

SAT[®] ? ACT[®]

Choosing the Right Fit



Many students have going to college, attending a technical school or joining the military as a post-secondary goal, and taking an entrance exam is just a part of that process. The SAT and ACT tests both measure academic readiness for college, and most universities accept scores from either test for admissions and merit-based scholarships.

Fulton County Schools encourages all students to take the SAT and/or ACT as a way to personally challenge themselves and to show their aptitude, regardless if attending college is in their future plans.

So which one is right for you? Here is a quick breakdown of each format excerpted from the organizations' websites.

	SAT	ACT
Timing	3 hours 3 hours 50 minutes (with essay)	2 hours 55 minutes 3 hours 40 minutes (with essay)
Total Score	400-1600	1-36
Section Scores	Evidence-Based Reading & Writing (200-800) Math (200-800)	Reading (1-36) Math (1-36) English (1-36) Science (1-36)
Number of Questions	154	215
Guessing Penalty	No	No
Number of Sections	3	4
Section Details	<p>Reading 65 Questions—52 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command of Evidence • Words in Context • Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science <p>Writing & Language 44 Questions—35 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command of Evidence • Words in Context • Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science • Expression of Ideas • Standard English Conventions <p>Mathematics 58 Questions—80 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra • Problem Solving & Data Analysis • Passport to Advanced Math • Additional Topics in Math (Geometry/Trig) <p>Optional Essay 1 essay—50 mins</p>	<p>English 75 Questions—45 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of Writing (29–32%) • Knowledge of Language (13–19%) • Conventions of Standard English (51–56%) <p>Reading 40 Questions—35 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Ideas and Details (55–60%) • Craft and Structure (25–30%) • Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (13–18%) <p>Mathematics 60 Questions—60 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for Higher Mathematics (57–60%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Number and Quantity (7–10%) ◦ Algebra (12–15%) ◦ Functions (12–15%) ◦ Geometry (12–15%) ◦ Statistics and Probability (8–12%) • Integrating Essential Skills (40–43%) • Modeling <p>Science 40 Questions—35 mins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of Data (40–50%) • Scientific Investigation (20–30%) • Evaluation of Models, Inferences, and Experimental Results (25–35%) <p>Optional Essay 1 essay—40 mins</p>
Basic Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few Geometry questions • Has a no calculator Math section • SAT provides a formula reference table • Multiple choice and grid in math questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Geometry • Science section that test your critical thinking skills not your science knowledge • All multiple choice

Other Tips:

- Neither test is considered easier or harder than the other; however, some students tend to do better with a particular format. Students should take a timed, full-length practice exam for both to see if one feels like a better fit.
- What is considered a “good” score is often determined by your college goals. It can be helpful for students to create a list of colleges they are considering, research the required test score needed for admissions, and then determine the score they need to aim for.
- To determine how SAT and ACT scores compare to one another, look at page 2 of this document for a conversion table: <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT-SAT-Concordance-Information.pdf>

