

## PSAT Test

The PSAT is a two-hour test given October 15, 2014. Many students take the PSAT, not only as preparation for the SAT taken in senior year and widely used as a major criterion for college admissions, but also to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. See Ms. Baron to register by October 11, 2014. There is a fee of \$14 to take the test.

As with the SAT, the PSAT has separate math and verbal sections and a third section testing English grammar. Each subject is scored on a scale of 20 to 80 and these scores are combined to create the National Merit Scholarship selection index.

Almost all students take the PSAT during their junior year, but many students take the PSAT when they are sophomores to get the feel of the test. However, it is only the scores from the PSAT taken in your junior year that are considered for the National Merit Scholarship competition.

This scholarship competition awards approximately 8,200 scholarships annually. The selection process starts with the choosing of National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists and Commended Scholars. Cutoffs vary from state to state but typically Semi-Finalists score in the top one percent of students in their state and Commended Scholars between the top one to four percent. Most of the approximately 16,000 Semi-Finalists become Finalists, and half of those ultimately receive National Merit Scholarships.

The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are:

- To receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.
- To see how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college.
- To enter the competition for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (grade 11).
- To help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT.
- To receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service.