
Testing: SAT, ACT & PSAT

For students planning to attend a 4-year college or university, plan to take either the SAT and/or the ACT college admission tests at the end of your junior year. It is also encouraged for students to take the PSAT during the fall of junior year.

- **SAT** - The SAT is run through the College Board. It is offered several times a year. For more information or to register online visit sat.collegeboard.org.
- **SAT II Subject Tests** - Some colleges will require students to take specific subject tests in areas ranging from Spanish and history to math and science. See individual admission requirements for schools and programs you are applying to find out if you need to take the SAT II.
- **ACT** - The SAT and ACT tests vary in testing format and materials tested. While most colleges accept both SAT and ACT test scores for admission purposes, some prefer the ACT over the SAT. Visit individual college websites to determine what test you should take.
- **PSAT** - This test is run through the College Board and it is offered one time a year (October). It is encouraged that juniors take this test to familiarize them with the SAT format. As well, during junior year, students have the opportunity to qualify for the [National Merit Scholarship](#) through the PSAT. Students register through NKHS in late September/early October to take the test.

ACT vs SAT*

1. ACT questions tend to be more straightforward.
2. ACT has a Science section, while the SAT does not.
3. ACT tests more advanced math concepts.
4. ACT Writing Test is optional on test day, but required by many schools.
5. SAT is broken up into more sections.
6. ACT is more of a "big picture" exam.
7. SAT has a stronger emphasis on vocabulary.

ACT

Testing Time

2 hours, 55 mins. (+ 30 mins. for optional essay)

Components

- Mathematics (60 items, 60 mins.)
- Reading (40 items, 35 mins.)
- Science (40 items, 35 mins.)
- English (75 items, 45 mins.)
- Writing (optional; 1 prompt, 30 mins.)

Features

- Designed to measure academic achievement.
- Scores based on the number of correct answers (No penalty for incorrect answers).
- ELA: 1-36

- Includes enhanced scoring for reliable college and career planning insights.

Score Reporting

- ACT Composite Score: 1–36 (average of 4 test scores)
- English: 1–36
- Reading: 1–36
- Mathematics: 1–36
- Science: 1–36
- English and writing: 1–36
- STEM: 1-36

SAT

(Learn more on the new SAT format at www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-changes)

Testing Time:

3 hours (+ 50 mins. for optional essay)

Components

- Math (58 items, 80 mins.)

Evidence-Based Reading & Writing:

- Reading (52 items, 65 mins.)
- Writing & Language (44 Items, 35 mins.)
- Essay (optional; 1 prompt, 50 mins.)

Features

- Emphasis on reasoning.
- Greater emphasis on meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact.
- Scores based on the number of correct answers (No penalty for incorrect answers)

Score Reporting

- Scale from 400 to 1600
- Scale from 200 to 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing; 200 to 800 for Math; 2 to 8 on each of three traits for Essay
- Essay results reported separately

**Information from actstudent.org and princetonreview.com*