Recently, the [2017 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report](https://reports.collegeboard.org/sat-suite-program-results/detailed-2017-reports) was released and along with it, the SAT score averages for each state. While this statistic may seem irrelevant to your personal performance, it’s one worth looking at for a few different reasons.

In this post, we’ll outline what the average SAT scores are in each state, lend some insight into why it matters, and offer some perspective on how these scores stack up. To learn more about the average SAT scores in each state in 2017, keep reading.

**Why Do Average SAT Scores By State Matter?**

When colleges admit incoming students, they nearly always aim to compile a diverse class. One of the ways in which they consider this diversity is by geographical region. For this reason, you might find yourself competing with other students from your state for a seat at selective colleges, especially if many students from your state happen to be applying to the same school.

In addition, if you are applying for scholarships it is likely that you will be competing against students from your state, since many scholarships are local or regional in nature. Because SAT scores are often a key evaluation criterion for scholarships, it’s worth knowing how your scores are likely to stack up to others in your region.

To learn more about applying for scholarships, check out our post [What You Need to Know for a Successful Scholarship Season](https://blog.collegevine.com/scholarship-season-is-upon-us-what-you-need-to-know/).

## Which States Have the Highest SAT Scores?

The highest average SAT scores were found in the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, where average composite scores were each over 1270. It’s worth noting that in these states, overall participation was quite low, with only 3% of students taking the test.

This pattern holds true across the board, with higher scoring states having lower participation rates. This is likely due to statewide popularity or requirements related to the ACT. Students are not likely to take both the ACT and the SAT unless they know they will score well, and when given the choice, students often choose the test that they believe they’ll score higher on.

Of states with at least 25% participation, Arizona (1116), Nevada (1116), and Vermont (1114) stand out as top scorers.

## Which States Have the Lowest SAT Scores?

The lowest average SAT scores were found in the states of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Idaho, and Michigan, where average composite scores were all below 1010. The inverse relationship between participation and average score held true here as well, with all the lowest performing states having participation rates above 90%. When students do not self select and rather take the test as part of a requirement or as what they view their only option, their scores tend to be lower.

## How Do Average SAT Scores Compare to Average ACT Scores?

The preference for one standardized test over another tends to be largely geographical in nature. For that reason, in states with high SAT participation, ACT participation tends to be much lower, and the same is true vice versa.

Because higher participation tends to be associated with lower average scores, it is hard to compare SAT and ACT scores by state. Most states with high participation rates in one test have low participation rates in the other, which often means that states that have high averages on one test, have low averages for the other. In states like Georgia, where participation in the SAT and in the ACT are nearly equally as common, scores tend to be very close to the national averages for each test.

## What Do State Averages Mean for Me?

State averages matter because you want to perform well in comparison to others in your geographical area in order to gain a competitive edge. One way to do this is by considering which test you should take. Beyond considering the state averages for each test, you should also consider the merits of the tests individually. The SAT generally encompasses more general knowledge while the ACT is more subject oriented. To learn more about choosing between the ACT and the SAT, see these posts:

[The CollegeVine Guides to the ACT](https://blog.collegevine.com/the-collegevine-guides-to-the-act/)

[The CollegeVine Guides to the SAT](https://blog.collegevine.com/the-collegevine-guides-to-the-sat/)

It’s also important to remember that standardized tests are not the be-all and end-all of college admissions or scholarship applications. While scores do matter, many other factors will be weighed as well. To learn more about how standardized test scores impact admissions, see these posts:

[Which Section of the SAT and ACT is Most Important?](https://blog.collegevine.com/which-section-of-the-satact-is-the-most-important/)

[What is a Good SAT Score?](https://blog.collegevine.com/what-is-a-good-sat-score/)

[Can a Good SAT/ACT Score Offset a Bad GPA?](https://blog.collegevine.com/can-a-good-satact-score-offset-a-bad-gpa/)

[How the ACT Is Graded: A Breakdown](https://blog.collegevine.com/how-the-acts-graded-a-breakdown/)

Preparing for the SAT? Download our [free guide](https://info.collegevine.com/sat-8tips-download) with our top 8 tips for mastering the SAT.