



CHARLOTTE
COUNTRY DAY
SCHOOL

PreACT & PSAT Information for Students & Parents



Why does Country Day administer the PreACT and PSAT?

- Practice and testing experience
- Early diagnosis of potential areas of improvement
- Preparation for the ACT and SAT
- Assessment of school program
- Eligibility for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation for 11th graders who score very high on the PSAT/NMSQT.



What skills does the PreACT measure?

- It measures students' curriculum-related knowledge and complex cognitive skills.
 - The English test measures students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English (punctuation; usage; sentence structure and formation), production of writing (topic development; organization, unity and cohesion), and knowledge of language (word choice; style; tone).
 - The Math test requires use of quantitative reasoning skills to solve practical problems and covers the following categories: Preparing for Higher Math (Number & Quantity; Algebra; Functions; Geometry; Statistics & Probability), Integrating Essential Skills (such as rates and percentages; proportional relationships; area, surface area, and volume; average and median; expressing numbers in different ways), and Modeling (involves producing, interpreting, understanding, evaluating, and improving models).



What skills does the PreACT measure? (cont.)

- The Reading test measures students' reading comprehension. It asks students to use referring and reasoning skills to determine main ideas; locate and interpret significant details; understand sequences of events; make comparisons; comprehend cause-effect relationships; determine the meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, and statements; draw generalizations; and analyze the author's or narrator's voice and method.
- The Science test requires students to recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information; to examine critically the relationships between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed; and to generalize from the given information to gain new information, draw conclusions, or make predictions. The scientific information is conveyed in one of three formats: data representation (graphs, tables, and other schematic forms), research summaries (descriptions and results of several related experiments), or conflicting viewpoints (expressions of several related hypotheses or views that are inconsistent with one another).



What skills does the PSAT measure?

- The Reading test measures comprehension and reasoning skills and focuses on close reading of passages in a wide array of subject areas (challenging literary and informational texts, including texts on science and history/social studies topics).
- The Writing and Language test measures a range of skills including command of evidence, expression of ideas, and the use of standard English conventions in grammar, usage, and punctuation.
- The Math test covers a range of math practices (applying that ability to solve problems situated in science, social studies, and career-related contexts), with an emphasis on problem solving, modeling, using tools strategically, and using algebraic structure.



What is the test structure of the PreACT?

- **Four Sections:**
 - English – 45 questions/30 minutes
 - Math – 36 questions/40 minutes
 - Reading – 25 questions/30 minutes
 - Science – 30 questions/30 minutes



What is the test structure of the PSAT?

- **Four Sections:**
 - **Reading – 47 questions/60 minutes**
 - **Writing and Language – 44 questions/35 minutes**
 - **Math (no calculator) – 17 questions/25 minutes**
 - **Math (w/calculator) – 31 questions/45 minutes**



How is the PreACT scored?

- For each of the four tests, the number of questions answered correctly is counted to obtain a raw score, which is then converted to a scale score.
- Scale scores for the four tests and the Composite score range from a low of **1** to a high of **35**.
- The composite score is calculated by rounding the unweighted average of the four subject test scale scores.



How is the PSAT scored?

- A student's raw score is computed as the number of questions correctly answered. The scores included on score reports are based on raw scores.
- The raw score is then converted to a scaled score of 160 to 760. This conversion process adjusts for slight differences in difficulty among versions of the test and provides a score that is *equated*, or consistent, across forms.
- The total score is the combination (addition) of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section score (160–760) with the Math section score (160–760). The total score reported range for the PSAT/NMSQT is 320–1520.



How does the PreACT compare to the ACT?

- The PreACT is a shortened version of the ACT: 2 hours 10 minutes versus 2 hours 55 minutes.
- PreACT scores range between 1–35; ACT scores range between 1–36.
- How different are PreACT scores in comparison to ACT scores? According to the ACT, “... PreACT and ACT ranges are on approximately the same score scale. A score increase from PreACT to ACT can be interpreted as academic development within the limitations of measurement error.”



How does the PSAT compare to the SAT?

- The PSAT is a shortened version of the SAT: 2 hours 45 minutes versus 3 hours.
- PSAT scores range between 320–1520 (evidenced-based reading and writing and math); SAT scores range between 400–1600 (evidenced-based reading and writing and math).
- How different are PSAT/NMSQT scores in comparison to SAT scores? According to the College Board, “... a student who took the PSAT/NMSQT and received a Math section score of 500 would be expected to also get a 500 on the SAT if he or she had taken that test on that same day.”



Improving performance and scores.

- Rework the test.
 - Refer to your score report and test booklet, and visit the [PreACT](#) or [PSAT](#) for helpful test information and practice.
- Read, read, read, and develop strong writing skills.
- Take challenging courses and continue to develop academic skills.
- Review the math material in the test booklet.



How does my student's scores compare? 2021 CCDS Results

CCDS 10th Graders (PreACT)

Composite Mean: 23.2

Math Mean: 22.3

Science Mean: 22.5

English Mean: 21.3

Reading Mean: 26.4

CCDS 11th Graders (PSAT)

Total Score Mean: 1189

Evidenced-Based Reading/Writing Mean: 611

Math Mean: 578



Do colleges receive PreACT or PSAT scores?

- No. Colleges ***require ACT and/or SAT scores***, not PreACT and/or PSAT scores.
- PreACT and PSAT scores ***are not*** listed on the transcript and ***are not*** reported to colleges, unless specifically requested by colleges and reported by the student.
- Colleges ***do*** purchase lists of students who score in certain ranges in order to “market” to these students. These scores, however, ***do not*** become a part of the student’s application file.



When should I take the ACT and/or SAT and should I take a prep course?

- The College Counseling Office recommends that 11th graders take an ACT and/or SAT in the winter and consider taking it again in late spring.
- Some students will take the ACT and/or SAT again in the fall of their 12th grade year.
- Many CCDS students do take a prep course. However, this is a personal decision.
- College Counseling keeps an updated list of ACT/SAT prep opportunities (on BucsNet) based on how satisfied our students were with the course.
- Students can also access free test preparation through ACT and College Board by linking their testing accounts.



If I take a prep course, when should I take it and what improvement can be expected?

- **If PreACT or PSAT scores indicate areas that need to be strengthened, then addressing it in the 10th or 11th grade may be a good idea.**
- **Improvement varies widely. Students who work diligently to take advantage of the instruction can gain points. Those who do not follow through on homework for the course will generally experience minimal gains. Choose to take a prep course when you will have the time to devote to it.**



CHARLOTTE
COUNTRY DAY
SCHOOL

Additional Questions? Please feel free to contact us.

Catherine Loftin Odum

Interim Director of College Counseling

704-943-4683 or catherine.odum@charlottecountryday.org

Jonathan M. Woog

Associate Director of College Counseling/Testing Coordinator

704-943-4684 or jonathan.woog@charlottecountryday.org

Jordon McRae

Assistant Director of College Counseling

704-943-4692 or jordon.mcrae@charlottecountryday.org



COUNTRY DAY Ready.

charlottecountryday.org