

What Students Will Ask About the New SAT[®]

A GUIDE FOR COUNSELORS



A Message to Counselors

Thank you for your support of the SAT Program at your school. The College Board is here as a resource in your important work to help students connect to college success™.

This guide will help you answer questions that your students, parents, and colleagues may have about the new SAT®. Please see pages 12 and 13 for “The New SAT at a Glance,” followed by a list of additional resources on page 14. Also, please feel free to call our toll-free SAT counselor hotline at 888 SAT-HELP.

What's Changing?

The changes to the test will not make it more difficult. Students are very likely to do as well on the new SAT as on the current one. The changes are as follows:

- **Critical Reading:** The new critical reading section, currently known as the verbal section, will continue to include short and long reading passages. Analogies will be eliminated, and sentence-completion questions will remain.
- **Math:** The new math section will include topics from third-year college-preparatory math, such as exponential growth, absolute value, functional notation, and negative and fractional exponents. Greater emphasis will be placed on other topics such as linear functions and scatterplots. Quantitative comparisons will be eliminated.
- **Writing:** Students will be asked to write an essay that requires them to take a position on an issue and use examples to support their position. It will be similar to the type of on-demand writing required on college tests. Multiple-choice questions will test a student's ability to identify sentence errors, improve sentences, and improve paragraphs.

Also important is what will not change about the SAT. The SAT will still measure the kind of reasoning skills needed for college by assessing how students apply what they have learned in school. Colleges and universities use the SAT as only one of many factors in admission decisions. The most important factor is high school grades earned in challenging courses. The best preparation for the new SAT—and for college—is for students to take challenging academic courses and to read widely and write often.

Most changes will also be part of the October 2004 PSAT/NMSQT®, one of the best ways to prepare for the new SAT. Please see page 5 of this brochure for further details.

Please note: Registrations for the new SAT will be processed starting early in December. Students can register now using paper forms; however, they will not gain any advantage in doing so. Please remind students who still want to register by mail to send in only one registration and one payment per envelope.

The Basics

Q: Will I be taking the new SAT®?

A: For students in the class of 2006, the College Board recommends taking the new SAT in spring 2005.

- **October 2004:** New PSAT/NMSQT administered (without student-written essay). Practice materials for the new SAT distributed.
- **March 12, 2005:** First new SAT administered.

Q: If I already took the current SAT, should I take the new one, too?

A: Many colleges will require the new SAT with writing for students graduating from high school in 2006, and others might accept scores from either the current or the new SAT. You should check with each college to which you are applying to be sure you have accurate information about admissions requirements.

Q: If I'm in the class of 2006, should I rush to take the SAT before it is changed?

A: No. The College Board doesn't recommend that students take the SAT before they are ready. Most students wait until spring of their junior year to take the SAT because they want to have covered as much English and math course work as possible.

Q: What's new about the test?

A: The new SAT will include a student-written essay and multiple-choice writing section. Two types of questions—analogies and quantitative comparisons—will not be on the new SAT. Analogies will be replaced with short, paragraph-length reading passages, and the math section will include some advanced math (but nothing beyond Algebra II).

Q: Why is the test being changed?

A: The SAT is changing to be more closely related to classroom work and to include writing, which is an important skill for success in college and in life. The changes were made in consultation with high school teachers and counselors, college professors, and admissions officers who regularly advise the College Board.

Q: Will the new SAT be more difficult?

A: It will be different, not harder. A few math questions on the new SAT will cover some topics from Algebra II. However, the test will still measure reasoning ability and problem-solving skills gained through activities and learning in and outside of school.

Q: How long will the test be?

A: The testing time for the new SAT will be 45 minutes longer, for a total of 3 hours and 45 minutes. Students will have 60 minutes for the new writing section, 70 minutes each for critical reading and math, and a 25-minute variable section.

Q: What will the test cost?

A: With the administration of the new SAT, the fee will be \$41.50. Because the College Board is a not-for-profit organization, any revenue we generate goes right back into our programs.

