

# THE PSAT:

## Exam Overview & Section Breakdown



## EXAM OVERVIEW

### FORMAT

- Reading, Writing, Math
- 4 answer choices for multiple-choice questions

### SCORING

- 320-1520 total points
- Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 160-760 points
- Math: 160-760 points

### GUESSING PENALTY

No deduction for wrong answers



# THE PSAT:

## Section Breakdown

### READING

4 long passages, 1 double passage, 47 multiple-choice questions  
Total time: 60 minutes

- Tests vocabulary within passages, fewer old and obscure “SAT words”
- Graphics (charts, graphs, pictures related to text)
- 10 questions ask students to identify lines in the passage that support their answer
- Founding Document/Global Conversation passage

### MATH

2 sections: Calculator and No Calculator  
Total time: 70 minutes

- Real-world situations
- Student-produced responses
- Less geometry, more emphasis on algebra and data analysis
- No Pre-calculus or trigonometry
- No calculator for 35% of Math

### WRITING & LANGUAGE

4 passages, 44 multiple-choice questions  
Total time: 35 minutes

- Passage-based sentences to edit for grammar and punctuation
- Tests rhetorical skills
- 10 vocabulary questions
- Graphics (at least one passage will include a graph, picture, or table related to the text)

### PSAT vs SAT

While the PSAT and the SAT are similar in structure, there are three main differences to note.

- **Scores:** The PSAT score range is 320 to 1520, whereas the SAT score range is 400 to 1600. However, your PSAT score is an excellent predictor of how you would score on the SAT if you took the SAT on the same day you took the PSAT.
- **Longer Reading:** The SAT Reading section is 5 minutes longer than the PSAT Reading section.
- **Longer Math:** The SAT Math Calculator section is 10 minutes longer than the PSAT Math Calculator section and the Math sections include a few questions testing higher level topics.