



# ACT vs SAT

## Which is Best For You?



***ALL COLLEGES  
ACCEPT BOTH  
THE ACT AND  
THE SAT***

## SAT (3 hours plus 50 min essay)

- Reading 52 Q/ 65 Min
  - 5 Passages
- Writing & Language 44 Q / 35 Min
  - 4 Passages
- Math (no calculator) 20 Q / 25 Min
  - 5 grid-ins
- Math (calculator) 38 Q /55 Min
- Essay (optional) 1 prompt / 50 Min
  - Analyze an argument

Breaks – 10 mins after Reading; 5 mins after Math (no calc); 2 mins before Essay

## ACT (2 hours 55 min plus 40 min essay)

- English 75 Q/ 45 Min
  - 5 passages
- Math (calculator) 60 Q / 60 Min
- Reading 40 Q / 35 Min
  - 4 passages
- Science 40 Q /35 Min
- Essay (optional) 1 prompt / 40 Min
  - Consider 3 perspectives of an issue

Breaks – 10 mins after Math; 10 mins before Essay

# SAT – ACT STRUCTURE

## SAT

- 154 questions / 3 hours (plus 50 min essay)
- Top Score = 1600 (sum of 2 sections)
- 1 min 10 seconds per question
- Reading – 5 passages; emphasis on vocab; charts & graphs
- Writing & Language – 4 passages; almost same content as ACT; ~50% grammar
- Math – non-calculator & calculator sections; grid-ins
- No Science section
- Essay – analyze an argument
- No guessing penalty

## ACT

- 215 questions / 3 hours (plus 50 min essay)
- Top Score = 36 (average of 4 sections)
- 49 seconds per question
- Reading – 4 passages; generally easier to read; no charts/graphs
- Writing & Language – 5 passages; almost same content as SAT; ~50% grammar
- Math – calculator allowed
- Science section – 6 passages; analyze studies/experiments
- Essay – consider an issue & 3 perspectives
- No guessing penalty

# SAT – ACT COMPARISON

# *WHICH TEST SHOULD YOU TAKE? – IT DEPENDS*



# Which Test Fits Best For You?

## Consider the SAT if:

- You read a lot and enjoy it
- You can read and understand complex texts
- You have a good vocabulary
- You do NOT rely heavily on the use of a calculator when doing math
- You have difficulty understanding scientific terms and methods
- You get stressed out with tight time limits
- You are an analytical thinker and work well with multi-step problems

## Consider the ACT if:

- You have difficulty reading and understanding complex or historic texts
- You need a calculator to solve most math problems
- You enjoy science and are comfortable with scientific terms and processes
- You are very comfortable reading and interpreting charts & graphs
- You work well under time pressure
- You have a good command of standard English conventions – e.g. grammar, punctuation, sentence structure

# HOW IS THE SAT SCORED?

Example:

Reading Test  $30 \times 10 = 300$

Writing and Language Test  $27 \times 10 = \underline{270}$

**Evidenced Based Reading & Writing Score 570**

**Math Test  $25 \times 20 = \underline{500}$**

**TOTAL SCORE**

**1070**

# HOW IS THE ACT SCORED?

Example:

English Test	25
Math Test	23
Reading Test	27
Science Test	22
<b>Composite Score</b>	<b>24*</b>

\* Composite Score is average of all 4 scores (rounded up at .5)



# WHAT'S A GOOD SCORE?

	<u>SAT</u>	<u>ACT</u>
<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1500/750+</b>	<b>33+</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>1400/700</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>1300/650</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>1200/600</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>1100/550</b>	<b>22</b>

# CAN I JUST SEND MY “BEST” SCORES FROM EACH TEST?

- Most colleges “Superscore” by SAT test section
- Fewer colleges Superscore the sections of the ACT because they use the composite score – most do Superscore composite scores
- Check each school’s website for most current policy on Superscoring – if it’s not on their website call admissions
- To get the best Superscore most students take the ACT or SAT 2 to 3 times
- Colleges are ranked based on the average ACT/SAT scores of their entering class

# THE STARTING POINT

## *Prepare For The Test Based On Your Score Goals*

- **What schools am I interested in?**
  - Particular major, size , geography, other
- **What are the ACT/SAT score ranges for those schools?**
  - Your score goal should be between the 50th and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for that school
- **Are you looking for merit aid?**
  - Target schools where you are in the top 25% provides opportunities for merit aid
- **What is a realistic score for you?**
  - Average test prep increases are 4 points on the ACT and 150 points on the SAT