

Intro to Entrance Exams

Virtually every 4-year university requires the SAT or ACT to apply. It is recommended to take it in the spring of your junior year and, if necessary, the fall of your senior year with the latest date taking the exam being in October or November. Here are some differences:

	ACT	SAT
Time	2 hours, 45 minutes (plus 40 minutes for the essay [optional])	3 hours (plus 50 minutes for the essay [optional])
Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math: 60 questions, 60 minutes • Reading: 40 questions, 35 minutes • Science: 40 questions, 35 minutes • English: 75 questions, 45 minutes • Essay (optional): 1 prompt, 40 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math without calculator: 20 questions, 25 minutes • Math with calculator: 38 questions, 25 minutes • Reading: 52 questions, 65 minutes • Writing and Language: 44 questions, 35 minutes • Essay (optional): 1 prompt, 40 minutes
Essay	Consists of one writing prompt that will describe a complex issue and present three different perspective on that issue. You are asked to read the prompt and write an essay in which you develop your own perspective on the issue.	Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills. Students produce a written analysis of a provided source text which is given at the end of the test.
Scoring	Composite score: 1 - 36 (average of four test scores) English: 1 - 36 Reading: 1 - 36 Math: 1 - 36 Science: 1 - 36 Essay (optional): 2 - 12 STEM Score: 1 - 36 (science and math combined) ELA Score: 1 -36 (English, reading, and writing combined - only available to students who do all 3 sections)	Composite score: 400 - 1600 Evidence - Based Reading and Writing: 200 - 800 Math: 200 - 800 Essay score ranging from 2 - 8 on each of 3 essay dimensions
Guessing	No penalty for guessing!	No penalty for guessing!
Calculator	Can use calculator on all portions of the math section; all multiple choice	Some sections do NOT let use of a calculator; multiple choice and come in the blank questions
Reading	4 reading passages	5 reading passages