

PSAT/NMSQT Percentiles and Mean Scores

can be used to compare a student's performance with that of juniors and sophomores.

JUNIORS			
Score	Percentiles		
	Critical Reading	Math	Writing Skills
80	99+	99+	99+
79	99+	99+	99+
78	99+	99+	99+
77	99	99	99+
76	99	99	99
75	99	99	99
74	99	98	99
73	98	98	99
72	98	97	99
71	97	97	98
70	97	96	98
69	96	95	97
68	96	95	97
67	95	94	96
66	94	92	95
65	94	90	95
64	92	90	93
63	90	88	93
62	89	85	91
61	87	82	91
60	85	82	88
59	83	79	88
58	80	76	86
57	78	73	83
56	76	72	82
55	73	69	80
54	70	66	79
53	67	62	75
52	65	61	72
51	58	58	68
50	58	54	68
49	55	51	63
48	49	47	58
47	45	43	54
46	42	40	51
45	38	40	50
44	35	36	44
43	32	33	40
42	29	30	36
41	26	27	33
40	23	24	29
39	20	21	27
38	18	18	21
37	15	16	21
36	13	13	18
35	13	11	15
34	10	11	11
33	8	9	11
32	7	7	8
31	6	7	6
30	6	5	6
29	4	3	4
28	4	3	4
27	3	2	2
26	3	2	2
25	2	1	2
24	1	1	2
23	1	1	1
22	1	1	1
21	1	1	1
20	1	1	1
Mean score	47.8	48.5	45.7
Standard deviation	11.1	11.8	10.9
Number of juniors in sample	1,235,267	1,235,267	1,235,267

SOPHOMORES			
Score	Percentiles		
	Critical Reading	Math	Writing Skills
80	99+	99+	99+
79	99+	99+	99+
78	99+	99+	99+
77	99+	99+	99+
76	99+	99+	99+
75	99+	99+	99+
74	99+	99	99+
73	99	99	99+
72	99	99	99+
71	99	99	99+
70	99	99	99+
69	99	98	99
68	99	98	99
67	98	98	99
66	97	97	99
65	97	96	99
64	97	96	98
63	96	95	98
62	95	94	97
61	94	92	96
60	93	92	95
59	91	90	95
58	90	88	94
57	89	86	92
56	87	86	92
55	85	83	90
54	83	80	89
53	80	78	87
52	79	77	85
51	73	74	82
50	73	71	82
49	70	68	78
48	65	65	74
47	62	61	71
46	58	58	67
45	55	58	67
44	51	54	62
43	48	51	58
42	45	47	54
41	41	44	49
40	36	40	45
39	32	36	44
38	30	32	35
37	26	28	35
36	23	24	30
35	23	21	26
34	19	21	20
33	15	17	20
32	14	13	16
31	11	13	12
30	11	9	12
29	8	7	9
28	8	7	8
27	5	5	5
26	5	5	5
25	3	3	5
24	3	3	5
23	3	3	3
22	2	1	3
21	2	1	1
20	1	1	1
Mean score	43.4	43.4	41.2
Standard deviation	10.7	11.1	10.0
Number of sophomores in sample	1,260,584	1,260,584	1,260,584

Points to note

- Percentiles indicate the percentage of students whose scores fall below each specified score.
- On the score report, percentiles for juniors compare their performance with that of other juniors who took the test. For sophomores or younger students, percentiles compare their performance with that of sophomores.
- Percentiles are based on the critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores earned by a sample of college-bound juniors or sophomores who took the PSAT/NMSQT in 2011.
- The *mean* score is the statistic that describes the *average* performance of a group.
- The *standard deviation* is a measure of the variability of a set of scores around their mean. If the test scores cluster tightly around the mean score, as they do when the group tested is relatively homogeneous, the standard deviation is smaller than it would be for a more diverse group.

Reliability

shows how consistently a student would earn similar scores in repeated testings.

	Reliability Coefficient	Average SEM
Critical Reading	0.87	4.0
Mathematics	0.89	3.8
Writing Skills	0.85	4.3

Points to note

Data are based on a sample of sophomores and juniors who took the PSAT/NMSQT in the previous year (2010 Wednesday and Saturday forms).

