

## About the ACT

The ACT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. It is a multiple-choice, pencil-and-paper test administered by ACT, Inc.

The purpose of the ACT test is to measure a high school student's readiness for college, and provide colleges with one common data point that can be used to compare all applicants. College admissions officers will review standardized test scores alongside your high school GPA, the classes you took in high school, letters of recommendation from teachers or mentors, extracurricular activities, admissions interviews, and personal essays. How important ACT scores are in the college application process varies from school to school.

There are four ACT sections:

English

Reading

Math

Science

The ACT is 2 hours and 55 minutes long. If you choose to take the ACT with Essay, the test will be 3 hours and 35 minutes long. Each section of the ACT is scored on a 1 to 36 point scale. Your composite ACT score is the average of your four section scores, also on a scale from 1 to 36. If you take the ACT with Writing Test, you will receive a separate score on the Writing Test.

Most colleges and universities will accept scores from either the SAT or ACT, and do not favor one test over the other. That said, college-bound students are increasingly taking both the SAT and ACT. Changes made to the SAT in 2016 have made it easier than ever to prep for both tests concurrently—and earn competitive scores on both!

## Difference between SAT and ACT

ACT vs SAT: Students may take whichever test they prefer (assuming there are available testing locations for both tests). If you're not sure which test you would prefer, consider the key differences between the ACT and SAT. Some students find that the ACT caters to their strengths more so than the SAT, and vice versa.

| SAT  | vs.                 | ACT  |
|--|---------------------|--|
| content-based test   | <b>Type of Test</b> | content-based test   |
| Reading: 1, 65-min section;<br>Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) & 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; | <b>Test Format</b>  | English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional) |

|   |                                   |  |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)   |                                   |  |
| reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)  | <b>Content Covered</b>            | grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)  |
| questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving  | <b>Test Style</b>                 | straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher  |
| Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranged from 400-1600.               | <b>Scoring</b>                    | English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36 |
| no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers   | <b>Penalty for Wrong Answers?</b> | no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers  |
| yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges   | <b>Score Choice?</b>              | yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges  |
| questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage) | <b>Difficulty Levels</b>          | difficulty level of the questions is random  |
| arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; formulas provided.   | <b>Math Levels</b>                | arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided  |
| with private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores   | <b>Tends to be more popular?</b>  | with public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores  |
| typically about four weeks before the test date   | <b>Registration deadline?</b>     | typically about five to six weeks before the test date   |
| <a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>  | <b>More Information</b>           | <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>   |

