



## December 2016

### 3<sup>rd</sup>— SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

### 10<sup>th</sup>— ACT and ACT With Writing

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report with advisor and map out a plan for test preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing dates

Seniors — File any additional college applications before deadline dates

## January 2017

### 21<sup>st</sup> – SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests

(register by 12/21 - late registration 1/10/17)

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

## Planning on Playing College Sports?

Prospective college athletes may have to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. This is the organization that evaluates academic records and experiences for student athletes to determine whether they would be allowed to participate in sports at NCAA Division I or Division II colleges as freshman. Division III colleges set their own admissions standards and prospective DIII athletes do not need to register with the NCAA.

Division I schools enroll the most students, manage the largest athletic budgets, and offer the most athletic scholarships. They account for 176,000 student athletes and 346 colleges. There are specific eligibility requirements to play sports in Division I schools. Students must have completed 16 core courses, with 10 of them completed before the seventh semester (senior year) of high school. A player must have at least a 2.3 GPA in the core courses, and an SAT combined score or ACT composite score that matches the core course GPA on the Division I sliding scale, which balances test scores with GPA. The ACT composite used for NCAA purposes is a sum of the English, mathematics, reading, and science sections. This means that if your test scores are low, you need a higher GPA, and if your GPA is low, you will need higher test scores.

If you cannot meet the Division I requirements, you cannot compete in sports during your first year. However, if you qualify as an academic redshirt, you can still practice and are eligible for athletic scholarships. To qualify, you must complete 16 core courses, maintain a 2.0 GPA in them, and have an SAT combined or ACT sum score that matches the core course GPA in the Division I sliding scale.

Division II schools provide opportunities for academic achievement, high-level athletic competition, and community involvement. They account for 118,800 student

athletes and 307 colleges. The requirements for Division II schools are slightly different. You must take 16 core courses in high school, maintain a core-course GPA of at least 2.0, **and** have a minimum score on the SAT combined exam of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68 to fully qualify to practice, compete, and receive scholarships. A partial qualifier requires the 16 core courses and a GPA of 2.0 **or** an SAT combined score of 820/ACT sum score of 68. Partial qualifiers can practice and receive scholarships, but they cannot compete in the first year.

For high school students, it is important to plan ahead if you want to play sports in college. In Grade 9, check out the NCAA required core courses to make sure you are taking the correct ones. In Grade 10, create an account and register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. In Grade 11, take the ACT or the SAT and have your counselor upload your official transcript to your account. In Grade 12, complete all the required NCAA core courses, retake the ACT or SAT if necessary, and answer the academic and amateurism questions. Amateurism refers to your status as a non-professional athlete. The questions pertain to whether you have accepted payment for playing a sport, whether you are represented by an agent, and/or whether you have a contract with a professional team. Submit final transcripts after graduation.

To find out more and to register with the NCAA, go to [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). Create an account and be prepared to answer questions about your education history, additional coursework you have completed, and your sports participation history. For US and Canadian citizens, there is a \$75 fee to register. For all other nationalities the fee is \$130. Options do exist for home-schooled students, students with documented Education-Impacted Disabilities (EID), and those who need fee waivers.

## Career Paths for Communication Majors

- Event Planner
- Executive Producer
- Human Resources Professional
- Editorial Director
- Brand Strategist
- Media Director
- Senior Account Executive
- Marketing Director
- Senior Interactive Producer
- Director of Communications
- News Anchor
- Editor-in-Chief
- Senior Technical Writer
- Campaign Manager
- Freelance Writer
- Senior Copywriter
- Communications Manager
- Web Manager
- Advertising Broadcast Producer
- Vice President, Public Relations and Corporate Communications

More information about Communications majors and careers can be found at [www.communications-major.com](http://www.communications-major.com).

## Majoring in Communications

A degree in Communications can be useful in almost any industry. It teaches students how to effectively communicate information to diverse audiences, visually, verbally and in writing. Communications majors also learn how to plan and execute events and projects, with attention to detail and organization. This degree is useful to professionals who need to represent a company, and its services or products, in the best possible way. In business, strong writing and oral communication skills are valued, along with good presentation skills that can portray a solid knowledge of how a company functions within all of its departments.

As many traditional media outlets such as newspapers, television, and magazines transition to online platforms, Communications experts play an important role in helping to sell products, in maintaining strong relationships with investors and clients, and in making sure everyone within a business is on the same page. In the media, Communications graduates work in TV and film production, and in journalism. These jobs can be very competitive, and relevant work experience is a must, so it is crucial that students take advantage of internships or student media productions while in college. Work is also available in web design, social media, online publishing, and video production. Social media managers are experts at helping organizations to advertise their products and services online and must use strong writing skills to compose messages showing them in the best possible light. Business reporters cover news in industry and the economy in general, both online and in print. Strong analytic and communication skills are required, both to create contacts with business insiders and to convey information to the public. As technology evolves, more employment in this sector is predicted.

Advertising, marketing, and public relations are all fields that work to maintain a company's good relationship with the public. Prospective jobs for Communications graduates include creating press releases, writing advertising scripts, developing company presentations, and attending media events. These jobs are available within corporations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Human Resources teams employ Communications graduates to assist in recruiting, training, and retaining strong employees. They also help to ensure that company guidelines and regulations are being clearly communicated, both orally and in print. Human Resources professionals use their public speaking skills to give presentations to employees and to interview job candidates. They use writing skills to create manuals and web content.

Some Communications majors continue on to law school. They also find work in administrative and organizational roles within the courts and legal firms. Legal secretaries and paralegals frequently have degrees in Communications.

