

Connecting Assessments with Opportunities: The SAT[®] Compared to the ACT[®]

The SAT[®] is focused on the classroom skills and knowledge that are essential for college and career. The test is part of the College Board's commitment to ensuring that our assessments not only measure readiness, but connect students to opportunities including free practice tools and college application fee waivers.

	SAT [®]	ACT [®]
TEST FEATURES		
Curriculum based	✓	✓
Optional essay	✓	✓
No guessing penalty	✓	✓
Full test specifications available online	✓	
FEE WAIVERS		
Test fee waivers for eligible students	✓	✓
Free late registration for fee-waiver students	✓	
Four college application fee waivers sent directly to eligible students	✓	
Four free score sends with registration	✓	✓
Four free additional score sends	✓	
FREE PRACTICE		
Official, personalized practice recommendations on Khan Academy [®] that help students where they need it most	✓	
Four full-length practice tests	✓	
Sample test questions	✓	✓
SAT practice app with paper scan & score functionality	✓	

SAT®

ACT®

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TESTED

Focused on the few things evidence shows matter most for college and career, in both math and ELA



Vocabulary. Focused on words more widely used in college and career



History/social studies and science included throughout all required sections of the test



Integration of words and numbers across academic disciplines



Demonstration of command of evidence



Essay analyzing a source



TEST STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

Testing time

3 hours
+ 50-minute SAT essay (optional)

2 hours 55 minutes
+ 40-minute essay (optional)

Structure

3 tests + optional SAT essay

4 tests + optional writing test

Score range

Composite 400–1600
(SAT Essay: reported in
3 dimensions, each 2–8)

Composite 1–36
(writing domain scores: 2–12)

Test length and timing

Number of questions: 154
Time per question: 1:10

Number of questions: 215
Time per question: 0:49

Reading Test

65 minutes
52 questions

Reading Test

35 minutes
40 questions

Writing and Language Test

35 minutes
44 questions

English Test

45 minutes
75 questions

Math Test

80 minutes
58 questions

Math Test

60 minutes
60 questions

*Use of a calculator permitted
on some problems*

*Use of a calculator permitted
on some problems*

Science Test

35 minutes
40 questions

The tests that constitute the SAT Suite of Assessments — including PSAT™ 8/9, PSAT™ 10, PSAT/NMSQT®, and the SAT — provide benchmarks and consistent feedback for measuring student progress over time, so teachers can accelerate students who are either ahead or behind. And, in addition to fee waivers and free, personalized practice tools through Khan Academy, the assessments help connect students to millions of dollars in scholarships and Advanced Placement® course work.

For more information, visit sat.org/new