

INTRO

Chapter 1

What is the SAT?

The SAT is a 3-hour long beast of a test (3 hours 50 minutes with essay).

It has 4 parts--**Reading, Writing and Language, Math**, and an optional **Essay**.

Here's the breakdown:

Part	# Of Questions	Time	Time/ Question
Reading	52 questions	65 mins	1.25 min
Writing and Language	44 questions	35 mins	0.8 min
Math (calculator)	38 questions	55 mins	1.45 min
Math (No calculator)	20 questions	25 mins	1.25 min
Essay	1 question	50 min	50 min

How is the SAT Scored?

The SAT has a pretty weird scoring scale from 400 - 1600 points.

A 400 means someone should check your pulse.

A 1600 means your mom forced you to master the cello by 2nd grade.

800 possible points come from the **Reading** part and **Writing/Language** part (**400 each**).

800 possible points come from the calculator **Math** part and no calculator **Math** part (**400 each**).

The **Essay** is graded separately with a scale from 6 - 24 points.

SAT vs ACT?

Once upon a time...

The SAT and ACT were very different.

Then more and more students started preferring the ACT.

So what did College Board (the people/creatures who make the SAT) do?

THEY COPIED THE ACT!

Yep, the current SAT is basically a total rip-off of the ACT.

This blatant thief is amazing for you though!

How????????? Because, **now preparing for the SAT will also prepare you for the ACT.**

There are still a couple of minor differences though. Here's the breakdown:

SAT	ACT
No 'hard' vocab questions	No vocab questions
4 answer choices per multiple-choice question	4-5 answer choices per multiple-choice question
Science questions in the reading part	Has a separate science part

What Do Colleges Want?

Wait! You're not taking the SAT for fun?

You'd **rather** be mauled by a raccoon for 3 hrs?

You'd **rather** undergo dental surgery without anesthesia for 3 hrs?

You'd **rather**...ALRIGHT WE GOT IT!

You're trying to get into college? Gotcha. Yea, college is pretty awesome.

That means at some point you're likely going to call up your favorite school and ask about getting in.

Someone will tell you (usually in smug voice),

“WE TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO OUR ADMISSIONS PROCESS”

They're saying that they take your entire application into consideration.

So you start thinking,

“Cool. Even if my SAT score sucks, my high GPA, loads of extracurricular activities, glowing letters of recommendation, and quality personal statement, should make up for it!”

We'll put this as softly as we can...

NO.

Sorry to break it to you, but the vast majority of colleges only care about two things...¹

1) Your SAT

2) Your GPA

The even sadder reality is that your GPA is seen as secondary to your SAT.

Nowadays, there's so much emphasis on the SAT that most colleges will accept a weak GPA (~2.5) if it is offset by a very high SAT score.²

Whereas if you do fantastic in high school, but your SAT score is trash, then your application will likely become trash as well--even if you apply with a perfect GPA.

'WHAT MADNESS IS THIS!?'

We agree! The SAT carries way too much weight. The problem is that colleges have no way of knowing whether or not your GPA is legit.

Your high-school could have been crazy strict with only the most dedicated suck ups managing to get B's, or your teachers could have been giving out A's left and right.

So the SAT was invented to give everyone a "level playing field" to prove that they actually paid attention in class.

1) Private liberal arts colleges at least pretend to seriously consider your personal statement, letters of recommendation, etc. Some probably do, but more often than not admissions only reads through these materials to see if you/your parents have money.

2) This is not true for extremely selective schools, such as "Ivy Leagues." Almost everyone who applies to these schools has a virtually perfect GPA and SAT. You'll need a truly remarkable application to set yourself apart.