

# COLLEGE TESTING TERMS

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS

There are 24 examinations offered by The College Board in the Advanced Placement (AP) Program.

All AP Exams, with the exception of Studio Art, contain both multiple-choice questions and free-response questions that require essay-writing, problem-solving, and other skills. AP exams are given every year at the Senior High School during two weeks in May.

Every examination receives an overall grade on a five-point scale: 5 (extremely well-qualified), 4 (well-qualified), 3 (qualified), 2 (possibly qualified) and 1 (no recommendation). Upon student request, Grade Reports are sent in early July to each student's home address, school, and to his/her college. Many colleges grant credit and/or advanced placement to students whose AP examination grades are considered acceptable. Students are strongly encouraged to take the AP test at the conclusion of the course.

Students who choose to take an AP examination must register to do so and assume the related costs.

## ACT

The ACT measures a student's ability in the subject areas of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning.

ACT scores are reported on a standard scale that ranges from 1 to 36. The arithmetic average of the scores on the four tests is the ACT composite score, which is often used as a measure of overall academic ability. Scores are organized into Individual Student Profile Reports, which are sent to the students and to colleges.

The English Test measures students' understanding and use of the basic elements of correct and effective writing in usage/mechanics and rhetorical skills.

The Mathematics Test measures students' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

The Reading Test measures reading comprehension abilities in the following areas: Social Studies/Science, Arts/Literature.

The Science Reasoning Test measures students' critical reasoning and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.

The Writing Test is an optional essay test that measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry level college composition courses. The test consists of one writing prompt that describes two points of view on an issue, and students write a response about their position on the issue.

The ACT is given in September, October, December, February, and April of each year at North Allegheny Senior High School. High school seniors who take the ACT for admission purposes should take the test early in their senior year. Juniors may also take the test.

Students who choose to take the ACT Assessment must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration booklets are available in the School Counseling Office at NASH or at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

## PSAT and the NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST (NMSQT)

The PSAT is a multiple-choice examination. It measures verbal and mathematical abilities important for academic

performance in college. The questions test ability to reason with facts and concepts rather than recall them. The test is given annually in October, and may be useful as a practice test for the SAT.

The PSAT also serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test for juniors in a nationwide competition for recognition, awards, and scholarships.

High school juniors take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. Tenth graders may elect to take the test for practice; however, their scores are not applicable to the NMSQT.

Students who choose to take the PSAT/NMSQT must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration materials are available in the School Counseling Offices at NAI and NASH.

## SAT REASONING TEST

The SAT is an entrance examination used by colleges and universities. There are three sections on the SAT Reasoning Test: Critical Reading, Writing, and Math. Each section is scored 200 to 800 with a perfect score being 2400.

The Critical Reading Test focuses on reading comprehension and vocabulary. It includes a variety of reading passages and 48 multiple-choice comprehension questions. In addition, there are 19 multiple-choice sentence completion questions that test vocabulary and a student's ability to understand fairly complex sentences.

The Writing Section was new to the SAT in 2005. Students are required to write an essay and answer 49 multiple-choice questions on grammar, word choice, and usage.

The SAT Math Test tests upper level math rather than have students recall basic math. It includes concepts from Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, as well as functions, data analysis, and statistics.

The SAT Reasoning Test is typically given to high school juniors and seniors. It is given at North Allegheny Senior High School in October, November, January, May, and June. Students who choose to take this exam must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration materials are available in the School Counseling office or on the website, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

## SAT SUBJECT TESTS

These tests measure a student's knowledge of a particular subject and one's ability to apply that knowledge. The tests offered are:

World History	Chinese
United States History	German
Mathematics Level 1	Korean
Mathematics Level 2	Latin
Physics	French
Chemistry	Italian
Biology E/M	Japanese
(Ecological/Molecular)	Spanish
Literature	Modern Hebrew

Some colleges require various combinations of SAT Subject Tests for admission and/or placement purposes. Each test is a one-hour multiple-choice examination in a specific subject area. SAT Subject Tests are given in October, November, January, May, and June of each year at North Allegheny Senior High School.

