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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORING</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>New SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 section scores: Reading, Math, and Writing</td>
<td>200 - 800 each</td>
<td>600 - 2400 total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 section scores: Reading/Writing and Math</td>
<td>200 - 800 each</td>
<td>400 - 1600 total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 section scores: English, Math, Reading, and Science</td>
<td>1 - 36 each</td>
<td>1 - 36 total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only the old SAT still carries the wrong answer penalty.

Number of Sections

- SAT: 10 short
- New SAT: 4 long
- ACT: 4 long
**MATH**

**Number of Questions**
- SAT: 54
- New SAT: 58
- ACT: 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.

**Range of Math**

**SAT**
- Geometry
- Algebra
- Arithmetic

**New SAT**
- Advanced Algebra
- Interpretation of Data
- Some Geometry & Arithmetic
- Some Trigonometry

**ACT**
- Geometry
- Algebra
- Arithmetic
- Trigonometry

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

**Number of Questions**
- **SAT**: 67 questions (19 sentence completion, 48 passage-based)
- **New SAT**: 52 questions (passage-based)
- **ACT**: 40 questions (passage-based)

**Time per Question**
- **SAT**: 63s
- **New SAT**: 75s
- **ACT**: 53s

**Vocabulary**
- **SAT**: 36%
- **New SAT**: 17%
- **ACT**: 8%

**Number of Passages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New SAT</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>New SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>sentence improvement</td>
<td>(passage-based questions)</td>
<td>4 passages x 11 questions each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>error identification</td>
<td>5 passages x 15 questions each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 6</td>
<td>paragraph improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**49**  **44**  **75**

**Time per Question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>New SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43s</td>
<td>48s</td>
<td>36s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocabulary**

What percent of questions test vocabulary?

- SAT: 0%
- New SAT: 7%
- ACT: 3%

**Grammar vs. Rhetorical Skills**

- **SAT**: 80% Grammar, 20% Rhetorical Skills
- **New SAT**: 45% Grammar, 55% Rhetorical Skills
- **ACT**: 51% Grammar, 49% Rhetorical Skills

*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.*

---

**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
ESSAY

Is it Mandatory?

SAT: YES
New SAT: NO
ACT: NO

Timing

SAT: 25m
New SAT: 50m
ACT: 40m

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

SCORING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Section(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>section score 0 - 12 total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New SAT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>section scores: Reading, Analysis, and Writing 2 - 8 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>section scores: Ideas/Analysis, Development/Support, Organization, and Language Use/Convention 2 - 12 each, 1 - 36 scaled total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can the student use a Personal Opinion?

SAT: Yes
New SAT: Yes
ACT: Yes, but the student must address the three perspectives

No, the student must only explain the opinion given

Prompt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>A short quote and related question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New SAT</td>
<td>A short passage which the student must analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>A contemporary issue with three different opinions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pages allotted for the Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New SAT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>