

The SAT® at a Glance

Like the ACT, the SAT is a nationally administered, standardized paper-and-pencil test that helps colleges evaluate candidates. All colleges now accept scores from the SAT and ACT interchangeably. This means you'll have the opportunity to decide on which test you'll perform better. And in many cases, students prepare for and take both exams. Is the SAT vs. ACT – what's best for you?

Generally, you'll take the SAT for the first time in the spring of your junior year. This allows you enough time to re-take the test during the fall of your senior year if you're not satisfied with your score.

Learning About SAT Sections

The SAT tests your critical thinking skills, as well as your ability to analyze and solve problems in math, critical reading, and writing. Those three, along with an experimental section (which does not count toward your score), make up the four SAT sections. How long is the SAT? The test lasts 3 hours and 50 minutes.

The 25-minute essay will always be the first section you see, and the 10-minute multiple-choice writing section will always be the last. The other SAT sections can appear in any order.

Sections

- Critical Reading - Two 25-minute sections - 19 Sentence Completions
- Critical Reading - One 20-minute section - 48 Reading Comprehension
- Math - Two 25-minute sections - 44 Multiple Choice
- Math - One 10-minute section - 10 Grid-Ins
- Writing - One 25-minute section - 18 Identifying Sentence Errors
- Writing - One 10-minute section - 25 Improving Sentences
- Writing - One 25-minute essay - 6 Improving Paragraphs
- Experimental - One 25-minute section - Can be Critical Reading, Math, or Writing. Does not count towards your score

The SAT Critical Reading Section

The SAT Critical Reading component is designed to test skills in vocabulary, reasoning, and reading. The section does this through two distinct question types: Sentence Completions and Reading Comprehension.

The SAT Math Section

Many students fear the SAT Math Section more than any other. But there is no reason to feel that way. Just like the other sections, there are proven strategies for approaching the different kinds of math questions. On the test, you'll see two question types: Multiple-Choice and Student Produced Responses (or Grid-Ins).

The SAT Writing Essay

The first section you'll see on the SAT Writing component is the essay—and it counts for one-third of your 800-point Writing score. Your essay and multiple-choice section scores will be combined into a single scaled score that reflects the weight given to each section. This scaled score will then be converted into a final score, ranging from 200-800 points.

Your SAT Score

One of the most common questions we get from students and parents is: "What does this score mean?"

The SAT is graded on a 2400-point scale, with the Math, Critical Reading, and Writing sections all being worth 800 points each. It is important to remember that the SAT returns scores on a bell-curve. This means that the median score on each section will always be close to 500 (the midpoint between 200 and 800), with a decreasing frequency of scores down to 200 and up to 800.

Your score report also includes percentile rankings. These let you compare your performance against students across the country. For instance, if you ranked in the 90th percentile on the Math section, you did better than 89 percent of other students, while 10 percent fared better than you.

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<http://www.brightonrotaryevents.org/sat-what-is-it>