



# THE PSAT and SAT

Essential Information for Parents and Students  
of  
Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School

Evan Wessler  
Vice President of Education  
[evan@methodtestprep.com](mailto:evan@methodtestprep.com)

# Part I

## The Story

All About the PSAT and SAT

# *When is the PSAT Changing?*

- The PSAT is being revised to align with the new SAT
- It will be administered in October 2015
  - Confusingly, this happens while students *could* still take the current version of the SAT

# *Why Take The PSAT?*

- It has literally zero consequences for college application prospects
- It's another opportunity to develop test-taking stamina
- It will help shed light on your strengths and weaknesses

# *When* is the SAT Changing?

- January 2016 will be the *final* administration of the SAT in its current form
- The revised SAT will be administered starting in March 2016
- All current juniors will have a choice:
  - Prepare for and take the current SAT before or in January 2016
  - Prepare for the new SAT and take it in March 2016 or after
  - Ignore the SAT and take the ACT instead

# Why is the (P)SAT Changing?

- Last revision: 2005–2006
  - Added the essay and grammar questions (Writing section)
  - Eliminated analogies from Critical Reading
  - Eliminated certain types of questions from Math
- How'd that go? Not so well.
  - The essay is bogus
  - The vocabulary is over-the-top
  - The test as a whole is not what higher level educators want
- Competition with the ACT
  - For relevance
  - Alignment to high school & Common Core curriculum

# Part II

The Changes to the PSAT & SAT

# In General...

- Fewer but longer sections
- Greater emphasis on reading comprehension and analytical skills
- Optional and longer document-based essay
- Four choices; no “guessing penalty”
- Restructuring of scores back to 1600
  - Essay score separately; will not affect this number

# Reading Comprehension

## Current – Critical Reading

- Content Areas
  - Sentence completions (vocab)
  - Reading comprehension (passages & questions)
- Structure & Scoring
  - 3 sections; 67 questions
  - All sections 20-25 min
  - Scores range: 200-800

## New – Reading Test

- Content Areas
  - No sentence completions!
  - Reading comprehension (passages & questions)
  - Integrated graphics & data interpretation questions
  - Evidence questions
  - Vocab in context
- Structure & Scoring
  - 1 section
  - 65 min (60 PSAT)
  - Score range 10-40 (will combine with Writing & Language to create a score from 200-800)

# Grammar & Language

## Current – Writing

- Content Areas
  - Improving sentences
  - Finding errors
  - Improving passages
  - Structure, punctuation, rhetorical skills
- Structure & Scoring
  - 2 sections; 49 questions
  - 25 min or 10 min
  - Scores range: 200-800 (70% of current Writing score)

## New – Writing & Language

- Content Areas
  - Improving sentences
  - Finding errors
  - Improving passages
  - Structure, punctuation, rhetorical skills
  - All passage-based
  - Graphics integration
- Structure & Scoring
  - 1 section
  - 35 min
  - Score range 10-40 (will combine with Reading to create a score from 200-800)

# Mathematics

## Current – Mathematics

- Content Areas
  - Arithmetic
  - Algebra
  - Geometry
  - Algebra II (very little)
  - Data & statistics (very little)
- Structure & Scoring
  - 3 sections; 54 questions
  - All sections 20-25 min
  - Scores range: 200-800

## New – Math

- Content Areas
  - Algebra (emphasis here)
  - Geometry (much less)
  - Algebra II (more of it)
  - Data & statistics (more of it)
  - Trigonometry (some)
  - Extended thinking
  - Multiple choice & grid-in
- Structure & Scoring
  - 2 sections
    - No-Calculator – 25 min
    - Calculator – 55 min (45 PSAT)
  - Score range: 200-800

# Essay

## Current – Prompt/Response

- Read prompt, respond to it
- Formulaic
- Not fact-based
- Structure & Scoring
  - 25 min
  - Graded 0-12
  - 30% of Writing section score

## New – Evidence-Based

- Students will formulate arguments based on a provided document
- No more “making things up”
- Structure & Scoring
  - 50 min
  - Graded 0-8

# Part III

## Best Practices

A Logical Approach to Preparing

If You Remember Just One Thing...

These tests are predictable.

Predictability warrants preparation

# An Example

- Where's the error?

The congressional panel issued their findings after conducting an investigation that lasted for over a year.

