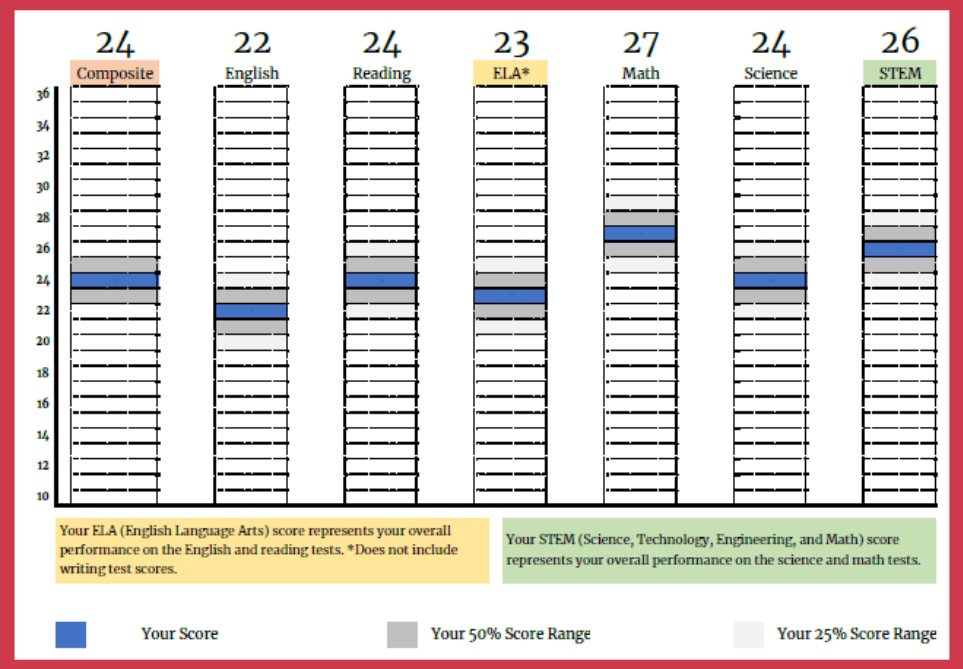


ACT Test Review Night

How to read your scores, the current testing landscape
& the SAT v ACT

Aaron Golumbskie
Education Director

Reading Your Score Report



There are lots of details on the score report, but start with your composite score. Colleges will rarely delve any deeper than that one number.

Diagnosing Your Performance

As you look over your scores, try not to focus too much on the overall section scores but rather how you earned them.

Ask yourself: Did I have adequate time to complete the section without rushing?
Did I make the best decisions in using the time I had?

For the questions you missed, try to determine what caused your mistakes. Errors are typically the result of:

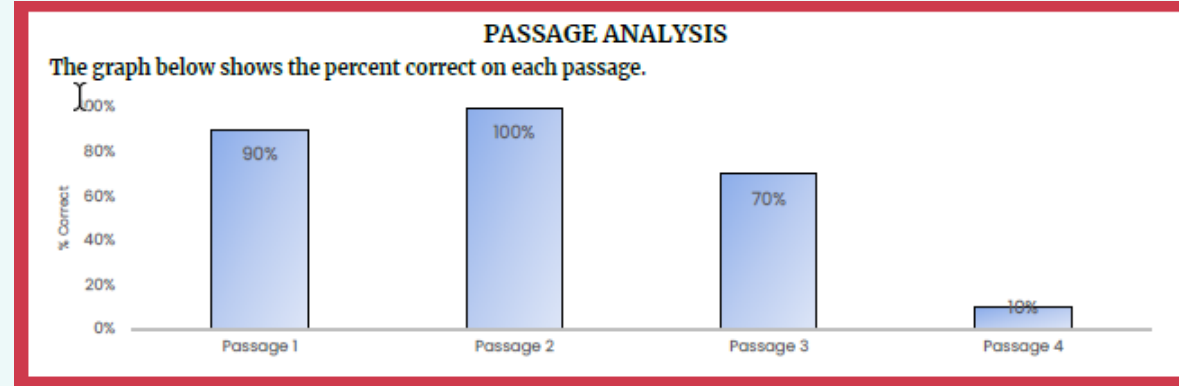
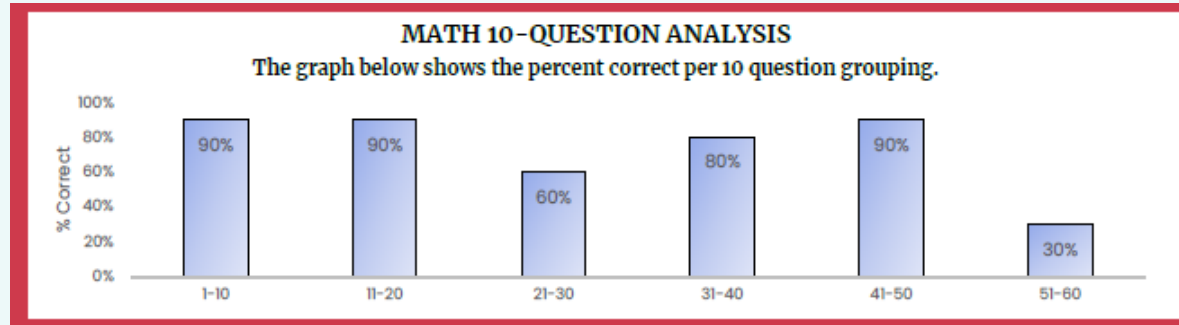
content *Did you honestly not know the necessary material to answer the question?*
Looking for trends will tell you if need to relearn the equation of a circle, brush up on your geometry, or review how to correctly use a semicolon.

process *Is there a more strategic way you could have approached the problem?*
Remember - this is a standardized test and not a test in school. The best way to answer a question is the easiest way.

anxiety *Upon review, does it seem that you really should have gotten that right?*
Test anxiety, stress, or lack of sleep can cause you to underperform in any number of ways ranging from "careless" errors to choking or panicking.

Improving your score on a standardized test requires you to not only understand the material on the test but also a little about yourself. Take the time to reflect and make the most of this practice test - you've already spent several hours on it!

It's not "what" you got wrong it's "why" you got it wrong that's important!

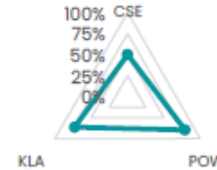


What sort of trends can you see throughout the section? Did you make hasty errors early? Did you run short of time at the end?

