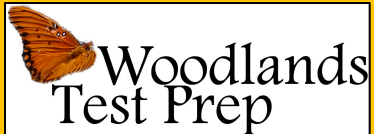




# WHAT DO MY PSAT SCORES MEAN?

(AND WHAT ABOUT THIS ALPHABET SOUP?)

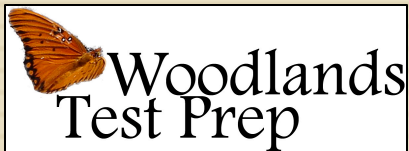


Susan Powers  
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# What Do My PSAT Scores Mean?

- PSAT Score Report – What do these numbers mean?
- SAT vs. ACT – Which one should I take? When?
- Test Prep Strategies – What “pro tips” do I need to know?



# PSAT Score Report

- **Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (AKA Verbal)**

- On a scale of 160 – 760
- Combines results from both Reading and Writing sections

- **Math**

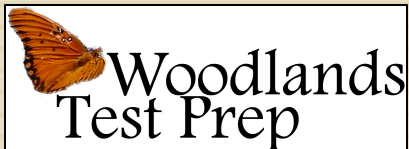
- On a scale of 160 – 760
- Combines results from both Math sections

- **Total Score**

- On a scale of 320 – 1520
- “Should” be comparable to score the student would have received on the SAT. Probably true in the middle but less true as scores approach 1520.

- **Percentiles**

- Nationally-representative means compared to a reference population created from research, NOT the students who actually took the test.
- Comparisons to last year’s students who took the test can be found in “Understanding Scores 2016” by the College Board.
- Compares students to their own grade: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades in one group, 11<sup>th</sup> grade in another.



# PSAT Score Report

## ➤ **National Merit Selection Index**

- Comprised of the individual Test Scores (see below) added together, and then that sum multiplied by 2.
- Verbal sections make up  $\frac{2}{3}$  and Math  $\frac{1}{3}$  of index.

## ➤ **Reading Test**

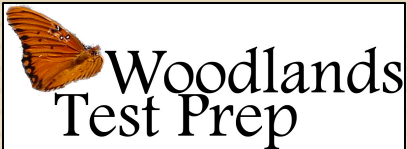
- Ranges from 8 – 38
- Covers Reading portion only

## ➤ **Writing Test**

- Ranges from 8 – 38
- Covers Writing portion only

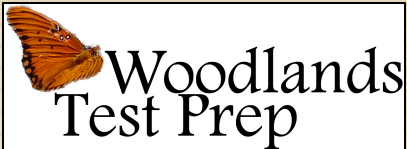
## ➤ **Math Test**

- Ranges from 8 – 38
- Covers both math sections together



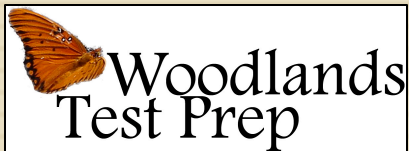
# PSAT Score Report

- Remember that PSAT scores are NOT reported to colleges. For most students, they only serve as a great resource to indicate what areas need work for the SAT.
- Remember that the test is aimed at 11<sup>th</sup> graders, particularly in math. The math test is heavily focused on algebra, including Algebra II. Ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> graders need to remember that they will cover that material in time to come.
- For students in National Merit Commended or Semi-Finalist range, the qualifying scores from last year were:
  - Commended – 209 (set on a national basis)
  - Semifinalist – 220 (set on a state-by-state basis); our prediction for class of 2018 is 219
- Students' scores on spring SATs go up more often than down. Firm statistics with the new version of the test aren't available yet, but with the old SAT format, approximately 60% of students' scores went up. Relatively lower SAT scores show larger gains.



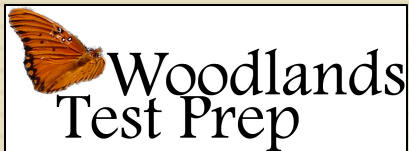
# PSAT Score Report

- Resources to improve
  - Students can and should log in to their College Board account to see their full PSAT score report. There, they will see other skills and improvement steps.
  - Also on the College Board site, students can link their College Board account to Khan Academy for personalized, free SAT practice. A great resource!
  - Students can also use the question-level feedback to note which question types they are doing well with and which ones need work. Focusing their attention on the areas that need work is the first step to improvement!



# SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

- All colleges accept either test. You have choices!
- You can choose to focus on only one test.
- Each test has a “personality.”
- Each student’s processing style, strengths, and weaknesses create preferences for one test or the other.



# SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

## SAT

- ✓ Just like PSAT, only slightly longer
- ✓ More time per question
- ✓ Tons of words in every section – even math!
- ✓ Focused math: almost all algebra and data analysis
- ✓ Data analysis across 3 sections is easier
- ✓ Extended time is easier to get approved

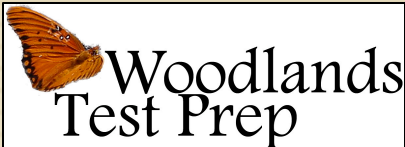
## ACT

- 4 sections: English, Math, Reading, Science
- Much faster paced
- Straightforward; easier reading level overall
- Math covers broader range of topics – there's geometry!
- Science section calls for more rigorous data analysis



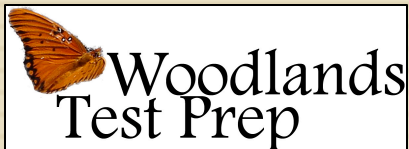
# SAT vs. ACT – Which one is right for me?

- To decide which one is better, compare ACT score with either SAT score (best) or PSAT score (good).
- Take a full-length official practice test at home to get a baseline score. No need to take on the record!
- Compare scores using College Board tables (ACT vs. SAT) or Woodlands Test Prep tables (ACT vs. PSAT). See last page for links.



# When should I take the SAT/ACT?

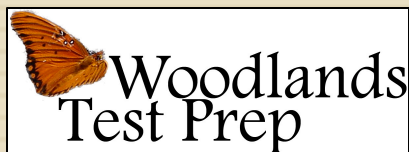
- Consider math level – Both tests cover Algebra II. Fall testing is ok if the student has already taken Algebra II. Spring testing is recommended if taking Algebra II in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Consider AP classes - SAT May 6<sup>th</sup> date is in the middle of AP testing.
- Consider SAT subject tests – Very selective colleges require or suggest subject tests. Subject tests are given on the same day as the SAT and can't be taken the same day.
- Consider extra-curricular activities – When is crunch time? When can extra prep time be absorbed?
- Consider early decision / admission deadlines – For senior year, how many test dates will be available for re-taking the target test?
- Consider taking multiple times – Most students take their chosen test at least twice and often three times. Make sure to allow time.



# When should I take the SAT?

Begin Prep Around Here	Register by Date	SAT Date
August 1, 2016	September 1, 2016	October 1, 2016
September 1, 2016	October 7, 2016	November 5, 2016
October 1, 2016	November 3, 2016	December 3, 2016 Scores by Dec. 23
November 1, 2016	December 21, 2016	January 21, 2017 Scores by Feb. 23
January 1, 2017	February 10, 2017	March 11, 2017 Scores by Apr. 13
March 1, 2017	April 7, 2017	May 6, 2017 Scores by Jun. 8
April 1, 2017	May 9, 2017	June 3, 2017 Scores by Jul. 12
June 1, 2017	Not yet available	August 26, 2017

Note new August test date!

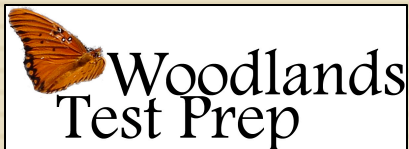


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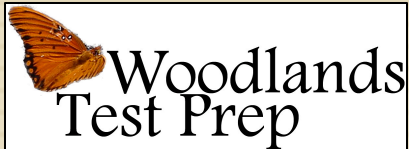
# When should I take the ACT?

Begin Prep Around Here	Register by Date	ACT Date
July 1, 2016	August 5, 2016	<b>September 10, 2016</b>
August 15, 2016	September 16, 2016	<b>October 22, 2016</b>
October 1, 2016	November 4, 2016	<b>December 10, 2016</b> Scores by Dec. 20
December 1, 2016	January 13, 2017	<b>February 11, 2017</b> Scores by Feb. 22
February 1, 2017	March 3, 2017	<b>April 8, 2017</b> Scores by Apr. 18
April 1, 2017	May 5, 2017	<b>June 10, 2017</b> Scores by Jun. 20



# Test Prep Strategies – “Pro Tips”

- Consider how the student learns best and his or her realistic motivation level
  - ▣ In a group or class
  - ▣ One on one tutoring
  - ▣ Independently – books or videos
- Prep before taking a test “on the record”
- Try to take the first time when the test booklet is available
  - ▣ SAT: October or May (possibly one other date)
  - ▣ ACT: December, April, or January



# Finally.....

- Remember – These tests are only a tool. You can learn to use this tool in order to achieve your goals.
  
- “To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one’s self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived—this is to have succeeded.”
  - ~ Bessie Andersen Stanley

# Useful Links

- College Board (SAT):  
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
- ACT, Inc.:  
<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration-information.html>
- ACT vs. PSAT:  
<http://www.woodlandstestprep.com/act-vs--sat>
- ACT vs. SAT:  
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/higher-ed-brief-sat-concordance.pdf>