



**THE COMPLETE GUIDE
BOOK FOR PSAT 8/9
&
PSAT 10**

Test Dates

September 24, 2018–March 29, 2019 April 1–April 26, 2019(dates can vary per year)

What Does the PSAT 8/9 Measure?

The PSAT™ 8/9 measures reading, writing and language, and math skills learned both in and out of school. You won't be asked to recall facts from literature, history, or science, or to complete math formulas, because this test measures your reasoning and critical thinking skills. The PSAT™ 8/9 is designed for 8th- and 9th-grade students.

The PSAT 8/9 provides a clear, early picture of you and your readiness for college. Your scores help you and your teachers pinpoint areas for improvement.

PSAT 8/9 includes a Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, and a Math Test. The PSAT 8/9 is a test that will help educators and students figure out what students need to work on most in the skills that are considered essential for success in high school, college, and career.

Practising Tips for Students

When you're taking a practice test, make sure to mark which ones are random guesses so you can ask for reviewing them when you're finished. To make the most out of your practice tests, you want to really **analyze why you missed the question** and what you need to do - review content, work at a faster pace, etc. - to ace that question type the next time.

Gone are the days of studying long lists of obscure vocabulary - the new PSAT (and SAT) tests that you **understand the meaning and connotation of a word within the context of a passage**. Similarly, grammar questions ask you to revise sentences within the context of passages, not as stand-alone sentences. All of the sections will include graphs and charts to test your ability to interpret, describe, and represent data visually or in words.

Major Features

Category	PSAT 8/9
Total Testing Time	2 hours and 25 minutes

Category	PSAT 8/9
Components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence-Based Reading and Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Test • Writing and Language Test 2. Math
Important Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career readiness and success • Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact • Rights-only scoring (a point for a correct answer but no deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores)
Score Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Score: Scale ranges from 240 to 1440. • Section Score: Scale ranges from 120 to 720, and 6 to 36 on test and cross-test scores.
Subscore Reporting	<p>Subscores on a 1 to 15 scale for every test, providing added insight for students, parents, educators, and counselors.</p>

Test Length and Timing

PSAT 8/9		
Component	Time Allotted (min.)	Number of Questions/ Tasks
Reading	55	42
Writing and Language	30	40
Math	60	38
Total	145	120

PSAT 8/9 Score Ranges		
PSAT 8/9 Score Reported	Details	Score Range
Total score	Sum of the two section scores.	240–1440
Section scores (2)	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math.	120–720

PSAT 8/9 Score Ranges		
PSAT 8/9 Score Reported	Details	Score Range
Test scores (3)	Reading, Writing and Language, and Math.	6–36
Cross-test scores (2)	Analysis in History/Social Studies and Analysis in Science. Based on selected questions in the Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Tests.	6–36
Subscores (6)	Reading and Writing and Language: Command of Evidence and Words in Context. Writing and Language: Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions. Math: Heart of Algebra, and Problem Solving and Data Analysis.	1–15

English Portion

Words in Context

Many questions on the PSAT 8/9 focus on important, widely used words and phrases found in texts in many different subjects. Some questions ask you to figure out a word's meaning based on context. The words are ones that you will probably encounter in college or in the workplace long after test day.

No longer will students use flashcards to memorize obscure words, only to forget them the minute they put their test pencils down. The redesigned exams will engage students in close reading and honor the best work of the classroom.

Command of Evidence

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section asks you to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence found in a wide range of sources. These sources include informational graphics, such as tables, charts, and graphs, as well as multiparagraph passages in the areas of literature and literary nonfiction, the humanities, science, history and social studies, and on topics about work and career.

For every passage or pair of passages you'll see during the reading test at least one question will ask you to identify which part of the text best supports the answer to the previous question. In other instances, you'll be asked to find the best answer to a question by pulling together information conveyed in words and graphics.

The writing and language test also focuses on command of evidence. It asks you to do things like analyze a series of sentences or paragraphs and decide if it makes sense. Other questions ask you to interpret graphics and to edit a part of the accompanying passage so that it clearly and accurately communicates the information in the graphics.

