

SAT vs ACT: Which Test is Right for You?

Many students and parents begin the college prep process by comparing the ACT and SAT tests. The [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) generally cover the same topics. Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions decisions and awarding merit-based scholarships. Most colleges do not prefer one test over the other.

Compare the ACT and SAT tests

- ACT includes a Science section
- SAT includes one SAT Math Section on which you may not use a calculator

	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">• Reading• Writing & Language• Math• Essay (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English• Math• Reading• Science Reasoning <p>Essay (Optional)</p>
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	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arithmetic• Algebra I & II• Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arithmetic• Algebra I & II• Geometry, Trigonometry, and Probability & Statistics
Calculator Policy	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

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When You Should Register	At least six weeks before the test date	At least four weeks before the test date
For More Information	Educational Testing Service (ETS) (609) 771-7600 www.ets.org The College Board www.collegeboard.com	ACT (319) 337-1000 www.act.org

SAT Test Dates for 2018-2019

2018-19 SAT Test Date	Registration Date	Late Fee Required**
Saturday, August 25, 2018	July 27, 2018	August 7, 2018
Saturday, October 6, 2018	September 7, 2018	September 18, 2018
Saturday, November 3, 2018	October 5, 2018	October 16, 2018
Saturday, December 1, 2018	November 2, 2018	November 19, 2018

ACT Test Dates for 2018-2019

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 8, 2018**	August 12, 2018	August 13-26, 2018
October 27, 2018	September 28, 2018	September 29-October 14, 2018
December 8, 2018	November 2, 2018	November 3-19, 2018
February 9, 2019*	January 11, 2019	January 12-18, 2019
April 13, 2019	March 8, 2019	March 9-25, 2019
June 8, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 4-20, 2019
July 13, 2019*	June 14, 2019	June 15-24, 2019