High school students usually take SAT Subject Tests following the completion of their last course in a particular subject. SAT Subject Tests are published by the Educational Testing Service of the College Board in Princeton, New Jersey.

Students who choose to take this test must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration materials are available in the School Counseling Department or on the website, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

## PSSA – Graduation Requirement Pennsylvania System of State Assessment

The Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) is administered to all 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade are required to take the Writing, Reading, Mathematics, and Science Assessments during the spring of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. The PSSA is administered during school hours to all students. There is no advance registration or cost to the students associated with the PSSA.

Student performance on the assessments is scored and placed into four categories - Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic. **Eleventh grade student scores and performance levels will be recorded on the student transcripts.**

## COMMENCING WITH THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2009 and as delineated in the North Allegheny School District Board Policy #3241 -

In order to be eligible for graduation a student must demonstrate mastery of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards on the culminating 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA, and/or local assessment aligned to the PA Academic Standards, or through progress monitoring on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Mastery shall be deemed as attaining a score of Proficient or higher on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA or 12<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA Retest, attaining passing grades on a local assessment aligned to the PA Academic Standards as designed or selected by the District, or fulfilling requirements of a graduation plan on a student's IEP.

**Beginning in 2008-2009, high school students in grades 9-12 who have not demonstrated proficiency on the PSSA Math, and/or Reading, and Writing will be required to schedule a PSSA Preparation class. More thorough course descriptions can be found within this Program of Studies –**

**PSSA Reading Preparation, course #1001, page 36**

**PSSA Writing Preparation, course #1002, page 36**

**PSSA Math Preparation, course #3001, page 56**

## WAIVER POLICY

### *Philosophy*

A waiver is a contract between the student and parent(s) and the School District. It provides a placement which supersedes the teacher-recommended level. The student may pursue such a contract. This action carries with it responsibility and accountability. Thus, abuse of the waiver system will have consequences. Neither curricular content nor performance expectations of a course will be deleted or diminished to accommodate waived students.

## *Procedures*

The current teacher shares the course recommendation with the student.

If the parent/student indicates intent to opt for a course other than the recommended course:

- Communication is initiated by the parent and student to the appropriate teacher, School Counselor, or Administrator. Information is shared with the parent and student regarding the recommendation procedure, student achievement, and past performance of waived students in the course being considered.

- If a waiver contract is still desired, the waiver form is given to the student by the current teacher. The student is responsible to obtain all the needed signatures on the form except for the Principal's signature. The form must be handed in to the School Counseling Department on or before **May 1<sup>st</sup>**. This submission implies the acknowledgment of the conditions identified on the form. Any appeal to waiver into a class past the **May 1<sup>st</sup>** deadline must be made to the Building Principal. The Principal will consult with appropriate staff members on the matter prior to making a judgment on the appeal. Teachers and counselors do not have the authority to grant exceptions to this deadline.

- The School Counseling Department forwards the waiver form to the Principal for signature and comment.
- A list of waived students is generated by the School Counseling Office in each building and is distributed to the Department Chairperson and Administration by the end of the school year.
- Students who waiver into a class cannot change placement until after the first three weeks of the school year.
- The student has a right to appeal for a reduction or elimination of this waiting period in extraordinary circumstances. The decision to hear the appeal rests with the Building Principal. If the appeal is heard, a Building Review Committee is convened (consisting of the Principal, a member of the school counseling staff, and a teacher). The decision of the Review Committee is final.
- If a student does withdraw from a course (after the 15 day waiting period) for which a waiver contract has been signed, one of the following consequences will occur for a full year course. *(For a semester course, the 40 is replaced with a 20 in the items below).*

If withdrawal occurs . . .

. . . during days 16 to 40 of the semester, a "W" will appear on the official high school transcript. There will be no exceptions.

. . . beyond the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the semester, an "E" will appear on the official high school transcript. There will be no exceptions.

**NORTH ALLEGHENY'S  
SCHOOL CODE NUMBER IS  
# 393 745**

**TO BE USED ON TEST APPLICATIONS  
WHEN REQUESTED**