



My College QuickStart™

Implementation Guide



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Introduction

Students take the PSAT/NMSQT® for many reasons: to prepare for the SAT®; to enter scholarship competitions; to get personalized feedback to help them plan for college. My College QuickStart™ is the newest and one of the most robust benefits of a student’s participation in the PSAT/NMSQT. However, it only benefits those who use it. This guide provides advice on best practices that have been implemented by educators and that have succeeded in encouraging student use of My College QuickStart.

“Just yesterday, a junior taking an AP Spanish class told me that he wants to be an anthropologist and that he has read all the material on My College QuickStart. He was about the tenth person this week to talk to me about My College QuickStart. The results have been amazing in terms of students getting all the information needed for their college planning, including preparing for the SAT, registration for the SAT, and college admissions.”

—Judy Rath, Head Counselor,
Northside Health Careers High School
San Antonio, TX

What is My College QuickStart?

My College QuickStart is an easy-to-use, online, personalized college and career planning kit available free of charge to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. This useful tool incorporates student responses that were provided when they took the test. Student information is provided in four parts:

- My Online Score Report
- My SAT Study Plan™
- My College Matches
- My Major & Career Matches

Detailed descriptions of each My College QuickStart section are included below.

Note: If students took the 2006 PSAT/NMSQT and created a My College QuickStart account last year, they will see their 2006 **and** 2007 online score reports when they log in with their **new** access code.

My Online Score Report is an interactive, supplemental PSAT/NMSQT Score Report that includes:

- Every test question with complete answer explanations; includes the ability to sort answer explanations by difficulty level and by question type.
- National percentiles so students can see how they performed compared to other students across the nation.
- State percentiles for high school students so they can see how they performed compared to other students in their state.
- Projected SAT score ranges for high school students so they can estimate how they might perform on the SAT based on their PSAT/NMSQT scores.

Note: Ninth-graders will receive percentile ranges. Students in schools outside the United States will see comparisons to all students outside the United States.

Question Type	Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Difficulty	Content
Section 2					
Multiple Choice	1 view	A	✓	Easy	Alg
	2 view	B	✓	Medium	Geom
	3 view	A	C	Hard	Data
Section 4					
Multiple Choice	1 view	A	✓	Easy	Alg
	2 view	B	✓	Medium	Geom
	3 view	A	C	Hard	Data
	4 view	D	✓	Medium	Num

My SAT Study Plan is for high school students and is a personalized study plan based on how the student performed on the PSAT/NMSQT. It includes:

- Advice and hands-on practice to improve academic skills—students can review PSAT/NMSQT questions they missed and answer SAT practice questions of the same type
- Higher-level math and SAT essay-writing practice
- Official SAT practice test, complete with score report
- SAT test-taking advice
- Express SAT registration

Note: Middle school students do not receive a personalized SAT study plan. Instead, they will be encouraged to sign up for The Official SAT Question of the Day™.

My College Matches is a starter list of colleges in each student’s home state that offer the chosen major indicated on the PSAT/NMSQT paper score report. There is a detailed profile for each college that includes specific information on:

- Majors offered
- Admissions (for high school students)
- Tuition costs and financial aid
- Sports, housing, and more

Students can use the College MatchMaker feature to edit their personalized college list by adding and deleting search criteria like distance from home, school size, and extracurricular activities.

Note: Students outside the United States will receive a list of all U.S. colleges that offer the chosen major.

My Major & Career Matches contains a personalized list of majors and associated careers based on the chosen major of interest indicated on the PSAT/NMSQT paper score report. It connects students to profiles of:

