

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS 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. Remember that if you are not a good test taker, a school whose admission decision is based mainly on test scores will likely have a teaching and learning environment that includes test-based learning. Consider whether or not this would be a good fit for you. For a list of schools that do not use test scores as their main admissions criteria, go to <http://fairtest.org/>.

An Overview

PSAT - This test is important practice for the SAT test and is given at your high school 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. Register with your counselor in September.

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/>

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.

Test Dates and Registration: <http://www.collegeboard.com/>

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.

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