

A+ *Test Prep and Tutoring*

**FAST FACTS
HANDBOOK
2006**

Table of Contents

Topic	Page
Feedback Form	3
1. What Kind of Test Prep is Right for You?	4
2. Test Prep Time Line	5
3. Types of College Admissions Applications	6
4. Application Documents	6
5. Other Application Requirements	8
6. Admissions Policies	8
7. Financial Aid Basics	9
8. ACT Test Dates	12
9. SAT Test Dates	13
10. SAT/ACT Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	14
11. Which Exam Should I Take?	15
12. Comparison Chart: SAT vs. ACT	16
13. Schools That Do Not Require the SAT or ACT	18
14. Helpful Websites/Books	19
15. SAT and ACT Scores at Selected Colleges and Universities	21

Feedback Form

We would very much appreciate your comments about this Fast Facts Handbook, especially any additional information you would find useful.

1. Which colleges would you like to have added to the SAT/ACT Scores list?

2. Is there any additional information you would like added to this handbook? Some possibilities include:

- Listing of college application fees_____
- College application dates_____
- College application requirements_____
- Listing/Overview of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education (state university system)_____
- More college data, i.e., size, tuition, special scholarship programs_____
- Unusual college admission programs, i.e., state colleges that offer in-state tuition to talented out-of-state students_____
- Other information (please list)_____

3. Do you want pages that are setup to be copied and handed out to students? _____

4. Other Comments:

Please copy this page and fax your feedback to A+ at 215.886.0155.

Thank you for your assistance.

1. What Kind of Test Prep is Right for You?

Whether they intend to or not, students do prepare for the SATs. Virtually all students take the PSATs at least once and possibly three times before attempting the SATs. Some students do no more to prepare. Both the SAT and ACT make extensive materials available at no cost, but some students go into the test without even reading the basics.

All students should prepare in some way. They should know the basic structure of each test and should practice some sample questions. This may be accomplished in as little as an hour. For some students, this may be sufficient preparation. Most students, however, need to dedicate substantial time to the preparation process, and there are many options available. No matter what type of preparation a student uses, parents and students alike need to remember that an unmotivated student will not learn.

Self-Directed Preparation

A student should go to the library or a bookstore to get a test prep book. The cost of this test prep is the cost of the book, usually around \$20. However, to get any benefit, the student must use the book – read the chapters, take the pre-test, do the practice exercises and follow up with a post-test. Most people, not just teenagers, are not very good at this level of self-tutoring. Parental involvement, if possible, is important.

Another method of self-preparation is to use free test prep websites. Some sites provide extensive preparation, including vocabulary building exercises and tests, and they keep a record of the student's progress. Some even send e-mail reminders to keep the student on track. In addition to these free sites, many of the pay-for-services sites have no-cost trial sections or practice questions.

Group Preparation

Group preparation is available in many forms and varies widely in cost. Some schools offer classes given by test prep companies on site during or after school. School classes may be a problem for some students as they find it difficult to pay attention when surrounded by friends. If students can pay attention and complete the work, group classes like these may be of great benefit. Other group courses are offered by community groups, individuals and test prep companies. It is important to compare the number of classes, size of classes and materials in evaluating the cost and possible outcome of a course. Asking for references is also recommended.

Individual Tutoring

One-to-one instruction is the most expensive form of preparation. However, for many students, it is also the most effective way to increase test scores. One-on-one instruction provides the customization, structure and individual accountability required for them to apply themselves to the task. Because the instruction ratio is one-to-one, it can be tailored to fit the individual student's needs and modified as necessary throughout the course of the program. This form of preparation also facilitates communication between the instructor, student and parents.

Finally, individual tutoring actually can prove more efficient than group preparation. Many students find that with one-to-one instruction, compared to group preparation, they can achieve the score improvement they seek in about half the instructional time. Again, references are recommended.

When to Prepare

Most juniors take the PSATs in October and receive their results in December. They take the SATs or ACTs for the first time in March or April. Preparation for these tests should begin in December or January. A senior who plans to take a test in September (ACT), October (SAT) or November (SAT) should begin preparation during the summer. Preparation for the SAT subject tests should coordinate with the proposed test dates. Remember that a student cannot take the SAT and SAT subject tests on the same date.

2. Time Line for Standardized Test Preparation

Ninth Grade

- Do **not** begin formal preparation for standardized tests. Work on vocabulary development. Read as much as possible. Reading should include both class reading and personal reading. Reading is a skill that improves with practice.

Tenth Grade

- If the PSAT is given to sophomores, review score reports and work on improving weak areas. Continue reading for pleasure and developing vocabulary.

