

ACT vs. SAT at a Glance

	ACT	SAT
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale of 1-36 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale of 400-1600
Length and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both tests are about the same length, but the ACT has more questions. More time per question on the SAT, which tends to mean more in-depth questioning. 	
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate science section devoted to analyzing and interpreting data Counts as $\frac{1}{4}$ of overall score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No such section, however some questions in both reading and writing and in math will involve analyzing and interpreting data. 2 reading passages will include science topics
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counts as $\frac{1}{4}$ of overall score Calculator can be used for every question Multiple choice (5 options) Questions get harder as test progresses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ overall score. Includes separate calculator and non-calculator sections. Contains multiple choice (4 options) and free response questions. Some simple formulae provided
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly more time per question on SAT (and more questions overall), so questions tend to be more in-depth. 	
English (ACT)/Writing and Language (SAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, more time per question on SAT. Both ask students to improve expression of ideas and grammar. However, ACT also asks students to identify style and tone. SAT passages may contain graphs or charts. 	
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and evaluate 3 perspectives on an issue + your own perspective and how they relate (40min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the author of a passage builds an argument (50min)
Best suited for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those students who prefer straightforward questions Endurance students who can move quickly and steadily Students who can process scientific data in a logical way Students who want to demonstrate themselves as 'science' students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mathy" students who like puzzle-type questions Students who don't rely on a calculator Students with strong reading skills Students with less advanced math skills – SAT math contains more word problems and data/chart math questions

- ACT has been around since 1959, SAT since 1929
- ACT surpassed the SAT in 2011 for number of test takers in the United States
- SAT still tends to be more popular on east and west coasts