

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

What are they?

Why are they important?

How can students prepare for them?

WHAT ARE COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS?

- Standardized tests that measure the same thing in the same way for everyone who takes it.
- Most, but not all, 4-year colleges require scores from one or more standardized test in order to be considered for admission.
- Some 2-year colleges and vocational schools will use these standardized tests for placement purposes rather than as an admission requirement.
- **Most colleges rely on standardized tests to determine how ready students are for college-level work.**

WHY ARE THESE TESTS IMPORTANT?

- Scores are one indication of student's college readiness, i.e. provide insight into how successful students will be in college.
- Colleges use scores to determine whether students should be admitted.
- Scores are often considered for merit-based scholarship opportunities.



TYPES OF COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

PSAT: a practice test for the SAT. At CKHS, the PSAT is available for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students.

PreACT: a practice test for the ACT. This test is not currently offered at CKHS.

SAT: assesses what students learn in high school and what students need to succeed in college. Test content includes: Reading, Writing/Language, Math, and Optional Essay.

SAT Subject Tests: specific subject-level tests in science, math, social studies, and foreign languages required by some colleges for admission.

ACT: an achievement test focusing on the application of skills learned in high school. Test content includes: English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and Optional Enhanced Writing Test.

PSAT 8/9 AND PSAT/NMSQT

• PSAT 8/9

- Administered to current 9th grade students (October 9th, 2018)
- Provides a baseline idea about a student's readiness for college.
- Offers exposure to these types of tests and a chance to practice.

• PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

- Offered to current 10th and 11th grade students (October 10th, 2018)
- Provides practice for the SAT and a check-in on student progress
- Pinpoints areas to improve readiness and offers ideas for further preparation
- Some 11th grade students will qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program based on their scores (less than 1% of all students who take the test.)



WHAT'S ON THE PSAT?

- Measures what students learn in high school and what they need to succeed in college.
- **Reading:** involves taking in, thinking about, and using information; multiple choice and based on reading passages and informational graphics. Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested and no math is required.
- **Writing and Language:** involves reading, finding mistakes and weaknesses in writing and fixing them; multiple choice and based on reading passages and informational graphics. Prior topic knowledge not tested and no math is required.
- **Math:** questions designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling students will do in college math, science, and social studies. Real world math problems that students may see in future jobs or their personal life. Includes two sections, one that allows calculators and one that does not. Multiple choice and grid-in questions.

SAT



- Measures what students learn in high school and what students need to succeed in college.
- Test sections include Reading, Math, Writing & Language, plus an optional essay.
- SAT Essay Test: Students read a passage and explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience. Students must support their explanation with evidence from the passage. The essay is optional starting in March 2016. Students should check college admission requirements carefully to determine if they require the essay.
 - NOTE: some schools will use the writing score for placement or to award credit.
- Used as one piece of information in the admissions process, seen as one predictor of future success.

ACT



- A curriculum- and standards-based test that assesses students' academic readiness for college.
- Test sections include: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning
- Optional Writing Test: measures skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. The test describes an issue and provides three perspectives on the issue. Students are asked to evaluate and analyze the perspectives, state and develop their own perspective, and explain the relationship between their perspective and those given. Students should check college admission requirements carefully to determine if they require the essay.
 - NOTE: some schools will use the writing score for placement or to award credit
- Used as one piece of information in the admissions process, seen as one predictor of future success.

SHOULD STUDENTS TAKE SAT OR ACT?



- With the introduction of the New SAT, the tests are more alike than they are different now. Both assess what is learned in high school, i.e. tied to high school curriculum.
- Math content tested is the same, i.e. Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II and some Precalc/Trig
- ACT emphasizes science more with a dedicated science reasoning section whereas SAT provides a “science insight” score and uses science-related passages in the three main test sections.
- Neither test penalizes for incorrect answers.
- Many colleges will Super Score, meaning they will take the best combination of scores between test dates. NOTE: they do not Super Score between SAT and ACT nor will they Super Score between the old and new versions of the SAT.
- It is typically in the student’s best interest to take one or both tests multiple times and let the college take the combination of scores that puts the student in the best position for admission. ALWAYS read admission information about how these tests are used carefully!
- A good plan is for students to take both tests at least once and then retake the test they felt more comfortable with or that produced the best score.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS



- 20 specific subject-level tests in: English, history, languages, mathematics, and science.
- Multiple-choice tests assessing knowledge of subjects on a high school level. The best way to prepare is through coursework taken in high school. Therefore, students should wait to take subject tests until they've covered the material in their coursework.
- Given 7 times each year on the same days when the SAT is scheduled, but not all 20 offered every available SAT date.
- Students may take up to 3 tests on a testing date and CANNOT take the SAT and Subject tests on the same day.
- Registration occurs online just like the SAT.
- Typically only required for highly selective schools or highly selective programs (be sure to check admission requirements for each university.)

WHEN DO STUDENTS TAKE THESE TESTS?

- PSAT 8/9 October or November of 9th grade (November 1st @ CKHS)
- PSAT/NMSQT October of 10th and 11th grade (October 11th @ CKHS)
- SAT is offered 7 times throughout the year between August and June
 - Next available test date is November 4th
- ACT is offered 7 times throughout the year between September and July
 - Next available tests dates are October 28th and December 9th

HOW DO STUDENTS REGISTER?



