

Standardized Testing Overview

Dear Juniors & Parents/Guardians of Juniors:

Please note that our first College Night for juniors and their parents will be held on Tuesday, November 29th @ 6:30pm in Gross Theater. This program will introduce you to the College Counseling Office, what we do, and how we do it. We will also go over the college counseling timeline so that you can better plan for the future.

The purpose of this letter is to outline a general plan for standardized testing in the junior year and to provide information about registering for these tests.

Some Important Things to Consider About Testing:

- While **some** students may complete their standardized testing profile during the junior year, the national research shows that students are most likely prepared to do their best in the fall of senior year when they've had as much time as possible to mature and develop intellectually.
- Detailed advice for standardized testing should be individualized. What is recommended for one student should not be assumed to be appropriate for another student. Factors such as emotional and intellectual maturity, grades in specific courses, and adequate preparation time should all play a role in the decision-making.
- Most students perform about the same on the SAT and ACT exams; however the best way to know is by taking a full-length practice SAT and a full-length practice ACT. Many HM juniors took the practice ACT last June and all will have a chance to take the PSAT on October 19th.
- Colleges will accept the ACT and the SAT equally. They have no preference for one exam over the other. In fact, it is in a college's best interest to give equal weight to both as it allows them to report the highest possible test averages to national organizations.
- Colleges that have "Test-Optional" admissions policies are becoming increasingly common. [The National Center for Fair & Open Testing \(click here\)](#) has compiled a comprehensive list of those colleges. A partial list can be found at the end of this packet.
- While your HM coursework is the foundation for preparing for standardized testing, there are inexpensive ways to become familiar with the structure and form of the test. [The College Board's partnership with Khan Academy \(click here\)](#) provides free online SAT preparation. [The ACT offers a free study guide \(click here\)](#) as well as [low cost online prep \(\\$40\) for students \(click here\)](#). Please contact the college counseling office if you have questions about other options for low- or no cost test preparation.

By the end of the 11th grade, we expect all students to have one ACT **or** one SAT exam score **and** 2-3 SAT Subject Test scores. This will allow college counselors to give the most relevant individual advice to each student. In general, we recommend the following standardized testing sequence:

Timing	Testing
11 th Grade - Fall	PSAT exam given at HM - October 19 th
11 th Grade - Spring	ACT or SAT exam
11 th Grade - Spring	2-3 SAT Subject Tests
12 th Grade - Fall	ACT or SAT exam or SAT Subject Tests

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Taking the PSAT at HM:

Horace Mann juniors will be taking the PSAT exam on Wednesday, October 19th of this year. This test is designed to provide practice for the SAT and to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship program. Because we strongly encourage all juniors to sit for this exam at HM, we will automatically register you and pay your exam fee. Here are some keys to remember:

- Pre-registration is not necessary and the cost of the exam will be covered by HM.
- Juniors may pick up the **Official Student Guide to the PSAT** in the College Counseling Office. An email will go out as soon as those guides are available.
- On PSAT exam day, students should arrive at school by 8:25am ('A' Period) and report directly to the gym.
- The exam should be finished by 12:30pm. Juniors will have 'F' Period for lunch and then continue to their 'G' and 'H' Period classes.
- In December, juniors will be notified when test scores have arrived at HM.
- If the College Board has approved you for extended time, you will hear directly from Dr. Ladd regarding where you will take the exam.

Registration for Standardized Testing:

- Horace Mann is not an official test center for all exams. The importance of registering now is to give juniors the best opportunity to take exams either at Horace Mann or a test center close to where you live. After registration, there is still some flexibility to make modifications to your registration details. Test type, test center, or test date changes can be made through either the College Board website or the ACT website. There may be a fee for making those changes.
- When registering online, you will need to enter HM's **(CEEB) school code: 333700**. This will ensure that the College Counseling Office receives your test scores and colleges, which may receive your scores, know where you go to high school.
- Students who have documentation on file with ACT or College Board (SAT) and have been granted extended time or other accommodations should indicate this at the time of online registration.
- If you receive financial aid to attend Horace Mann, it's possible that you may qualify for an exam registration fee waiver. You should reach out to the College Counseling Office.

Please take some time to review the following pages in this packet. They include an overview of available tests and dates, some very specific advice regarding SAT Subject Tests for juniors, and a list of test optional colleges where test scores are not required for admission.

As always, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the College Counseling Office. We look forward to supporting you throughout your junior year!



Canh Oxelson, Director of College Counseling, oxelson@horacemann.org

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By the end of the 11th grade, we expect all students to have one ACT **or** one SAT exam score **and** 2-3 SAT Subject Test scores. Below are the testing options that can help you reach this goal:

Test Date	Test	Registration Deadline
October 19, 2017	PSAT Exam at Horace Mann School A – E Periods	All HM juniors are registered automatically.
January 21, 2017	SAT Exam	December 21, 2016
February 11, 2017	ACT Exam, but not in New York State	January 13, 2017
March 11, 2017	SAT Exam	February 10, 2017
April 8, 2017	ACT Exam	March 3, 2017
May 6, 2017	SAT or SAT Subject Tests*	April 7, 2017
June 3, 2017	SAT or SAT Subject Tests*	May 9, 2017
June 10, 2017	ACT Exam	May 5, 2017

* Please note that not all Subject Tests are offered during the May & June testing dates. You should check the College Board website to determine which tests are offered on specific dates.

