

What are the differences between the COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS?

SAT

The current SAT is broken up into 3 content areas: Reading, Writing, and Math. It is known for its focus on vocabulary (almost 30% of the reading section), multiple passage types, and reasoning-based math (up to Algebra II). Additionally, the essay is factored into the writing score.

New SAT

The redesigned SAT will return to the 1600 scale; Reading and Writing will combine for one section score. The Math will focus more on the content students are learning during their junior year. Also, the Essay will be optional and not factored into the Reading/Writing score.

ACT

The ACT is made up of 4 sections: English, Math, Reading, and Science, plus an optional Essay. The section lengths range from 35 minutes (Reading and Science) to 60 minutes (Math). The content of the Math, Science, and English is similar to what junior students are learning in school.

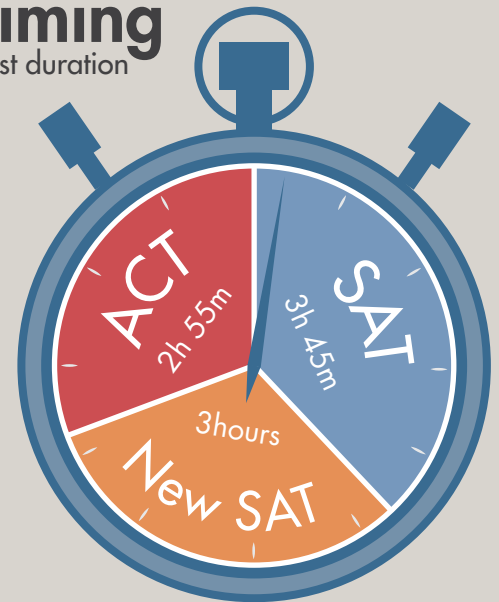
QUICK LOOK

SCORING

SAT	3 section scores: Reading, Math, and Writing	200 - 800 each 600 - 2400 total
New SAT	2 section scores: Reading/Writing and Math	200 - 800 each 400 - 1600 total
ACT	4 section scores: English, Math, Reading, and Science	1 - 36 each 1 - 36 total

Timing

Test duration



Only the old SAT still carries the **wrong answer penalty**.

Number of Sections



MATH

Number of Questions

SAT	New SAT	ACT
54	58	60

Time per Question

SAT	78s
New SAT	83s
ACT	60s

Both the **SAT** and the **New SAT** have student-produced-response questions.

Formulas

The **New SAT** includes more formulas to reference.

The **ACT does not allow** formulas for reference.

The SAT and ACT allow calculators for all Math sections.
The **New SAT** has **one NO CALCULATOR** section and one that allows a calculator.

Range of Math

SAT

- Geometry
- Algebra
- Arithmetic

New SAT

- Advanced Algebra
- Interpretation of Data
- Some Geometry & Arithmetic
- Some Trigonometry

ACT

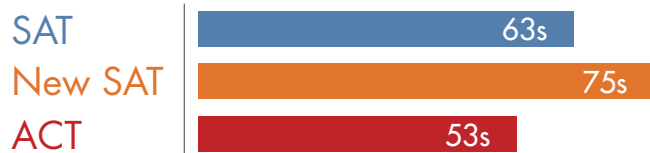
- Geometry
- Algebra
- Arithmetic
- Trigonometry

READING

Number of Questions

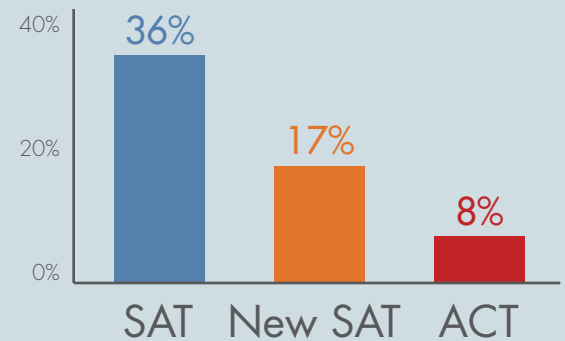


Time per Question



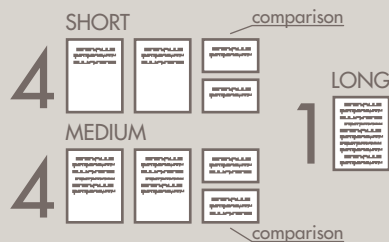
Vocabulary

What percent of questions test vocabulary?



Number of Passages

SAT



New SAT



ACT



Do the Reading sections have Graphs and Charts?

SAT



No

New SAT



Yes, relating to two passages

ACT



Only on the Science section

Types of Passages

SAT

Passages come from a variety of sources from the last 200 years.

There is no pattern in the types of passages used.

New SAT

- 1 prose
- 1 social science/history
- 2 sciences
- 1 "great global conversation"

Contains a mix of contemporary and historical writing.

ACT

- 1 prose
- 1 social science
- 1 humanities*
- 1 natural science

All contemporary writing.

* This tends to be the comparison passage

ENGLISH/WRITING

Number of Questions

SAT	New SAT	ACT
25 sentence improvement	(passage-based questions)	(passage-based questions)
18 error identification	4 passages	5 passages
+ 6 paragraph improvement	× 11 questions each	× 15 questions each
49	44	75

Time per Question

SAT	43s
New SAT	48s
ACT	36s

Do the English sections have Graphs and Charts?



No

New SAT



Yes, relating to two passages

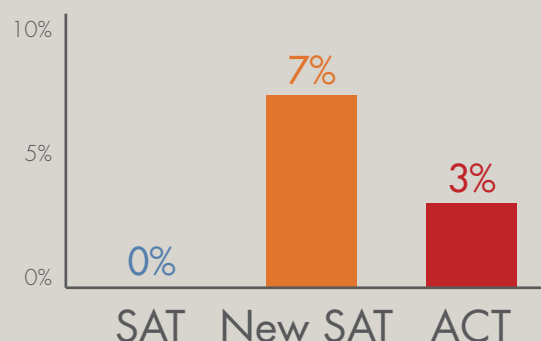
ACT



Only on the Science section

Vocabulary

What percent of questions test vocabulary?



Important

GRAMMAR topics

SAT

- Sentence parallelism
- Relationship between words (subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent)

New SAT

- Punctuation
- Words in context
- Sentence Structure

ACT

- Punctuation
- Sentence Structure

GRAMMAR VS. RHETORICAL SKILLS

SAT 80% 20%

New SAT 45% 55%*

ACT 51% 49%*

*The difference between the 49% Rhetorical Skills on the ACT and 55% on the SAT feels even greater in practice, as the questions on the SAT require a fuller understanding of the passage.

ESSAY

Is it Mandatory?

SAT
YES

New SAT
NO

ACT
NO

Timing

SAT



New SAT



ACT



SCORING

SAT **1** section score 0 - 12 total

New SAT **3** section scores: Reading, Analysis, and Writing 2 - 8 each

ACT **4** section scores: Ideas/Analysis, Development/Support, Organization, and Language Use/Convention 2 - 12 each
1 - 36 scaled total

The Essay affects the overall score only on the old **SAT**.
The other two tests consider it an additional score.

Can the student use a Personal Opinion?

SAT

Yes

New SAT

No, the student must only explain the opinion given

ACT

Yes, but the student must address the three perspectives

Prompt

SAT

A short quote and related question

New SAT

A short passage which the student must analyze

ACT

A contemporary issue with three different opinions

Pages allotted for the Essay

SAT

2

New SAT

4

ACT

4