



*Climbing the steps to success*

## December 2018

**1<sup>st</sup>—SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams**

**8<sup>th</sup>— ACT and ACT With Writing**

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report with advisor and map out a plan for test preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing dates

Seniors — File any additional college applications before deadline dates

## January 2019

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

## Majors, Minors & Concentrations

Let's start with some simple definitions of these academic terms, and then we'll get into how to make them work for you as you complete your undergraduate degree.

**MAJORS:** Your major is defined as the primary area of study upon which you will focus during your college career. Typically, you don't have to declare your major until the end of your second year. Anywhere from 1/3 to 2/3 of your classes will be within this area of study. Your major selection will appear on your official transcript. Coursework will move from introductory classes, through the intermediate level and then advanced senior level, in a cohesive arrangement. You might also have more than one major.

**MINORS:** A minor course of study is a set of classes, from 15 to 18 credit hours, that is designed to complement and enhance your choice of major. Some college majors require a minor, but typically, the choice of minor is an individual one for each student to consider. A minor can be your opportunity to explore a new subject of interest, or add coursework that enriches your choice of major. Many colleges permit more than one and will identify that minor on the official transcript.

**CONCENTRATIONS:** These are coordinated groups of coursework that represent a sub-specialization or emphasis within a specific major field of study. They lie within your major and allow you to customize your college experience. Your selection of concentration, sometimes called a 'track', will also influence a prospective employer by providing her with more information

about your specific areas of interest and expertise. In some colleges, many concentrations may also be offered as a minor.

Most high school students have no clear idea of what they want to study in college – they just know they want to get into the best possible college to help them realize their unique goals and ambitions. When looking at colleges, it is important to review each listing of academic majors available. Is there more than one that draws your interest?

According to a January 2018 National Center for Education Statistics study of 25,000 students, nearly one-third changed their major within 3 years of enrollment. As a nod to the understanding that many young people are unclear about their choice of major, some colleges are creating programs designed to encourage exploration across the range of liberal arts disciplines. Northeastern University offers a "Program for Undeclared Students" that includes a selection of coursework designed to encourage exploration and close association with talented advisors who help students make course selections that keep them on track with graduation requirements. Other colleges are making the choice of major an easier one by pushing back the timeline. Georgia State University has made this adjustment, resulting in a 32% decrease in the number of undergraduate major changes.

Some students also choose to complete two majors while other students take the opportunity to broaden their undergraduate career by selecting a minor. Often, colleges offer many minors, and several allow students to complete more than one. It is important to work closely with (continued p. 3)

### Careers for Criminology Majors

- Juvenile justice
- Probation and parole
- Offender rehabilitation
- Municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement
- Industrial security
- Public administration
- Counseling
- Victim advocacy
- Court reporting
- Legal assistance
- Legal research
- Private security
- Investigations
- Global intelligence
- Internet security
- Education
- Law
- Forensics
- Writing
- Entertainment



## Focus on Majors: Criminology

Do you like watching crime shows like NCIS, Criminal Minds, and NYPD Blue? Are you fascinated by crooks? Do you wonder why murderers kill and thieves steal? Are you obsessed with the “crime scene” section of the news? If so, criminology may be the major for you.

Criminology is the study of the attributes of crime, how and why it happens, why people commit them, the behavior of these people, and the nature of the criminal-justice system. It differs from a major in criminal justice in that the major focuses more on the social aspect of crimes than the legal consequences of committing them.

Criminology is considered a branch of sociology, though the field of study contains a significant amount of psychology, law enforcement, and cultural anthropology. The major consists of a combination of class lessons and field experience. In class, students will learn theories revolving around the sources of crime. They will consider the impacts of race, social status, economics, and law enforcement methods on crime rates and on the types of crimes committed. Students will explore crime prevention tactics. They will also analyze several specific case studies and study data on criminals to gain a better understanding of how theories apply.

For further application of in-class learning, many criminology programs require field experience or internships. Students may be sent to a prison, a local police department or a court to apply class lessons in real-life scenarios. They may be asked to write a report reflecting on how the class’s information was relevant to the experience.

Students are often required to conduct research projects on an aspect of criminology. They will interview experts in the field, such as FBI workers, behaviorists, lawyers or police officers. These projects reinforce material learned in class as well as push students to enhance their interviewing and organizational abilities.

In addition to the core courses, the degree

requires students to gain a background knowledge in psychology, law, forensic science, statistics, and American history. Science and statistics allow students to interpret necessary data. Psychology aids students in studying criminal motives while law helps students understand prevention methods and the consequences of crime. American history serves as a basis for understanding when and how laws are developed.

Throughout the study of this major, students acquire general and widely-applicable skills in communication, writing, research, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, socio-cultural awareness, and perceptiveness.

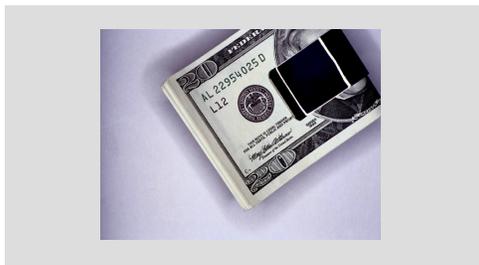
A major in criminology generally leads to jobs in the fields of law, science, and law enforcement. In law, majors may become loss prevention specialists, profilers, and criminal-justice attorneys. In science, students may go into forensics, psychology, criminal behaviorism, sociology, or criminology as researchers or teachers.

