



A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

12. Comparison of SAT and ACT Tests

	SAT	ACT
Number of Questions	170 questions	215 questions
Overall Time	3 hours 45 minutes	2 hours 55 minutes without essay 3 hours 25 minutes with essay
Test Organization	10 sections: 3 math, 3 reading comprehension, 2 grammar, 1 essay (and 1 experimental section in math, reading or grammar – difficult to identify – not included in score)	4 sections plus optional essay. One subject per section (English, Math, Reading, Science). Experimental section given on some test dates & is identified.
Section Lengths	25 minutes each for essay, 2 math, 2 reading, 1 grammar and 1 experimental; 20 minutes each for 1 math and 1 reading; 10 minutes for one grammar	Grammar, 45 minutes; math, 60 minutes; reading, 35 minutes; science, 35 minutes; and essay, 30 minutes
Type of Questions	There are 10 student-produced-response questions in the math section. The rest of the test is consists of 5-choice multiple choice questions; Each section proceeds from easy to hard questions except reading questions, which follow the passage.	All 4-choice multiple choice except Math - 5 choices Not in order of difficulty except Math (easy to hard).
Penalty for guessing	1/4 point subtracted for incorrect answers	No penalty for incorrect answers
Scoring	Each subject receives a score of 200-800; The 3 scores are added for a composite score of 600-2400. Essay scored 2-12 and is included in the writing score	Each subject receives a score of 1-36; scores averaged for a composite score of 1-36. Essay is scored 2-12 and is included in Combined English score
Persuasive Essay	25 minutes, first section of test. Topics: truths about human nature, life, or society. Essays are available to schools	30 minutes, last section of test (optional); Topics: subjects of concern to high school students. Essays are available to schools

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Subjects/Skills tested	Math through the first semester of Algebra II Reading, Vocabulary and Grammar Questions require much decoding	Math through basic trig Reading and Grammar Most questions are straightforward
Calculators	Scientific graphing calculator allowed	Scientific graphing calculator allowed
When Offered	Seven times each year: January, March, May, June, October, November, December. Most students test on Saturday; Sunday is available for documented religious reasons.	Six times each year: February, April, June, September (limited locations), October, December. Most students test on Saturday; non-Saturday is available for documented religious reasons.
Where Offered	Both tests are given at most area high schools at least once a year. Some schools offer both tests each time offered SAT Subject tests cannot be taken on same day as SAT. SAT test dates differ from ACT dates.	
Ease of registration	Easy; on-line, by mail, by phone	Easy; on-line, by mail, by phone
Preparation	Practice questions on-line at ACT and SAT websites; books in libraries and bookstores; on-line practice for free; group classes and individual tutoring are available for both tests.	
Fees	\$49.00 for regular registration; includes scores sent to 4 schools, each additional school \$10.50 essay cost included in registration fee Late registration add \$26.00 Standby testing add \$43.00 Changing date or place \$25.00 Scores free on-line; by phone \$15.00	\$34.00 for regular registration; includes scores sent to 4 schools, each additional school \$10.00 add \$15.00 for writing Late registration add \$21.00 Standby testing add \$42.00 Change place/date \$21.00 Scores free on-line
Score Choice	Score Choice is permitted. Students can opt to have a single test date. Date for SAT/single subject test result sent to Schools. See school websites to determine how Test scores are used.	Send selected test result to selected schools. Test scores cannot be broken down by subject and sent separately. Some schools will use multiple test results to create a composite; others use a single test date's score only.
Other tests	SAT Subject Tests are required by some schools	Some schools accept ACT with writing instead of Subject Tests
Question/Answer Service	For some test dates, students may obtain a copy of their test booklet and a printout of their answers and the correct answers. See websites for available dates and fees.	
More Information	www.CollegeBoard.com	www.act.org

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