

The PSAT

The PSAT test measures a student's skills in three core areas:

- Critical Reading (2 sections),
- Math (2 sections), and
- Writing (1 section).

PSAT/NMSQT Test Format

Section	Content	Time Allowed	# of Questions
1	Critical Reading	25 minutes	24
1 minute break			
2	Math	25 minutes	20
1 minute break			
3	Critical Reading	25 minutes	24
5 minute break			
4	Math	25 minutes	18
1 minute break			
5	Writing Skills	30 minutes	39
1 minute break			
Total		2 hours, 10 minutes	125

Critical Reading

	Sentence Completion	Short Passages (approx. 100 words)	Long Passages (approx. 400-850 words)
Section 1	#1-8	#9-12 (2 passages)	#13-24 (2 passages)
Section 3	#25-29	#30-33 (2 passages)	#34-48 (2 passages)
	13 questions total	8 questions total	27 questions total

Critical Reading – Sentence Completion

Directions:

Each sentence below has one or two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five words or sets of words labeled A through E. Choose the word or set of words that, when inserted in the sentence, best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

A discerning publishing agent can ----- promising material from a mass of submissions, separating the good from the bad.

- (A) supplant
- (B) dramatize
- (C) finagle
- (D) winnow
- (E) overhaul

Critical Reading – Short Passages

I remember the summer of 1940 when I first left here. After my final school year my days had been reduced to waiting, anticipating the preinduction physical for the year of compulsory service required of all physically fit seventeen and eighteen year olds, both men and women. Although I wanted the medical reports to declare me perfectly fit and would have felt inferior if they had not, I was not looking forward to upcoming camp life. Yet without any say in my future, all I hoped to know was where and when. Then the paralyzing uncertainty ended. My orders to report to a never-heard-of location in Czechoslovakia even kindled a spark of anticipation for traveling to a foreign country and moving toward new experiences, whatever they might be. I was assigned to a camp that was an agricultural teaching facility, where I was expected to learn to run a large rural household. Like me, most of the girls at the camp enjoyed the hearty meals and learned to ignore our servant status. After years of having subsisted on ration diets in the cities, we blossomed into robust young women whose physical well-being countered surges of hurt pride, resentment, and periods of homesickness. And so began just one of the many disjointed and unpredictable periods I endured before the subsiding waves of war swept me an ocean away.

The passage indicates that if the author had failed the preinduction physical, she would most likely have felt

- (A) grateful for the excuse to spend more time with her family
- (B) wistful about having missed the opportunity to travel
- (C) upset that she was not classified as completely healthy
- (D) dejected because her friends would be leaving without her
- (E) unconcerned since she was already unable to control her destiny

Critical Reading – Long Passages

Line

Ernest Hemingway reminds us that both Tolstoy and Stendahl had seen war, that Flaubert had seen a revolution, that Dostoyevsky had been sent to Siberia, and that such experiences were important in shaping the art of these

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nineteenth-century literary masters. And he goes on to observe that "writers are forged in injustice as a sword is forged." He declined to describe the many personal forms which injustice may take in this chaotic world -- who would be so mad as to try? -- nor does he go into the

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personal wounds that each of these writers sustained. In the end it is the quality of Hemingway's art that is primary. It is the art which allows the wars and revolutions which he knew, and the personal and social injustice which he suffered, to lay claims on our attention, for it was through his

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art that they achieved their most enduring meaning. It is a matter of outrageous irony, perhaps, but in literature great social clashes of history, no less than the painful experience of the individual, are secondary to the meaning they take on through the skill, talent, imagination, and personal vision

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of the writer who transforms them into art. Here they are reduced to more manageable proportions; here they are imbued with humane values; here injustice and catastrophe become less important in themselves than what the author makes of them. This is *not* true, however, of the writer's

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struggle with that recalcitrant angel called Art, and it was through *this* specific struggle that Ernest Hemingway became *Hemingway*. And it was through this struggle with form that he became the master, the culture hero, whom we have come to know and admire.

In the passage, art is described as a "recalcitrant angel" (line 25) because

- (A) writers have traditionally found it difficult to achieve mastery of artistic form
- (B) so few artists have found fame and appreciation for their work
- (C) art does not readily relieve the suffering of those caught in unjust situations
- (D) divine inspiration is often considered intrinsic to artistic creation
- (E) writer's block is a frequent result of the artist's struggle with new forms

Math

	Easy	Medium	Hard
Section 2: Multiple – Choice	#1-6	#7-14	#15-20
Section 4: Multiple – Choice	#21-22	#23-25	#26-28
Section 4: Grid – In	#29-31	#32-35	#36-38

Math – Multiple – Choice

If n is an odd integer, which of the following must be an odd integer?

(A) $n - 1$

(B) $n + 1$

(C) $2n$

(D) $3n + 1$

(E) $4n + 1$

Math – Grid - In

Directions: For Student-Produced Response questions 9-18, use the grids at the bottom of the answer sheet page on which you have answered questions 1-8.