Math Portion

The Math Test focuses in-depth on two essential areas of math: Problem Solving and Data Analysis, and Heart of Algebra. It also includes some Passport to Advanced Math questions.

Problem Solving and Data Analysis is about being quantitatively literate. It includes using ratios, percentages, and proportional reasoning to solve problems in science, social science, and career contexts.

The Heart of Algebra focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems, which helps students develop key powers of abstraction.

Passport to Advanced Math focuses on more complex equations and the manipulation they require.

Current research shows that these areas are used disproportionately in a wide range of majors and careers.

Maths Portion in detail

The Math Test covers a range of math practices, with an emphasis on problem solving, modeling, using tools strategically, and using algebraic structure.

It's about the Real World

Instead of testing you on every math topic there is, the PSAT 8/9 asks you to use the math that you'll rely on most in all sorts of situations. Questions on the Math Test are designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling you'll do in:

- College math, science, and social science courses
- The jobs that you hold
- Your personal life

For instance, to answer some questions you'll need to use one or two steps—because in the real world a single calculation is rarely enough to get the job done.

Quick Facts

- Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some—called grid-ins—ask you to come up with the answer rather than select the answer.

- The Math Test is divided into two portions: Math Test–Calculator and Math Test–No Calculator.
- Some parts of the test include several questions about a single scenario.

Focus

The Math Test will focus in depth on two of the areas of math that play the biggest role in a wide range of college majors and careers:

- Heart of Algebra, which focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems.
- Problem solving and Data Analysis, which is about being quantitatively literate.

There will also be some Passport to Advanced Maths questions; these require the manipulation of complex equations.

What the Math Test Measures

Fluency

The Math Test is a chance to show that you:

- Carry out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and strategically.
- Solve problems quickly by identifying and using the most efficient solution approaches. This might involve solving a problem by inspection, finding a shortcut, or reorganizing the information you've been given.

Conceptual Understanding

You'll demonstrate your grasp of math concepts, operations, and relations. For instance, you might be asked to make connections between properties of linear equations, their graphs, and the contexts they represent.

Applications

These real-world problems ask you to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out a solution.

Calculator Use

Calculators are important tools, and to succeed after high school, you'll need to know how—and when—to use them. In the Math Test–Calculator portion of the test, you'll be able to focus on complex modeling and reasoning because your calculator can save you time.

However, the calculator is, like any tool, only as smart as the person using it. The Math Test includes some questions where it's better not to use a calculator, even though you're allowed

to. In these cases, students who make use of structure or their ability to reason will probably finish before students who use a calculator.

The Math Test–No Calculator portion of the test makes it easier to assess your fluency in math and your understanding of some math concepts. It also tests well-learned technique and number sense.

Grid-In Questions

Although most of the questions on the Math Test are multiple choice, 18 percent are student-produced response questions, also known as grid-ins. Instead of choosing a correct answer from a list of options, you'll need to solve problems and enter your answers in the grids provided on the answer sheet.

Gridding-In Answers

- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- Only answers indicated by filling in the circle will be scored (you won't receive credit for anything written in the boxes located above the circles).
- It doesn't matter in which column you begin entering their answers; as long as the responses are recorded within the grid area, you'll receive credit.
- The grid can hold only four decimal places and can only accommodate positive numbers and zero.
- Unless a problem indicates otherwise, answers can be entered on the grid as a decimal or a fraction.

$$\frac{3}{24}$$

- Fractions like $\frac{3}{24}$ do not need to be reduced to their lowest terms.
- All mixed numbers need to be converted to improper fractions before being recorded in the grid.
- If the answer is a repeating decimal, students must grid the most accurate value the grid will accommodate.

Below is a sample of the instructions students will see on the test.

