

## The ACT vs. the SAT

### Which test is the best for your students?

With a test time of 3 hours and 25 minutes (compared to a test time of 3 hours and 45 minutes on the SAT), an optional essay introduced in February of 2004, and the ability to send only your best scores to colleges, the ACT test is gaining in popularity. The number of ACT test takers has increased by about 18 percent since 2000, and about 40 percent of all college applicants take the ACT. This doesn't mean that the SAT has lost its appeal; many students still find that the SAT is their test of choice, and some colleges across the country still consider SAT scores major factors in their admission process. When your students are weighing their options, they should keep in mind that there are differences in test structure and the type of content assessed.

Use the chart below to see which test makes the most of students' strengths to help determine which test might be best for them.

	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (Including the 30-minute optional Writing test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Sections	4 test sections (5 with the optional Essay, known as the Writing Test)	10 Sections
Areas Tested	English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (Optional)	Critical Reading, Math, Writing (includes the Essay)
Reading (ACT) / Critical Reading (SAT)	4 Reading Comprehension passages, 10 questions per passage.	Mix of Reading Comprehension and Sentence Completion questions that require vocabulary expertise
Science	Science (analysis, interpretation, evaluation, problem solving) covered	Science not included
Math	Math accounts for <u>        </u> of overall score Topics covered: Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry (4 questions)	Math accounts for 1/3 of overall score. Topics covered: Basic Geometry and Algebra II
Essay	Last thing you do (optional); 30 minutes	First thing you do; 25 minutes. Factored into overall score.
Scoring	Total composite score of 1-36 (based on average of 4 tests)	Total score out of 2400 3 scores of 200-800 for each section. 2 sub-scores of 20-80 for writing multiple choice and 0-12 for the Essay
Wrong Answer Penalty	No wrong answer penalty	Yes, <u>        </u> point per wrong answer (except for Math Grid-in questions)
Sending Score History	You decide which score is sent	Your entire score history will be sent automatically