

## General Test Structure

As you'll see in the chart below, **the redesigned SAT is radically streamlined**—there are now only four sections and the scoring has returned to the original 400-1600 (instead of the current 600-2400). The wrong answer penalty will also be eliminated.

**The ACT format, meanwhile, is essentially the same.** The essay is slightly longer, however.

	New SAT	ACT
Total Time	3 hrs (plus 50 min for essay)	2 hrs 55 min (plus 40 min for essay)
Number of sections	4 plus essay	4 plus essay
Sections	Reading: 65 min Writing and Language: 35 min Math (No calculator): 25 min Math (with calculator): 55 min Optional essay: 50 min	English: 45 min Math: 60 min Reading: 35 min Science: 35 min Optional essay: 40 min
Scoring	Two section scores, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (includes Reading and Writing and Language) and Math, on a 200-800 scale combined for a total score from 400-1600	Four section scores scaled from 1-36 averaged for a composite from 1-36
Wrong answer penalty?	No	No

## Reading

Since the new SAT will include only long passages and the ACT recently added paired passages, **the two tests' reading sections have become much more similar**.

Nonetheless, there are still some **major differences in the types of questions** they ask: [the evidence questions on the redesigned SAT](#) are especially different from ACT reading questions.

	New SAT	ACT
Time	65 min	35 min
Format	4 single passages and 1 pair, 10-11 questions each	4 passages, potentially including 1 paired passage, 10 questions each
# of questions	5 passages, 52 questions	4 passages, 40 questions
Time per passage/question	13 min/75 sec	8 min, 45 sec/53 sec
Passage types	1 U.S. or World Literature, 2 History or Social Studies, 2 Science	1 Prose Fiction or Literary Narrative, 1 Social Sciences, 1 Humanities, 1 Natural Sciences
Question types	Main Idea, Vocab-in-Context, Inference, Evidence Support, Data Reasoning, Technique, Detail-Oriented	Main Idea, Vocab-in-Context, Inference, Detail-Oriented
Key skills	Reading comprehension, inferring ideas, identifying evidence	Reading comprehension, inferring ideas, locating details

## SAT Writing and Language/ACT English

SAT Writing and Language (formerly SAT writing) is the other SAT section that the redesign will make **markedly more similar to its ACT equivalent**. The College Board is ditching Identifying Sentence Errors and the rest of its question styles for an ACT-style passage structure.

However, the new SAT writing section **still doesn't include the big-picture organization and main idea questions** that the ACT English section does.

	New SAT	ACT
Time	35 min	45 min
Format	4 passages, 11 questions each	5 passages, 15 questions each
Total # of questions	44 questions	75 questions
Time per passage/question	8 min, 45 sec/48 sec	9 min/36 sec
Content	Standard English Conventions: 20 questions (45%), covering sentence structure, conventions of usage, and conventions of punctuation Expression of Ideas: 24 questions (55%), covering development, organization and effective language use	Usage and Mechanics: sentence structure (20-25%), grammar and usage (15-20%), and punctuation (10-15%) Rhetorical Skills: style (15-20%), strategy (15-20%), and organization (10-15%)
Key Skills	Understanding grammar rules, expressing ideas clearly, connecting sentences logically	Understanding grammar rules, connecting sentences logically, recognizing overall structure and argument

## Math

The **redesigned SAT math section will focus on a more limited set of topics**, primarily algebra. The diminished presence of geometry sets the new SAT math section apart from the one on the ACT, which is still roughly a third geometry and trigonometry questions.

Redesigned SAT math will also include a no-calculator section, a significant number of data analysis problems, and simpler wording for questions.

	New SAT	ACT
Time	80 min	60 min
Format	Divided in to two sections No calculator: 20 questions (4 grid-ins), 25 min With calculator: 38 questions (9 grid-ins), 55 min	1 section, all questions multiple choice
Total # of questions	58 questions	60 questions
Time per question	No calculator: 75 sec With calculator: 87 sec	1 min
Content	Heart of Algebra — 33% Problem Solving and Data Analysis — 28% Passport to Advanced Math — 29% Additional Topics in Math — 10%	Pre-algebra — 20-25% Elementary algebra — 15-20% Intermediate algebra — 15-20% Coordinate geometry — 15-20% Plane geometry — 20-25% Trigonometry — 5-10%
Key Skills	Doing simple calculations without a calculator, translating word problems, analyzing data	Memorizing formulas, translating word problems, working quickly without making errors

## Science

The redesigned SAT still **doesn't have a separate science section**, but it does include science questions in all three of the other sections.

**Those questions are primarily focused on reading charts and graphs**, while ACT science tests a wider range of skills.

	New SAT	ACT
Time	N/A	35 min
Format	No specific section, 2 passages in reading (21 questions), 1 passage in Writing (6 questions), and 8 questions in Math	~7 passages, with 5-7 questions each
Total # of questions	35 questions	40 questions
Time per passage/question	Varies by section	5 min/53 sec
Content	Varies by section	Data Representation — 30-40% Research Summaries — 45-55% Conflicting Viewpoints — 15-20%
Key Skills	Understanding scientific ideas, reading charts and graphs	Doing simple calculations without a calculator, reading charts and graphs, analyzing experimental design

## SAT Essay/ACT Writing

The [ACT writing section](#) (the essay) is the one part of the test that's **undergoing major changes**. You'll still be presented with an issue and asked for your opinion on it, but you'll also be given three perspectives on the topics and asked to analyze them.

The **new SAT essay**, on the other hand, will be **more similar to the type of papers you write in English class**: the prompt asks you to read and analyze a persuasive essay.

	New SAT	ACT
Time	50 min	40 min
Optional?	Yes	Yes
Format	Presented with an essay or article and asked to analyze the author's argument	Presented with 3 viewpoints on a topic and asked to analyze those ideas as well as argue for your own perspective
Grading Criteria	Writing, Reading, and Analysis	Ideas and Analysis, Development and Support, Organization, and Language Use and Conventions
Scoring	Given a score from 2-8 for each dimension	Scaled score from 1-36