

SAT/ACT FAQ

Do Colleges Prefer the SAT or ACT?

No, colleges/universities do not have a preference between these two tests anymore. All colleges/universities treat these tests equally in terms of admission.

- The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (www.FairTest.org) works to end the misuses and flaws of standardized testing and to ensure that evaluation of students, teachers and schools is fair, open, valid and educationally beneficial. Site also lists schools that are “Test Optional” colleges of universities.

Should I Take the SAT or ACT?

In Illinois, all juniors must take the SAT for a graduation requirement. This test is offered during the school day usually in April. Some students may score better on the ACT than on the SAT. It is a good idea to take both (even if they are just practice tests), to determine if the ACT highlights a student’s abilities better.

What's the Difference Between the SAT and ACT?

The SAT has two sections, Evidence Based Reading and Writing (ERW) and Math Section, and an optional Essay test. The Math section is broken into two parts, calculator, and non-calculator. They also have open-ended questions for Math. The two section scores are added together to provide the total (out of 1600 total). There is no longer a penalty for guessing, and compared to the ACT, students have more time per question overall. The reading level of the SAT tends to be higher.

The ACT has four sections, English, Reading, Math, and Science, and an optional Writing test. The four subsection scores are averaged together for students to receive a composite score (out of 36). Students can use their calculator throughout the whole math section and all answers are multiple choice. Students tend to have less time per question than on the SAT, but the reading level tends to be not as high.

Compare ACT and SAT Scores

Would you like to know what your score would be on the other test? [Check out this document.](#)

Do Illinois Colleges and Universities Only Take the SAT?

No! Both scores are considered equally for admission and scholarship consideration.

Should We Sign Up to Have Free Score Reports Sent?

This is a personal decision. We encourage students to take advantage of the four free scores ACT and SAT provide when registering for the exam, and consider sending them to colleges/universities where they are more certain of admission (though colleges will consider the highest overall score that is sent to them). College Board does allow students to send the free scores within nine days of taking the SAT (before students receive the scores, but it allows the student to see how the test felt). Some

colleges/universities require students to send all of their test scores, so sending them ahead of time can save families money.

If students qualify for a test fee waiver, College Board allows for unlimited SAT score fee waivers and ACT allows for 20 score fee waivers (after students receive their scores).

How Does Khan Academy Work with SAT?

Khan Academy provides, free, customized, test prep for students. Students are able to connect their College Board account, with a Khan Academy account. Khan Academy will then take their current scores and provide support in areas that are needed. Use this link for SAT tips and strategies:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning>

What Other Test Prep Options Are Available?

SAT provides an app for daily practice, more info can be found here:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/daily-practice-app>Opens in New Window

While GHS does not endorse any test prep companies, the Counseling and Advising office has compiled a list of local options-