

ACT VS SAT

The SAT and ACT generally cover the same topics. Both the ACT and SAT are nationally recognized standardized tests. Most colleges do not prefer one test over the other. Neither the SAT or ACT is harder than the other. Some students do better on one test over the other. Most students score the same.

The best way to decide if taking the SAT, ACT, or both is right for you is to take a timed full-length practice test of each type. SCA will offer juniors the opportunity to take both the PSAT (in 9th, 10th, and 11th) and Pre-ACT (in 10th grade). Since the content is similar, factors like how students handle time pressure and what types of questions students find most challenging can help juniors determine which test is a better fit.

	SAT	ACT	New Digital ACT (April 2025)
Why take it?	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	two sections: the Reading and Writing section and the Math section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Math Reading Science Reasoning Essay (optional) 	Three sections: English, Math, and Reading
Length	You have 64 minutes to complete the Reading and Writing section and 70 minutes to complete the Math section for a total of 2 hours and 14 minutes of testing time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay) 	You have 65 minutes to complete English, Math, and Reading. English: 35-minute section with 50 questions Math: 50 Minute section with 45 items Reding: 40-minute section with 36 items
Reading	5 Reading passages	4 Reading passages	
Other subjects	No longer available	1 section testing your critical thinking skills (not specific science knowledge)	Optional Science and Writing. Science: 40-minute with 40 questions Writing: 40-minute section with one writing prompt
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36	