

IVY LOUNGE TEST PREP™

DEMYSTIFYING THE SAT AND THE ACT:

Find out which standardized test your college-bound student should take to show off his or her strengths

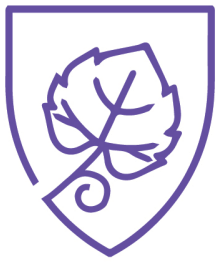
I. THE BIG PICTURE: GETTING INTO COLLEGE

- A. College List
- B. Standardized Tests
 - 1. SAT or ACT?
 - 2. SAT II Subject Tests?
- C. College Applications

II. LET'S COMPARE THE TWO TESTS

- A. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Grammar
 - 1. ACT – “English Section” – 1st Section
 - a. 1 section with 75 Q's in 45 min
 - b. 5 passages with 15 Q's per passage
 - c. 9 min per passage
 - 2. SAT – “Writing & Language Test” – 2nd Section
 - a. 1 section with 44 Q's in 35 min
 - b. 4 passages with 11 Q's per passage
 - c. 8:45 min per passage
 - d. Graphs or charts on 1+ passage(s)
 - 3. Basically same layout and same grammar and rhetorical skills tested!
- B. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Reading Comprehension
 - 1. ACT – “Reading Section” – 3rd Section
 - a. 40 Q's in 35 min
 - b. 4 passages with 10 Q's each (Fiction, Soc Sci, Humanities, Natural Sci)
 - c. 8:45 min per passage
 - d. One passage is a PAIRED DOUBLE Passage
 - 2. SAT – “Evidence-Based Reading Test” – 1st Section
 - a. 52 Q's in 65 min
 - b. 5 passages with 10-11 Q's each (Fiction, 2 History/Social Studies, 2 Science)
 - c. 13 min per passage!!
 - d. 1 Paired Double Passage
 - e. 2 passages will have charts or graphs in them
 - f. “Evidence” questions
- C. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Math
 - 1. ACT – “Math Section” – 2nd Section
 - a. 1 Section, all multiple choice
 - b. 60 Q's in 60 min
 - c. Geometry: 24% of test

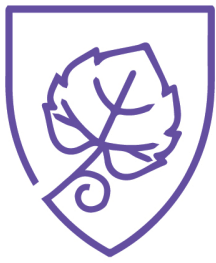
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2. SAT – “Math Test” – 3rd & 4th Sections
 - a. Section #3 – NO CALCULATOR
 - i. 25 min
 - ii. 15 multiple choice
 - iii. 5 grid-in (self-produced)
 - b. Section #4 – Calculator OK
 - i. 55 min
 - ii. 30 multiple choice
 - iii. 8 grid-in (self-produced)
 - c. Total 58 Q’s in 80 min
 - d. Geometry < 10 % (considered “Additional Topic”)
 - e. Focus: “Heart of Algebra,” “Problem Solving and Data Analysis” and “Passport to Advanced Math”
- D. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Science
 1. ACT – Science Section – 4th Section
 - a. 40 Q’s in 35 min
 - b. Typically 6 passages, sometimes 7.
 - c. STILL a time crunch at 5:50 min per passage.
 2. SAT – NO Science Section
 - a. Instead, charts, graphs and tables are included in:
 - i. 1 Writing and Language passage
 - ii. 2 Reading passages
 - iii. in several math questions
 - b. Students given a “Science subscore” of up to 40 pts based on how well they answered questions with Science content, across the sections of the test.
 - c. There’s also a “History subscore” of up to 40 pts.
- E. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Writing Skills: The Essay
 1. ACT
 - a. 40 min
 - b. Issue and 3 perspectives.
 - c. Come up with your own perspective on the issue and relate it back to at least one of the given 3 perspectives.
 - d. Scored on a 2-12-pt scale for each of four domains of your essay: Ideas & Analysis, Development & Support, Organization, Language Use
 2. SAT
 - a. 50 min
 - b. Read a passage and analyze the features the author uses to make his or her argument.
 - c. Scored on a 2-8 pt scale for each of three different dimensions of your essay: Reading, Analysis, Writing
- F. How the ACT and the SAT evaluate Vocab
 1. BOTH – vocab is tested indirectly with specific “Vocab In Context” questions in the Reading sections.
 2. Still helpful to review vocab for increased reading comprehension and essay writing ability.

