

I JUST GOT MY PSAT SCORES BACK. NOW WHAT?

An Overview of the PSAT
from the founders of  Edison Prep

December 6, 2022

Interpreting Your PSAT Score Report

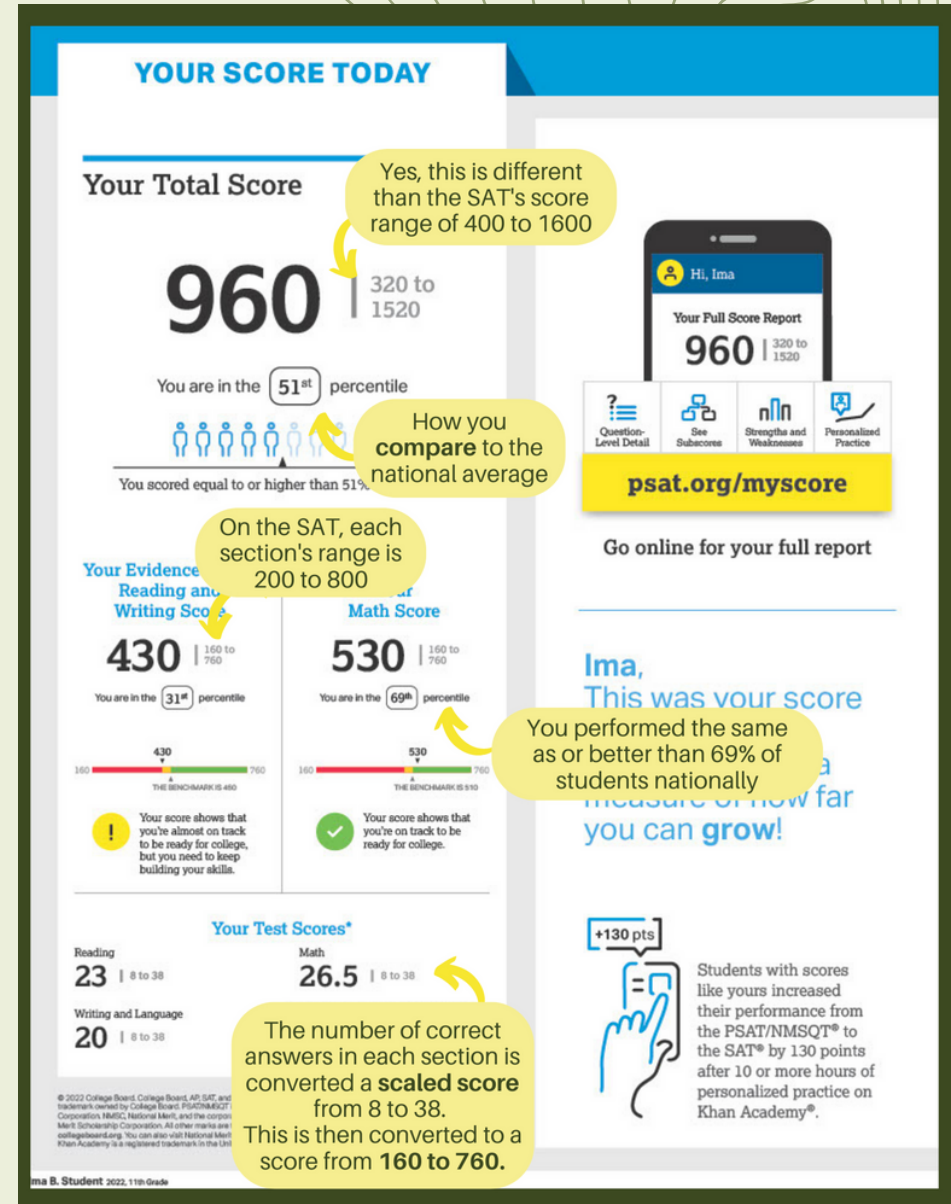
PSAT scores are released today, so let's take a look at an example student's report! Your student's report should look very similar, with, of course, some differences in score and percentile.

