Fitzgerald

PSAT Preparation: A General Description of the Test and Some Pointers

**What Does the PSAT 8/9 Measure?**

The PSAT™ 8/9 measures

* reading,
* writing and language,
* and math skills.

**Evidence-Based Reading and Writing**

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section has two separate but related tests.

* The Reading Test gives you a chance to show how well you understand what you read.
* The Writing and Language Test asks you to revise and edit the writing of another.

This section focuses on four specific things:

* Words in context:
  + measure how well you understand the meaning and use of the words and phrases in the passages ƒ
* Command of evidence:
  + measures how well you understanding of how an author is using evidence to support and develop his claim and supporting ideas
* Informational graphics:
  + measures how well you can interpret data presented in tables, graphs, and the like, and if you can relate it to information in the reading ƒ
* Text that represent a variety of levels of difficulty
  + The passages on range in difficulty from those found in 9th grade to those found first-year college courses

**The Reading Test**

* 42 multiple choice questions
* 55 minutes
* Reading Passages
  + length - about 500 to 750 words
  + Variety of subjects
    - literature
    - history/social studies
    - science
  + Some passages are accompanied by informational graphics, such as tables or graphs.
  + Sometimes two passages on a similar subject are paired, and questions ask you to both
    - make important connections between the passages
    - and understand each passage on its own.

**Tips for the Reading Test**

* To answer each question, consider what the passage or passages say ***directly***.
  + Draw conclusions that are supportable by evidence clearly provided in the passage.
    - The best answer to each question is derived from what is stated or implied in the passage, not from prior knowledge on the topic.
    - All of the questions are passage based.
* Reading carefully is the key to finding the best answer to each question.
  + The information you need to answer each question is always in the passage.
  + Don’t be misled by an answer that but isn’t supported by the actual text of the passage.
* The questions don’t increase in difficulty from easy to hard.
  + They are presented as logically as possible
    - General questions about central ideas and themes, point of view, overall text structure come first.
    - More specific questions about facts, details, and words in context come after.
* Stay with a passage until you have answered as many questions as you can before you proceed to the next passage.
  + Don’t jump from passage to passage.
* The questions often include references to help direct you to relevant part(s) of the passage(s).
  + You may have to look elsewhere in the passage, however, in order to find the best answer to the question.
* In your test booklet, mark each question you skip.
  + You can easily go back to it later if you have time.
* Remember that all questions are worth one point regardless of the type or difficulty.
  + Try to answer each question as best you can and move on.
  + Circle questions you would like to come back to if you have time.

**Writing and Language Test Overview**

In the Writing and Language Test, you’ll be asked to make revision and editing decisions to improve the text within a passage. ƒ

* 40 multiple choice passage-based revision and editing questions
* 30 minutes ƒ
* Passages
  + length - about 350 to 400 words
  + topics
    - careers
    - history/social studies
    - humanities
    - science
  + Some passages are accompanied by informational graphics, such as tables or graphs.

**Tips for the Writing and Language Test**

* You will be asked to revise and edit the work of an unspecified writer.
  + Revise – fix how something is said
  + Edit – fix convention errors
* Revision goals –
  + Development – enough supporting detail,
  + Organization
  + Effective language
* Editing goals –
  + Grammar
  + Usage
  + Punctuation.
* A line in the passage will be underlined, and you will be offered
  + Three alternatives
  + Or NO CHANGE
* You must read the whole passage.
  + The correct answer must logically fit within the whole passage.

**Work Cited**

PSAT 8/9 Student Guide 2018-19.” *The College Board: The SAT Suite of Assessments*, Collegeboard.org, 2019,

collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/.