



Testing for College Admission

...PSAT, ACT, SAT I, SAT II and AP Testing

Standardized tests such as the SAT or ACT are required by many, but not all, colleges as part of the admissions process. Some colleges require additional standardized tests such as the SAT II subject exams. Additionally, college credit can be obtained for successful completion of AP exams.

- **PSAT** - This test is important practice for the SAT test and is given once a year in October. It does not include an essay or any Algebra II. It is a 2 hours and 10 minute test compared to the SAT test time of 3 hours and 45 minutes. For Juniors, it is used to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship. It can be taken in the Sophomore or Freshman year for practice. It is not used for admission.

Test Dates and Registration:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/reg.html>

- **ACT** - Like the SAT, the ACT is used by many colleges to determine admissions and award scholarships and grants. It is approximately 3 hours long and made up of four sections—English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. Each section is scored on a scale of 1 – 36 and the composite overall score is the average of the four scores. The test includes an OPTIONAL 30-minute essay. Like the SAT, it is graded on a scale of 1-6 by two graders, for a combined score of 2 to 12, although the grading criteria are different.

Test Dates and Registration: <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/nextdates.html>

- **SAT I** - This test is used by many colleges as one factor in admissions and sometimes to award grants and scholarships. It has three sections—Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. An unscored 25 minute Experimental section is also included. The individual sections are scored on a scale of 200-800 with a maximum score for the three sections of 2400. The writing section includes an essay which makes up 30% of the writing score. The scale of 1- 6 is used by two graders, for a combined score of 2 to 12. (If the two graders' scores differ by more than a point, a third grader is given the essay.)

Test Dates and Registration:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees.html>

- **SAT SUBJECT TESTS (SAT II)** - These tests are a series of one-hour exams designed to evaluate specific knowledge in particular areas. Not all colleges require these—check with the specific college.

Test Dates and Registration:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees.html>

- **Advanced Placement (AP) Exams** - Some colleges offer credit for successful completion of these exams. They are low risk—students choose which AP exams scores will be reported to colleges. The following groups should consider taking the AP exams:

- Students in Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- Students in International Baccalaureate (IB) courses
- ESL (English as Second Language) students

For more information, see the document [Taking Advantage of Advanced Placement Exams](#).

Test Dates and Registration: Contact Fairview's IB/AP Office.

TEST PREPARATION

There are test preparation classes offered through many sources. Training is available through BVSD, CU, private companies, and private tutors. In addition, there are books, software, and websites to help prepare for the standardized college tests. Some of these are available through the Fairview Academic Achievement Center. See [Private SAT and ACT Test Preparation Classes](#) for more information.

SAT vs. ACT

(from the Princeton Review, www.PrincetonReview.com, 800-2Review)

Question	SAT Response	ACT Response
How often is it administered?	Seven times per year	Six times per year
What is the test structure?	Ten-section exam: Three Critical Reading, three Math, three Writing, and one Experimental	Five-section exam: English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and Writing (optional)
What is the test content?	Math: Geometry and up to Algebra II Reading: Sentence completions, short and long reading passages, reading comprehension Writing: Grammar, usage, word choice, and a mandatory essay	Math: up to trigonometry Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science Writing: optional essay Science: charts, graphs, and data interpretation English: stresses grammar
Is there a penalty for wrong answers?	Yes , ¼ of a point for each wrong answer on multiple-choice questions	No
How is the test scored?	200-800 per section, added together for a score of 600-2400 2-12 for the essay	1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score 2-12 for the Writing Test
Are all scores sent to schools?	Yes. If a student requests a score report be sent to specific colleges, the report includes the scores the student received on every SAT taken.	No. There is a "Score Choice" option. Students can choose which schools receive their scores AND which scores the schools see.
Are there other uses for the exams?	Scholarship purposes Certain statewide testing programs	Scholarship purposes Certain statewide testing programs
Need more information?	Educational Testing Service (ETS), 609-771-7600, ETS.org The College Board: www.collegeboard.com	ACT, Inc. 319-337-1270 www.ACTstudent.org

Suggested Testing Plan for Competitive Colleges

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Freshman	N/A	N/A
Sophomore	May take practice PSAT in October	Prepare for PSAT , SAT and or ACT (June-Aug)
Junior	PSAT -- October SAT (Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan)	ACT --All Fairview Juniors take in April (offered additional 4 other times) SAT (March, May or June) SAT II --June AP/IB Exams (if applicable)
Senior	Retake Tests, if needed	AP Exams / IB Exams (if applicable)