

	SAT	ACT	Differences
Format & Length	5 sections(4 tests and an optional essay) Contains a Reading, English, and two Math sections. Total test time: 3 hours 50 minutes with essay	5 sections(4 tests and an optional essay) Contains a Reading, English, Math, and Science section. Total test time: 3 hours 25 minutes with essay	The SAT has more of an emphasis on math, whereas the ACT has more of an emphasis on science. SAT math questions usually require more critical thinking, but the SAT also has roughly 50-60% more time per question.
Scoring	Combined score: 400-600 Evidence-based Reading and Writing: 200-800 Math: 200-800 Essay (not added in combined score): 6-24	Composite Score: 1-36(average of 4 test scores, rounded up) English: 1-36 Reading: 1-36 Math: 1-36 Science: 1-36 Essay (not averaged into score): 1-36	The ACT composite is averaged , so a change in one test may not show up in the composite. The SAT combined score is a simple sum, so any improvement will show up in the combined score.
Writing & English	Revise and edit a piece of writing. Standard English grammar and usage. Punctuation Logical structure Effective rhetoric	Revise and edit a piece of writing. Standard English grammar and usage. Punctuation Logical structure Effective rhetoric	The SAT and ACT English sections are nearly identical both in format and content. The SAT offers more time per question (30% more), but generally has more complex passages.
Math	Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry 12 Grid-in questions (no answer choices/not multiple choice) Strong emphasis on algebra and word problems No calculator in one of the sections.	Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry Extensive range of concepts tested No formulas provided 5 answer choices per question (rest of test has 4)	The ACT requires a broad, basic knowledge of many concepts. The SAT requires deep knowledge of a core set of concepts. The SAT offers about 80% more time per question. The SAT requires accurate manual arithmetic on the no calculator sections and has unforgiving grid-ins (due to a lack of multiple choice).
Reading	4 single passages and 1 paired passage 2 passages include diagrams/charts	4 single or paired passages Consistent order of subject areas: Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction, Humanities or Social Studies, Natural Sciences	The SAT and ACT Reading sections are nearly identical both in format and content. The SAT offers more time per question (30% more), but generally has more complex passages.
Science	The SAT does not have a science section, but it instead includes data interpretation style questions in the Math and Reading sections.	40 questions over 6 or 7 passages. Emphasis on charts, diagrams, etc. A reasoning test-almost never requires any actual science facts/knowledge.	The ACT science section measures interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The test uses scientific knowledge and reasoning (scientific method), but it rarely requires any specific knowledge from academic science classes. The SAT has no analogue to this section.
Essay	50 minutes Analyze a passage and evaluate the author's reasoning and rhetoric Student opinions not encouraged	40 minutes Evaluate 3 perspectives on a contemporary issue. Student opinions encouraged	ACT essay emphasizes crafting and comparing arguments. SAT emphasizes understanding and analyzing how arguments are crafted. ACT allows for more creativity; SAT requires strong analytic reading skills.

