

Standardized Tests: ACT & SAT

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What is the ACT?

- **Achievement** test, measuring how much you learned
- Up to 5 components:
 - English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing Test
- Scale scores range from 1-36
- Two scores for writing Test
 - Combined english/writing score (1-36)
 - Writing sub-score (2-12)
 - Comments from one of the trained readers
- ACT national average score is 21
- Typically taken first in junior year

BASICS OF PREPARATION

- Become familiar with the content and format of ACT
 - www.actstudent.org
- Learn appropriate test-taking strategies
- *ACT Online Prep*
 - ACT's test preparation program
- *"The Real ACT Prep Guide"*
 - official test prep book
- *ACT question of the Day*
- *Preparing for the ACT*
 - Free student test prep book
- See your counselor for other test preparation materials

**YOU NEED A SOLID
HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

English	4 Years
Mathematics (<i>Algebra 1 and above</i>)	4 Years
Social Studies	3 Years
Science	3 Years
Foreign Language (<i>of the same language</i>)	2 Years
Arts	1 Year

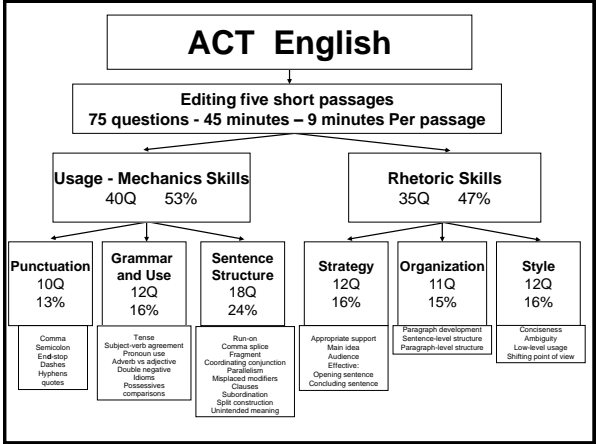


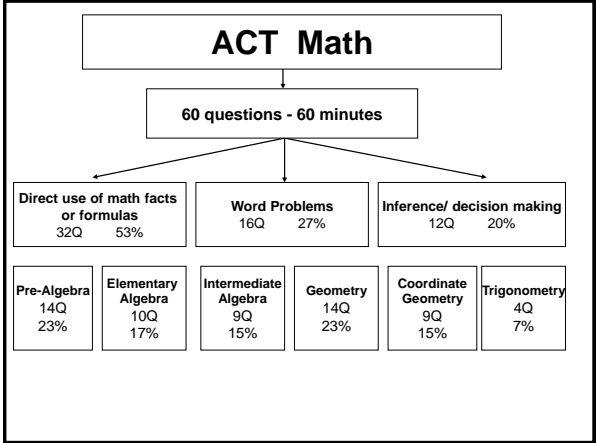
REMEMBER:

Test scores are only ONE factor used for college admissions!
Your entire application is important!

Question

What is the national average score for the ACT and what score do YOU want?!?