BREAKDOWN BY DOMAIN

The graph below shows your percent correct by content category.

| | Right | Wrong | Blank | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Conventions of Standard English (CSE) | 20 | 20 | 0 | 40 |
| Knowledge of Language (KLA) | 8 | 3 | 0 | 11 |
| Production of Writing (POW) | 19 | 5 | 0 | 24 |



Conventions of Standard English questions require you to apply an understanding of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to revise and edit text.

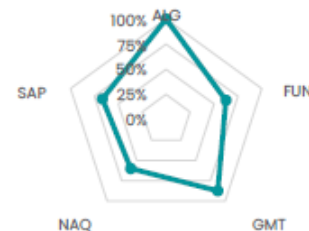
Knowledge of Language questions require you to demonstrate effective language use through ensuring precision and concision in word choice and maintaining consistency in style and tone.

Production of Writing questions require you to apply your understanding of purpose and focus of a piece of writing.


BREAKDOWN BY DOMAIN

The graph below shows your percent correct by each Preparing for Higher Math content category.

| | Right | Wrong | Blank | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Algebra (ALG) | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Functions (FUN) | 5 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| Geometry (GMT) | 7 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Numbers and Quantity (NAQ) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Statistics and Probability (SAP) | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 |



Are there particular content areas you might need to brush up on, particularly on the English and Math sections?



2018 ACT/SAT CONCORDANCE TABLES

Table A1: SAT Total to ACT Composite.

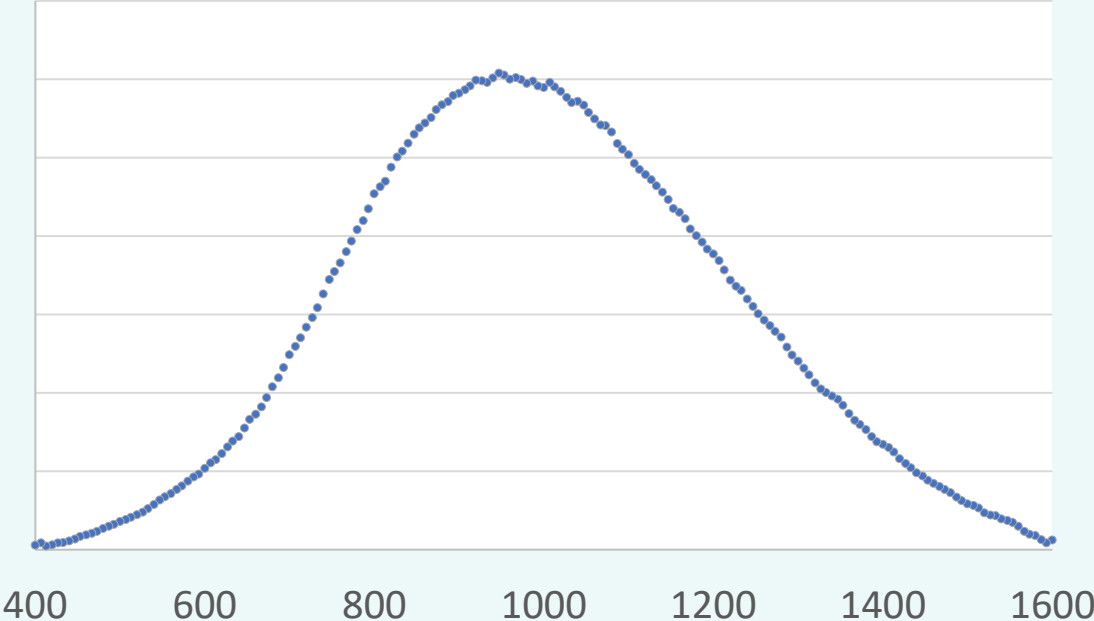
| SAT | ACT | SAT | ACT | SAT | ACT |
|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|
| 1600 | 36 | 1250 | 26 | 910 | 16 |
| *1590 | 36 | *1240 | 26 | 900 | 16 |
| 1580 | 36 | 1230 | 26 | *890 | 16 |
| 1570 | 36 | 1220 | 25 | 880 | 16 |
| 1560 | 35 | *1210 | 25 | 870 | 15 |
| 1550 | 35 | 1200 | 25 | 860 | 15 |
| *1540 | 35 | 1190 | 24 | *850 | 15 |
| 1530 | 35 | *1180 | 24 | 840 | 15 |
| 1520 | 34 | 1170 | 24 | 830 | 15 |
| 1510 | 34 | 1160 | 24 | 820 | 14 |
| *1500 | 34 | 1150 | 23 | 810 | 14 |

Table A2: ACT Composite to SAT Total.

| ACT | SAT | SAT Range |
|-----|------|-----------|
| 36 | 1590 | 1570-1600 |
| 35 | 1540 | 1530-1560 |
| 34 | 1500 | 1490-1520 |
| 33 | 1460 | 1450-1480 |
| 32 | 1430 | 1420-1440 |
| 31 | 1400 | 1390-1410 |
| 30 | 1370 | 1360-1380 |
| 29 | 1340 | 1330-1350 |
| 28 | 1310 | 1300-1320 |
| 27 | 1280 | 1260-1290 |
| 26 | 1240 | 1230-1250 |

US Colleges accept SAT and ACT scores on an equal basis. They'll consult a concordance chart to put all students on even footing, no matter which test they took.

SAT Score Distribution 2018



| SAT | Percentile | ACT |
|------|------------|-----|
| 400 | 0.01 | 1 |
| 500 | 0.54 | 5 |
| 600 | 2.58 | 9 |
| 700 | 7.65 | 12 |
| 800 | 18.25 | 14 |
| 900 | 34.18 | 16 |
| 1000 | 52.1 | 19 |
| 1100 | 68.72 | 22 |
| 1200 | 81.8 | 25 |
| 1300 | 90.88 | 28 |
| 1400 | 96.3 | 31 |
| 1500 | 99.02 | 34 |
| 1600 | 99.98 | 36 |

What are “good scores”? Good scores are those that make you a competitive applicant at schools you wish to attend. That’s the only real answer.

