

A Student's Guide to the Sophomore Year

The following guide to the 10th grade year was written by a student for students to help anticipate the challenges of sophomore year.

I. PSAT/NMSQT

A. What is it?

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test – PSAT/NMSQT – put simply is a practice SAT. It gauges your score if you were to take the SAT and shows the categories in which you need to improve upon.

It's split up into three parts:

- 1) Critical Reading – Two 25-minute sections
- 2) Math – Two 25-minute sections
- 3) Writing – One 30-minute multiple choice section

The test is taken during homeroom and should take a total of 2 hours and 10 minutes. For more information on what is actually on the test visit:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about/ontest.html>

B. Why is it important?

This test is important because not only does it indicate your score on the SAT, but it could also win you scholarships and academic recognition your junior year for combined scores over 200.

National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships

College and University Sponsorship of Merit Scholarship® Awards

C. Why do you take it twice?

At Collegiate, you take the PSAT twice, once in October of your sophomore year and once in October of your junior year. Taking the PSAT allows you to become used to the test structure. Think of it as practice. However, still do your best in order to get the most accurate gauge of where you are. Also **your PSAT score is used in the application process for dual enrollment and summer programs**. So do not write it off as unimportant.

D. What do the results mean?

When you are given back your PSAT results, they are divided into three categories: Your Scores, Your Skills, and Your Answers.

Your Scores – you are given a score out of 80 for each category on the PSAT - Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing Skills. With this you can check your percentile, then compare your score to national scores.

Your Skills – the three main categories are then broken up into sections that the PSAT focuses on. The number of questions you got right in each category is given. This is to see where your strengths/weaknesses lie.

Your Answers – you are given the number of the question, the correct answer, your answer, and the difficulty of the question.

Note: At the very bottom of the page there is a box labelled: “Next Steps.” Read that box! By using the website and the access code listed, you can research colleges and careers, and start to study for the SAT. **The website also gives you feedback about why you missed certain questions and what you can do get them right on the SAT.**

II. Resume

Update your resume in Naviance with 9th grade and summer activities, while deleting any middle school events. Remember to continue updating it as you participate in activities during your 10th grade year.

Write it down!

Trust me. You’re not going to remember what you did on September 1st of your freshman year unless you have some sort of documentation. Get a notebook or even better update your resume as you complete an activity. Just make sure you keep a running list of what you did, when you did it, and what person or organization you did the activity through. This will also help you if you’re invited to apply to the National Honor Society.

If you have nothing to add, take it as a sign that you need to start participating in activities.

Resumes are also reviewed by the counselors/administration for occasional student opportunities. But they can only do this through **Naviance**, so it is in your best interest to use and get familiar with Naviance.

III. Getting Academic Help

Collegiate offers programs for students who may be struggling with a certain subject, whether it be math, English, or the dreaded chemistry. If you are struggling in a class, please, please ask for help, whether from another student, your teacher, or a peer tutor.

A. Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. Mr. Taylor, room 2, will pair you up with another, usually older, student to help you. From there you and your peer tutor can arrange meetings to fit both of your schedules.

B. The Writing Center

Here you can get help writing, revising, and editing a paper for class. If you are interested or struggling ask your language arts teacher for more information.

IV. Scheduling for 11th Grade

The course selections for 11th grade become broader than those in prior years.

A. What is Dual Enrollment?

Starting junior year, dual enrollment is a chance for you to experience a college level class at an actual college with a **reduced tuition fee**. During the fall or spring semester you can travel back and forth (using **your own transportation**) to the college campus in order to take the class.

1. What Colleges?

- a. Gannon University (www.gannon.edu/dual)
- b. Mercyhurst College (<http://www.mercyhurst.edu/>)
- c. Edinboro University (**Summer only**)
- d. Penn State Behrend (<http://psbehrend.psu.edu/>)

Note: The different schools have varied requirements/ tuition fees. Tuition fees vary from year to year. Specific details will be made available in during 10th grade scheduling.

2. Why take a dual enrollment class?

Dual enrollment is a chance to take college classes at an actual college. Not only do you get college and high school credits, but you also experience what an actual college class would be like. It can also be a factor in admissions to selective colleges.

Note: The college credit may or may not transfer to the college of your choice.

Colleges have different policies when it comes to accepting credit. It is a good idea to research the college's AP/dual enrollment credit policy.

Be warned: Even though Collegiate will try to fit the college class into your schedule sometimes the class will overlap with others. **You are responsible for any content/assignments you missed.**

There will be a scheduling meeting during 2nd semester. If you miss this meeting or need a refresher, visit the Guidance tab on the Collegiate Academy website: <http://www.eriesd.org/Page/963>, or visit Ms. James or Ms. King in the guidance office.

The website often has posted requirements for taking the class and tuition fees.

B. What other course options are there?

Go to the Collegiate Academy website and hover over “Students.” A dropdown tag should appear. Scroll down until you get to “20-- to 20-- Coursebook.” This document has all the courses that Collegiate offers. Find the ones that say “Grades: 10” and these are the courses you can take as a 10th grader.

USE THIS RESOURCE!

For the core subjects – math, science, and language arts – there is a diagram/table that depicts the sequence of courses that you as a student can take. The science diagram also gives you an occupation (ex. Biologist) and maps out the courses you should take if you are considering that occupation.

At the very end there is also information on National Honors Society and converting community service into credits.

V. Define Broad Areas of Interest

In order to find out what you like, you have to do research.

But do not get discouraged if you don’t find the perfect fit. There are a lot of jobs out there that few high school students are aware of.

