

Alignments of PSAT/NMSQT Skill Categories and State Standards

PSAT/NMSQT Skill Category and Description of Skills	Illinois ELA: Learning Standards 1997		
	Course/ Level	Standard	Standard ID
<b>Author’s Craft</b> Understand how authors use tone, style and writing devices such as metaphor or symbolism.	Early High School	1.B.4b Analyze, interpret and compare a variety of texts for purpose, structure, content, detail and effect.	1.B.4b
	Early High School	1.C.4d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.	1.C.4d
	Early High School	2.A.4a Analyze and evaluate the effective use of literary techniques (e.g., figurative language, allusion, dialogue, description, symbolism, word choice, dialect) in classic and contemporary literature representing a variety of forms and media.	2.A.4a
	Late High School	1.A.5b Analyze the meaning of abstract concepts and the effects of particular word and phrase choices.	1.A.5b
	Late High School	1.C.5d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.	1.C.5d
<b>Determining the Meaning of Words</b> Use vocabulary skills, context, roots, prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of words.	Late High School	1.A.5a Identify and analyze new terminology applying knowledge of word origins and derivations in a variety of practical settings.	1.A.5a
<b>Manage Grammatical Structures Used to Modify or Compare</b> Understand correct use of adjectives and adverbs, comparative structures (such as <i>neither</i> and <i>nor</i> ) and phrases used to modify or compare.	Early High School	3.A.4 Use standard English to edit documents for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.	3.A.4
<b>Manage Phrases and Clauses in a Sentence</b> Use well-formed sentence structure (e.g., parallelism, connectives and relative clauses) to indicate relationships between and among sentence elements.	Early High School	3.A.4 Use standard English to edit documents for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.	3.A.4
<b>Manage Word Choice and Grammatical Relationships Between Words</b> Understand relationships between and among words, including subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, and verb form and tense.	Early High School	3.A.4 Use standard English to edit documents for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission a	3.A.4

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<p><b>Organization and Ideas</b></p> <p>Understand the organization of a reading passage and identify the main and supporting ideas.</p>	Early High School	1.B.4b Analyze, interpret and compare a variety of texts for purpose, structure, content, detail and effect.	1.B.4b
<p><b>Reasoning and Inferencing</b></p> <p>Understand assumptions, suggestions and implications in reading passages and draw informed conclusions.</p>	Early High School	1.B.4b Analyze, interpret and compare a variety of texts for purpose, structure, content, detail and effect.	1.B.4b
	Early High School	1.C.4d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.	1.C.4d
	Late High School	1.C.5d Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.	1.C.5d
<p><b>Understanding Literary Elements</b></p> <p>Understand literary elements such as plot, setting and characterization.</p>	Early High School	2.A.4b Explain relationships between and among literary elements including character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of the literary piece.	2.A.4b

# PSAT/NMSQT Skills Insight™ Alignment to State Standards

## Executive Summary, July 2010

### Purpose

PSAT/NMSQT *Skills Insight*™ is a free online tool designed to help students and educators gain a better understanding of how PSAT/NMSQT® scores relate to specific academic skills. It provides a description of the academic skills that are typical of students scoring at each score band, suggestions for improvement, and practice test questions. Learn more by visiting [www.collegeboard.com/psatskills](http://www.collegeboard.com/psatskills).

The information provided by PSAT/NMSQT *Skills Insight* is organized by skill category. There are five skill categories for the critical reading section, nine for the mathematics section (4 content skill categories; 5 process skill categories), and 5 for the writing skills section. This report shows the alignment between state standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the content and skills measured by the PSAT/NMSQT.

### Using Alignment Results with PSAT/NMSQT Reports

Schools and districts that administer the PSAT/NMSQT have access to the *Summary of Answers and Skills* (SOAS) report<sup>1</sup>. SOAS reports summarize performance on test sections, skill categories, and individual test questions, and compare local results to the state or nation. Using SOAS and the alignment information provided in this report, schools and districts can develop remediation strategies to help students improve their college readiness skills, future SAT scores, and performance on state assessments.

