

Key differences between the ACT and SAT

ACT vs SAT: which test is a better fit for you? Students may take whichever test they prefer (assuming there are available testing locations for both tests). If you're not sure which test you would prefer, consider the key differences between the ACT and SAT. Some students find that the ACT caters to their strengths more so than the SAT, and vice versa. Current Study Packets for both tests are available in the Counseling and Career Centers.

SAT		vs.	ACT	
content-based test		Type of Test	content-based test	
Reading: 1, 65-min section; Math: 1, 25-min section (no calculator) & 1, 55-min section (w/ calculator); Writing & Language: 1, 35-min section; Essay: 1, 50-min section (optional)		Test Format	English: 1, 45-min section; Math: 1, 60-min section; Reading: 1, 35-min section; Science: 1, 35-min section; Writing: 1, 40-min essay (optional)	
reading, relevant words in context, math, grammar & usage, analytical writing (optional)		Content Covered	grammar & usage, math, reading, science reasoning, and writing (optional)	
questions are evidence and context-based in an effort to focus on real-world situations and multi-step problem-solving. Questions are harder overall, but given more time to answer.		Test Style & Time	straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher, however time is VERY tight for each section	
Math and Evidence-Based Reading & Writing are each scored on a scale of 200-800. Composite SAT score is the sum of the two section scores and ranged from 400-1600.		Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36	
no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers		Penalty for Wrong Answers?	no – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	
yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges		Score Choice?	yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges	
questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)		Difficulty Levels	difficulty level of the questions is random Math questions increase in difficulty level for each section	
arithmetic, problem-solving & data analysis, heart of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; formulas provided.		Math Levels	arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided	
with private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores		Tends to be more popular?	with public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores	
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Offered on these dates	Test Date	Registration Deadline
Aug 24 Oct 5 Nov 2 Dec 7 Mar 14 May 2 Jun 6	Jul 26 Sept 6 Oct 3 Nov 8 Feb 14 Apr 3 May 8		Sept. 14 Oct. 26 Dec. 14 Feb. 8 Apr 4 June 13 Jul 18	Aug 16 Sept. 20 Nov. 8 Jan. 10 Feb 28 May 8 Jun 19
\$49.50 Or \$64.50 with Essay		COST	\$52.50. or \$68. with Writing	
www.sat.org/register		REGISTER @	www.actstudent.org	
Students choose test location when registering		Where are they offered?	Students choose test location when registering.	

BOTH TESTS REQUIRE THE Squalicum School Code FOR REGISTRATION 480-091

FEE WAIVERS: Students who are eligible for free & reduced lunch may request fee waivers for SAT or ACT from Mrs. O'Brien in the Career/Counseling Center

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with a diagnosed learning or health disability may be eligible to take the SAT and/or ACT with extended time. See your school counselor early for registration information.