

Introduction to College Admissions Testing

BWS Education Consulting

Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Take the PSAT as a junior
- Try both the ACT and SAT once in the winter of junior year
- Based on results, focus on both the SAT and ACT or just one

Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Take the SAT and/or ACT again in the spring of junior year
- If needed, take the ACT or SAT again in the fall of senior year
- All schools will accept either the ACT or SAT

Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- Fine to take each test 3 times
- For early decision, try to take the last tests in September or October of senior year
- For regular decision, can typically take the tests as late as January or February of senior year

Recommended Test-Taking Schedule

- If applying to highly selective schools, take 2-3 SAT Subject Tests
- Best to take Subject Tests at the end of a corresponding AP or Honors course (May/June)

Advance Planning Situations

- Student Athlete
- Extended Time

How do schools use test scores?

- About $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of what schools consider
- Grades most important admissions factor
- Some schools “superscore”
- Some schools don’t require test scores ([fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org))
- When in doubt, simply call the college admissions office

SAT Overview

- Math
 - Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, data analysis
- Reading and Writing
 - Reading passages, vocabulary in context
 - Grammar and editing
- Optional Essay
 - Analyze an argument

ACT Overview

- English (grammar and editing)
- Math (Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, pre-calculus)
- Reading (reading comprehension)
- Science (analyze experiments, data, and passages)
- Optional: analytical essay

ACT and SAT Similarities

- Can guess on both tests
- Both curved
- Test broad critical thinking and problem solving skills

ACT and SAT Differences

- Faster test-takers usually like the ACT
- More in-depth thinkers tend to like the SAT
- Students with extra time usually prefer the ACT
- Students with test anxiety often prefer the SAT

ACT and SAT Scoring

- ACT: 1-36 for each section, 1-36 average as composite
- SAT: 200-800 for each section, 400-1600 sum as composite
- Optional Essay will not affect overall score, but will be reported

What is a good score?

- It depends!

School	ACT	SAT
Ohio University	24	1100
Ohio State	29	1300
Ivy League	33	1500

What can students do to prepare?

- Read widely
- Take rigorous courses
- Do realistic, timed practice
- Work on argumentative writing
- Vocabulary memorization not as important anymore

Free Resources

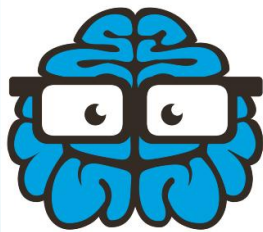
- [Khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org)
- [Actstudent.com](https://www.actstudent.com)
- [BWSEducationConsulting.com](https://www.bwseducationconsulting.com)
- Subscription services at the Columbus Public Library

How can parents help?

- Order the “Test Information Release” (ACT) or “Question and Answer Service” (SAT)
- Encourage reading
- Help with test anxiety

Further Information

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