

Compare the New SAT to the ACT

Taking the SAT is the best way to show colleges you have the skills and knowledge they want most. Find out how the new SAT, launching in March, compares to the ACT.

Test Snapshot		
Features	New SAT	ACT
Widely accepted	All U.S. colleges	Almost all U.S. colleges
Major redesign	2016 SAT is based on the latest research on the skills colleges value most.	No recent significant revisions.
Tests the vocabulary you'll use	Yes	Yes
Everyday math formulas provided	Yes	No
Essay is optional	Yes	Yes
Penalty for guessing	No	No
Cost	\$54.50 (\$43 without essay)	\$56.50 (\$39.50 without essay)

Flexibility		
Schedule	New SAT	ACT
Test days	7 times a year	6 times a year
Regular registration deadline	About 4 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later.	About 5 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later.
Late registration closes	About 11 days before test day	20+ days before test day

Free Practice		
Resources	New SAT	ACT
Free daily practice questions	Yes, the free mobile app, Daily Practice for the New SAT.	Yes
Free comprehensive test practice	Yes, through Khan Academy®, with over 4,000 questions and video lessons.	No
Free, downloadable practice tests	Yes	No
Mobile app that instantly scores paper tests	Yes, Daily Practice for the New SAT.	No

Fee Waivers		
Benefits and Rules	New SAT	ACT
Test fees waived for eligible students	Yes	Yes
Waivers cover late fees	Yes	No
Four college application fee waivers sent directly to eligible students	Yes	No

Test Format		
Structure and Timing	New SAT	ACT
Testing time	3 hours + 50-minute essay (optional)	2 hours 55 minutes + 40-minute essay (optional)
Structure	3 tests + optional essay	4 tests + optional writing test
Number of questions	154	215
Time per question	1 minute, 10 seconds	49 seconds
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	<p>Reading Test 65 minutes 52 questions</p> <p>Writing and Language Test 35 minutes 44 questions</p> <p>Math Test 80 minutes 58 questions</p>	<p>Reading Test 35 minutes 40 questions</p> <p>English Test 45 minutes 75 questions</p> <p>Math Test 60 minutes 60 questions</p> <p>Science Test 35 minutes 40 questions</p>