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2017

| Factor | N | Considerable Importance | Moderate Importance | Limited Importance | No Importance |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Grades in All Courses | 220 | 74.5 | 15.0 | 5.5 | 5.0 |
| Grades in College Prep Courses | 220 | 73.2 | 16.8 | 5.9 | 4.1 |
| Strength of Curriculum | 219 | 62.1 | 21.9 | 8.7 | 7.3 |
| Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT) | 221 | 45.7 | 37.1 | 12.2 | 5.0 |
| Essay or Writing Sample | 220 | 23.2 | 33.2 | 24.1 | 19.5 |
| Student's Demonstrated Interest | 218 | 16.1 | 23.9 | 28.0 | 32.1 |
| Counselor Recommendation | 218 | 15.1 | 40.4 | 26.6 | 17.9 |
| Teacher Recommendation | 219 | 14.2 | 40.2 | 26.5 | 19.2 |
| Class Rank | 220 | 9.1 | 29.1 | 34.1 | 27.7 |
| Extracurricular Activities | 219 | 6.4 | 42.9 | 32.0 | 18.7 |
| Portfolio | 219 | 6.4 | 11.9 | 26.9 | 54.8 |
| Subject Test Scores (AP, IB) | 219 | 5.5 | 18.3 | 35.2 | 41.1 |
| Interview | 219 | 5.5 | 16.4 | 28.3 | 49.8 |
| Work | 217 | 4.1 | 28.6 | 36.9 | 30.4 |
| State Graduation Exam Scores | 218 | 2.3 | 8.7 | 18.8 | 70.2 |
| SAT II Scores | 216 | 1.9 | 5.6 | 14.8 | 77.8 |

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

For better or worse, SAT or ACT scores have historically been more important to the college admissions process than anything other than a student's grades and transcript.

"You will not be disadvantaged in our evaluation process if you do not include scores for consideration in your application."

Permanent

Experimenting

Reluctant

" T e s t O p t i o n a l "

"We value the information provided by standardized testing and will continue to consider test scores as part of our holistic admissions review process."

Test Blind

UC System
Univ San Diego
Caltech
Reed
Northern Illinois
Northern Michigan
Univ. New England

Catholic Univ
Hampshire College
Idaho State
Loyola
Dickinson
Worcester Polytechnic Inst

Test Required

MIT
Service Academies
Florida State
Univ of Florida
Univ of Georgia
Georgia Tech
Univ of Tennessee
Gallaudet University

Be sure to check schools' websites for the latest admissions guidelines since policies can evolve rapidly.



“We will continue to allow applicants who are not able to access the SAT or ACT due to Covid to apply without the test but it is our expectation that vaccines will be readily available by this summer and **we expect that most applicants should be able to fulfill the testing requirement by next fall.**” – Georgetown University Website



It's useful to have something that's consistent among applicants, even when we're aware of how limited and imperfect that metric can be, AKA the SAT or the ACT. It could be especially valuable since our internal research-- we look at these things regularly-- show **that the tests are predictive of Yale performance above and beyond high school GPA.**
– Jeremiah Quinlan, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Yale University



“So next year, what's going to be interesting is that whether a student submits a standardized test score or not will be more a matter of choice, rather than a limitation. The ability for students to choose whether or not to submit scores reduces barriers to students from all kinds of backgrounds in deciding where to apply to college. **But test scores do add information that admissions officers find useful** in assessing a student's preparation, and how a student compares to the applicant pool as a whole. **There were certainly some students where we wish we'd had scores and we didn't.**” – Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University

Will submitting scores help?



Understanding admit rates requires a more granular view:

| | Applicants with Scores | Applicants Test Optional | Admit Rate with Scores | Admit Rate Test Optional |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Amherst College | 51 | 63 | 10 | 6 |
| Boston College | 58 | 61 | 20 | 18 |
| Bucknell University | 49 | 62 | 43 | 25 |
| Colgate University | 41 | 60 | 25 | 12 |
| Emory University | 50 | 69 | 18 | 8 |
| Fordham University | 36 | 42 | 68 | 53 |
| Georgia Tech | 63 | 79 | 22 | 10 |
| Tufts University | 50 | 60 | 13 | 9 |
| University of Georgia | 50 | 60 | 47 | 31 |
| University of Virginia | 58 | 72 | 26 | 14 |
| Vanderbilt University | 56 | 61 | 7 | 6 |

Source: CollegeKickStart

Correlation does not imply causation, yet students submitting scores were universally accepted at higher rates than those applying test-optional.

Average test scores will continue to rise...

| | 2019 | | 2020 |
|---|--------------|---|--------------|
|  | SAT 1413 | ➔ | SAT 1495 |
|  | ACT 28-33 | ➔ | ACT 31-34 |

But grades can't really go much higher than they already are.

| | 2020 Admitted Students | |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------|
| | 25 th | 75 th |
| Weighted GPA | 4.34 | 4.68 |
| Unweighted GPA | 3.92 | 4.00 |
| Honors Courses | 19 | 30 |

Test-optional policies will lead to increasing average test scores, since only students with higher and higher scores will feel submitting provides an advantage.

- Testing can be a helpful component of a competitive application to almost all schools.
- Students with testing inconsistent with their grades will have many avenues to apply test-optional.
- Nuanced decisions will need to be made about whether to send scores to any particular school. Almost all students will report scores to some schools but not others.

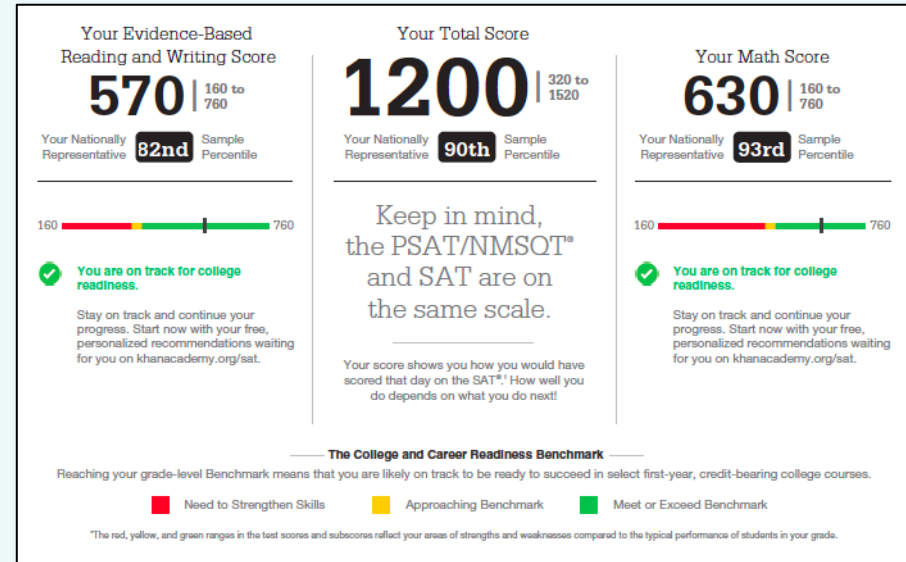
Like in any year, preparing for and doing well on the SAT or ACT will provide students with the most options during the college admissions process.

