



The SAT vs the ACT: Which is Right for Your Students?

Outline of what we will cover

- How students can determine which test to take
- Differences between the two tests
- Advantages and disadvantages to each test
- Individual circumstances that determine which test and when to take them

How do I know which test to take?

While there are certain advantages and disadvantages to each test, there is no way to know which test to take without taking past exams.

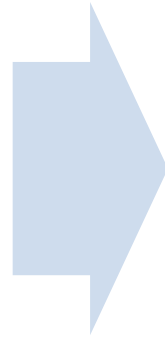
Why not use PSAT and PLAN results to determine which test?

The PSAT and particularly the PLAN test are not accurate enough to adequately determine which test is better for a student.

Differences between the two tests

SAT

- Math section only contains Algebra and Geometry
- Explicitly tests vocabulary
- Questions are abstract: the questions look and feel different than those from school.
- Essay is mandatory
- No science section
- Timing is not as difficult



ACT

- Math section contains Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry
- Vocabulary is not tested
- Questions are much more straightforward (almost the same as questions students see in school).
- Essay is optional
- Contains a science section
- Time is extremely difficult

Advantages to the SAT

70% of colleges superscore SAT scores (they take the highest section scores across multiple test dates)

Students only need to have taken Algebra and Geometry, not Trigonometry

Studying vocabulary guarantees a higher score

Disadvantages to the SAT



- The SAT tests fundamental reading, math, and grammatical concepts in novel ways – most students will find that the questions feel (and are) different from the questions they see in school.
- The essay is included in the writing section score.
- Vocabulary

Advantages to the ACT

The questions are very similar to what students see in school and are much more straightforward.

The Math section is significantly more redundant than the Math section on the SAT.

Disadvantages to the ACT

- Timing
- The Math portion contains Trigonometry.



Circumstances that impact which test a student should take

Whether a student has taken Trigonometry yet

Whether a student has been granted extra time

A student's performance on a past SAT and ACT

When should a student take the SAT and/or ACT?

- The best testing schedule is for students to take the January SAT and the December ACT in their junior year. The reason for this is twofold:
 - Students need to know an official score before spring of their junior year
 - The January test offers the “Question-and-answer” and the December test offers the “Test Information Release”

A decorative graphic for the month of December. It features a light blue background with white snowflakes and a white wavy line at the bottom representing snow. Two green Christmas trees are positioned on either side of the word "December", which is written in a blue cursive font.

December

A decorative graphic for the month of January. It features a light blue background with white snowflakes and a white wavy line at the bottom representing snow. The word "January" is written in a blue cursive font.

January

Summing it up

- As annoying as it often seems, it is great for students that there are two tests from which to choose
- Explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each test can help impress upon students the necessity of accurately determining which test is best for them