PSAT™ 8/9

Information for Parents

What is the PSAT™ 8/9?

The PSAT 8/9 is an assessment given to eighth- and ninth-graders that is closely aligned to the PSAT/NMSQT™ and PSAT™ 10. It consists of questions in Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and in Math.

What are the benefits of taking the PSAT 8/9 assessment?

It helps establish a baseline for students as they enter high school and begin preparing for college and career readiness. It also provides students with better access to data and personalized study through the online College Board and Khan Academy® resources.

When will my student take the PSAT 8/9 assessment?

It will be administered during class time on the following date: Wednesday, Oct. 14

How should my student prepare?

The best preparation is to deeply engage in classroom learning and practice skills over time. On test day, your student should answer all the questions to the best of his or her ability. It will also help if he or she gets plenty of sleep the night before test day.

What should my student bring on test day?

Your student will need two No. 2 pencils with soft erasers, an acceptable calculator, and a student ID number or Social Security number (optional).

How long will the assessment take and how many questions are there?

Actual testing time is 2 hours and 25 minutes. There are 42 Reading questions, 40 Writing and Language questions, and 38 Math questions. Some students will take a fifth section that takes an additional 20 minutes.

What should my student do if he or she doesn't know an answer?

Your student may encounter some difficult questions that he or she does not know how to answer. Advise your student that if this happens, not to get discouraged but to answer every question to the best of his or her ability.

A message for parents

The PSAT 8/9 assessment will help your student prepare for the future. By taking the PSAT 8/9, your student will learn which skills he or she needs to work on for continued success through high school and college. In addition, the PSAT 8/9 will identify areas where your student excels and may want to consider taking higher-level courses, as well as areas he or she should focus on to improve academically. Please note that PSAT 8/9 scores are not sent to colleges.

How does my student receive PSAT 8/9 scores?

Your student will receive a paper score report at school with a unique code giving him or her access to a robust online score report. The scores reported will grow to include every test your student takes that is part of the SAT Suite of Assessments (see **collegeboard.org/sat-suite** for more information).

The online experience is designed to help you and your student understand the scores better and to use the feedback to build new skills based on a detailed breakdown of your student's performance.

CollegeBoard

PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 Reading Test Sample Questions

Content Classification: History/Social Studies/ Social Science

Questions 1 and 2 are based on the following passage and supplementary material.

This passage is adapted from Richard Florida, *The Great Reset*. ©2010 by Richard Florida.

In today's idea-driven economy, the cost of time is what really matters. With the constant pressure to innovate, it makes little sense to waste countless collective hours commuting. So, the most efficient and productive regions are those in which people are thinking and working—not sitting in traffic.

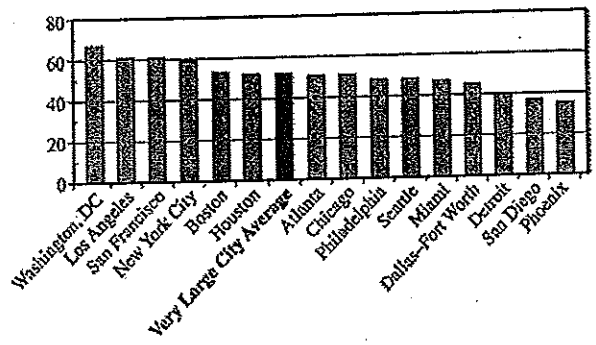
The auto-dependent transportation system has reached its limit in most major cities and megaregions. Commuting by car is among the least efficient of all our activities—not to mention among the least enjoyable, according to detailed research by the Nobel Prize–winning economist Daniel Kahneman and his colleagues. Though one might think that the economic crisis beginning in 2007 would have reduced traffic (high unemployment means fewer workers traveling to and from work), the opposite has been true. Average commutes have lengthened, and congestion has gotten worse, if anything. The average commute rose in 2008 to 25.5 minutes, "erasing years of decreases to stand at the level of 2000, as people had to leave home earlier in the morning to pick up friends for their ride to work or to catch a bus or subway train," according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which collects the figures. And those are average figures. Commutes are far longer in the big West Coast cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco and the East Coast cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. In many of these cities, gridlock has become the norm, not just at rush hour but all day, every day.

The costs are astounding. In Los Angeles, congestion eats up more than 485 million working hours a year; that's seventy hours, or nearly two weeks, of full-time work per commuter. In D.C., the time cost of congestion is sixty-two hours per worker per year. In New York it's forty-four hours. Average it out, and the time cost across America's thirteen biggest city-regions is fifty-one hours per worker per year. Across the country, commuting wastes 4.2 billion hours of work time annually—nearly a full workweek for every commuter. The overall cost to the U.S. economy is nearly $90 billion when lost productivity and wasted fuel are taken into account. At the Martin Prosperity Institute, we calculate that every minute shaved off America's commuting time is worth $19.5 billion in value added to the economy. The numbers add up fast: five minutes is worth $97.7 billion; ten minutes, $195 billion; fifteen minutes, $292 billion.