Q: What if I can't afford to pay for the test?

A: The College Board provides fee waivers for students from families with low incomes. Students who qualify will be eligible for two free administrations of the SAT. Fee-waiver-eligible students who register online can also receive discounts on some SAT practice materials produced by the College Board. See the Fee-Waiver information under SAT registration on www.collegeboard.com.

Q: Can I do the essay first?

A: Yes. The essay will always be the first section of the test. While we found that placement of the essay had no effect on students' performance on other sections of the SAT, students did slightly better on the essay when it appeared at the beginning of the test.

Q: Will there still be an SAT Subject Test™ in Writing?

A: The last SAT Subject Test™ in Writing will be administered in January 2005. Check with the colleges to which you are applying about what other subject tests to take.

Q: Will the Subject Tests in Math be changing?

A: No. The SAT Subject Test in Math Level 1 and Level 2 will continue to be available and the content will not change.



Getting Ready

Q: What courses do I need to take?

A: The best preparation for the SAT, and for college, is to take challenging courses within a strong curriculum. Take the toughest classes you can handle that are offered at your school. To prepare for the writing section, you should write for school and read as often as possible. Try to stretch your thinking by reading a wide variety of challenging writing—fiction, nonfiction, and magazines, including the topics you are not most familiar with. The more you read, the better your writing becomes.

Q: Will the PSAT/NMSQT change, too?

A: Yes. Beginning in October 2004, the PSAT/NMSQT, which is typically taken by sophomores and juniors, will include changes along the lines of those on the new SAT. The multiple-choice questions will be similar to those on the new SAT. However, the PSAT/NMSQT will not include an essay. All schools that administer the PSAT/NMSQT have been sent “*ScoreWrite™: A Guide to Preparing for the New SAT Essay*,” which is a comprehensive essay practice tool for all students.

The content of the new math section of the PSAT/NMSQT will be enhanced, but not to the same extent as the SAT. For example, Algebra II will not be included.

Your PSAT/NMSQT Score Report *Plus* will be sent to your school and will provide personalized feedback on your academic skills. Score Report *Plus* will help you identify strengths and possible areas that you may want to improve in preparation for the new SAT and college. When you receive your Score Report *Plus* in December 2004, you will also receive a set of practice questions, with answers and explanations, on advanced Algebra topics to help you further prepare for the new SAT.

Q: How can I get practice questions for the new SAT?

A: Here are several ways:

- The online SAT Preparation Center™ at www.collegeboard.com provides new SAT sample questions;
- The free *SAT Preparation Booklet™* (the successor to *Taking the SAT Reasoning Test™*), which will be sent to schools in winter 2004, will contain a full-length sample test;
- The score report mailing from the 2004 PSAT/NMSQT will include an advanced math sampler;
- The College Board will be sending test-preparation materials to schools;
- Additional ways to get new SAT practice questions are now available. Please see page 14 of this guide for more detailed information.

Q: Can I still use the preparation materials for the current SAT?

A: Yes. Although two question types—analogies and quantitative comparisons—will be dropped, other sections of SAT test-preparation materials can still help you get familiar with reading passages and questions. In particular, in your current SAT materials, you should practice using the five-choice multiple-choice math questions, the math student-produced response questions, the reading comprehension questions, and sentence completions. But remember that the enhanced math content, writing multiple-choice questions, and essay practice are not covered in test-preparation books for the current SAT.

The Writing Section

Q: Do I have to write the essay?

A: When you take the new SAT, you must complete the essay.

Q: How much time will I have to write the essay?

A: You will have 25 minutes.

Q: Will my SAT writing score suffer if I don't have time to revise my work?

A: The College Board recognizes that an essay written in a short amount of time will not be polished. It's just a first draft and will be scored as such. The essay will be similar to the on-demand writing required for college exams. In addition, your writing score is based on a combination of the essay score and the multiple-choice score.

