College Entrance Exams
ACT and SAT

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Learning Should Be Personal™
On a Path to Graduation Day
The Top 10

Most frequently asked questions about the ACT and SAT
QUESTION 1

What factors are taken into account by College Admissions?
College Admissions Factors

- Grades in CP Courses: 79%
- Overall Grades: 60%
- SAT/ACT: 56%
- Essay: 22%
- Class Rank: 14%
- Activities: 6%
- Interview: 3.5%
QUESTION 2

Why are College Entrance Exams so important?
# Why Entrance Exams are Important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Colleges</th>
<th>For Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creates level playing field</td>
<td>Chance to make up for sub-par effort in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusts for grade inflation</td>
<td>Chance to earn scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps predict student success</td>
<td>Chance to separate one student from another</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colleges use SAT and ACT scores along with many other factors in making admissions decisions:

- Grades
- Extracurricular activities
- Admissions essays
- Interviews
Test Scores Differentiate

SAT and ACT scores DO have a great influence in differentiating students because they are concrete and... remove subjectivity.
QUESTION 3

What are the differences between the ACT and the SAT?
## ACT vs. SAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No penalty for incorrect answers</td>
<td>No penalty for incorrect answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaled between 1-36 per section</td>
<td>Scaled between 200-800 per section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score is average of 4 sections, plus optional essay</td>
<td>Overall score is sum of 2 sections (out of 1600), plus optional essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science section</td>
<td>No science section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math topics through trigonometry</td>
<td>Math topics through trigonometry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Total time:
- 2 hours & 55 minutes or
- 3 hours & 35 minutes with optional essay

* Optional Writing Essay (40 minutes)
Overview

Total time:

- 3 hours
- 3 hours & 50 minutes with optional essay
- All multiple-choice except for Math which has grid-ins

* Optional Essay
(50 minutes)
QUESTION 4

What skills are tested on the ACT and SAT?
English Overview

75 multiple-choice questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage/Mechanics</th>
<th>Rhetorical Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuation:</strong> conventions of internal and end punctuation and relationship to meaning</td>
<td><strong>Organization:</strong> organization of ideas, effective introduction, transitions, closing sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar/usage:</strong> subject/verb agreement, pronoun/antecedent, modifiers, verb formation, pronoun case, comparative/superlative adjectives and adverbs, idiomatic usage</td>
<td><strong>Style:</strong> word choice, maintenance of style and tone, effect of sentence structure on rhetorical effectiveness, ambiguity of pronoun references, wordiness, redundancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure:</strong> relationship between and among clauses, modifier placement, shifts in construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Math Overview

- 60 multiple-choice questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Algebra and Elementary Algebra</th>
<th>Intermediate Algebra/Coordinate Geometry</th>
<th>Plane Geometry &amp; Trigonometry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 questions</td>
<td>18 questions</td>
<td>18 questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topics include:**
- Fractions, decimals, ratio, percent, and absolute value, variable to express relationships, polynomials and square root
- Quadratic formula, inequalities, roots of polynomials, real number line, line graphs, point, line, and slope
- Properties and relationships of plane figures, parallel lines, proof techniques, perimeter, area, volume, graph of trigonometric functions, and trigonometric equations

**The skills most students have upon entering high school**

**The skills most students have upon completion of Algebra**

**The skills most students have upon completion of Geometry**
40 multiple-choice questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Referring and Reasoning Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ideas that are directly stated</td>
<td>• Determine main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statements with implied meaning</td>
<td>• Locate and interpret details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 reading selections: prose fiction/literary narrative, social sciences,</td>
<td>• Understand sequence of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanities and natural sciences.</td>
<td>• Make comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comprehend cause-effect relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine meaning of words in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draw generalizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze author’s or narrator’s voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
40 multiple-choice questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Representation</th>
<th>Research Summaries</th>
<th>Conflicting Viewpoints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions focus on skills such as graph reading, interpretation of scatterplots, and interpretation of information presented in tables.</td>
<td>Questions focus on the design of experiments and the interpretation of experimental results.</td>
<td>Questions focus on understanding, analysis, and comparison of alternative viewpoints or hypotheses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One Writing Prompt

• Describes an issue.
• Presents three different perspectives on the issue.
• You are asked to analyze and evaluate the perspectives, state and develop your own perspective, and explain the relationship between your perspective and the others.

40 minutes to complete

Assesses skills taught in high school English class and entry level college composition courses
Evidence-Based Reading

There are 52 multiple-choice reading questions.

► Words in Context
  • Use context clues to figure out which meaning of a word or phrase is being used
  • Decide how the author’s word choice shapes meaning, style, and tone
  • Interpret words presented in passage-based readings

► Command of Evidence
  • Find evidence in a passage (or paired passages) that best supports the answer to the previous question or supports a conclusion
  • Identify how authors use evidence to support claims
  • Find a relationship between an informational graphic and passage
  • Demonstrate ability to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence in sources.

