

# Learn About Standardized Tests & Customized Test Prep

This lesson is designed to help students explore the various standardized tests required by some colleges and how they can prepare to take them.

## OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Learn about the two major standardized tests used by colleges during the admissions process
2. Evaluate which test(s) they plan to take and their preparedness for the test by taking practice tests
3. Create a plan for preparing for and taking the standardized test

## ACTIVITIES

### PART 1

#### Content Knowledge

Teach students about the difference between the PSAT, SAT, and ACT, by using the *Standardized Tests* page under the *Search Colleges* tab in MEFA Pathway and the *Standardized Text Planning Handout* included below.

### PART 2

#### Applying Information

Students should start exploring admissions requirements for colleges they are interested in. Students can use the search bar at the top of the MEFA Pathway *College Search* page under the *Search Colleges* tab to search for a college and view the college's profile. The details page will indicate the average test scores for all students that were accepted and enrolled. Students can use the link to the school's website on the details page to see if the school is test-optional. Over 1,000 4-year schools do not require the SAT or ACT. Tell students that even if a school is test-optional, if they score well, they should include their scores in their application, as test scores may be required to be considered for merit scholarships or for placement once enrolled. Also, a strong test score can help bolster an admissions application.

Grade Level: 10

#### MEFA PATHWAY SECTIONS WITHIN THIS LESSON:

- Standardized Test
- College Search

#### DOMAIN:

- College & Career Exploration
- Academic Skills

#### TIME:

- 45 minutes

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Internet connection to work with the MEFA Pathway website
- Standardized Test Planning Handout (attached)

#### FUTURE READY SKILLS:

- Evaluating
- Critical Thinking
- Time Management

#### VOCABULARY:

- PSAT
- SAT
- ACT

Email any questions to:  
[info@mefapathway.org](mailto:info@mefapathway.org)



# LESSON PLAN

### PART 3

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#### Evaluating Information

After collecting admissions information for all the colleges they are interested in, students should decide what test they intend to take for college admissions purposes. Students may decide that they want to take both the SAT and ACT.

### PART 4

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#### Critical Thinking/Creative Application

Many high schools facilitate the PSAT, although if your school does not, there may be a test site close by. Although the PSAT is not used in the college admissions process, it can help prepare students for future standardized test taking.

After taking the PSAT, encourage students to link their test results from the College Board to Khan Academy. As a result, customized practice recommendations will be generated based on test results. Have students view [this page](#) on how to connect College Board and Khan Academy accounts.

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# Standardized Test Planning Handout

	PSAT	SAT	ACT
<b>Details</b>	The preliminary SAT or practice SAT; Taken by sophomores and juniors; is not used for college admissions  Can qualify students for National Merit Scholarships and other corporate and college-sponsored merit scholarships	A standardized test that assesses critical thinking	A subject-based standardized test taken usually by juniors and seniors
<b>Cost</b>	\$16. Students may be eligible for a fee waiver; schools request waiver, not student	\$60 <a href="#">Fee waivers</a> are available if the student meets the qualifications	\$63 without the writing portion and \$88 with the writing portion. If you miss the registration date, there is an additional \$36 fee.  <a href="#">Fee waivers</a> are available if the student meets certain qualifications.
<b>Length &amp; Sections</b>	Two hours and forty-five minutes; four total sections <b>Math:</b> One 25-minute section and one 45-minute section consisting of multiple-choice and grid-ins (student-produced answers) <b>Evidence-Based Reading:</b> One 60-minute section consisting of reading comprehension <b>Writing:</b> One 35-minute section consisting of fixing grammatical errors and revising words and phrases to improve the text	Three hours (3 sections) <b>Math:</b> One 80-minute section (58 questions) consisting of primarily multiple-choice questions and some grid-ins produced answers); the main concepts tested here are algebra, problem-solving, data analysis, and advanced math <b>Reading:</b> One 65-minute section (52 questions) consisting of understanding complex passages and identifying words in context <b>Writing and Language:</b> One 35-minute section (44 questions) consisting of targeting grammar and argument-building abilities	Two hours and 55 minutes long (4 sections) without the writing section and 3 hours and 35 minutes (5 sections) with the writing portion <b>English:</b> One 45-minute section (75 questions) comprised of usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills <b>Math:</b> One 60-minute section (60 questions) comprised of algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry, and trigonometry <b>Reading:</b> One 35-minute section (40 questions) comprised of Social Studies, Natural Science, Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction, and Humanities <b>Science:</b> One 35-minute section (40 questions) comprised of Testing Data Analysis, Experimental Results, and Conflicting Viewpoint <b>Writing:</b> One 40-minute written section (1 essay) comprised of taking a position on an issue in response to a question; this section requires students to exhibit their ability to explain their position using supporting evidence, opinion, and reason. Only some colleges require the writing section
<b>Scoring</b>	Each section has a scaled score from 160 to 760 points	The SAT is scored on a 1600-point scale. There is no penalty for a wrong answer	The four multiple-choice sections are graded on a scale of 1-36 and will generate a composite score of 1-36  The writing section is graded ranging 0 to 12