

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized tests are a significant component of the college admission process. They are one of many factors considered when colleges review a student's application.

CEEB: College Entrance Examination Board. This is an endowed institution (also called the College Board), governed as a nonprofit organization by college and secondary school members. Its headquarters are in New York, New York. The College Board is the overseeing agency for many tests and services connected with the college admissions process. These include the PSAT, the SAT: Reasoning Test and the SAT: Subject Tests. Our C.E.E.B code number, which most colleges will ask for, is **260720**.

PSAT/NMSQT: Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The National Merit Scholarship foundation once based its awards on its own test. In the interest of convenience and economy, the National Merit foundation now uses the results of the PSAT for its selection purposes. The PSAT was designed as a practice test in the fall of the junior year, a warm-up and predictor for the SAT. Colleges, rarely, if ever, use PSAT scores as part of their admissions criteria. PSAT scores are broken down into three categories, Critical Reading, Math and Writing. Scores are reported in the range of 20 to 80. The National Merit selection index is calculated by adding the three scores together. Semifinalist status is awarded to students whose selection index places them in the top half of one percent among the students in their state. The minimum score needed to achieve National Merit Semifinalist status, and therefore to be in the running for a scholarship, varies from year to year and from state to state. The qualifying score for Missouri in recent years has ranged from 211 to 215. Commended students are those who score in the top five percent on the PSAT/NMSQT. The required score in recent years has been a selection index of approximately 200.

SAT I – Reasoning Test: The SAT underwent a significant overhaul as of the March, 2005 test. The SAT is largely a multiple-choice examination (except for a small portion of the math section and the essay component of the Writing section) and, in theory, is designed to measure a student's aptitude for college level work. Students receive scores (on a scale of 200 to 800) in three different areas: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. These scores must be submitted as a piece of one's admissions credentials to many colleges, although an increasing number of colleges and universities will accept the ACT as an alternative. A few colleges have made the reporting of scores optional (see the "College Search" portion of the college counseling web-site – phscollege.com – for a complete listing.) Most schools use the scores as one of several factors in reaching their decisions.

SAT II – Subjects Tests: The SAT Subject tests give students an opportunity to show their academic strengths in a wide variety of subject areas. Tests are offered in 20 specific subjects. Each test is one hour in length and a student may take one, two or three tests on a given date. Most selective colleges ask for two or three subject tests (consult admissions literature for specific testing requirements at each school), usually a Math test (either 1 or 2) and a second or third test of the student’ s choice. The Subject Tests, like the SAT, are scored on a scale of 200 to 800. Some students have taken one or more of these tests prior to the junior year and **many juniors should take three subject tests in June.**

ACT: American College Testing Program. The ACT, with its headquarters in Iowa, was established as an alternative to the SAT. For many years it was the predominate testing program for state universities in the West, Midwest and parts of the South. Most colleges and universities today, including private colleges in all parts of the country, now accept either the SAT or the ACT. We therefore encourage all students to take both tests at least once. Because the ACT combines certain aspects of both the SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests into a single instrument, some students perform better on the ACT than the SAT. The ACT is scored on a 0 to 36 scale, and its scores are reported in four categories (English, Math, Reading Comprehension and Scientific Reasoning), as well as a composite average of the four areas. **Beginning with the February, 2005 test, ACT offers an OPTIONAL Writing section. [Although students may consult the testing requirements of the colleges or universities they are considering, it is our feeling that Hickman High students will do well on the ACT writing section and should, therefore, take it].** Juniors should take the ACT in February or April.

AP: Advanced Placement. The AP program gives recognition for college–level work done in secondary school on the basis of special examinations designed by the College Board. These exams require academic preparation that is much more extensive than is found in a typical high school course. The exams are given in May and cover the equivalent of college expectations in a specific course. The exams are graded from 1 to 5. Colleges have the prerogative to determine what kind of recognition they will award to a matriculating student’ s AP scores. Students should check with the colleges individually during the application process to find out what the policy is for granting credit.