ThePrincetonReview®

SAT® vs ACT®

Trying to decide between the SAT and ACT?

Both tests are accepted by colleges nationwide and play a key role in admissions and merit-based scholarships. Use this side-by-side comparison to see which test aligns best with your strengths and testing style.

	SAT	ACT
Test Structure	2 sections: Math Evidence-based Reading & Writing	3 - 5 sections: Required: English, Math, Reading Optional: Science, Writing (Essay)
Reading/Writing	2 Combined modules Single questions per passage	Separate sections Multiple questions per passage
Math	Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trig, Data Analysis	Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trig, Probability & Statistics with 4 answer choices
Test Format	Online only	Online or Paper & Pencil
Testing Time	2 hours 14 min	2 hours- Required Sections 3 hours 35 mins- Required + Science + Essay
How It's Scored	Total Score Range: 400 - 1600 (Sum of section scores) Section scores: 200 - 800	Composite score: 1 - 36 (Avg of English, Reading & Math) Science scored separately: 1-36 Essay scored separately: 2-12
Cost	$68	$68 $4 fee to add the Science section $25 fee to add the Writing section

Unsure Where to Start?

The best way to decide is by taking a timed, full-length practice test of each. While the SAT and ACT are similar in content and style, key differences—like pacing and question types—can help you determine which test is the better fit. Discover your strengths and choose the right path for you!

Check out our prep options!
bit.ly/TPRHighSchool

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*ACT® and SAT® scores are provided by schools featured. These scores are representative of the median score for those who enrolled in school for Fall 2023. Students within a wide range of scores have received admissions to these schools based on their entire application package. Contact the school for more specific information. SAT®, PSAT® and AP® are registered trademarks of the College Board, which is not affiliated with and do not endorse The Princeton Review's products. ACT® is a registered trademark of ACT, Inc. The Princeton Review is not affiliated with Princeton University.