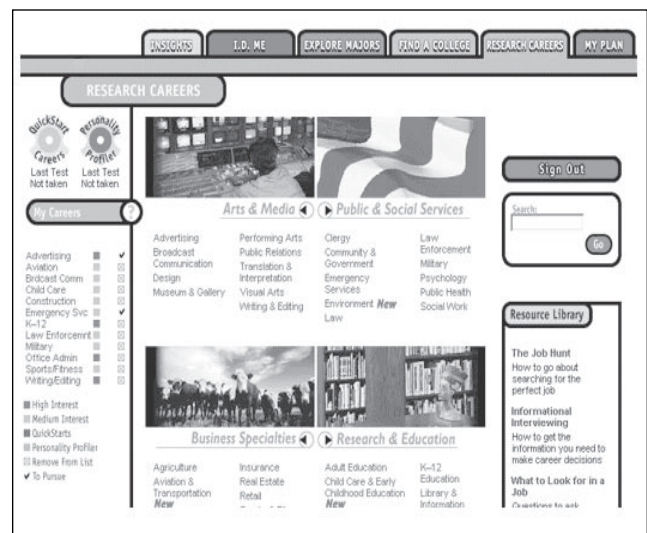
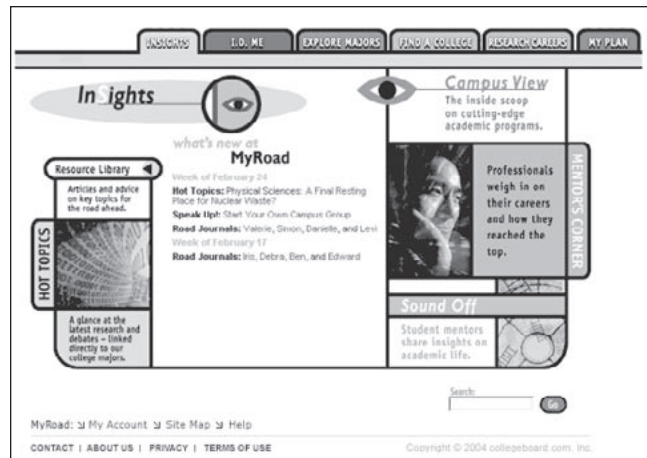
- Their chosen major
- Related majors
- Related careers

If students had selected “other” or “undecided” for a major, they will be prompted to use one of the personality profilers in MyRoad™ to explore a range of possible majors and careers. Students can also update the major that appears on their My Major & Career page if they discover a new interest.

MyRoad comes with My College QuickStart, and students can use this interactive feature of My Major & Career Matches to further research their interests.

MyRoad includes:

- Personality profilers: Assessment tools that students can take to learn about their personality types and receive additional major and career suggestions.
- 69 profiles of academic fields—from aeronautics to zoology, representing 175 instructional programs.
- Fascinating articles covering more than 450 occupations—everything from hot new careers like medical technician to more traditional pursuits like law and medicine.
- The latest information on more than 3,800 four-year and two-year colleges and universities.
- In-depth coverage of associate, bachelor’s, and graduate degree programs.
- An online magazine packed with insights and tips for making important educational and career choices.
- My Plan: Students can record their interests, track their activity on the site, and build a résumé.



Who Can Use My College QuickStart?

My College QuickStart is available to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. Students will have access to My College QuickStart until they graduate high school.

Access My College QuickStart

Students sign in at www.collegeboard.com/quickstart. Students will need:

- a) Their unique access code, found on the official paper PSAT/NMSQT Score Report. Student access codes are also listed on the *Roster of Student Scores and Plans* sent to each PSAT/NMSQT Coordinator with the individual score reports.
- b) A collegeboard.com student account. Students are guided to create a collegeboard.com account if they do not already have one. Note: Students will need a valid e-mail address in order to create a collegeboard.com account.

Best Practices

The following pages describe best practices for educators to successfully implement My College QuickStart in schools.

- 1) Familiarize yourself with My College QuickStart.
- 2) Customize your approach to utilize My College QuickStart to meet your individual school's needs.
- 3) Work closely with teachers to promote the tool.
- 4) Demonstrate My College QuickStart in a classroom or advisory setting.
- 5) Demonstrate My College QuickStart in a schoolwide assembly.
- 6) Assign My College QuickStart as homework.
- 7) Involve parents in promoting My College QuickStart.
- 8) Generate excitement about the tool.

Familiarize Yourself with My College QuickStart

Many educators find it best to try out Web-based tools before recommending them to their students. Here are a few ways you can get to know My College QuickStart:

Guided Tour: View images of My College QuickStart and MyRoad, and learn about the many features by viewing the guided tour located at www.collegeboard.com/

quickstart. Click “Take a Tour of My College QuickStart” to get started. PDF and Microsoft PowerPoint versions of the tour, which can be useful in giving presentations to students, parents, or teachers, can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

Demonstration Accounts: Starting with the 2007 PSAT/NMSQT administration, educators will have access to My College QuickStart demonstration accounts. These accounts will allow them to experience firsthand what their students will experience when they set up their own accounts. Educators will be able to maneuver within the site as if they were students, and will have access to all of the same information, including test questions and complete answer explanations. The demonstration accounts for two fictitious students will be available in late November, and there will be accounts for both the Wednesday and Saturday test forms. To access a demonstration account, visit www.collegeboard.com/reports and sign in using your school's “SOAS and/or My College QuickStart Access Code” located on the *Roster of Student Scores and Plans*.

Customize Your Approach to Meet Your School's Needs

It goes without saying that effective use of My College QuickStart requires access to a computer. It's also clear that schools and communities vary widely when it comes to the number of computers available for student use, either in school, at home, or in the community.

