



Comparative Features of the ACT and SAT 2016–2017¹

The ACT [®] Test (ACT)		SAT [®] (College Board)
Test Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$83.50 • \$99.50 (with writing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$78.00–\$107.50, depending on location
Test Purpose	Designed to measure academic achievement in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Mathematics • Reading • Science 	Designed to measure: ² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing • Math • The essay
Accepted for University Admission	The ACT is accepted by all colleges and universities in the United States and more than 225 other universities around the world.	Accepted by all US colleges. ³
US High School Graduates Tested in 2015⁴	1,924,436	1,548,198
Test Content	<p>ACT Mathematics Test (60 items, 60 minutes) Pre-Algebra/Elementary Algebra (35–45%) Intermediate Algebra and Coord. Geometry (30–40%) Plane Geometry and Trigonometry (25–35%)</p> <p>ACT Reading Test (40 items, 35 minutes) Arts and Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary Narrative or Prose Fiction (25%) • Humanities (25%) (art history, art, music, philosophy, theater, architecture, dance, religion/ethics, literary criticism) Social Studies and Natural Sciences (25%, 25%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History, Political Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Sciences </p> <p>ACT English Test (75 items, 45 minutes) Usage/Mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation (10–15%) • Basic Grammar and Usage (15–20%) • Sentence Structure (20–25%) Rhetorical Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy (15–20%) • Style (15–20%) • Organization (10–15%) </p> <p>ACT Science Test (40 items, 35 minutes) Interpretation analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills in Biology, Earth/Space Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Representation (30–40%) • Research Summaries (45–55%) • Conflicting Viewpoints (15–20%) </p> <p>ACT Writing Test (optional) (1 prompt, 40 minutes) Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. Consists of one 40-minute essay.</p>	<p>SAT Mathematics (Total 58 items, 80 minutes) Calculator Portion (38 items, 55 Minutes) Multiple-Choice 79%, Grid-In 21% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra (29%) • Problem Solving and Data Analysis (45%) • Passport to Advanced Math (18%) • Other Topics (8%) No-Calculator Portion (20 items with 25 minutes) Multiple-Choice 75%, Grid-In 25% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart of Algebra (40%) • Passport to Advanced Math (45%) • Other Topics (15%) </p> <p>SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Reading Test (52 items, 65 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US and World Literature (20%) • History/Social Studies (40%) • Science (40%) Writing and Language Test (44 items, 35 Minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers (25%) • History/Social Studies (25%) • Humanities (25%) • Science (25%) </p> <p>No Science Test Note: Reading subject test is constructed of 40% science and the Writing and Language subject test is constructed of 25% science.</p> <p>SAT Essay (optional) (1 task, 50 minutes) Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; students produce a written analysis of a provided source text.</p>
Method of Scoring	Scores based on number of right answers. No penalty for incorrect answers.	Scores based on number of right answers. No penalty for incorrect answers.

1. Every effort has been made to represent the ACT and SAT information accurately and concisely. All information has been drawn from official publications and websites of the organizations.

2. www.collegeboard.org/releases/2014/expand-opportunity-redesign-sat

3. Information from <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/benefits>

4. Figures are from the test publishers' Program Results Reports, and include US students in the 2015 high school graduating class who took the ACT or SAT.

The ACT [®] Test (ACT)		SAT [®] (College Board)
Test Score Scales	<p>ACT Composite Score: 1–36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of four test scores Does not include writing <p>ACT Mathematics Test: 1–36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Algebra and Elementary Algebra: 1–18 Inter. Algebra and Coordinate Geometry: 1–18 Plane Geometry and Trigonometry: 1–18 <p>ACT Reading Test: 1–36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Literature: 1–18 Social Studies and Sciences: 1–18 <p>ACT English Test: 1–36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usage/Mechanics: 1–18 Rhetorical Skills: 1–18 <p>ACT Science Test: 1–36</p> <p>ACT Writing Test (optional): 1–36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas and Analysis: 2–12 Development and Support: 2–12 Organization: 2–12 Language Use and Conventions: 2–12 <p>Additional Scores and Indicators (New readiness scores and indicators give students, parents, and educators more detailed insights to better plan for future success.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM Score: 1–36 ELA Score: 1–36 Progress Toward Career Readiness Indicator Text Complexity Progress Indicator 	<p>SAT Composite Score: 400–1600</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sum of two section scores Does not include essay <p>SAT Mathematics: 200–800</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart of Algebra: 1–15 Problem Solving and Data Analysis: 1–15 Passport to Advanced Math: 1–15 <p>SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 200–800</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Command of Evidence: 1–15 Words in Context: 1–15 Expression of Ideas: 1–15 Standard English Conversations: 1–15 <p>No Science Test</p> <p>SAT Writing (optional): 200–800</p> <p>Subject Scores</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 10–40 Writing and Language: 10–40 Mathematics: 10–40 <p>Cross-test Scores</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis in science: 10–40 Analysis in history/social science: 1–40 <p>Optional Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading: 2–8 Analysis: 2–8 Writing: 2–8
Student Information	<p>Student Profile Section When students complete the Profile section, ACT connects their unique interests, abilities, and values with potential education and career paths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission/Enrollment Information Educational Plans, Interests, and Goals College Extracurricular Plans Financial Aid Background Information (Demographics) High School Courses, Grades, and Extracurricular Activities Out of Class Accomplishments <p>Educational and Career Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Interest Inventory⁵ ACT World-of-Work Map⁶ College Majors and Programs 	<p>Student Descriptive Questionnaire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background (Demographics) Academic Background High School and Community Activities Sports Student Plans for College
Common Uses⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions Talent Identification Academic Advising Freshman Course Placement Decisions Awarding Course Credit, Especially in English and Math Courses Awarding Scholarships (not sole criterion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions Talent Identification Academic Advising Awarding Scholarships (not sole criterion)
Research Services⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Profile Service Admissions Service Course Placement Service Retention Research Service ACT Enrollment Information Service (ACT EIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Profile Service Validity Research Service

5. ACT Interest Inventory matches your interests and skills to job descriptions. One of the most difficult tasks faced by students is to find occupations appropriate to their goals and personal characteristics. The ACT Interest Inventory provides a focus to career exploration by pointing to world-of-work regions individuals may wish to explore. Through exploration, people can find occupations they might otherwise have missed.

6. The ACT World-of-Work Map organizes occupations into six clusters (occupational types), 12 regions, and 26 career areas (groups of similar jobs). It shows how occupations relate to each other according to primary work tasks.

7. These are common uses by universities to identify and qualify students for admission.

8. These are common uses by research services groups to study demographics and comparative analysis.