Eleventh Grade

- Take the PSAT in October. In this school year, students should be encouraged to treat the test as a diagnostic exam for the SAT (which it is) and to take it seriously. When score reports come back, strong and weak points can be assessed.
- Begin formal or self-directed test preparation after receiving PSAT scores. Preparation is most effective if taken in manageable lessons over time rather than cramming shortly before taking the test.
- Juniors should take the ACT or SAT for the first time in the spring. Keep in mind that it is not possible to take the SAT and SAT subject tests on the same day. Also, students who are enrolled in AP classes may want to avoid the May SAT because it is usually given in the same week as the AP exams.

Summer Between Eleventh and Twelfth Grades

- Summer is a great time to do standardized test preparation. Formal lessons can begin in July or early August to prepare for the fall testing season.

Twelfth Grade

- Retake the SAT or ACT in September or October if necessary. Take SAT subject tests. Students may want to take the ACT or SAT one last time in November or December.
- Make note of all deadlines. Do not assume one school's dates will be the same as another's. Score reports take time to be received by schools. If a school's application deadline is February 1 and the SAT is January 25, the school will not receive scores on time. An earlier test should be taken.
- If they haven't already been sent, have SAT or ACT test scores sent to schools.. Schools need scores directly from the testing agencies, not copies of student reports.

General Comment

- Pay attention to registration deadlines. Late fees are costly and testing centers do fill up.

3. Types of College Admissions Applications

There are a number of ways in which schools manage their admissions application process. Each admissions scenario can result in acceptance, rejection, deferral or placement onto a waiting list.

Early Decision

Application made to one school by November 1. Applicant agrees to attend the school if accepted. This is a binding application. If the student applies to other schools, the acceptance is withdrawn. Other schools may also not consider applications. Applicants who are deferred will be considered in the regular application pool and still have a good chance of being accepted. Students who are deferred or rejected are freed from the Early Decision contract and may apply to other schools. Students are free to apply elsewhere if the school cannot meet the student's financial needs.

Early Action

Application due by a school specified date; schools send decisions by a school specific date. Both dates are prior to the school's regular deadlines. Acceptance is non-binding; applicant is free to apply to other schools.

Rolling Admissions

Applications are sent in at any time. Schools evaluate and respond in two to three weeks. Student has until spring to accept or reject decisions.

Regular Admissions

All applications are due by a specified date, usually in February. Decision letters are sent out to all applicants on the same date, usually April 1. Students have until a third date to accept or reject the school's offer. Students who are wait-listed may be accepted after this third date, as space becomes available.

Early Admissions

Student enters college before completing high school. Not offered by all schools. Each school has its own procedures and requirements.

4. Application Documents

Common Application/School Application

The common application is a standardized application that is currently accepted by 277 schools. Most of these schools also have a school specific application. When a school elects to accept the common application, it states that it will not give preference to one application type over the other. There are over 70 schools that only use the common application.

The application is available on-line (www.commonapplication.org) and may be submitted to schools electronically or downloaded and mailed. The student is responsible for checking each school's requirements

in addition to the application and for submitting the application and supporting materials to each school, as well as the appropriate fee.

School-specific applications are available on-line for most schools and may be submitted electronically if the school permits.

It may save time and money to apply using the common application. The most obvious saving is postage, but some schools eliminate their application fees entirely if a student applies on-line.

Transcripts and Test Scores

Early on, students should request that their school send transcripts. Most students are applying to college at the same time, so a backlog can develop in the school office. Students should allow some time for their schools to process transcript orders. Transcripts will need to be sent two or three times for some students as colleges and universities usually want updated records at a semester or year's end.

The student may report test scores on his application, but it is necessary to ask the testing service to send official copies to each school. Applications are not complete without them. The ACT and the SAT have definite, published time requirements for sending scores. It is possible to have ACT scores sent more quickly, but this is quite expensive.

Letters of Recommendation

Most colleges and universities require letters of recommendation. The number varies by school, but most require a minimum of two, one from the school's guidance counselor and one from a teacher. Guidance counselors write recommendations for many students and should be given adequate lead-time to get letters completed. Teachers also receive a large number of requests and should be given several weeks to prepare a letter. A polite reminder is sometimes necessary.

Students should try to select teachers who know them well as students. Students should ask for letters in a way that allows teachers to gracefully refuse. Teachers who do not want to write letters of recommendation usually do not feel that they can write favorable letters, and therefore students should not insist.

If a college or university provides a format for a letter of recommendation, it should be given to the teacher. If it does not have a recommendation format, the teacher should be told that also.

Application Essays

Many schools require essays from applicants although there are still a few who do not. Most schools also provide suggested or required topics. As on the SAT and ACT, writing off topic is simply bad form. If multiple topics are given, students can practice on more than one and submit the strongest. If a school asks for one essay, students should send one essay and not more. The common application is a time – saver because a student usually must write only one essay.

