

SAT vs. ACT

Colleges accept both tests equally, so the choice is up to you! Here's what you need to know to compare the exams.

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math• Reading• Writing and Language• Essay (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math• Reading• English• Science• Essay (Optional)
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 hours (without essay)• 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)• 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 reading passages	4 reading passages
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arithmetic• Algebra I & II• Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arithmetic• Algebra I & II• Geometry and Trigonometry
Tools	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
Essays	Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400–1600	Scored on a scale of 1–36