

# Guide to Testing

at the High School Level



Bedford High School

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## Introduction

Test-taking preparation does not only lie in the hands of the educator. Parents want to and need to be involved in this process. Because high stakes testing at the high school is so important toward graduation and college acceptance, parents should be accurately informed of the processes of testing and what each test means for his/her child. The goal of this guide is to provide parents and guardians with the necessary information to feel accurately informed on tests taken at the high school level.

Our parents realize that testing at the high school level is significant, but sometimes become confused by the details of the tests. Furthermore, many parents have asked for resources to assist their children with test preparation. By providing this information in one document, parents can more readily assist their child and be actively involved in their child's learning process.

The goal for Bedford High School during the 2010-2011 school year is to again attain the status of Effective on our State Report Card as we have once before. The teachers, students, and administrators have played an active role in this process thus far; now we must actively involve more parents so that learning and preparation can happen at home as well as in the educational setting.

## Testing Sequence

<b>Test</b>	<b>Full Name of Test</b>	<b>Grade Level Administered</b>
Practice OGT	Practice Ohio Graduation Tests	9 (Spring)
PLAN	Practice ACT	10 (Fall)
PSAT	Pre-SAT	10 & 11 (Fall)
ASVAB	Career Explorations	10, 11, or 12 (Fall)
OGT	Ohio Graduation Tests	10 (Spring) 11 & 12 (Summer, Fall, & Spring if needed)
COMPASS	Career Explorations	Tech Prep 12 (Fall) Post-Secondary Placement (as needed)
ACT	No longer stands for a name	11 and 12
SAT	Scholastic Achievement Test	11 and 12

## Test Glossary & Score Information

### Practice OGTs

#### **Who takes the test?**

- All ninth grade students at Bedford High School

#### **What is this test all about?**

- Students are given tests in the following areas: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies

#### **When will this test be taken?**

- In March, ninth grade students will take these tests while tenth graders take the OGTs for the first time.

#### **Where is the test taken?**

- This test is given at Bedford High School.

#### **Why do students take this test?**

- Taking a practice OGT allows students to practice for their official graduation tests the following year.

#### **How are the students scored?**

- Bedford High School teachers will grade these tests. All scores will be equated to the OGT scale. A score of 400 on any of the five tests is proficient and passing.

#### **Cost?**

- There is no cost to take these tests.

### PLAN

#### **Who takes the test?**

- All tenth grade students

#### **What is this test all about?**

- Testing areas include English, math, reading, and science.
- Questions are multiple choice question format.

#### **When will this test be taken?**

- Students will test in October

### **Where is the test taken?**

- This test is given at Bedford High School.

### **Why do students take this test?**

Taking the PLAN test

- allows students to prepare for the ACT
- helps students to find out if they are on track for college
- points out students' academic strengths and areas of improvement
- identifies college and career choices appropriately aligned to the student

### **How are the students scored?**

- PLAN scores provide an estimated ACT score, or college readiness indicator. Knowing this score will allow parents and students to take advantage of interventions if needed to improve the score on the ACT.
- There is no penalty for incorrect answers.
- Composite scores will range from 1 – 32.

### **Cost?**

- Counselors will provide students with test information, registration, and costs.

### **PSAT**

#### **Who takes the test?**

- All eleventh grade students, tenth graders who opt to pay for the test, and any University Bound Scholar

#### **What is this test all about?**

Testing areas

- Critical reading skills focus on sentence completions and passage-based reading
- Math skills focus on algebra, geometry, and data analysis and statistics
- Writing skills include improving sentences and paragraphs, and identifying sentence errors

#### **When will this test be taken?**

- Students will test in October.

#### **Where is the test taken?**

- This test is given at Bedford High School.

### **Why do students take this test?**

Taking the PSAT helps students

- to prepare for the SAT
- to receive information from colleges
- to enter scholarship programs
- to plan for college and their careers
- to improve academic skills

### **How are the students scored?**

- Scores are given by specific scores for the tested area, a score range, and a score percentile.
- Only eleventh grade students can qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
- If a student qualifies, an asterisk will appear next to the selection index score.