Administered by schools in October

Just like the SAT but slightly shorter

Colleges do NOT see the scores, which become available in December

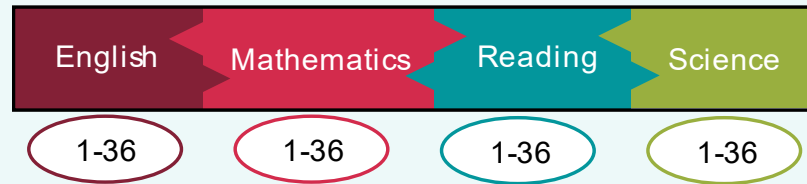
National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test



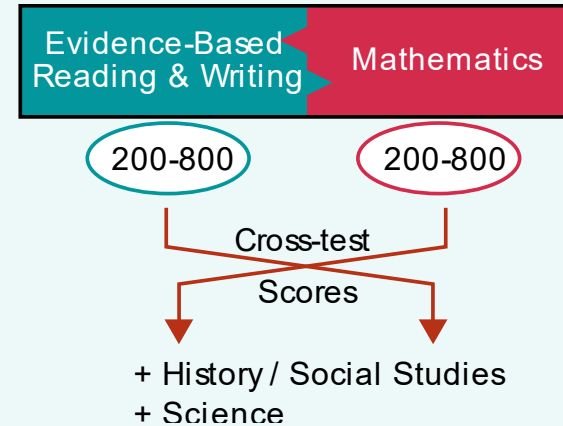
The PSAT provides students real testing experiences without real consequences. Feedback, while coming late, is valuable for understanding performance.

