mefa pathway YOUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE®

Test Preparation

This lesson is designed to help students explore career categories in order to research and prepare for a particular career direction (if not a specific career).

Grade Level: 10 - 12

OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about the two major standardized tests used by colleges during the admissions process
2. Research the standardized tests required by the colleges to which they intend to apply
3. Evaluate which test(s) they plan to take and their preparedness for the test by taking practice tests
4. Create a plan for preparing for and taking the standardized test

ACTIVITIES

PART 1

Content Knowledge

Teach students about the difference between the PSAT, ACT, and SAT using the MEFA Pathway Standardized Tests page. Some key differences are also listed below.

PSAT: The preliminary SAT or practice SAT; Taken by sophomores and juniors; is not used for college admissions

- Can qualify students for National Merit Scholarships and other corporate and college- sponsored merit scholarships
- **Cost**: $16. Student may be eligible for a fee waiver; schools request waiver, not student
- **Length**: Two hours and forty-five minutes; four total sections
  - Math: One 25-minute section and one 45-minute section consisting of multiple choice and grid-ins (student-produced answers)
  - Evidence-Based Reading: One 60-minute section consisting of reading comprehension
  - Writing: One 35-minute section consisting of fixing grammatical errors and revising words and phrases to improve text
- **Scoring**
  - Each section has a scaled score from 160 to 760 points

MEFA PATHWAY LINKS FOR LESSON:

- Standardized Tests

SUBJECT AREAS:

- Test Prep Courses

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Internet connection to work with the MEFA Pathway website
- PSAT Practice website
- ACT Practice website
- SAT Practice website
- Standardized Test Planning Handout (attached)

Email any questions to:
info@mefapathway.org

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ACT: A subject-based standardized test taken usually by juniors and seniors

- **Cost**: $46 without the writing portion and $62.50 with the writing portion. If you miss the registration date there is an additional $29.50 fee. Fee waivers are available if the student meets certain qualifications.
- **Length and Sections**: Two hours and 55 minutes long (4 sections) without the writing section and 3 hours and 35 minutes (5 sections) if you elect to do the writing portion
    - English: One 45-minute section (75 questions) comprised of usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills
    - Math: One 60-minute section (60 questions) comprised of pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry, and trigonometry
    - Reading: One 35-minute section (40 questions) comprised of Social Studies, Natural Science, Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction, and Humanities
    - Science: One 35-minute section (40 questions) comprised of Testing Data Analysis, Experimental Results, and Conflicting Viewpoint
    - Writing: One 40-minute section (1 essay) comprised of writing about your position on an issue in response to a question; this section requires students to exhibit their ability to explain their position using supporting evidence, opinion, and reason
- **Scoring**
    - The four multiple choice sections are graded on a scale of 1-36 and will generate a composite score of 1-36
    - The writing section is graded ranging 0-12

SAT: A standardized test that assesses critical thinking

- **Cost:** $47.50 without the writing portion and $64.50 with the writing portion. If you miss the registration date there is an additional $29 fee. Fee waivers are available if the student meets certain qualifications.
- **Length and Sections**: Three hours (3 sections) without the writing section and three hours and 50 minutes (4 sections) if you elect to do the writing portion
    - Math: One 80-minute section (58 questions) consisting of primarily multiple choice questions, and some grid-ins (student produced answers); the main concepts tested here are algebra, problem solving, data analysis, and advanced math
    - Reading: One 65-minute section (52 questions) consisting of understanding complex passages and identifying words in context
    - Writing and Language: One 35-minute section (44 questions) consisting of targeting grammar and argument-building abilities
    - Essay: One 50-minute section (1 essay) that some schools may require
- **Scoring**
    - The SAT is scored on a 1600-point scale. The optional essay is evaluated separately and doesn't factor into the overall score
    - There is no penalty for wrong answers, so it's always better to guess if you're not sure

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PART 2

Applying Information

Students should look at the admissions requirements for the colleges in which they are interested. They can use the search bar at the top of the MEFA Pathway College Search page to search for their college and view the college's profile. The details page will indicate the average test scores for all students that were accepted and enrolled. Students can use the link to the school's website on the profile page to see if the school is test-optional or need additional information. Over 1,000 4-year schools do not require the SAT or ACT. Even if a school is test-optional, if you score well, include your scores in your application, as test scores may be required to be considered for merit scholarships or for placement once enrolled.

PART 3

Evaluating Information

After collecting information about all of the colleges in which they are interested, students should decide what test they intend to take for college admissions purposes. Students may decide that they want to take both the SAT and ACT.

PART 4

Critical Thinking/Creative Application

Once students determine the tests they want to take, they should create a plan for when they will take them and how they will prepare for them. Urge students to use the resources available to them through the MEFA Pathway Standardized Tests page as well as the PSAT Practice Website, ACT Practice Website, and SAT Practice Website. Khan Academy offers free test prep that can tailor a practice plan based on a student's PSAT and/or SAT scores.

If students need help making a plan, show them this example:

Test Name	Test Date	Test Preparation Plan
SAT	February 9, 2019	- Review the question of the day on the SAT website every night - Purchase a SAT preparation book -Take practice questions on the SAT website every weekend (focus on one small section per weekend) -Take the free full SAT on the SAT website over Thanksgiving - Review the types of questions I did poorly on and focus on those throughout

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Standardized Test Planning Handout

Fill out your plan for standardized testing. Make sure your plan is detailed and thorough.

Test Name	Test Date	Test Preparation Plan