SAT SUBJECT TESTS FAQs

What are SAT Subject Tests?

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour assessments that test knowledge in a particular subject. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests; Loomis Chaffee students most commonly take the tests in Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Math 1, Math 2, American History or foreign language (French, Spanish, Latin, Chinese) without the listening component. The SAT Subject Tests are much more curriculum based than the SAT.

When are the SAT Subject Tests offered?

SAT Subject Tests are offered in October, November, December, January, May and June of each year. Students can opt to take either the SATs or SAT Subject Tests on a particular date. Students cannot take both the SATs and Subject Tests on the same day. It is also important to note that the foreign language with listening tests are only offered in November and that the foreign language without listening tests are not offered in November.

Which tests should I take?

In consultation with their teachers, students should take SAT Subject Tests for which they are well prepared and on which they are likely to do well. Success in advanced level course offerings at Loomis is a good predictor of success on the corresponding SAT Subject Test. Below are recommendations by discipline:

Science: Those students doing well in Biology Advanced, Chemistry Advanced or Physics Advanced should consider taking the SAT Subject Test in that discipline. Students in the regular section of those disciplines and who are excelling should also consider those tests but should consult with their teacher and know that some additional preparation might be warranted.

Foreign Language: Please see “Foreign Language Subject Test Recommendations,” available as a download on the Resources section of the College Guidance portal page.

Mathematics: Please see “Mathematics Department Subject Test Recommendations,” available as a download on the Resources section of the College Guidance portal page.

English: Students who are very strong in reading comprehension should consider taking the SAT Subject Test in Literature at the end of junior year or in the fall of senior year.
History: Students who do well in AP US History should consider taking the SAT Subject Test in American History.

When should I take SAT Subject Tests?

Students should take the SAT Subject Test in a particular discipline at the culmination of coursework that prepares students for that test. For juniors, sophomores (occasionally) and freshmen (in rare instances), this is at the end of the school year in June. Taking the tests at that time allows for the completion of relevant Loomis Chaffee coursework and provides time in the week leading up to the test for specific review. In all instances, students should consult with their teachers to ascertain which tests make the most sense.

How many subject tests can I take on one day?

Students may take one, two or three subject tests in one sitting.

Can I register for Subject Tests without knowing which ones I will take?

Yes, students can change the actual tests that they take on the day of the test. The one exception to this is any test of foreign language with listening. Those tests are only offered in November and cannot be taken at another time.

How many subject tests will I need to have taken by the time I apply to colleges in my senior year?

A number of highly selective institutions either require or strongly recommend two SAT Subject Tests. Still others do not require SAT Subject Tests at all while some will accept the ACT in lieu of SATs and SAT Subject Tests. Some colleges or particular majors within a college might require specific SAT Subject Tests: MIT, for instance, requires Math I or Math 2 plus a Subject Test in a science. Requirements do vary widely from institution to institution, and colleges do opt to make changes in their policy from one year to the next. Also, please note that when a college requires more than one SAT Subject Test, only one of those tests can be in mathematics; in other words, colleges will accept only the Math 1 or the Math 2 but not both.

Should I take one or two SAT Subject Tests just for practice?

Due to the availability of publications with practice tests, we do not recommend that students take a test just to “practice.” The Loomis Chaffee bookstore carries the College Board subject test practice test book for those interested. The College Board website is also a good resource for more information and subject test practice questions.