ACT ← → SAT

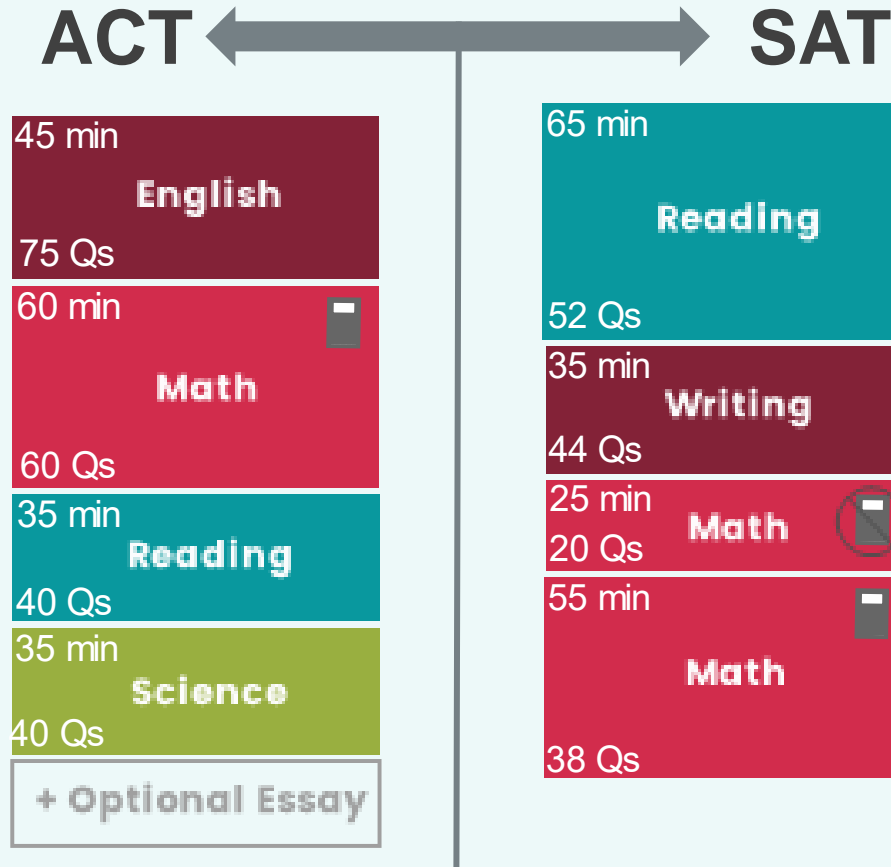
Composite Score: 1-36



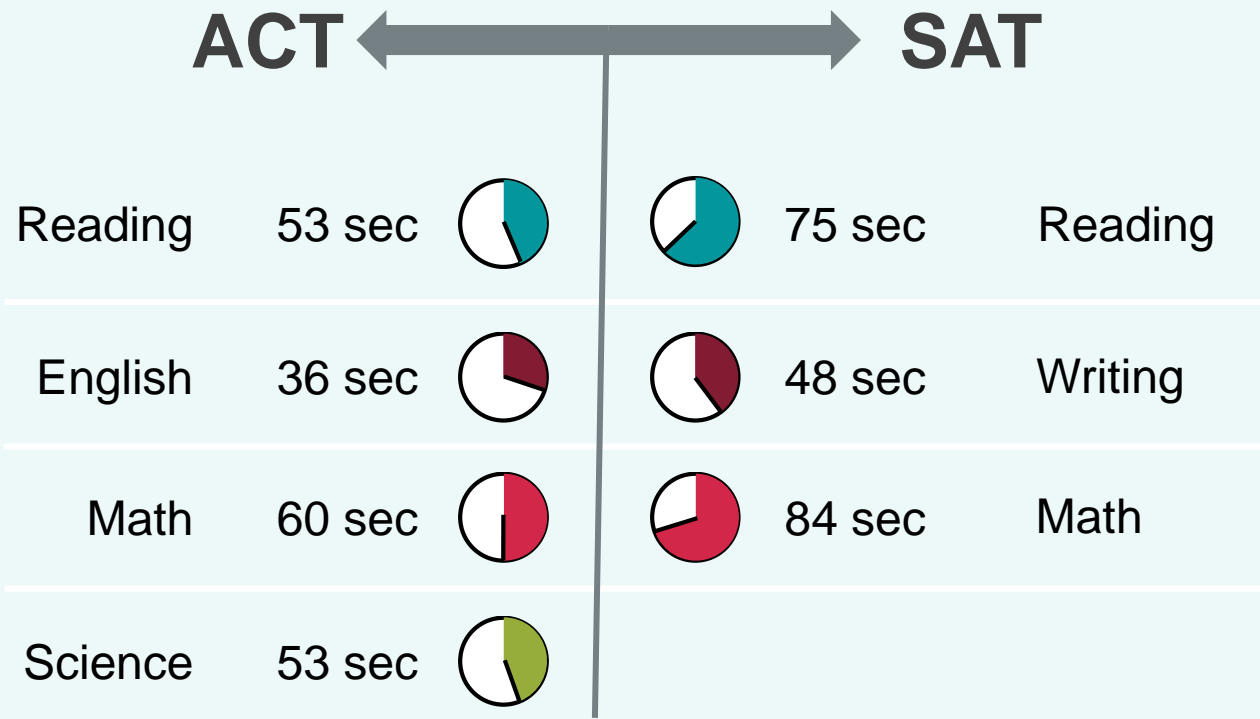
Total Score: 400-1600



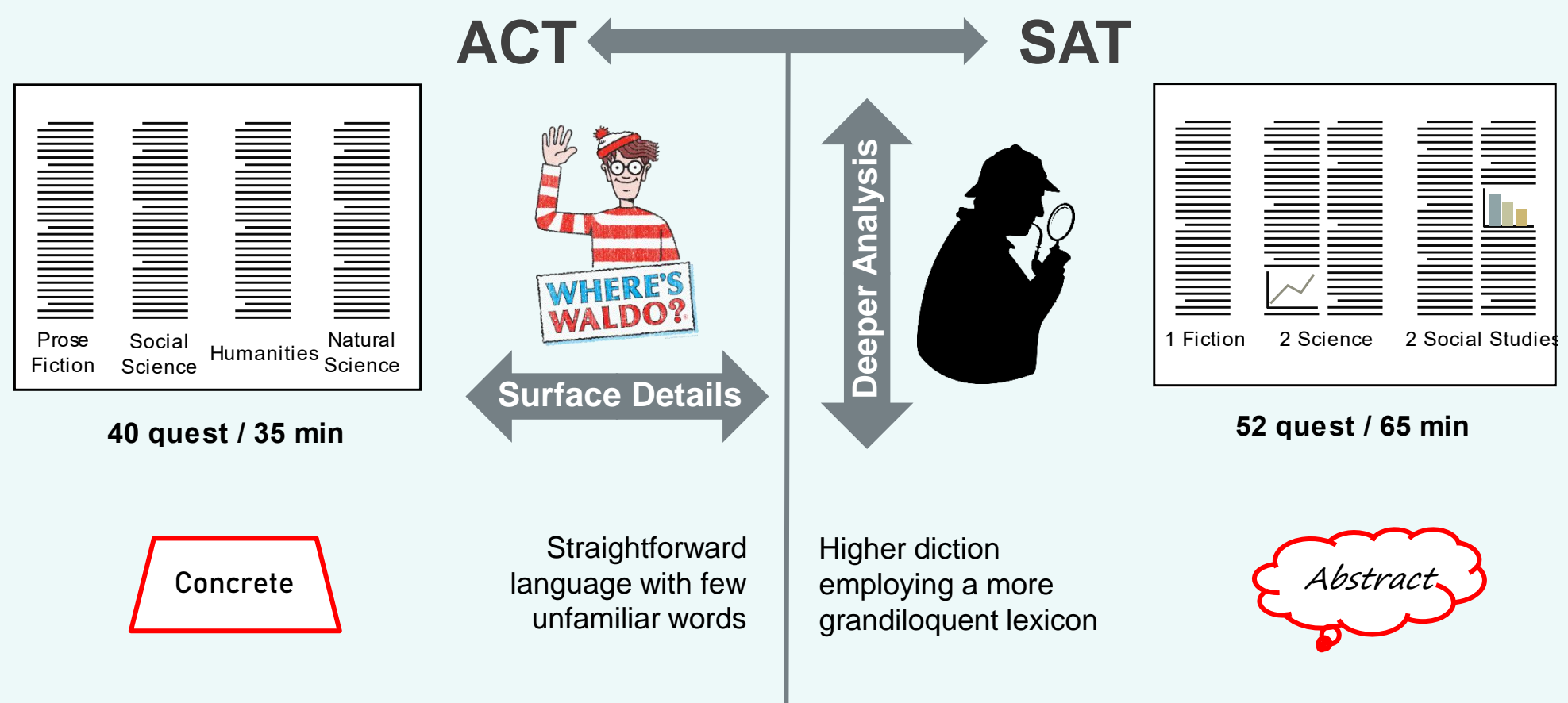
Students should focus their efforts on the scores that matter most to colleges: the section scores and, more importantly, the total SAT or composite ACT score.



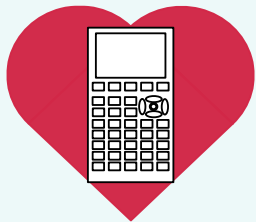
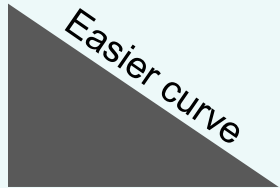
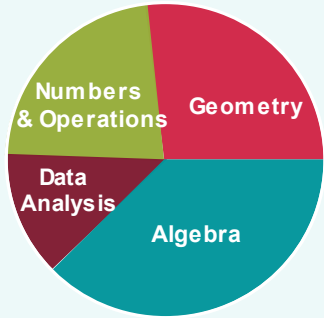
The SAT and ACT remain much longer tests than students face in school; therefore, practice tests are an essential tool for developing stamina and focus.



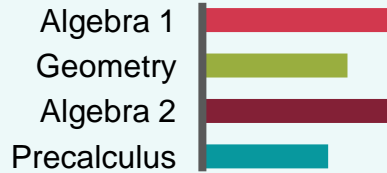
Despite the changes to the SAT that make it more ACT-like, the speededness of the tests can be the defining difference for students deciding which test is right for them.