What's a Good Score?

Despite what it might seem like in conversations in the lunchroom and in the stands at sports games, **the average score for a sophomore is 910-920** (about halfway between 320 and 1520), and **the average score for a junior is 1000**.

For sophomores hoping to shoot for National Merit as juniors, a score of 1300 "cold" (taking the test without preparation) is a hopeful sign, and deliberate steps should be taken to prepare for the junior year PSAT. Use CollegeBoard's **free PSAT/NMSQT full-length practice tests** to track your progress.

Ultimately, a "good" score depends on your percentile (how you compare to other students in your grade level) as well as your aspirations for future tests and your potential college list. The PSAT simply shows how you performed on that day—**use it to guide, not hinder, your academic growth** by targeting any weaknesses and honing any strengths. It is a great way to build familiarity with and demystify standardized tests in a low-pressure way that cannot be used against you in college admissions. You should take the PSAT every year that your high school allows you to!



YOUR SCORE TODAY

Your Total Score
960 | 320 to 1520
Yes, this is different than the SAT's score range of 400 to 1600

You are in the **51st** percentile
How you compare to the national average
You scored equal to or higher than 51%

Your Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Score
430 | 160 to 760
You are in the **31st** percentile
On the SAT, each section's range is 200 to 800
Your score shows that you're almost on track to be ready for college, but you need to keep building your skills.

Math Score
530 | 160 to 760
You are in the **69th** percentile
Your score shows that you're on track to be ready for college.

Your Test Scores*

Reading	23 8 to 38
Math	26.5 8 to 38
Writing and Language	20 8 to 38

The number of correct answers in each section is converted a **scaled score** from 8 to 38. This is then converted to a score from **160 to 760**.

psat.org/myscore
Go online for your full report

Ima,
This was your score
You performed the same as or better than 69% of students nationally
a measure of how far you can grow!

+130 pts
Students with scores like yours increased their performance from the PSAT/NMSQT® to the SAT® by 130 points after 10 or more hours of personalized practice on Khan Academy®.

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Your NMSC Selection Index Score

139

NMSC® uses a Selection Index score based on PSAT/NMSQT scores as an initial screen of students who enter its scholarship programs. The Selection Index score is double the sum of your Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Test scores.

Your NMSC Selection Index Score

Every year, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation considers the 50,000 highest-scoring students for National Merit Scholarship Program recognition by using their NMSC Selection Index Score. This score ranges from 48 to 228, and is calculated by adding your three two-digit section scores together and then multiplying by 2. For example, a student with a 30/40 on Reading, 29/40 on Writing, and 28/40 on Math would receive an index of $(30+29+28)*2 = 174$. You'll see your NMSC Selection Index on page 3 of your PSAT Score Report. We'll cover more about National Merit in a minute!

Back to your PSAT Score Report: Your Question-Level Feedback

Finally, page 4 of your report includes 'question-level feedback'. Here, you can see the number of questions correct, incorrect, and omitted in each section. However, questions and answers are only released for certain test dates. For instance, if you took the PSAT on October 15, you will only see if you answered questions correctly; the actual questions, answers, and answer explanations will not be released.

Can the PSAT Predict Your SAT or ACT Score?

From our experience, most students improve their score by about 30-40 points from the PSAT sophomore year to the PSAT junior year if no preparation beyond attending school and being a year older and wiser occurred. If a student practices or participates in a PSAT preparation program, that increase is likely higher. However, PSAT scores don't necessarily predict SAT or ACT scores. The best way to see where your student stands is to take mock tests—preferably, one of each. You can set SAT and/or ACT score goals by looking at universities' class profiles: in particular, the middle 50th percentile of incoming students. These ranges can vary widely depending on the university's rank, class size, and many other factors.