Good news! Beginning in 2017, College Board will offer an August test date for the SAT and Subject Tests, which should prove popular with students preparing over the summer.

[Click here for SAT registration information](#)

[Click here for ACT registration information](#)

In the junior year, there are two questions that college counselors are asked the most:

1. “Should I take the SAT exam or the ACT exam?”
2. “Which SAT Subject Tests should I take and when should I take them?”

“Should I take the SAT exam or the ACT exam?”

“The big decision juniors and sophomores face is whether to take the SAT or ACT. As both tests are equally acceptable at institutions that require standardized testing, the choice should be based first on a comparison of the student's performance on each test and then on additional logistical and practical concerns.” [Click here for more information to help you answer this question.](#)

On Wednesday, October 19th (A-F Periods), juniors will be taking the PSAT exam at Horace Mann. Once those scores are made available to you in December, you can use them to help you make an informed choice about taking the SAT or the ACT moving forward. For those of you who took the practice ACT at HM in June 2016, this year's PSAT scores will be especially helpful in making that decision.

“Which SAT Subject Tests should I take and when should I take them?”

- We recommend that students take two SAT Subject Tests by the end of their junior year. Colleges that require SAT Subject Tests, usually require only two. One exception is Georgetown University, which strongly recommends three. Those who do not take at least

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two Subject Tests in the spring OR those who would like to retake a Subject Test can do so in the fall of 2017 as a senior.

- Horace Mann coursework can help students prepare for the various SAT Subject Tests. Still, in most cases, we recommend that students **(A)** take a full-length Subject Test for practice and **(B)** consider additional preparation on any topics not covered in our courses. Test-preparation manuals such as those published by *Kaplan*, *Princeton Review*, and the *College Board*, are inexpensive options. Many test prep companies can also provide students with a full-length practice exam.
- Only **2-3** subject tests may be needed for the college application process. Because 3 different Subject Tests can be taken at one sitting, there is no need to rush into taking these tests before the end of 11th grade. Students who want more information about content on the SAT Subject Tests should speak with their teacher and/or the department chair.
- Many colleges will ask to see **ALL** standardized testing scores for applicants. Because students **may not** be able to suppress any official scores, students should assume that all of their official scores would need to be reported to colleges.

While HM courses do not ‘teach to’ the corresponding SAT Subject Tests, our academic departments have offered some advice regarding which courses may best prepare our students to sit for the various SAT Subject Tests:

English

Literature

- English 11 should prepare most students well.

Foreign Language

Tests are offered in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Modern Hebrew & Spanish.

- Level 3 Honors, Level 4 Honors, and AP-level courses should prepare most students.
- Level 4 courses could prepare students with some additional work.

History

U.S. History:

- AP U.S. History (11) students should prepare most students.
- Contemporary US History (11) students must prepare on their own.
- Voices of Protest (11) students must prepare on their own.

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History (continued)

World History:

- This test is only for AP World History (11) students who are willing to prepare on their own.

Mathematics

**The department does not work to match its curriculum with the topics on either of these Subject Tests.

Math Level I

- Precalculus (11) should prepare most students but motivated students should consider additional preparation to sit for Math Level II.
- Algebra II (11) should prepare most students.

Math Level II

- Precalculus BC Honors (11) or Precalculus AB (11) prepare students well.

Science

Physics

- Physics, Summer Physics, and Physics Honors (11) cover the great majority of topics and concepts that may appear on this Subject Test. Some additional preparation on the few topics not covered in our courses is optional, but not necessary. Students may also want additional practice in answering SAT-type questions.

[Click here for SAT Subject Test registration information](#)

Need Some Advice?

You are always welcome to speak with someone in the College Counseling Office. While we are not test preparation experts, we certainly know how testing plays out in the college admissions process and can provide some very helpful individualized advice about your testing plan.

One of our favorite resources for testing is [*The Compass Guide to College Admission Testing* \(click here\)](#). You may remember Adam Ingersoll from Compass, who came to speak to your class at a college night in November of 2015. His company also offered the practice ACT that many students took back in June of this year. *The Compass Guide* is designed to take some of the guesswork out of admission testing so that you can make the most informed decisions possible. You can download a copy of their guide using the above link. You're also welcome to call Compass directly at (800) 685-6986. The company is based on the west coast, but provides thoughtful and individualized testing advice and preparation to students around the world.

Test Optional Colleges Common at HM

New England

Connecticut College
Fairfield University
Trinity College
Wesleyan University
Brandeis University
Clark University
Holy Cross
Hampshire College
Mt. Holyoke College
Smith College
Stonehill College
Wheaton College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Bates College
Bowdoin College
Colby College
Bryant University
Providence College
Bennington College

New York State

Bard College
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Ithaca College
Marist College
Sarah Lawrence College
Skidmore College
St. Lawrence University
Union College

Mid-Atlantic

American University
George Washington University
Goucher College
St. John's College, Annapolis
Allegheny College
Bryn Mawr College
Dickinson College
Franklin & Marshall College
Gettysburg College
Juniata College
Muhlenberg College
Susquehanna University
Temple University
Washington & Jefferson College

Midwest

Knox College
Earlham College
Kalamazoo College
Lawrence University
Beloit College

South

Guilford College
Wake Forest University

West

Pitzer College
Lewis & Clark College
Whitman College