5. Other Application Requirements

Interviews

Many schools suggest interviews for applicants who live within reasonable distances. Some schools require interviews for all applicants. Others only request interviews with particular students. Most colleges are reasonable and, if an interview at the school is a hardship, will forego the interview or arrange to set up an interview closer to the student's home. Often schools ask local alumni to interview applicants.

Arts Majors' Requirements

Students who plan to enter the fine arts, music or performance arts usually are required to submit portfolios, tapes, videos or auditions.

Application Fees

Application fees range from no fee at all to \$75 or so, with many in the \$25-\$35 range. All schools have fee exemption policies for needy applicants, but students should not assume that they will qualify for a fee waiver at all schools. A student's application is not considered complete until the fee is received.

6. Admissions Policies

Admission Indexes

Some schools use admissions formulas or indexes for admission. Most are a balance of GPA or class rank and SAT/ACT scores. These are plugged into the formula and this produces an index number. The schools have established index numbers at which students will be admitted, deferred or rejected. Scholarships are also awarded using this system. The most openly publicized indexes are used by state university systems although the trend seems to be away from indexes and to holistic assessments of applicants. If the formulas are released to the public, applicants may pre-assess themselves.

Students who do not meet the automatic acceptance number should not be discouraged from applying. Even schools that use admissions indexes consider other factors in evaluating applicants who do not make the automatic admission cut, including letters of recommendation, difficulty of high school courses, extracurricular activities, interviews and essays.

Many schools do not use strict admissions formulas because in addition to wanting academically talented student bodies, they want diverse student bodies. For example, the University of Pennsylvania may not accept all valedictorians from Montgomery County. They may select one or two of those applicants and reject the others in order to accept valedictorians from Nebraska and Georgia, thereby creating geographic diversity.

Recently admissions indexes have been in the news as they were applied to affirmative action. Some schools awarded applicants extra points for their race, school districts or disabilities. This procedure has been challenged in courts, sometimes successfully, and most of the index factors have been changed or eliminated. Many colleges and universities have developed other means to ensure equal opportunity.

See two reports on admissions:

<http://airweb.org/page.asp?page=347>

"Trends in College Admissions 2000: A Report of a National Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Policies, Practices and Procedures. Two versions are available as PDF files, complete, 196 pages, and summary, 30 pages.

www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/press/adm_decision_making.pdf

“How US Institutions of Higher Education Select Undergraduate Students.

Some schools use a form of indexing for awarding scholarships. For example, a school might state that any accepted applicant would be awarded a scholarship if his GPA or test scores were at or above a predetermined level. If these types of awards exist, they will be listed on a school's financial aid information page.

The Application Process

Even if schools do not use public admissions formulas, they do establish priorities for consideration and may use internal indexes as a tool to help evaluate their applicants. For most schools, GPA and class rank are the most important criteria. Many schools provide a profile of their most recent entering class, including test scores (mean, median and/or mid 50% cluster) and GPA and class ranking distributions. These are helpful guidelines for students. Often, schools also include the number of applications received, the number accepted, and the number or percentage of students who actually enroll.

Each school states what it needs for consideration. Students need to understand that an application is not complete and will not be evaluated until all required items are in the school's hands. Meeting deadlines is critical.

Applications may ask the student to fill in their test scores and GPA, but they also require official copies of high school transcripts (i.e., sent by the high school directly to the college or university) and test scores (sent by the testing company directly to the college or university). These requirements all take time to fulfill and should be requested early in the process.

Students should try to send in all application material as a packet, but some items such as test scores or first semester, senior year grades may not be available. Schools know this and expect that some items will arrive later. It is extremely important, however, that your application and all available supporting materials be submitted before the deadline.

7. Financial Aid Basics

There are two major categories of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. Need is the difference between the total estimated cost of attending college for one year and the family's expected contribution. Merit aid is awarded to students who meet particular criteria, usually without consideration of need.

How Need is Determined – FAFSA

Virtually all schools use the FAFSA (“Free Application for Federal Student Aid”; the FAFSA is required for all federal and most state awards. The form is available on line as well as at libraries and can be requested by phone. Applying on line at www.fafsa.gov is easiest since the website checks the form for math errors and omissions. The website also has a work sheet.

Federal Methodology uses the information supplied on this application to determine how much a family can be expected to contribute to the student's education for the year of the application. This amount is called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

As the name implies, applying under FAFSA is free. It is not necessary to pay someone to complete the form. All of the information on the application would need to be supplied to the person completing the form. The

application may be submitted after January 1 of the senior year. Applicants should not wait for acceptances to begin the financial aid process, nor should parents wait until they have filed their income taxes to complete the form. Estimates are permitted.

