



Agoura Math Circle PSAT Training

PSAT Training

The PSAT/NMSQT is a standardized test used for college admissions and scholarships in the United States. It is currently administered by the College Board, an American nonprofit organization. The PSAT covers three skill areas: reading, writing and language, and math. The PSAT is also good practice for the SAT, the main test used in college admissions. Based on scores in the PSAT, one can obtain a National Merit Scholarship. The PSAT exam can be taken any year, but it only counts for scholarships typically in 11th grade.

In this course, we will discuss various sections of the PSAT test with specific test-taking tricks and tips. We will do this as a three-part, 20-hour course consisting of 10 sessions:

1. PSAT Reading
2. PSAT Writing and Language
3. PSAT Math

Final Exam: Actual PSAT exam from past years

Course flow

Our course will start with a broad overview of the PSAT, before diving into specific knowledge needed to succeed in the exam. After we cover the three sections, there will be a final exam from practice/previous year PSATs.

Recommended Textbooks

SAT PREP BLACK BOOK – Second Edition
Authors: Mike Barrett and Patrick Barrett

Class Schedule

Alternate Sundays 1:00 pm – 3:00pm (online on Zoom).

Class	Homework Review	Lecture	Lecture & Class Work
PSAT Training	1:00 – 1:30 PM	1:30 PM – 2:00 PM	2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Please note that if you miss two classes in a row, you will not be able to follow the topics anymore. Students must log in 10 min before the start of the class. There will be a break given when time permits.

Course Details

Pre-requisites: Good understanding of basic mathematical concepts (no higher than taught in Senior Intermediate level at Agoura Math Circle). Good foundational knowledge of grammar and reading [at least 8th-grade level]. Also, students are expected to have their laptops or desktops to log in via Zoom and do any practice problems assigned.

Course Registration & Website: Each student should register for the class. All course communication and homework submissions will be through the course website. The Zoom link will also be posted on the website.

Class workload: Apart from the 2 hours of class once every 2 weeks, students are expected to spend at least 45 minutes every day of the week for a total workload of between 10 – 12 hours. In this way, you will continuously be able to work on the skills and complete the homework. If you cannot make this commitment for about 2 hours, please do not register.

Class style: Classes will be on Zoom, conducted interactively. During the course, the textbook recommended will come into use. However, the lecture notes will contain the content, so the purchase is not mandatory, just highly recommended. Students are expected to come to class with a calculator for the math section.

Homework Policy: After each class, homework assignments will be mailed out and posted on the website. Most of the homework problems are previous year/practice PSAT problems and help simulate the level of difficulty found on the actual test. Please ensure any homework submitted is your work alone, so you can benefit, and we can monitor your progress. Cheating and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

Final Exam Policy: Final exam will be a real PSAT test from past years.

What will you learn from this course?

1. Learn the structure of the PSAT exam
2. Learn time management skills to use on any standardized test
3. How to identify the patterns of the different PSAT questions and find the correct answer efficiently
4. How to prepare for each of the 3 sections of the PSAT test.

Syllabus**Part 1: Reading (4 sessions)****1. Overview**

Overview and Important Reminders for Reading

Restatement vs Demonstration

Common mistakes

Wrong answer Types

Off by one or two words

Barely relevant, Literary Interpretations

Reasonable Statements

Direct Contradiction

Confused Relationships

Wrong part of a passage

2. How to Handle Passages

General Ideas

Reading the whole passage at once

Answering citation questions first

Making a mental map

Taking notes

Specific Approaches – 7 strategies

3. Answering Reading Questions

Technical Terms

The General Process, Questions without Citations

Best Evidence Questions

“Most Nearly Means” Questions

Attitude Questions and Questions with Figures

4. Answering Reading Questions – Part 2

Purpose Questions

Yes-Yes-No-No Questions

Central Claim Questions

Summary and Development Questions

Humor Questions

Paired Passages

Summary – PSAT/SAT Reading

Part 2: Writing and Language (3 sessions)**1. Overview**

Overview of Writing and Language

Big Secrets

Reading Comprehension Type Questions

“Best accomplishes X”

Transition words and phrases

Sentence/Paragraph placement

Vocabulary in Context

Figures

Including/Excluding a phrase/figure/sentence

2. Grammar and Grammar Type Questions

Nouns, Verbs

Singular vs Plural

Tenses and verb forms as nouns

Adjectives and Adverbs

Pronouns – Personal and Ambiguous usage

Subjects and Objects

Who vs Whom

Possession

Conjunctions

Clauses

Commas, colons, semicolons

Other punctuation

Frequently confused words and Joining Sentences

3. Rules, Hidden Patterns, Parallelism and Phrasing

Shorter is Better
No mistakes at all
NO CHANGE options
Wrong Answer Imitation
Functionally Identical Answer Choices
Intervening Phrases, Unique Phrases
Parallelism

Part 3: Math (2 sessions)**1. Overview and Review**

SAT Math Toolbox
Review of basic math (geometry, algebra, basic trigonometry)
Basics of surveys and sampling
Functions and graphs affected by variables, coefficients, constants
Back solving
Rounding and Estimating

2. Methods and Rules

Know the keywords
Formulas are not all important
Calculations should not be complex
Figures are USUALLY accurate
Limited Subject Matter
30 seconds or less
Necessary Information in Question
Wrong Answers reflect common mistakes
Hidden Patterns
Types of Approaches
Steps to solve a problem

Final Test (Session 10)