It's ironic that so many people still believe the main remedy for traffic congestion is to build more roads and highways, which of course only makes the problem worse. New roads generate higher levels of "induced traffic," that is, new roads just invite drivers to drive more and lure people who take mass transit back to their cars. Eventually, we end up with more clogged roads rather than a long-term improvement in traffic flow.

The coming decades will likely see more intense clustering of jobs, innovation, and productivity in a smaller number of bigger cities and city-regions. Some regions could end up bloated beyond the capacity of their infrastructure, while others struggle, their promise stymied by inadequate human or other resources.

The Most Congested Cities in 2011
Yearly Hours of Delay per Automobile Commuter



Adapted from Adam Werbach, "The American Commuter Spends 38 Hours a Year Stuck in Traffic." ©2013 by The Atlantic.

1

The passage most strongly suggests that researchers at the Martin Prosperity Institute share which assumption?

A) Employees who work from home are more valuable to their employers than employees who commute.

B) Employees whose commutes are shortened will use the time saved to do additional productive work for their employers.

C) Employees can conduct business activities, such as composing memos or joining conference calls, while commuting.

D) Employees who have lengthy commutes tend to make more money than employees who have shorter commutes.

Content: Rhetoric/Analyzing arguments/Analyzing reasoning	Objective: Students must reasonably infer an assumption that is implied in the passage.
Estimated Difficulty: Medium	

Choice B is the best answer because details in the third paragraph (lines 31–49) strongly suggest that researchers ("we") at the Martin Prosperity Institute assume that shorter commutes will lead to more productive time for workers. The author notes that "across the country, commuting wastes 4.2 billion hours of work time annually" and that "the overall cost to the U.S. economy is nearly $90 billion when lost productivity and wasted fuel are taken into account" (lines 39–43). Given also that those at the institute "calculate that every minute shaved off America's commuting time is worth $19.5 billion in value added to the economy" (lines 44–46), it can reasonably be concluded that some of that added value is from heightened worker productivity.

2

Which claim about traffic congestion is supported by the graph?

A) New York City commuters spend less time annually delayed by traffic congestion than the average for very large cities.

B) Los Angeles commuters are delayed more hours annually by traffic congestion than are commuters in Washington, D.C.

C) Commuters in Washington, D.C., face greater delays annually due to traffic congestion than do commuters in New York City.

D) Commuters in Detroit spend more time delayed annually by traffic congestion than do commuters in Houston, Atlanta, and Chicago.

Content: Synthesis/ Interpreting quantitative information	Objective: Students must interpret data presented graphically.
Estimated Difficulty: Easy	

Choice C is the best answer. Higher bars on the graph represent longer annual commute delays than do lower bars; moreover, the number of hours of annual commute delay generally decreases as one moves from left to right on the graph. The bar for Washington, D.C, is higher than and to the left of that for New York City, meaning that D.C. automobile commuters experience greater amounts of delay each year.

PSAT 8/9 Writing and Language Test Sample Questions

Content Classification: Careers	Objective: Students must make revising and editing decisions in the context of a passage on a topic related to careers.

Questions 1–3 are based on the following passage.

The Online World of Job Searching

Job searching sites, websites that help job seekers find open positions, have grown in popularity. These sites typically allow users to customize their job searches to focus on specific industries, employers, skills, or geographic areas. Many job search sites have features such as automatic alerts that will send job seekers an email or text message when a relevant job has been posted. Knowing how to use these features and navigate the sites makes it much easier for job seekers to connect with employers.

1 For instance, job seekers can use a site to find the name of the hiring manager of a company and contact that manager directly. The job searching website can provide job seekers with valuable information about a company's mission and history. This information will help job seekers determine if the company seems like a good fit for them.

Online job sites can also make it easier for employers to find job seekers. A person can post a résumé on a site and make that résumé "searchable," which means that employers who are seeking new employees can search résumés using keywords. This is why it's important for job seekers to include in their résumés keywords that describe their skills, training, and education. Keywords may include things like "leadership skills" or "CPR certification."

Although job searching sites can be very helpful, they should be used wisely and in moderation.

It's important to be selective and focused while searching. One mistake many inexperienced, and even experienced, job seekers sometimes make is to apply to jobs that are outside of their areas of expertise. This mistake **2** resulted in unanswered job applications and wasted time for both job seekers and employers. Perhaps for this reason, job coaches **3** support their clients to use job searching websites sparingly. They recommend that job seekers spend just 10 percent of the time they devote to job hunting on these websites. In reality, people spend almost triple that amount. A recent poll conducted by Climber.com revealed that job seekers spend 29.94% of their time looking for work on these sites.

