



# Guide for the ACT and the SAT College Entrance Exams

## What are the ACT and SAT exams?

The ACT (American College Testing) and the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) are two types of standardized tests that colleges, universities and places that give scholarships use to measure high school students' academic level. The student chooses which of the two exams s/he will take according to what the university where s/he is applying requires.



### ACT

- Lowest possible score - 1
- Highest possible score - 36
- Costs \$47 – but you can get a “waiver”
- If you receive free or reduced lunch, you can ask your counselor for a waiver

### SAT

- Lowest possible score - 200
- Highest possible score - 800
- Costs \$45 – but you can get a “waiver”
- If you receive free or reduced lunch, you can ask your counselor for a waiver

## Who should take the ACT or the SAT?

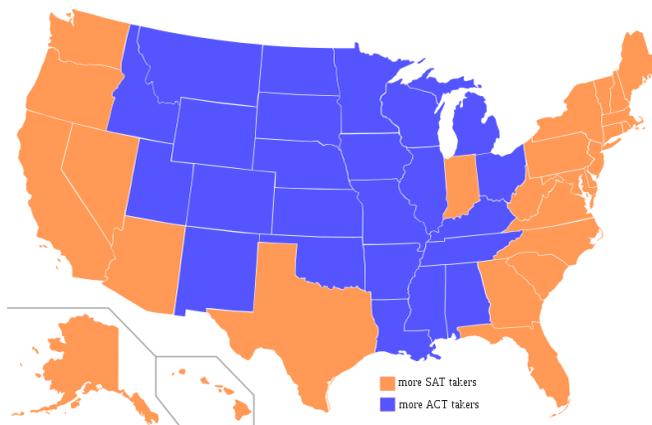
All students that want to go to college and who want to apply for scholarships should take it.

 But **WARNING:** These exams are not automatically given to all students in high school. Instead, only students that are proactive and look for the information take it. It's up to the student to find information about the test registration and test dates, speaking with her/his counselor or on the website:

**ACT:** [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org) and **SAT:** [sat.collegeboard.com](http://sat.collegeboard.com)

## Which of these two exams should I take?

Some colleges prefer that applicants take the ACT and some prefer the SAT. To decide which test you should take, ask for information from the university where you want to apply.



Blue = States where most students take the ACT

Orange = States where most students take the SAT

## What score do I have to get?

Remember that the higher your score is, the more opportunities you will have for scholarships and to get into different universities and colleges. However, there is no “magic number” and everything depends on the requirements of the college you want to attend and the scholarships for which you are applying. In general, you need a higher score if your grades are lower and not so high of a score if you have high grades.

## How do I register?

You can register online. **ACT:** [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org) and **SAT:** [sat.collegeboard.com](http://sat.collegeboard.com)

## When should I take the exam?

Don't wait until 12<sup>th</sup> grade to do it! In general, students of color and low-income students don't score as high on these exams. According to some studies, these types of tests are geared toward middle class white students. But, the good thing is that **you can take this test as many times as you want**. Because of this, it's important to take the test several times to improve their scores. We recommend:

1. **10th grade**- Take the practice exam (PLAN O PSAT)
2. **11th grade** – Take the ACT or the SAT (We recommend that you take it twice)
3. **12th grade** - Take the ACT or the SAT (In 12<sup>th</sup> grade, take it if you still need to increase your score)

## How long does it take to get my results?

It takes 3-8 weeks to get your score. Make sure you plan ahead to meet college and scholarship deadlines.

# Test Taking Strategies

Subjects and Structure	<b>MATH</b> 60 questions  60 minutes  Questions are ordered from easiest to most challenging  All answers are worth the same amount of points	<b>READING</b> 40 questions  35 minutes  4 passages -fiction -social science -humanities -science	<b>ENGLISH</b> 75 questions  45 minutes	<b>SCIENCE</b> 40 questions  35 minutes	<b>WRITING</b> 1 writing prompt  30 minutes
Tactics	Pick 25-30 questions  Answer the easiest questions first	Work out of order, using the strategy that works best for you: -Read questions first -Read text first -Scan text	Beforehand, study: -Comma usage -The shortest, simplest way to say something		This section is optional: You should take it if the colleges and/or scholarships you are applying to require it  This section is optional: You should take it if the colleges and/or scholarships you are applying to require it



## Preparing Your Body for the Test

- All tests begin at 8 am
- Get a good night's rest the night before
- Eat a good breakfast that has protein
- Do some deep breathing or stretches



## What to Take with You on Test Day

- Several #2 pencils
- Admissions ticket (you need to print it out)
- Acceptable ID
- Calculator
- A snack: we recommend yogurt, granola, and apple

