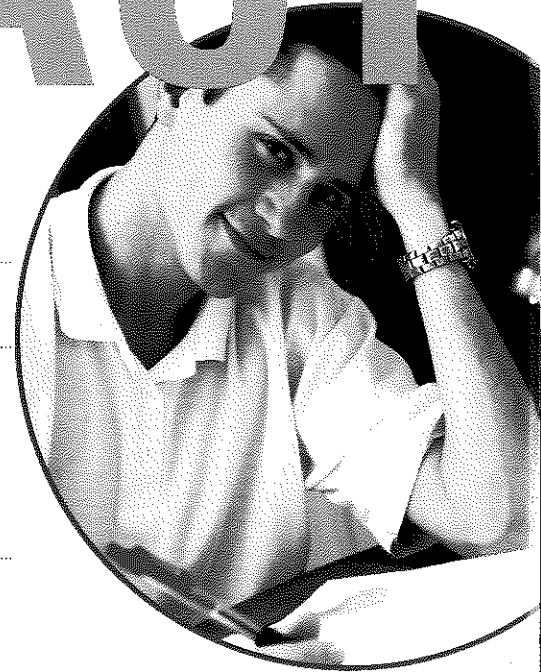


[Everything you need to know]

SAT & ACT



SAT

How often is it administered?

Seven times per year

What is the test structure?

Ten-section exam:
Three Critical Reading, three Math, three Writing (the first of which is the Essay), and one experimental section masked to look like a regular section

What is the test content?

Math: Fundamentals through 10th grade math, including Geometry and limited Algebra II

Reading: Sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, Reading comprehension

Writing: limited grammar rules, word usage, word choice, and a mandatory essay

Is there a penalty for wrong answers?

Yes, 1/4 of a point for each wrong answer on multiple-choice questions

How is the test scored?

200–800 per section, added together for a total score of 600–2400
0–12 for the essay

Are all scores sent to schools?

Unless you enroll in Score Choice™, all of your scores will be reported to colleges.

Are there other uses for the exams?

Scholarship purposes
Certain statewide testing programs

Need more information?

Educational Testing Service (ETS):
609-921-9000, ETS.org;
The College Board: collegeboard.com

ACT

Six times per year

Five-test exam:

Math, English, Reading, Science and Writing (optional)

An Experimental test is added to exams on certain dates only and is clearly experimental.

Math: up to trigonometry

English: Usage/Mechanics and Rhetorical Skills

Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences

Science: charts, graphs, data interpretation

Writing: optional essay

No

1–36 for each test, averaged together for a composite score of 1–36

2–12 for the Writing test

You can choose which scores get sent to colleges.

Scholarship purposes
Certain statewide testing programs

ACT, Inc.:
319-337-1270,
ACT.org

800-2Review • PrincetonReview.com

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The Princeton Review is not affiliated with Princeton University.

SEVEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE SAT TEST

1. The SAT tests general knowledge and ability to solve problems creatively. It doesn't test broad subject knowledge. For example, students won't need to know the date of the Magna Carta but they will need to know appropriate math concepts so they can solve problems. Subject knowledge is helpful to students only when it is incorporated into solving problems.
2. The SAT focuses on skills that will be essential for success at a competitive liberal-arts school. The areas include writing ability, critical reading, and the ability to solve mathematical problems. It also is a good reflection of how well students will be able to reason under pressure.
3. SATs are necessary because each school has slightly different methods for issuing grades. Since classroom grades aren't objective, colleges need a "third party" source for determining college readiness. The SAT provides that standardization.
4. The SAT has three sections – Critical Reading, Writing and Math. Each of these three sections is scored based on a scale of 200 to 800.
5. The Writing section includes multiple-choice questions on grammar and word usage. It also has a 25 minute essay that students will handwrite in response to a prompt. In addition to the essay, there are two other sections on the Writing test. One is 25 minutes and includes improving sentences, identifying sentence errors and improving paragraphs questions. The final section is 10 minutes and has improving sentences questions. The multiple-choice portion of the SAT counts for 70 percent of their total writing score and the essay counts for the remaining 30 percent. The writing section is the newest addition to the test (it was first administered in 2005).
6. The Critical Reading section was formerly called the verbal section. It consists of short reading passages and longer reading passages. Students will have to read through the paragraphs and answer questions specific to their reading. The analogies portion of the test, which was an SAT standard for decades, has been removed. The questions consist of sentence completion questions and reading questions. There are three sections on the Critical Reading section – two 25 minute sections and one 20 minute section. Each section has a mix of the different question types.
7. The Math section has two question types and three timed sections. There are four major math topics on the test – numbers and operations, algebra 1 and 2, geometry, data analysis, statistics and probability. Students will need to answer questions in these major math areas. The first math section has all multiple-choice questions, the second has eight multiple-choice and 10 "grid-in" questions and the third has all multiple-choice questions.

EIGHT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ACT TEST

1. There are four sections on the ACT (English, math, reading, and science) and then a separate optional essay section. The "science" section is really just reading comprehension (no outside science knowledge is needed; all questions can be answered by understanding the given information.)
2. Answer **every question** on the ACT even if it just a guess; there is no penalty for wrong answers.
3. On the ACT, finishing all of the questions in time is difficult. The ACT rewards working quickly so students should push themselves to move quickly through each section. For example, if you are 90% sure about a question, answer it and move on rather than going back and double checking.
4. Again, you don't want your score to be lower due to the fact that you were not able to finish most questions in time. The best way to deal with this issue is to time yourself as you complete a few practice ACTs before the actual test. Get used to how much time a section lasts and how quickly you need to work to finish it.
5. The national average for the ACT is approximately 21. This is the approximate national average for the overall score and for each section.
6. Do not read the reading passages for too long. Only take between one and two minutes to read the long passages quickly. Just read enough to get a main understanding of the arguments or points the author is making. Once you get to the questions, you will be going back to the passages anyway to search for the right answer, so it doesn't make sense to read for too long.
7. Many students are curious as to how many questions they need to answer correctly on each section to earn a certain score. Here is one example: To earn an overall ACT score of 24, a student would need to get 55 out of 75 English questions correct, 37 out of 60 math questions correct, 26 out of 40 reading questions correct, and 29 out of 40 science questions correct.
8. Many students are curious about how the ACT and SAT compare to each other and here are some general thoughts. Most students find the ACT slightly easier and get a higher percentage of ACT questions correct. The downside is that the curve on the ACT is tougher so a student needs to get a higher percentage of ACT questions correct to earn a score that would be equal to the comparable SAT score. One of the reasons that students find the ACT slightly easier is that there are only 4 answer choices on every question of the ACT except for the math section where the questions have 5 answer choices. By contrast, every section of the SAT has 5 answer choices.