

# SAT vs. ACT

## Differences at a Glance

The road to college can be a confusing and hectic experience. Choosing the right admissions test to take – SAT or ACT – doesn't have to be. While most colleges across the country accept scores from either test, the SAT and ACT are significantly different, and in many ways, they measure different skills. This comparison chart should help...

SAT	ACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No science section</li> <li>• No trigonometry questions</li> <li>• Vocabulary emphasized</li> <li>• Non multiple-choice questions asked</li> <li>• Guessing penalty</li> <li>• No English grammar</li> <li>• Math accounts for 50% of your score</li> <li>• Questions go from easy to difficult</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science reasoning section</li> <li>• Math includes trigonometry</li> <li>• Vocabulary less important</li> <li>• Entirely multiple-choice</li> <li>• No guessing penalty</li> <li>• English grammar tested</li> <li>• Math accounts for 25% of your score</li> <li>• Questions are mixed up</li> </ul>

## The Set-up

SAT				ACT			
Section	Time	Q*	*S	Section	Time	Q*	S*
Verbal	30min.	35-36		English	45 min.	75	1-36
Verbal	30min.	30-31		Math	60 min.	60	1-36
Critical Rdg.	15 min.	11-13		Reading	35 min.	40	1-36
Total Verbal	75 min	78	200-800	Science	35 min.	40	1-36
Math	30 min.	25		Math	2hrs.55min	215	1-36
Math	30 min.	25					
Math	15 min.	10			ACT are weighted equally		
Totals	75 min.		200-800				
Experimental	30 min.	varies	no score				
Totals	3 hrs.	138+	400-1600				

## **The Verbal Sections**

**SAT-** The SAT verbal sections include: Analogies, Sentence Completion's, and Critical Reading. You' ll need to work around tough vocabulary in both analogies and sentence completion's.

In the critical reading section, you'll get four passages from different subject areas.

To answer the questions, you'll have to grasp the author's overall argument quickly, and draw relationships between the details of the passage and its main idea.

**ACT-** The ACT English section gives you a series of sentences and paragraphs and asks you to identify and correct any grammatical or punctuation errors, garbled or redundant prose, or stylistic flubs. Don't be alarmed though. These questions do not test arcane grammar rules, but rather your basic grammar skills, logic and common sense.

In the ACT Reading section, you'll be given four reading passages followed by questions mostly asking you to locate facts and verify information.

**OTHER "HELPS"-** The SAT Critical Reading is like analyzing a debate, while ACT reading is more like researching a term paper. If you're good at interpretation, you'll do well on the SAT. If you're more of a quantitative thinker, you might be more comfortable with the ACT.

## **Math Sections**

**SAT-** The SAT Math sections contain approximately equal proportions of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry questions, along with some other question types that require skills like probability and logical reasoning. The SAT is interested in testing your ability to manipulate information like key facts and formulas, rather than just memorizing them.

The questions are a mix of Regular Math (multiple choice), Grid-ins (regular math problems where you have to fill in the answer) and Quantitative Comparisons 9 multiple choice questions where you'll have to compare quantities in two columns.

**ACT-** The ACT Math section requires you to know pre algebra, geometry, and coordinate and plane geometric. Unlike the SAT, you'll also see trigonometry, the quadratic formula and graphs and equations of circles, ellipses and parabolas.

The questions are multiple-choice. Regular Math questions. They are straightforward, requiring you to know a particular concept or formula - so you'll need to have this information memorized.

Other "Helps"- Both the SAT and ACT test high school math and permit you to use a calculator. If you enjoy questions that call upon logical reasoning and visualization, you might prefer the SAT. But if you're more comfortable with straightforward, academically rigorous questions, the ACT might be for you.

## Comparable Scores on SAT/ACT

<b>ACT</b>	<b>SAT</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
36	1600	99
29	1300	90
27	1200	80
25	1180	70
23	1080	60
21	1000	50
20	960	40
18	870	30
15	740	20