### **Cost?**

- Counselors will provide students with test information, registration, and costs.

### **ASVAB**

#### **Who takes the test?**

- Any tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade student
- Typically, students interested in the military benefit greatly from this test.

#### **What is this test all about?**

- Testing areas include science, arithmetic reasoning, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, electronics information, auto and shop information, and mechanical comprehension.

#### **When will this test be taken?**

- Students will test in November.

#### **Where is the test taken?**

- This test is given at Bedford High School.

## **Why do students take this test?**

Taking the ASVAB test

- provides career explorations scores
- points out academic strengths and areas of improvement

## **How are the students scored?**

- Students will receive three Career Explorations Scores that will help students research careers.
- There is no pass or fail to this test.

## **Cost?**

- There is no cost to take this test.

## **OGTs – The Ohio Graduation Tests**

### **Who takes the test?**

- In March of their sophomore year, all tenth graders take these tests for the first time. Any student not passing a test can take it during the summer, fall, and/or spring of the subsequent school year(s).

### **What is this test all about?**

- Students are given tests in the following areas: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- All tests are based on the Ohio Academic Content Standards appropriate for the tenth grade level.
- Students are expected to test at a level of proficiency in order to gauge that the school is meeting the needs of its students.
- Tests include multiple choice question format as well as short answer and extended response questions. Additionally, the Writing test includes completion of two essays.

### **When will this test be taken?**

- The test is offered in October, March, and June. Only students who have not passed section(s) will test during October and June. The summer testing session is optional.

### **Where is the test taken?**

- This test is given at Bedford High School.

## **Why do students take this test?**

### Passing the OGTs

- shows that a student receiving a diploma is testing at least at a high school level
- measures academic expectations for the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year
- meets federal testing guidelines

## **How are the students scored?**

- Most tests contain 35 questions.
- The raw score (number of correct points) will be converted to a scale score out of 400.
- Scores of 400 or more are considered passing on the OGTs.
- Each year, a Proficient score on each test section is 400.
- Students scoring well above 400 may score an Accelerated or Advanced score.
- Students scoring below 400 will be rated at Basic or Limited.
- These scores will vary year to year with each new test given.
- Passing the OGTs is required by state and federal law in order to graduate high school.
- Students not passing all five parts of the OGT may still graduate via the *Alternative Pathway for Eligibility for a Diploma*.

## **Cost?**

- There is no cost to take these tests.

## **COMPASS**

### **Who takes the test?**

- Students currently enrolled in our TechPrep Career classes take this test. This test is also used for Post Secondary Placement by students.

### **What is this test all about?**

- Testing areas include reading, writing, math, essay writing, and English as a Second Language.
- Currently, this is the only computerized test available to students.

### **When will this test be taken?**

- Students take this test as needed.

**Where is the test taken?**

- This test is taken at a COMPASS-testing site.

**Why do students take this test?**

Taking the COMPASS test

- provides high school outreach
- helps counselors and advisors place students in college courses appropriate to their skill levels
- identifies problems in major subject areas so that appropriate interventions can be scheduled

**How are the students scored?**

- Students will receive three Career Explorations Scores that will help students research careers.
- There is no pass or fail to this test.

**Cost?**

- Counselors will provide students with test information, registration, and costs.

**ACT****Who takes the test?**

- This test is suggested for eleventh and twelfth grade students planning on attending college.

**What is this test all about?**

- Testing areas include English, math, reading, science reasoning, and an optional writing test.

**When will this test be taken?**

- Typically, students may take the ACT for the first time in the spring of their eleventh grade year.
- It is suggested that students take this test by the April or June testing dates during their junior years.
- Many students take the test once during their eleventh grade year and once during their twelfth grade year.
- The test may taken be up to twelve times.

