

# About the SAT Subject Tests

Subject Tests (formerly SAT II: Subject Tests) are designed to measure your knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as your ability to apply that knowledge.

Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and language. The tests are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. The tests' content evolves to reflect current trends in high school curricula, but the types of questions change little from year to year.

Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection. Used in combination with other background information (your high school record, scores from other tests like the SAT Reasoning Test, teacher recommendations, etc.), they provide a dependable measure of your academic achievement and are a good predictor of future performance.

Some colleges specify the Subject Tests they require for admission or placement; others allow applicants to choose which tests to take.

Subject Tests fall into five general subject areas:

## English

- [Literature](#)

## History and Social Studies

- [U.S. History](#) (formerly American History and Social Studies)
- [World History](#)

## Mathematics

- [Mathematics Level 1](#) (formerly Mathematics IC)
- [Mathematics Level 2](#) (formerly Mathematics IIC)

## Science

- [Biology E/M](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Physics](#)

## Languages

- [Chinese with Listening](#)
- [French](#)
- [French with Listening](#)
- [German](#)
- [German with Listening](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Spanish with Listening](#)
- [Modern Hebrew](#)
- [Italian](#)
- [Latin](#)
- [Japanese with Listening](#)
- [Korean with Listening](#)

All Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple-choice tests. However, some of these tests have unique formats:

- The **Subject Test in Biology E/M** contains a common core of 60 general-knowledge multiple-choice questions, followed by 20 multiple-choice questions that emphasize either ecological (Biology E) or molecular (Biology M) subject matter. After completing the core questions, test takers choose the section for which they feel most prepared.
- The **Subject Tests in Mathematics (Level 1 and Level 2)** have some questions that require the use of at least a scientific or graphing calculator. Mathematics Subject Tests are developed with the expectation that most students will use a graphing calculator. There are no plans to discontinue or change the content of the Subject Tests in Mathematics Level 1 or Mathematics Level 2.
- The **Subject Tests in Languages with Listening** (Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish) consist of a listening section and a reading section. Students taking these tests are required to bring an [acceptable CD player](#) with earphones to the test center.

For more detailed information, including recommended preparation, anticipated skills, test format, sample questions, and more, visit the [Subject Tests Preparation Center](#).

### **Which Subject Tests should you take?**

Before deciding which tests to take, make a list of the colleges you're considering. Then review school catalogs, [College Search Engines](#), or [College Handbooks](#) to find out whether the schools require scores for admission and, if so, how many tests and in which subjects.

Use your list of colleges and their admission requirements to help plan your high school course schedule. You may want to adjust your schedule in light of colleges' requirements. For example, a college may require a score from a Subject Test in a language for admission, or the college might exempt you from a freshman course requirement if you do well on a language Subject Test.

Many colleges that don't require Subject Test scores will still review them since they can give a fuller picture of your academic background.

If you're not sure which Subject Test to take from a subject area, talk to your teacher or school counselor and visit the [Subject Tests Preparation Center](#).

### **When should you take Subject Tests?**

Most students take Subject Tests toward the end of their junior year or at the beginning of their senior year.

Take tests such as World History, Biology E/M, Chemistry, or Physics as soon as possible after completing the course in the subject, while the material is still fresh in your mind. For foreign language tests, you'll do better after at least two years of study.