The congressional panel issued their findings

The congressional panel issued its findings

# A Smart Timeline

## SAT

- Changes this March!
- We recommend steering clear of the first exam unless you are an *exceptionally strong student*
- Try preparing for the current form of the exam and taking it in December & January

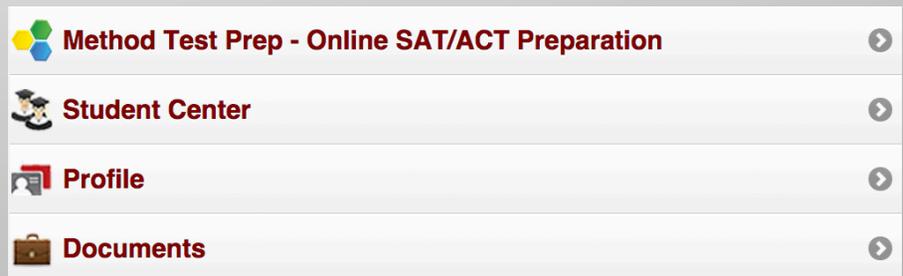
## ACT

- Much more flexible timeline because there are no major changes
- ACT
  - Could prepare for the December test
  - More ideal first test may be in April
    - Order Test Information Release (TIR\*)
    - Leaves time for another test in spring (June)
    - Must know more math

Part III  
How to Prepare  
MTP Online

# MTP Online

- Complete SAT, New SAT, and ACT course available to all POB-JFK students
- Log in through your Castle Learning accounts
- Lessons, quizzes, audio/video explanations, vocab builder
- Practice exams
- Go at your own pace, access from anywhere with internet



# A Structured Checklist of Tasks

## Week 2

---

6. Take the Reading Evaluation (approx. 25 min.)
  7. Take the Math Evaluation (approx. 25 min.)
  8. Take the Writing and Language Evaluation (approx. 25 min.)
  9. Math Lesson #1: Plug in Numbers (approx. 15 min.)
- 

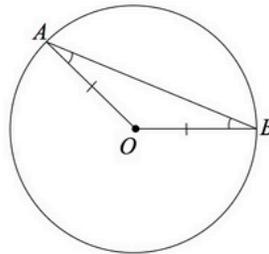
## Week 3

---

10. Reading Lesson #1: Best Reading Practices (approx. 15 min.)
  11. Writing and Language Lesson #1: Subject Verb Agreement (approx. 15 min.)
  12. Math Lesson #2: Literal Equations (approx. 15 min.)
  13. Reading Lesson #2: Strategy for Vocab in Context (approx. 15 min.)
-

# Rich, Engaging Lessons

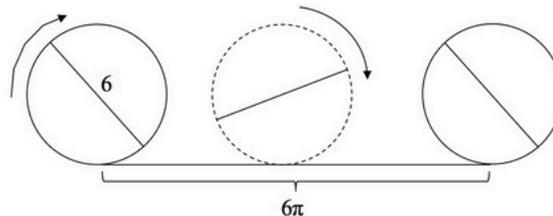
2. When you have a triangle whose sides are the radii of a circle, the triangle is isosceles or *MAYBE* equilateral. We'll get to the "maybe" part in the example problems, but here's the bottom line: any triangle with equal sides will also have equal angles. For example, in the figure below,  $AO = OB$ , so  $\angle A = \angle B$ , making an isosceles triangle.



3. When a circle is "rolled" on its outer edge, or when the total distance around the circle must be calculated, the factor under consideration is its circumference. The distance covered by a circle that rolls once around on a straight line is equal to the circle's circumference. For example, in the figure below, the circumference of the circle is 6 units, so in one roll, it would cover a distance equal to its circumference. Since

$$C = \pi d$$

this would be a total length of  $6\pi$ .



4. To find the area of a shaded region, find the area of the largest figure, and subtract the area of the part

# Instant-Feedback Quizzes

B. traveled. Answer You Submitted

C. invented. ✔ Correct Answer

D. published.

The correct answer is C. The answer you entered was B.

[Go To Next Question](#)

## Explanation



Your Explanation Video

As used in line 46, "pioneered" most nearly means

- A) revised.
- B) traveled.
- C) invented.
- D) published.

Context

45 To investigate just how *thermophilus* can survive extreme temperatures, van Koop pioneered lab techniques that would allow him to isolate the bacteria's proteins without disturbing their natural structure. "These proteins are very difficult to collect," van Koop notes. "No one had really tried to isolate *thermophilus* proteins before, so we had to

# Even More Features!

- Full-length exams
- Concept summary reports – highlight strengths and weaknesses
- Quiz on-demand
- Vocabulary Builder

# In Summary

- The PSAT and SAT are changing in a big way
- Both exams are highly predictable, and are thus teachable
- Consistent practice with problems is essential to raising score
- MTP provides tools to the students and parents of POB-JFK succeed

# Thanks for Listening!



Questions?

[evan@methodtestprep.com](mailto:evan@methodtestprep.com)