

# All About College Admission Tests

## Why you need to take a standardized college admission test?

Since course offerings and grading systems can vary so much from high school to high school, standardized tests are used to evaluate students from schools across the country. College admission test scores are used to supplement high school records and other information in assessing readiness for college-level work. Colleges use the ACT and SAT in a variety of ways.

**Admissions:** Colleges use ACT/SAT scores to predict college performance and consider them as one part of the admission decision.

**Course Placement:** ACT and SAT scores are often used for course placement and sometimes used by colleges to determine if an entering student needs local course placement testing.

**Scholarships:** For certain institutional grants, eligibility is sometimes determined using test scores.

## What are the major differences between the two tests?

**The ACT** is a curriculum-based achievement test. Measuring what a student has learned in school. The ACT includes English, math, reading and science, and has an optional writing test. There is no penalty for answering a question incorrectly.

**The SAT** assesses how well students analyze and solve problems using the knowledge they have obtained in school and outside reading and study. The SAT tests critical reading, math and writing. Students are docked a fraction of a point for wrong answers.

The highest combined score on the Act is a 36. The highest combined score on the SAT is 2400.

## How do you decide which test you should take?

Virtually all colleges in the U.S. accept either the ACT or the SAT. Many students choose to take them both, since most colleges will use your higher score.

It is important to find out each institutions testing policy. For example, some colleges require the Writing Test. The Writing Test is included as part of the SAT and optional on the ACT.

Additionally, some colleges may require SAT Subject Tests, while some colleges accept the ACT in lieu of the SAT and SAT Subject Tests. Subject Tests are one hour, multiple-choice tests in specific subjects that measure knowledge of skills in a particular subject and the ability to apply that knowledge. Some out-of-state colleges require students to take subject tests. SAT Subject Tests can be taken at most sites during the administration of the standard SAT test.

## How can students get help paying for the tests?

Fee waivers are available for juniors and seniors who meet certain financial eligibility requirements. The ACT offers two fee waivers for either The ACT or ACT Plus Writing. The College Board offers two fee waivers for the SAT and two fee waivers for the SAT Subject Tests. Check with your schools Counseling Office or Career Center for more information.