13}$**

(C)  $\frac{33}{17}$

(D)  $\frac{33}{13}$

# Math Section

## Student-Produced Responses



### Sample Grids

Instead of choosing a correct answer from a list of options, students will need to solve problems and enter their answers in the grids provided on the answer sheet.

Answer:  $\frac{7}{12}$

Write answer in boxes. →

	7	/	1	2
○	●	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○
①	①	○	①	○
②	②	②	○	○
③	③	③	③	○
④	④	④	④	○
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	○
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	○
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	○
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	○
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	○

← Fraction line

Grid in result. {

Answer: 2.5

	2	.	5
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
①	○	①	①
②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	○
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

← Decimal point

Acceptable ways to grid  $\frac{2}{3}$  are:

	2	/	3
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
①	①	①	①
②	○	②	②
③	③	③	○
④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

	.	6	6	6
○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○
①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	○	○	○	○
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

	.	6	6	7
○	○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○	○
①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	○	○	○	○
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	○
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

Answer: 201– either position is correct

	2	0	1
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
①	①	①	○
②	○	②	②
③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④

	2	0	1
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
①	①	○	①
②	○	②	②
③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④

**NOTE:** You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns you don't need to use should be left blank.

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# Math Section

## Math Test – Calculator



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## Students: Know Your Calculator

- A scientific or graphing calculator is recommended.
- Students should bring a familiar calculator. Test day is not the time to figure out how to use a new calculator.

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# Math Section

## Math Test – Calculator



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## Additional Calculator Tips for Students

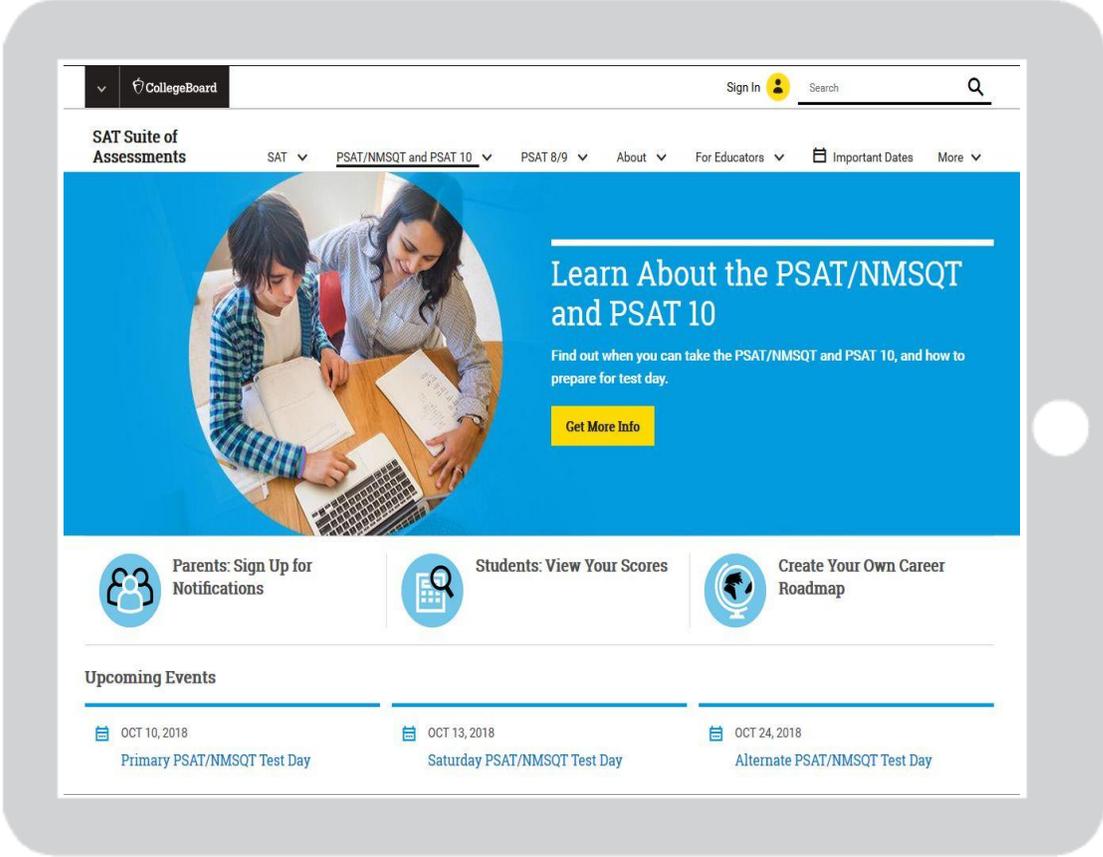
- Don't try to use the calculator on every question—no question requires one.
- Decide how to solve each problem; then decide whether to use a calculator.
- Make sure your calculator is in good working order and that batteries are fresh.
- Students will not be permitted to use laptops or other computers, tablets, cell phones, or smartphones, etc. Please reference the student guide for a complete list.