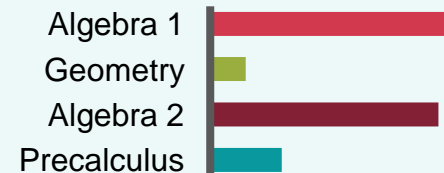
While structurally similar, students have almost twice as long for the SAT as for the ACT reading sections. During that time, they face much more complicated passages.



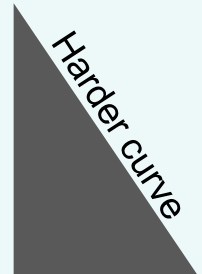
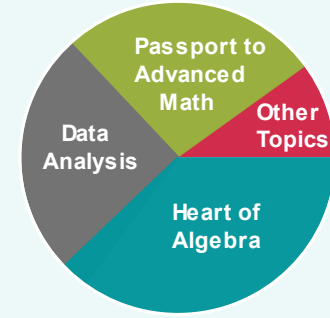
ACT ← → SAT



- Wide range of material, not all of which will appear on a given test
- More straightforward – feels like math in school

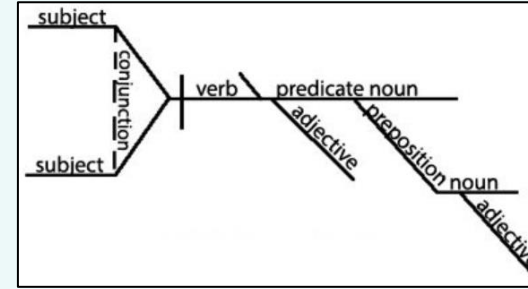


- Narrower range of more consistent content
- Trickier questions feel more unfamiliar to students
- Many more data and statistics questions



The ACT covers more math than does the SAT but in a more straightforward way. The SAT still tends to be the trickier test, requiring students to do more reasoning.

These test are the most similar between tests and of the least use in making the SAT/ACT decision



ACT ← → SAT

(, : - ; ')

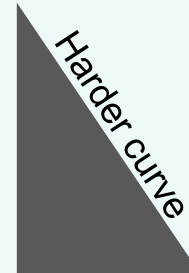
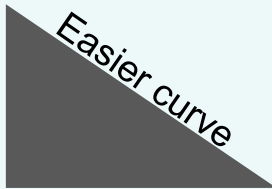
More punctuation

Objective and Technical

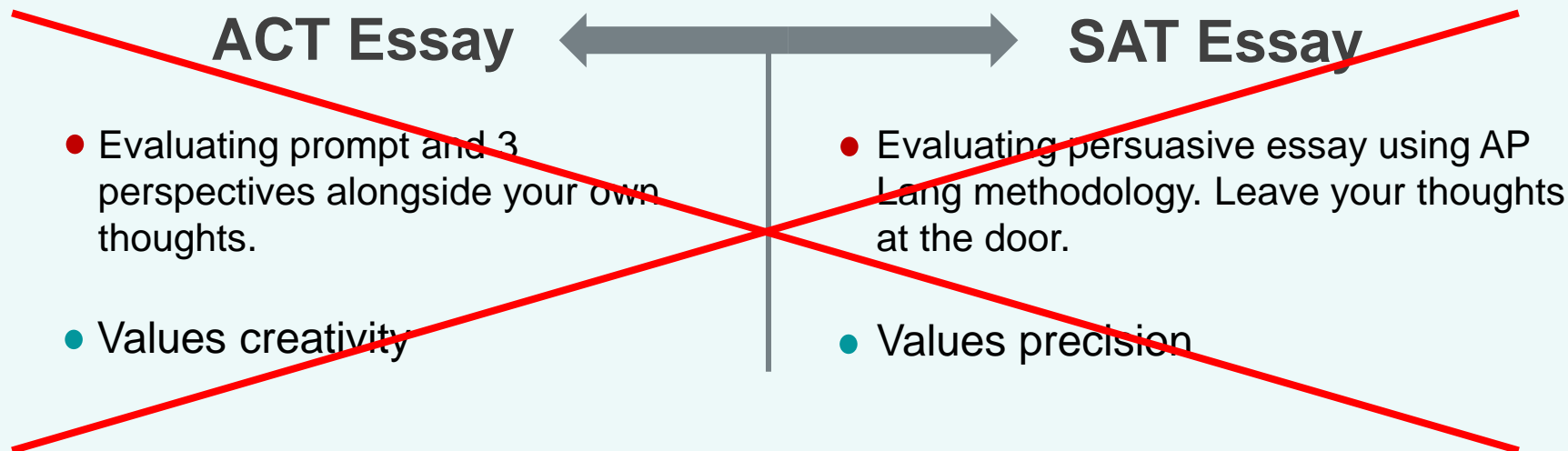


More transitions and flow

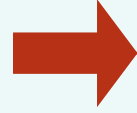
Subjective and Intuitive



These sections tend to be the easiest to improve on either test and thus rarely factor into the decision as to which test to take.



Nobody is picking a test based on the essay, right? Right. Let's move on.



READING CHARTS & GRAPHS

Passage I

Five bicycle riders traveled during the same 35 sec time interval along a 1 km segment of a straight path. Point P was located at one end of the segment. D , measured in meters, was a rider's distance along the path from Point P at time t . Measurement of D began simultaneously for all riders at $t = 0$ sec.

Figure 1 is a graph of D versus t for Riders 1 and 2. Figure 2 is a graph of D versus t for Riders 3, 4, and 5.

