

Should You Take the ACT or SAT?

Both the ACT and the SAT are nationally administered standardized tests that help colleges evaluate candidates. All schools accept either test interchangeably. So as you begin to think about college and creating the best application package possible, your admissions plan should begin with the question, "Which test should I take?"

What's the Difference Between the ACT and SAT?

Test Structure and Format

	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 min (with Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Structure	4 Sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) plus an optional Writing Test	10 Sections (3 Critical Reading, 3 Math, 3 Writing, and 1 Experimental, which is unscored)

Scoring

	ACT	SAT
Score	<p>Composite of 1-36 based on average scores from the 4 test sections</p> <p>4 scores of 1-36 for each test</p> <p>Optional Writing Test score of 0-12 (not included in the overall score)</p>	<p>Total score range of 600-2400 based on adding scores from 3 subjects</p> <p>3 scores of 200-800 for each subject</p> <p>Score of 0-12 for the Essay</p>
Wrong Answer Penalty	No penalty for wrong answers	$\frac{1}{4}$ point subtracted from your raw score for each wrong answer (except for Math Grid-Ins)
Sending Score History	You decide which score is sent	<p>You decide which score is sent</p> <p>*Some colleges require you to send all scores, check with the college to be sure</p>

Content

	ACT	SAT
Reading	Reading Comprehension	Reading Comprehension Sentence Completions
Math	Arithmetic Algebra Geometry Algebra II Trigonometry	Arithmetic Algebra Geometry Algebra II
Science	Analysis Interpretation Evaluation Basic Content Problem Solving	Not applicable
Essay	Optional Final Section 30 Minutes Not Included in Composite Score Topic of importance to high school students	First Section 25 Minutes Factored into overall score More abstract topic