Q: What will the essay measure?

A: The essay will measure the student's skill in developing a point of view on an issue. Students must first think critically about the issue presented in the essay assignment and write an original first draft in which they develop that point of view, using reasoning and evidence based on their own experiences, readings, or observations to support their ideas.

Q: What will the multiple-choice questions be like?

A: The multiple-choice writing questions measure your ability to improve sentences and paragraphs, and identify errors (such as word choice, grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, proper word usage, and wordiness).

Q: Who will read the essay and how will it be scored?

A: The essay will be scored by experienced and trained high school and college teachers. Each essay will be scored separately by two people who won't know the other's score. They won't know your identity or school either. Each reader will give the essay a score from 1 to 6 (6 is the highest score) based on the overall quality of the essay and your demonstration of writing competence. If their scores differ by more than one point, a scoring director will score the essay.

Q: Will colleges see my essay?

A: Any college you send your scores to will be able to view and print your essay at no extra charge.

Q: Can I see my essay?

A: Yes. Students will be able to access copies of their own essays online.

Q: How will colleges and universities use the new writing score?

A: This will vary depending on the school. Writing scores may be used for admissions decisions and possibly for placement in English composition courses. However, for the first few years, some schools may choose to use writing scores for research purposes only.

Q: What will I be asked to write about?

A: The essay question will ask you to take a position on an issue and support it effectively with examples from your studies or experience. It will be an open-ended question so you can answer it successfully in many different ways. The prompt will be written in a way that will be accessible to all students, including those who are English language learners, and will not use literary terms or rely on knowledge of any specific books.

Q: Can I prepare an essay ahead of time?

A: No. Though your essay may include examples from your own class work, reading, and experience, it must answer the question directly. Essays not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of zero.

Q: Does spelling count? How about grammar and punctuation?

A: Spelling errors will not affect your score unless they are so pervasive that they get in the way of the reader understanding your essay. Even with some errors in punctuation and grammar, you can get a top score on the essay. The essay will be scored using a holistic approach. That means readers will consider the essay as a total piece of work and will judge it on the overall impression it produces.

Q: Will my handwriting count against me?

A: No, but essay readers must be able to read your writing in order to score your essay, so you should try to write legibly.

Q: Can I use a computer to type my essay?

A: Not unless you have a disability that requires the use of a computer. More information about our Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) eligibility requirements can be found on our Website. The new SAT writing essay will be done by hand, like the writing you do on school exams and in-class assignments.

The Critical Reading Section

Q: What is covered in the critical reading section?

A: The critical reading section assesses a student's ability to synthesize information, to tell the difference between main and supporting ideas, to understand word meaning in context, to follow the logic of an argument, and to make inferences about meaning and genre.

Q: Why were analogy questions dropped?

A: On the new test, analogy questions will be eliminated. Like antonyms, which were eliminated from the test in 1994, analogies are absent from classroom teaching.

The Math Section

Q: Will the math be harder than on the current test?

A: No. A few math questions on the new SAT will cover some topics from what's known as Algebra II. However, the overall difficulty of the math questions will not change. The test will still measure reasoning ability and problem-solving skills gained through activities and learning in and outside of school.

Q: Can I use a calculator?

A: Yes. Every question on the test can be solved without a calculator; however, using a calculator on some questions may be helpful to students. A scientific or graphing calculator is recommended.

Q: Do I need to memorize formulas?

A: No. Formulas will be provided to you where needed—just as they are on the current SAT.



Test Scores

Q: What will the new SAT scores look like?

A: The new SAT will have three scores in writing, math, and critical reading, each on the familiar 200–800 scale. You will also receive two writing subscores; a score of 20–80 for the multiple-choice questions and a score of 2–12 for the essay.

Q: Can I find out more detailed information about my results?

A: Yes. There will be an online score report with more detailed information about your scores as well as your college success skills. A copy of your essay is also provided.

