

## General Testing Information – Podcast Transcript

### Opening:

Hi, my name is Kyra Mathews, from the Oregon Student Access Commission, also called OSAC for short. Today, I am going to talk about general testing information; including information on standardized tests and tips for test taking.

### Body:

Tests—just saying that word evokes a stress response in most students. Students are able to take many different kinds of proficiency tests in their educational careers. The first kinds of tests that I will be going over are standardized tests, in all their forms.

First, let's talk about the American College Testing Assessment also called the ACT. There are three types of the ACT test. There is ACT Explore, ACT Plan, and ACT. The ACT Explore is administered to students in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade with the goal of helping them plan high school courses and prepare for the ACT exam This assessment includes four multiple choice portions with section taking about 30 minutes to complete.

The ACT Plan is administered to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. The assessment relates personal characteristics to career options along with a multiple choice portion similar to the ACT Explore. The ACT is the standardized test that is accepted by virtually all U.S colleges as an alternative to the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). For more information about any versions of the ACT, please visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

The SAT has the same four types of questions as the ACT, with an available writing portion, 215 multiple choice questions, which take approximately three and a half hours to complete.

The SAT has three versions—thePSAT, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subjects.

The PSAT or Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test is taken by 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. It's great practice for the SAT and is the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST) for high school juniors. This test also gives students access to college and career planning tools. There are five sections on the exam and takes a little over two hours to complete.

The SAT Reasoning is the most common college-entrance exam and the SAT scores are often used to award scholarships. The sections are similar to the PSAT except that there are a few more sections. The total time of the SAT Reasoning is approximately four hours.

The SAT Subjects test is sometimes required by selective colleges. If required, the college usually has students submit one to three of the Subjects tests. Each one-hour test is in a multiple choice format, except the writing, which includes a timed twenty-minute essay. In total, there are twenty subjects available for testing. The SAT is the only national admissions test in which the test takers choose the subjects tests that best exemplify their skills. For more information about any versions of the SAT, please visit [sat.collegeboard.org](http://sat.collegeboard.org)

Another test available to high school students is the ASVAB or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery – test. It is a timed multi-aptitude test. Scores in four sections count toward your Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT). Your AFQT score determines whether you're qualified to enlist in the U.S military. Scoring high on the ASVAB requires studying similar much like the ACT/SAT. For more information on the ASVAB, please visit [www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

For high school students, there are also AP and IB classes and exams.

AP or Advanced Placement – classes are held like normal high school courses, but are more rigorous in order to prepare students for college-level work. Scoring well on the AP exam, which happens in May, could gain students' college credit from participating institutions. Taking AP exams, you can save yourself time and money, which you will have little of during college Also by participating in the AP program, you increase your chances of getting into a competitive college. Personally, I took two AP courses in high school and some “College Now” courses – which gives you the chance to take college-level classes during high school. Those classes were some of my favorite classes along with the ones that gave me extra help when I began at University of Oregon with a full term of college credits under my belt. For more information about the AP program, please visit [apstudent.collegeboard.org](http://apstudent.collegeboard.org)

IB or International Baccalaureate –program is an approximate two-year comprehensive program which includes rigorous pre-university curriculum. Students that participate in the IB program usually have a distinguishing educational background and apply to competitive universities. The IB exam is similar to the AP exam, except for IB has a different curriculum style and includes college prep. For more information on the IB program, please visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

Beyond high school examinations, an exam that is mostly taken by college students, adults entering or returning to college, and military service members is the College-Level Examination Program, also called the CLEP. The CLEP helps students receive college credit for subjects they have already mastered, but for a fraction of the cost of a college class. The way a student gains mastery of a subject can be acquired in many ways: general academic instruction, significant independent study, or extra-curricular work. There are thirty-three different CLEP exam subjects. For more information about the CLEP, please visit [clep.collegeboard.org](http://clep.collegeboard.org)

Here are some test-taking tips to follow: always read the instructions, don't rush yourself, know if there are penalties for not answering questions, and mark your answers carefully. Also, get plenty of rest the night before, don't "cram" information the night before, eat a healthy and balanced breakfast that morning, and wear comfortable clothes since you will be sitting for long periods of time.

Conclusion:

There are many types of tests out there, some to prep for college admission, some for college admission and some to qualify for military enlistment and more. Always do research to see which test is best for you. Also, remember to read **all** the instructions, get your sleep, and be relaxed and comfortable for your test.

Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important topic. For more podcast topics, please visit our website at [www.OregonStudentAid.gov](http://www.OregonStudentAid.gov). From all of us here at the Oregon Student Access Commission, this is Kyra Mathews. We look forward to helping you again soon.