

Get the BFF Tutoring Test-Taking Advantage!



Should You Study for the PSAT ?

Everyone knows that you should prepare for the SAT or ACT, but what about the PSAT? The PSAT covers many of the same topics as the SAT and presents the questions in the same format. Although the PSAT is somewhat easier, it is far more than just a practice test– it is also a great scholarship opportunity.

All 11th grade students who take the PSAT are automatically considered for the highly prestigious NMS (National Merit Scholarship). Although only a small percentage of students will actually receive scholarship money, there are multiple levels of achievement. Of the approximate 1.5 million entrants each year:

- ❖ 50,000 are designated as “High Scorers”
- ❖ 34,000 advance to become “Commended Students”
- ❖ 15,000 are chose as “Finalist”
- ❖ 7,400 receive one of three types of Merit Scholarship
 - National Merit \$2,500 award
 - Corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship
 - College-sponsored Merit Scholarship

Reaching any level of designation is reason for celebration; the award is so prestigious that any level of commendation can be leveraged on college applications. But even students who don’t think they could possibly compete for the National Merit Scholarship should take the PSAT:

Real Testing Conditions: one of the best ways to prepare for the SAT is to practice under real testing conditions

Help for SAT Prep: PSAT scores provide insight into students’ unique strengths and weaknesses. A student who scores well on reading/ writing but not on the math would know to focus more on math prep for the SAT (and likely the ACT)

Compare Scores: PSAT scores give students an idea of how they compare to other college-bound students by providing percentile rankings.

Which Juniors should study:

The decision to prepare or not for the PSAT/NMSQT® depends on two questions:

1. Do you think you have a chance to earn a high enough score to be eligible for National Merit Scholar? *(if you scored in the top 20% as a sophomore...then yes!)*
2. Are you taking Algebra 2, or higher math class your junior year? If so, then YES!

*****Contact BFF Tutoring in March of Sophomore year and we will set up a study plan, ideally starting in mid-late summer and get you ready for the October test*****

Should Sophomores study?

No. But it can be helpful to look over [a practice test](#). The goal is only to familiarize yourself with the sections and the format. There’s not harm in trying out some problems, but do not feel obligated to prep as a 10th grader. Colleges will never see these results.

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Your BFF
for the SSAT,
SAT & ACT

What is the National Merit Scholarship Program?

Eligibility: A student must:

- 1) take PSAT/NMSQT during 3rd year (junior year) of high school
- 2) plan to enroll in college full time by the fall after graduation and
- 3) be a U.S. citizen

If a student meets these requirements, he or she will automatically be eligible to participate in the National Merit Scholarship Program (NMSP).

How many qualify:

Of the about 1.5 million juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT each year, approximately 50,000 juniors with the highest PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores (or total PSAT scores) who meet the eligibility requirements described above qualify for NMSP recognition. That is, roughly the top 3% of 11th grade testers will qualify. (varies from year to year and state to state).

Timeline:

December/ January (junior year) Scores are released

April (junior year) 50,000 students are invited to select two colleges to which the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) will provide a reference.

September (senior year) Approximately 2/3 of those 50,000 students will receive "Letter of Commendation" recognizing their academic abilities and potential. The remaining 1/3 of the 50,000 students qualify as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists.

- *Student must then complete/submit the NMSC Application*
- *If student has not yet taken the SAT or ACT and had those scores reported to the NMSC, must do so in Oct, Nov, or Dec of his/her senior year.*

February of senior year, NMSC will notify Semifinalists who have qualified as Finalists. Of the roughly 16,000 students who qualify as Semifinalists:

- 15,000 of them will qualify as Finalists.
- About half of the finalist will be selected for Merit Scholarships. Scholarships are awarded based on skills, abilities, and accomplishments as exhibited through a student's application materials.

Hillary Yarmowich

Hillary@BFFTutoring.com

678-575-6065

For more information :

www.bfftutoring.com