

Average PSAT scores by grade (2024-25), the benchmarks, and what a good score is

	Test takers	Mean total	R&W	Math	Met both benchmarks
10th graders (PSAT/NMSQT)	1,733,948	911	465	447	34%
11th graders (PSAT/NMSQT)	1,449,296	998	508	490	40%
All PSAT/NMSQT takers	3,085,279	950	485	466	
PSAT 10 (spring, grade 10)	357,706	904	459	445	
PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 together	3,397,371	946	482	464	

Source: the College Board's 2025 SAT Suite annual report. The grade gap is about 90 points: compare a score with the student's own grade.

Scales: total 320-1520, sections 160-760 (the SAT is 400-1600 and 200-800); a PSAT score is built to predict the same SAT score at the same time, and students typically add 50-150 points by the SAT a year later.

Grade-level benchmarks (on track for the SAT's 480 and 530)

Grade	Reading and Writing	Math	Met R&W / Math in 2024-25
10th	430	480	63% / 35%
11th	460	510	67% / 42%

Estimated percentile by grade (from the 2024-25 means and the SAT's spread; the score report's

Total	10th grade	11th grade	Reads as
1400	98th	96th	National Merit range for a junior, depending on the split
1300	95th	90th	Commended range begins for juniors strong in R&W
1200	89th	80th	the top fifth of juniors
1100	79th	67th	
1000	65th	50th	the 11th-grade average is 998
900	48th	34th	the 10th-grade average is 911
800	32nd	20th	

A good score: above the grade's average and above both benchmarks. For selective colleges: 1200+ as a sophomore, 1300+ as a junior (predicting an SAT of 1350-1450 by the next autumn).

From

sciencewithshobha.com/blog/average-psat-score-for-10th-graders-and-11th-graders-what-a-good-psat-score-is-the-benchmarks-the-selection-index-and-national-merit-cutoffs/ · 1-on-1 online SAT, ACT, PSAT and school subjects, US after-school hours, free 30-minute first class.

The NMSC Selection Index, National Merit, and a worksheet

Selection Index = $(2 \times \text{Reading and Writing} + \text{Math}) / 10$, scale 48-228. Reading and Writing counts twice. Only the 11th-grade PSAT/NMSQT counts for National Merit.

Level	Who	Selection Index
Commended Student	about the top 50,000 nationally	210 for the class of 2026 (announced the September after the test)
Semifinalist	about 16,000, allocated to states	set state by state: 208-225 for the class of 2026; Massachusetts and New Jersey 225
Finalist	about 15,000 Semifinalists, after a confirming SAT or ACT, the school's recommendation and an essay	
Scholarship winner	about 7,000 Finalists	

Cutoffs move a point or two each year; the state cutoff is the one that matters. In PSAT terms a Semifinalist score is roughly 1400-1500 depending on the split between sections.

Selection Index worksheet

Reading and Writing section score:

x 2 =

Math section score:

Sum:

/ 10 = Selection Index:

State cutoff (last year's, from NMSC or a prep company's table):

Points short or over:

Worked examples

R&W 620, Math 500	$(1,240 + 500) / 10 = 174$
R&W 700, Math 740	$(1,400 + 740) / 10 = 214$
R&W 740, Math 700	$(1,480 + 700) / 10 = 218$: the same total, a higher index

How to use a sophomore's score

- [] Compare the total with 911 and each section with 430 and 480; the section furthest below gets the work
- [] Read the Knowledge and Skills section: the eight domains show which question types lost points
- [] Plan the junior-year PSAT in October: it is the one that counts; a sophomore at 1200+ is a cutoff candidate with a year's work
- [] Expect the SAT to be 50-150 points above the PSAT taken a year earlier