For certain test dates, the Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) is available for a fee. You can see the actual questions and correct answers, as well as whether you answered correctly, incorrectly, or omitted the question. QAS includes information on question types and levels of difficulty.

For all other test dates, Student Answer Service (SAS) is available. SAS does not provide the actual questions, but it does send you a list of question types and difficulty levels, along with a description of how you answered the questions. Check registration materials or collegeboard.com to determine whether your test date is eligible for QAS or SAS.

Q: Can I compare my old SAT scores—or my older brother's or sister's—with my new SAT scores?

A: The math and critical reading test scores can be compared to the existing math and verbal scores. This is something colleges need for consistency in admissions requirements. However, the SAT writing section is completely new.

Q: How will colleges use my scores?

A: Colleges and universities use the SAT as one of many factors in admissions decisions. Most colleges consider high school transcripts to be the most important factor of all. That includes your grades and the level of courses taken in high school. Other considerations include extracurricular activities, special circumstances, and recommendations.

Q: When will I get my new SAT test scores?

A: If you take the SAT on March 12, 2005, you will have online access to your scores on April 11, 2005. Scores will be sent to colleges and universities starting April 15, 2005. Thereafter, scores will be available online about 16 days after the test date.

What to Tell Parents

- Tell parents about the changes to the SAT and what their children will need to know and be able to do to perform well on the new test and in college.
- Show parents how the skills needed for success on the new SAT correlate with those required in college and the workplace.
- Share with parents a PowerPoint slide presentation about the new SAT, which is available at www.collegeboard.com/newsat.

What to Tell Teachers

- Suggest that teachers visit www.collegeboard.com for details on new test content in reading, writing, and math and how the test reflects instructional trends. Be sure they know about the PowerPoint presentations for English and math teachers at www.collegeboard.com/newsat.
- Remind teachers about *ScoreWrite: A Guide to Preparing for the New SAT Essay*, which is available to all schools. This publication can help teachers prepare students for the new SAT essay. It is also an excellent teacher professional development program. Using the essay topic provided in *ScoreWrite*, teachers can administer a practice essay to their students and then score the essays using the same techniques and scoring guide that will be used for the essay on the new SAT.
- Inform teachers that the College Board will offer professional development workshops on new SAT topics and refer them to collegeboard.com for a workshop schedule.
- Make sure teachers know that *The Official SAT Teacher's Guide™*, the successor to the *Real SAT Teacher's Guide*, will be available in fall 2004.
- Suggest that English teachers consider becoming readers for the new SAT essay. More information about becoming a reader is available at www.collegeboard.com/newsat.

For more information about the new SAT of 2005, go to www.collegeboard.com/newsat.

The New SAT at a Glance

(Beginning March 2005)

The New SAT®: Implemented for the Class of 2006

Introduction Schedule:

October 2004..... PSAT/NMSQT® (without student-written essay)
 March 2005..... new SAT

Focus on College Success Skills™: Writing, Critical Reading, and Mathematics

Total testing time: 3 hours and 45 minutes, including unscored 25-minute section

Writing—The New Components: Student-Written Essay, Grammar and Usage Multiple-Choice

Improve predictive validity and encourage writing in schools

- Short Essay
 - Measures student's ability to develop and support a point of view on a given topic. Students must first analyze the topic and consider their own viewpoint on it, then support their position with reasoning and examples taken from their reading, studies, experience, or observations.
 - The essay will be similar to the type of on-demand college writing that is typically read by the professor as a first draft.
- Multiple-Choice
 - Measures student's ability to recognize errors, improve sentences, and improve paragraphs within a writing context.

Scoring procedures

- Scored by trained high school teachers and college professors
- Essays will be scored holistically:
 - Each reader will award a score according to the overall quality of the essay.
 - They will take into account such aspects as complexity of thought, substantiality of development and facility with language.
- Each test is scored independently by two readers on a 1–6 scale according to a scoring guide in conjunction with exemplar papers.
- Essays will be scanned and distributed to readers via the Web.
- Readers will be rigorously trained and continuously monitored in real time.