### **Where is the test taken?**

- All ACT dates are scheduled at Bedford High School.
- Additional dates are scheduled at other testing locations as well.

### **Why do students take this test?**

#### The ACT

- is accepted for college admission
- is curriculum-based and is related to what a student has learned in high school
- provides career and college information for students
- identifies academic strengths and weaknesses
- is the only test aligned to the College Readiness Standards

### **How are the students scored?**

- There is no penalty for guessing or answering incorrectly on this test; therefore, it is suggested that students answer every question.
- Composite scores on this test will range from 1 – 36. This score will be an average of the four tests that students take.
- Students' raw scores (number of correct answers on each test) will be converted into a scale score for each test area.
- When looking into various colleges, ask what their admissions standards are. This will include the ACT scores they will accept as this varies by college or university.

### **Cost?**

- The basic registration fee, which includes score reports to four colleges, is \$34.00. This fee may increase with time.
- The registration fee for the ACT Plus Writing is \$49.50. This fee may increase with time.

### **SAT**

#### **Who takes the test?**

- This test is suggested for eleventh and twelfth grade students planning on attending college.

## **What is this test all about?**

Testing areas include critical reading, math, and writing skills in multiple choice question format.

- Critical reading skills focus on sentence completions and passage-based reading.
- Math skills focus on numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, and data analysis and statistics
- Additionally, students may use a calculator.
- Writing skills include improving sentences and paragraphs, and identifying sentence errors.
- There is also a mandatory essay.

## **When will this test be taken?**

- Typically, students may take the SAT for the first time in the spring of their eleventh grade year.
- It is suggested that students take this test by the April or June testing dates during their junior years.
- Many students take the test once during their eleventh grade year and once during their twelfth grade year.
- There is no evidence to prove that taking this test more than twice is beneficial.

## **Where is the test taken?**

- The SAT needs to be scheduled at a high school other than Bedford High School.

## **Why do students take this test?**

The SAT

- measures basic skills learned in the classroom
- helps students to find the best fit for college
- has researched test questions to provide a fair testing experience

## **How are the students scored?**

- A fraction of a point is subtracted for an incorrect answer.
- Points are not deducted for questions left blank.
- Correct answers will earn students a point.
- These scores will total a student's raw score on the SAT.
- The raw score will then be converted into a scale score.
- Each test section will be out of a total of 200 – 800 points.
- The total score will be out of 2400.

### Cost?

- The basic registration fee, which includes score reports to four colleges, is \$49.00. This fee may increase with time.

## **SAT Subject Tests**

### **Who takes the test?**

- This test is suggested for eleventh and twelfth grade students planning on attending college.

### **What is this test all about?**

- These tests are one hour long and focus on one of twenty specific areas in which the student has strengths

### **When will this test be taken?**

- These tests are scheduled six times annually; however, not each test is offered during every scheduled test time.
- A student cannot take the SAT and an SAT Subject Test on the same day.
- Visit <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/> to learn more.

### **Where is the test taken?**

- These tests are scheduled at several different locations. Visit <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/> to learn more.

### **Why do students take this test?**

The SAT Subject tests

- highlights advanced skills for colleges and universities with special regard toward admissions
- may be used for college placement

### **How are the students scored?**

- Scoring is similar to that of the SAT and is scored on a 200 – 800 point scale.

### Cost?

- The basic registration fee for each test is \$22.00. This fee may increase with time.

## **OGT-Specific Skills**

- TAKE YOUR TIME! You will be given 2.5 hours for each test!
- You may not use a highlighter; however, you can circle, underline, or write notes in the margin of the test booklet. NOTE: This information WILL NOT BE GRADED.
- Read everything when taking the test. Answers for questions may be found in the title, footnotes, head notes, etc especially when referring to graphs or charts.
- Paragraphs in the text of a passage are numbered for reference in the questions.
- Give support for all of your responses. Support can be quoted directly from the text or be in your own words. Make sure you explain why you use that support.
- Use process of elimination.
- On all tests EXCEPT for the writing, students do not need to write in complete sentences.
- Spelling does not count against the student.
- Use the entire amount of time allotted for the test.
- Many questions pose challenging topics for the students. Do not panic. The students are not expected to know each answer.
- You may write or mark in the test booklets. Do not make random marks in the Answer Document.

