

Comparative Features of the ACT and SAT 2009–2010

	The ACT (ACT, Inc.)	SAT (College Board)
Test Fee:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$32.00 • \$47.00 (with writing) 	• \$45.00
Test Purpose:	Designed to measure academic achievement in the areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science.	Designed to measure critical reading, writing, and mathematical reasoning skills.
Test Content:	<p>ACT English Test (75 items, 45 minutes) Usage/Mechanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation (13%) • Basic Grammar and Usage (16%) • Sentence Structure (24%) • Rhetorical Skills • Strategies (16%) • Organization (15%) • Style (16%) <p>ACT Mathematics Test (60 items, 60 minutes) Pre-Algebra and Elementary Algebra (23%, 17%) Intermediate Algebra and Coord. Geometry (15%, 15%) Plane Geometry and Trigonometry (23%, 7%)</p> <p>ACT Reading Test (40 items, 35 minutes) Arts and Literature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prose Fiction (25%) • Humanities (25%) (art history, art, music, philosophy, theater, architecture, dance, religion/ethics, literary criticism) • Social Studies and Natural Sciences (25%, 25%) • History, Political Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Sciences <p>ACT Science Test (40 items, 35 minutes) Interpretation analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills in Biology, Earth/Space Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Representation (38%) • Research Summaries (45%) • Conflicting Viewpoints (17%) <p>ACT Writing Test (Optional) (1 prompt, 30 minutes) Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. Consists of one 30-minute essay.</p>	<p>SAT Writing (Mandatory) (60 minutes) Multiple Choice (35 minutes) Essay (25 minutes)</p> <p>SAT Mathematics (70 minutes) Arithmetic (20%) Algebra (35–40%) Geometry (25–30%) Data Analysis (10–15%)</p> <p>SAT Critical Reading (70 minutes) Sentence Completion Critical Reading in Humanities, Social Narrative (80% nonfiction) 80% Extended Reasoning 10% Literal Comprehension 10% Vocabulary Elementary Analogies Adding Short Passages</p> <p>No Science Test</p>
Method of Scoring:	Scores based on number of right answers. No penalty for guessing.	Scores adjusted for guessing. Correct answers carry full weight while a chance-level penalty is applied for each incorrect answer.



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Test Score Scales:

- ACT English Test: 1-36**
- Usage/Mechanics: 1-18
 - Rhetorical Skills: 1-18
- ACT Reading Test: 1-36**
- Arts and Literature: 1-18
 - Social Studies and Sciences: 1-18
- ACT Mathematics Test: 1-36**
- Pre-Algebra and Elementary Algebra: 1-18
 - Inter. Algebra and Coordinate Geometry: 1-18
 - Plane Geometry and Trigonometry: 1-18
- ACT Science Test: 1-36**
- ACT Composite: 1-36**
(average of four test scores—does not include writing)
- ACT English and Writing: 1-36**
- Essay Subscore: 2-12

SAT Writing: 200-800

- Multiple Choice: 20-80
- Essay: 2-12

SAT Critical Reading: 200-800

SAT Mathematics: 200-800

No Science Test

SAT Total: 600-2400

(sum of SAT Critical Reading, Math, and Writing Scores)

Student Information:

Student Profile Section

- Background (Demographics)
- High School Courses and Grades
- Admission/Enrollment Information
- Educational Plans, Interests, and Needs
- Special Educational Needs, Interests, and Goals
- College Extracurricular Plans
- High School Information and Extracurricular Activities
- Out of Class Accomplishments
- Evaluation of High School Experience

Educational and Career Planning

- ACT Interest Inventory
- World-of-Work Map
- College Majors and Programs

Student Descriptive Questionnaire

- Background (Demographics)
- Educational Background
- High School and Community Activities
- Sports
- Student Plans for College

Common Uses:

Admissions (accepted by most, but not all, colleges and universities)
Talent Identification
Academic Advising
Freshman Course Placement Decisions
Awarding Course Credit, Especially in English and Math Courses
Awarding Scholarships (not sole criterion)

Admissions (accepted by most, not all, colleges and universities)
Talent Identification
Academic Advising
Awarding Scholarships (not sole criterion)

Research Services:

Class Profile Service
Prediction Research Service
Course Placement Service
Retention Research Service

Class Profile Service
Validity Research Service

Please Note: Every effort has been made to represent the ACT and SAT information accurately and concisely. All information has been drawn from official publications of the organizations offering the tests.