



# **PSAT 8/9**

## **October 27, 2015**

The PSAT 8/9 is a test designed for eighth and ninth grade students that will help the students and their teachers figure out what students need to work on most so that they are ready for college. It tests the same skills and knowledge as the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, and PSAT 10, in a way that makes sense for eighth and ninth grade students.

### **How to Get Ready**

The College Board says that students need to use the same habits and choices that lead to success in school in order to get ready for the PSAT 8/9 and other tests in the SAT Suite of Assessments. The best way to prepare is to:

- Take challenging courses
- Do your homework
- Prepare for tests and quizzes
- Ask and answer lots of questions

In short, students need to take charge of their education and learn as much as they can.

# Reading Test

The Reading Test focuses on the skills and knowledge of reading. It's not about how well students memorize facts and definitions, but how they do with analyzing information in passages and answering questions.

## Quick Facts

- All Reading Test questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with other passages.
- Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages, but no math is required.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.
- The Reading Test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section.

**The Reading Test always includes:** Passages in the fields of history, social studies, and science. It will require students to draw on the reading skills needed most to succeed in those subjects. For instance, students might read about an experiment then see questions that ask them to:

- Examine hypotheses.
- Interpret data.
- Consider implications.

Answers are based only on the information in the passage.

- One passage from a classic or contemporary work of U.S. or world literature.
- One passage or a pair of passages from either a U.S. founding document or a text in the great global conversation they inspired. The U.S. Constitution or a speech by Nelson Mandela, for example.
- A selection about economics, psychology, sociology, or some other social science.
- Two science passages (or one passage and one passage pair) that examine foundational concepts and developments in Earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

## What the Reading Test Measures:

### Command of Evidence

Some questions ask students to:

- Find evidence in a passage (or pair of passages) that best supports the answer to a previous question or serves as the basis for a reasonable conclusion.
- Identify how authors use evidence to support their claims.
- Find a relationship between an informational graphic and the passage it's paired with.
- Use context clues in a passage to figure out which meaning of a word or phrase is being used.
- Decide how an author's word choice shapes meaning, style, and tone.

# Writing and Language Test

Students will be tested on their ability to:

1. Read a texts and narratives
2. Find mistakes and weaknesses within the text or narratives.
3. Correct or make suggestion to the text or passages.

## Quick Facts

- All questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are accompanied by informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts — but no math is required.
- Prior topic knowledge is never tested.
- The Writing and Language Test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section.

## What the Writing and Language Test Is Like

To answer some questions, students will need to look closely at a single sentence. Others require reading the entire piece and interpreting a graphic. For instance, students might be asked to choose a sentence that corrects a misinterpretation of a scientific chart.

## What the Writing and Language Test Measures

### Command of Evidence

- Students are asked to improve the way passages develop information and ideas. For instance, they might choose an answer that sharpens an argumentative claim or adds a relevant supporting detail.
- Some questions may ask students to improve word choice. In other words, they will need to choose the best words to use based on the text surrounding them. The goal will be to make a passage more precise or concise, or to improve syntax, style, or tone.
- Students will be asked to read passages about topics in history, social studies, and science with a critical eye and make editorial decisions that improve them.
- Some questions ask about a passage's organization and its impact. For instance, students will be asked which words or structural changes improve how well it makes its point and how well its sentences and paragraphs work together.
- Sentence structure, usage, and punctuation will also be evaluated as students will be asked to change words, clauses, sentences, and punctuation. Some topics covered include verb tense, parallel construction, subject-verb agreement, and comma use.

# Math Test

## Focus

The Math Test will focus in depth on two of the areas of math that play the biggest role in a wide range of college majors and careers:

- **Heart of Algebra**, which focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems.
- **Problem Solving and Data Analysis**, which is about being quantitatively literate.
- There will also be some **Passport to Advanced Math** questions; these require the manipulation of complex equations.
- Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some — called grid-ins — ask students to come up with the answer rather than select the answer.
- The Math Test is divided into two portions: Some parts of the test include several questions about a single scenario.
- In addition one part of the test will allow students to use calculators where another part of the test will not allow calculators.

## What the Math Test Measures

### Fluency and Understanding:

- How to carry out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and strategically.
- Solve problems quickly by identifying and using the most efficient solution approaches. This might involve solving a problem by inspection, finding a shortcut, or reorganizing the information you've been given.
- Demonstrate the grasp of math concepts, operations, and relations. For instance, students might be asked to make connections between properties of linear equations, their graphs, and the contexts they represent.

### Applications

These real-world problems ask you to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out a solution.

### Calculator Use

In the Math Test – Calculator portion of the test, students will be able to focus on complex modeling and reasoning because their calculator can save them time. However, the calculator is, like any tool, only as smart as the person using it. The Math Test includes some questions where it's better not to use a calculator, even though students are allowed to use them. In these cases, students who make use of structure or their ability to reason will probably finish before students who use a calculator.

The Math Test – No Calculator portion of the test makes it easier to assess student fluency in math and their understanding of some math concepts. It also tests well-learned technique and number sense.

## Grid-In Questions

Although most of the questions on the Math Test are multiple choice, 18 percent are student-produced response questions, also known as grid-ins. Instead of choosing a correct answer from a list of options, students will need to solve problems and enter their answers in the grids provided on the answer sheet.

## Gridding-In Answers

- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- Only answers indicated by filling in the circle will be scored (students will not receive credit for anything written in the boxes located above the circles).
- It doesn't matter in which column students begin entering their answers; as long as the responses are recorded within the grid area, they receive credit.
- The grid can hold only four decimal places and can only accommodate positive numbers and zero.
- Unless a problem indicates otherwise, answers can be entered on the grid as a decimal or a fraction.

- Fractions like  $\frac{3}{24}$  do not need to be reduced to their lowest terms.
- All mixed numbers need to be converted to improper fractions before being recorded in the grid.
- If the answer is a repeating decimal, students must grid the most accurate value the grid will accommodate.

Below is a sample of the instructions students will see on the test.

Write answer in boxes. →

Answer:  $\frac{7}{12}$       Answer: 2.5

Grid in result. →

Fraction line      Decimal point

Answer: 201

Either position is correct.

Acceptable ways to grid  $\frac{2}{3}$  are: