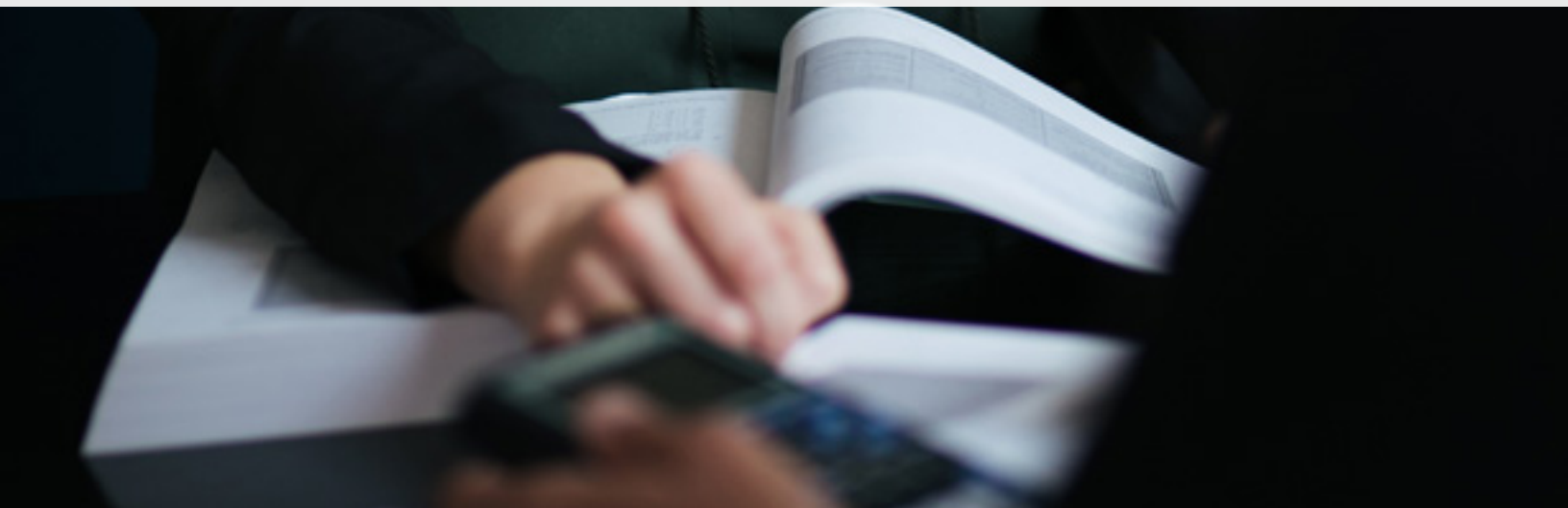




Understanding College Entrance Exams

A Personalized Approach



Academic  Approach[®]

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Introduction



Introduction

The Landscape of College Admissions

About Academic Approach

Introduction



For over 20 years, we have provided personalized learning solutions for students preparing for the ACT or SAT, offering tutoring that meets our students' specific needs and goals. Our mission is to teach students the most essential college readiness skills, helping them not only to grow their ACT and SAT scores but also to learn skills important for long-term academic success. To help our students succeed, we have developed 1) a deep understanding of the construct and content of the ACT and SAT and 2) a sensitive process for assessing which test—the ACT or SAT—is the better fit for each student.

We seek the most efficient, effective growth for our students, so finding the right match between the student and the test is critical. Since most colleges accept either the ACT or SAT, there is often no clear need to choose one test over the other. A student may not even need to take both tests. Therefore, an efficient, accurate assessment of a student's skills early on can save significant time and effort in determining which test form best suits the strengths of a student.

In "Part One: Guide to Navigating the College Admissions Tests," we share important content about the ACT and SAT, including side-by-side comparisons. We also provide information about the PSAT, SAT Subject Tests, and other college-readiness tests.

"Part Two: Personalized Pathways of Learning" provides contextualized understanding for why it is important to avoid reducing students to their composite ACT or SAT scores. Our section *An Overview: To ACT or SAT* details major differences between the ACT and SAT and how those differences can impact student performance.

After our overview, we provide three specific case studies analyzing student performance through both quantitative and qualitative assessments that determine which test is the best fit for each student. We end with a *Decision-Making Guide* that can frame conversations around a student's choice between the ACT and SAT.

We hope you find our guide useful in helping students make thoughtful, sensitive decisions about which test is the better fit. In doing so, you can ensure that their personalized journeys of test preparation are efficient, effective, and successful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Pietrafetta".

Matthew Pietrafetta, Ph.D.

Founder & CEO
Academic Approach

Testing as a Factor in College Admissions

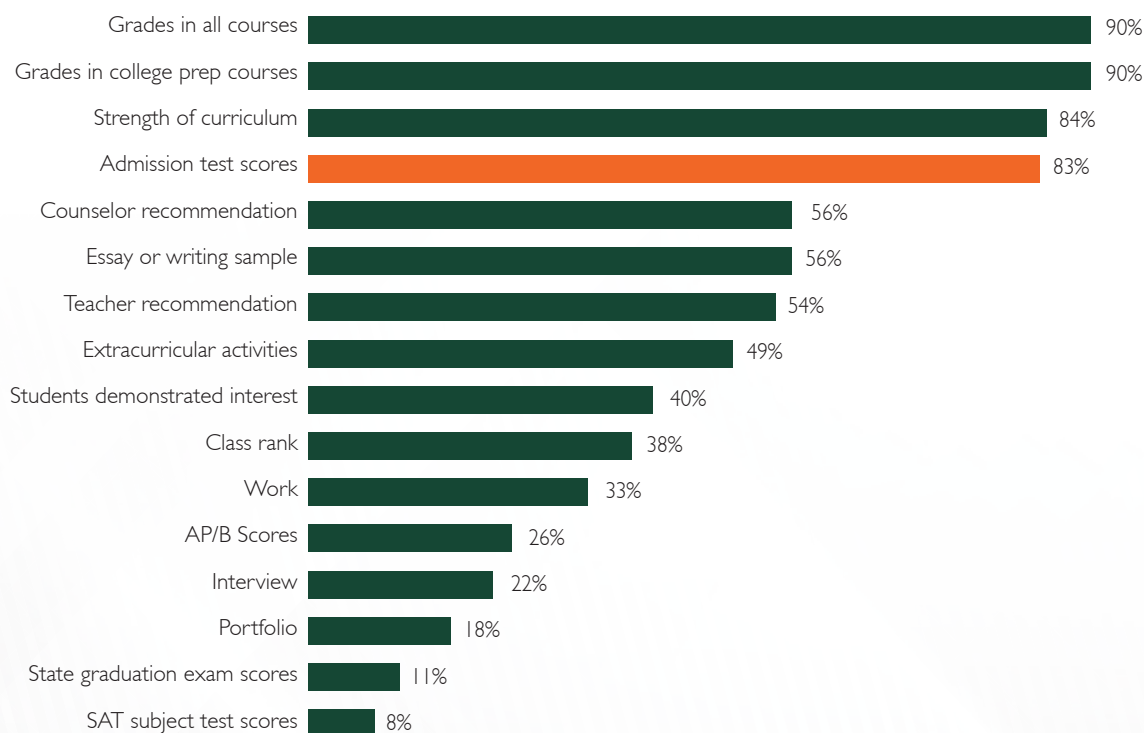
Navigating the college admissions process can be challenging and confusing. The role of standardized testing is always evolving, making the process even harder to navigate. The SAT and ACT are an important part of the admissions process, but they are just one part. Generally, student grades and the rigor of coursework matter more than anything. That said, standardized tests do factor into admissions decisions significantly, so students should explore which test better exhibits their strengths and knowledge in order to maximize their opportunities.

Standardized test scores may also be a significant factor beyond admissions; they are often used for athletic and scholarship eligibility at many universities. In addition, research has shown that these tests best predict student success once they get to college, including their likelihood to earn passing grades in first-year courses and to graduate on time.

The large majority of U.S. colleges and universities accept both the SAT or ACT with no bias or regionalism, so it's a matter of which test better features a student's skills. For tools on determining which test might be right for a student, see part two on page 31.

ADMISSION FACTORS

Percentage of Colleges Reporting “Considerable or Moderate Importance”



Source: 2019 NACAC State of College Admissions

Test Optional Admission Policies

Some colleges and universities are “test optional,” which means that students are not required to provide any standardized testing scores when applying to a college or university, though they are still accepted, reviewed, and considered as part of the application. Test optional does not mean test blind, so if a student submits their scores as part of their application, those scores will be incorporated into the holistic analysis of the application and used to evaluate applicant fit.

Test-optional policies vary from school to school. Some schools don't require but actively encourage students to submit them, while others require alternative documents if not submitting a test score. Some programs within a university may have different policies than other programs at that same institution. It's important for students to research the policies at all schools and programs of interest as those policies will likely differ.

Many colleges have shifted to be test optional for the Class of 2021 in an effort to review applications in the most fair and flexible way following school closures and the inconsistent transition to e-learning. Testing access isn't an even playing field considering the experiences of thousands upon thousands of low-income and low-access students, medically compromised students, and students with learning accommodations that cannot be fairly met because of school closures.



About Academic Approach

Academic Approach is an organization of educators. Since 2001, we have focused on skills-based test preparation that supports growth for students at all levels of achievement. We reach and teach a wide range of students through both one-on-one tutoring and school-based programs. Our core mission is to create opportunities for students to learn, think critically, problem-solve, and grow both scores and skills.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

<p><i>Tests are Standardized. Students are Not.™</i></p>	<p><i>Skills-Based Test Preparation™</i></p>	<p><i>Teaching Beyond the Test™</i></p>
<p>We do not believe in the myth of the “average” student, so we customize our program designs and our teaching to fit each individual student.</p>	<p>We focus on building transferrable, lasting skills (not just tips and tricks) that are necessary to excel both on the test and in a student’s high school and college coursework.</p>	<p>We are committed to both score growth and academic enrichment, so our materials include the context that connects skills with real-world situations.</p>

We believe that preparing for standardized tests presents a valuable opportunity to learn skills that are essential for college readiness, and the above three pillars of our philosophy create the foundation for our approach. The combination of strategy and knowledge promotes a mastery of skills that leads to higher scores, better grades, and increased college readiness.

TEACHING FOR TRANSFER

Many students struggle with transferring skills they’ve learned in the classroom to the way skills are evaluated on standardized tests. Often these skills are presented in unfamiliar contexts and in challenging ways under great time pressure. Our methodology bridges what students are learning in the classroom with the skills commonly assessed on tests by teaching for “transfer”—helping students carry over something from one context to another. Simply put, if students study skills at the right level of rigor for them and practice applying those skills under test conditions, they can achieve higher test performance.



Part One

Navigating College Admissions Tests

About the Tests

Overview

The ACT

The SAT

ACT vs. SAT: The Student Experience

SAT Subject Tests

The PSAT, NMSQT, and PreACT

Advanced Placement Exams

Overview



The ACT and SAT are the two primary standardized tests submitted with college admissions applications. While the majority of colleges and universities accept both tests, they are distinctly different tests in terms of content, format, scoring, and timing.

Though the two tests are distinct and assess core concepts differently, students can compare their scores on each test by looking at the derived concordance tables on page 72 of the Appendix, which was developed collaboratively by the College Board and ACT. The table is based on the performance of students who took both tests close together and how those scores aligned. This most recent table was released in June 2018. For section-specific concordance tables, see Appendix 2 on page 68.

	ACT	SAT
Format and Structure	<p>4 required sections on the test:</p> <p>English: 45 minutes, 75 multiple-choice questions</p> <p>Math: 60 minutes, 60 multiple-choice questions</p> <p>Reading: 35 minutes, 40 multiple-choice questions</p> <p>Science: 35 minutes, 40 multiple-choice questions</p> <p>Optional essay: 40 minutes</p>	<p>2 required components of the test:</p> <p>Evidence-Based Reading & Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: 65 minutes, 52 multiple-choice questions • Writing & Language: 35 minutes, 44 multiple-choice questions <p>Math: 80 minutes, 58 questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Calculator: 15 multiple-choice questions, 5 student-produced response problems (25 minutes) • Calculator: 30 multiple-choice questions, 8 student-produced response problems (55 minutes) <p>Optional essay: 50 minutes</p>
Total Number of Questions	215 multiple-choice questions and one optional essay	154 multiple-choice and student-produced response questions and one optional essay
Testing Time	2 hours, 55 minutes + 40 minutes for optional essay	3 hours + 50 minutes for optional essay
Highest Math Level	Trigonometry (only approximately 4 out of 60 questions)	Trigonometry (less than 10% of questions); advanced algebra
Penalty for Incorrect Answers	No	No
Scoring	1-36 for each subject—English, Math, Reading, and Science—averaged together for a composite score with 36 as the highest score; optional essay receives a score between 2 and 12 for each of four domains and is reported separately	400-1600 scale—200-800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing combined with 200-800 for Math; optional essay receives a score between 2 and 8 in each of three areas (reading, analysis, and writing) and is reported separately
Score Choice Available?	Yes	Yes
Test Administrations	Seven times per year: February*, April, June, July, September, October, December <i>*typically not offered in New York</i>	Seven times per year: March or April, May, June, August, October, November, December
For More Information	ACT • (319) 337-1000 www.actstudent.org	The College Board • (866) 630-9305 www.collegeboard.org

SAT TOTAL SCORE TO ACT COMPOSITE SCORE

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1340	29	1080	21	820	14
1590	36	1330	29	1070	21	810	14
1580	36	1320	28	1060	21	800	14
1570	36	1310	28	1050	20	790	14
1560	35	1300	28	1040	20	780	14
1550	35	1290	27	1030	20	770	13
1540	35	1280	27	1020	19	760	13
1530	35	1270	27	1010	19	750	13
1520	34	1260	27	1000	19	740	13
1510	34	1250	26	990	19	730	13
1500	34	1240	26	980	18	720	12
1490	34	1230	26	970	18	710	12
1480	33	1220	25	960	18	700	12
1470	33	1210	25	950	17	690	12
1460	33	1200	25	940	17	680	11
1450	33	1190	24	930	17	670	11
1440	32	1180	24	920	17	660	11
1430	32	1170	24	910	16	650	11
1420	32	1160	24	900	16	640	10
1410	31	1150	23	890	16	630	10
1400	31	1140	23	880	16	620	10
1390	31	1130	23	870	15	610	9
1380	30	1120	22	860	15	600	9
1370	30	1110	22	850	15	590	9
1360	30	1100	22	840	15		
1350	29	1090	21	830	15		

ACT COMPOSITE SCORE TO SAT TOTAL RANGE

ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT
36	1570-1600	26	1230-1250	16	880-910
35	1530-1560	25	1200-1220	15	830-870
34	1490-1520	24	1160-1190	14	780-820
33	1450-1480	23	1130-1150	13	730-770
32	1420-1440	22	1100-1120	12	690-720
31	1390-1410	21	1060-1090	11	650-680
30	1360-1380	20	1030-1050	10	620-640
29	1330-1350	19	990-1020	9	590-610
28	1300-1320	18	960-980		
27	1260-1290	17	920-950		

The ACT

The ACT is a standards-based test that assesses academic readiness for college. It measures grammar, reading comprehension, math, and science skills. Colleges and universities use the ACT as one measure among many—class rank, high school GPA, extracurricular activities, personal essays, and teacher recommendations—to evaluate a student's readiness to do college-level work. ACT scores can also be used as a basis for awarding scholarships and merit-based financial aid.



TEST FORMAT & STRUCTURE

The ACT consists of four required sections with a total of 215 multiple-choice questions as well as one optional essay section.

Section	Time	Number of Questions	Content Covered
English	45 minutes	75 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production of Writing• Knowledge of Language• Conventions of Standard English
Math	60 minute	60 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing for Higher Mathematics• Number and Quantity• Algebra• Functions• Geometry• Statistics and Probability• Integrating Essential Skills• Modeling
Reading	35 minutes	40 multiple-choice questions across four passages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Ideas & Details• Craft & Structure• Integration of Knowledge & Ideas
Science	35 minutes	40 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpretation of Data• Scientific Investigation• Evaluation of Models, Inferences, & Experimental Results
Writing (optional essay section)	40 minutes	1 prompt to discuss three perspectives on a contemporary social issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ideas and Analysis• Development and Support• Organization• Language Use

TEST ADMINISTRATION

The ACT is typically administered in paper and pencil form, and students are allowed to use a calculator for the duration of the test. Students can take the test at local high schools, career schools, colleges, and other locations across the country and around the world. ACT announced that they would be starting online administration of the test at select national test sites beginning in fall of 2020. This was delayed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SECTION RETESTING

Beginning in the fall of 2021, after a student has taken the full ACT once, that student may then take individual sections to gain the best possible composite score. Any retakes of specific sections would be taken online, and students will be able to take one, two, or three subjects in each retest sitting. This change was originally scheduled to launch in fall of 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19 capacity limitations.

SCORING

Each multiple-choice section of the ACT is graded on a scale of 1 to 36. These four section scores are averaged and rounded for a student's composite score. The ACT does not penalize students for incorrect answers, so students should guess even if it means filling in random answer choices.

Students who are not taking the Essay will instead take a 20-minute experimental section after the Science section. This section does not count towards a student's composite score but should still be taken seriously.

ESSAY SCORING

The essay on the ACT is optional, but many colleges require it. Two graders evaluate student essays, and each grader gives the writing sample a score from 1 to 6 in each of four domains—Ideas & Analysis, Development & Support, Organization, and Language Use. The respective scores are then combined for a score from 2 to 12 in each domain, and the final score is an average of those four domain scores. This score does not factor into a student's composite ACT score.

SCORE CHOICE

ACT offers score choice, which means that, should a student have taken the ACT more than once, that student can then choose to have only their best score be sent to colleges. However, essay scores cannot be sent separately, so if a student wishes to send a specific essay score to a college, they must also send the results of the multiple-choice portion of the same test.

Superscoring

As of fall 2020, the ACT will allow superscoring. If a student takes the test multiple times, the best score from each section will be reported and compiled into the final composite score sent to schools that accept superscores. It is worth noting that some colleges will ask students to submit all their scores when applying and some may not accept superscores. The score reporting policy of each college is different, so students should learn about the policies at all their schools of interest.

UPCOMING TEST DATES AND REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Due to challenges with test cancellations and re-registration during COVID-19 pandemic, registration for all tests through July 2021 opened on August 3. The deadlines below are still in effect, but seats may be more limited than usual for specific dates and testing sites.

ACT		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration
September 12, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
September 13, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
September 19, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
October 10, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 17, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 24, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 25, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
December 12, 2020	November 6	November 7 – 20
February 6, 2021	January 8	January 9 – 15
April 17, 2021	March 12	March 13 – 26
June 12, 2021	May 7	May 8 – 21
July 17, 2021*	June 18	June 19 – 25

*No test centers are scheduled in New York for the July test date.

COST

The cost for a full administration of the ACT is \$44 without the optional Essay section or \$70 with the Essay section. If a student registers within the late registration window, there is an additional \$30 fee. If a student wishes to retake one, two, or three sections on a single day, the cost is \$44, \$48, or \$52 respectively.

Students may apply for a fee waiver if they meet certain household income criteria. After section retesting launches in 2021, students who qualify for a fee waiver will receive four total waivers and each test sitting will use one fee waiver regardless of how many sections are being tested.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The ACT provides a variety of accommodations: large print test booklets, extended time, multiple-day testing, English learner support, and accommodations for additional physical disabilities. Most accommodations requests are submitted through the student's high school and are processed in 10-14 business days.

One of the most common accommodation requests is extended time. The standard extended time accommodation grants students time and a half (1.5x), receiving an additional 50% more time per section. The total testing time for extended time tests is five hours without the Essay section or six hours with Essay. If a student's IEP or extended time application supports more than time and a half, ACT does offer multiple-day testing (two-to-four days) administered at the school for up to triple time.

PERCENTILE RANKS

ACT score reports include percentile rankings in five categories—the composite score and one per section, including the essay. The percentiles are based on the performance of the previous class year, with the exception of the essay percentile, which is based on a combination of the performance of the previous three class years.

ACT Composite and Section Percentile Ranks					
SCORE	COMPOSITE	ENGLISH	MATH	READING	SCIENCE
36	100	100	100	100	100
35	99	99	99	98	99
34	99	96	99	97	98
33	98	94	98	95	97
32	96	92	97	92	96
31	95	91	96	89	95
30	93	89	94	86	94
29	90	88	93	84	92
28	88	86	91	82	90
27	85	84	88	80	88
26	82	82	84	77	85
25	79	79	79	75	82
24	75	75	74	71	78
23	71	71	70	66	71
22	66	66	66	62	64
21	61	61	61	55	58
20	55	55	58	50	51
19	49	49	54	45	46
18	45	45	49	39	39
17	41	41	43	34	33
16	35	37	34	29	26
15	29	31	21	24	19
14	22	25	11	19	14
13	16	19	4	14	11
12	10	15	1	9	7
11	4	11	1	5	4
10	1	7	1	2	2
9	1	3	1	1	1
8	1	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1

The SAT

The SAT is a standardized test that evaluates what students learn in high school and is an indicator of collegiate success. Specifically, the test is designed to measure a student's skill level in reading, writing, and math, both with and without a calculator. It is owned, developed, and published by the College Board and administered by the Educational Testing Service. Colleges and universities use it as one measure to determine admission to their campus, along with GPA, personal essays, teacher recommendations, class rank, and extracurricular activities. Scores can also strengthen scholarship applications and help secure merit-based financial aid.

TEST FORMAT & STRUCTURE

The SAT consists of two components plus an optional essay. The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing component is broken into two sections: 1) Reading and 2) Writing & Language. The Math component is broken into two sections: 1) No-Calculator and 2) Calculator. In total, there are 154 multiple-choice and student-produced response questions and one optional essay prompt. The essay is a previously published persuasive essay about which students write a rhetorical analysis.

Section	Time	Number of Questions	Content Covered
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	100 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 65 minutes Writing and Language: 35 minutes 	96 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 52 questions (4 single passages and 1 paired set) Writing and Language: 44 questions (4 passages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Command of Textual Evidence Understanding Relevant Words in Context Skills Application Standard English Conventions and Expression of Ideas
Math	80 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Calculator: 25 minutes Calculator: 55 minutes 	58 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Calculator: 15 multiple-choice questions, 5 student-produced responses Calculator: 30 multiple-choice questions, 8 student-produced responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart of Algebra Problem Solving and Data Analysis Passport to Advanced Math Additional Topics in Math
Essay (optional)	50 minutes	1 persuasive essay prompt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Comprehension Content and Structure Analysis Writing

TEST ADMINISTRATION

Currently, the SAT is a paper and pencil test. A calculator can be used for a portion of the Math section, but not the entire test. Students can register online or by mail for the location of their choosing. Students testing through state, district, or school testing may have a digital option, but national test dates only offer pencil and paper testing at this time.

SCORING

The two sections—Evidence-Based Reading & Writing and Math—are each graded on a scale from 200-800, making a perfect score 1600. Because there is no penalty for incorrect answers, students should guess even if it means filling in random answer choices.

Students who are not taking the Essay may also take an experimental section of the SAT after the final Math section. This section does not count towards a student's composite score but should still be taken seriously.

ESSAY SCORING

The Essay section on the SAT exam is optional, but many colleges require it. The essay is graded by two College Board graders. Each grader gives the writing sample a score from 1 to 4 in each of three dimensions (reading, analysis, and writing). These two scores are added together to create final essay scores in the three dimensions, each from 2 to 8. The essay score is reported separately from the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score and is not included in a student's composite score.

SCORE CHOICE

The College Board offers score choice for the SAT, which means that, should a student have taken the SAT more than once, that student can then choose to have only their best score be sent to colleges. Essay scores cannot be sent separately, however. If a student wishes to send a specific essay score to a college, they must also send the results of the multiple-choice portion of the same test.

Superscoring

The SAT allows superscoring. If a student takes the test multiple times, the best score from each section will be reported and compiled into the final composite score sent to schools that accept superscores. It is worth noting that some colleges will ask students to submit all their scores when applying and some may not accept superscores. The score reporting policy of each college is different, so students should learn about the policies at each of their schools of interest.



DATES & DEADLINES

SAT		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (fee required)
August 29, 2020	July 31, 2020	August 11, 2020 (mailed registrations) August 18, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
September 26, 2020*	August 26, 2020	September 15, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
October 3, 2020	September 4, 2020	September 15, 2020 (mailed registrations) September 22, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
November 7, 2020	October 7, 2020	October 21, 2020 (mailed registrations) October 27, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
December 5, 2020	November 5, 2020	November 17, 2020 (mailed registrations) November 24, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
March 13, 2021	February 12, 2021	February 23, 2021 (mailed registrations) March 2, 2021 (online/phone registrations)
May 8, 2021	April 8, 2021	April 20, 2021 (mailed registrations) April 27, 2021 (online/phone registrations)
June 5, 2021	May 6, 2021	May 18, 2021 (mailed registrations) May 26, 2020 (online/phone registrations)

*Subject Tests will not be offered for the September administration.



COST

The SAT costs \$52 without the Essay section or \$68 with the essay. If a student registers late, there is an additional \$30 fee to register. Students may apply for a fee waiver if they meet certain household income criteria. The waiver covers up to two SAT registrations and up to six SAT Subject Test registrations as well as any late fees.



ACCOMMODATIONS

The SAT provides a variety of accommodations: extended time, multiple-day testing, large print test booklets and large block answer sheets, computer-based testing, and accommodations for additional physical disabilities. Extended time is one of the most commonly requested accommodations. Qualified students may be approved to test with 50%, 100%, or 150% additional time to complete the exam either on the full test or on specific sections, including extra breaks.

It can take up to seven weeks for the College Board to approve accommodations requests, so students should start working with their school counselor early to submit their request. Once a student is granted accommodations on any College Board exam, students will have them for all future tests as well.

PERCENTILE RANKS

Each score report comes with two percentile ranks—Nationally Representative Sample Percentile and SAT User Percentile. These are not determined by the specific date a student took the test, but rather the overall performance of an earlier cohort. The Nationally Representative Sample Percentile is intended to represent all students, including those who wouldn't otherwise be taking the SAT, so it is slightly higher. The SAT User Percentile is based only on the performance of the previous graduating classes.

SAT USER PERCENTILES: TOTAL, EVIDENCE-BASED READING & WRITING, AND MATH

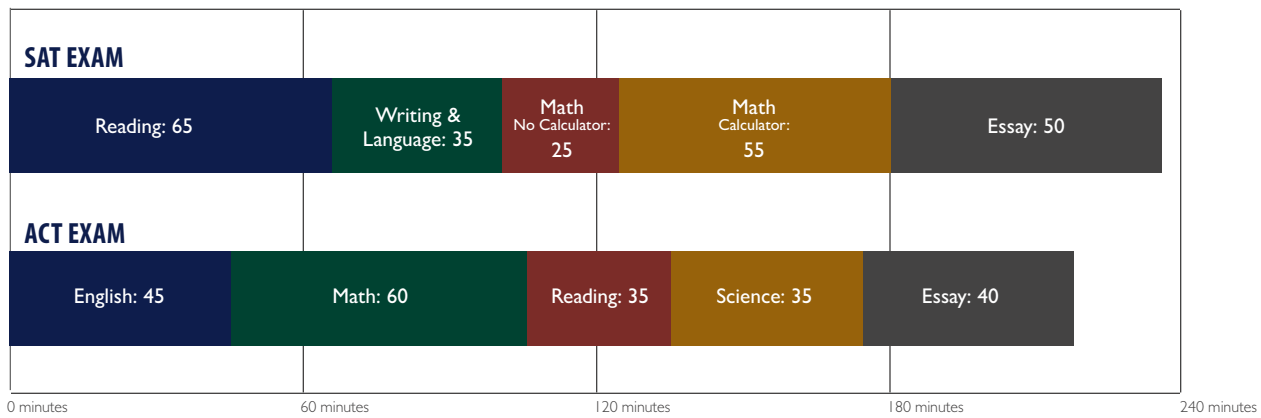
SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	ERW	MATH	SCORE	ERW	MATH
1600	99+	1200	74	800	10	800	99+	99+	500	39	41
1590	99+	1190	73	790	9	790	99+	99	490	36	38
1580	99+	1180	72	780	8	780	99+	98	480	32	35
1570	99+	1170	70	770	7	770	99	97	470	29	32
1560	99+	1160	68	760	6	760	99	97	460	26	29
1550	99+	1150	67	750	5	750	99	96	450	23	26
1540	99	1140	65	740	5	740	98	95	440	20	23
1530	99	1130	64	730	4	730	97	94	430	17	20
1520	99	1120	62	720	3	720	96	94	420	14	18
1510	99	1110	60	710	3	710	95	93	410	12	15
1500	98	1100	58	700	2	700	94	92	400	10	13
1490	98	1090	57	690	2	690	93	91	390	8	11
1480	98	1080	55	680	1	680	91	89	380	6	9
1470	97	1070	53	670	1	670	90	87	370	5	7
1460	97	1060	51	660	1	660	88	86	360	3	6
1450	96	1050	49	650	1	650	86	84	350	2	4
1440	96	1040	47	640	1	640	83	83	340	2	3
1430	96	1030	46	630	1-	630	81	81	330	1	2
1420	95	1020	44	620	1-	620	78	79	320	1	2
1410	95	1010	42	610	1-	610	75	77	310	1	1
1400	94	1000	40	600	1-	600	73	75	300	1-	1
1390	93	990	38	590	1-	590	69	72	290	1-	1
1380	93	980	36	580	1-	580	66	69	280	1-	1-
1370	92	970	35	570	1-	570	63	66	270	1-	1-
1360	91	960	33	560	1-	560	60	64	260	1-	1-
1350	91	950	31	550	1-	550	56	61	250	1-	1-
1340	90	940	30	540	1-	540	53	57	240	1-	1-
1330	89	930	28	530	1-	530	50	53	230	1-	1-
1320	88	920	27	520	1-	520	46	49	220	1-	1-
1310	87	910	25	510	1-	510	43	45	210	1-	1-
1300	86	900	23	500	1-	500			200	1-	1-
1290	85	890	22	490	1-						
1280	84	880	20	480	1-						
1270	83	870	19	470	1-						
1260	82	860	18	460	1-						
1250	81	850	16	450	1-						
1240	80	840	15	440	1-						
1230	78	830	14	430	1-						
1220	77	820	13	420	1-						
1210	76	810	11	410	1-						

Source: College Board, *Understanding Scores 2019*

ACT vs. SAT: The Student Experience

ORDER MATTERS

The order of the sections can have a significant impact on a student's stamina, mindset, and ability to concentrate and problem solve.



For example, does the student prefer to dive into the reading section immediately, like the SAT demands, or warm up to it as the third section, as the ACT presents its reading section? Is ending with math more favorable as the SAT presents its math section? Or would the student rather see math second and then move on to more reading-based sections? Is science a preferred or non-preferred subject? The ACT features a standalone science section, while the SAT does not. The ACT also features its science section last—how does that impact the student's test-taking mindset?

The subtle differences in order can have a major impact on student test-taking experience. Such considerations generate very important qualitative factors to account for when helping students decide whether to take the ACT or SAT.

ACT Reading vs. SAT Reading

One of the most profound differences between ACT reading and SAT reading is the time allowed. Though both tests have about 10 questions per passage, the SAT provides 13 minutes per reading passage, while the ACT allows 8 minutes and 45 seconds per passage. For student's who need the extra time to dive into a text, this difference can be considerable. On the other hand, SAT reading passages are more rigorous than ACT passages, sometimes measuring two grade levels above the text complexity of an ACT reading passage. SAT provides more time but more rigor, something that needs to be thought through by each student when deciding whether to take the ACT or SAT.

ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: READING		
	ACT	SAT
Passages	4 passages 800-900 words per passage 10 questions per passage	5 passages 500-750 words per passage 10-11 questions per passage
Total Questions	40 questions	52 questions
Testing Time	35 minutes total: 8 minutes, 45 seconds per passage 52.5 seconds per question	65 minutes total: 13 minutes per passage 1 minute, 15 seconds per question
Genre Order	Prose ↓ Social Sciences ↓ Humanities ↓ Natural Sciences	U.S. and World Literature ↓ History / Social Studies ↓ Science ↓ History / Social Studies ↓ Science <i>Note: the order of History / Social Studies and Science passages vary from test to test.</i>

ACT English vs. SAT Writing

The decision of whether to take the ACT or SAT is easier when it comes to comparing the differences between the ACT English and the SAT Writing & Language sections. While the section lengths vary, the content is quite similar. They each test English grammar and composition skills, focusing on a student's ability to revise and copyedit writing. A healthy dose of grammar review is needed to succeed on either section, but rarely does a student detect much difference between these two sections in terms of content and construct.

ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE		
	ACT	SAT
Passages	5 passages 15 questions per passage	4 passages 11 questions per passage
Total Questions	75 questions	44 questions
Testing Time	45 minutes total 9 minutes per passage 36 seconds per question	35 minutes total 8 minutes, 45 seconds per passage 47.7 seconds per question
Item Types	35 Rhetorical Skills 40 Usage and Mechanics	24 Expression of Ideas 20 Standard English Conventions

ACT Math vs. SAT Math

Time and rigor are once again profound differences between the ACT and SAT Math sections. The SAT allows 20 more minutes for two fewer questions, which is a significant difference in time per question. Like in the reading comparison, however, the SAT provides more time but also more rigor. The SAT Math section features more complex algebra and word problems than the ACT, and features sections with no-calculator and no multiple choice, while the ACT allows use of calculator for all 60 multiple-choice questions.

	ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: MATH	
	ACT	SAT
Total Questions	60 questions total	58 questions total: 20 questions without calculator 38 questions with calculator
Testing Time	60 minutes total (<i>1 minute per question</i>)	80 minutes total: No Calculator 25 minutes (<i>1 minute, 15 seconds per question</i>) Calculator 55 minutes (<i>1 minute, 7 seconds per question</i>)
Item Types	60 multiple choice questions	No Calculator 15 multiple choice questions 5 student produced responses Calculator 30 multiple choice questions 8 student produced responses
Content Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Higher Mathematics (34-36 questions total) • Number and Quantity (4-6 questions) • Algebra (7-9 questions) • Functions (7-9 questions) • Geometry (7-9 questions) • Statistics and Probability (5-7 questions) • Integrating Essential Skills (24-26 questions) • Modeling (at least 16 questions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra (19 questions) • Problem Solving & Data Analysis (17 questions) • Passport to Advanced Math (16 questions) • Additional Math Topics (6 questions)

ACT Science vs. SAT Science

The Science section provides the starkest difference between the exams. The ACT has a science section, which counts as $\frac{1}{4}$ of the student's composite score, while the SAT does not. The SAT features science-related questions across all of its subject areas; however, there is no standalone section. ACT Science is always the fourth and last multiple-choice section. If a student is strong in science, then having the standalone ACT Science section is favorable; if not, then the student may prefer the SAT instead.

ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: SCIENCE		
	ACT	SAT
Total Questions	40 questions total	35 questions contribute to the science cross-test score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 Reading questions • 6 Writing & Language questions • 8 Math questions
Testing Time	35 minutes total 52.5 seconds per question	N/A
Science Content Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science reading and reasoning skills • Analysis of charts and graphs • Analysis of data presentations and research summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science reading and reasoning skills • Analysis of charts and graphs • Analysis of rigorous texts on science-related topics

SAT Subject Tests

SAT Subject Tests (previously known as SAT IIs) are hour-long, content-based exams. They are designed to assess student knowledge and mastery of specific subject matter within the disciplines of English, history, mathematics, science, and a variety of languages. These tests help students gain admission to some of the more selective colleges and universities, place out of introductory-level college classes, and sometimes even grant college credits or satisfy subject or major-specific program requirements.

In the college admissions process, these tests allow students to differentiate themselves. Some of the more selective colleges require them for admission. Other colleges, though they do not require SAT Subject Test scores, recommend them and may use scores for placement in college courses.

COMMON SUBJECT OPTIONS

Mathematics

- Math Level 1
- Math Level 2

History

- U.S. History
- World History

Science

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

English

- Literature

Languages

- Chinese with Listening
- French or French with Listening
- German or German with Listening
- Spanish or Spanish with Listening
- Modern Hebrew
- Italian
- Latin
- Japanese with Listening
- Korean with Listening



TEST ADMINISTRATION

Each test is administered with paper and pencil, including the Listening portions of the Language tests. The two Mathematics tests allow the use of a calculator. All other subjects, including the sciences, do not allow students to use a calculator. Some tests may require you to bring additional equipment, such as a CD player for the Language with Listening tests.

On test dates that offer Subject Tests, students can take either the SAT or up to three SAT Subject Tests. The SAT and SAT Subject Tests cannot be taken on the same day. Subjects must be selected when registering for the tests. Test dates for 2020-2021 can be found on page 18.



SCORING

Each SAT Subject Test is scored on a scale of 200 to 800 points, with 800 being a perfect score. There is a fraction of a point penalty for each incorrect answer, so students should not guess unless they are able to eliminate some of the answer choices.



COST

Taking an SAT Subject Test has a \$26 basic registration fee plus an additional \$22 per test. Language with Listening tests are an additional \$26 rather than \$22 per test. As with the SAT, additional fees apply for late registrations. Eligible students can receive a fee waiver, which covers up to two SAT registrations and up to six SAT Subject Test registrations.

Overview: The PSAT, NMSQT, and PreACT

The PSAT and PreACT are preliminary versions of their respective tests (the SAT and the ACT). While neither test is used for college admissions, the PSAT and PreACT are much more than just practice tests. Success on one of these tests can be a mark of distinction, elevating the competitive candidacy of the student as well as providing the possibility of scholarship funding. Performance can also be a helpful guide for students in deciding a coursework plan, such as which AP courses to take. An effective PSAT or PreACT preparation course can help secure additional merit-based scholarship funding and lay the foundation for subsequent success on the SAT and ACT by uncovering a student's strengths and areas of improvement.

THE PSAT

The PSAT is a preliminary version of the SAT and is made up of a suite of scaffolded tests. The PSAT 8/9 is for 8th and 9th graders, and the PSAT 10 is for 10th graders. In the fall of 11th grade, the PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is taken to qualify students for National Merit Scholarships.



TEST FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

As with the SAT, the PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT (the same test, given at different grade levels) are made up of two components, with the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing component section broken into a Reading section and a Writing & Language section. Math is broken up into No Calculator and Calculator questions. In total, there are 139 multiple-choice and student-produced response questions.

SAT 10			
Section	Time	Number of Questions	Content Covered
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	95 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 60 minutes Writing and Language: 35 minutes 	91 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 47 multiple-choice questions Writing and Language: 44 multiple-choice questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Command of Textual Evidence Understanding Relevant Words in Context Skills Application Standard English Conventions and Expression of Ideas
Math	70 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Calculator: 25 minutes Calculator: 45 minutes 	48 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Calculator: 13 multiple-choice questions, 4 student-produced responses Calculator: 27 multiple-choice questions, 4 student-produced responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Solving and Data Analysis Heart of Algebra Passport to Advanced Math Additional Topics in Math



TEST ADMINISTRATION

The PSAT is a paper and pencil test administered through a student's school district, typically taken at their school. A calculator can be used for a portion of the Math section, but not the entire test. The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes across all sections, not including breaks.



SCORING

Each of the two sections for the PSAT 10 is scored between 160 to 760, for a possible score range of 320 to 1520. Because there is no penalty for incorrect answers, students should guess even if it means filling in random answer choices.

NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST (NMSQT)

The National Merit Scholarship was established in 1955 and identifies and honors academically talented U.S. high school students. The National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) is the PSAT that students take in the fall of 11th grade.

Commended Scholars

In late September of senior year, student test scores are measured on a nationally applied Selection Index, which varies from year to year. Of the 50,000 or so highest scores on the PSAT nationally, about 34,000 fall into the category of Commended Student. The remaining portion become semi-finalists.

Semi-Finalists

Semi-finalists are then required to fill out an application and take the SAT or the ACT by December of their senior year. Students that score well enough confirm their PSAT performance and become finalists. In February, approximately 8,200 seniors advance to the final stage of the competition and receive a certificate from school principals.

Finalists

Then, the ~8,200 finalists are awarded one of three Merit Scholarships based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments evaluated through the following factors:

- Academic record in the context of a school's curriculum and grading system
- Two sets of test scores—the PSAT and either the SAT or the ACT
- A school's official recommendation
- Information about extracurricular activities and leadership
- The finalist's personal essay

There are three types of Merit Scholarships a student could be awarded, and students will be notified that they have won between March and mid-June of their senior year.

- **National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship:** Every finalist competes for these single payment scholarships, which are awarded on a state representational basis
- **Corporate-Sponsored Merit Scholarship Award:** Corporate sponsors designate awards to finalists that are one or more of the following: 1) finalists with career plans the sponsor wishes to encourage, 2) children of employees or members, and/or 3) residents of a community where a company operates
- **College-Sponsored Merit Scholarship Award:** Officials of each college select winners of their awards from finalists that have been accepted and previously designated that college or university as their first choice; these awards are renewable for up to four years of undergraduate study

COST

The 2019-2020 PSAT registration fee was \$17, although some schools may charge an additional fee to offset some of their costs to administer the test. PSAT fee waivers are available, but only for a student's 11th grade test. If a student needs scholarship support, they should contact their college counselor or principal.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The College Board provides a variety of accommodations: extended time and multiple-day testing, large print test booklets and large block answer sheets, computer-based testing, and accommodations for additional physical disabilities. Once a student is granted accommodations on any College Board exam, they will have them for all future tests as well. It can take up to seven weeks for the College Board to approve accommodations requests, so students should start working with their college counselor early to submit their request.

THE PreACT

The PreACT 8/9 and PreACT 10 are shortened versions of the ACT that are intended to be predictors of a student's performance on the ACT. The test is a pencil and paper exam lasting 2 hours and 10 minutes. It is made up of the same four sections as the ACT:

- English: 30 minutes
- Math: 40 minutes
- Reading: 30 minutes
- Science: 30 minutes

Because the PreACT is slightly easier than the ACT, the PreACT has a high score of 35 rather than 36. Testing windows are determined by schools, so a student should talk with his or her college counselor to find out if the school is offering the PreACT.

Advanced Placement Exams

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams measure student mastery of the content taught in a specific AP course taught through high schools. The exams are administered during a two-week window in May, typically in paper-and-pencil form. In May and June of 2020, shortened AP exams were administered online for students to take at home due to COVID-19 school closures. The below information is about AP exams in their original form rather than the 2020 at-home version. It is unclear how the College Board will administer AP exams in the future.