### **Tips for Writing a Short Answer or Extended Response**

- You will be given a box in which you will write your response. The box is big enough for your response; however, if you write outside of the box, your response will still be graded as long as it is on the same page.

- All responses must contain information FROM THE PASSAGE.
- Don't use generic words like "thing" or "stuff." Use the exact language or vocabulary from the text.
- Be sure to transfer information over to the Answer Document, or it will not be graded.
- You can bullet point or number your answer if it fits the question.
- Leave no two or four point question blank.
- Do not erase! Simply draw a single line through the part of the answer you believe is inaccurate. If the scorers are able to read it, you may still be awarded points!
- Two point questions are worth two points because they ask for TWO items in response.
- Four point questions are worth four points because they ask for FOUR items in response.

## **OGT Alternative Pathway**

Some students may have extended difficulties with passing one test in particular. By following the listed protocol, a student may still be awarded his/her diploma. Be sure to speak with your child's guidance counselor for additional details.

A student qualifies for Alternative Pathway if he:

1. failed to pass ONE subject area by 10 scaled points or less.
2. has a 97% attendance rate for the last four years, excluding excused absences.
3. has no expulsions in the last four years.
4. has a grade point average of at least a 2.5 in the subject area of the failed OGT.
5. completes state high school curriculum requirements in the subject area of the failed test.
6. participates in intervention programs outside of the school day with a 97% attendance rate.
7. receives a letter of recommendation from a staff member in the failed subject area.

## **Where is the OGT going?**

The state of Ohio is currently in the process of revising the Academic Content Standards. Ohio has committed to the Common Core Standards Initiative.

Along with revising the standards, the state is looking at incorporating more 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and creating a depth for learning. This means that the amount of material a student learns may lessen, though his ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize that information would deepen.

It is likely that the state of Ohio and its stakeholders will develop new tests in the near future; however, at this time there is no specific date for release or realization. It is also important to understand that state testing will remain. While the format and specific content may change, the ideas of accountability will remain strong.

As always, Bedford City Schools will work diligently to keep our parents and students aware of any changes that may take place in the future.

## ACT v. SAT

Colleges accept scores from both of these nationally known tests. Because of this, many students and parents wonder which test to take. Students may take both tests; others will opt for just one.

<b>ACT</b>	<b>SAT</b>
Given six times annually	Given seven times annually
Five section exam	Ten section exam
English, math, reading, and science components with optional writing	Critical reading, math, and writing sections
Math tests through trigonometry.	Math tests through geometry and algebra II.
Reading section contains four passages.	Reading section contains sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, and reading comprehension strategies.
Writing will include an essay. This test is optional.	Writing section will contain grammar, usage, word choice, and a mandatory essay.
Science sections will include graphs, charts, and data interpretation.	
English section will stress grammar and usage.	
No penalty for incorrect answers.	Incorrect answers will be deducted $\frac{1}{4}$ point.
Composite score will range from 1 – 36.	Scores will range from 600 – 2400.
“Score Choice” allows students to choose which colleges receive their scores and which scores the colleges see.	“Score Choice” allows students to choose which colleges receive their scores and which scores the colleges see. “Score Choice” must be selected when registering for each test.
Scores can be used for scholarship programs and purposes.	Scores can be used for scholarship programs and purposes.