Will my student qualify to become a National Merit Semifinalist?

- **The junior year PSAT is the only route to qualifying for National Merit.** The sophomore PSAT is just for practice.
- **There are two levels of National Merit Recognition: Commended and Semifinalist—either one is an honor!**
 - The top 16,000 students of the more than 1.5 million students who take the PSAT are named **Semifinalists**. 15,000 of these fill out an application to attempt to move on to the Finalist round, some of which are offered scholarships directly from the National Merit Corporation, some of which are offered scholarships by U.S. companies, and some of which are sponsored by institutions.
 - The next 34,000 students are named **Commended** students. 50,000 students receive National Merit Recognition.
- **To become a National Merit Semifinalist**, you have to score above your state’s cutoff, which corresponds to the top 1% of students in your state—but this can vary by a few points each year and by state! (For reference, in fall of 2021, Georgia students needed a score of 218 or higher to be named Semifinalists.) Students who score high enough will be notified of their Semifinalist status in September of 2023.
- **For most National Merit recipients, the National Merit award is more of an honor than a financial benefit.** The scholarship money awarded to the top students directly from the National Merit Corporation is nominal compared to merit aid that a high SAT or ACT score might earn. However, there is one big exception: there are **over 25 colleges who give full tuition all the way up to a full ride** (and dozens of others who give smaller amounts) for National Merit Finalists who indicate that school as their first choice on the National Merit application.
- Unless a student is starting at a very high Sophomore PSAT score, **far more money is likely to be earned via merit aid from the real SAT or the real ACT** than from the PSAT at 95%+ of colleges.

Auburn Case Study:

National Merit Semifinalist requires a top 0.5% score, and at most colleges would earn a student \$2,000–4,000 per year. However, at Auburn, students who earn a 29 ACT (a top 10% score) can save \$11,000 per year (300–500% as much, with 2000% as common of a score), and those with a 33 ACT (a top 2% score) can earn \$16,500 per year! The bar is far lower and the rewards many times higher via merit aid from the SAT and ACT.

auburn.edu/scholarship/undergraduate/firstyearstudents.php

Competitive Merit Scholarships for Non-Residents

Fall 2023 Scholarship	Minimum High School GPA Required	Minimum ACT Score Required*	Estimated Annual Award Amount
Academic Presidential Scholarship	3.5	33-36	\$16,500
Academic Heritage Scholarship	3.5	31-32	\$15,000
Academic Charter Scholarship	3.5	29-30	\$11,000

*Equivalent SAT scores are available at auburn.edu/testscores.

So, what do I do now?

If you're a junior:

If you are taking Algebra II as a junior and just got your junior year PSAT back, now is the time to begin SAT/ACT prep in earnest, since Early Action deadlines loom and there are just 3 test dates left of each exam before senior year. Just reach out and we can advise you on SAT vs. ACT (you can **take a mock ACT** ASAP if you don't have any scores yet).

Should I practice for next year's PSAT?

