

Information about the SAT

The SAT is focused on measuring what you learn in high school as well as the skills you need to succeed in college. Along with the ACT, it is one of the two primary tests that colleges and universities use in admissions and scholarship decisions. The new SAT, which began use in March 2016, has several key differences to its predecessor:

- Stronger focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career readiness and success.
- Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact.
- Rights-only scoring (no penalty for guessing).
- Essay is optional (colleges and universities determine whether they will require it), tests reading, analysis, and writing skills (no longer arguing a side of an issue), and given twice as much time to complete.
- Scores ranging from 400-1600 points with Essay results reported separately.

What sections are on the SAT?	What skills are being assessed?	How long is this section?
Reading Test	In the first part of the <i>Evidence-Based Reading and Writing</i> section, students must read several passages and infographics from historical literature, social science texts, and scientific papers and answer questions on their Command of Evidence (finding evidence that best supports a given conclusion or answer to a previous question, and identifying how the author uses evidence) as well as Words in Context (using context clues to determine the meaning of a word and deciding how the author's word choices shapes meaning, style, and tone).	52 questions in 65 minutes
Writing and Language Test	In the second part of the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section, students must again read several passages and infographics and make judgments based on their Command of Evidence as well as Words in Context. However, these questions will have students choose sentences, phrases, or words that would improve the passages through strengthening an argument, making a passage more precise or concise, or improving syntax, style, or tone.	44 questions in 35 minutes

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Math Test	Questions on the Math Test are designed to mirror the problem solving and modeling students will do in college math, science, and social science courses, as well as practical problems from real life situations. Students will be tested on their ability to identify and use the most efficient solutions to problems, their grasp of math concepts, operations, and relations, and their ability to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out the solution. Note that some “grid-in” questions will require the student to fill in an answer instead of selecting from multiple choices. Additionally, a portion of this test will disallow use of a calculator to better assess the student’s fluency in math and understanding of some math concepts.	58 questions in 80 minutes
Essay (Optional)	The optional Essay further tests the student’s reading and writing skills by having them read a passage, explain how the author builds an argument to persuade the audience, then support that explanation with evidence from the passage. The student will need to be able to identify and analyze evidence the author uses to support their claims, the reasoning used to develop ideas and connect claims and evidence, and the stylistic or persuasive elements used to add power to the ideas expressed.	1 Essay in 50 minutes
Total Time		154 questions in 3 hours (plus 1 optional Essay in 50 minutes)

How is the SAT scored?

The two major sections of the SAT, *Evidence-Based Reading and Writing* and *Math*, are both scored on a scale of 200-800. In the *Evidence-Based Reading and Writing* section, the number of correct answers on the **Reading** and **Writing and Language** Tests are tallied to give a raw score, which is then converted to a score on a scale of 200-800 using a process called equating. Equating adjusts for slight differences in difficulty between various versions of the test (such as versions taken on different days). Because the score is based solely on the number of correct answers, there is no penalty for guessing. The *Math* section is scored in the same manner, tallying the number of correct answers from the **Math** Test.

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The Optional Essay is reported separately and is scored on a scale of 2-8. The two people who score your essay will each award between 1 and 4 points, which will be added together to give a score on a scale of 2-8. Each grader's score will be an average of scores between 1 and 4 points for each of three categories:

- **Reading:** A successful essay shows that you understood the passage, including the interplay of central ideas and important details. It also shows an effective use of textual evidence.
- **Analysis:** A successful essay shows your understanding of how the author builds an argument by examining the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and other stylistic and persuasive techniques, as well as supporting and developing claims with well-chosen evidence from the passage.
- **Writing:** A successful essay is focused, organized, and precise, with an appropriate style and tone that varies sentence structure and follows the conventions of standard written English.