COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

- **PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)** – Intended as a practice for the SAT but a shorter version, the PSAT can only be taken once a year and many students take the test in both 10th and 11th grade. If students earn a high score on the PSAT during their junior year, they could qualify to receive a National Merit Scholarship. The PSAT is a comprehensive, standardized assessment administered at schools each year. The test is 2 hours and 45 minutes long. The PSAT has two sections: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (1 hour and 35 minutes), and Math (1 hour and 10 minutes). Each section is scored on a 160-to-760 point scale. Students should check with their school counselor for registration for the PSAT exam.

- **SAT** – The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The SAT exam is a standardized test that shows universities/colleges how prepared a student is for college by measuring key skills like reading, computational ability, and clarity of expression. The SAT tests the subject matter learned by students in high school and how well they apply that knowledge. The SAT is offered 7 times a year in the US. It is a 3-hour long test, consisting of three main sections – Math, Evidence-Based Reading, and Writing. There is an optional 50-minute essay. It includes three kinds of questions: Multiple-choice; student-produced responses (mathematics only); and essay question. The test is machine-scored, except for the essay. Math and Evidence-Based Reading sections are scored on a scale from 200-800. The essay is scored separately. Register at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

- **SAT Subject Exam** – SAT Subject Exam measures students' knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, and their ability to apply that knowledge. They are closely linked to the high school curriculum and provide colleges with an objective assessment of student readiness for college-level work. The SAT Subject Tests give students an additional opportunity to distinguish themselves and showcase their skills in a particular subject area. There are 20 SAT Subject Exams in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics, and science. Most of the exams are multiple-choice. Each SAT Subject Exam is scored on a scale between 200-800. Based on a student’s performance on the Exam(s), they could potentially fulfill basic requirements, receive credit for introductory-level college courses, or even fulfill A-G subject areas. Register at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

- **ACT - Plus Writing** – The ACT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The exam contains five sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing. The ACT is also used as placement test and measures the skills and knowledge needed for first-year college success. The composite score is the score most often used for admission purposes by universities and colleges. The ACT composite score ranges on a scale of 1 to 36. Test time for the ACT (No Writing) is approximately 2 hours and 55-minutes long, with the Writing component, 3 hours 35-minutes. Register at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

- **AP Exams (Advanced Placement)** – AP Exams are rigorous, multiple-component tests that are offered in a variety of subjects and administered at high schools each May. High school students can earn college credit, placement, or both for qualifying AP Exam scores. Each AP Exam has a corresponding AP high school course and provides a standardized measure of what students have learned in the AP classroom. AP Exams are an essential part of the AP course experience, and help students stand out in the admission process. The AP examinations are used as measures of college achievement, and are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. A minimum score of 3 is required to be granted college credit. The tests are approximately three hours. Register at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
Know what exams are required for admissions purposes!

<table>
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<th>CSU</th>
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<th>PRIVATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>SAT or ACT (Writing not required) Test Blind for Class of 2021</td>
<td>SAT or ACT (Optional for class of 2021 &amp; 2022), SAT Subject (Optional) Students can submit SAT Subject scores for consideration and to show subject proficiency. Engineering and nursing departments/schools highly recommends students to take Math Level 2 and a Science.</td>
<td>SAT or ACT, some require SAT Subject (check with each university)</td>
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Test-Taking Strategies for High School Students

Students should take the following exams during the specified month and the SAT Subject Tests if the stated course has been completed.

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<th>GRADE LEVEL</th>
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<td>PSAT - October</td>
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| 10 | PSAT – October  
ACT – June – taken if algebra 2 has been completed or in progress  
SAT – June – taken if algebra 2 has been completed or in progress  
AP – May – taken if enrolled in AP courses  
SAT Subject Tests- May or June, take:  
Math Level 2 (upon completion of Pre-Calculus)  
Biology or Chemistry (if enrolled in Honors or AP preferred)  
Language (completion of 3rd year preferred) |
| 11 | PSAT – October  
ACT – June – taken if algebra 2 has been completed or in progress  
SAT – June – taken if algebra 2 has been completed or in progress  
AP – May – taken if enrolled in AP courses  
SAT Subject Tests – May or June, take:  
Chemistry or Physics (Honors or AP preferred)  
Math Level 2 (upon completion of Pre-Calculus)  
Language (completion of 3rd year preferred)  
US History (Honors or AP preferred) |
| 12 | December is your last opportunity to take ACT/SAT exams. Some CSU’s will not take December scores! Don’t forget to request your scores to be sent to universities you are considering.  
ACT- October or December (if necessary)  
SAT – August, October, November or December (if necessary)  
SAT Subject- October, November or December  
AP - May, if enrolled in AP courses |

STUDY TIP

The best way to prepare for these exams is by taking challenging courses. Read and write beyond classroom assignments to improve your vocabulary and writing skills. Take advantage of practice tools available (i.e. SAT prep courses, prep books, etc.) Free online SAT Prep – https://www.khanacademy.org/sat