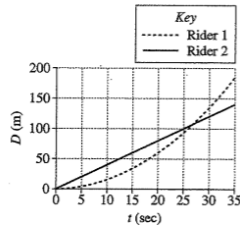


Figure 1

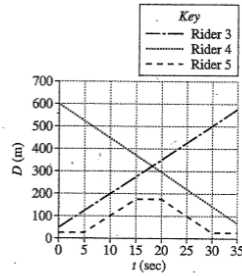


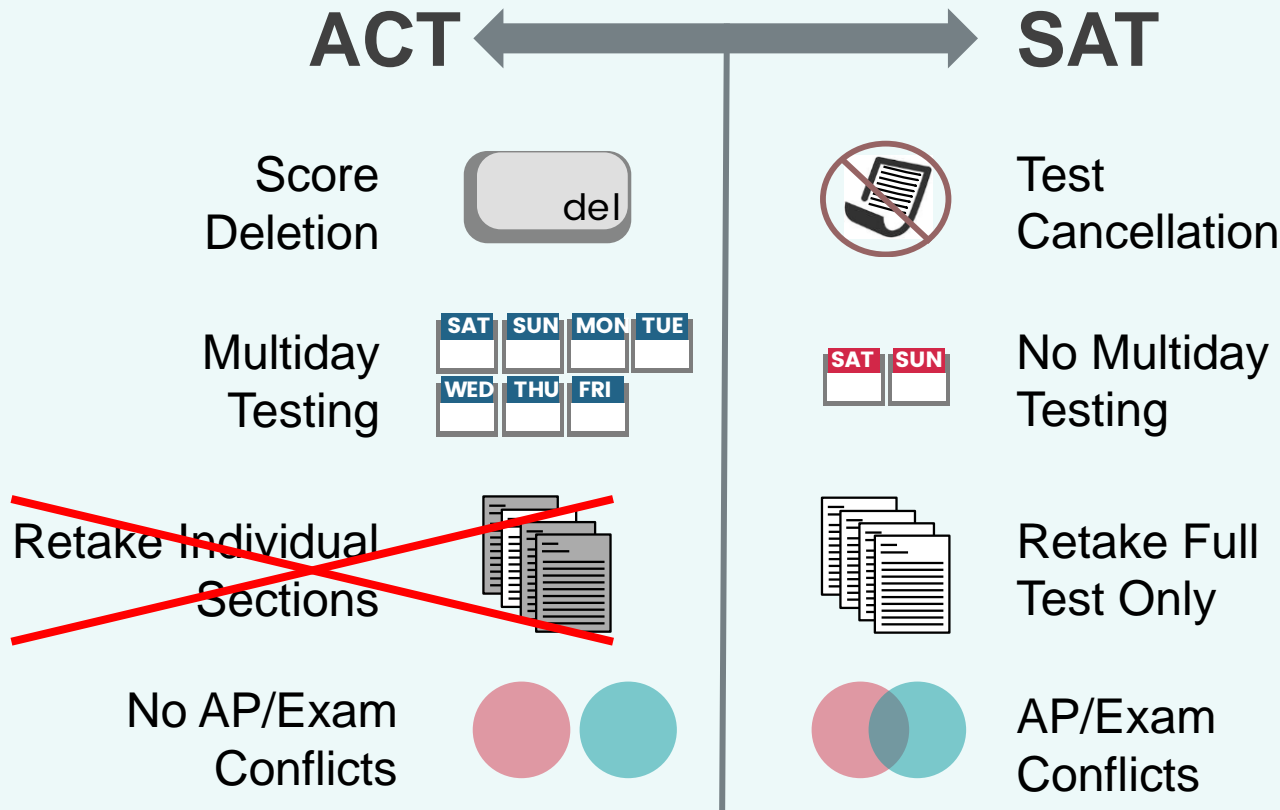
Figure 2

1. Consider two of the riders temporarily renamed Rider A and Rider B. Rider A traveled in the same direction as Rider B throughout the 35 sec interval. Initially, Rider A traveled more slowly than Rider B and fell behind. But Rider A pedaled faster and faster and, in less than 30 sec, caught up with and passed Rider B. Who were Riders A and B?

| Rider A | Rider B |
|------------|---------|
| A. Rider 1 | Rider 2 |
| B. Rider 2 | Rider 3 |
| C. Rider 3 | Rider 5 |
| D. Rider 5 | Rider 4 |

- Science knowledge more helpful for context – especially more recently.
- Common sense still rules the day!
- More about processing speed than science knowledge.
- Correlates with Reading score more than with Math score

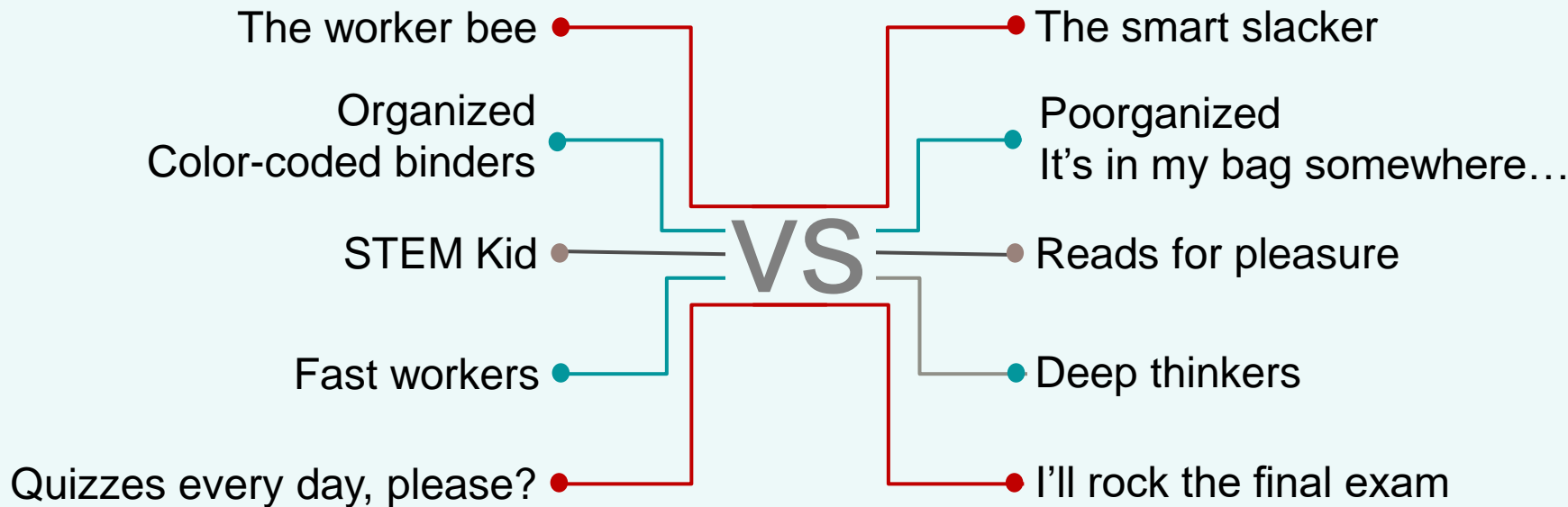
The ACT Science section is more about reading charts and graphs than understanding science, so science lovers might not love it and science phobic students shouldn't fear it.



