

SAT vs. ACT

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

- Math
- Reading
- Writing and Language
Essay (Optional)

- Math
- Reading
- English
- Science
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

Arithmetic
Algebra I & II
Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis

Arithmetic
Algebra I & II
Geometry and Trigonometry

Tools

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

What You Should Know About Taking the ACT or SAT

Either the **ACT** or the **SAT** is required for admission to most 4-year colleges and universities, and both tests are accepted at every college in America. By getting familiar with the differences between the two tests, students will find the test which will give them the best results. Taking the test that results in the best score can enhance a student's chances of being accepted by the college of his/her choice. Students who plan to attend a 4-year college after graduation should plan to take one or both of these tests by the spring of their Junior year.

- You must register for the tests online.
ACT—www.actstudent.org SAT—www.collegeboard.org
- Register early to get the testing location of your choice and to avoid paying late fees.
- Take advantage of the 4 free score reports to send to colleges when you register for the tests!
- Students attending a two-year college, technical college, enlisting, or entering the work force are not required to take the ACT or the SAT. Technical/2 year colleges will administer a test called the "Compass Test" or "Accuplacer Test" to determine student placement in certain courses, like English and Math.

ACT and SAT Practice

Practicing for the ACT—Visit www.actstudent.org and click on "Test Prep" for free online practice tests, to download a free study guide and/or sign up for the ACT Question of the Day,

Practicing for the SAT—College Board has partnered with Khan Academy to practice anytime, anywhere for FREE! Visit <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat> for practice tests and instant feedback.

Come visit us in Student Services for free practice booklets!