

# ACT vs SAT

## What's the Difference Between the ACT and SAT?

The differences in content on the two tests do allow for some generalizations that are listed below:

Students who do better on the ACT typically...	Students who do better on the SAT typically...
enjoy science, economics, or debate	enjoy brain teasers or riddles
work hard in school to earn good grades	don't have to study to pass tests
are "book smart"	are "street smart"
are good writers	are good at reading between the lines
are better at reading for general ideas	have a good eye for detail

	ACT	SAT
<b>Who takes it?</b>	Popular in the Mid-West and the South	More common on the East and West coasts
<b>What is the top score, national average?</b>	36 is perfect 21 is the national average	2400 is perfect 1500 is the national average
<b>What if you miss a question?</b>	There is no penalty for a wrong answer, so don't leave any blank.	You lose points for incorrect answers, so don't guess blindly
<b>What does it test?</b>	Based on curriculum learned in high school.	Reasoning & Logic
<b>What topics are tested?</b>	Math (up to Trigonometry); Reading, Writing & Science.	Math (up to Algebra II); Reading, Writing & Grammar.
<b>How should you prepare?</b>	The ACT is similar to your high school exams, but you need to know what is tested. The more you practice the questions, the better you'll score.	The SAT is tricky and requires you to utilize analytical thinking and logic. It is very "coachable" as you can learn to use reasoning to solve these problems.
<b>Where do you sign-up?</b>	<a href="http://www.ACTstudent.org">www.ACTstudent.org</a>	<a href="http://sat.collegeboard.org/register">http://sat.collegeboard.org/register</a>

## TEST STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

	<b>ACT</b>	<b>SAT</b>
<b>Length</b>	3 hours, 25 min (with Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
<b>Structure</b>	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

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

## CONTENT

	<b>ACT</b>	<b>SAT</b>
<b>Reading</b>	Reading Comprehension	Reading Comprehension Sentence Completions
<b>Math</b>	Arithmetic Algebra Geometry	Arithmetic Algebra Geometry

	Algebra II Trigonometry	Algebra II
<b>Science</b>	Analysis Interpretation Evaluation Basic Content Problem Solving	Not applicable
<b>Essay</b>	Optional Final Section	First Section
	30 Minutes	25 Minutes
	Not Included in Composite Score	Factored into overall score
	Topic of importance to high school students	More abstract topic