- A *reliability coefficient* helps to show expected fluctuation in scores if a student takes a test more than once. The higher the reliability coefficient, the smaller the fluctuation of scores across repeated testings. A reliability coefficient of 1.00 would indicate perfect reliability, or no expected fluctuation.
- PSAT/NMSQT scores should be interpreted as ranges rather than points. The *standard error of measurement* (SEM) in the table above indicates that a student who took different forms of the test under identical conditions would be likely to earn scores within 4 points of one another.

Selection Index Percentiles and Mean Score

can be used to compare a student's performance with that of juniors.

JUNIORS					
Selection Index	Percentile	Selection Index	Percentile	Selection Index	Percentile
240-222	99+	162	73	102	10
221	99	161	72	101	9
220	99	160	71	100	9
219	99	159	70	99	8
218	99	158	69	98	8
217	99	157	68	97	7
216	99	156	67	96	7
215	99	155	66	95	6
214	99	154	65	94	6
213	99	153	64	93	5
212	99	152	63	92	5
211	99	151	61	91	5
210	98	150	60	90	4
209	98	149	59	89	4
208	98	148	58	88	4
207	98	147	57	87	3
206	98	146	55	86	3
205	98	145	54	85	3
204	97	144	53	84	2
203	97	143	52	83	2
202	97	142	50	82	2
201	97	141	49	81	2
200	96	140	48	80	1
& below					
199	96	139	47		
198	96	138	45		
197	96	137	44		
196	95	136	43		
195	95	135	42		
194	95	134	40		
193	94	133	39		
192	94	132	38		
191	94	131	37		
190	93	130	36		
189	93	129	34		
188	92	128	33		
187	92	127	32		
186	91	126	31		
185	91	125	30		
184	90	124	29		
183	90	123	28		
182	89	122	27		
181	89	121	25		
180	88	120	24		
179	87	119	23		
178	87	118	22		
177	86	117	21		
176	85	116	21		
175	85	115	20		
174	84	114	19		
173	83	113	18		
172	82	112	17		
171	82	111	16		
170	81	110	15		
169	80	109	15		
168	79	108	14		
167	78	107	13		
166	77	106	12		
165	76	105	12		
164	75	104	11		
163	74	103	10		
Mean score					141.9
Standard deviation					30.9
Number of juniors in sample					1,235,267

Points to note

- Reported on a scale ranging from 60 to 240, the Selection Index is the sum of the critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores. For example, a critical reading score of 56, a mathematics score of 62, and a writing skills score of 59 would result in a Selection Index of 177 (56 + 62 + 59).
- Percentiles are based on the Selection Index earned by a sample of college-bound juniors who took the PSAT/NMSQT in 2011.

How NMSC uses the Selection Index

National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) uses the Selection Index score to designate groups of students to receive recognition in the programs it conducts. Entry to NMSC's competitions for scholarships to be offered in 2013 is determined by students' responses to program entry questions on the 2011 PSAT/NMSQT answer sheet. Both the PSAT/NMSQT Score Report *Plus* and the Roster of Student Scores and Plans show the student's Selection Index, the student's responses to four entry items, and whether the student meets participation requirements. Currently, about 1.5 million test-takers meet requirements to enter NMSC's competitions each year. Almost all entrants are in their third year (grade 11, junior year) of high school.

Of the 1.5 million NMSC program entrants, about 55,000 will earn 2011 PSAT/NMSQT scores high enough to qualify them for recognition. These students will be notified of their standing through their high schools in September 2012. Students who qualify to continue in the competitions for scholarships to be offered in 2013 must then meet academic and other requirements specified by NMSC to be considered for awards.

Detailed descriptions of NMSC programs are published in the *Guide to the National Merit® Scholarship Program* and the *Information Booklet for the National Achievement® Scholarship Program*, mailed to high school principals each fall. For students and parents, information about the competitions is given in the *Official Student Guide to the PSAT/NMSQT* and at www.nationalmerit.org.

Inquiries about any aspect of the National Merit Program or National Achievement Program — including entry requirements, the selection process, and awards to be offered — should be sent to:

National Merit Scholarship Corporation
 Attn: Educational Services
 1560 Sherman Avenue, Suite 200
 Evanston, IL 60201-4897
 Phone: 847-866-5100