There are currently over 30 AP exam options, although most high schools do not offer courses in every subject. AP courses enable students to pursue college-level coursework while still in high school, with the opportunity to earn college credit and/or be placed in advanced-level courses. Taking AP courses and the subsequent AP exams provides several benefits, including:

- **College Admissions Impact:** Taking AP courses shows college admissions officers that a student is challenging him or herself with the most rigorous high school classes available and can succeed as an undergraduate
- **Earn College Credits:** Most colleges and universities offer college credit for qualifying AP Exam scores. These college credits can allow students to save on tuition, secure a second major, or study abroad
- **Skip Introductory Classes:** Taking an AP course and earning a qualifying score on the AP Exam can allow a student to avoid required introductory courses. This can open up time on a student's schedule to undertake a second major or minor, take additional electives of interest, or pursue additional activities
- **Skill Building:** Taking rigorous AP courses helps students build the requisite skills to continue to excel at the college level



TEST FORMAT AND STRUCTURE

AP exams are usually two- to three-hour long paper and pencil tests administered through a student's high school as a part of an AP course. Most exams consist of two sections: multiple-choice and free-response. Free-response questions could be in the form of an essay, a handwritten solution to a problem, or even a spoken response.

Calculators are allowed for 10 of the exam options—Biology, all Calculus, Chemistry, Environmental Science, all Physics, and Statistics exams. Calculators are not allowed for any other exams, including Macro- and Microeconomics. Eight AP exams have a format that is different from the typical paper and pencil tests, including language, design, and capstone courses.

SCORING

AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. The score is calculated as a weighted combination of the multiple-choice and free-response scores. Some courses have additional assessments that are factored in, including AP Seminar, AP Research, AP Computer Science Principles, and three AP Art and Design courses.

Because there is no penalty for incorrect answers to multiple-choice items, students should guess even if it means filling in random answer choices.

Most colleges and universities factor in taking AP courses as a demonstration of academic strength. Whether a high AP exam score strengthens admission decisions depends on the school. More than 75% of admissions officers surveyed by the College Board have stated that a low score would not negatively impact an application.

Colleges and universities typically do not grant college credit for AP scores below a 4, though a score lower than a 4 may still impact course placement. It is important to check with specific schools of interest to understand how they consider AP scores.

COST

AP course costs, if any, are determined by high schools, but the exam fees are set by the College Board. Each exam is \$94, except for AP Seminar or AP Research exams, which are \$142 each.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students are eligible to request accommodations if they have a qualifying documented disability, an IEP or 504 Plan, or already receive accommodations from their school. Accommodations include extended time, large print test booklets and large block answer sheets, computer-based testing, and accommodations for additional physical disabilities. Requests go through the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office and can be submitted by the student or the student's counselor.

AT-HOME TESTING PROBLEMS - SPRING 2020

In spring 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College Board administered AP exams as 45-minute at-home online tests. This process came with a host of problems, including upload errors and technological glitches. In addition, it highlighted the inequities of at-home testing. Many students did not have access to a computer, reliable internet, or a quiet workspace. As a result, a class action lawsuit was filed against the College Board.



Part Two

Personalized Pathways of Learning

Choosing Which Test is Right for You



Personalized Pathways of Learning

An Overview: To ACT or SAT

Case Study: Student A

Case Study: Student B

Case Study: Student C

Decision-Making Guide

Personalized Pathways of Learning



While parents and educators can appreciate the fact that no two students are alike, it often seems like education is designed toward an average student. This makes it difficult to thoughtfully appeal to important variations in learning needs and styles, from student to student.

In his book *The End of Average*, Todd Rose, Director of The Mind, Brain, and Education Program at Harvard School of Education, shows that there is no such thing as average body size, average talent, average intelligence, or average character—or average brains, for that matter. And, worst of all, in designing for the average person, we design for no one.

We too have found that there are no average students. For example, two students may have the very same composite ACT or SAT score but can be tremendously diverse in their various areas of test-taking performance. Why does this matter?

If our job is to teach these two individuals, then each student’s respective learning profile matters.

TEST PERFORMANCE FACTORS

ACT: 26	English: 32	English: 20	ACT: 26
	Has a mastery of grammar rules & rhetorical skills; needs advanced study of diction & idioms	Needs basic review of sentence construction, punctuation, verbs, and pronouns	
	Math: 20	Math: 32	
	Needs to be re-taught geometry, ratios, percentages, functions, and statistics	Has a mastery of general topics; needs advanced study of discrete math	
	Reading: 32	Reading: 20	
	Reads with accuracy at a fast rate; performs well with all ACT reading genres	Reads at a rate that will not allow completion; challenged by science genre	
	Science: 20	Science: 32	
A non-preferred subject; data presentations are challenging	A preferred subject; data presentations are familiar and comfortable		

TESTS ARE STANDARDIZED. STUDENTS ARE NOT.

For the past 20 years, we’ve operated under this thinking: you cannot create a one-size-fits-all solution for students. At Academic Approach, we personalize our instructional plan based on the individual needs of each student. This philosophy shapes our approach to helping students choose between and prepare for the ACT or SAT.

In the following section, we’ll first lay out some broad advice on choosing between the tests and then drill down into how to make a truly personalized decision—one that involves both **quantitative** and **qualitative** data. We’ll walk through some case studies, and then end with some tools on how to facilitate the decision-making process.

An Overview: To ACT or SAT

Choosing between college entrance exams like the ACT or SAT can make us as indecisive as Hamlet, leaving us wondering what to do, what path to take, and whether 'tis nobler to ACT or not to ACT! To help students and families with their decision, we offer the following directional advice below.

READING COMPREHENSION: WHAT KIND OF DECISION-MAKER ARE YOU?



When reading, are you more like Rodin's Thinker—deliberate, calculating, and cautious in your decision making? Or do you prefer a bit more of a Looney Toon's Roadrunner approach, reading and reacting quickly based on initial impressions, interpretations, and judgments?

The SAT features passages with greater text complexity, so the reading requires a bit more thoughtful analysis. The SAT also grants you 43% more time per question, though, so you have increased time to thoroughly ponder the passages and questions.



If you prefer the extra time and enjoy diving into texts to arrive at your decisions and conclusions, then the SAT is for you. If you prefer to skim the surface and make quick decisions on first impressions, then the ACT is for you.

MATHEMATICAL REASONING: WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM SOLVER ARE YOU?



The ACT and SAT math sections cover similar material, but in different ways. The ACT requires a student have a stronger memory for geometry formulae, but also allows students use of a calculator through its 60 multiple-choice questions. The SAT, on the other hand, is a bit more demanding with thorough, algebraic problem solving. Unlike the ACT, it does not allow calculator-use for 20 of its 58 math questions, and of those 58 questions, 13 are student-produced responses with no multiple-choice answers.



In short, on the SAT, you have to do math the old-fashioned way: you earn it! So, if you're a problem solver who is comfortable working out and calculating your answers by hand, then the SAT is for you. If you find yourself more calculator dependent in arriving at your answers, the ACT may be your preferred path to math.

SCIENCE REASONING: DO YOU ENJOY A FULL SERVING OR APPETIZER PORTIONS?



While both the SAT and the ACT assess science through data presentations and analytical questions, the ACT features a standalone Science section, which is always the fourth section, after English, Math, and Reading. Comparatively, on the SAT, there are 35 science-related questions spread throughout the Reading, Writing & Language, and Math sections.



If you enjoy a healthy, full order of science (ending the test with science as your last section), then the ACT is for you. If you would prefer some assorted science appetizers, delivered as small courses throughout your exam, then you have an appetite for the SAT.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND ESSAY WRITING: APPLES TO APPLES



Your Hamlet-like dilemma, “To ACT or not to ACT,” is simplified when it comes to the English grammar and essay writing sections, which are largely the same—writing apples to writing apples.



Fortunately, the English section on the ACT and the Writing & Language section on the SAT are very similar. The content of the grammar on both exams targets usage & mechanics skills (e.g., sentence construction, punctuation) and rhetorical skills (e.g., essay composition principles and practices), so there is no avoiding a healthy and necessary assessment of your college readiness proofreading and copy editing skills.

As for essay writing, both essays on the respective exams are optional, unless specific schools of interest specific otherwise. These essays require argumentative writing, evidence-based reasoning, and a solid grasp of essay structure and logic. While the ACT will require a synthesis of multiple positions on a topic of controversy, the SAT will require analysis of a text. Either writing task requires a strong grasp of analytical writing, a valuable skill to acquire before heading off to college.



CONCLUSION

If you are still unsure which exam will best suit the strengths of your student, then the best course of action is our diagnostic exams. From this diagnostic test data, our directors can pinpoint a student’s individual strengths and weaknesses on overall sections of the test and on individual question types. This data, combined with their thorough knowledge of both the ACT and SAT, guides each director’s test recommendation. Please contact us to learn more about our complimentary diagnostic testing and expert consultations, so our directors can help you determine which test is best for your student.

Case Studies: Students A, B, and C

STUDENT A



STUDENT B

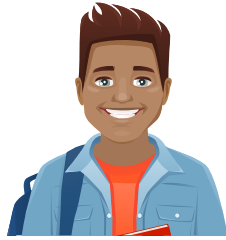


STUDENT C



While there are numerous things that differentiate the ACT and the SAT, there are just as many common elements between the two exams. It is natural that much of the conversation shifts to “how do I decide which exam to take?” A quantitative comparison along with some qualitative assessment can help students to decide between the ACT and SAT, allowing students to be active participants in the decision-making process. While there are almost unlimited combinations of how students can perform on the two exams, we have a few student journeys listed below as examples of how a student may feel about the exams. Please remember that these case studies are meant to provide guidance, but they are certainly not the only viewpoints that a student might have!

Case Study: Student A



DIAGNOSTIC SCORES

SAT	ACT
1260	31

SAT / ACT CONCORDANCE TABLE	
SAT Score (out of 1600)	ACT Composite Score (out of 36)
1570-1600	36
1530-1560	35
1490-1520	34
1450-1480	33
1420-1440	32
1390-1410	31
1360-1380	30
1330-1350	29
1300-1320	28
1260-1290	27
1230-1250	26
1200-1220	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1030-1050	20
990-1020	19
960-980	18
920-950	17

QUANTITATIVE: The ACT score is several rungs higher than the SAT score.

QUALITATIVE: During our meeting with the student, Student A concludes that they prefer the ACT because 1) ACT math has more geometry and SAT math has more algebra; 2) ACT reading passages felt easier than the SAT passages; and 3) the faster pace of the test is not a problem; in fact, Student A likes to read and reason quickly.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student A performed much better on the ACT diagnostic test and prefers the content and structure of the ACT, so Student A should focus on the ACT.

Case Study: Student B



DIAGNOSTIC SCORES

SAT	ACT
1150	23

SAT / ACT CONCORDANCE TABLE

SAT Score (out of 1600)	ACT Composite Score (out of 36)
1570-1600	36
1530-1560	35
1490-1520	34
1450-1480	33
1420-1440	32
1390-1410	31
1360-1380	30
1330-1350	29
1300-1320	28
1260-1290	27
1230-1250	26
1200-1220	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1030-1050	20
990-1020	19
960-980	18
920-950	17

ANALYSIS: Student B has comparable composite scores on the SAT and ACT.

But what story do the section scores tell?

SAT
EBRW*: 650
Math: 500



ACT
English: 26
Math: 26
Reading: 21
Science: 18

*Evidence-Based Reading & Writing

Case Study: Student B

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE



ACT ENGLISH

English

Section Score

26/36

Percentile 82nd

75 Questions | 62 Correct | 13 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Usage & Mechanics	39	32	7
Rhetorical Skills	36	30	6

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	D	✓	Redundancy
2	H	G	Sentence Construction
3	D	A	Sentence Construction
4	F	✓	Verbs
5	C	✓	Apostrophes
6	F	✓	Redundancy
7	B	D	Sentence Construction
8	G	✓	Inserting & Deleting
9	D	✓	Ordering
10	H	✓	Commas
11	B	✓	Transitional Terms
12	H	✓	Diction
13	A	✓	Commas
14	J	✓	Transitional Terms
15	A	C	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
16	J	✓	Redundancy
17	C	✓	Commas
18	J	H	Sentence Construction
19	C	✓	Verbs
20	G	✓	Sentence Construction
21	C	✓	Redundancy
22	F	✓	Inserting & Deleting
23	D	✓	Sentence Construction
24	F	✓	Commas
25	A	C	Inserting & Deleting
26	H	✓	Pronoun Case
27	B	✓	Commas
28	J	✓	Ordering
29	B	✓	Verbs
30	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
31	B	✓	Redundancy
32	J	✓	Redundancy
33	A	✓	Commas
34	G	✓	Transitional Terms
35	D	✓	Transitional Terms
36	F	H	Inserting & Deleting
37	C	✓	Commas
38	J	✓	Apostrophes
39	A	✓	Verbs
40	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
41	C	✓	Verbs
42	J	✓	Idiom
43	B	✓	Verbs
44	H	✓	Commas
45	C	A	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
46	F	H	Sentence Construction
47	B	✓	Commas
48	J	F	Inserting & Deleting
49	A	✓	Commas
50	G	✓	Inserting & Deleting
51	A	✓	Verbs
52	G	✓	Inserting & Deleting
53	B	✓	Sentence Construction
54	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
55	C	✓	Pronoun Agreement
56	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
57	B	✓	Inserting & Deleting
58	F	✓	Redundancy
59	C	✓	Verbs
60	H	✓	Scope

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
61	C	B	Sentence Construction
62	F	✓	Idiom
63	C	A	Sentence Construction
64	G	✓	Diction
65	A	✓	Pronoun Case
66	H	✓	Pronoun Agreement
67	D	✓	Redundancy
68	F	✓	Verbs
69	A	✓	Inserting & Deleting
70	J	✓	Verbs
71	D	✓	Diction
72	H	✓	Comparative Vs. Superlative
73	B	A	Inserting & Deleting
74	J	✓	Adjectives vs. Adverbs
75	B	✓	Commas

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Sentence Construction	10	3	7
Inserting & Deleting	16	10	6
Commas	11	11	0
Verbs	10	10	0
Redundancy	8	8	0



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B should focus on key editing skills related to inserting or deleting sentences in context as well as sentence construction—rules that relate to identifying and correcting fragments, run-ons, and misplaced modifiers. Like many students who do not always learn these rules in school, Student B has great potential for growth in his English skills.