### Mathematics: Alignment Approach and Findings

- There are nine Skills Categories in Mathematics, representing both content and process skills: *Number and Operations; Algebra and Functions; Geometry and Measurement; Data, Statistics and Probability; Problem Solving; Representation; Reasoning; Connections and Communication*.
- Only standards for grades 9-12 were considered for these alignments. Within grades 9-12, the areas with the greatest concentration of alignments are the Number and Operations, Algebra and Geometry strands of the state standards. In most cases, Precalculus and Trigonometry were excluded from the alignment study.
- The organization and hierarchy of standards varies on a state-by-state basis. During the alignment process, the College Board aligned the PSAT/NMSQT skills to the most specific level of the state's standards.
- States often integrate process and content standards. In such cases, the state standard received an alignment to both a process skill category and a content skill category.
- Generally, there is strong correspondence between the PSAT/NMSQT Skills Categories in Mathematics and state standards. Coverage of the Skills Categories across a state standards document is dependent upon the specific state standards and on the degree of specificity of language employed within the standards.
- The PSAT/NMSQT is administered to students in grades 10 and 11; consequently, the strongest areas of alignment are in the content categories of *Number and Operations, Algebra and Functions* and *Geometry and Measurement* and in the process categories of *Problem Solving, Reasoning* and *Representations*. Considering the design and purpose of the PSAT/NMSQT, extensive alignments in upper levels of high school mathematics standards, including Trigonometry, are not intended or expected.

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<sup>1</sup> Using the access code printed on the PSAT/NMSQT *Roster of Student Scores and Plans*, SOAS reports can be downloaded from [www.collegeboard.com/reports](http://www.collegeboard.com/reports) beginning in the first week of January.

- The College Board content specialists who conducted the alignments have a deep understanding of the PSAT/NMSQT test specifications. Therefore, although multiple Skills Categories might link to a particular standard, these alignments display only the strongest and most appropriate matches.

## English Language Arts: Alignment Approach and Findings

- Reading and Writing each have five PSAT/NMSQT Skills Categories. In Reading, the categories are *Determining the Meaning of Words*, *Author’s Craft*, *Reasoning and Inferencing*, *Organization and Ideas* and *Understanding Literary Elements*. In Writing, the categories are *Manage Word Choice and Grammatical Relationships Between Words*, *Manage Grammatical Structures Used to Modify or Compare*, *Manage Phrases and Clauses in a Sentence*; *Recognize Correctly Formed Sentences* and *Manage Order and Relationships of Sentences and Paragraphs*.
- The PSAT/NMSQT is administered to students in grades 10 and 11, and the College Board targeted the English Language Arts alignments at these specific grade levels. In states where the standards are organized by grade band (grades 9-10, 11-12) or by one high school band (grades 9-12), the College Board aligned to all high school grade levels.
- Given the purpose and design of the PSAT/NMSQT, the English Language Arts alignment is focused on the areas of reading and writing and does not include state standards in speaking, listening, or media literacy. Additionally, these alignments excluded genre-specific state standards (such as those related to American, British, or World literature), although the essential PSAT/NMSQT skills in Reading can be used to support instruction in literature.
- The organization and hierarchy of standards varies on a state-by-state basis. During the alignment process, the College Board aligned the PSAT/NMSQT skills to the most specific level of the state’s standards. Coverage of the Skills Categories across a state standards document is dependent upon the specific state standards and on the degree of specificity of language employed within the standards.
- In Writing, generally there is strong correspondence between the PSAT/NMSQT Skills Categories and state standards that focus on grammar, usage, language conventions, and the role of editing and revising in writing.
- In Reading, there is strong correspondence between the PSAT/NMSQT Skills Categories and state standards in the essential areas of vocabulary development (determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or of words with multiple meanings by understanding context and by analyzing roots, prefixes, and suffixes) and reading comprehension (determine the main idea and supporting details; understand the organization of passages; analyze the various elements of an author’s craft, including purpose, perspective, word choice, and use of rhetorical and literary devices and understand literary elements such as plot, characterization, and setting).

## Summary

In summary, the PSAT/NMSQT Skills Categories correspond well to state standards. Educators can use these alignments to connect the PSAT/NMSQT to their local curricula and state standards to monitor student learning and to build a coherent instructional plan for their students.