

A Parent Tutorial for Understanding 2008 PSAT/NMSQT® Results

PSAT/NMSQT Score Report

Take a look at your student's PSAT/NMSQT® Score Report. Notice that each section of the test—critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills—has its own color-coded column. Within each color-coded section is a great deal of information that provides a thorough review of performance and ways to improve academic skills.

1 Your Scores:

- Each PSAT/NMSQT score—critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills—is based on a scale of 20 to 80.
- The **score ranges** show how much scores might vary if students were to take the PSAT/NMSQT repeatedly without learning additional skills. In other words, the scores within this range are considered “equal” statistically.
- **Percentiles** compare your student's performance with those of other students. Eleventh-graders are compared to all eleventh-graders who took the test; tenth-graders and younger students are compared to all tenth-graders who took the test.

2 Review Your Answers: This section shows the correct answer, the student's response, and the difficulty level of the question. (Mathematics questions also indicate the general math area covered in the question.) Students should have received their test book along with their score report. At the bottom of this section is an overview showing the number of correct answers for each level of difficulty and the number of points subtracted for wrong answers. Encourage your child to go over questions she or he got wrong. Did she or he really not know the answer? Make a careless error? Guess instead of leaving the question blank? In My College QuickStart™, complete answer explanations are provided to help students learn from their mistakes.

3 Improve Your Skills: This section demonstrates to students some specific skills that need improvement. These were identified based upon the pattern of responses across test questions. For each student, personalized feedback is provided for up to three critical reading and mathematics skills and up to two writing skills. This does not necessarily mean that these are the only skills that need improvement. However, the skills listed here are the ones that can be best improved through additional attention and learning. Share this information with teachers, as these skills affect classroom performance and are important for success in college.

4 National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) Programs: NMSC cosponsors the PSAT/NMSQT, which stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. High school students enter NMSC programs, usually as eleventh-graders, by taking the PSAT/NMSQT and meeting other published entry requirements. NMSC uses the Selection Index score—the sum of the critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores—as an initial screen

The image shows a sample PSAT/NMSQT score report for a student named STUDENT, IMA B. The report is divided into several sections:

- Your Scores:** Critical Reading: 50, Mathematics: 52, Writing Skills: 44. Each score is accompanied by a score range and percentile.
- Review Your Answers:** A table showing questions from various sections (e.g., Sentence Completion, Reading, Multiple Choice) with columns for the correct answer, the student's response, and the difficulty level.
- Improve Your Skills:** A section providing personalized feedback on specific skills, such as "Determining an author's purpose or perspective" and "Understanding complex sentences".
- National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) Programs:** Shows a Selection Index score of 146 and a Percentile of 47.
- Your Educational Plans:** A section for students to indicate their college major and computer engineering plans.
- My College QuickStart:** A section providing personalized feedback and resources for college preparation.

of students who enter its programs and to designate groups of students to be honored. If the Selection Index has an asterisk, refer to the NMSC section on the back of the score report. NMSC will notify principals of students whose Selection Index scores qualify them for recognition. For more information about NMSC scholarship programs, visit www.nationalmerit.org.

5 Your Educational Plans: Before the test, each student provided information on her or his grade point average and the college major she or he is considering pursuing. In this section, the College Board provides important information about the indicated major, including recommended high school courses that will help prepare students for college-level work.

6 Information About Your Student's My College QuickStart. See the reverse side to learn about this free online resource.

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
cosponsored by

My College QuickStart™

My College QuickStart is an easy-to-use, online, personalized college and career planning kit available to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. This useful tool incorporates the responses students provide when they take the test and presents personalized information back to them in four main parts:

- My Online Score Report—an enhanced score report that allows students to review each test question, their answers, and correct answers with answer explanations
- My SAT Study Plan—a customized SAT study plan based on students' PSAT/NMSQT test performance, highlighting skills for review and practice
- My College Matches—a starter list of colleges based on students' home states and selected majors
- My Major and Career Matches—a list of majors and careers based on the major students choose when they take the test. Additionally, with access to MyRoad™, students can take a personality test to learn about their personality types and identify their strengths. They can also access descriptions of majors and careers, and, for each major, learn about steps to take in high school and what to expect in college.

Students may log in to My College QuickStart with the access code printed on their paper score report. The tool is available in mid-December and can be utilized throughout high school.

Use www.collegeboard.com/parents to help your student reach his or her important education and career goals:

Visiting www.collegeboard.com/parents makes it easier for you to help your student have a successful experience preparing for and applying to college. You'll find expert advice to keep you informed throughout the college planning process, including:

- Ways to encourage your student to start thinking about life after high school
- Strategies for financing your student's education
- Help with curriculum planning to realize your student's specific career goals
- Information and resources you need to help your student prepare to perform his or her best on the SAT
- Practical advice and online tools to find the right college for your student's needs and goals

What happens now?

With the help of teachers and counselors, students should use the information provided on the PSAT/NMSQT Score Report and in My College QuickStart to improve their academic skills and plan for their postsecondary goals. Here are some other suggestions for students:

- Review high school transcripts and select courses for upcoming semesters that will prepare for education and career goals.
- Take challenging courses: Consider honors and AP® courses.
- Tenth-graders and younger students should take the PSAT/NMSQT again in eleventh grade to enter competitions conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation.
- Eleventh-graders should register for the SAT, and possibly SAT Subject Tests™, this spring. (Online at www.collegeboard.com or “express register” in My College QuickStart.)
- Be involved in extracurricular and community activities. College admissions officials look for academic competence and preparation (types/levels of academic courses taken and grades received), but they also look for how a student will contribute to the college community. What do students do outside of the school day? Are they involved in music, art, athletics, student government, volunteer work, employment, etc.? The quality of students' involvement is important. What is the depth of their commitment? Are they assuming leadership roles? Are they making a contribution to the school or community?