

Scarsdale High School
Science Department

SAT Biology E/M Subject Test

January 15, 2017

The SAT Subject Test in biology is a national examination administered by The College Board, a private agency. It is designed to measure a student's ability to recall and understand major concepts of biology, and to apply them to the interpretation of data and the solution of problems. Topics assessed by the SAT Subject Test in biology are cellular and molecular biology, ecology, genetics, organismal structure and function, and evolution and diversity. At Scarsdale High School, we teach a comprehensive course in biology, which includes most of the topics covered on the SAT exam. Scarsdale High School students who are completing Biology 513 are well prepared for this test. The College Board recognizes that most students will encounter some questions on topics unfamiliar to them. The emphasis on specific sub-topics varies from year to year.

The Biology E/M Test has a common core of 60 questions, and two specialized sections of 20 questions. Students select, and answer the questions from, one of the specialized sections. The common core includes questions dedicated to the application and interpretation of fundamental knowledge. The specialized sections focus on ecology (E) or molecular biology (M). Students doing well in Biology 513 may be good candidates for the SAT in biology. Students can expect to complete the curriculum just prior to the **June 3** test date.

How the scoring works: The test is scored on a scale of 200-800. Technically speaking, a student has the right under the College Board's plan called *Score Choice*, to choose which SATs or Subject Tests to send to colleges, (i.e. if a student takes a Subject Test and does poorly, then he/she does not have to send the result). However, we have found that colleges have their own rules, some do not allow this, and require seeing the student's entire testing history (meaning that the poor score will be seen by the college). The Scarsdale High School deans caution students to never take a Subject Test for which they feel unprepared.

The department recommends that students who wish to prepare take the following steps:

1. Visit the College Board website <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests> for information and sample questions. Registration for the exam can be completed online. The registration deadline for the **June 3** exam is May 9. If you wish to sit for this exam at Scarsdale High School, register as soon as possible.
2. Purchase the SAT Subject Test Study Guide, *The Official Study Guide for All SAT Subject Tests*. It is published by The College Board, and is available on their website. It contains the **only** legally released Biology E/M Test. In addition, you may want to purchase a review book for: *SAT Subject Test Biology E/M*.
3. We suggest you design a review schedule that follows the sequence of topics explored in Biology 513. Please note there may be questions on the following topics, which are not part of our course curriculum:
 - Mendelian Genetics
 - Classification
 - Plants
 - Animal Behavior
 - Locomotion
 - Eye & Ear

Your teacher is available to help you with any questions that you encounter as you review, and can help you to decide whether the Biology-E or Biology-M test is more appropriate for you.

If you receive extended time, please see Fran Garafolo in room 102. She may also be contacted by phone, 722-2839. If you have already contacted her regarding testing accommodations in general, you do not need to follow up on this specific exam.