Networking and face-to-face contact have always been important parts of any job search. However, when used strategically, job searching websites can also be powerful tools for researching and ultimately finding a job.

1

Which choice most effectively establishes the main topic of the paragraph?

A) Job seekers can think of job searching websites as strategic "intelligence-gathering" tools.
B) New job postings are sometimes flagged to indicate that they're recent additions.
C) Instead of placing an advertisement in the "help wanted" section of a newspaper, an employer is more likely to post on an online job site.
D) Some people use online job searching sites just to be aware of job opportunities in their area, even if they're not actively looking for a new job.

Content: Development/ Proposition	**Objective:** Students must determine which sentence best signals the main topic of a paragraph.

Estimated Difficulty: Hard

Choice A is the best answer because it clearly establishes the main topic of the paragraph: ways that job seekers can use job searching websites to collect information about advertised job opportunities and the companies associated with them.

2

A) NO CHANGE
B) was resulting
C) had resulted
D) can result

Content: Sentence Structure/Inappropriate shifts in construction/Verb tense, mood, and voice	**Objective:** Students must recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense, voice, and mood within and between sentences.

Estimated Difficulty: Medium

Choice D is the best answer because its use of the modal verb "can" to indicate possibility is consistent with the preceding sentence's statement that applying for jobs outside their areas of expertise is a mistake that job seekers "sometimes make."

3

A) NO CHANGE
B) encourage
C) cheer
D) inspire

Content: Effective Language Use/Precision	**Objective:** Students must revise test as needed to improve the exactness or content appropriateness of word choice.

Estimated Difficulty: Easy

Choice B is the best answer because "encourage" is the most contextually appropriate way to indicate that job coaches are offering their clients advice about how best to use job sites.

PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 Math Test Sample Questions

1

$$\frac{5(k+2)-7}{6} = \frac{13-(4-k)}{9}$$

In the equation above, what is the value of k?

A) $\frac{9}{17}$

B) $\frac{9}{13}$

C) $\frac{33}{17}$

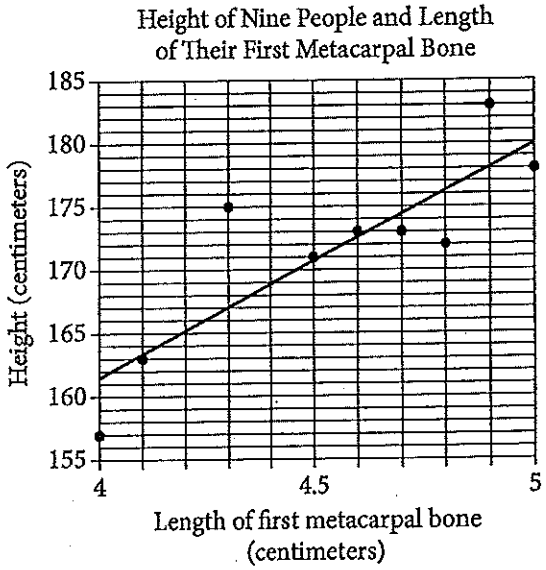
D) $\frac{33}{13}$

Content: Heart of Algebra	No Calculator
Estimated Difficulty: Medium	

Choice B is correct. Simplifying the numerators yields $\frac{5k+3}{6} = \frac{9+k}{9}$, and cross-multiplication gives $45k + 27 = 54 + 6k$. Solving for k yields $k = \frac{9}{13}$.

2

The first metacarpal bone is located in the hand. The scatterplot below shows the relationship between the length of the first metacarpal bone and height of 9 people. The line of best fit is also shown. Students will see examples such as those shown here on the right, illustrating how to fill in their answers on the grid.



How many of the 9 people have an actual height that differs by more than 3 centimeters from the height predicted by the line of best fit?

A) 2

B) 4

C) 6

D) 9

Content: Problem Solving and Data Analysis	Calculator
Estimated Difficulty: Easy	

Choice B is correct. The people who have first metacarpal bones of length 4.0, 4.3, 4.8, and 4.9 centimeters have heights that differ by more than 3 centimeters from the height predicted by the line of best fit.

Student-Produced Response Math Questions

For some questions in the Math Test, students will be asked to solve the problem and enter their answer in the grid, as shown at right, on the answer sheet. Students will not receive credit for anything written in the boxes above the circles.

3

$$x^2 + y^2 - 6x + 8y = 144$$

The equation of a circle in the xy-plane is shown above. What is the *diameter* of the circle?

Content: Additional Topics in Math	No Calculator
Estimated Difficulty: Hard	

Completing the square yields the equation $(x - 3)^2 + (y + 4)^2 = 169$, the standard form of an equation of the circle. Understanding this form results in the equation $r^2 = 169$, which when solved for r gives the value of the radius as 13. Diameter is twice the value of the radius; therefore, the diameter is 26.