

BASIC { SAT DIFFERENCES } ACT

	SAT	ACT
LENGTH (MENTAL ENDURANCE REQUIRED)	225 minutes (including one experimental section that goes unscored)	175 minutes (plus a 30-minute optional writing test)
NUMBER OF SECTIONS	10 sections: 3 critical reading, 3 writing (including an essay), 3 math, and 1 experimental	4 or 5 sections: English, math, reading, science, and an optional writing section
SCORING	A percentage is subtracted for missed answers – think twice before guessing blindly on this test!	No penalty for incorrect answers, so answer every question – even the ones you don't have time to think about!
MATH CONTENT	Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra I (including functions and graphs), Data analysis and Probability	Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra I, Algebra II and Trigonometry
CRITICAL THINKING	Abstract reasoning (analogous, interpretative, anticipating an author's response); also focuses heavily on vocabulary	Straightforward, content-based, similar to high-school curriculum – focus is on grammar and punctuation, mechanics and rhetoric
SPEED	190 questions total	215 questions total – this test is more about time management!
FORMAT	Mostly multiple choice, except for the essay and 9 “grid-in” questions, which span a number of math principles	Entirely multiple choice except for the (optional) essay
SCORING	Each of the three sections (critical reading, writing, and math) is worth up to 800 points, for a total score potential of 2400 points. Essay scored at a range from 0-12 points	Each of the 4 separate sections is graded on a scale of 1-36; those composite scores are then averaged. Essay scored at a range of 0-12 points
COST	\$45 for standard administration	\$31 for standard administration, \$46 if you decide to write the essay
WHAT SCORES COLLEGES SEE	By default every score gets sent (at least until March 2009, when “Score Choice” will be offered)	Offers a bit more flexibility with the “Score Choice” option – students can pick which scores will be reported
DIFFICULTY LEVELS	Questions on each section become more difficult as the section progresses	Difficulty level remains fairly constant throughout
WHERE TO REGISTER	http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg.html	http://www.actstudent.org