

SAT vs. ACT Need a quick side-by-side comparison of the tests?

SAT	vs.	ACT
content-based test	Type of Test	content-based test
Reading: 1, 65-min section; Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) & 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)	Test Format	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional)
reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)	Content Covered	grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)
questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving	Test Style	straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranged from 400-1600.	Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36
no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	Penalty for Wrong Answers?	no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers
yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges	Score Choice?	yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges
questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)	Difficulty Levels	difficulty level of the questions is random
arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; formulas provided.	Math Levels	arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
with private schools and	Tends to be	with public schools and

schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores	more popular?	schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores
seven times per year: January, March or April, May, June, October, November, December	Offered when?	six times per year: February, April, June, September, October, December (note that some states offer the ACT as part of their state testing requirements; these tests are not administered on the national test dates)
typically about four weeks before the test date	Registration deadline?	typically about five to six weeks before the test date
www.collegeboard.com	More Information	www.act.org