



Comparing the SAT (Current and Redesigned) to the ACT

A guide from Summit Educational Group

When it is released in 2016, the new SAT will be a significant change from the current test. Also, the redesign will affect how we determine whether a student is better-suited for the SAT or ACT. Below is a broad comparison of the new SAT to the current SAT and the ACT.

	Current SAT	New SAT (Spring 2016)	ACT
Description	The new SAT will require similar skills and test similar content to that of the ACT and current SAT. Many of the changes to the new SAT's format will make it look a lot like the ACT. Among the biggest changes to the SAT are an emphasis on real-world problems, a new scoring system, and an overhaul of the essay section. Overall, the redesigned SAT will place a bigger emphasis on problem-solving and understanding context. Whereas the new SAT will focus on critical thinking, the ACT will require more speed.		
Format & Length	10 short sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Critical Reading; 3 Mathematics; 3 Writing (including Essay); 1 experimental (not scored) Questions have 5 answer choices Total testing time: 3 hours, 45 minutes 	5 long sections (comprising 3 "tests" and an optional essay): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing & Language; Reading; 2 Math; Essay Questions have 4 answer choices Total testing time: 3 hours (without optional essay) 	5 long sections (comprising 4 "tests" and an optional essay): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English; Mathematics; Reading; Science; Writing (optional essay) Most questions have 4 answer choices (Math has 5) Total testing time: 2 hours, 55 minutes (without optional essay)
Scoring	Combined score: 600-2400 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Reading: 200-800; Math: 200-800; Writing: 200-800 Writing score comprised of Multiple Choice and Essay subscores. ¼-point deduction for incorrect answers 	Combined score: 400-1600 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 200-800; Math: 200-800 Essay score reported separately "Cross-Test Scores" report performance on Science and History/Social Studies across entire test No deduction for incorrect answers 	Composite score: 1-36 (average of 4 tests) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: 1-36; Math: 1-36; Reading: 1-36; Science: 1-36 Writing score not factored into Composite score Combined English/Writing score provided separately: 1-36 No deduction for incorrect answers
Writing/English	Identify and correct errors in single sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> standard English grammar and usage punctuation not tested Limited and predictable set of errors	Revise and edit a piece of writing for, logical structure, and effective rhetoric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> standard English grammar and usage punctuation logical structure effective rhetoric includes informational graphics 	Revise and edit a piece of writing for, logical structure, and effective rhetoric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> standard English grammar and usage punctuation logical structure effective rhetoric commonly confused words
Math	Arithmetic, Algebra I and II, Geometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply core math skills to solve mostly non-standard, "tricky" problems formulas provided 10 Grid-In questions (no answer choices)	Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong emphasis on Algebra Calculator prohibited on one section 13 Grid-In questions (no answer choices)	Pre-Algebra through basic Trigonometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> math tested in straightforward manner extensive range of concepts tested emphasis on word problems formulas not provided
Reading	Vocabulary-based sentence completions Total of 7 short and long reading passages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> many inference, tone, purpose questions questions follow order of passage 	Vocabulary de-emphasized 4 long passages and 1 paired passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 passages include diagrams/charts 1 passage from "Great Global Conversation" 	4 long passages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very little emphasis on vocabulary straightforward questions that require close reading of passage order of questions is random less time per question
Science	The current SAT does not have a Science section.	The new SAT does not have stand-alone Science section, but Science questions will be included throughout the Math, Reading, and Writing & Language tests.	40 questions distributed over 7 passages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasis on charts, diagrams, etc. Science is a reasoning test—rarely requires prior science knowledge
Essay	25 minutes, required, always first section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broad theme can be approached formulaically or creatively 	50 minutes, optional, always last section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze a passage and evaluate author's reasoning and rhetoric students' opinions discouraged Essay is scored on 2-8 scale on three traits (Reading, Analysis, and Writing) 	Optional, always the last test <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze multiple viewpoints on a contemporary issue demands a more structured response optional, but required by most schools



Current SAT vs. ACT: Concordance

Scores on the ACT cannot be directly converted to SAT scores – they are different tests. However, “concordance” can be developed that matches comparable performance on the two exams by comparing thousands of students who took the tests at approximately the same time. Colleges and the NCAA use tables like the ones below to evaluate applicants

who have taken different tests. ACT and the College Board have developed concordance tables comparing ACT and SAT scores. One table shows the concordance between the ACT Composite score and the sum of SAT Critical Reading and Math Scores, while the other shows the concordance between ACT combined English/Writing score and the SAT Writing Score. An ACT Composite score alone should not be directly converted into a 600-2400 SAT score because the Composite score does not include the essay.

This chart compares only the current SAT with the ACT. Information on how the new SAT will compare to the ACT has not yet been released.

Concordance between ACT Composite Score and SAT Critical Reading and Math		Concordance between ACT Combined English/Writing Score and SAT Writing Score	
ACT Composite	SAT CR+M	ACT English/Writing	SAT Writing
36	1600	36	800
35	1560	35	800
34	1510	34	770
33	1460	33	740
32	1420	32	720
31	1380	31	690
30	1340	30	670
29	1300	29	650
28	1260	28	630
27	1220	27	610
26	1190	26	590
25	1150	25	570
24	1110	24	550
23	1070	23	530
22	1030	22	510
21	990	21	490
20	950	20	470
19	910	19	450
18	870	18	430
17	830	17	420
16	790	16	400
15	740	15	380
14	690	14	360
13	640	13	340
12	590	12	330
11	530	11	310

Source: <http://www.act.org/aap/concordance>

One-on-One, In-Home Tutoring | Classroom Programs | Course Materials and Services

SAT | ACT | SAT Subject Tests | PSAT | SSAT | ISEE | Academic Subjects

(800) **MY TUTOR** | **MYTUTOR.COM**