Write answer in boxes. →

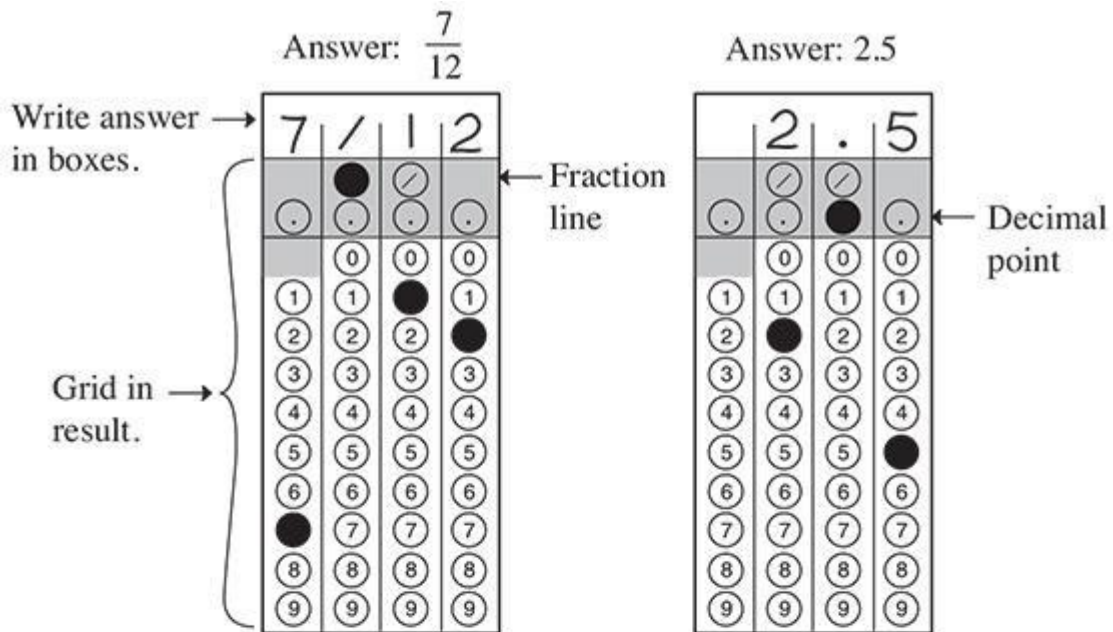
Grid in result. →

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

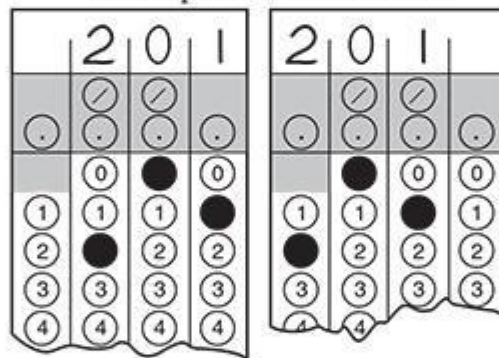
Fraction line ←

Answer: 2.5

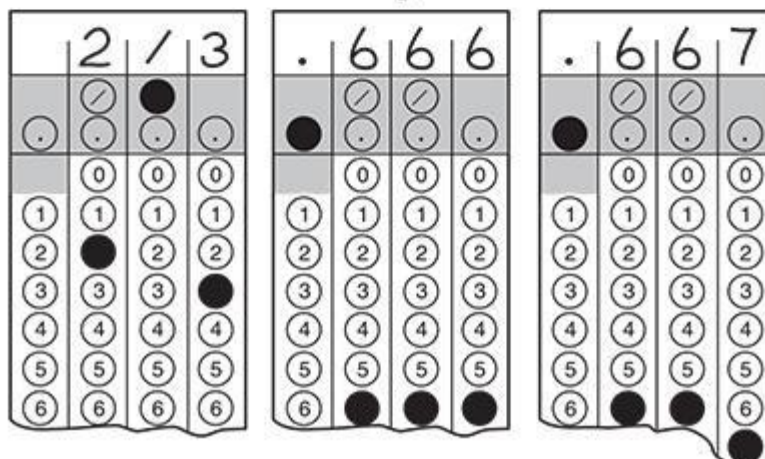
Decimal point ←



Answer: 201
Either position is correct.



Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:



Reading Test in detail

It's about the Everyday

The Reading Test focuses on the skills and knowledge at the heart of education: the stuff you've been learning in school, the stuff you'll need to succeed in college. It's about how you take in, think about, and use information. And guess what? You've been doing that for years.

It's not about how well you memorize facts and definitions, so you won't need to use flashcards or insider tricks or spend all night cramming.

Quick Facts

- All Reading Test questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with other passages.
- Informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts, accompany some passages—but no math is required.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.
- The Reading Test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section.

What the Reading Test Is Like

When you take the Reading Test, you'll read passages and interpret informational graphics. Then you'll use what you've read to answer questions.

What You'll Read

To succeed in college and career, you'll need to apply reading skills in all sorts of subjects. Not coincidentally, you'll also need those skills to do well on the Reading Test.

The Reading Test always includes

- One passage from a classic or contemporary work of U.S. or world literature.
- One passage or a pair of passages from either a U.S. founding document or a text in the Great Global Conversation they inspired. The U.S. Constitution or a speech by Nelson Mandela, for example.
- A selection about economics, psychology, sociology, or some other social science.
- Two science passages (or one passage and one passage pair) that examine foundational concepts and developments in Earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

What the Reading Test Measures

A lot more goes into reading than you might realize—and the Reading Test measures a range of reading skills.

Command of Evidence

Some questions ask you to:

- Find evidence in a passage (or pair of passages) that best supports the answer to a previous question or serves as the basis for a reasonable conclusion.
- Identify how authors use evidence to support their claims.
- Find a relationship between an informational graphic and the passage it's paired with.

Words in Context

Many questions focus on important, widely used words and phrases that you'll find in texts in many different subjects. The words are ones that you'll use in college and the workplace long after test day.

The PSAT 8/9 focuses on your ability to:

- Use context clues in a passage to figure out which meaning of a word or phrase is being used.
- Decide how an author's word choice shapes meaning, style, and tone.

Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science

The Reading Test includes passages in the fields of history, social studies, and science. You'll be asked questions that require you to draw on the reading skills needed most to succeed in those subjects. For instance, you might read about an experiment then see questions that ask you to:

- Examine hypotheses.
- Interpret data.
- Consider implications.

Answers are based only on the information in the passage.

Writing and Language Test in detail

The Writing and Language Test asks you to be an editor and improve passages that were written especially for the test—and that include deliberate errors.

It's About the Everyday

When you take the Writing and Language Test, you'll do three things that people do all the time when they write and edit:

1. Read.
2. Find mistakes and weaknesses.
3. Fix them.

The good news: You do these things every time you proofread your own schoolwork or workshop essays with a friend.

It's the practical skills you use to spot and correct problems—the stuff you've been learning in high school and the stuff you'll need to succeed in college—that the test measures.

Quick Facts

- All questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are accompanied by informational graphics, such as tables, graphs, and charts—but no math is required.
- Prior topic knowledge is never tested.
- The Writing and Language Test is part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section.

What the Writing and Language Test Is Like

To answer some questions, you'll need to look closely at a single sentence. Others require reading the entire piece and interpreting a graphic. For instance, you might be asked to choose a sentence that corrects a misinterpretation of a scientific chart.

What the Writing and Language Test Measures

Questions on the Writing and Language Test measure a range of skills.

Command of Evidence

Questions that test command of evidence ask you to improve the way passages develop information and ideas. For instance, you might choose an answer that sharpens an argumentative claim or adds a relevant supporting detail.

Words in Context

Some questions ask you to improve word choice. You'll need to choose the best words to use based on the text surrounding them. Your goal will be to make a passage more precise or concise, or to improve syntax, style, or tone.

Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science

You'll be asked to read passages about topics in history, social studies, and science with a critical eye and make editorial decisions that improve them.

Expression of Ideas

Some questions ask about a passage's organization and its impact. For instance, you will be asked which words or structural changes improve how well it makes its point and how well its sentences and paragraphs work together.

