

# COMPARISON OF THE DIGITAL SAT AND THE ACT

	DIGITAL SAT	ACT	KEY DIFFERENCES
<b>FORMAT &amp; LENGTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 sections, 2 modules per section</li> <li>• Reading &amp; Writing; Math</li> <li>• Total testing time: 2 hours, 14 minutes</li> <li>• Digital, adaptive format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 sections</li> <li>• English; Math; Reading; Science; Writing</li> <li>• Total testing time: 2 hours, 55 minutes (not including 40-minute essay)</li> </ul>	<p>Due to its adaptive format, the SAT is a shorter test. The digital SAT also provides more time per question than the ACT does, but the SAT questions are generally more challenging. Some students may prefer one test over the other, but most students score comparably.</p>
<b>SCORING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total score: 400–1600</li> <li>• Reading &amp; Writing: 200–800</li> <li>• Math: 200–800</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composite score: 1–36 (average of 4 test scores)</li> <li>• English: 1–36</li> <li>• Math: 1–36</li> <li>• Reading: 1–36</li> <li>• Science: 1–36</li> <li>• Writing (not averaged into composite score): 2–12</li> </ul>	<p>The ACT Composite score is the average of your four test scores, so a change in one test score may not be reflected in the Composite.</p> <p>The SAT Total Score is the sum of the test scores. Within each ACT section, each question is worth the same scoring value. On the digital SAT, questions have different scoring values based on their difficulty and the skills required to solve them.</p>
<b>SAT READING &amp; WRITING / ACT READING AND ENGLISH</b>	<p>Reading &amp; Writing Section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 question per short text (25–150 words)</li> <li>• 64 total minutes (32 minutes per module)</li> <li>• 25–29 Reading questions</li> <li>• 19–27 Writing questions</li> </ul>	<p>Reading Section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 minutes for 40 questions</li> <li>• 4 longer texts (700–900 words each)</li> <li>• English Section</li> <li>• 45 minutes for 75 questions</li> <li>• Revise and edit longer texts (300–350 words)</li> </ul>	<p>The ACT has separate sections for Reading and English, whereas the SAT combines the same assessment into one section (Reading &amp; Writing). The ACT Reading and English sections are passage-based, with 10–15 questions per text. The digital SAT is paragraph-based, with only 1 question per text.</p> <p>The digital SAT offers more time per question but requires more complex analysis of texts.</p>
<b>MATH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-algebra through basic trigonometry</li> <li>• Basic formulas provided</li> <li>• About 25% of questions are “student-produced response” questions that do not provide answer choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-algebra through basic trigonometry</li> <li>• Extensive range of concepts tested</li> <li>• Formulas not provided</li> <li>• 5 answer choices per question (rest of test has 4)</li> </ul>	<p>The SAT and ACT Math Tests cover similar ranges of concepts. The ACT requires a broad, basic knowledge of many concepts. The SAT requires a deep knowledge of a core set of concepts, particularly algebra. The digital SAT offers about 38% more time per question than the ACT does.</p>
<b>SCIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SAT does not have a stand-alone Science section and does not directly assess science knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACT Science Section is primarily a reasoning test, but it occasionally requires prior science knowledge.</li> </ul>	<p>The ACT Science Test measures interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The test requires outside scientific knowledge on a few questions per test.</p> <p>The SAT does not include a Science section.</p>
<b>EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All tests include 8 total experimental (“pretest”) questions.</li> <li>• 2 questions are mixed into each of the test’s 4 modules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students receive an extra 20-minute section or experimental questions blended throughout the test.</li> <li>• All questions in the fifth section are experimental.</li> <li>• If experimental questions are blended throughout the test, sections are extended by 5–10 minutes.</li> </ul>	<p>Experimental questions test the viability of questions that may appear on future tests. They do not count toward a student’s official score. On the ACT, they occur in either the fifth section or throughout the test. On the digital SAT, they appear twice per module. When experimental questions are mixed with scored questions, there is no indication of which questions are experimental, so students should take every question seriously and not attempt to identify and skip experimental questions.</p>
<b>ESSAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SAT does not have an essay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essay section is optional.</li> <li>• 40 minutes to evaluate three perspectives on a contemporary issue</li> <li>• Scored on 2–12 scale on each of 4 domains: Ideas &amp; Analysis, Development &amp; Support, Organization, Language Use &amp; Conventions</li> </ul>	<p>The ACT Essay emphasizes crafting and comparing arguments. Most students will not need to take the ACT Essay because it is not required for most college applications.</p> <p>The SAT does not include an Essay section.</p>