ACT/SAT: Which Test is Right for Me

Kaplan Test Prep
October 18, 2017
Tonight’s Agenda

- Why do Admissions Tests Matter?
- SAT vs ACT
- Next Steps
Why do College Admissions Tests Matter?

Stanley Kaplan
Why Admissions Tests Matter:

A good test score can open the door to more colleges and academic scholarships. Merit based scholarships are based on two factors: SAT or ACT scores and high school grades.

A large percentage of colleges place considerable or moderate importance on test scores*.

Future employers may ask to see an asking entry level applicant’s SAT/ACT scores.

*According to a National Association for College Admission Counseling study.

POP QUIZ
Fact or Myth?

“Well, the SAT is the more widely accepted college admissions test, so I should probably take that one.”

Myth!

The FACT is:

All colleges and universities accept either the SAT or the ACT. Students should prepare to take the test they feel they will score the best on! Many students today are also taking both the SAT and ACT.
Fact or Myth?

“I have heard that the ACT is much easier than the SAT”

Myth!

The FACT is:
The ACT is not easier than the SAT, or vice versa. They are both standardized exams that equally test students on critical thinking and reasoning, just with different styles. One is not easier than the other.
“I like Science and I do well in my Science classes at school. I should probably prepare for the ACT only since there is a Science section!!”

Myth!

The FACT is:
While there is an ACT Science section, it does not test students on Biology or Chemistry content. Rather, students are tested on their reasoning and logic with questions that are based on science passages, data, and graphs. A few questions may require science knowledge, but the section is meant to test students on their reasoning skills.
Fact or Myth?

“My target school doesn’t require an essay score from the SAT or ACT, but I have heard it’s a good idea to take the optional essay at least once.....”

Fact!

Even if a student’s target school isn’t “requiring” an essay section score on the application, it is still a good idea for students to sit for the optional essay at least once.

• Opens up the possibilities to applying to other schools who may require the essay
• You cannot take just the essay portion at one time. You will have to sit for the whole SAT / ACT again
SAT vs ACT
SAT Overview
# SAT Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SAT</td>
<td>400-1600 scoring, 3 hours without essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>65 minutes, 52 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>35 minutes, 44 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>25 minutes, 20 questions, no calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>55 minutes, 38 questions, calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Requires reading a passage, describing development of argument, 50 minutes long</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SAT Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based Reading &amp; Writing Section</td>
<td>• Reading and Writing combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading details:</strong></td>
<td>• No sentence completions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Passage topics include US and World Literature, History/Social Studies, and Sciences (500 - 750 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 65 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing and Language details:</strong></td>
<td>• Focus on extended prose (400 - 500 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 35 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SAT Overview

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math Section</strong></td>
<td><strong>Three areas of concentrated focus:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Problem solving and data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “The Heart of Algebra”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Passport to Advanced Math”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55 minutes with a Calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 minutes without a Calculator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SAT Overview

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</table>
| Essay    | • Essay is **optional**  
|          | • 50 minutes  
|          | • Requires students to analyze a 650-750 word document and explain how the author builds an argument |

**3 Scores**  
✓ Reading  
✓ Analysis  
✓ Writing
SAT Scoring Details

Test Scores
- 3 scores: Math, Reading, and Writing & Language
- Range of 10 - 40

Composite (Total) Score
- Sum of the two Area Scores
- Range of 400 - 1600

Math Area Score
- Range of 200 - 800

Evidence-Based Reading + Writing Area Score
- Range of 200 - 800
Scoring SAT

Understanding Scoring

• Correct Answer: +1 point
• Omitted Question: 0 points
• Incorrect Answer: 0 points

Answer every question. If you don’t know the answer, guess! You won’t be penalized. Every point helps
ACT Overview
# ACT Overview

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ACT</td>
<td>1-36 scoring, three hours without essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>45 minutes, 75 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>60 minutes, 60 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>35 minutes, 40 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>35 minutes, 40 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Requires analysis of 3 different perspectives, 40 minutes long, optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACT Scoring

Composite Score
- Out of 36 points
- Average of the four sections: English, Math, Reading, Science

Math
- Out of 36 Points

Reading
- Out of 36 Points

Science
- Out of 36 Points

(Optional) Essay Score
- Score between 2-12
- Average of four domain scores

\[
\frac{\text{English}}{4} + \text{Math} + \text{Reading} + \text{Science} + \text{(Optional) Essay Score} = \text{Composite Score}
\]
SAT vs ACT Recap
## Similarities Between the Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT &amp; ACT</th>
<th>Both used for college admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used for scholarships + merit-based grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can retake several times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colleges accept both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typically taken Spring of junior year + Fall of senior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approx three to four hours long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No wrong answer penalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SAT/ACT Which Test is right for me?**
## SAT and ACT: Notable Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>More Social Studies Reading</td>
<td>More Science Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td>More data analysis</td>
<td>More geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No calculator section</td>
<td>Calculator use allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring</strong></td>
<td>50% math, 50% verbal</td>
<td>25% math, 50% verbal, 25% science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The best way to know is to take a practice test!
Reading Passage Topics

SAT
- Sciences
- Humanities
- SS/History
- Literature
- Careers

ACT
- Sciences
- Humanities
- SS/History
- Literature
Math Skills Tested

SAT
- Algebra
- Data Analysis/Problem Solving
- Geometry
- Trig

ACT
- Algebra
- Data Analysis/Problem Solving
- Geometry
- Trig
Next Steps
Test Taking Timeline

- **Fall Soph**: Practice PSAT
- **Spring Soph**: Official PSAT
- **Fall Junior**: Practice SAT or ACT
- **Spring Junior**: SAT and/or ACT
- **Fall Senior**: AP Tests
- **SAT or ACT Last chance!**
Your Next Steps

**Junior Year**
- PSAT in October for National Merit Qualification
- Focus on Academics – this is a critical year!
- Research admissions requirements for target, reach, and safety schools
- **Prep for the SAT or ACT**
- Take AP and Subject Tests

**Senior Year**
- Take the SAT and/or ACT for the last time
- Take AP and Subject Tests
- Request letters of recommendation
- Complete and send out college applications
- Fill out FAFSA and research scholarships
Combination SAT ACT Practice Test: In person or online

ACT® or SAT®
Which test is right for you?

FIND OUT
Thank you

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