

PSAT/NMSQT®

What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

The PSAT/NMSQT stands for the Preliminary Standardized Achievement Test or otherwise known as the “practice SAT”. NMST stands for National Merit Scholarship which applies scholarship and other honor awards monies to those that score a certain composite score. Each individual State holds a certain score which qualifies students for these scholarship awards.

How long is the PSAT/NMST test and what does it include?

The PSAT/NMSQT takes 2 hours and 10 minutes to complete. It is made up of five sections:

- Two 25-minute critical reading sections
- Two 25-minute math sections
- One 30-minute writing-skills section

The critical reading sections include multiple-choice sentence completions and critical reading questions. The math sections include both multiple-choice questions and problem solving. For the writing-skills section, students answer multiple-choice questions related to identifying sentence errors, improving sentences and improving paragraphs.

Who Qualifies?

STEP 1: Program Recognition –

Of the 1.5 million entrants, some 50,000 with the highest PSAT/NMSQT® Selection Index scores (critical reading + mathematics + writing skills scores) qualify for recognition in the National Merit® Scholarship Program. In September, these high scorers are notified through their schools that they have qualified as either a Commended Student or Semifinalist.

Step 2: Commended Students –

In late September, more than two-thirds (about 34,000) of the approximately 50,000 high scorers on the PSAT/NMSQT® receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise. Commended Students are named on the basis of a nationally applied Selection Index score that may vary from year to year and is typically below the level required for participants to be named Semifinalists in their respective states (224 in MA). Although Commended Students do not continue in the competition for National Merit® Scholarships, some of these students do become candidates for Special Scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.

Step 3: Semi-Finalists /Finalists -

In early September, about 16,000 students, or approximately one-third of the 50,000 high scorers, are notified that they have qualified as Semifinalists. In February, some 15,000 Semifinalists are notified by mail at their home addresses that they have advanced to Finalist standing. A certificate is received by the high school Principal. Students must complete NMSQT Application to advance onto next round.

Step 4 “Winner Selection” – \$2500 awarded to approximately 8,200 students each year!

Finalist's academic record, information about the school's curricula and grading system, two sets of test scores, the high school official's written recommendation, information about the student's activities and leadership, and the Finalist's own essay.

For Additional Information, please visit: <http://www.nationalmerit.org/>