

# Understanding PSAT Scores

## Parent and Student Presentation

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Objective: To be able to interpret your test score report

Goal: Students will understand that their results, however strong, horrendous or otherwise, provide the basis for a study plan not only for future testing, but also for their studies in school.

# SCORING INFORMATION

For the PSAT, your score is intended to be essentially the equivalent of a score on the SAT. I have not heard a truly satisfactory explanation for why the sections for the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT are 760 points each rather than 800. The PSAT 8/9 is 720 points per section.

Pay close attention to your rank (nationally representative sample percentile) against students at your grade level in the state and nation (your competition), as well as your NMSC index score (used for National Merit Scholarship consideration).

There are also subscores that provide a more granular understanding of how you did in targeted areas. You have ranges for Test Scores, Cross-Test Scores on Social Studies and Science, and Subscores.

# Score Structure

From the College Board website:

PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 Score Ranges		
PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10 Score Reported	Details	Score Range
Total score	Sum of the two section scores.	320–1520
Section scores (2)	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math.	160–760
Test scores (3)	Reading, Writing and Language, and Math.	8–38
Cross-test scores (2)	Analysis in History/Social Studies and Analysis in Science. Based on selected questions in the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Tests.	8–38
Subscores (7)	Reading and Writing and Language: Command of Evidence and Words in Context. Writing and Language: Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions. Math: Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, and Passport to Advanced Math.	1–15

## Cross-Test Scores

The two cross-test scores are Analysis in Science and Analysis in History/Social Studies. They're called "cross-test" scores because the questions that make up this part of your score are drawn from all three tests. The cross-test scores have a range of 8–38.

## Subscores

Seven subscores reflect how well you did on specific types of questions that appear on the PSAT 10. The subscores are:

- Command of Evidence
- Words in Context
- Expression of Ideas
- Standard English Conventions
- Heart of Algebra
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- Passport to Advanced Math

Each of the subscores is in the range of 1–15.

Show your work on every question that you hope to answer correctly.

# Free Advice

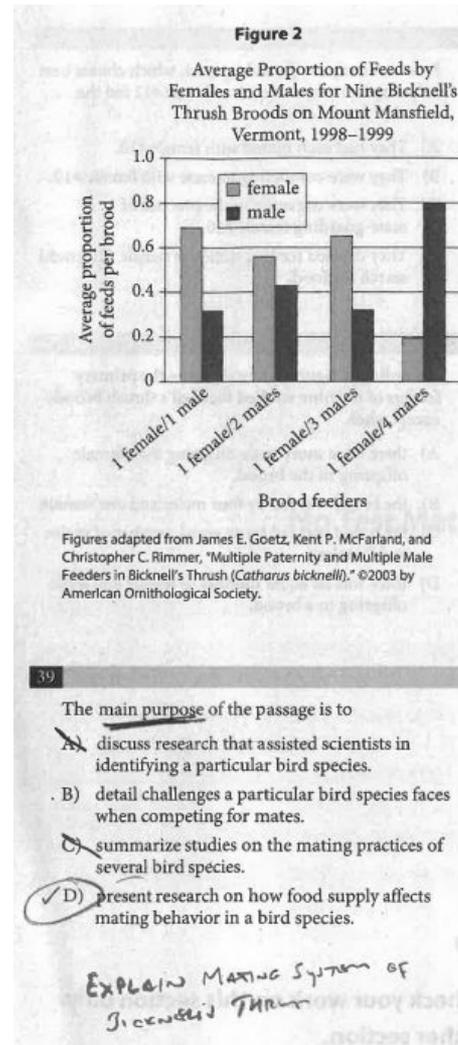
First, read the question and write down your own answer **before** you look at the answer choices.

Next, mark up all answer choices:

- Cross out down to the right = “I know this is incorrect.”
- Dot = “Meh. I’m not sure what to do with this.”
- Check = “I think this might be correct.”
- Double Check = “I am confident this is correct.”

Finally, circle your answer.

Leave nothing blank. If you’re stumped, circle the question and move on. Either get back to it with fresh eyes, or fill in your guess letter. Use that letter for all blanks.



40 As used in line 13, “recognized” most nearly means

- ✓ A) acknowledged. identified
- B) remembered.
- ~~C~~ rewarded.
- ~~D~~ glimpsed.

41 The passage suggests that the mating system of the Bicknell's thrush should be considered

- ~~A~~ ineffective, since it yields relatively few offspring in a given year.
- ~~B~~ efficient, because a high percentage of offspring survive in harsh environmental conditions.
- ~~C~~ elusive, since scientists are unable to explain why the system first evolved.
- ✓ D) unusual, since it differs from the strategy of closely related bird species.

42 Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- ~~A~~ Lines 15–17 (“The Bicknell’s . . . America”)
- ~~B~~ Lines 20–22 (“A female . . . clutch”)
- ✓ C) Lines 22–26 (“To accomplish . . . inadequate”)
- ~~D~~ Lines 26–30 (“Female . . . young”)

43 As used in line 31, “unraveled” most nearly means

- ✓ A) figured out. teased out
- B) declined.
- ~~C~~ picked apart.
- ~~D~~ detached.

# Reading (Section 1)

SAT words are no longer on the SAT. Rather, the vocabulary questions focus on “Words in Context.” See questions #1 & 6 with the “most nearly means” phrasing. Focus on roots of words rather than memorizing obscure words.