Case Study: Student B

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE



SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE

Writing and Language

Section Score **650**/800

44 Questions | 35 Correct | 9 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Expression of Ideas	24	18	6
Standard English Conventions	20	17	3

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	B	✓	Verbs
2	D	✓	Diction
3	C	✓	Redundancy
4	C	B	Inserting & Deleting
5	C	B	Sentence Construction
6	A	✓	Verbs
7	B	✓	Inserting & Deleting
8	C	✓	Sentence Construction
9	D	✓	Transitional Terms
10	B	✓	Verbs
11	A	✓	Transitional Terms
12	D	C	Sentence Construction
13	A	✓	Redundancy
14	A	B	Sentence Construction
15	D	✓	Transitional Terms
16	A	✓	Idiom
17	C	✓	Commas
18	C	B	Inserting & Deleting
19	D	✓	Inserting & Deleting
20	C	✓	Ordering
21	C	✓	Sentence Construction
22	C	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
23	B	✓	Diction
24	B	✓	Apostrophes
25	B	✓	Commas
26	D	C	Inserting & Deleting
27	C	A	Pronoun Agreement
28	A	✓	Transitional Terms
29	B	✓	Commas
30	C	✓	Pronoun Agreement
31	D	✓	Ordering
32	B	✓	Sentence Construction
33	A	✓	Analyze Data
34	B	✓	Verbs
35	B	✓	Colons & Semicolons
36	A	✓	Colons & Semicolons
37	A	✓	Transitional Terms
38	D	✓	Commonly Confused Words
39	C	✓	Apostrophes
40	C	✓	Ordering
41	D	C	Inserting & Deleting
42	D	✓	Diction
43	B	✓	Idiom
44	D	C	Redundancy

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Inserting & Deleting	7	3	4
Sentence Construction	6	3	3
Redundancy	3	2	1
Pronoun Agreement	2	1	1
Transitional Terms	5	5	0



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

The SAT Writing & Language section prioritizes similar skills to the ACT English Section. Accuracy percentage is approximately the same.

Case Study: Student B

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT B ABOUT ENGLISH AND WRITING:

Have you learned much grammar in school?

Not really, we don't really talk about it in class. We do some group editing on papers, but that's it.



When do you think was the last time you focused on grammar in school?

A little last year, but the last time we really went through the rules was in middle school.



Well, then these scores make a lot of sense! If you haven't looked at the rules in some time, there is a lot that can be worked on in these sections. How do you feel about learning a range of the most relevant, useful grammar rules?

That could probably be helpful because I'm not really great at editing my papers at school.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student B must learn grammar for either test! Because these two sections are so similar in terms of content and skills covered, learning and building consistency with the content is going to be broadly applicable to both exams.

ACT vs. SAT = no winner

Case Study: Student B

ACT READING VS. SAT READING



ACT READING

Reading

Section Score

21/₃₆

Percentile 55th

40 Questions | 21 Correct | 19 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Specific	29	15	14
General	11	6	5

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
1	C	A	General	Prose
2	H	✓	General	Prose
3	A	C	Specific	Prose
4	G	✓	General	Prose
5	C	B	General	Prose
6	F	✓	Specific	Prose
7	D	C	Specific	Prose
8	G	✓	Specific	Prose
9	B	✓	Specific	Prose
10	F	✓	Specific	Prose

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
21	B	✓	General	Humanities
22	J	H	General	Humanities
23	D	✓	General	Humanities
24	H	F	Specific	Humanities
25	A	B	General	Humanities
26	G	✓	Specific	Humanities
27	A	✓	Specific	Humanities
28	J	✓	Specific	Humanities
29	C	✓	Specific	Humanities
30	J	✓	Specific	Humanities

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
11	B	A	Specific	Social Science
12	G	✓	Specific	Social Science
13	B	A	Specific	Social Science
14	J	✓	General	Social Science
15	A	B	Specific	Social Science
16	H	F	Specific	Social Science
17	A	✓	Specific	Social Science
18	F	✓	Specific	Social Science
19	D	✓	Specific	Social Science
20	G	✓	Specific	Social Science

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
31	B	✓	General	Natural Science
32	J	H	Specific	Natural Science
33	C	B	General	Natural Science
34	J	✓	Specific	Natural Science
35	A	C	Specific	Natural Science
36	H	F	Specific	Natural Science
37	B	A	Specific	Natural Science
38	H	F	Specific	Natural Science
39	D	C	Specific	Natural Science
40	G	F	Specific	Natural Science

Accuracy By Passage Type	
Prose	60.00
Social Science	60.00
Humanities	70.00
Natural Science	20.00



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B is relatively accurate with the first three passages but drops to 20% accuracy in the fourth passage, likely because Student B runs out of time.

Case Study: Student B

ACT READING VS. SAT READING



SAT READING

Reading

Section Score

650/800

52 Questions | 42 Correct | 10 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
General	28	22	6
Specific	24	20	4

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
1	1	A	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
2	1	B	✓	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
3	1	D	C	General	U.S. and World Literature
4	1	D	B	General	U.S. and World Literature
5	1	C	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
6	1	B	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
7	1	D	✓	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
8	1	A	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
9	1	B	✓	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
10	1	C	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
11	2	D	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
12	2	C	✓	General	History/Social Studies
13	2	A	D	Specific	History/Social Studies
14	2	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
15	2	D	✓	General	History/Social Studies
16	2	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
17	2	A	B	General	History/Social Studies
18	2	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
19	2	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
20	2	D	✓	General	History/Social Studies
21	2	B	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
22	3	A	✓	Specific	Science
23	3	B	✓	General	Science
24	3	C	✓	General	Science
25	3	C	✓	Specific	Science
26	3	A	✓	General	Science

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
27	3	A	C	Specific	Science
28	3	B	✓	General	Science
29	3	D	✓	Specific	Science
30	3	C	D	Specific	Science
31	3	C	✓	Specific	Science
32	4	B	A	General	History/Social Studies
33	4	B	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
34	4	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
35	4	D	✓	General	History/Social Studies
36	4	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
37	4	C	B	Specific	History/Social Studies
38	4	C	✓	General	History/Social Studies
39	4	D	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
40	4	B	A	General	History/Social Studies
41	4	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
42	5	D	✓	Specific	Science
43	5	A	✓	General	Science
44	5	C	✓	Specific	Science
45	5	C	✓	General	Science
46	5	D	✓	Specific	Science
47	5	A	✓	General	Science
48	5	C	B	General	Science
49	5	C	✓	Specific	Science
50	5	A	✓	Specific	Science
51	5	C	✓	General	Science
52	5	D	✓	General	Science

Accuracy By Passage Type	
U.S. and World Literature	80.00
History/Social Studies	76.19
Science	85.71



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B was able to complete the Reading section. The 43% extra time makes Student B feel that he can read at a more comfortable pace and be successful.

Case Study: Student B

ACT READING VS. SAT READING

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT B ABOUT READING:

How did you feel about the reading sections on the exams?

They seemed kind of similar.



That is a fair assessment in a lot of ways. Both reading sections are testing students on their evidence-based reading comprehension (reading passages and answering questions about what you have read).

Did one of the reading sections seem more comfortable to you?

I don't know. The ACT questions seemed a little easier than the SAT, but it was all a little bit of a blur.



It can certainly feel like a blur when you are going through these sections—especially when you don't have a plan going into the passages. In terms of difficulty, it makes sense that the SAT might feel a little denser. The passages are often more complex. How did you feel about the timing within each reading section?

I felt really rushed on the ACT. The questions didn't seem that difficult individually, but by the time I got to the third passage, I had to rush. I didn't get to read the last passage, so I was just guessing blindly.



How about the SAT? How did timing feel there?

Timing was fine. I am pretty sure I had a little time left over at the end.



Testing aside, would you consider yourself a faster or slower reader?

More slowly, because sometimes I need to re-read and take notes. I usually double check my answers a lot because I get nervous when I don't feel 100% confident that I haven't missed anything.



How do you feel about the primary source document with the foundational text—the old-fashioned text on the SAT?

It was hard, but we read stuff like that in US History all the time, so I'm used to it.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student B prefers SAT Reading. ACT vs. SAT = SAT wins! While the reading passages on the ACT and SAT are similar in many ways, the choice between the two exams will come down to the student's balance of accuracy and speed.

Case Study: Student B

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH



ACT MATH

Math

Section Score

26/36

Percentile 84th

60 Questions | 45 Correct | 5 Incorrect | 10 Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Plane Geometry & Trigonometry	18	9	9
Pre-Algebra & Elementary Algebra	28	24	4

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	D	✓	Manipulations
2	J	✓	Percents
3	D	✓	Polynomials
4	J	✓	Probability
5	B	✓	Ratios
6	F	✓	Manipulations
7	C	✓	Isosceles & Equilateral ...
8	H	G	Rectangles
9	D	✓	Function Basics
10	F	✓	Manipulations
11	A	✓	Function Basics
12	K	✓	Manipulations
13	B	✓	Ratios
14	F	✓	Manipulations
15	B	✓	Percents
16	J	H	Trapezoids
17	D	✓	Systems
18	H	✓	Function Basics
19	E	C	Combinatorics
20	H	✓	Inequalities

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
21	B	✓	Fractions
22	F	✓	Exponent Basics
23	C	B	Angle Relationships
24	G	✓	-
25	B	✓	Polynomials
26	G	✓	Pythagorean Theorem Basics
27	B	✓	Manipulations
28	H	✓	Graphs
29	C	✓	Progressions
30	H	✓	Special Right Triangles
31	D	✓	Manipulations
32	J	✓	Fractions
33	C	✓	Graphs
34	H	✓	Graphs
35	E	✓	Polynomials
36	G	✓	Ratios
37	D	✓	Distance Formula
38	F	✓	Ratios
39	E	✓	Trapezoids
40	J	✓	Factoring Integers

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
41	B	✓	Data Representation
42	F	✓	Manipulations
43	A	✓	SOHCAHTOA
44	F	H	Circle Ratios
45	A	✓	Exponent Complications
46	K	✓	Basic Sequences
47	B	✓	Circle Ratios
48	H	✓	Manipulations
49	E	✓	SOHCAHTOA
50	H	✓	Rectangles
51	E	⊗	Similar Triangles
52	K	⊗	Distance Formula
53	A	⊗	Parabolas
54	K	⊗	Manipulations
55	D	⊗	Angle Relationships
56	K	⊗	SOHCAHTOA
57	E	⊗	Data Representation
58	K	⊗	Data Representation
59	D	⊗	Radians & Degrees
60	G	⊗	Conics: Circles

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Data Representation	3	1	2
Angle Relationships	2	0	2
Manipulations	10	9	1
SOHCAHTOA	3	2	1
Trapezoids	2	1	1



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B is largely accurate with the easy to medium items but appears to guess randomly in the last ten questions, which are the hardest questions on the ACT math test. Also, Student B appears to find the geometry items challenging.

Case Study: Student B

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH



SAT MATH

Math

Section Score **500/800**

No Calculator

20 Questions | 9 Correct | 11 Incorrect | 0 Omit

Calculator

38 Questions | 16 Correct | 20 Incorrect | 2 Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Heart of Algebra	19	7	12
Passport to Advanced Math	16	6	10

Question	Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math No Calculator			
1	B	✓	Graphs
2	A	B	Circle Ratios
3	C	✓	Polynomials
4	B	D	Parabolas
5	D	C	Manipulations
6	B	✓	Polynomials
7	C	A	Inequalities
8	D	✓	Function Basics
9	C	B	Systems
10	B	✓	Manipulations
11	C	✓	Volume & Surface Area
12	D	B	Exponent Complications
13	B	✓	Function Basics
14	C	✓	Function Basics
15	A	B	Manipulations
16	4	✓	Inequalities
17	1	14	Manipulations
18	6	3	Systems
19	5	8	Manipulations
20	133	47	Triangle Angles

Question	Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math Calculator			
1	C	✓	Data Representation
2	B	A	Function Basics
3	D	✓	Ratios
4	A	✓	Manipulations
5	C	B	Ratios
6	B	✓	Systems
7	A	✓	Manipulations
8	B	C	Polynomials
9	A	✓	Ratios
10	D	A	Manipulations
11	D	✓	Graphs
12	B	C	Systems
13	D	A	Inequalities
14	B	✓	Probability
15	A	✓	Statistics
16	C	D	Data Representation
17	B	✓	Data Representation
18	B	✓	Data Representation
19	B	C	Special Right Triangles
20	D	A	Function Basics
21	A	B	Negative Numbers
22	C	✓	Statistics
23	C	D	Function Basics
24	C	D	Manipulations
25	D	A	Inequalities
26	C	D	Manipulations
27	B	✓	Statistics
28	D	A	Graphs
29	C	D	Conics: Circles
30	A	B	Parabolas

Question	Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math Calculator			
31	12.4	13.4	Ratios
32	1.65	✓	Ratios
33	15	56	Manipulations
34	2	✓	Graphs
35	12	✓	Manipulations
36	60	75	Isosceles & Equilateral ...
37	2	⊗	Data Representation
38	80	⊗	Data Representation

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Manipulations	12	4	8
Data Representation	6	3	3
Function Basics	3	0	3
Ratios	5	3	2
Inequalities	4	1	3

SAT Domains & Dimensions 2016	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Heart of Algebra	19	7	12
Passport to Advanced Math	16	6	10



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B struggled with the more advanced algebraic problems on the SAT, but did well on easier algebra. This shows a strong foundation for growth.

Case Study: Student B

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT B ABOUT MATH:

What math class are you in this year?

Algebra II



How are you liking it?

I am actually really enjoying it. My teacher is much better than my geometry teacher was last year!



I am glad to hear that you are liking Algebra II. A great teacher really can make a huge difference. What was it that you didn't like about geometry last year?

It was a little bit of everything. The material seemed a lot harder, but I also didn't really understand my teacher's explanations at the time.



How did the geometry feel on the diagnostic tests that you took?

It was pretty hard. A lot of it looked familiar, but I didn't really remember how to approach some of the questions.



What did you think of the SAT Math specifically? There is a lot larger focus on algebraic thinking compared to geometry. Did that feel a little more comfortable?

There were some questions that I don't think I have learned how to do yet, but it seemed to make more sense overall. I wasn't sure what to do with some of the grid-ins so I left them blank, but I did have some extra time.



It makes sense that some of the questions were unfamiliar since you still have a good amount of this school year left to learn new curriculum. That being said, you had great accuracy on what you have learned so far in Algebra II and seem to be trending well even with some of the more complex material on the SAT.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student B prefers SAT Math. ACT vs. SAT = SAT wins! While the ACT and the SAT cover the same general breadth of knowledge, the relative focus on geometry vs. algebra can make a real difference for students.

Case Study: Student B

ACT SCIENCE



ACT SCIENCE

Science

Section Score

18/36

Percentile 32nd

40 Questions | 16 Correct | 15 Incorrect | 9 Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Analyze Data	19	8	11
Understand Experiments	13	6	7

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
1	1	B	✓	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
2	1	H	F	Infer from Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
3	1	C	B	Infer from Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
4	1	F	✓	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
5	1	A	B	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
6	1	H	F	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
7	1	B	C	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
8	2	G	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
9	2	D	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
10	2	F	H	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
11	2	B	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
12	2	H	F	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
13	2	D	C	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
14	3	J	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
15	3	A	B	Infer from Data	Data Representation
16	3	J	✓	Identify Data	Data Representation
17	3	B	C	Infer from Data	Data Representation
18	3	H	F	Infer from Data	Data Representation
19	4	D	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
20	4	J	F	Analyze Data	Research Summaries

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
21	4	D	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
22	4	G	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
23	4	A	B	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
24	4	G	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
25	5	B	A	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
26	5	H	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
27	5	C	✓	Identify Data	Research Summaries
28	5	F	H	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
29	5	A	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
30	5	G	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
31	6	C	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
32	6	H	⊗	Understand Experiments	Data Representation
33	6	B	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation
34	6	J	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation
35	6	A	⊗	Infer from Data	Data Representation
36	7	G	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation
37	7	A	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation
38	7	J	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation
39	7	D	⊗	Understand Experiments	Data Representation
40	7	F	⊗	Analyze Data	Data Representation

Passage Format	Accuracy
Data Representation	20.00
Research Summaries	61.11
Conflicting Viewpoints	28.57

Question Type	Accuracy
Analyze Data	42.11
Understand Experiments	46.15
Infer from Data	0.00
Identify Data	100.00



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student B shows low accuracy throughout the Science section and appears to run out of time on the last 9 questions.

Case Study: Student B

ACT SCIENCE

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT B ABOUT SCIENCE:

How did you feel about the Science section?

It's not like science in school at all. My friends had told me that it would be different, but I was still surprised. There were a lot of graphs and I didn't really know what to read. I was also really tired at the end, so it was hard to focus on what I needed to do.



How did you feel about the timing on the section?

It was way too fast for me to finish. I don't think I could ever get the entire test finished.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student B prefers that the SAT has no science section. ACT vs. SAT = SAT wins!

ACADEMIC APPROACH SUMMARY

Student B has more growth potential on the SAT



Writing involves grammar rules that must be learned for either the ACT or the SAT.



SAT Reading provides the student with the time to read and reason accurately.



SAT Math, though more challenging for Student B than ACT Math, provides more time, has less geometry, and features a lot of algebra. Student B is currently studying algebra and feels more positive about it than geometry.



The SAT does not feature a science section. Instead of spending time attempting to master the content and the speed required to improve his ACT Science score, Student B can spend time learning grammar, math, and reading strategies that will help grow his SAT score and be valuable to Student B's academic success.

Case Study: Student C



DIAGNOSTIC SCORES

SAT	ACT
1330	29

SAT / ACT CONCORDANCE TABLE

SAT Score (out of 1600)	ACT Composite Score (out of 36)
1570-1600	36
1530-1560	35
1490-1520	34
1450-1480	33
1420-1440	32
1390-1410	31
1360-1380	30
1330-1350	29
1300-1320	28
1260-1290	27
1230-1250	26
1200-1220	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1030-1050	20
990-1020	19
960-980	18
920-950	17

ANALYSIS: Student C has comparable composite scores on the SAT and ACT.

But what story do the section scores tell?

SAT	
EBRW*:	670
Math:	660



ACT	
English:	34
Math:	29
Reading:	30
Science:	24

*Evidence-Based Reading & Writing

Case Study: Student C

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE



English

Section Score

34/36

Percentile 99th

75 Questions | 73 Correct | 2 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Rhetorical Skills	36	34	2
Usage & Mechanics	39	39	0

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	D	✓	Redundancy
2	H	✓	Sentence Construction
3	D	✓	Sentence Construction
4	F	✓	Verbs
5	C	✓	Apostrophes
6	F	✓	Redundancy
7	B	✓	Sentence Construction
8	G	F	Inserting & Deleting
9	D	✓	Ordering
10	H	✓	Commas
11	B	✓	Transitional Terms
12	H	✓	Diction
13	A	✓	Commas
14	J	✓	Transitional Terms
15	A	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
16	J	✓	Redundancy
17	C	✓	Commas
18	J	✓	Sentence Construction
19	C	✓	Verbs
20	G	✓	Sentence Construction
21	C	✓	Redundancy
22	F	✓	Inserting & Deleting
23	D	✓	Sentence Construction
24	F	✓	Commas
25	A	✓	Inserting & Deleting
26	H	✓	Pronoun Case
27	B	✓	Commas
28	J	✓	Ordering
29	B	✓	Verbs
30	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
31	B	✓	Redundancy
32	J	✓	Redundancy
33	A	✓	Commas
34	G	✓	Transitional Terms
35	D	✓	Transitional Terms
36	F	✓	Inserting & Deleting
37	C	✓	Commas
38	J	✓	Apostrophes
39	A	✓	Verbs
40	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
41	C	✓	Verbs
42	J	✓	Idiom
43	B	✓	Verbs
44	H	✓	Commas
45	C	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
46	F	✓	Sentence Construction
47	B	✓	Commas
48	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
49	A	✓	Commas
50	G	✓	Inserting & Deleting
51	A	✓	Verbs
52	G	✓	Inserting & Deleting
53	B	✓	Sentence Construction
54	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
55	C	✓	Pronoun Agreement
56	J	✓	Inserting & Deleting
57	B	✓	Inserting & Deleting
58	F	✓	Redundancy
59	C	✓	Verbs
60	H	✓	Scope

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
61	C	✓	Sentence Construction
62	F	✓	Idiom
63	C	✓	Sentence Construction
64	G	✓	Diction
65	A	✓	Pronoun Case
66	H	✓	Pronoun Agreement
67	D	✓	Redundancy
68	F	✓	Verbs
69	A	B	Inserting & Deleting
70	J	✓	Verbs
71	D	✓	Diction
72	H	✓	Comparative Vs. Superlative
73	B	✓	Inserting & Deleting
74	J	✓	Adjectives vs. Adverbs
75	B	✓	Commas

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Inserting & Deleting	16	14	2
Commas	11	11	0
Verbs	10	10	0
Sentence Construction	10	10	0
Redundancy	8	8	0



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C's ACT English score report reveals great strengths with some opportunity for growth in questions that involve inserting and deleting.

Case Study: Student C

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE



SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE

Writing and Language

Section Score **670/800**

44 Questions | 35 Correct | 9 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Expression of Ideas	24	16	8
Standard English Conventions	20	19	1

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	B	✓	Verbs
2	D	✓	Diction
3	C	B	Redundancy
4	C	✓	Inserting & Deleting
5	C	✓	Sentence Construction
6	A	✓	Verbs
7	B	✓	Inserting & Deleting
8	C	✓	Sentence Construction
9	D	✓	Transitional Terms
10	B	✓	Verbs
11	A	C	Transitional Terms
12	D	✓	Sentence Construction
13	A	✓	Redundancy
14	A	✓	Sentence Construction
15	D	✓	Transitional Terms
16	A	✓	Idiom
17	C	✓	Commas
18	C	D	Inserting & Deleting
19	D	C	Inserting & Deleting
20	C	✓	Ordering
21	C	✓	Sentence Construction
22	C	✓	Inserting & Deleting

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
23	B	✓	Diction
24	B	✓	Apostrophes
25	B	A	Commas
26	D	C	Inserting & Deleting
27	C	✓	Pronoun Agreement
28	A	✓	Transitional Terms
29	B	✓	Commas
30	C	✓	Pronoun Agreement
31	D	C	Ordering
32	B	✓	Sentence Construction
33	A	✓	Analyze Data
34	B	✓	Verbs
35	B	✓	Colons & Semicolons
36	A	✓	Colons & Semicolons
37	A	✓	Transitional Terms
38	D	✓	Commonly Confused Words
39	C	✓	Apostrophes
40	C	✓	Ordering
41	D	B	Inserting & Deleting
42	D	✓	Diction
43	B	✓	Idiom
44	D	C	Redundancy

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Inserting & Deleting	7	3	4
Redundancy	3	1	2
Transitional Terms	5	4	1
Commas	3	2	1
Ordering	3	2	1



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C shows strength in this section, but has more difficulty with editing questions that require students to assess what should be inserted or deleted from the passage.

Case Study: Student C

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING & LANGUAGE

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT C ABOUT ENGLISH AND WRITING & LANGUAGE:

How did you feel about the English and Writing & Language Skills sections?

They felt pretty similar overall. I feel pretty solid in grammar.



Yes, that shows! You did very well in the grammar areas. How did you feel about the questions that were more focused on editing? Some of those questions were about what would happen if you add or remove a component of the passage.

They were okay for the most part, but some of them were hard to narrow down. All of the answers seemed like they could work.



That can happen when you don't have a framework on how to evaluate the answers. There is always going to be only one right answer, but it doesn't feel quite as black and white as grammar rules when you start out. Did you notice that on both tests?

A bit, but I felt like I got more tripped up on the SAT.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student C is more intuitive at ACT English than SAT Writing & Language. While the content is very similar, the student has a preference for and better performance on the ACT. ACT vs. SAT = ACT wins! We would still recommend a brief review of key concepts so that the student can maintain consistency, but this is a more clear-cut choice.

Case Study: Student C

ACT READING VS. SAT READING



ACT READING

Reading

Section Score

30/₃₆

Percentile 90th

40 Questions | 33 Correct | 7 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Specific	29	23	6
General	11	10	1

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
1	C	B	General	Prose
2	H	✓	General	Prose
3	A	✓	Specific	Prose
4	G	✓	General	Prose
5	C	✓	General	Prose
6	F	✓	Specific	Prose
7	D	C	Specific	Prose
8	G	✓	Specific	Prose
9	B	✓	Specific	Prose
10	F	✓	Specific	Prose

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
21	B	✓	General	Humanities
22	J	✓	General	Humanities
23	D	✓	General	Humanities
24	H	✓	Specific	Humanities
25	A	✓	General	Humanities
26	G	✓	Specific	Humanities
27	A	B	Specific	Humanities
28	J	✓	Specific	Humanities
29	C	D	Specific	Humanities
30	J	✓	Specific	Humanities

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
11	B	✓	Specific	Social Science
12	G	✓	Specific	Social Science
13	B	C	Specific	Social Science
14	J	✓	General	Social Science
15	A	B	Specific	Social Science
16	H	✓	Specific	Social Science
17	A	✓	Specific	Social Science
18	F	✓	Specific	Social Science
19	D	✓	Specific	Social Science
20	G	✓	Specific	Social Science

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Standard	Type
31	B	✓	General	Natural Science
32	J	✓	Specific	Natural Science
33	C	✓	General	Natural Science
34	J	✓	Specific	Natural Science
35	A	✓	Specific	Natural Science
36	H	✓	Specific	Natural Science
37	B	C	Specific	Natural Science
38	H	✓	Specific	Natural Science
39	D	✓	Specific	Natural Science
40	G	✓	Specific	Natural Science

Accuracy By Passage Type	
Prose	80.00
Social Science	80.00
Humanities	80.00
Natural Science	90.00



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C is accurate in all four passages, without showing a significant challenge with the fast pace of ACT reading.

Case Study: Student C

ACT READING VS. SAT READING



SAT READING

Reading

Section Score

670/800

52 Questions | 45 Correct | 7 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
General	28	23	5
Specific	24	22	2

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Lesson Type
1	1	A	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
2	1	B	✓	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
3	1	D	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
4	1	D	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
5	1	C	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
6	1	B	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
7	1	D	B	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
8	1	A	D	General	U.S. and World Literature
9	1	B	✓	Specific	U.S. and World Literature
10	1	C	✓	General	U.S. and World Literature
11	2	D	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
12	2	C	✓	General	History/Social Studies
13	2	A	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
14	2	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
15	2	D	B	General	History/Social Studies
16	2	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
17	2	A	✓	General	History/Social Studies
18	2	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
19	2	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
20	2	D	✓	General	History/Social Studies
21	2	B	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
22	3	A	✓	Specific	Science
23	3	B	C	General	Science
24	3	C	✓	General	Science
25	3	C	✓	Specific	Science
26	3	A	✓	General	Science

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Lesson Type
27	3	A	✓	Specific	Science
28	3	B	✓	General	Science
29	3	D	✓	Specific	Science
30	3	C	✓	Specific	Science
31	3	C	A	Specific	Science
32	4	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
33	4	B	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
34	4	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
35	4	D	✓	General	History/Social Studies
36	4	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
37	4	C	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
38	4	C	✓	General	History/Social Studies
39	4	D	✓	Specific	History/Social Studies
40	4	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
41	4	B	✓	General	History/Social Studies
42	5	D	✓	Specific	Science
43	5	A	✓	General	Science
44	5	C	✓	Specific	Science
45	5	C	D	General	Science
46	5	D	✓	Specific	Science
47	5	A	B	General	Science
48	5	C	✓	General	Science
49	5	C	✓	Specific	Science
50	5	A	✓	Specific	Science
51	5	C	✓	General	Science
52	5	D	✓	General	Science

Accuracy By Passage Type	
U.S. and World Literature	80.00
History/Social Studies	95.24
Science	80.95



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C is largely accurate with SAT reading, which is comparable to ACT reading.

Case Study: Student C

ACT READING VS. SAT READING

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT C ABOUT READING:

How did you feel about the reading on both tests?

I don't really love the SAT reading section. The section felt long, especially to start the test. I was really tired after the first section.



