

Testing

Standardized testing is a necessary portion of the admissions process at most colleges and universities. Schools use these tests as a way to gauge college readiness. This remains the model for the majority of U.S. colleges. Other schools may allow for “Test Optional” admissions policies. Test optional admissions means that students are not required to submit SAT or ACT scores to be considered for admissions. A list of these schools can be found at www.fairtest.org. Despite a growing number of test optional schools you will most likely still need to take the SAT or ACT to gain college admission since not every school participates in testing optional admissions. Here are descriptions of the most common standardized tests.

PSAT: The PSAT is typically offered on the 3rd Saturday in October and is available to all sophomores and juniors. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant. The PSAT results provide specific feedback regarding performance on the test, including the correct answer to each question, your answer to that question, and what type of question it was. This feedback is very helpful in planning test prep for the SAT.

SAT: The SAT tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math. Most students take the SAT during their junior or senior year of high school and almost all colleges and universities can use the SAT to make admission decisions. Admissions offices use the SAT as a predictor of college academic success. The SAT is offered at Mendham and Central, as well as numerous neighboring schools, on multiple Saturdays throughout the year. Visit www.collegeboard.org for test dates and registration.

SAT Subject Tests: These are one hour, multiple choice exams given in specific subject areas. Some of the most competitive colleges/universities require one or more of these tests for admission. Other colleges/universities use them for placement in courses. Students should contact college admission offices to determine if the college requires Subject Tests. The SAT Subject tests are offered at Mendham and Central, as well as numerous neighboring schools, on multiple Saturdays throughout the year. Visit www.collegeboard.org for test dates and registration.

ACT: The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing. However, students SHOULD take the ACT with Writing for admission into a 4-year college or university. ACT results are accepted by all 4-year colleges and universities in the U.S. The ACT is offered at Mendham and Central on numerous Saturdays throughout the year. Visit www.actstudent.org for test dates and registration.

AP: Advanced Placement (AP) Exams are 3 hour exams in specific subject areas and are designed to be taken upon completion of an AP course or the equivalent. These rigorous exams include both multiple choice & essay sections. More than 1,400 colleges and university accept AP credits. AP exams are not typically used for admissions purposes. Speak with an admission representative to discuss that college’s AP policy. Registration takes place through the Guidance Office every March. AP Exams are only offered on specific dates in May.

IB: International Baccalaureate Exams are taken by students to fulfill requirements in their IB diploma or certificate programs. These exams are not typically used for admissions, though a score report including junior year SL exams can be sent. Some schools will request predicted scores in senior year. Many colleges and universities award credit based on exam scores. Contact the admissions office of your colleges to discuss their IB policy. Registration takes place through the IB Coordinator in October.

Score Choice: Score Choice means that students control which test scores go to which colleges, *unless a specific college requires ALL testing to be submitted*. You may take the SAT and ACT as many times as you need. However, please consider that twice is the norm, three times is a lot, and four times is not recommended. Consider enrolling in preparatory courses or tutoring to help you prepare for testing. Guidance counselors have a list of SAT/ACT tutors readily available. Consider using Naviance’s “Test Prep” online course free of charge. The charts that follow may help you determine whether the SAT or ACT is the most appropriate test for you.

Summary

1. Meet with your guidance counselor in January to discuss which tests are appropriate for you and when to take them.
2. Take the appropriate SAT, SAT Subject, or ACT Tests in the spring of your Junior year, or fall of your Senior year.
3. Take prep courses or seek tutoring if necessary. Look at Naviance “Test Prep” program for free test prep.
4. Submit the necessary test scores to your colleges directly through the testing agency website.

*AP & IB Test scores may be submitted for consideration in admissions at some schools. Otherwise you will send the scores directly to the school you matriculate

(Jan 2016)