Although coursework varies among universities, students majoring in Communications should plan on taking classes in topics such as Communication Theory, News Writing and Reporting, Speech Communication, Research Methods, Corporate Communications and Public Relations, and Interpersonal Communications.

Majoring in Communications is a great fit for students who are interested in conveying information to others in innovative and creative ways. Strong communications skills are highly sought after, so if you enjoy public speaking and writing content, this may be the ideal degree to pursue.

## Financial Matters: Write your Way to a College Scholarship



With one year of college costing over \$60,000 at many schools, even the most affluent families become grateful for any additional scholarship help. Although some essay contest committees consider need in selecting winners, many others look only at the merits of the essay. Writing a really dynamite essay can pay off handsomely, and, unless the topic is unusually specific, essays can often be tweaked to fit the requirements of several contests.

First, accumulate a list of essay contests and make note of the essay required for each. Group those that address similar topics, and spend your time crafting a really good essay. Your opening sentence needs to grab your reader—paint a scene and place your audience right in the middle. Use specific examples and work on those descriptive phrases. Spend time writing and revising; winning an essay contest can yield more money than a minimum wage job. Here's a list of essay contests to get you started—find more by Googling “scholarship essay contests”.

Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead Scholarships: [www.aynrand.org](http://www.aynrand.org)

The Jane Austin Society Essay Scholarship: [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org)

The National Peace Essay Contest: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)

The American Mensa Educational & Research Foundation Scholarship [www.mensafoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships](http://www.mensafoundation.org/what-we-do/scholarships)

Profile in Courage Essay Contest: [www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Profile-in-Courage-Essay-Contest](http://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Profile-in-Courage-Essay-Contest)

Spirit of Anne Frank Award: [www.annefrank.com/fileadmin/safa/index.html](http://www.annefrank.com/fileadmin/safa/index.html)

American Foreign Service High School Essay Contest: [www.afsa.org/essay-contest](http://www.afsa.org/essay-contest)

## Using PSAT Results in Planning Testing Strategy

Each year, tens of thousands of students take the PSAT exam at high schools across the United States. The PSAT is not used by colleges in the admissions process, but the results can help you better understand your academic strengths and weaknesses and suggest the skills you should focus on in preparing for college entrance exams such as the SAT or ACT. This year, students are expected to be able to access their PSAT scores online on December 12th.

Your score report will show you both the average scores earned by test takers in specific grade levels across the U.S., as well as your individual scores on the reading and writing section and on the math portion. Your raw scores (number correct) for each section have been converted to a score table that ranges from 160-760 to allow for differences between alternate versions of this exam. The scores are also reported in terms of percentile rank. Your

percentile rank on a specific section represents the percentage of student test takers whose scores fell at or below your score. Therefore, a score rank at the 75th percentile indicates that you scored the same or better than 75% of test takers in your grade level. Benchmarks are also provided to help you identify areas in which your skills are “college ready” as well as those needing more work. There's an excellent video on understanding your score report available to students at <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/scores/understanding-scores>.

The real value in the PSAT, however, is that it can provide you with a guide to your academic strengths and weaknesses. You'll want to take some time to review the individual sections of the report and look at the types of questions that you answered both correctly and incorrectly on this test. If you are a

tenth grader taking geometry, don't worry if you missed several geometry questions since the test was given early in your course. If you have completed geometry and still missed several questions in this area, you'll want to spend more time reviewing this material before taking your SAT or ACT. A reading and writing section score below the benchmark for college readiness should serve as a wake up call—you really need to increase the time you spend reading for pleasure. Discuss your score report with your advisor for specific suggestions for improving your performance.

As you review your PSAT scores and think about future SAT scores, keep in mind that test scores, while important, *never* trump grades when it comes to college admissions. So, high PSAT scores that lead to high SAT scores are *not* a replacement for *consistently* good academic performance.



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## Your Applications are In—What Now?

Applications are in and you are enjoying that wonderful feeling of relief that comes with the last submission, but don't put away those user names and passwords. Many colleges allow students to check the status of an application by logging into their portal. You should also check your e-mail regularly so that you don't miss any important communication. Don't panic if you are notified that your application is incomplete, as the missing document is probably somewhere in their system. With the deluge of documents, it can take several weeks for the staff to get everything logged in. Still, check on any "missing" items.

Usually, you need to wait until you are accepted before applying for housing. However, some schools do allow students to submit a preliminary housing application as soon as they apply. This can be especially important at colleges that do not guarantee housing for freshmen. If you want to have the best chance of getting your preferred housing choice, make sure you apply for housing as soon as the school allows you to do so.

With financial aid deadlines looming, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should be completed as soon as possible. Funds are limited and the earlier you apply, the better. You will find comprehensive financial aid and scholarship

information at [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org). Complete the FAFSA at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. Many private colleges require the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA. Access that form through the College Board site.

If you have registered with a scholarship search engine such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), make sure you have reviewed all the possibilities. Check with your high school's college counseling office to find out about scholarships offered by local civic groups and businesses. The amount of the scholarship may be smaller but there are fewer students competing for it. Before you rule out a \$500 or \$1,000 scholarship as not worth the effort, look at the application requirements. If you can complete the application in two or three hours, you are earning hundreds of dollars an hour. Put together several small scholarships and you have a nice contribution toward your college costs.

Be sure to keep up with schoolwork. Even if you have been accepted early at your favorite college, an offer of admission is always contingent upon successful completion of senior year. If your grades are significantly lower or you have lightened your course load, you could be jeopardizing your admission. Be sure to notify the admission office if you decide to drop an AP class or make any other changes to your schedule.