Sometimes, psychologists may choose to work with the police force to help keep officers stable. Behaviorists and forensic scientists can also team up with law enforcement to solve crimes. In law enforcement, students can become police officers, parole workers, FBI agents, offender rehabilitation workers, and probation officers.

In addition to the typical careers, students may choose to apply the major to a creative path. Criminology can be beneficial to aspiring authors and screenplay writers, especially in the genres of mystery, horror, and psychological thriller.

Dan Aykroyd, screenwriter and actor for Saturday Night Live, *The Blues Brothers*, and *Ghostbusters* majored in criminology. John Edward Douglas majored in sociology and worked with the FBI’s Behavioral Science Unit for twenty-five years. He later wrote several books about criminal psychology. Bestselling thriller author Jennifer Chase also majored in criminology.

### Financial Matters: Searching for Scholarships



College is expensive, and students and their families must be resourceful as they seek ways to alleviate the burden of these costs. There are many ways to help cover the cost of attendance, including scholarships both internal and external, financial aid, work-study, jobs, grants and loans.

Your high school may use a software program such as Naviance, which offers students help with locating scholarships, tracking application deadlines, and offering tips for completing scholarship applications. Free scholarship searches are also available on College Board, Fast Web and similar sites. Your Guidance Office might also have a list of scholarships available to graduates of your high school. Begin looking at these in 10th grade.

There are often local businesses, foundations, community, church and/or civ-

ic groups in your region that may offer a scholarship. These scholarships are often quite small but are worth looking into.

Some parents may work for companies that offer scholarships to their employees' children – ask.

The websites of your colleges of interest will likely list scholarship options on their Financial Aid website – check these out.

The US Department of Labor has a free scholarship search tool - <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx>. Use it.

The US Department of Education has a link to each state's grant agency that will also have information about available scholarships: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>.

The Federal Student Aid site has links for specific aid programs that may be relevant to you: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types#federal-aid>.

Check both your school and public libraries for scholarship listings.

If you have a particular academic or career trajectory, you may well find a scholarship awarded to students in your chosen major by a professional association in that field.

There are some highly selective national scholarships to review: [National Merit Scholarship](#), [Gates Millennium Scholars](#), and [Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation](#) are great examples. The [Regeneron Science Talent Search](#) is a prestigious national Math and Science competition with very high monetary prizes, helpful when paying for college.

Be sure to check scholarship deadlines very carefully – some may be due before your college application and each scholarship is different. Some may require an application and an essay; others may require a high school transcript, a recommendation, and more than one essay. Read the details of the application to be sure you qualify! And finally, keep looking. You don't have to pay anyone to search for a scholarship for you, but it does require legwork and dedication on your part.

### Majors, Minors & Concentrations (continued from p. 1)

your advisor to be sure that you graduate on time. Two strong reasons for selecting a minor are personal fulfillment and professional enhancement. This also reveals to a prospective boss how accomplished you are across several fields, thus making you a more desirable candidate.

Students who resist being 'put in a box' will be really excited to review concentration options within their choice of

major. Concentrations give students the chance to choose something that matches their personal interests, allowing them to explore and gain expertise in a sub-specialization of their major. Examples include Tourism and Hospitality Management with a concentration in Destination and Event Management, English major with a concentration in Science, Medicine and Literature, and Business Management with concentrations in Entrepreneurship and

Accounting.

You've heard of Shakespeare's metaphor about the world being your oyster? Well, in this case, a college degree can be your own personal pearl - to be selected, enhanced, and completed through a variety of course offerings, all designed to create a customized degree program that will reward you with both personal growth and professional opportunities.

# Understanding & Using Your PSAT Score Report

Each year, tens of thousands of students take the PSAT exam at high schools across the United States. The PSAT is not used by colleges in the admission process, but the results can help you better understand your academic strengths and weaknesses and suggest the skills you should focus on in preparing for college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT. Students will be able to access their PSAT scores online between December 10th-12th, depending upon the state in which they tested.

Your score report will show you both the average scores earned by test takers in specific grade levels across the U.S., and your individual scores on the verbal (reading and writing) and math sections of the test. Your raw scores (number correct) for each section have been converted to a score table that ranges from 160-760 to allow for differences between alternate versions of this exam. The scores are also reported in terms of percentile rank. Your percentile rank on a specific section represents the percentage of student test takers whose scores fell at or below your score. Therefore, a score rank at the 75th percentile indicates that you scored the same or better than 75% of test takers in your grade level. Benchmarks are also provided to help you identify areas in which your

skills are “college ready” as well as those needing more work.

The real value of the PSAT, however, is that it can provide you with a guide to your academic strengths and weaknesses. You’ll want to take some time to review the individual sections of the report and look at the types of questions that you answered both correctly and incorrectly on this test. If you are a tenth grader taking geometry, don’t worry if you missed several geometry questions, since the test was given early in your course. If you have completed geometry and still missed several questions in this area, you’ll want to spend more time reviewing this material before taking your SAT or ACT. A reading and writing section score below the benchmark for college readiness should serve as a wake up call—you really need to increase the time you spend reading for pleasure. Discuss your score report with your advisor for specific suggestions for improving your performance.

As you review your PSAT scores and think about future SAT scores, keep in mind that test scores, while important, *never* trump grades when it comes to college admissions. So, high PSAT scores that lead to high SAT scores are *not* a replacement for *consistently* good academic performance.

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