



Testing for College Admission

Standardized testing is an important factor in admission decisions, especially at most of the “highly selective” colleges and universities. A few institutions have downplayed the importance of scores, and some have eliminated test requirements entirely, but those institutions are in the minority. Standardized testing still matters at most colleges. We want you to understand testing requirements and, just as important, to keep them in perspective.

TEST DESCRIPTIONS

1. P S A T / N M S Q T – Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

This test is given in October to the entire sophomore and junior classes. Registration is coordinated through the Learning Support Services Office. Scores from the junior year are used for National Merit Scholarship Qualification (NMSQT) and for student and counselor use only. These scores are not sent to colleges.

2. S A T R E A S O N I N G T E S T

SAT is officially called the SAT: Reasoning Test. It consists of critical reading, math, and writing sections and takes close to four hours.

3. S A T S U B J E C T T E S T S

These are one-hour tests measuring your knowledge of specific subject areas such as languages, math, sciences, and history. Students choose which tests to take. Most selective colleges require two (sometimes three) SAT Subject Tests in addition to the SAT Reasoning Test. These tests can be taken at any time during one’s high school career. Three tests can be taken at one sitting, but we recommend that students only take one or two at a time. For more information about both the reasoning and subject tests, access the College Board website at: **WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM**.

4. A C T – American College Test

An achievement-based test, the ACT is a popular alternative to the SAT and some students do better on this test. Students can submit the ACT in exchange for the SAT Reasoning Test, the SAT Subject Tests, or both, depending on the college’s requirements. Almost all colleges accept the ACT. For more information access their website at: **WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG**.

5. A P – Advanced Placement exam

These exams are not required for college admission and are used, instead, for college credit or placement in an advanced course in college. College may look favorably on strong results if available, but students are not penalized if they have not taken the AP exams.

6. T O E F L – Test of English as a Foreign Language

Used to evaluate English proficiency, most American colleges require the TOEFL of students whose native language is not English. For more information, access their website at: **WWW.TOEFL.COM**.

1. **It is your responsibility to register for the SAT and the ACT tests.**
2. **Online registration is the easiest way for most students to sign up for the SAT Reasoning and Subject tests, or the ACT.** (Go to WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM or WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG and sign up) You will need a valid, major credit card to register. The earlier you register the better.
3. **Know the testing requirements of each college to which you plan to apply.** Note which SAT Subject Tests are required and whether they accept the ACT (WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG) instead of the SAT.
4. **Always use exactly the same name and address when signing up for any tests!** If you sign up once as Jane P. Sherman and as Janie Sherman another time, the computer will treat you as two different people, which can make sending scores to colleges much more difficult. Be just as precise with your address, birth date, Social Security number, and testing codes!
5. **Extended-time testing:** Students eligible for extended time testing must have on file with the Learning Specialist, Angela Tabb, an educational evaluation done in the last three years, with a diagnosed disability and specific recommendation for extended time. Please note that it is extremely difficult to obtain extended time for the ACT. See your counselor for details.
7. You will receive an **admission ticket** for all testing sessions. Check the information for accuracy, and to be sure you are assigned to the correct test center. If you are not, or if you have other questions, see your college counselor well ahead of the test date. Save your admission tickets and **score reports** you receive in a specific file, even after you have taken the tests. You may need registration numbers and test dates later in the application process.

Recommended testing plan

Freshman and Sophomore years

- Register for and take any SAT Subject Tests that you are qualified to take in June. Refer to chart at the end of this chapter.
- Sophomores take the PSAT in October—the school will register the students.

Junior year

- October: PSAT—the school will register juniors for this test
- December: register for SAT Reasoning Test
- January: take the SAT reasoning test
- April: register for and take the ACT
- March/May: SAT test dates can be used to re-take the SAT Reasoning test
- May/June: SAT test dates should be used to take SAT Subject Tests. Your college counselor will help you choose.

Senior year

- Re-take the SAT Reasoning Test, Subject Tests, and ACT as needed

The only way for colleges to see your SAT or ACT scores is for you to arrange for official scores to be sent. They are not on BB&N's transcript and it is your responsibility, not the school's, to send scores.