In considering the best approach for your school, poll your colleagues and students to answer the following questions:

School:

- 1) Does your school have a computer lab that can accommodate a group of students working with My College QuickStart simultaneously? What is the schedule of availability of that lab, and how far in advance does it need to be reserved? Will there be staff on hand to help with technical issues that may arise?
- 2) If there is not a computer lab that will accommodate a group experience of My College QuickStart, what other computers exist in the building? Are there computers in classrooms, libraries, or resource centers that students could use, on their own or with an educator, during advisory periods, study hall, or other free periods?
- 3) Does your school restrict the Web sites that may be accessed, and is www.collegeboard.com on the list of accessible sites?
- 4) What other activities, lessons, or assignments that incorporate the use of the Internet are being employed at your school? Are there opportunities to piggyback My College QuickStart exploration onto those activities?

- 5) Are there classes or instructional units offered at your school that focus on preparing for admissions tests like the SAT or career exploration and selection? Would these classes benefit from the inclusion of a My College QuickStart unit?
- 6) Who are the “Internet experts” on staff who find ways to incorporate it into their lessons and could be good sources of advice?

Students:

- 1) How many students have a computer with Internet access at home, and are allowed to use it?
- 2) How many students have access to computers at other locations in the community, such as libraries or community centers?
- 3) What Web sites do your students use in their free time when they are preparing for college admissions tests or have questions about college and career planning? Could they supplement or replace fee-based independent test prep or college guidance with My College QuickStart, which is free of charge?
- 4) What Web sites do your students visit for fun? How is My College QuickStart like those sites?

All of this information can help you determine the best approach for encouraging your students to get the most value out of My College QuickStart.

Work Closely with Teachers to Promote Use

The important work of encouraging successful college planning often falls to counselors, but teachers can also play an important role and may be helpful in engaging students in My College QuickStart.

Some steps to engage teachers:

- Incorporate information about My College QuickStart, including a link to the Guided Tour online, in newsletters that are distributed to staff.
- Inform the English and math departments about the wealth of feedback that My College QuickStart provides, which can be used for practice and discussion in the classroom.
- Share PSAT/NMSQT reports, such as the Summary of Answers and Skills reports, with English and math teachers to help guide classroom instruction.
- Identify teachers who use the Internet in their curriculum, and reach out to them for advice or brainstorming on encouraging the use of My College QuickStart.

- Identify the teachers responsible for college and career coaching and make sure they know about My College QuickStart.

Demonstrate My College QuickStart in a Classroom or Advisory Setting

Lesson plans that can be implemented in a variety of ways, including in a classroom or computer lab, can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

It should be no surprise that schools with the highest participation in My College QuickStart in 2006 demonstrated the tool in a computer lab, with students accessing their own accounts on individual computers.

Educators from those schools found it useful to do the following:

- **Reserve the computer lab** ahead of time, and make sure that any available staff are on hand to assist with technical problems that may arise.
- Allow **plenty of time for logging in** and getting started. Students new to www.collegeboard.com will need to spend some time setting up their accounts. Logging-in time might vary for different students. Occasionally, students will incorrectly enter identifying information on the PSAT/NMSQT answer sheet, or during the log-in process, which can cause delays in connecting to their online information. Usually, these delays can be resolved by contacting the College Board, but they may not be resolved immediately. If students are logging in as a group, additional time to identify these situations should be added. Be prepared with supplemental activities for the students in these rare situations—an example may be to have them search for colleges or sample SAT questions on www.collegeboard.com. Remember that students need an e-mail address to access My College QuickStart.
- Use the **color-coded** design of My College QuickStart to keep an eye on your students’ progress. The swirl icon on the top left of the screen, as well as key elements on the pages, are colored accordingly:
 - My Online Score Report = Green
 - My SAT Study Plan = Orange
 - My College Matches = Blue
 - My Major & Career Matches = Red
- Identify **new concepts and vocabulary** that emerge in My College QuickStart and make sure they are explored during, or prior to, the class. Do students understand what “percentile” means and what it tells them about their performance on the PSAT/NMSQT? Do they realize that the college list they first see only reflects their home

state and chosen major, and is not related to their scores? Do they understand how their major in college can help shape their career choices?

- **Encourage deeper exploration and discussion** of the concepts and information that My College QuickStart introduces. What supplemental activities can students do, on their own or in a follow-up class, that take the information from My College QuickStart and lend it to a plan of action related to college preparation? What can students do to work on the identified “Skills to Improve”? See www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads for section-specific lesson plans that include suggestions for follow-up activities.
- **Be mindful of the sensitive and confidential nature** of test scores, and discourage the sharing of score information among students.
- Download and print the “**Get Connected**” reference sheet at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

Demonstrate My College QuickStart in a Schoolwide Assembly

Lesson plans that can be implemented in a variety of ways, including in an assembly, can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

The classic schoolwide assembly is sometimes the best option for introducing students to My College QuickStart or to supplement and reinforce prior introductions. Small schools, schools lacking technical or financial resources, and schools lacking space are all examples of schools that may find success with this approach.

Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of students’ scores, one of the Demonstration Accounts for Educators described above in “Familiarize Yourself with My College QuickStart” should be used in an assembly setting.

Here are some suggestions for activities the assembly speaker can do in conjunction with a My College QuickStart demonstration:

- Explain the format and content of the official PSAT/NMSQT Score Report *Plus*. Begin or conclude the assembly by handing out the score reports. Remember to tell students not to focus on their scores. Their results will likely improve the harder they work and the longer they are in school.
- Show the *Destination College: Planning with the PSAT/NMSQT* video sent to schools in December 2006. It is also available at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

- Show the “Understanding Results from the 2007 PSAT/NMSQT Scores” presentation, available in Microsoft PowerPoint and PDF formats at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.
- Show the “Take a Tour” presentation located at www.collegeboard.com.
- Hold a practice SAT essay-writing session using *ScoreWrite™: A Guide to Preparing for the SAT Essay*, sent to all schools in the fall.
- Discuss SAT preparation methods and ways in which My College QuickStart can supplement or replace existing strategies.
- Present practice SAT or PSAT/NMSQT questions.
- Invite speakers or panelists to talk about colleges, majors, and/or careers.

Assign My College QuickStart As Homework

Lesson plans with worksheets that can be used as homework assignments can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.

Schools that are unable to use in-school computers for My College QuickStart but have a high number of students with access to computers at home or in their community may want to assign My College QuickStart exploration as homework.

Some points to consider:

- Students will need their **paper score report**, so distribute score reports prior to assigning My College QuickStart activities.
- Guide students to the **resources** that can help them, like their original PSAT/NMSQT test book and the My College QuickStart Guided Tour at www.collegeboard.com/quickstart.
- Ask for **evidence of completion**. Every page of My College QuickStart includes a printer-friendly version. Ask your students to print out key pages to bring to school and use in further discussion.
- Identify **new concepts and vocabulary** that emerge in My College QuickStart, and make sure they are explored prior to assigning any homework. Do students understand what “percentile” means and what it tells them about their performance on the PSAT/NMSQT? Do they realize that the college list they first see only reflects their home state and chosen major and is not related to their scores? Do they understand how their major in college can shape their career choices?

- **Encourage deeper exploration and discussion** of the concepts and information that My College QuickStart introduces. What supplemental activities can students do, on their own or in a follow-up class, that take the information from My College QuickStart and lend it to a plan of action related to college preparation? What can students do to work on the identified “Skills to Improve?” See www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads for section-specific lesson plans that include suggestions for follow-up activities.
- **Involve parents** so that they can encourage use of My College QuickStart outside of school.

Involve Parents in the Use of My College QuickStart

My College QuickStart introduces several topics that can and should inspire discussions at home: course decisions, academic expectations, and college selection are just a few. If your school can reach out to your parent community and make them aware of My College QuickStart, your students will see the value in this personalized tool.

Tips for involving parents include:

- **Provide parents with valuable resources** for helping their children prepare for college. Calendars and lists of select Web sites are useful for everyone—include links to My College QuickStart and the Guided Tour in these resources.
- Send a **letter to the parents** of all PSAT/NMSQT takers explaining the benefits of the test, what the scores mean, and the information available on My College QuickStart. Sample letters and handouts can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.
- Include information about My College QuickStart in **regular parent newsletters**. Sample text for messages to parents can be found at www.collegeboard.com/psatdownloads.
- Incorporate My College QuickStart information into **events and face-to-face communications** with parents. Talk up the site with parents, especially in one-on-one conferences or at parent night events. Ask whether they know if their child has visited the site.

Generate Excitement About My College QuickStart

Experienced practitioners advise showing your enthusiasm for college planning and talking it up at every opportunity. For PSAT/NMSQT takers, My College QuickStart should be a common part of that excitement and discussion.

Include your community as you widen your circle of involvement. Inform community centers of your efforts to encourage a college-going culture and My College QuickStart’s role in these efforts. When sharing PSAT/NMSQT participation information with local newsgroups, point out the availability of My College QuickStart.

Move Ahead

With the advice in this guide, you can now move forward with encouraging your students to take full advantage of the personalized, in-depth feedback My College QuickStart has to offer.

What best practices of your own would you like to share with other educators? Share your school’s approaches to using My College QuickStart by e-mailing your ideas to psat@collegeboard.org.

The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,200 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.