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# Resources



# Resources

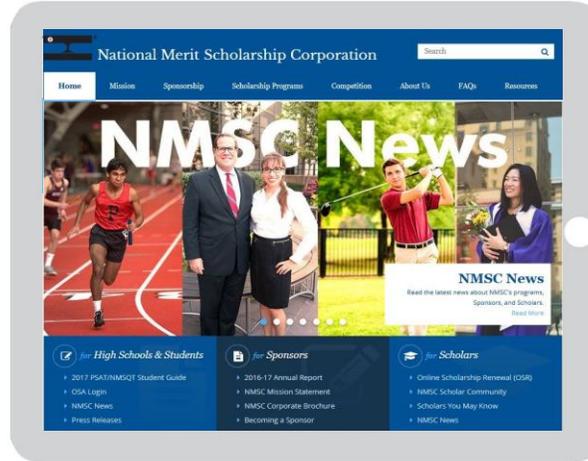


The screenshot displays the CollegeBoard website's 'SAT Suite of Assessments' page. The navigation bar includes 'SAT', 'PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10', 'PSAT 8/9', 'About', 'For Educators', 'Important Dates', and 'More'. The main content area features a blue banner with a circular image of a student and a teacher reviewing documents. The banner text reads: 'Learn About the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10' and 'Find out when you can take the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10, and how to prepare for test day.' A yellow 'Get More Info' button is positioned below the text. Below the banner are three action buttons: 'Parents: Sign Up for Notifications' (with a family icon), 'Students: View Your Scores' (with a magnifying glass icon), and 'Create Your Own Career Roadmap' (with a globe icon). The 'Upcoming Events' section lists three dates: 'OCT 10, 2018 Primary PSAT/NMSQT Test Day', 'OCT 13, 2018 Saturday PSAT/NMSQT Test Day', and 'OCT 24, 2018 Alternate PSAT/NMSQT Test Day'.

For general information about the PSAT/NMSQT, please visit:

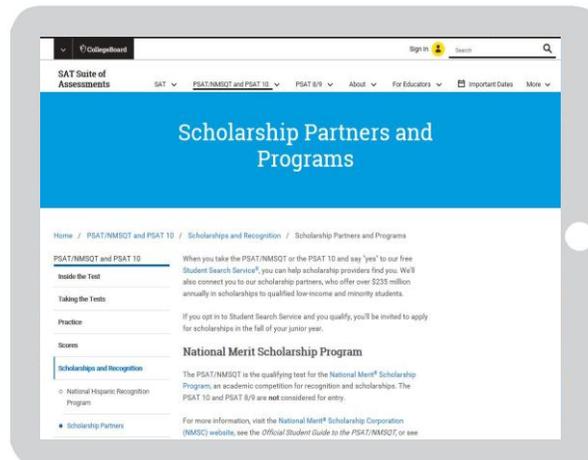
[collegeboard.org/psat](https://collegeboard.org/psat)

# Resources



To find out more about National Merit Scholarship Corporation and its scholarships, visit:

[nationalmerit.org](http://nationalmerit.org)



To find out more about PSAT-related scholarships, visit:

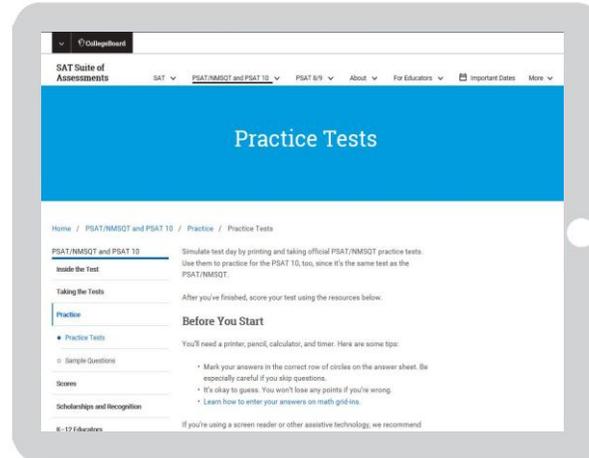
[psat.org/scholarships](http://psat.org/scholarships)

# Resources



For personalized resources aligned to the SAT Suite of Assessments (including the PSAT/NMSQT), please visit:

[satpractice.org](https://satpractice.org)



Take the practice test in the *PSAT/NMSQT Student Guide*, available through your counselor or at:

[collegeboard.org/psatpractice](https://collegeboard.org/psatpractice)

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# Good luck!

**PSAT/NMSQT**

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