- **Colleges require official score reports sent directly** to them from the testing agency. As a rule, they will not accept a copy of the report the agency has sent to you. Always have an official report sent!
- **Use the correct code.** Every college and other organizations (scholarship agencies & the NCAA) that might want to see your scores has a four-digit code, listed in the back of the registration booklet or online.
- SAT and ACT registration forms have spaces to put these codes when you register; a certain number of official reports are sent “free” – part of the price of registration. **Do not list any colleges in this space when you take the test as a junior!** Do, however, use the spaces for senior test dates, at least for colleges to which you are fairly certain to apply. You can always add others later, online.
- **Score choice** gives students the option to send SAT scores by sitting (test date) and SAT Subject Test scores by individual test.
- **Score reports for all SATs are *cumulative* up to the date of the request.** Thus, if you request a report for the December testing date of your senior year, it will include all tests taken up to that point, both SAT and Subject Tests.
- **Score reports for the ACT are *not* cumulative.** You must obtain a separate report for each testing date.
- **When should colleges have your scores?** For students applying early, scores should be sent by the first of November at the latest. For most students applying regular, scores should be sent by early January.

The College Counseling Office will not send SAT or ACT scores to a college for a student.

It is the student's responsibility to send official standardized test scores from the testing company to each college that requires them.

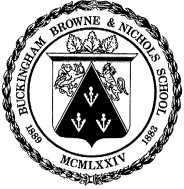
TEST PREPARATION

Familiarity with the organization, structure, and types of questions on any standardized test can be helpful, as it will allow you, on test day, to focus on the content of the questions without having to spend extra time during the test to figure out directions. Some basic, common-sense strategies can be useful in preventing extra stress and unnecessarily wasted time.

Many types of test preparation for the SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, and the ACT are available, including books, computer software, and commercial courses that require a significant investment of time and money. At the very least, you should familiarize yourself with the format and structure of the exams by using the booklets with sample questions that The College Board provides. There are sample questions and test taking tips on the College Board and the ACT websites (www.collegeboard.com, www.act.org). All contain practice test questions, as do many of the test-preparation books on the market. Some students are motivated to prepare on their own, while others may believe that they will not do the necessary preparation unless they have the external motivation that comes from a formal course. There is debate as to whether or not coaching can have a significant impact on a student's scores, but some sort of preparation is definitely beneficial; you and your family can decide which is best for you.

SAT SUBJECT TEST RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COLLEGE OFFICE

In order to take...	You should be finishing...
Humanities	
Literature	AP English 11
United States (U.S.) History	U.S. History (after grade 11)
Mathematics	
Mathematics Level 1	Pre-calculus
Mathematics Level 2	Honors pre-calculus (or higher)
Sciences	
Biology E/M (Ecological/Molecular)	Biology M (with prep course)
Chemistry	Chemistry or Honors Chem (with prep course)
Physics	Honors Physics (with prep course)
Foreign Languages *	
French	Honors Level 4 or 5 (with approval of teacher)
Latin	
Spanish	
* Test with Listening offered only in Nov	



**BB&N COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE
STANDARDIZED TESTING PLAN**

Name: _____

Date Completed: _____

Please fill in this chart to the best of your ability.				
Date	Tests Offered (Circle test you will take)	Registration Deadlines	Late Registration	Subject Tests? Which ones?
January 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT Reasoning • SAT Subject 	December 23	January 7	
February 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 	January 7	January 21	
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT <i>only</i> 	February 11	February 25	
April 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 	March 4	March 18	
May 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT Reasoning • SAT Subject 	April 8	April 22	
June 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT Reasoning • SAT Subject 	May 6	May 20	
June 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 	May 6	May 20	
September 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT 	TBA	TBA	
October 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAT Reasoning • SAT Subject Test 	TBA	TBA	

ACT V. SAT

	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (including the 30-minute optional Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Sections	4 test sections (5 with the optional Essay, known as the Writing Test)	10 Sections
Areas Tested	English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (optional)	Critical Reading, Math, Writing (includes the Essay), Experimental (unscored)
Reading (ACT) / Critical Reading (SAT)	4 Reading Comprehension passages, 10 questions per passage	Mix of Reading Comprehension and Sentence Completion questions that require vocabulary expertise
Science	Science Reasoning (analysis, interpretation, evaluation, problem solving) covered	Science not included
Math	Math accounts for 1/4 of overall score Topics Covered: Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry (4 questions)	Math accounts for 1/3 of overall score Topics Covered: Basic Geometry and Algebra II
Essay	Last thing you do (optional); 30 minutes Not included in composite score	First thing you do; 25 minutes Factored into overall score
Scoring	Total composite score of 1-36 (based on average of 4 tests) 4 scores of 1-36 for each test Score of 0-12 for the optional Essay	Total score out of 2400 3 scores of 200-800 for each section 2 sub-scores of 20-80 for writing multiple choice and 0-12 for the Essay
Wrong Answer Penalty	No wrong answer penalty	Yes, 1/4 point per wrong answer (except for Math Grid-in questions)
Sending Score History	You decide which score is sent	Score choice enables you to have some choice about which test scores are sent to colleges.