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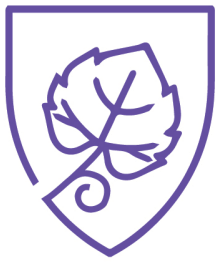
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- G. Scoring on the tests
 - 1. ACT:
 - a. Each Section 1-36
 - b. Composite Score **averaged** to create 1-36
 - c. Essay scored separately; not required for every college.
 - d. No Guessing Penalty!
 - 2. SAT:
 - a. Combined Grammar + Reading = 200-800 ("Evidence-Based Reading and Writing"); Combined Math Sections = 200-800
 - b. Sections **added** for a Total Score of 400-1600
 - c. Essay scored separately; not required for every college.
 - d. No Guessing Penalty!

III. MAJOR PROS AND CONS OF EACH TEST

- A. ACT
 - 1. PROs:
 - a. We have history! Tons of practice tests
 - b. We know what ACT scores each college wants.
 - c. You might be exempt from taking SAT II Subject Tests.
 - d. Score Choice
 - e. Questions are generally straightforward.
 - 2. CONS:
 - a. TIMING – this is a SPEED TEST. Many students REALLY struggle, especially with the Reading and Science sections.
 - b. Your score is averaged. It's harder to move up a point—you actually need to get 4 more points test-wide.
 - c. Fewer schools Super Score for the ACT.
- B. SAT
 - 1. PROs:
 - a. TIMING is incredibly more forgiving!!!
 - i. Grammar: 8:45 min for 11 Q's instead of 9 min for 15 Q's!
 - ii. Reading: 13 min per passage vs. 8:45 min per passage!!!
 - iii. No Science section!
 - b. Fewer Geometry questions (if Geometry is your weak point)
 - c. Your score is added. If you improve 100 points on the Math, you get to keep it ☺ And MANY more schools Super Score.
 - d. Score Choice
 - 2. CONS:
 - a. We have limited history with this test ☹
 - i. Only 8 College-Board-approved practice tests right now.
 - b. No-Calculator Math section (if that's your weak point)
 - c. Reading passages tend to be more sophisticated / harder.

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IV. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: HOW DO YOU ACTUALLY CHOOSE?

- A. Top Priorities and Deal Breakers:
 - 1. Extended Time
 - 2. Required Subject Tests for your college list
 - 3. National Merit Scholarship Program
- B. Take a Practice Test of Each.
 - 1. Test "Allergy"?
 - 2. Timing struggles?
 - 3. Awful at Geometry? Would prefer No-Calc arithmetic?
 - 4. Compare scores! We have concordance charts.
- C. If tests are pretty much equal, pick the one you like more and move on!
- D. OR, consult with a Test Prep Expert (like me!) to see if your weak spots on one test are more easily fixable than those on the other test. Certain weaknesses can be strengthened much more easily than others.

V. I FOUND MY TEST! NOW WHAT? (CREATING YOUR TESTING TIMELINE)

- A. ACT test dates:
2019: Feb 9, Apr 13, June 8, July 13*, Sep 14, Oct 26, Dec 14
- B. SAT test dates:
2019: Mar 9*, May 4, June 1, Aug 24, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7
- C. Timing your first attempt:
Spring of Junior Year (Feb or Apr for ACT; Mar or May for SAT)
- D. How many attempts?
2-3 is normal these days. (1 or 2 in Spring, last attempt in the Fall)
- E. When should you take Subject Tests (if you need to)?
In May or June, when you're already studying for your finals, AP exams, and Regents. Sophomore and/or Junior years.

VI. RESOURCES

- A. FREE E-course and helpful advice - www.IvyLoungeTestPrep.com
- B. Official ACT website - www.ACTstudent.org
- C. Official SAT website - www.CollegeBoard.org
- D. Researching Colleges:
 - 1. College stats and requirements: www.CollegeBoard.org
 - 2. Book: "Fiske Guide to Colleges"
- E. DIY ACT Prep:
 - 1. "The Real ACT Prep Guide" – official practice tests from the company
 - 2. Barron's, PR's, Erica Meltzer's ACT English, McGraw Hill's 50 Math Skills
- F. DIY SAT Prep:
 - 1. www.KhanAcademy.org - Free practice questions
 - 2. Barron's, PR's, Erica Meltzer's SAT Grammar, Kaplan's SAT Math Prep
- G. National Merit Scholar info – <http://www.nationalmerit.org/nmsp.php>
- H. List of test-optional schools – <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>

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