Your readings were

- Narrative (1-9)
- Social Studies -- Dual Long Passage (10-18)
- Science -- with Graph (19-27)
- Social Studies -- with Charts (28-37)
- Science -- (38-47)

The key to the reading section is evidence. Focus on the words *because* & *but*, and don't worry about interpreting anything.

In examining your scores, pay special attention to the degree of difficulty of your incorrect responses and where they fall in the reading passages. For example, #1, 4 & 8 were Easy. You need to get points for those, while #6-7 were Hard and a less likely source for points. Note if you ran out of time as well (last passage -- #45-47).

## READING

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
1	A	✓	Easy
2	B	✓	Easy
3	B	✓	Easy
4	B	A	Easy
5	C	✓	Easy
6	D	✓	Hard
7	B	✓	Hard
8	A	✓	Easy
9	D	✓	Easy
10	A	✓	Easy
11	D	C	Easy
12	D	B	Easy
13	D	A	Easy
14	A	X	Easy
15	C	B	Easy
16	B	C	Easy
17	D	C	Easy
18	B	D	Easy
19	A	✓	Easy
20	C	✓	Easy
21	B	D	Easy
22	D	✓	Easy
23	B	D	Easy
24	D	✓	Easy
25	C	✓	Easy
26	B	A	Easy
27	B	C	Easy
28	A	C	Easy
29	D	A	Easy
30	B	A	Easy
31	D	✓	Easy
32	A	✓	Easy
33	C	✓	Easy
34	A	B	Easy
35	A	B	Easy
36	C	∅	Easy
37	B	C	Easy
38	C	D	Easy
39	C	✓	Easy
40	C	✓	Easy
41	B	✓	Easy
42	B	✓	Easy
43	A	B	Easy
44	A	✓	Easy
45	A	C	Easy
46	D	A	Easy
47	C	B	Easy

NARR.  
72

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GE  
(OLE)  
1-7-1

Sci  
5-4

S.S.  
3-6-1

Sci  
5-5

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# Writing and Language

If you base your answers on the logic of “Well, it sounds right/wrong,” you should expect to do poorly.

There are four readings that involve questions in context that focus on conventions (grammar) and expression of ideas (clarity).

Focus primarily on pronouns, subject-verb agreement, transitions, and verb tenses.

The titles are typically helpful. Remembering the 3 C’s is critical as well: clear, concise, and consistent.

## WRITING AND LANGUAGE

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
1	D	C	■ ■ ■ ■
2	B	D	■ ■ ■ ■
3	C	D	■ ■ ■ ■
4	C	A	■ ■ ■ ■
5	B	D	■ ■ ■ ■
6	B	X	■ ■ ■ ■
7	A	D	■ ■ ■ ■
8	B	C	■ ■ ■ ■
9	A	B	■ ■ ■ ■
10	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
11	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
12	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
13	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
14	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
15	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
16	B	A	■ ■ ■ ■
17	B	D	■ ■ ■ ■
18	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
19	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
20	C	D	■ ■ ■ ■
21	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
22	A	B	■ ■ ■ ■
23	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
24	D	C	■ ■ ■ ■
25	C	D	■ ■ ■ ■
26	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
27	A	D	■ ■ ■ ■
28	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
29	D	A	■ ■ ■ ■
30	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
31	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
32	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
33	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
34	D	B	■ ■ ■ ■
35	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
36	B	A	■ ■ ■ ■
37	C	D	■ ■ ■ ■
38	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
39	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
40	D	A	■ ■ ■ ■
41	D	B	■ ■ ■ ■
42	A	∅	■ ■ ■ ■
43	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
44	B	C	■ ■ ■ ■

# Math (Sections 3 and 4)

Historically sophomores have not done particularly well on this section.

According to College Board, there are three areas assessed:

- Heart of Algebra
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- Passport to Advanced Math

There are questions connected to science and social studies embedded in the math sections.

MATH – CALCULATOR

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
1	B	D	■ ■ ■ ■
2	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
3	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
4	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
5	B	C	■ ■ ■ ■
6	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
7	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
8	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
9	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
10	D	C	■ ■ ■ ■
11	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
12	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
13	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
14	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■

MATH – CALCULATOR

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
15	C	A	■ ■ ■ ■
16	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
17	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
18	B	A	■ ■ ■ ■
19	C	A	■ ■ ■ ■
20	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
21	B	C	■ ■ ■ ■
22	D	C	■ ■ ■ ■
23	D	B	■ ■ ■ ■
24	C	∅	■ ■ ■ ■
25	B	A	■ ■ ■ ■
26	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
27	D	A	■ ■ ■ ■

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
28	65	60	■ ■ ■ ■
29	0, 12	2	■ ■ ■ ■
30	1368	∅	■ ■ ■ ■
31	85	75	■ ■ ■ ■

MATH – NO CALCULATOR

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
1	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
2	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
3	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
4	C	B	■ ■ ■ ■
5	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
6	B	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
7	A	✓	■ ■ ■ ■

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
8	B	C	■ ■ ■ ■
9	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
10	D	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
11	A	C	■ ■ ■ ■
12	C	✓	■ ■ ■ ■
13	B	A	■ ■ ■ ■

Question #	Correct	Your Answer	Difficulty
14	2	0	■ ■ ■ ■
15	90	80	■ ■ ■ ■
16	1	2	■ ■ ■ ■
17	0	✓	■ ■ ■ ■

## Closing Advice (Also Free)

“Nobody plans to fail, but many people fail to plan.”

Chart your own course for success and take advantage of every resource you have available. And read. Read every day. Read.