

STANDARDIZED TESTING REVIEW

THE SAT

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Purpose

The SAT (formerly known as the SAT Reasoning Test) is intended to measure a student's reasoning ability. It is an exam that almost every student at St. Ignatius will take for the college admission process starting in the Spring of Junior year and/or possibly the Fall of senior year.

The SAT Reasoning Test lasts approximately 3 hours, 45 minutes.

There are three sections:

1. **Critical Reading:** Emphasis is placed on reading skills and tests vocabulary in the context of sentence completion questions in addition to reading passages of varying length.
2. **Math:** Emphasis is placed on interpretation and applied math questions. Topics include Advanced Algebra & Precalculus. Calculators are not required, but are advised; a four-function, scientific or graphing calculator may be used.
3. **Writing:** Grammar, Word Choice and Usage are the primary focus. There are both multiple choice questions and a student essay in this section. (The essay portion was not included on the PSAT).

Registering to Take the SAT

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.

Preparing for the SAT

The best way for a student to prepare for any standardized test is by engaging in their education. In addition, students may opt to take a prep course, get a tutor or study independently with a prep book or computer program. It is important to consider family resources and student preferences; there are several great preparation methods.

A few suggestions

Students should start by reviewing their PSAT score report with their test booklet. This is an excellent 'first' step in preparing for the SAT as it allows students to focus time on their specific preparation needs.

Students may also log on to their Family Connection account and use the Method Test Preparation, which offers free online SAT/ACT diagnostic testing as well as learning strategies that may greatly enhance their test-taking skills.

For additional information about the SAT, students and parents are directed to the College Board website: www.collegeboard.com.

SAT Scoring

The SAT is scored in three sections:

1. Critical Reading: (CR 200-800)
2. Math: (M 200-800)
3. Writing: (WR 200-800) Two subscores are provided (multiple choice and the essay).

SAT 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 approximately five weeks after the test date.

If specific college codes were included (by the student) during the test registration process, those 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 or SAT Subject Test. This includes the 'free score reports' students may send when registering for the test.

The only time students may use the free score report option is when they register for a test. In general, students should send scores in the Fall of senior year when a college list has been finalized and standardized testing is completed.