

Your High School Testing Timeline

A grade-by-grade game plan for taking the SAT and ACT and when to study.

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GRADE**FRESHMAN YEAR****Build Your Foundation**

- Read as much as you can. It is the single best way to grow your reading and writing scores.
- Take the most challenging math classes you can handle.

*** SUMMER**

Use your summer wisely: explore an activity you're passionate about and/or get a summer job.

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GRADE**SOPHOMORE YEAR****Explore Your Options**

- Make a tentative list of about 8 to 10 colleges you're interested in, and look up each one's testing policy.
- Take the PSAT in October.
- Take the PreACT if your school offers it, or take a free practice ACT at worldclasstutoring.com/grade-my-act.
- Decide between the SAT or the ACT (you can always switch later).

*** SUMMER**

Start your test prep, either a class or tutoring.

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GRADE**JUNIOR YEAR****Test With a Plan**

- Take the **PSAT/NMSQT** in October, the test that qualifies you for National Merit.
- Then follow one of these two recommended timelines:

SAT Timeline

- 1 **First test** in the fall (October, November, or December)
- 2 **Second test** in March
- 3 **Third test** in June, only if you need it

Skip May so you can focus on AP exams, and avoid August and September because of the summer slide.

ACT Timeline

- 1 **First test** in the fall (October or December)
- 2 **Second test** in February
- 3 **Third test** in April or June, only if you haven't hit your goal

Many students mix and match these timelines and end up taking both tests.

If your high school offers an SAT or ACT during the school day for the whole junior class, it's always a good idea to participate.

SUMMER**SUMMER AFTER JUNIOR YEAR****Get Ready to Apply**

- Finalize your list of colleges.
- Start working on your applications, especially the essay.
- It's not too late to prep. A higher SAT or ACT score can still qualify you for a scholarship or additional merit aid.

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GRADE**SENIOR YEAR****Cross the Finish Line****SEPTEMBER**

Both the SAT and ACT are offered in September. Your last chance to reach your goal score before the Early Decision and Early Action deadlines.

JANUARY 1

Most common deadline for Regular Decision applications.

NOVEMBER 1

Most common deadline for Early Decision and Early Action applications.

MAY 1

National Decision Day. Choose your college!