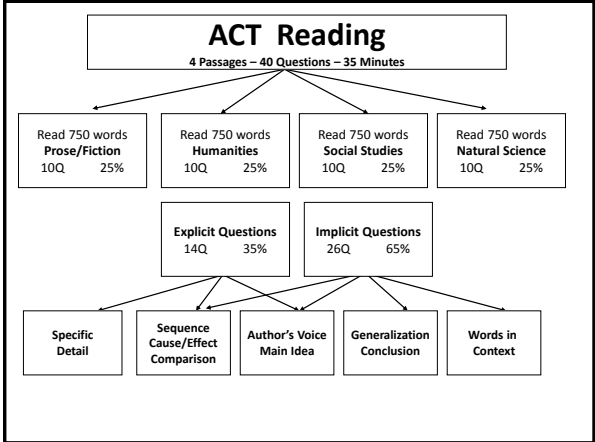


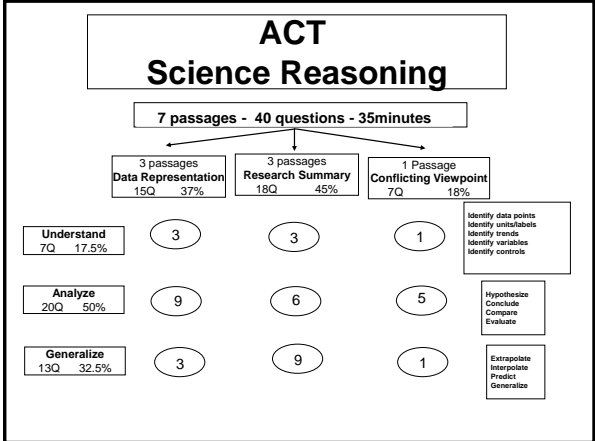


PRACTICE ACT MATH PROBLEM

What is the value of x when $2x + 3 = 3x - 4$?

A) -7
B) -1/5
C) 1
D) 1/5
E) 7





ACT WRITING TEST (OPTIONAL)

- 1 essay
- 30 minutes
- Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English and in entry level college composition courses
- Define an issue and describe two points of view on the issue
- Respond to a question about your position
- May agree with either perspectives or you may present a different argument
- You score will not be affected by which position you take

10 STRATEGIES FOR ACT

- 1) Skip the directions
- 2) Skim the whole section
- 3) Pace yourself
- 4) Answer the easy questions first
- 5) When in doubt, guess
- 6) Don't lose your confidence with tough questions
- 7) Frequently check your place on the answer sheet
- 8) Don't get sidetracked by the unimportant
- 9) Understand what you're being asked
- 10) Stop a minute or two before your time is up

BONUS: Make a study plan and follow it

STRATEGIES FOR ACT WRITING

- 1) Plan before you start writing
- 2) Do not skip lines or write in the margins
- 3) Carefully think about the prompt
- 4) Decide which position you will take
- 5) Make a list of the reasons for your position and give specific examples to justify
- 6) Figure out how best to organize your thoughts
- 7) Explain your position clearly and logically
- 8) Stay on topic
- 9) Address what others might say to counter your argument
- 10) End with a strong conclusion that summarizes your argument

SAT: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

- **Aptitude:** predicts your potential for future success
- Assess your academic readiness for college
- Provides a path to opportunities, financial support and scholarships
- Measures the skills required for success in college and beyond!

SAT

- Taken 1st time in spring of junior year
- Indicates how well you use skills and knowledge attained in and out of the classroom
 - How you think, solve problems, and communicate
- 3 hr. and 45 min exam
- 10 sections
 - 3 critical reading sections
 - 3 math sections
 - 3 writing sections
 - 1 experimental section
- Total score is between 600-2400
- National average for the SAT is 1510

SAT

- Offered 7 times a year
 - January, March, May, June, October, November, December
- Register at www.Collegeboard.com
- Fee waivers available
- Cost is \$45.00 and includes 4 score reports

SAT Critical Reading

Time	Total 70 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Two 25-minute sections❖ One 20 minute section
Content	Reading Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Single paragraphs❖ Longer passages❖ Paired paragraphs❖ Paired longer passages❖ Sentence level reading
Question Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Multiple-choice with 5 answer choices❖ Critical Reading❖ Sentence completions
Score	200-800

SAT Writing

Time	Total: 60 minutes ❖ 25-minute essay ❖ One 25-minute multiple choice section ❖ One 10-minute multiple choice section
Content	❖ Grammar and usage ❖ Word choice (diction)
Question Types	❖ Multiple choice with 5 answer choices ❖ Identifying sentence errors ❖ Improving sentence errors ❖ Improving sentences ❖ Improving paragraphs ❖ Student-written essay
Score	200-800; essay sub-score: 2-12

SAT WRITING QUESTION

Hoping to -----the dispute, negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be -----to both labor and management.