Each of the remaining 10 questions requires you to solve the problem and enter your answer by marking the circles in the special grid, as shown in the examples below. You may use any available space for scratchwork.

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

Write answer in boxes.

7	/	1	2
○	●	○	○
0	0	0	0
1	1	●	1
2	2	2	●
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
●	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

Grid in result.

Answer: 2.5

2	.	5	
○	○	●	○
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	●	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	●
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

Decimal point

Answer: 201

Either position is correct.

2	0	1	
○	○	○	○
0	0	●	0
1	1	1	●
2	●	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4

2	0	1	
○	○	○	○
0	0	○	0
1	1	●	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4

Note: You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns not needed should be left blank.

- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- Because the answer sheet will be machine-scored, you will receive credit only if the circles are filled in correctly.
- Although not required, it is suggested that you write your answer in the boxes at the top of the columns to help you fill in the circles accurately.
- Some problems may have more than one correct answer. In such cases, grid only one answer.
- No question has a negative answer.
- **Mixed numbers** such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ must be gridded as 3.5 or 7/2. (If $\frac{31}{2}$ is gridded, it will be interpreted as $\frac{31}{2}$, not $3\frac{1}{2}$.)
- **Decimal Answers:** If you obtain a decimal answer with more digits than the grid can accommodate, it may be either rounded or truncated, but it must fill the entire grid. For example, if you obtain an answer such as 0.6666..., you should record your result as .666 or .667. **A less accurate value such as .66 or .67 will be scored as incorrect.**

Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:

2	/	3	
○	○	○	○
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	●	2	2
3	3	3	●
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6

.	6	6	6
○	○	○	○
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	●	●	●

.	6	6	7
○	○	○	○
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	●	●	○

Writing Skills

Identifying Sentence Errors	Improving Sentences	Improving Paragraphs
14 questions	20 questions	5 questions

Writing Skills – Identifying Sentence Errors


The following sentences test your knowledge of grammar, usage, word choice, and idiom. Some sentences are correct. No sentence contains more than one error. You will find that the error, if there is one, is underlined and lettered. **Elements of the sentence that are not underlined will not be changed.** In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English.

Directions:

If there is an error, select the one underlined part that must be changed to make the sentence correct. **If there is no error, select E.**

Sponsors of the Olympic Games who bought advertising
time on United States television includes at least a dozen
international firms whose names are familiar to American
consumers. No error.

A
B **C**
D
E



Writing Skills – Improving Sentences

Directions:

In each of the following sentences, some part or all of the sentence is underlined. Below each sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. Select the answer that produces the most effective sentence, one that is clear and exact, without awkwardness or ambiguity. In choosing answers, follow the requirements of standard written English. Choose the answer that best expresses the meaning of the original sentence.

Answer (A) is always the same as the underlined part. Choose answer (A) if you think the original sentence needs no revision.

Hearing that the Statue of Liberty did not have a pedestal, a campaign was begun by Joseph Pulitzer to raise money for the construction of one.

- (A) a campaign was begun by Joseph Pulitzer to raise money
- (B) a campaign to raise money was initiated by Joseph Pulitzer
- (C) money was raised in a campaign by Joseph Pulitzer
- (D) Joseph Pulitzer began a campaign to raise money
- (E) Joseph Pulitzer had campaigned to raise money

Writing Skills – Improving Paragraphs

Directions:

The following passage is an early draft of an essay. Some parts of the passage need to be rewritten. Read the passage and select the best answer for the question that follows. In making your decision, follow the conventions of standard written English.

Passage:

(1) Every year we hear more and more people complaining about the extended commercialism of the winter holiday season. (2) Every year stores put out decorations and holiday merchandise earlier and earlier. (3) Yet every year retailers complain that sales are not what they should be. (4) When will retailers learn? (5) The public knows how to keep its own schedule. (6) When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers are saying that they do not want to think about the winter holidays too early.

Question: Which of the following is the best version of the underlined portion of sentence 6 (reproduced below) ?

When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers are saying that they do not want to think about the winter holidays too early.

- (A) When we do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, shoppers
- (B) When shoppers do not buy holiday gifts far in advance, they
- (C) In fact, shoppers' holiday gifts are not bought far in advance; they
- (D) Consequently, by our not buying these far in advance, shoppers
- (E) In contrast, when we do not do so, it is because shoppers

How is the PSAT scored?

- Raw Score
 - Every correct answer is worth 1 point
 - Every incorrect multiple-choice answer is a loss of $\frac{1}{4}$ point. **There is no penalty for incorrect grid-in answers!**
 - Unanswered questions will not affect the raw score.

$$\text{Raw Score} = (\# \text{ of correct answers}) - \left(\frac{\# \text{ of incorrect multiple-choice answers}}{4} \right)$$

How is the PSAT scored?

- Scaled Score
 - Each section receives a separate raw score scaled to a range of 20-80.
 - Each scaled score is added to provide the selection index (SI), so it is a range of 60-240. ***It is this score that is used to determine eligibility for National Merit scholarships!***
 - The SI for Oklahoma National Merit semifinalist is usually around 207-209.