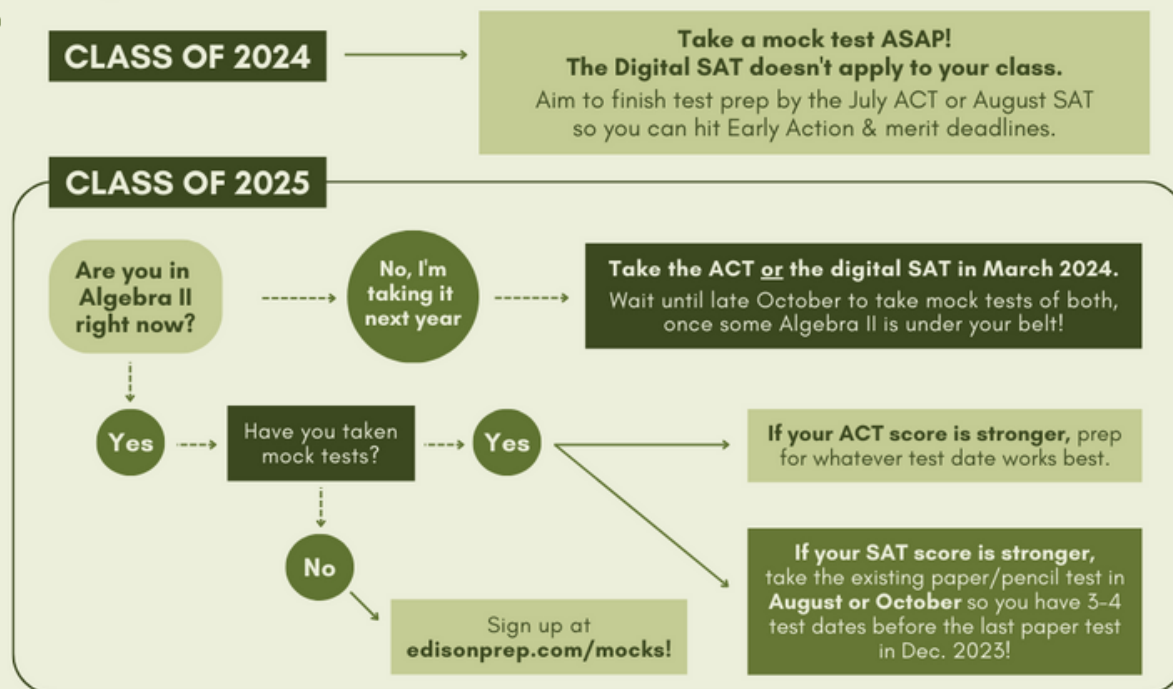
To qualify for National Merit Semifinalist as a junior, you can only miss 4-7 questions on the entire test. Out of our more than 7,000 students who have shared their PSAT scores with us since 2016, only one has had a "cold" sophomore PSAT score below 1300, but earned National Merit Semifinalist status in their junior year.

- If your "cold" sophomore year PSAT is at least 1300, prepare for next year's test and make a run at National Merit!
- If your "cold" score is below 1300, **the PSAT should be viewed as low-stress practice for the SAT**, and you should focus on GPA, your extracurriculars, and the actual SAT and ACT.

If you're a sophomore:

First, don't start SAT or ACT preparation too early. If you're a sophomore in Algebra II, focus on your grades for the next few months, and then **take mock tests** late sophomore year of each test so you can map out a summer/fall/winter testing plan. A high GPA is even more important than extracurricular involvement, leadership opportunities, volunteer hours, and the like. If you'll be taking Algebra II junior year, check out the flowchart below!

When should I map out a preparation plan? When should I take mock tests? *Here's a helpful flowchart!*



About Edison Prep

Edison Prep is a boutique SAT/ACT tutoring company whose founders, Silvia and Brian Eufinger, are the **two most experienced SAT/ACT tutors in Georgia**, with over 66,000 hours of experience. The founders teach all of the group classes themselves. They also authored their own SAT/ACT books that are revised each year. Finally, they are unique among Atlanta tutors in that they still take the real tests each year, earning top 0.5% scores, including the **only back-to-back-to-back perfect 36's in history**.

They work alongside their small team of highly experienced tutors doing private tutoring whenever not teaching group classes; the small team of eight has over 100,000 hours of combined SAT/ACT experience!

Interested in learning more about our SAT/ACT preparation?

We offer both in-person prep in Atlanta and virtual prep worldwide—find out how we're **markedly different**.

Want free strategy advice on college admissions, scholarships, and test prep?

We conduct **free parent/student info sessions** a few times each year with straight talk about the college process; the next session is on **Jan. 5th at 7pm**. **RSVP here!**

Still have questions about what the PSAT means for your student's future?

Call or text us at 404-333-8573 for a **free consultation** with one of our founders.

