

# SAT / ACT Information

# Which one should I take?

- ▶ A lot of colleges require at least one admissions test as part of their application process. It is one of the main factors that colleges consider to predict a student's college success.
- ▶ Some students take both tests more than once, but all that is required is one test with a score high enough to be admitted. Students can choose to take SAT or ACT, or both. Almost every college will accept either test.
- ▶ Since you don't know how you'll do until you take the test, many students try both tests at least once. Whichever one you like better, you can choose to take again and earn a higher score.

# What about test optional colleges?

- ▶ If your college is test optional, you can decide if you think your scores will enhance your application or bring it down, and that will help you choose whether to send your scores to that college or not.
- ▶ Keep in mind that schools that are currently test optional may not remain that way by the time you apply for admission senior year, so it is a good idea to have at least 1 test score in case you need it.
- ▶ Sometimes test scores can help earn scholarships as well.

# ACT vs SAT: What's the difference?

- ▶ The SAT is a test of reading, writing and language, and math. The scores range from 400 to 1600 (200 to 800 per test).
- ▶ The ACT is a test of English, math, science, reading, and optional writing. The highest score is a 36.
- ▶ SAT time length: 3 hours
- ▶ ACT time length: 2 hours + 55 minutes (with optional writing, adds 40 minutes)

# ACT vs SAT: What's the difference?

## Compare the ACT and SAT tests

- ACT includes a Science section
- SAT includes one SAT Math Section on which you may not use a calculator

|                          | SAT   | ACT   |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Why Take It</b>       | Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.                | Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.                            |
| <b>Test Structure</b>    | Reading<br>Writing & Language<br>Math   | English<br>Math<br>Reading<br>Science Reasoning<br>Essay (Optional)                             |
| <b>Length</b>            | 3 hours   | 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)<br>3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)                         |
| <b>Reading</b>           | 5 reading passages  | 4 reading passages  |
| <b>Science</b>           | None  | 1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)   |
| <b>Math</b>              | Covers:<br>Arithmetic<br>Algebra I & II<br>Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis | Covers:<br>Arithmetic<br>Algebra I & II<br>Geometry, Trigonometry, and Probability & Statistics |
| <b>Calculator Policy</b> | Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.                            | You can use a calculator on all math questions.   |
| <b>Essays</b>            | None  | Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.                 |
| <b>How It's Scored</b>   | Scored on a scale of 400-1600   | Scored on a scale of 1-36   |

# ACT vs SAT: What's the difference?

## SAT<sup>®</sup>

**400–1600**

## VS

## ACT<sup>®</sup>

**1–36**

**Final Scores**

**Time**

Without Essay  
**3 hrs**

Without Writing  
**2 hrs 55 mins**

With Writing  
**3 hrs 35 mins**

**Time per Question**

**47–86 seconds**  
per question

**Time per Question**

**36–60 seconds**  
per question

**No. of Sections**

**3**  
sections

**No. of Sections**

**4**  
sections

**Subjects Tested & Weight**

**Math** 50%

**EBRW** 50%

**Subjects Tested & Weight**

**English** 25%

**Math** 25%

**Reading** 25%

**Science** 25%

**Calculator**

**Not Allowed**  
on Math "No Calculator" Section

**Calculator**

**Allowed**

**Optional Test**

**Optional Test**

**Writing**

Scored separately on a scale of 2–12

# THE SAT

# VS

# THE ACT

- Fewer Geometry Questions
- More Time per Question
- No-calculator Math Section

**KEY Differences**

- Lots of Geometry
- Faster Paced
- Tough Science Section

**Overall Time**

**3h**

**Overall Time**

**2h 55m**

**TIMING & SCORING**

**Reading** 65m

**Writing** 35m

**Math (No Calculator)** 25m

**Math (Calculator)** 55m

200 - 800 points

**Reading** 35m

**English** 45m

**Math** 60m

**Science** 35m

200 - 800 points

**Total Points**

**400 - 1600**

**Total Points**

**1 - 36**

**Time per Question**

**75s** Reading

**48s** Writing

**83s** Math

**Time per Question**

**53s** Reading

**36s** English

**60s** Math

# Should I do the optional essay?

- ▶ Check to see if you are only applying to schools who do not require the essay.
- ▶ Some schools like to see the essay and use it for multiple purposes.
- ▶ If you're not sure, it's better to go ahead and take the writing because you don't want to have to take the entire test again just to get a writing score.
- ▶ Also, sometimes the writing portion can earn you scholarships even if it wasn't required for admission.

