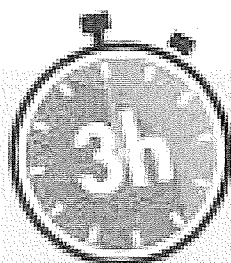


THE SAT VS THE ACT

- Fewer Geometry Questions
- More Time per Question
- No-calculator Math Section

KEY Differences

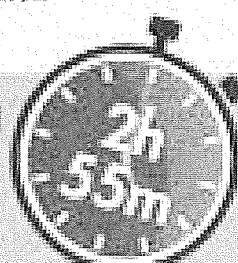
- Lots of Geometry
- Faster Paced
- Tough Science Section



Overall Time

TIMING & SCORING

Overall Time



Reading

65m

Writing

35m

Math
(No Calculator)

25m

Math
(Calculator)

55m

200 - 800 points

200 - 800 points

1-36

1-36

1-36

1-36

35m

Reading

45m

English

60m

Math

35m

Science

Total Points

400 - 1600

1 - 36

Total Points

Time per Question



Reading



Writing



Math

Time per Question



Reading



English



Math

SAT vs ACT

Many students and parents begin the college prep process by comparing the ACT and SAT. Two of the most common questions they ask are:

- Is the ACT easier than the SAT?
- Do colleges prefer scores from the SAT or ACT?

The SAT and ACT generally test the same types of content. Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships. The biggest differences between the tests are that the ACT has a Science Test, and there's one SAT Math Section for which you cannot use a calculator. Colleges don't prefer one over the other, so explore both tests to decide which one is right for you.

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	Reading Writing & Language Math Essay (Optional)	English Math Reading Science Reasoning Essay (Optional)
Length	3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry and Trigonometry
Calculator Policy	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
Essays	Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36
	SAT PREP OPTIONS	ACT PREP OPTIONS

ACT versus SAT: How do I choose?

The best way to decide if the SAT or ACT is right for you is to take a timed full-length practice test in each. Since the content and style of the SAT and ACT are very similar, factors like how you handle time pressure and what types of questions you find most challenging can help you determine which test is a better fit. For example, the pace of the SAT gives you a tad more time to think through problems, while the ACT can be more of a time crunch. Some students really thrive under the pressure of the clock, while others prefer the extra time to ponder a question. Try our QUIZ: SAT, ACT, or Both? to learn more.

Need help deciding?

Take our free SAT and ACT practice tests and get a personalized score report that helps you understand your strengths and areas for improvement.

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ACT or SAT?

[What's the Difference?](#)
[Format Comparison](#)
[Content Comparison](#)
[Resource Links](#)

ACT or SAT?

Content Comparison

English/Writing

ACT (English)	SAT (Writing)
75 questions in 45 minutes	49 questions in 35 minutes
Content: Usage/mechanics (punctuation, grammar, sentence structure) Rhetorical skills (writing strategy, organization, style).	Content: Improving sentences Identifying sentence errors Improving paragraphs.

Math

ACT	SAT
60 questions in 60 minutes	54 questions in 70 minutes
Content: Pre-algebra Algebra I Algebra II Geometry Trigonometry (4 questions).	Content: Arithmetic Algebra I Algebra II Geometry
Math reference information (formulas, etc.) is not provided.	Math reference information (formulas, etc.) is provided.
Questions generally increase in difficulty.	Questions generally increase in difficulty.

Reading

ACT	SAT
40 questions in 35 minutes	67 questions in 70 minutes
Content: Reading comprehension	Content: Sentence completion Reading comprehension
The four reading passages are always in the areas of Prose Fiction, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences (in that order).	The reading passage areas are not defined.
Limited testing of vocabulary, all of it within the context of the reading passages.	Sentence completion questions directly test vocabulary, as do some of the reading comprehension questions.

THE SAT vs. THE ACT

SAT	vs.	ACT
Every 4-year college in the US accepts SAT scores for admission and merit-based scholarships.	Why Take It?	Every 4-year college in the US accepts ACT scores for admission and merit-based scholarships.
Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing (ERW): 200-800 Math: 200 - 800 Composite: 400-1600 Optional Essay Writing: 2-8	Scoring	English: 1-36 Mathematics: 1-36 Reading: 1-36 Science: 1-36 Optional Essay Writing: 1-12 Composite: 1 – 36
Composite: 1010	50% National Percentile	Composite: 20
Reading (65 minutes) Writing & Language (35 minutes) Math (25 minutes NO calculator) Math (55 minutes with calculator) Optional Essay (50 minutes) <i>3 hours (without essay)</i> <i>3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)</i>	Test Format & Length	English (45 minutes) Math (60 minutes with calculator) Reading (35 minutes) Science (35 minutes) Optional Essay (40 minutes) <i>2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)</i> <i>3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)</i>
YES; increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (reading passage progress chronologically through the passage).	Difficulty Levels	NO; random difficulty order.
7 national test dates per academic year: August, October, November, December, March, May & June	Offered When?	7 national test dates per academic year: September, October, December, February, April, June & July
SAT Registration Fee: \$46 SAT Registration with Essay: \$60 SAT LATE Registration Fee: Additional \$29 <i>*For those that qualify, fee waivers are available</i>	Cost	ACT Registration Fee: \$46.00 ACT Registration with Writing: \$62.50 ACT LATE Registration Fee: Additional \$29.50 <i>*For those that qualify fee waivers are available</i>
sat.org	More Information & Registration	act.org
SAT Evidence-Based Read and Writing (ERW) + Math		ACT Composite
1600		36
1590-1560		35
1550-1520		34
1510-1490		33
1480-1450		32
1440-1420		31
1410-1390		30
1380-1350		29
1340-1310		28
1300-1280		27
1270-1240		26
1230-1200		25
1190-1160		24
1150-1130		23
1120-1100		22
1090-1060		21
1050-1020		20
1010-980		19
970-940		18
930-900		17
890-860		16
850-810		15
800-760		14
750-720		13
710-630		12
620-560		11

ACT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARK SCORES

College Course/Course Area	ACT Test	Benchmark Score
English Composition	English	18
College Algebra	Mathematics	22
Intro to Social Sciences	Reading	22
Biology	Science	23

ACT research shows students who meet this standard have a:

- ▶ 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing first year college courses.
- ▶ 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing first year college courses.

PSAT & SAT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARK SCORES

	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW)	Math
10 th -Grade PSAT/NMSQT	430	480
11 th -Grade PSAT/NMSQT	460	510
SAT	480	530

▶ 75% likelihood of earning at least a C or better in a first semester credit-bearing college course in the related subject.

PSAT & Accuplacer Ivy Tech Community College course placement

PSAT Test Scores	Ivy Tech	Ivy Tech Accuplacer Score Requirement	IDOE PSAT - Accuplacer Indicator	IDOE Accuplacer Score Requirement
Reading	25	Reading 76	≥ 21	69
Writing & Language	26	Sentence Skills 80		
Math	24.5	Elementary Math 74	≥ 23	Chosen program of study levels: 92+ 4-year 74+ 2-year NON-STEM/Business 45+ Technical Field
*Math	27	College Level Math 61		

*Math 135, 136 and 137 require the higher PSAT Math Score