



## SHOULD I TAKE SAT II: SUBJECT TESTS?

These questions and answers are designed to be reproduced, so that more students can make choices about taking Achievement Tests in a manner that is efficient for the college counselor and sensible for the student.

What are SAT II: Subject Tests?

- ▶ They are college admission tests, one-hour long, in specific subjects. They are similar to final exams.
- ▶ Such tests were called Achievement Tests and were abbreviated as ACH.

Do all colleges require SAT II tests?

No. In fact, of the roughly 3,000 colleges in the U.S., only about 150 require SAT II tests.

What kind of schools require SAT II tests?

Usually the most competitive schools in terms of admission standards. For instance, all the Ivy League schools require such tests.

How many SAT II tests are necessary? What Subject Tests are required?

- ▶ No school requires more than three tests. Often, only one or two are required.
- ▶ Requirements vary at different schools. Writing will replace English Composition as the most frequently required test. A Math test (either Level I or Level II) is also commonly

required. Some schools may require a science (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics) or a foreign language. Some schools leave the selection up to you.

- ▶ School catalogs give specific test requirements.

I don't know which schools I'm applying to yet. Should I take Subject Tests this year?

This is a difficult question to answer for most of you. A few guidelines, however, will be useful. If you typically receive Bs or better in your classes, and if your PSAT/NMSQT combined score is over 100, you should give Subject Tests consideration. Also, if you have a serious interest in a particular college and it has SAT II requirements, this is good reason to consider taking the tests. No harm will come from taking SAT II tests, then finding later on they were not required.

Which tests should I take?

- ▶ Sophomores most often take Biology and American History. These are one-year courses that prepare

you for Subject Tests. Sophomores completing Algebra II may consider the Math Level I Exam.

- ▶ Juniors may consider Chemistry or Physics if they take those courses. Juniors, if taking Algebra II, would take the Math Level I. Juniors enrolled in precalculus might take Math Level I, Level II, or Level IIC (calculator required for Level IIC).
- ▶ Sophomores or juniors completing a third or fourth year of French or Spanish may also consider these exams.
- ▶ *Remember:* You should have reasonable competency in the class if you expect to do well on SAT II tests.

Can I take SAT II tests as a senior?

- ▶ Absolutely! In fact, many students wait until their senior year to determine specific college requirements.
- ▶ Some students, however, regret waiting. For instance, it is not all that uncommon to hear from a senior: "I wish I had taken the Biology and American History tests as a sophomore. I knew the material back then, but I've forgotten it now."

How do I sign up?

You need to complete a registration form. These forms are found in the college counseling office.

When should I take SAT II tests?  
Where?

- ▶ The best dates are the early May or early June administrations. These dates coincide with the conclusion of your courses.
- ▶ You will need to choose a College Board test center location. Again, the college counseling office has this information.

Any other test guidelines?

Yes, you can take one, two, or three SAT II tests on the same day. You cannot take SAT I on the same day you take SAT II tests.

I've heard that not only is the SAT changing, but so are the Achievement Tests. Is this true?

- ▶ Yes, it's true. The new SAT will be known officially as SAT I: Reasoning Tests. The Achievement Tests will become SAT II: Subject Tests.
- ▶ Though most of the Subject Tests are the same as the current Achievement Tests, new ones such as Writing, Japanese, and Chinese will be available.

What other changes will I see in the SAT II?

- ▶ For most test takers, the biggest change will be in the Writing Test. This test will be administered five times each year, and will include 40 minutes of multiple-choice questions and a 20-minute written essay section. It will be similar to the current English Composition Achievement Test that is offered in December.
- ▶ School-based administrations of foreign language tests in the SAT II program in November will include a listening component.
- ▶ Students may register for SAT II: Subject Tests and pay only for the test(s) they take (one, two, or three).
- ▶ Score Choice is available so you can see your score before sending it to a college.

What are the similarities between the Achievement Tests and the SAT II: Subject Tests?

- ▶ Each subject test is still one-hour long.
- ▶ Colleges will continue to use these tests for admission and placement decisions, depending on the school.
- ▶ You may take one, two, or three tests at a sitting.
- ▶ You cannot take the SAT I and SAT II tests on the same day.

Help! I'm still a little confused . . .  
See your college counselor for further information.