



# SAT vs ACT

## Total time

With Essay: 3 hours, 50 minutes  
Without Essay: 3 hours

With Essay: 3 hours, 35 minutes  
Without Essay: 2 hours, 55 minutes

## Included subjects

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Math, Essay (optional)

English, Math, Reading, Science, Essay (optional)

## Scoring

Two sections (not including essay) are scored separately and added for a total score from 400-1600. The essay is scored separately with three scores ranging from 2-8.

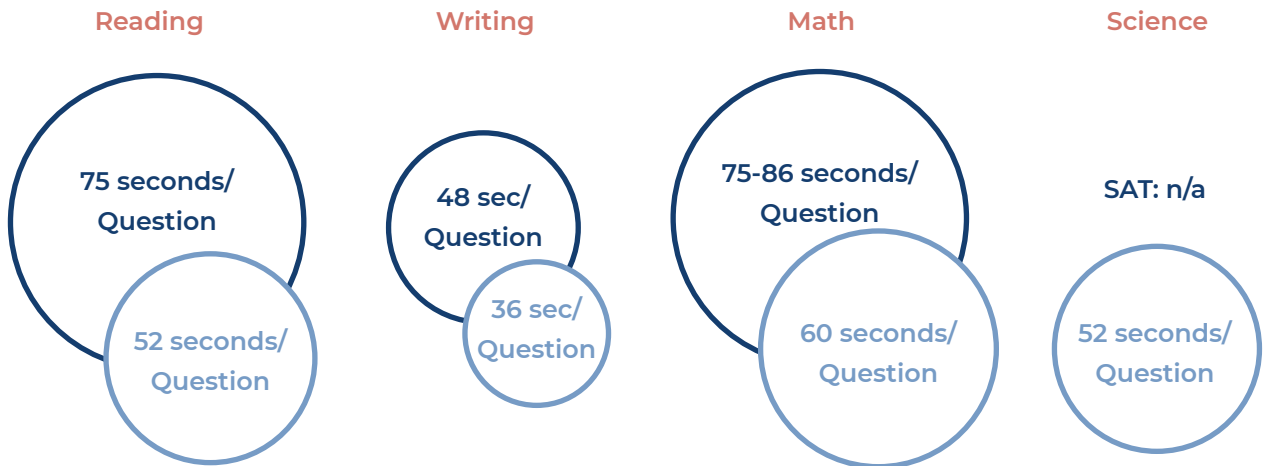
Four sections (not including essay) are averaged for a composite score from 1-36. The writing section is scored separately from 2-12.

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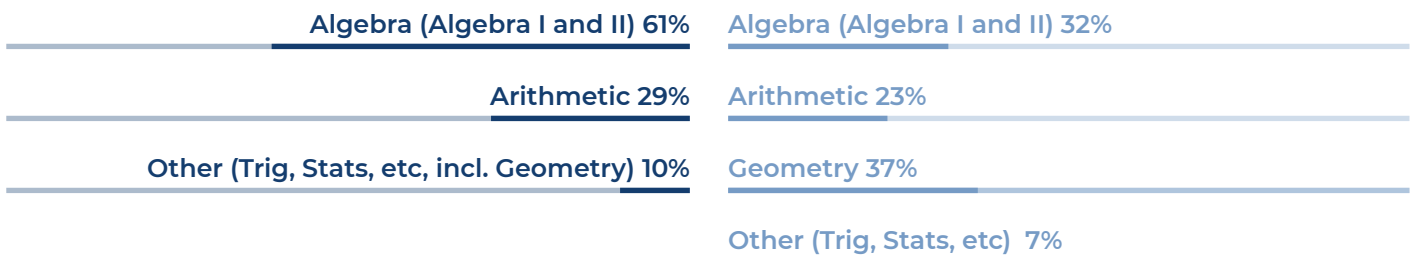
## Timing yourself

SAT time limits are more generous.

There is more time pressure on the ACT.



## Breakdown of the Math section per question





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## KEY DIFFERENCES

### Science

The SAT does not have a science section, but there are science-related questions in other sections.

The ACT has a science section centered around analyzing data, reading passages, and employing scientific skills to understand experimental design.

### Reading

Reading questions on the SAT require more critical thinking.

Reading questions on the ACT are more direct and fact-based.

### Cancellation Policy

Cancel scores before Wednesday 11:59pm after test date.

Delete the record of your scores on a test date any time.

## ADMISSIONS SCORE REPORTING POLICIES

Most colleges superscore the SAT by taking the best score for each section across multiple test dates.

Many colleges count the highest ACT composite score.

## CURRICULA AND SUBJECT MATTER

### English/Writing

Revise a passage of writing according to standard English grammar, punctuation, rhetoric, and structure.

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### Math

The questions are multiple choice and free response. They emphasize Algebra 2 and data interpretation and analysis. Some formulas are provided.  
*Two sections: Calculator and No Calculator*

The questions are multiple choice. They cover Pre-Algebra through Algebra 2, Coordinate Geometry, Plane Geometry, and Trigonometry.  
*Calculators are permitted on the whole section*

### Science

There is no science section on the SAT. There are science-related questions within other sections that are used to calculate the *Analysis in Science* subscore.

The section is comprised of six passages that cover the subject areas: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, or Physics. Students need to evaluate the information given in each passage and the accompanying charts and graphs. Scientific knowledge is not the basis of this section, but students will still use knowledge from their science classes.



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## CURRICULA AND SUBJECT MATTER

### Reading

Students read passages and answer evidence-based questions about the text. This section includes passages written before 1900 (both fiction and nonfiction) with denser language and more advanced vocabulary.

The test contains four prose passages that cover topics from natural sciences, fiction, the humanities, and social studies.

### Essay

The Essay is optional on the SAT. Students have 50 minutes to read a passage and write an essay. Students will use evidence from the passage to explain how the author built the argument. Students receive scores on three dimensions: Reading, Analysis, and Writing.

The Writing is optional on the ACT. Students are prompted to consider a contemporary issue and are provided three diverse perspectives to stimulate creative thinking. Students receive 40 minutes to plan, write, and edit an essay responding to these perspectives.