How did you feel about the difficulty of the passages?

ACT reading was much easier! SAT was okay, but the passages felt really dense to me.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student C prefers ACT Reading. ACT vs. SAT = ACT wins! When timing is not a factor for students, they often find the reading passages on the ACT to be more direct and approachable.

Case Study: Student C

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH



ACT MATH

Math

Section Score

29/36

Percentile 93rd

60 Questions | 52 Correct | 8 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Plane Geometry & Trigonometry	18	14	4
Pre-Algebra & Elementary Algebra	28	25	3

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
1	D	✓	Manipulations
2	J	✓	Percents
3	D	✓	Polynomials
4	J	✓	Probability
5	B	✓	Ratios
6	F	✓	Manipulations
7	C	✓	Isosceles & Equilateral ...
8	H	✓	Rectangles
9	D	✓	Function Basics
10	F	✓	Manipulations
11	A	✓	Function Basics
12	K	✓	Manipulations
13	B	✓	Ratios
14	F	✓	Manipulations
15	B	✓	Percents
16	J	H	Trapezoids
17	D	✓	Systems
18	H	✓	Function Basics
19	E	✓	Combinatorics
20	H	✓	Inequalities

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
21	B	✓	Fractions
22	F	✓	Exponent Basics
23	C	✓	Angle Relationships
24	G	✓	-
25	B	✓	Polynomials
26	G	✓	Pythagorean Theorem Basics
27	B	✓	Manipulations
28	H	K	Graphs
29	C	✓	Progressions
30	H	✓	Special Right Triangles
31	D	✓	Manipulations
32	J	✓	Fractions
33	C	✓	Graphs
34	H	✓	Graphs
35	E	✓	Polynomials
36	G	✓	Ratios
37	D	✓	Distance Formula
38	F	✓	Ratios
39	E	A	Trapezoids
40	J	K	Factoring Integers

Question	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
41	B	✓	Data Representation
42	F	✓	Manipulations
43	A	D	SOHCAHTOA
44	F	✓	Circle Ratios
45	A	✓	Exponent Complications
46	K	✓	Basic Sequences
47	B	✓	Circle Ratios
48	H	✓	Manipulations
49	E	✓	SOHCAHTOA
50	H	✓	Rectangles
51	E	✓	Similar Triangles
52	K	J	Distance Formula
53	A	✓	Parabolas
54	K	✓	Manipulations
55	D	✓	Angle Relationships
56	K	✓	SOHCAHTOA
57	E	A	Data Representation
58	K	H	Data Representation
59	D	✓	Radians & Degrees
60	G	✓	Conics: Circles

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Data Representation	3	1	2
Trapezoids	2	0	2
Graphs	3	2	1
SOHCAHTOA	3	2	1
Distance Formula	2	1	1



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C has a strong percentage accuracy on the section as a whole, does not appear to struggle with timing significantly, and appears, in large part, to answer the geometry questions accurately.

Case Study: Student C

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH



SAT MATH

Math

Section Score

660/800

No Calculator

20 Questions | 16 Correct | 4 Incorrect | 0 Omit

Calculator

38 Questions | 29 Correct | 9 Incorrect | 0 Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Passport to Advanced Math	16	9	7
Heart of Algebra	19	14	5

Correct Your Question Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math No Calculator		
1	B	✓ Graphs
2	A	✓ Circle Ratios
3	C	✓ Polynomials
4	B	✓ Parabolas
5	D	✓ Manipulations
6	B	✓ Polynomials
7	C	✓ Inequalities
8	D	✓ Function Basics
9	C	✓ Systems
10	B	✗ Manipulations
11	C	✓ Volume & Surface Area
12	D	✓ Exponent Complications
13	B	✓ Function Basics
14	C	✗ Function Basics
15	A	✗ Manipulations
16	4	✓ Inequalities
17	1	✓ Manipulations
18	6	✓ Systems
19	5	✗ Manipulations
20	133	✓ Triangle Angles

Correct Your Question Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math Calculator		
1	C	✓ Data Representation
2	B	✓ Function Basics
3	D	✓ Ratios
4	A	✓ Manipulations
5	C	✓ Ratios
6	B	✓ Systems
7	A	✓ Manipulations
8	B	✗ Polynomials
9	A	✓ Ratios
10	D	✓ Manipulations
11	D	✓ Graphs
12	B	✓ Systems
13	D	✗ Inequalities
14	B	✓ Probability
15	A	✓ Statistics
16	C	✓ Data Representation
17	B	✓ Data Representation
18	B	✓ Data Representation
19	B	✓ Special Right Triangles
20	D	✓ Function Basics
21	A	✓ Negative Numbers
22	C	✓ Statistics
23	C	✗ Function Basics
24	C	✓ Manipulations
25	D	✗ Inequalities
26	C	✗ Manipulations
27	B	✓ Statistics
28	D	✓ Graphs
29	C	✗ Conics: Circles
30	A	✗ Parabolas

Correct Your Question Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family
Math Calculator		
31	12.4	✓ Ratios
32	1.65	✓ Ratios
33	15	✗ Manipulations
34	2	✓ Graphs
35	12	✗ Manipulations
36	60	✓ Isosceles & Equilateral ...
37	2	✓ Data Representation
38	80	✓ Data Representation

Prioritized Lessons	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Manipulations	12	6	6
Inequalities	4	2	2
Function Basics	6	4	2
Conics: Circles	1	0	1
Polynomials	3	2	1



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

Student C has a lower percentage accuracy on the SAT and appears to struggle with the more complex algebraic problems.

Case Study: Student C

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT C ABOUT MATH:

How did you feel about the math?

It is my favorite subject. I really want to go into STEM.



Looking at your results, math is clearly a strength for you overall. How did you feel about math on the ACT and the SAT?

The math felt pretty good on both tests.



Did one test feel more comfortable than the other?

Maybe the ACT a little more. I did not love the grid-ins on the SAT. The questions were okay, but I kept worrying that I was making silly mistakes. I definitely prefer to use my calculator!



Looking at the data, you were a little more accurate on the ACT. As a strong math student, you will likely excel on both tests, but the ACT should allow you to maximize your score.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student B prefers ACT Math. ACT vs. SAT = ACT wins!

Case Study: Student C

ACT SCIENCE



ACT SCIENCE

Science

Section Score

24/36

Percentile 77th

40 Questions | 28 Correct | 12 Incorrect | - Omit

High Impact Skills

Skill	Total Questions	Question Correct	Improvement Available
Infer from Data	6	1	5
Analyze Data	19	15	4

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
1	1	B	✓	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
2	1	H	G	Infer from Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
3	1	C	B	Infer from Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
4	1	F	✓	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
5	1	A	C	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
6	1	H	✓	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
7	1	B	A	Analyze Data	Conflicting Viewpoints
8	2	G	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
9	2	D	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
10	2	F	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
11	2	B	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
12	2	H	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
13	2	D	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
14	3	J	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
15	3	A	B	Infer from Data	Data Representation
16	3	J	✓	Identify Data	Data Representation
17	3	B	✓	Infer from Data	Data Representation
18	3	H	F	Infer from Data	Data Representation
19	4	D	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
20	4	J	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries

Question	Passage	Correct Answer	Your Answer	Lesson Family	Type
21	4	D	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
22	4	G	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
23	4	A	D	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
24	4	G	F	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
25	5	B	C	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
26	5	H	✓	Analyze Data	Research Summaries
27	5	C	A	Identify Data	Research Summaries
28	5	F	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
29	5	A	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
30	5	G	✓	Understand Experiments	Research Summaries
31	6	C	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
32	6	H	✓	Understand Experiments	Data Representation
33	6	B	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
34	6	J	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
35	6	A	B	Infer from Data	Data Representation
36	7	G	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
37	7	A	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
38	7	J	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation
39	7	D	C	Understand Experiments	Data Representation
40	7	F	✓	Analyze Data	Data Representation

Accuracy By Passage Format	
Data Representation	73.33
Research Summaries	77.78
Conflicting Viewpoints	42.86

Accuracy By Question Type	
Infer from Data	16.67
Analyze Data	78.95
Understand Experiments	84.62
Identify Data	50.00



ACADEMIC APPROACH INSIGHT

While Student C's Science section is her lowest score, her overall performance on this section shows that she managed time reasonably well and needs strategies for the Conflicting Viewpoints passage and how to approach inference questions.

Case Study: Student C

ACT SCIENCE

KEY QUESTIONS TO STUDENT C ABOUT SCIENCE:

How did you feel about the ACT Science section?

It wasn't bad. I like science in school, so some of the passages were a little interesting.



Have you done much data analysis with your classes?

A little bit with experiments, but not a ton. Usually we are focusing more on a specific topic. Sometimes we have data mixed in but not always. The ACT was a little different than I expected. It didn't seem like you actually needed to know the science.



That's a good point. The ACT Science section is all about data interpretation and analysis. While the passages may cover things that you have learned in school, they don't expect you to have all of the background knowledge. The ACT will give you all of the information that you need; they just want to make sure that you know how to assess all of the pieces.

I feel like it makes sense. It feels like something that I could get better at with practice.



ACADEMIC APPROACH RECOMMENDATION

Student C prefers ACT Science. ACT vs. SAT = ACT wins! Since Student C plans to have a STEM career, demonstrating strong performance on the Science section may be a compelling piece of her college application.

ACADEMIC APPROACH SUMMARY

Student C has more growth potential on the ACT



Writing involves grammar rules that must be learned for either the ACT or SAT; however, Student C finds the ACT English section more intuitive.



ACT Reading does not present a time challenge for Student C, and she finds the passages more accessible.



Student C has a strong percentage accuracy on the Math section as a whole, does not appear to struggle with timing significantly, and appears to answer the geometry questions in large part accurately. Student C has a lower percentage accuracy on the SAT and appears to struggle with the more complex algebraic problems.



While Student C's ACT Science section score is her lowest, her overall performance on the section shows that she managed time reasonably well and needs strategies for the Conflicting Viewpoints passage and how to approach inference questions.

A Decision-Making Guide

The students above give us some examples of how a balanced decision between quantitative and qualitative data can lead to a choice: whether to take the ACT or the SAT. Some of the key questions—not all of them—can be broken down into the following decision-making guide:

Subject	Question	Answer	ACT or SAT	
Grammar	Which score is higher?		ACT	SAT
Grammar	Which test did you prefer?		ACT	SAT
Grammar	What skills need to be learned or relearned?		ACT	SAT
Reading	Which score is higher?		ACT	SAT
Reading	What was the effect of timing on the Reading sections of each test?		ACT	SAT
Reading	Which style of passages & questions do you prefer?		ACT	SAT
Reading	What length do you prefer—65 vs. 35 minutes?		ACT	SAT
Reading	What order do you prefer—1st section vs. 3rd section?		ACT	SAT
Math	Which score is higher?		ACT	SAT
Math	Which format did you prefer? How do you feel about Grid-Ins and the No Calculator Section?		ACT	SAT
Math	What was the effect of timing on the Math sections of each test?		ACT	SAT
Math	What are you studying in school and what types of math do you prefer?		ACT	SAT
Math	Based on what you're studying in class, where are the growth opportunities?		ACT	SAT
Science	How does your ACT Science score compare to your other ACT section scores? Is it raising or lowering your composite score?		ACT	SAT
Science	How do you feel about the material?		ACT	SAT
Science	Did you feel rushed during the standalone ACT Science section?		ACT	SAT
Total points			ACT:	SAT:
Winner				



Conclusion



Test Taking Strategies

Conclusion

Locations & Contact Information

Test-Taking Strategies

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- Relax and try to do something fun; your brain needs time to rest too
- Do not cram; you're probably more prepared than you think you are, so save your energy for the test itself
- Gather everything you'll need to bring; look up directions and travel times
- Go to bed early; sleep helps you retain knowledge and ensures your mind will be sharp during the test

ON TEST DAY

- Get up early enough to have a good breakfast and be alert
- Consider dressing in layers since you don't know how warm the room will be
- Get to the test site early and make sure you know where the restroom is
- Bring all required materials:
 - » Your admission ticket
 - » A photo ID
 - » Sharpened pencils (at least two) and an eraser
 - » An approved calculator (and maybe some extra batteries just in case)
 - » An acceptable watch
 - » Water and a snack for the break
- Leave your cell phone at home; you cannot use it during the test or during breaks; if you need it to get to the test site or for after the test, remember that it must be turned completely OFF, not on silent or vibrate, and not in "airplane" or "do not disturb" mode
- Be prepared to follow any procedure your site may have in place for COVID-19 testing

DURING THE TEST

Be an active test-taker:

- Make notes about your essay before writing
- Underline the main idea while reading passages
- Write down your work in math
- Draw on geometry diagrams or draw your own
- Cross out answers as you eliminate them

Know what to do when you don't know the answer:

- Narrow down the options by eliminating answer choices you know are incorrect
- Answer every question, even if you have to guess

Use your time wisely:

- Have a regular watch (not a smartwatch or a watch that makes noise) to keep track of time
- Know the pace you need to take to get through each section
- Leave hard questions until last, but be sure you get to every question you know
- If you have extra time, return to any questions you skipped

Work Carefully

- Read the directions!
- Check your work in math
- If you skip questions, be sure you skip on the answer sheet too. Periodically check to confirm that your question number matches the answer number on your bubble sheet.

Conclusion

For over 20 years, I've taken great pride in collaborating with families, college counselors, learning psychologists, and other education professionals in helping create highly personalized learning programs for students, especially when navigating college admissions testing. While developing Academic Approach over the years, I've always continued teaching students directly, learning from their experiences, developing my teaching strategies, and measuring my impact.

While it's very easy to become cynical about standardized testing—and there are a myriad of legitimate reasons for criticism—I've always focused on the learning opportunities they present. When designing standardized testing solutions for students, can we find those learning opportunities? Can we help raise scores while also helping students...

- find the better test—ACT or SAT—from the outset, promoting that student's ability to self-reflect, self-assess, and set efficient, independent learning goals?
- become more self-aware of how they read and reason, developing critical reading and critical reasoning skills that transfer to all their academic work?
- become more strategic problem-solvers in math, flexible and resilient in the face of unfamiliar problems, confident in their ability to attempt multiple approaches to problem solving? Can that flexibility and resilience inform their future approach to all novel problem-solving situations?
- master English grammar skills, graduating students who can clearly explain the difference between a semicolon and a colon, “who” vs. “whom,” and proofread and copy edit their own work independently in their high school and college classroom, students who one day send application essays and cover letters flawless in their grammar?

