





Learning About Standardized Tests and Customized Test Prep


Grade Level:

 10, 11

Domain:

 College & Career Exploration
 Academic Skills

TIME:

 45 Minutes

This lesson is designed to help students explore the various standardized tests required by some colleges and how they can prepare to take them.

Objectives

Students will:

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

MEFA Pathway Activities

- College Search
- My Journal

Materials Needed

- Internet connection
- MEFA's video, [Standardized Tests](#)
- Khan Academy's article, [Taking SAT and PSAT/NMSQT Practice Tests with Bluebook](#)
- Standardized Test Planning handout (attached)

Vocabulary

- PSAT
- SAT
- ACT
- Test-optional

Future Ready Skills

- Evaluating
- Critical Thinking
- Time Management

PART 1

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE



Have students watch the two-minute video, [Standardized Tests](#) and then review the *Standardized Test Planning* handout (attached). Students will learn about the differences among the PSAT, SAT, and ACT.

PART 2

APPLYING INFORMATION

Students should start exploring admissions requirements for colleges they are interested in. Students should click on **College Search** under the *Explore Colleges* tab and use the search bar at the top to search for a college.

Students can click on the college's name to view the college's details page. The page will indicate the average test scores for all students who were accepted and enrolled. Students can use the link to the school's website at the bottom of the details page to see if the school is **test-optional**.

More than 80% of U.S. 4-year colleges do not require the SAT or ACT. Tell students that even if a school is test-optional, if they score well, they should include their scores in their application, as test scores may be required to be considered for merit scholarships or placement once enrolled. Also, a strong test score can help bolster an admissions application.

PART 3

EVALUATING INFORMATION

After collecting admissions information for all the colleges they are interested in, students should decide which 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

Many high schools facilitate the PSAT, although if your school does not, there may be a test site close by. Although the PSAT is not used in the college admissions process, it can help prepare students for future standardized test taking.

Have students read this article, [*Taking SAT and PSAT/NMSQT Practice Tests with Bluebook*](#) to learn how to use College Board's Bluebook application to take practice PSATs and SATs.

Students should open their **My Journal** found under the *About Me* tab, and start a new journal entry to reflect on their testing plan.

Standardized Test Planning

	PSAT	SAT	ACT
DETAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice SAT • Taken by sophomores and juniors • Not used for college admissions • Can qualify students for National Merit Scholarships and other corporate and college-sponsored merit scholarships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A standardized test that assesses critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A subject-based standardized test taken usually by juniors and seniors
COST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$18 • Students may be eligible for a fee waiver; schools request the waiver, not the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$68 • Students may be eligible for a fee waiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$68 includes English, math, & reading sections • \$25 additional for writing • \$4 additional for science • Students may be eligible for a fee waiver
LENGTH & SECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and Writing: 2 modules, 32 minutes per module with a total of 54 questions • Math: 2 modules, 35 minutes per module with a total of 44 questions • Total test time: 2 hours, 14 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and Writing: 64 minutes • Math: 70 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English: 45 minutes (or 35 minutes for the digital format) • Math: 60 minutes (or 50 minutes for the digital format) • Break: 10-minute break (after Math) • Reading: 35 minutes (or 40 minutes for the digital format) • Science: 35 minutes (or optional for the digital format) • Writing (Optional): 40 minutes (with a 5-minute break)
SCORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each section has a scaled score from 160 to 760 points 	<p>Scored on a scale of 400-1600, combining scores from two sections: Math and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2 to 12

GRADING RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

CATEGORY	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
	4	3	2	1
Description	Offers a vivid, detailed, and insightful description of the experience, setting the stage for deeper reflection.	Provides a clear and detailed account of the experience, including relevant details.	Clearly describes the experience, event, or learning.	Offers a limited description of the experience.
Analysis	Engages in critical thinking, questioning assumptions, and demonstrating a thorough understanding of the learning.	Connects the experience to personal learning and raises some insightful questions.	Attempts to analyze the experience but may lack depth or clarity.	Superficial analysis, lacking deeper thought.
Future Application	Formulates clear, actionable plans for utilizing new insights and knowledge in future learning and experiences	Identifies specific ways to apply the learning to future situations or goals.	Suggests some possible connections to future learning or practice.	Makes no clear connection to future learning/action.