## Test-Taking Strategies

- Follow directions.
- Ask questions.
- Mark all of your answers clearly.
- When required to write, write legibly.
- If you don't know an answer to a question, skip it and come back to it. Spending too much time on questions may cause the student to not complete the test.
- Focus all of your attention on your work.
- Before answering each question, read it completely, as well as all of the choices.
- Use process of elimination for difficult questions.
- Pace yourself throughout the test by occasionally checking the time.
- Use a #2 pencil with an eraser. Be sure to erase all mistakes thoroughly.
- Do not mark any answers after time has been called. Doing so will invalidate the results.
- Look for key words and phrases that will help you to identify answers.
- Watch for questions with tricky wording, particularly questions that use qualifying words like *not*, *some*, *never*, *all*, and *none*.
- When asked to write an essay,
  - take time to prewrite your thesis with the main points of your essay.
  - plan to write a five paragraph essay minimally, with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
  - stay on topic by answering the prompt directly.
  - pay careful attention to time.
  - vary sentence length, structure, and vocabulary.
  - use transition words like *first*, *next*, *in addition*, and *finally*.
  - write legibly.

## **Test Anxiety Tips**

Test anxiety is a natural part of testing for any student. Many students may not even realize that he or she is nervous. By properly preparing for tests, students will reduce their anxiety. Because you cannot study for so many of these tests, students also feel anxious.

Symptoms of test anxiety may include

- upset stomach
- racing heart
- rapid breathing
- nausea
- sweaty palms
- headache
- feeling tense
- inability to concentrate
- forgetting things
- feeling angry, depressed, or panicked

Follow these additional tips to reduce anxiety.

- Get plenty of sleep the night before any test!
- Breathing deeply might relax a nervous student.
- Maintain a positive and confident attitude.
- Eat breakfast each day that you take a test.
- Take practice tests.
- Take a class on test taking. See Free Resources for help.
- Learn what the test will be like including types of questions, times, and scoring.
- Join a study group. Other students may feel the same way.
- Relax your muscles by stretching.
- Chew gum.
- Eat a peppermint. It also clears your mind.
- Learn how to manage your time.

## **Free Test Resources**

- Visit the Ohio Department of Education for valuable resources including a guide to the test, practice tests, and information for students.
  - Go to <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>
  - Click on testing.
  - Select Ohio Graduation Tests from the left sidebar.
  - Click on Resources for Ohio Graduation Tests.

- Visit Ohio's Statewide Testing Site
  - Go to <http://portal.success-ode-state-oh-us.info/>
  - Click on the box for the OGT.
  - This site will link you to a Parent Portal as well as a Student Site.
  
- Visit Study Island with your child for practice questions.
  - Go to <http://www.studyisland.com>
  - Log in with your user name: first name.last name@bedford
  - The initial password is bedford. You will be prompted to change this password.
  - Take the OGT Prep Pre-Tests for each subject area.
  - Then test in any of the subject areas.
  - Students may be using this in various classes, so passwords may already be altered.
  
- Visit the ACT site to set up a student account with your child.
  - Go to <http://www.actstudent.org>
  - Sign up to create a free account from which your child can register for tests, send scores, and update information to send to colleges.
  - Use the ACT Online Prep link on the right sidebar.
  - Use the ACT Question of the Day on the right sidebar.
  - Additional preparation materials for the ACT can be found on the left sidebar under the Test Prep link.
  
- Visit the SAT site to set up My Organizer with your child.
  - Go to <http://sat.collegeboard.com/practice/>
  - Scroll down the page to sign up using the left sidebar.
  - Use the Question of the Day.
  - Take free sample tests or view sample test questions.
  
- Visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/quickstart> to help improve scores on the SAT and create a personalized study plan.

**BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

**Samuel J. Vawters**  
Principal

**Sherrie Brown**  
Assistant Principal

**Kenneth Elder**  
Assistant Principal



**Robert Rutkowski**  
Assistant Principal

**Kimberly Sterlekar**  
Assistant Principal

**Sean Jackson**  
Director of Athletics/Student Activities/Special Events

**BEDFORD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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Superintendent

**Linda O'Neill**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Janet M. Pavlic, CPA**  
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