

SAT vs. ACT

OVERVIEW

	Digital SAT	Paper ACT
Format	Digital only via a College Board app	Paper-and-Pencil
Timing	2 hours and 14 minutes	2 hours and 55 minutes
Accommodations	All timing accommodations are available. Students whose accommodations require a paper test will still be able to take a paper-and-pencil test.	For information on how to request testing accommodations, visit www.compassprep.com/accommodations-requests-sat-vs-act
Structure	Stage Adaptive The difficulty of a section's second stage is based on performance in the first stage; the test tailors the second stage to the student	Static The test does not change based on a student's performance
Sections	2 Sections, each with 2 Stages Reading and Writing Combined R&W Stage 1 (32 min, 27 items) Combined R&W Stage 2 (32 min, 27 items) Math Math Stage 1 (35 min, 22 items) Math Stage 2 (35 min, 22 items)	4 Tests English (45 min, 75 items) Math (60 minutes, 60 items) Reading (35 min, 40 items) Science (35 min, 40 items) Optional Essay (40 minutes, 1 item)
Equating or Unscored Questions	Both the Reading and Writing and the Math tests will have 4 unscored questions mixed in with the scored questions	Students often receive a fifth section of unscored questions that are used for equating purposes
Test Scores	400–1600 Total Score 200–800 Reading and Writing 200–800 Math Digital SAT scores are equivalent to paper SAT scores. No new SAT-ACT Concordance is necessary.	1–36 Composite Score (rounded average of test scores) 1–36 each test: English, Math, Reading, and Science
Other Scores	No subscores or cross-test scores	Provides raw performance on content areas such as Conventions of Standard English, Algebra, Craft & Structure, and Interpretation of Data
Score Reports	Available days after the exam Students no longer have access to their questions and answers	Available 2 weeks after the exam Student can order Test Information Release (TIR) to receive a digital copy of the multiple-choice test questions for certain administrations
Security	Students have unique tests—an algorithm builds question sets out of a large pool of questions tagged based on qualities ranging from content area to difficulty.	A limited number of form codes are used each administration. Students sign an agreement to keep test questions confidential and are prohibited from using recording devices.

READING AND WRITING/ENGLISH

	Digital SAT	Paper ACT
Timing	64 minutes, evenly divided between 2 stages	English: 45 minutes Reading: 35 minutes
Passage Format	54 passage & question sets One short reading passage (25-150 words) per question	English: 5 medium-length passages with 15 questions each Reading: 4 long passages with 10 questions each
Reading Organization	Reading questions are in the first half of each stage and are organized by domain and then question type: 1. Craft and Structure (Words in Context, Text Structure and Purpose, Cross-Text Connections) 2. Info and Ideas (Central Ideas and Details, Command of Evidence, Inferences)	The four passages come in the same order and from the same categories: 1. Literary narrative or prose fiction 2. Social sciences 3. Humanities 4. Natural sciences
Question Organization	Difficulty increases within each question type	Random
Writing/English Organization	Writing questions are presented in the second half of each Reading and Writing stage and are organized by domain and then question type: 1. Standard English Conventions 2. Info and Ideas (Rhetorical Analysis, Transitions)	The five passages are written to appear like typical high-school level writing Topics range from history reports to personal narrative
Question Organization	Difficulty increases within each question type	Chronological

MATH AND SCIENCE

Timing	70 minutes, evenly divided between 2 stages	60 minutes
Format	44 questions (including about 11 student-produced response questions)	60 questions
Content Areas	Math content has not changed from the paper SAT but domains have been renamed: 1. Algebra 2. Advanced Math 3. Problem Solving and Data Analysis 4. Geometry and Trigonometry	ACT organizes questions into 3 overlapping areas and 5 question types 1. Preparing for Higher Math: Number & Quantity, Algebra, Functions, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability 2. Integrating Essential Skills 3. Statistics & Probability
Question Organization	Difficulty increases within each stage	Difficulty increases within the section
Calculator Use	Approved calculators or the testing application's built-in calculator can be used on all math questions	Approved calculators can be used on the Math Test only
Science	Reading, Writing, and Math questions ask students to interpret graphs and data tables	35-minute section: 6 long passages with graphs and 40 questions