Also, don’t set your heart on one single college. With 4,000 colleges to choose from, more than one will be a good fit. So even if you don’t make it to your dream school, you can still have a strong backup that meets your needs.

This beginning research is for you to get a general understanding of what you might like and what colleges you might want to apply.

A. Internet

It’s not all for fun and games! Lists of jobs, their pay, where they’re location, what degree is needed, colleges that offer that degree can all be found on the internet.

B. People

Ask around! See if you can find anyone in the area that is in a field you’re interested in. This can be nerve-wracking to talk to another adult but generally they are more than happy to answer questions on what they do. Teachers can be a great resource as they might know careers in their area that other students were interested in.

C. Experiences

Get involved! Volunteering, summer programs, and getting a job are excellent ways of getting a feel for what you like or do not like. Also Collegiate offers class trips to places both inside and outside of the U.S. And these experiences look good on an application!

KING TV announces many opportunities that are being offered through either Collegiate or the Erie community. Please, please try to listen.

D. Naviance Career Interest Profiler

Under the Careers tab in Naviance is a 20 minute questionnaire that will match your interests with possible majors and careers. You will be surprised how accurate it can be! Then you can use the college search feature to find colleges offering the majors you might want to pursue.

VI. SAT/ACT Prep

A. I take the SAT in junior year. Why should I prep now?

Junior year is hectic for most people. Your grades matter more than ever. The focus on the SAT gets pushed to the back of your mind. And suddenly it's May and you have this AP test and that AP test and this project and that final.

Moral of the story: It's better to start earlier than later.

Just start to think about the SAT so you don't get swamped in junior year. There is both a SAT Prep class offered for credit junior year that you can schedule for and sessions after school if you want to start now. Some teachers suggest taking it more than once so you have less test anxiety and know what to expect. In your junior and senior years, the College Board offers two test waivers per year to students eligible for free/reduced lunches, as each test costs about \$50. Also suggested is buying the Blue College Board SAT book. It gives you a rundown of what is on the test and ten practice SAT tests. College Board also offers free test prep on their website: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice>.

B. The ACT

For those who don't know, the ACT is another college admission test that covers four subject area tests: English, Math, Reading, and Science. It also includes a 30 minute Writing Test (optional – but take it anyway).

Now to answer why should I take another test? Some students actually score better on the ACT than on the SAT. The ACT is an achievement test, testing you on what you've skills learned in school. The ACT also does not take points off for guessing. And, the ACT can sometimes replace SAT subject tests. So it is suggested that you take both the SAT and the ACT. Fee waivers are also available

for juniors and seniors eligible for free/reduced lunches. See Mrs. Fachetti in the guidance office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

For more information on the ACT, visit the ACT website:

<http://www.actstudent.org/faq/>

VII. Summer Prep

Start hunting around for volunteer opportunities and summer camps. A good start would be to ask Ms. Lanich, the adviser of the National Honor Society, for a list of volunteer opportunities.

Also, KING TV, again, announces many opportunities offered through Collegiate and the Erie community. And if you miss the morning announcements, just go to Collegiate's website (<http://www.eriesd.org/n pca>) "News" tab and click "Daily Announcements."

The GoErie website (<http://www.goerie.com/>) is another resource you can use.

And, surprise, surprise, the Collegiate Academy website also lists other programs! The Guidance Home Page, <http://www.eriesd.org/Page/952>, has a column to the left, which if you scroll to the bottom has two links entitled, "Summer Classes," and "Summer Programs at Colleges and Universities."

Naviance offers a list of enrichment programs under the Colleges tab.

VIII. Read

Remember that the language arts classes assign summer reading assignments.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.

No one wants to rush through a 200 page book then write a sloppy essay on it. Pace yourself. Set a goal for each week and meet it. Make sure you get a rubric from your teacher to know what is assigned and assessed.

Also most teachers have two to three meetings at Barnes & Nobles over the summer. Use these if you have questions or if you want feedback. If you cannot make the meetings, email. Teachers will respond. Do not wait till the last minute to ask them questions. Summer reading will be a part of the first quarter grades.

IX. Work, Volunteer, Attend Classes, Workshops, Camps

This is how you build up your resume. Colleges want a well-rounded student, someone who will contribute to their campus. These experiences can also help you to determine a possible college major. Again, KING TV, Naviance, Collegiate's website, and college websites all have opportunities for high school students. Use them!

Also check out Collegiate's summer course offers. You can usually knock a wellness requirement out of the way. This allows you to free up your schedule during the year and add a little variety to your course selections.

REMEMBER: In order to qualify for the National Honor Society (NHS) next year, you need **25 hours of documented community service and a GPA of 3.5 or higher**. This is a service organization, so if accepted, plan to participate in service projects.

X. Quick and Easy Resource Links!

A: I. PSAT/NMSQT

1. PSAT Website:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about/ontest.html>

B: IV Scheduling for 11th Grade

1. Dual Enrollment at Gannon: www.gannon.edu/dual.

2. Dual Enrollment at Mercyhurst College: <http://www.mercyhurst.edu/>

3. Dual Enrollment at Penn State Behrend: <http://psbehrend.psu.edu/>

4. Collegiate's Guidance Page on Dual Enrollment:

<http://www.eriesd.org/Page/963>

C: VI. SAT/ACT Prep

1. ACT: <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/>

2. SAT: www.collegeboard.com

D: VII. Summer Prep

1. Collegiate Academy's Website: <http://www.eriesd.org/n pca>

2. Guidance Home Page: <http://www.eriesd.org/Page/952>

3. Naviance enrichment programs under the College tab.