- PSAT 8/9 will be offered to ALL 9th graders this year at CKHS—no registration necessary
- PSAT/NMSQT (10th/11th): Students sign up with Mrs. Cenicola in the ASB office—cost is \$18 (Registration closes on October 6th)
- SAT: students must register online at www.collegeboard.org
 - The fee is currently \$46 without essay; \$60 with the essay
- ACT : students must register online at www.actstudent.org
 - The fee is currently \$46 without the writing section; \$62.50 with the writing section
- Registration deadlines are set about one month from the test date.

HOW DO STUDENTS PREPARE?



- The best place to start is the testing companies themselves. They offer free and lower cost test prep options including sample questions, practice tests, books for sale, online prep courses, etc.
 - www.actstudent.org/testprep
 - <http://satpractice.org>
- Test Prep Books—available for check out in the counseling office
- Classroom and online prep courses offered by local and national test prep companies
- **TIP:** Students are encouraged to take as many practice tests as possible to become familiar with the timing and types of questions asked.

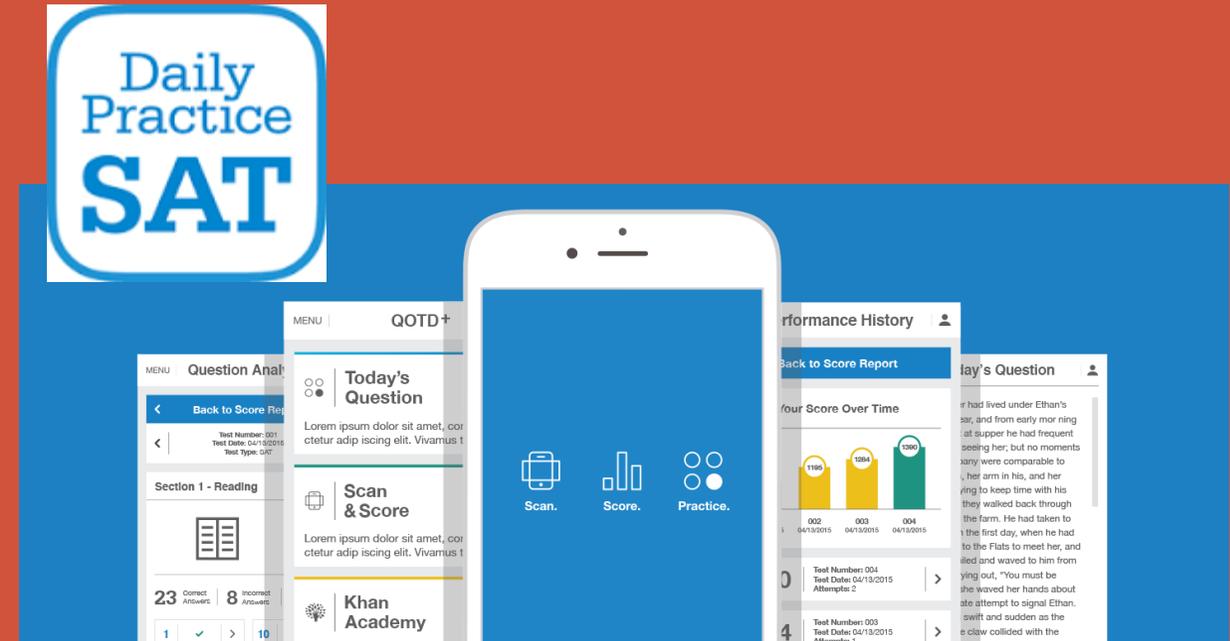
PRACTICE AND PREPARE FOR FREE!

- Students can go to www.satpractice.org to sign up for Official PSAT and SAT Practice from Khan Academy.
- Complete practice problems and questions and take diagnostic quizzes to help you identify where you need to strengthen your skills.
- Students get customized practice (based on your PSAT scores) when they link their College Board and Khan Academy accounts.



GET THE FREE SAT DAILY PRACTICE APP!

- Answer a question each day and get immediate feedback.
- Scan and Score full-length SAT or PSAT practice tests on paper and get an instant score!
- Scores are saved so that students can track their progress.



“TEST OPTIONAL”?



- A growing number of colleges have “test optional” or “test neutral” admissions policies.
- At test optional schools, students can choose whether they want to send standardized test scores as part of their application.
- Test optional and test neutral policies differ from school to school. Be sure to read all information provided about how standardized tests are used in the admission process at schools of interest.
- **Fair Test: The National Center for Fair and Open Testing**
www.FairTest.org
 - Maintains a list of over 800 four-year colleges and universities that do not use the SAT or ACT to admit substantial numbers of bachelor degree applicants.

WHAT ABOUT TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS?

- Students with a documented disability must apply for accommodations.
- The counseling office will help students submit the application, but ultimately has no control over approval of accommodations requested. Those are College Board and ACT decisions.
- Applications for accommodations must be submitted at least 7 weeks in advance of the test date when accommodations are needed.
- See your counselor for more information.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- College Board <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org>
 - Test descriptions, scoring information, sample test questions, help videos, and more!
- ACT www.actstudent.org
 - Test description, scoring information, sample test questions, test prep options
- Khan Academy www.khanacademy.org
 - An online tutoring site that also provides FREE PSAT and SAT prep

QUESTIONS?

Thank you for coming this evening!