If we take a long view of each student's educational journey, and we see the ACT vs. SAT as a rite of passage in this journey, can we leverage the moment as a learning opportunity that has long-lasting, positive value for the student's growth both on and beyond the test? That question has driven and continues to drive me.

I hope the materials we've provided here help us to take a broader view of the ACT vs. SAT moment and contextualize it as a learning opportunity for students as well as a collaboration opportunity for families, students, and educational professionals who want to see our students succeed.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Dates & Deadlines

Appendix 2: Section Side-by-Side Comparison

Appendix 3: Concordance Tables

Appendix 4: Printable Test Table Summaries

Appendix 1: Dates and Deadlines

ACT		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration
September 12, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
September 13, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
September 19, 2020	August 14	August 15 – 28
October 10, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 17, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 24, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
October 25, 2020	September 17	September 18 – 25
December 12, 2020	November 6	November 7 – 20
February 6, 2021	January 8	January 9 – 15
April 17, 2021	March 12	March 13 – 26
June 12, 2021	May 7	May 8 – 21
July 17, 2021*	June 18	June 19 – 25

SAT		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration (fee required)
August 29, 2020	July 31, 2020	August 11, 2020 (mailed registrations) August 18, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
September 26, 2020*	August 26, 2020	September 15, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
October 3, 2020	September 4, 2020	September 15, 2020 (mailed registrations) September 22, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
November 7, 2020	October 7, 2020	October 21, 2020 (mailed registrations) October 27, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
December 5, 2020	November 5, 2020	November 17, 2020 (mailed registrations) November 24, 2020 (online/phone registrations)
March 13, 2021	February 12, 2021	February 23, 2021 (mailed registrations) March 2, 2021 (online/phone registrations)
May 8, 2021	April 8, 2021	April 20, 2021 (mailed registrations) April 27, 2021 (online/phone registrations)
June 5, 2021	May 6, 2021	May 18, 2021 (mailed registrations) May 26, 2020 (online/phone registrations)

Appendix 2: Section by Section Comparison

ACT READING VS. SAT READING

	ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: READING	
	ACT	SAT
Passages	4 passages 800-900 words per passage 10 questions per passage	5 passages 500-750 words per passage 10-11 questions per passage
Total Questions	40 questions	52 questions
Testing Time	35 minutes total: 8 minutes, 45 seconds per passage 52.5 seconds per question	65 minutes total: 13 minutes per passage 1 minute, 15 seconds per question
Genre Order	Prose ↓ Social Sciences ↓ Humanities ↓ Natural Sciences	U.S. and World Literature ↓ History / Social Studies ↓ Science ↓ History / Social Studies ↓ Science <i>Note: the order of History / Social Studies, and Science passages vary from test to test.</i>

ACT ENGLISH VS. SAT WRITING

	ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: WRITING & LANGUAGE	
	ACT	SAT
Passages	5 passages 15 questions per passage	4 passages 11 questions per passage
Total Questions	75 questions	44 questions
Testing Time	45 minutes total 9 minutes per passage 36 seconds per question	35 minutes total 8 minutes, 45 seconds per passage 47.7 seconds per question
Item Types	35 Rhetorical Skills 40 Usage and Mechanics	24 Expression of Ideas 20 Standard English Conventions

ACT SCIENCE VS. SAT SCIENCE

	ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: SCIENCE	
	ACT	SAT
Total Questions	40 questions total	35 questions contribute to the science cross-test score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 Reading questions • 6 Writing & Language questions • 8 Math questions
Testing Time	35 minutes total 52.5 seconds per question	N/A
Science Content Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science reading and reasoning skills • Analysis of charts and graphs • Analysis of data presentations and research summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science reading and reasoning skills • Analysis of charts and graphs • Analysis of rigorous texts on science-related topics

ACT MATH VS. SAT MATH

	ABOUT THE ACT & SAT: MATH	
	ACT	SAT
Total Questions	60 questions total	58 questions total: 20 questions without calculator 38 questions with calculator
Testing Time	60 minutes total (<i>1 minute per question</i>)	80 minutes total: No Calculator 25 minutes (<i>1 minute, 15 seconds per question</i>) Calculator 55 minutes (<i>1 minute, 7 seconds per question</i>)
Item Types	60 multiple choice questions	No Calculator 15 multiple choice questions 5 student produced responses Calculator 30 multiple choice questions 8 student produced responses
Content Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Higher Mathematics (34-36 questions total) • Number and Quantity (4-6 questions) • Algebra (7-9 questions) • Functions (7-9 questions) • Geometry (7-9 questions) • Statistics and Probability (5-7 questions) • Integrating Essential Skills (24-26 questions) • Modeling (at least 16 questions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra (19 questions) • Problem Solving & Data Analysis (17 questions) • Passport to Advanced Math (16 questions) • Additional Math Topics (6 questions)

PRE-ALGEBRA & ELEMENTARY ALGEBRA		
LESSON FAMILY	ACT	SAT
Data Representation	●	▲
Statistics	▲	▲
Combinatorics	■	□
Probability	▲	■
Sets	●	□
Factoring Integers	■	■
Types of Numbers	■	■
Fractions	■	■
Negative Numbers	■	■
PEMDAS	■	■
Inequalities	■	▲
Manipulations	▲	▲
Systems	■	▲
Percents	▲	▲
Ratios	▲	▲
Basic Sequences	●	□
Progressions	●	□

INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA & COORDINATE GEOMETRY		
LESSON FAMILY	ACT	SAT
Conics: Circles	●	●
Ellipses	●	□
Exponent Basics	▲	▲
Exponent Complications	▲	■
Function Basics	■	▲
Graphs	●	▲
Logarithms	●	□
Matrices	■	□
Parabolas	●	●
Polynomials	▲	▲

PLANE GEOMETRY & TRIGONOMETRY		
LESSON FAMILY	ACT	SAT
Composite Shapes	■	●
Logic	●	□
Volume & Surface Area	■	●
Coterminal Angles	●	□
Four Quadrants	●	□
Graphing	●	●
Identities	▲	●
Non-Right Triangles	●	□
Points in the Plane - Radians & Degrees	●	●
SOHCAHTOA	■	●
Angle Relationships	▲	■
Circle Basics	▲	■
Circle Ratios	●	●
Circumference & Area	▲	■
Diagonals in a Figure	●	●
Planar Geometry	□	□
Distance Formula	■	●
Pythagorean Theorem Basics	▲	■
Special Right Triangles	●	●
Parallelograms	●	●
Rectangles	■	■
Rhombuses	●	●
Squares	■	■
Trapezoids	●	●
Isosceles & Equilateral Triangles	●	●
Similar Triangles - Triangle Angles	■	■
Triangle Area	▲	■
Triangle Congruency	■	●
Triangle Inequality Rule	●	●

- Not Included
- Tested Infrequently
- Tested ~ 1/exam
- ▲ Tested Frequently

Appendix 3: Concordance Tables

SAT / ACT CONCORDANCE TABLE	
SAT Score (out of 1600)	ACT Composite Score (out of 36)
1570-1600	36
1530-1560	35
1490-1520	34
1450-1480	33
1420-1440	32
1390-1410	31
1360-1380	30
1330-1350	29
1300-1320	28
1260-1290	27
1230-1250	26
1200-1220	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1030-1050	20
990-1020	19
960-980	18
920-950	17

SAT TOTAL SCORE TO ACT COMPOSITE SCORE

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1340	29	1080	21	820	14
1590	36	1330	29	1070	21	810	14
1580	36	1320	28	1060	21	800	14
1570	36	1310	28	1050	20	790	14
1560	35	1300	28	1040	20	780	14
1550	35	1290	27	1030	20	770	13
1540	35	1280	27	1020	19	760	13
1530	35	1270	27	1010	19	750	13
1520	34	1260	27	1000	19	740	13
1510	34	1250	26	990	19	730	13
1500	34	1240	26	980	18	720	12
1490	34	1230	26	970	18	710	12
1480	33	1220	25	960	18	700	12
1470	33	1210	25	950	17	690	12
1460	33	1200	25	940	17	680	11
1450	33	1190	24	930	17	670	11
1440	32	1180	24	920	17	660	11
1430	32	1170	24	910	16	650	11
1420	32	1160	24	900	16	640	10
1410	31	1150	23	890	16	630	10
1400	31	1140	23	880	16	620	10
1390	31	1130	23	870	15	610	9
1380	30	1120	22	860	15	600	9
1370	30	1110	22	850	15	590	9
1360	30	1100	22	840	15		
1350	29	1090	21	830	15		

ACT COMPOSITE SCORE TO SAT TOTAL RANGE

ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT
36	1570-1600	26	1230-1250	16	880-910
35	1530-1560	25	1200-1220	15	830-870
34	1490-1520	24	1160-1190	14	780-820
33	1450-1480	23	1130-1150	13	730-770
32	1420-1440	22	1100-1120	12	690-720
31	1390-1410	21	1060-1090	11	650-680
30	1360-1380	20	1030-1050	10	620-640
29	1330-1350	19	990-1020	9	590-610
28	1300-1320	18	960-980		
27	1260-1290	17	920-950		

Appendix 4: Test Table Summaries

ACT

Section	Time	Number of Questions	Content Covered
English	45 minutes	75 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of Writing • Knowledge of Language • Conventions of Standard English
Math	60 minute	60 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Higher Mathematics • Number and Quantity • Algebra • Functions • Geometry • Statistics and Probability • Integrating Essential Skills • Modeling
Reading	35 minutes	40 multiple-choice questions across four passages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Ideas & Details • Craft & Structure • Integration of Knowledge & Ideas
Science	35 minutes	40 multiple-choice questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of Data • Scientific Investigation • Evaluation of Models, Inferences, & Experimental Results
Writing (optional essay section)	40 minutes	1 prompt to discuss three perspectives on a contemporary social issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas and Analysis • Development and Support • Organization • Language Use

ACT Composite and Test Percentile Ranks

SCORE	COMPOSITE	ENGLISH	MATH	READING	SCIENCE
36	100	100	100	100	100
35	99	99	99	98	99
34	99	96	99	96	98
33	98	94	98	94	97
32	96	92	97	92	96
31	95	91	96	89	95
30	93	89	94	86	94
29	90	88	93	84	92
28	88	86	91	82	90
27	85	84	88	80	88
26	82	82	84	77	85
25	79	79	79	75	82
24	75	75	74	71	78
23	71	71	70	66	71
22	66	66	66	62	64
21	61	61	61	55	58
20	55	55	58	50	51
19	49	49	54	45	46
18	45	45	49	39	39
17	41	41	43	34	33
16	35	37	34	29	26
15	29	31	21	24	19
14	22	25	11	19	14
13	16	19	4	14	11
12	10	15	1	9	7
11	4	11	1	5	4
10	1	7	1	2	2
9	1	3	1	1	1
8	1	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1

SAT

Section	Time	Number of Questions	Content Covered
Evidence-Based Reading & Writing	100 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: 65 minutes • Writing and Language: 35 minutes 	96 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: 52 questions (4 single passages and 1 paired set) • Writing and Language: 44 questions (4 passages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command of Textual Evidence • Understanding Relevant Words in Context • Skills Application • Standard English Conventions and Expression of Ideas
Math	80 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Calculator: 25 minutes • Calculator: 55 minutes 	58 questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-Calculator: 15 multiple-choice questions, 5 student-produced responses • Calculator: 30 multiple-choice questions, 8 student-produced responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra • Problem Solving and Data Analysis • Passport to Advanced Math • Additional Topics in Math
Essay (optional)	50 minutes	1 persuasive essay prompt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension • Content and Structure Analysis • Writing

SAT USER PERCENTILES: TOTAL, EVIDENCE-BASED READING & WRITING, AND MATH

SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	TOTAL	SCORE	ERW	MATH	SCORE	ERW	MATH
1600	99+	1200	74	800	10	800	99+	99+	500	39	41
1590	99+	1190	73	790	9	790	99+	99	490	36	38
1580	99+	1180	72	780	8	780	99+	98	480	32	35
1570	99+	1170	70	770	7	770	99	97	470	29	32
1560	99+	1160	68	760	6	760	99	97	460	26	29
1550	99+	1150	67	750	5	750	99	96	450	23	26
1540	99	1140	65	740	5	740	98	95	440	20	23
1530	99	1130	64	730	4	730	97	94	430	17	20
1520	99	1120	62	720	3	720	96	94	420	14	18
1510	99	1110	60	710	3	710	95	93	410	12	15
1500	98	1100	58	700	2	700	94	92	400	10	13
1490	98	1090	57	690	2	690	93	91	390	8	11
1480	98	1080	55	680	1	680	91	89	380	6	9
1470	97	1070	53	670	1	670	90	87	370	5	7
1460	97	1060	51	660	1	660	88	86	360	3	6
1450	96	1050	49	650	1	650	86	84	350	2	4
1440	96	1040	47	640	1	640	83	83	340	2	3
1430	96	1030	46	630	1-	630	81	81	330	1	2
1420	95	1020	44	620	1-	620	78	79	320	1	2
1410	95	1010	42	610	1-	610	75	77	310	1	1
1400	94	1000	40	600	1-	600	73	75	300	1-	1
1390	93	990	38	590	1-	590	69	72	290	1-	1
1380	93	980	36	580	1-	580	66	69	280	1-	1-
1370	92	970	35	570	1-	570	63	66	270	1-	1-
1360	91	960	33	560	1-	560	60	64	260	1-	1-
1350	91	950	31	550	1-	550	56	61	250	1-	1-
1340	90	940	30	540	1-	540	53	57	240	1-	1-
1330	89	930	28	530	1-	530	50	53	230	1-	1-
1320	88	920	27	520	1-	520	46	49	220	1-	1-
1310	87	910	25	510	1-	510	43	45	210	1-	1-
1300	86	900	23	500	1-	500			200	1-	1-
1290	85	980	22	490	1-						
1280	84	880	20	480	1-						
1270	83	870	19	470	1-						
1260	82	860	18	460	1-						
1250	81	850	16	450	1-						
1240	80	840	15	440	1-						
1230	78	830	14	430	1-						
1220	77	820	13	420	1-						
1210	76	810	11	410	1-						

Source: College Board, *Understanding Scores 2019*