

What is the difference between the ACT and SAT?

Comparison of the ACT Test and SAT (current and new)

Category	Current ACT	Current SAT	New SAT
Test Fee	\$39.50 \$56.50 (with writing)	\$54.50	\$43.00 \$54.50 (with essay test)
Total Testing Time* *Redesigned SAT testing time subject to research	2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes for the Essay [optional])	3 hours and 45 minutes	3 hours (plus 50 minutes for the Essay [optional])
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT mathematics test (60 items, 60 minutes) • ACT reading test (40 items, 35 minutes) • ACT science test (40 items, 35 minutes) • ACT English test (75 items, 45 minutes) • ACT writing test (optional; 1 prompt, 30 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics (54 items, 70 minutes) • Critical Reading (67 items, 70 minutes) • SAT Writing Test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay (mandatory; 1 prompt, 25 minutes) • Multiple-Choice (49 Items, 60 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math (58 items, 80 minutes) • Evidence-Based Reading and Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Test (52 items, 65 minutes) • Writing and Language Test (44 Items, 35 minutes) • Essay (optional; 1 prompt, 50 minutes)
Important Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to measure academic achievement in English, mathematics, reading, and science. • Scores based on the number of correct answers. No penalty for incorrect answers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on general reasoning skills • Emphasis on vocabulary, often in limited contexts • Complex scoring (a point for a correct answer and a deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued emphasis on reasoning. • Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact. • Scores based on the number of correct answers. No penalty for incorrect answers.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes enhanced scoring for reliable college and career planning insights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM Score • ELA Score • Progress Toward Career Readiness Indicator • Text Complexity Progress Indicator 		
<p>Score Reporting</p> <p>*Redesigned SAT scores subject to research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT Composite Score: 1–36 (average of four test scores) • ACT English test: 1–36 • ACT reading test: 1–36 • ACT mathematics test: 1–36 • ACT science test: 1–36 • ACT English and writing test: 1–36 • STEM Score: 1-36 • ELA Score: 1-36 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale ranging from 600 to 2400 • Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Critical Reading; 200 to 800 for Mathematics; 200 to 800 for Writing • Essay results scaled to multiple-choice Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale ranging from 400 to 1600 • Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing; 200 to 800 for Math; 2 to 8 on each of three traits for Essay • Essay results reported separately