SAT vs. ACT

(A quick breakdown of frequently asked questions)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SAT |  | ACT |
| Private colleges and colleges on the east and west coasts. | Preferred by? | Public colleges and colleges in the middle of the country. The ACT is preferred by more U.S. colleges than the SAT. |
| Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities. | Accepted for? | Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities. |
| **Seven** times per year | When is it administered? | **Six** times per year. |
| **Ten-section exam:**  Three Writing Skills, three Math, three Critical Reading and one Experimental. The Experimental section is masked to look like a regular section. | What is the test structure? | **Four-section exam:**  English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An Experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only, and is clearly experimental. |
| **Math**: up to Algebra II.  **No Science** section.  **Reading**: long and short passages.  \*A test of strategy and testmanship. | What is that test content? | **Math**: up to Trigonometry.  **Science**: section included.  **Reading**: four passages with less than one minute to answer each question.  \*Stresses grammar.  \*A test of time management and studiousness. |
| **Yes.** | Is there a penalty for wrong answers? | **No.** |
| 200-800 for each subject, added together for a combined score. A 2400 is the highest possible combined score. | How is the test scored? | 1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score. |
| **Yes**. If a student requests a score report to be sent to specific colleges, the report will include the scores the student received on every SAT taken. | Are all scores sent to schools? | **No**. There is a “Score Choice” option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores AND which scores the schools will use. |
| Scholarship purposes. | Are there other uses for the exams? | Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs. |
| At least **6 weeks** before the test date. | Best time to register? | At least **4 weeks** before the test date. |
| You have 25 minutes to write an essay on an assigned topic. | Is an essay required? | 30 minute optional writing assessment is offered. (ACT Assessment Plus Writing). Check with college or university for requirement. |
| Educational Testing Service  609-771-7600  [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)  The College Board  [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) | Need more information? | ACT, Inc.  319-337-1270  www.act.org |