

SAT & ACT Test Comparison

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	SAT	ACT
Length	3 hours 45 minutes	3 hours 25 minutes (which includes the 30-minute optional Writing Test)
Format	Ten Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Critical Reading sections (70 minutes) • Three Mathematics sections (70 minutes) (The math section has mostly multiple-choice questions; some student produced response questions) • Three Writing sections (70 minutes) • One Experimental Section 	Four Sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: 40-question, 35-minute test • English: 75-question, 45-minute test • Mathematics: 60-question, 60-minute test • Science: a 40-question, 35-minute test
Math Section Content	Arithmetic and number operations, beginning and intermediate algebra, plane geometry, coordinate geometry, data analysis, statistics and probability.	Pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, plane geometry, and trigonometry.
Reading Section Content	Sentence Completions; Reading Comprehension passages of varying lengths with accompanying questions. Topics from natural sciences, humanities, social science and literary fiction.	Four reading passages each with ten question; topics from social studies, natural sciences, prose fiction, and humanities.
English or Writing Content	<u>SAT Writing Section</u> Written Essay; Multiple-choice questions cover improving sentence errors, improving sentences, and improving paragraphs. <i>Areas of focus:</i> grammar, usage, word choice writing process.	<u>ACT English Section</u> Standard Written English: Punctuation, grammar and usage, sentence structure. Rhetorical Skills: Strategy, organization and style. (Essay: 30-minute essay is optional and not included in the composite score.)
Science Content	No science section.	Biology, chemistry, physics, and the earth/space sciences (e.g., geology, astronomy, and meteorology). Scientific reasoning skill is emphasized over recall of scientific content. Questions are presented with respect to data representation (charts and graphs), research summaries of experiments, and conflicting scientific viewpoints.
Calculator?	Yes	Yes
Guessing Penalty	¼ point subtracted for each wrong answer (except for math grid-in questions)	No wrong answer penalty.
Scoring	Each section is scored on a scale of 200 – 800. (Lowest possible score = 200; median score = 500; “perfect” score = 800.) 2,400 points are possible on the exam.	Each test section is scored on a scale of 1 – 36. The composite score is the average score for the four sub-tests (also on a scale of 1 – 36). (The optional essay is scored on a scale of 0 – 12.)
Are all exam scores sent to colleges?	Yes. Score reports sent to colleges will include all scores the student has scored on every SAT exam taken.	No. The ACT offers a "Score Choice" option. Students may select which colleges will receive their scores as well as which scores they wish to submit.
Basic Fee	\$43.00 (2008)	\$30.00 without essay (2008) \$44.50 with essay (2008)
Register	www.collegeboard.com	www.act.org