# When should I start taking them?

- ▶ Most students take these tests in their junior year of high school. Each test offers 7 test dates per year on Saturdays, plus the school day opportunity (March 5 for juniors).
- ▶ Sophomore year is not too early, especially if you want to take the tests, then do a prep course, then take them again. But you can do this plan junior year instead if you choose.
- ▶ However, you will do better if you have completed algebra II and English III first.
- ▶ The latest I recommend taking a test is the summer at the end of junior year. Senior year is risky to be taking the tests for the first time while trying to apply for college and scholarships.



# How do I prepare for the test(s)?

- ▶ There are numerous resources to prepare for the tests for a large range of prices.
- ▶ Both ACT and SAT offer online test prep classes for a fee, but they both also offer free online practice tests.
- ▶ SAT and ACT offer a question of the day for free. Khan Academy offers free SAT prep.
- ▶ ACT offers Preparing for the ACT at [academy.act.org](https://academy.act.org) for free.
- ▶ There are many online test prep resources that you can pay for. These are typically not as expensive as the face-to-face options.
- ▶ There are many face-to-face options available as well. You can hire a one-on-one tutor or attend a test prep facility such as Revolution Prep, Kaplan, or Karen Dillard. These tend to be fairly pricey, depending on the length and frequency of the course.

# How do I sign up?

- ▶ For SAT, go to [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). You will click on Register for the SAT, and it will ask you to create an account.
- ▶ For ACT, go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). Click on Register for the ACT, and it will ask you to create an account.
- ▶ Once you have your account, the website will walk you through the process of signing up, including choosing your date, location, and paying the fee. All test dates are offered at a KISD high school (usually Fossil Ridge or Keller High) if you sign up before that testing date is full.
- ▶ The fee for the SAT is \$60, and for the ACT is \$93 with the writing portion and \$68 without writing. If you feel you would qualify for a fee waiver for the test fee, contact your counselor at your home campus. They can look to see if you qualify and get you the fee waiver.

# What scores should I send and when?

- ▶ You can choose whichever score you like best to submit, or submit all and let the college decide the best score to use (especially if they super score).
- ▶ Most colleges require that ACT or SAT scores be sent to them directly from the testing companies and not from the student or the high school. You can request that your scores be sent to colleges when you register for the test if you would like. You also need to list your high school when you sign up for the test so that they receive your test scores.
- ▶ If you don't choose to send your scores when you sign up for the test, you will need to log in to your College Board or ACT Student account when you are applying for college admission and request that the scores be sent then. There will be a small fee.

# What schools require test scores?

- ▶ A lot of 4-year universities require an ACT or SAT, some have gone test-optional. However, 2-year colleges do not require SAT or ACT.
- ▶ 2-year colleges require placement tests. In Texas, that test is called the TSIA2 (Texas Success Initiative Assessment). If you already took the ACT or SAT and your score is high enough, it can exempt you from the TSIA2.
- ▶ The purpose of the TSIA2 is to measure student's predicted success in college-level English and math classes. If you do not score high enough on the TSI test, you will be required to take remedial classes in college before you can take the freshman-level courses in that area. You will have to pay for these courses but not receive any college credit for them.

# If you don't need SAT/ACT, but do need TSIA2:

- ▶ The website below has all the TSIA2 exemption information. You can be exempted from this test by earning certain scores on your ACT, SAT, or PSAT.
  
- ▶ <https://www.kellerisd.net/Page/2680>

# Check out SAT and ACT websites for many more resources

- ▶ Both Collegeboard and MyACT offer other resources for post-high-school, including:
  - ▶ Test prep
  - ▶ Career interest inventories
  - ▶ College searches
  - ▶ Scholarships

# Questions?