Standard English Conventions

This is about the building blocks of writing: sentence structure, usage, and punctuation. You'll be asked to change words, clauses, sentences, and punctuation. Some topics covered include verb tense, parallel construction, subject-verb agreement, and comma use.

Benchmarks

The SAT Suite of Assessments' College and Career Readiness Benchmarks work together to help students and educators assess student progress toward college readiness from year to year. Benchmarks help:

- Identify students who are thriving and require greater challenges.
- Identify students who require additional academic support.
- Inform instructional and curricular enhancements throughout an institution.

SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks Defined

Students are considered college- and career-ready when their SAT section scores meet both the Math and the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing benchmarks. It is important to note that college readiness is a continuum — students scoring below the SAT benchmarks can still be successful in college, especially with additional preparation and perseverance.

Students with an SAT Math section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in algebra, statistics, pre-calculus, or calculus.

Students with an SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in history, literature, social sciences, or writing classes.

Grade-Level Benchmarks Defined

Students who take the PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9 see grade-level benchmarks on their score reports. Grade-level benchmarks indicate whether students are on track for college and career readiness. They are based on expected student growth toward SAT benchmarks at each grade. Preliminary benchmarks were used for the 2015 PSAT/NMSQT and fall PSAT 8/9 scores.

Benchmark Indicators

Score reports use colors to show how students' section scores relate to the SAT or grade-level benchmark.

- **Green:** The section score meets or exceeds the benchmark.
- **Yellow:** The section score is within one year's academic growth of the benchmark.
- **Red:** The section score is below the benchmark by more than one year's academic growth.

Benchmark Values and Section Score Ranges

8th Grade Section Score Ranges

120–720 Point Scale

	Red	Yellow	Green
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	120–360	370–380	390–720
Math	120–400	410–420	430–720

9th Grade Section Score Ranges

120–720 Point Scale

	Red	Yellow	Green
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	120–380	390–400	410–720
Math	120–420	430–440	450–720

Test Structure Differences

Three different tests PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10 AND PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT 8/9 is slightly different from the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT in **length and scoring**. The PSAT 8/9, as stated in the previous section, records scores on a scale of **240 to 1440**. Scores on the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT range from **320 to 1520**.

Part of the reason for this difference in scoring is that the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT are longer than the PSAT 8/9 and have more questions. Take a look at the chart below comparing the PSAT 8/9 (highlighted in yellow), PSAT 10, and PSAT/NMSQT side by side.

	PSAT 8/9	PSAT 10	PSAT/NMSQT
What is the range of possible scores?	240-1440	320-1520	320-1520
How long is it?	2 hrs 25 min.	2 hrs 45 min.	2 hrs 45 min.
# of Reading Qs	42	47	47
# of Writing Qs	40	44	44
# of Math Qs	38	48	48
Can your score qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship?	No	No	Yes

The biggest difference between the PSAT 8/9 and the other two tests is in the number of Math questions: There are ten more questions on the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT than there are on the PSAT 8/9.

2019 Testing Dates

Schools and districts schedule PSAT 10 administrations during these dates:

- February 25–March 29, 2019
- April 8–26, 2019

Dates can vary from year to year. The PSAT/NMSQT is offered in the fall and the PSAT 10 is offered in the spring.

Who, Where, When

PSAT/NMSQT

- Who: 11th and 10th graders
- Where: At school
- When: Wednesday, October 10, 2018. Other options are Saturday, October 13 and Wednesday, October 24. ([View the PSAT/NMSQT calendar.](#))
- Scholarships: Used by scholarship programs, including the National Merit® Scholarship Program, to look for eligible students.

PSAT 10

- Who: 10th graders
- Where: At school
- When: Schools choose a date to offer the PSAT 10. Testing is available during:
 - February 25–March 29, 2019
 - April 8–26, 2019
 - ([View the PSAT 10 calendar](#))
- Scholarships: Used by scholarship programs to look for eligible students, but not considered for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Fees

The 2018-19 tests cost schools \$16 for each student—but you might not pay that much. Some schools cover all or part of the cost for their students. For details, ask your counselor.

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