- A) enforce...useful
- B) end...divisive
- C) overcome...unattractive
- D) extend...satisfactory
- E) resolve...acceptable

SAT MATH

Time	Total: 70 minutes ❖ Two 25-minute sections ❖ One 20-minute section
Content	❖ Algebra I ❖ Algebra II ❖ Geometry ❖ Data analysis, statistics, probability
Question Types	❖ Multiple-choice with 5 answer choices ❖ Student-produced responses (grid-ins)
Score	200-800

SAT SUBJECT AREA TESTS

- Measure your knowledge and skills in particular subject areas
- SAT Subject Tests fall into five general subject areas:

English	Languages
Literature	Chinese with Listening
History	French
US History	French with Listening
World History	German
Mathematics	German with Listening
Mathematics Level 1	Spanish
Mathematics Level 2	Spanish with Listening
Science	Modern Hebrew
Biology E/M	Italian
Chemistry	Latin
Physics	Japanese with Listening
	Korean with Listening

10 STRATEGIES FOR SAT

- 1) Create a study plan and follow it
- 2) Don't get stuck on any one question
- 3) Learn the directions in advance
- 4) For the essay, develop your ideas and express them clearly, using examples to back them up
- 5) For the writing multiple-choice questions, think about the simplest clearest way to express an idea
- 6) For sentence completions, as you read, try to predict what word should go in each blank
- 7) For reading comprehension questions, skim the passage to see what it's about
- 8) For the math multiple choice, you're allowed to use a calculator, but it won't help you unless you know how to approach the problems
- 9) For the math grid-ins, you must come up with the answer and fill in the grid
- 10) Relax the night before the test

QUESTION

What is the difference between an aptitude and an achievement test?

Comparison (1)

SAT

- Aptitude Test
- 7 times per year
- Reading, Math, and Writing
- ¼ of a point deduction for wrong answer on multiple choice
- 200-800 points per section, for a total score of 600-2400*

ACT

- Achievement Test
- 6 times per year
- English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and optional Writing
- No penalty for wrong answer
- 1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score, 2-12 for the Writing Test

COMPARISON(2)

SAT

- Math section includes Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra 2
- Sends 4 free reports to colleges of your choice, each additional report is \$10
- Formulas given for math section*

ACT

- Math section includes Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Trigonometry
- Sends 4 free reports to colleges of your choice, each additional report is \$10
- No formulas given for math section

SAT Advantages

- 10 **short** sections, the longest is 25-minutes
- **Tests 9th and 10th grade math**, plus a few reasoning concepts
- About 1/4 of Critical Reading questions are **vocabulary**-based
- **"Score choice"**: choose to send best scores

SAT Disadvantages

- The SAT is about **4 hours** long
- ¼ point penalty for wrong answers
- If you don't like writing essays, the **SAT begins with a timed essay** that is graded and factored into your writing score

ACT

Advantages

- **Only 4 sections**, the longest is 1 hour
- ~3 hours long
- **“Score choice”**: only send your highest score to colleges
- **No penalty** for incorrect answers

ACT

Disadvantages

- Length of test sections
- Science section is challenging for those w/ difficulty **reasoning with numbers and graphs**
- Math concepts include **trigonometry**
- ACT English will certainly challenge knowledge of colons, hyphens, commas, etc.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES(1)

College Information

- **CSO College Center**: www.CSOcollegecenter.org
- **The College Board**: www.collegeboard.com
- **Peterson's**: www.petersons.com
- **The Common App**: www.commonapp.org
- **Hobson's College view**: www.collegeview.com
- **Colleges That Change Lives**: www.ctcl.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES(2)

Testing

- **ACT**: www.act.org
- **ACT Fee Waiver Instructions**: www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html
- **SAT**: The College Board: www.collegeboard.com
- **SAT Fee Waiver Instructions**: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees/feewaivers.html
- **Preliminary SAT(PSAT)**: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about/html
- **Free Test Prep from Number2.com**: www.number2.com
- **The Princeton Review**: www.princetonreview.com
- **Kaplan's Test Prep**: www.kaptest.com