Writing	Current SAT	New SAT
Time	No Test Currently	60 min. (One 25-min. and one 10 min. multiple choice; 25-min. essay)
Content	No Test Currently	Multiple-Choice: Identifying Errors; Improving Sentences and Paragraphs Student-Written Essay: Effectively Develop and Express a Point of View
Score		200–800 Multiple-Choice Subscore: 20–80 Essay Subscore: 2–12 Essays not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of zero.

Critical Reading—The Change: Change Name from Verbal, Eliminate Analogies, Additional Short Reading Passages

Strengthen alignment with instructional practices

- Measures student’s ability to identify genre, relationships among parts of a text, cause and effect, rhetorical devices, and comparative arguments.
- Reading passages taken from different fields:
 - Natural Sciences
 - Humanities
 - Social Sciences
 - Literary Fiction

Critical Reading	Current SAT	New SAT
Time	75 min. (Two 30-min. sections, one 15-min. section)	70 min. (Two 25-min. sections, one 20-min. section)
Content	Sentence Completions Passage-Based Reading Analogies Measuring: Extended Reasoning Literal Comprehension Vocabulary in Context	Sentence Completions Passage-Based Reading Measuring: Extended Reasoning Literal Comprehension Vocabulary in Context
Score	200–800	200–800

Mathematics—The Change: Add Content from Third-Year College-Preparatory Math and Eliminate Quantitative Comparisons

Increase alignment with curriculum and admissions expectations

- 70 percent of all high school students finish Algebra II (or equivalent) by the end of their junior year.
- 97 percent of college-bound students complete three years of math and 69 percent complete four or more years of math.
- Most four-year colleges require three years of math.

Math	Current SAT	New SAT
Time	75 min. (Two 30-min. sections, one 15-min. section)	70 min. (Two 25-min. sections, one 20-min. section)
Content	Multiple-Choice Items, and Student-Produced Responses, and Quantitative Comparisons Measuring: Number and Operations Algebra I and Functions Geometry; Statistics, Probability, and Data Analysis	Multiple-Choice Items, and Student-Produced Responses Measuring: Number and Operations Algebra I, II, and Functions Geometry; Statistics, Probability, and Data Analysis
Score	200–800	200–800

You can download the following publications and presentations from <http://www.collegeboard.com/newsat>.

- *New SAT Fact Sheet*
- *The New SAT: What Does It Mean for Students?* (PowerPoint presentation)
- *The New SAT: Important Information for High School English Teachers* (PowerPoint presentation)
- *The New SAT: Important Information for High School Math Teachers* (PowerPoint presentation)

Here are additional resources from the College Board:

- For more information about the new PSAT/NMSQT, including new and expanded math topics, go to www.collegeboard.com/newsat.
- *A Guide to the New SAT Essay*, a publication to help teachers prepare students for the new SAT essay, has been sent to all high schools that administer the PSAT/NMSQT. This publication includes *ScoreWrite*, which teachers can use to administer a practice essay to their students and then score the essays using the same techniques and scoring guide that will be used by scorers of the essays on the new SAT.
- The *SAT Preparation Booklet*, the new version of *Taking the SAT Reasoning Test*, the free booklet is available in high schools and on the Web at www.collegeboard.com.
- The SAT Preparation Center, a revised version of the free, online SAT Learning Center®, will continue to include the popular SAT Question of the Day™.
- A new version of *10 Real SATs* called *The Official SAT Study Guide: For the New SAT™* has been published to help prepare students who are taking the SAT in March 2005, and beyond.
- *The Official SAT Online Course™*, an online successor to *One-on-One with the SAT®* will be available to schools and individual students in fall 2004. It will include interactive instruction, essay practice, and hundreds of sample questions.

The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 4,500 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves over three million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program®, (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.



For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.

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to Reproduce This
Guide.**

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