



## SAT vs. ACT Comparison Chart

The SAT and ACT are two very different college entrance exams. Both are nationally administered and are used to help colleges evaluate applicants. The SAT is essentially a three-part aptitude test (Reading, Math, Writing) while the ACT is more of an achievement test with four core sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) and an optional Writing section. Many colleges will accept either test or both exams. Some colleges require one (typically the SAT). The chart below will help you understand the structure and content of the SAT and ACT.

	SAT	ACT
Length	3 hours, 45 minutes	3 hours, 25 minutes (includes 30-minute Writing Test)
Sections	10 Sections: 3 Critical Reading, 3 Math, 3 Writing (including Essay)	5 Sections: English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing (optional)
What content is on the test?	<p>Math: Numbers, Operations, Algebra I, Algebra II, Functions, Geometry, Probability, Statistics, Data Analysis</p> <p>Critical Reading: Sentence Completion, Short and Long Reading Passages from Natural Science, Humanities, Social Science, and Literary Fiction (measuring extended reasoning, literal comprehension, and vocabulary in context)</p> <p>Writing: Identifying Errors, Improving Sentences and Paragraphs, Student Written Essay measuring ability to communicate a viewpoint, define and support a position.</p>	<p>Math: Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, Coordinate Geometry, Plane Geometry, and Trigonometry</p> <p>Reading: Social Studies and Natural Science Reading Passage, Arts/Literature Reading Skills, Prose Fiction and Humanities Passage</p> <p>English: Usage and Mechanics, Grammar, Identifying Errors, Rhetorical Skills, Sentence Improvement, Paragraph Improvement</p> <p>Science: This is a glorified reading passage section. This does NOT test any science knowledge. Data representation, research summaries, science reading passages on conflicting viewpoints.</p> <p>Writing (optional): Written essay measuring ability to communicate a viewpoint, define and support a position</p>
Score Composition	<p>1/3 Math</p> <p>1/3 Reading</p> <p>1/3 Writing</p>	<p>1/4 English</p> <p>1/4 Math</p> <p>1/4 Reading</p> <p>1/4 Science</p> <p>Writing (optional)</p>
Scoring	Aggregate score 600 - 2400 based on total of 3 scores 200 - 800 (Reading, Math, Writing) Score of 0 - 12 for Essay	Composite score 1 - 36 based on average of 4 sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) Score 0 - 12 for Optional Essay
Penalties	1/4 point deducted for wrong answers	No penalties for incorrect answers
Sending Scores to Colleges	You can send scores to 4 colleges for free or you can select ("opt-in feature") which will allow you to choose specific test(s) - for a fee	Student decides which scores are sent
SPHS Code	102215	102215
Website	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>	<a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a>

For most students, the ACT and SAT are of similar difficulty. The ACT gives students less time per question so students who need extra time may find the ACT slightly more difficult than the SAT. On the other hand, SAT questions tend to be trickier and the SAT also tests vocabulary indirectly through the Sentence Completions questions on the Critical Reading section, so certain students may find the ACT easier.

