

WHICH TO TAKE: SAT or ACT?

All colleges in the U.S. place equal weight on the SAT and ACT exams. So it honestly doesn't matter which test your teen submits for admissions to colleges.

But it pays to be strategic!

Many students will score higher on one test over the other. And even if scores are comparable, students will typically feel that one exam is "easier" than the other. These two factors point students to which exam to focus on for college admissions, because there's less of a learning curve when it comes to preparation for the test. (And students should definitely prepare for the test!)

I always recommend that students take a practice SAT exam and a practice ACT exam to learn which is a stronger test for them personally.

Here's how to determine if the SAT or ACT is stronger for your teen:

1. Use the links below to access and print a practice SAT exam and ACT exam from each testing website. (You'll use a lot of paper. Print on both sides.)
2. Have your teenager sit for each exam on different days - preferably at least a few days apart. These are LONG TESTS!
3. Use the Practice Testing Protocol on page 2 of this guide to take the test under the best, most accurate conditions possible.
4. Score the exam as directed on the website or on the exam itself.
5. Refer to page 3 of this guide to compare the total (composite) scores for each exam with the SAT-to-ACT Conversion Table.
6. Determine which exam score is higher. Register and prepare for that exam. Or, if both scores match up closely, ask your teenager which exam "felt" better to take. Register and prepare for that exam.

[SAT Practice Exam](#)

[ACT Practice Exam](#)

Practice Testing Protocol



For the most accurate results when taking practice exams, refer to these guidelines in order to mimic the official testing day as closely as possible. Consider proctoring the exam for your teenager by reading aloud the instructions and timing appropriately for each section.

Before Beginning

- Set aside the full amount of time required for the exam, which is about 3.5–4 hours for SAT or ACT, not including breaks. The test should be taken all in one sitting for the most accurate score results.
- Arrange to take the test in a quiet, distraction-free area to best simulate the official testing environment. Turn off any phone notifications or alerts.
- Print out the practice exam and bubble (answer) sheet from the links provided.
- Have a pencil, calculator and stopwatch available, along with the practice exam and answer sheet.

Taking the Test

- Use the stopwatch to accurately time according to the instructions at the beginning of each section. Don't continue beyond the time that's instructed or continue on to the next part of the booklet until that section's time is complete.
- Feel free to write in the test booklet to work through answers. Use the bubble sheet to mark answers.
- Short breaks should be taken during the exam:
 - For the SAT, a 10-min break is given after Section 1, a 5-min break after Section 3, and a 2-min break after Section 4.
 - For the ACT, a 10-min break is given after the Math section and a 5-min break is given after the Science section.

After the Test

- Score the exam by following the instructions on the ACT or SAT website or on the practice exam itself.
- To compare SAT and ACT scores, use the SAT-to-ACT Conversion Table on pages 3–5 of this guide.

SAT-to-ACT

CONVERSION TABLE



SAT Composite Score (Mar 2016 and beyond)	ACT Composite Score
1600	36
1560-1590	35
1520-1550	34
1490-1510	33
1450-1480	32
1420-1440	31
1390-1410	30

SAT-to-ACT

CONVERSION TABLE



SAT Composite Score (Mar 2016 and beyond)	ACT Composite Score
1350-1380	29
1310-1340	28
1280-1300	27
1240-1270	26
1200-1230	25
1160-1190	24
1130-1150	23
1100-1120	22
1060-1090	21
1020-1050	20

SAT-to-ACT

CONVERSION TABLE



SAT Composite Score (Mar 2016 and beyond)	ACT Composite Score
980-1010	19
940-970	18
900-930	17
860-890	16
810-850	15
760-800	14
720-750	13
630-710	12
560-620	11