► Analysis in History/Social Studies and Science
  • Examine hypotheses
  • Interpret data
  • Consider implications
Writing and Language Overview

There are 44 multiple-choice writing and language questions.

- **Command of Evidence**
  - Improve the way passages develop information and ideas

- **Words in Context**
  - Improve word choice

- **Analysis in History/Social Studies and in Science**
  - Read and revise passages with a critical eye

- **Expression of Ideas**
  - Improve a passage for organization and intended impact

- **Standard English Conventions**
  - Revise sentence structure, usage, and punctuation
There are 58 multiple-choice and grid-in math questions.

- **Heart of Algebra**
  - Focuses on mastery of linear equations and systems

- **Problem Solving and Data Analysis**
  - Focuses on using ratios, percentages, and proportional reasoning to solve problems

- **Passport to Advanced Math**
  - Features questions that require the manipulation of complex equations

- **Additional Topics in Math**
  - Some questions focus on other topics such as the geometry and trigonometry relevant to college and career readiness
Math Overview

- 2 Math Sections: Non-calculator and calculator based
- 20 non-calculator questions; both multiple choice and non-multiple choices (grid-ins)
- 38 calculator based questions; both multiple choice and non-multiple choices (grid-ins)
Optional Essay

What does the Essay prompt ask you to do?

- Read a passage
- Explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience
- Support your explanation with evidence from the passage
Question 5

Which test should I take?
Advantages of Taking Both

➢ Show off your skills
  • The ACT and the SAT showcase different skills and slightly different academic curriculum.

➢ Showcase your diverse abilities
  • Many students possess strengths that favor elements of each test respectively.
  • Taking both tests provides a more complete picture of your talent.
Advantages of Taking Both

Most colleges accept both

- Colleges understand there are differences, but neither is seen as technically “harder” or “easier.”

- Sending both scores allows college admissions departments to consider both scores in determining admission and scholarship eligibility.
Bottom Line...

Do your homework
...so you can make decisions based on knowledge rather than guesses.

Keep your options open
... since there are so many similarities between the two tests, prep for both!
Question 6
What’s a good score?
What’s a good score?

A good score depends on the following:

- School to which your child is applying
- Program within a school
- Test scores of other applicants
- Scholarship requirements
- Rest of the application
# Fast Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ACT Composite Mid 50% Out of 36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of William &amp; Mary</td>
<td>28-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>29-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Newport University</td>
<td>23-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>22-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>24-29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Fast Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>SAT (CR &amp; Math) 25-75 percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of William &amp; Mary</td>
<td>1250-1470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Virginia</td>
<td>1240-1460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Newport University</td>
<td>1060-1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Madison University</td>
<td>1030-1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>1100-1320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 7
When should students take the ACT/SAT?
## Testing Timeline by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</table>
| **Freshman Year** | • PSAT 8/9 (If administered by state/district)  
                    • Begin thinking about college prep plan.               |
| **Sophomore Year** | • PSAT 10  
                    • SAT Subject Tests (if taking applicable Honors/AP courses) |}
| **Junior Year** | • PSAT/NMSQT in October  
                    • SAT/ACT in fall/spring  
                    • SAT Subject Tests (November, May or June)                         |
| **Senior Year** | • SAT/ACT in September or October (if necessary)  
                    • Finish any remaining SAT Subject tests in the fall. |
ACT dates 2017-2018

- October 28
- December 9
- February 10
- April 14
- June 9
- July 14

(also offered in September)

Register at least a month in advance at act.org
SAT dates 2017-2018

- SAT:
  - November 4
  - December 2
  - March 10, 2018
  - May 5
  - June 2
  (also offered in October)

Register at least a month in advance at collegeboard.org
QUESTION 8

When are test results received?
Online scores

• Scores are available approximately 2 weeks after the test date.

• Scores are sent to colleges within 10 days after you receive them.
QUESTION 9

How does “Score Choice” work?
How “Score Choice” Works

- Students can elect “Score Choice” when taking the SAT or ACT to avoid scores being sent to colleges before they have seen them.

**PRIMARY ADVANTAGE**
- You can see a low test score before a college receives it, and you can decide NOT to submit that test date’s score.

**PRIMARY DISADVANTAGE**
- If “Score Choice” is elected, it may delay your application.
QUESTION 10

What preparation resources are available?
Sylvan offers ACT and SAT Preparation

- Free practice ACT and SAT with online tutorials linking to test
- SAT Prep small group taught by trained and certified teachers. 2 practice tests, online tutorials, student workbooks.
- In-center individualized SAT and ACT courses
- Online ACT and SAT courses
- Discount for attending Parent Academy
YOUR CHILD CAN FEEL

- Confident
- Organized
- Prepared
- Strategic
- College-bound
College Bound
QUESTIONS
Thank You!

Deborah DeJesus
Sylvan Learning