



An SAT/ACT Comparison Chart

The SAT* and ACT are both standardized tests used by colleges for admissions purposes. Both are usually taken on a Saturday morning with a No. 2 pencil in hand. Most colleges/universities accept either test interchangeably. That said, they aren't the same test. Here's a quick look at how they stack up against one another.

	SAT	ACT
Length	225 minutes (3 hours and 45 minutes testing time)	205 minutes (3 hours and 25 minutes testing time)
Structure	3 Math sections (70 minutes, 54 questions) 3 Critical Reading sections (70 minutes, 67 questions) 3 Writing sections (60 minutes, 49 questions, 1 essay) 1 Experimental section (Math/Reading/Writing) - unscored	1 Math test (60 minutes, 60 questions) 1 Reading test (35 minutes, 40 questions) 1 English Test (45 minutes, 45 questions) 1 Science test (35 minutes, 40 questions) 1 Writing test (Optional) (30 minutes, 1 essay prompt)
Scoring	3 subject (Math, Critical Reading, Writing) scores: 200-800 Possible score range: 600-2400 Separate essay score of 0-12	Composite score of 1-36 based on the average scores from the individual tests Individual test scores of 1-36 (Math, Reading English, Science) Optional Writing test score of 2-12 (optional)
Math Content	Arithmetic Operations Algebra Geometry Statistics and Probability	Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry Plane Geometry/Trigonometry
Reading Content	Reading Comprehension (passage-based) Sentence Completions (vocabulary)	Reading Comprehension (passage-based)
Science	Not tested	Interpretation Analysis Evaluation Reasoning Problem-Solving
English/Writing Content	Writing Skills Grammar and Usage	Usage/Mechanics (English test) Rhetorical Skills (English test) Writing Skills (Writing test)
Essay	Part of the writing test	Separate (optional) essay test
When Offered	7 times a year: October, November, December, January, March, May, June	6 times a year: September, October, December, February, April, June
Cost	\$52.50 Fee waivers available	\$38 (no Writing), \$54.50 (with Optional Writing) Fee waivers available

*The SAT is changing in 2016 (2015 for the PSAT). This chart outlines the differences between the current SAT and the ACT.