

STANDARDIZED TESTING REVIEW

SAT Subject Tests

Purpose
How many SAT Subject Tests to take
Registering
Preparing
Score Reports
Score Choice
Sending Scores

Purpose

SAT Subject Tests are one hour multiple choice subject exams which were designed to measure a student's knowledge in a specific academic areas. Tests are offered in the following subject areas:

1. History (World & United States)
2. English Literature
3. Mathematics
4. Laboratory Sciences (Biology, Chemistry & Physics)
5. Languages (other than English)

According to the College Board, "(Subject tests) help colleges compare the academic achievement of students from different schools where course preparation and academic backgrounds may vary...".

How Many Subject Tests?

Colleges may require/recommend a specific number of subject tests as part of the application process. In some instances, colleges may also require specific subjects. It is important to be aware that whether or not to take SAT Subject Tests and which tests to choose depends on specific college admission requirements. Students should check the college websites or contact college admissions offices directly for more information.

A few examples of college admission requirements are noted at the beginning of this (Standardized Testing) section of this handbook.

Registering to Take the SAT Subject Tests

Go to: www.collegeboard.com

St. Ignatius College Preparatory School Code: 053-010

Students may register either online or using a paper SAT Registration Packet which can be found in the SI Counseling Center. Most students choose to register online so that the registration process, including the test center assignment, may be completed and confirmed immediately. Once an account is created, students may utilize it for all of their SAT testing needs.

Students may take up to three subject tests on a particular test date. The SAT and the Subject Tests may not be taken on the same day. In general, students should plan to take a subject test in May or June during the school year in which the relevant course work has been completed.

It is strongly recommended that students take the time to review sample questions for each of the Subject Tests under consideration and to speak to their teacher and counselor before registering online.

Preparing for the SAT Subject Tests

The best way for a student to prepare for any subject test is by engaging in the relevant coursework at St. Ignatius. Once the specific subject tests have been selected, students should take time to review a sample subject test and become familiar with the directions and the type of questions asked. Practice taking a sample test in a timed setting is also recommended as it helps students know what to expect prior to the test date.

Subject Test Scoring

Each subject test is scored on a scale from 200 to 800.

SAT Subject Test Score Reports

Three (sometimes four) weeks after the test date, SAT scores are available online (www.collegeboard.com) . A paper copy of the full score report will be mailed home by the College Board approximately five weeks after the test date.

If requested during the test registration process, colleges will also receive a copy. To be considered “official” from a college admission perspective, test scores must be sent to colleges from the College Board.

Score Choice

The College Board offers students the ‘Score Choice’ option for both the SAT and the SAT Subject Tests. This allows students to choose which scores they would like to send to colleges in place of a cumulative score report which lists all scores from all SAT tests taken. The SAT score is selected by test date and sent as a cumulative score. Subject test scores may be selected individually regardless of the number of subject tests taken on a specific date.

If students do not select Score Choice, a cumulative report including all scores will be sent automatically to the colleges selected by the student.

Please Note:

Score Choice is not an option that is recommended by the SI Counseling Department (nor any of the members of BAISSC, an organization of college counselors from Independent High Schools throughout the Bay Area).

Students who use score choice should give careful consideration to the requirements of each college. In most instances Score Choice may create unnecessary delays in submitting SAT scores, cost more money or prevent the student’s application from being ‘complete’ – if the college requirements are not met on time. Many private colleges have made it clear that they continue to expect a cumulative report of test scores because they will act in the student’s best interest and use the higher section of each test taken.

Sending Scores

Students who choose to send SAT scores should go to the College Board website : www.collegeboard.com and enter the appropriate college codes for the colleges on their list.

Before sending scores to colleges, students should consider the timing carefully. In general, we recommend that students wait until senior year when they register for their last SAT and/or Subject Test. This includes the ‘free score reports’ students may send when registering for the test, which is the only time students may send their scores without a fee from the College Board.