Many students neither know nor consider the important policy differences between the tests that can make an important difference as to which is the better match.

ACT

SAT



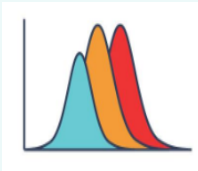
These are stereotypes, but stereotypes exist for a reason.
Then again, every rule has exceptions!

The PSAT



- The PSAT is great prep for the SAT
- The PSAT is awful prep for the ACT

The Curve



- The ACT math often feels harder but has an easier curve
- Students feel worse and performance suffers

The Speed

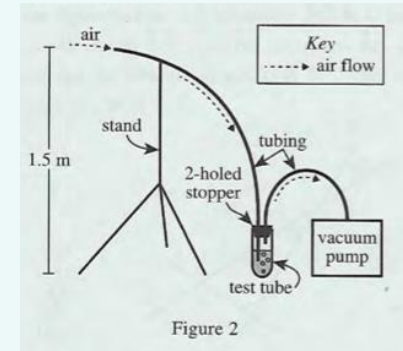


ACT Pace >> SAT Pace

The Science



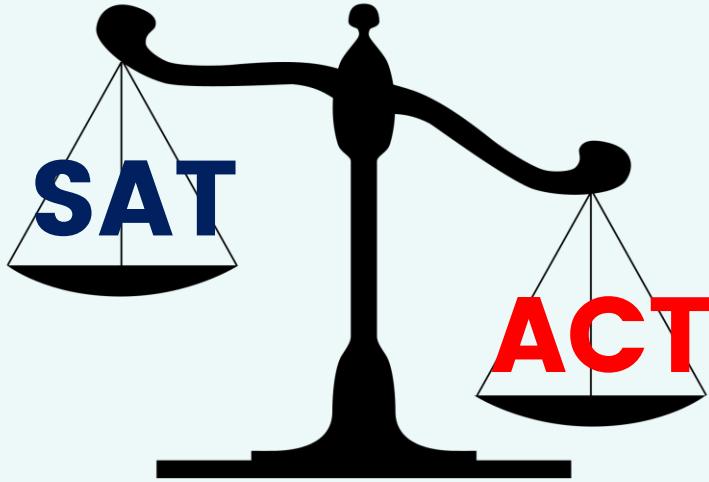
- Both the section and the content are unfamiliar to most students



???

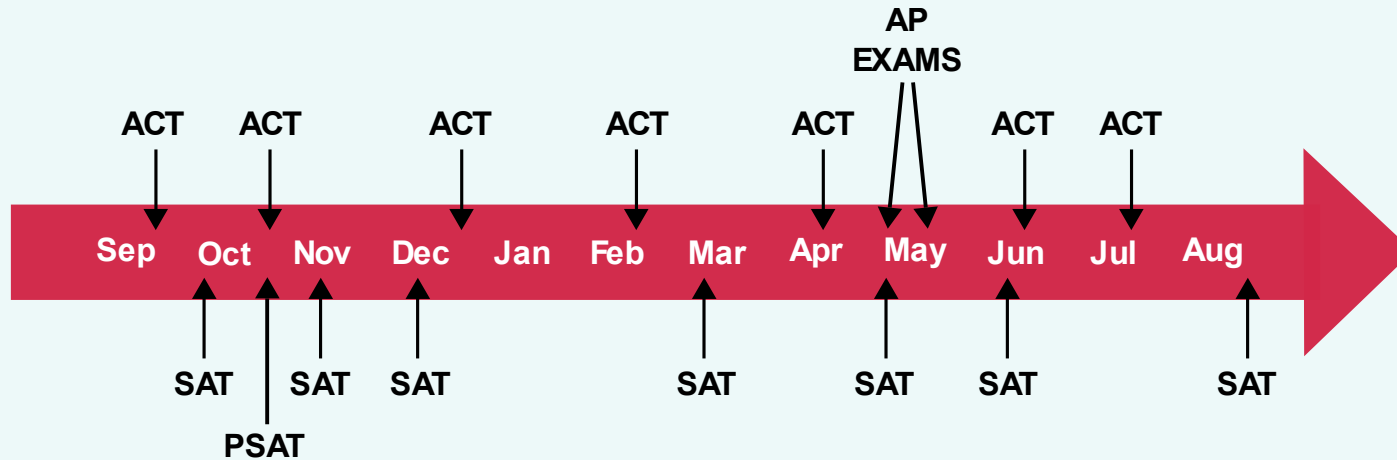
- The Science section is last when students are tired and more easily confused and overwhelmed

Good means good. But bad doesn't always mean bad.



- Power Test vs. Speed Test
- Larger suite of potential accommodations
- Fewer than a handful of exceptions over 30+ years of tutoring

Extended time tips the scales in favor of the ACT every time. Decision made.



Other Considerations

- Student Extracurriculars – sports, shows & performances, travel
- SAT “Desert” December to March – two “seasons” of preparation
- Exam Conflicts – AP & IB

The best time to take the SAT or ACT is when students can be well prepared and rested, but starting early provides plenty of options for retakes, which lowers students’ stress levels.

Timeline

Class of 2024: Current paper SAT only

Class of 2025: Paper SAT until Dec 2023, Digital SAT begins March 2024

Class of 2026: Digital SAT only

What's New?

- Two-hour computer adaptive test chooses questions based on student performance to assess scores more quickly.
- Students may test on their personal laptops or tablets but may not use smartphones.
- Scores will be released in days not weeks.
- Long form reading passages are no longer included. Each question will have its own short prompt – no more than two paragraphs.
- Desmos graphing calculator built into the testing app.

What's Remaining Unchanged?

- Test scores will remain out of 1600 and be directly comparable to old scores – no concordance is needed.
- The digital SAT will largely test the same reading comprehension, grammar, and math skills as the current test.
- Students will need to test at a testing center rather than at their homes.

Yerkes – Dodson Law



Test preparation reduces anxiety by replacing uncertainty with knowledge, skills, and a sense of control so that students can perform their best on test day.

Thanks for your time and attention.

Questions?

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Or write info@prepmatters.com