How Need is Determined – Other Forms

In addition to the FAFSA, some schools have their own financial aid forms. Applicants should be very careful to check each school's requirement. The most common additional form is the Financial Aid PROFILE that is processed by the College Board as part of its College Scholarship Service (CSS). Here, schools use *Institutional Methodology* to determine the amount of expected family contribution or EFC, using additional information acquired from these forms.

Many states use the FAFSA to determine state aid, but others use supplemental forms as well. Each state sets its own requirements and deadlines. Parents and students should check state requirements for all schools.

Time Is of the Essence

Deadlines are real and must be respected. Ignoring them can be deadly to one's prospects for financial aid.

Merit Awards

Merit awards, or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of predetermined criteria. Such scholarships are, for the most part, awarded by individual schools. In addition, some corporations, fraternal and social organizations, and ethnic organizations award scholarships. In dollar amounts, they range from token awards to substantial support for students. Most are based on academic achievement and are awarded by colleges, but a few may be won through essay writing or some other form of competition. There are numerous books and websites that list these scholarships and their requirements.

Some schools have automatic scholarships. If an applicant meets established GPA/class ranking and standardized test scores, he qualifies for a scholarship. As a part of applying to a school, an applicant should also look into the school's financial aid programs. Almost all scholarships require that the recipient maintain a specific GPA to retain the award from year to year.

Any student interested in investigating scholarships should spend some time in the library, bookstore or on line. There are many reputable search sites, including www.studentaid.gov, a government sponsored site.

Types of Financial Aid Awards

There are three major types of financial aid: (1) grants and scholarships, (2) loans and (3) work/study. Grants are gifts of money that are not paid back. Grants are untaxed for the most part. Grant funding comes from the federal government or state governments and from college or university monies. Scholarships are also free money, but they also carry responsibility to maintain minimum grades at a stated level.

Loans are of various types. Most are given to the student in his name. The federal or state government subsidizes interest. Interest and repayment do not begin until the student quits or finishes school. Interest rates are usually lower than that of loans secured by parents. Although there is a lot of negative press on the student loan burden of recent graduates, most people are able to repay loans. In most cases, monthly loan payments will be much less than monthly car payments, for example. Many people repay loans earlier than required.

Work/study is a jobs program. Students are hired to work at a part-time job at their school for a wage. The wages are subsidized by the federal government. Some schools have their own work/study programs as well,

increasing the number of available jobs. While some work/study students bus tables in school cafeterias and wash dishes in the kitchen, many students are hired to work in libraries and offices or as helpers to faculty. Many schools try to match student talents and career plans with on-campus jobs. Hours are limited to prevent the job from becoming a burden to the student.

Financial Aid Packages and Renewals

After acceptance, a student receives a financial aid package. A financial aid award may include scholarship, grant, loan and job, or any combination of the four. Award packages may change from year to year, depending on the student's need and developing skills and talents. A student who had a grant and a loan for the freshman year may receive a scholarship instead of the grant or loan after a good academic year. If a student's family has more or less money, the awards will be adjusted accordingly. In order to do this, an application for financial aid must be submitted each year that a student is enrolled in school.

It Should Not Cost Money to Get Money

Be aware of scholarship and financial aid scams. Some websites ask for money to enroll in scholarship searches; others ask for money in order to qualify for an award. Reputable companies do not award scholarships based on any payment of money. In addition, no one can guarantee a scholarship. Any scholarship search service that requires fees in advance or that purports to guarantee scholarships should be avoided. In most cases, industrious students and parents can perform their own Internet searches for scholarships.

In Summary

- Pay attention to deadlines. Financial aid agencies are serious about their dates.
- Complete all forms as much as is possible. If you cannot complete a line on a form, include a note explaining the omission.
- Don't pay to get financial aid information. Information is free for virtually all financial aid.
- Unless a student has unlimited funds it is worth applying for aid. Even families with good incomes and assets may qualify for some aid. Good students from all income levels may be awarded scholarships.

8. Test Dates

ACT Test Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Applies
February 11, 2006*	January 6, 2006	January 7 - January 20, 2006
April 8, 2006	March 3, 2006	March 4 - March 17, 2006
June 10, 2006	May 5, 2006	May 6 - May 19, 2006
September 16, 2006**	August 18, 2006	August 19 - August 25, 2006
October 26, 2006	September 22, 2006	September 23 - October 6, 2006
December 9, 2006	November 2, 2006	November 4 - November 16, 2006
February 10, 2007*	January 5, 2007	January 6 - January 19, 2007
April 14, 2007	March 9, 2007	March 10 - March 23, 2007
June 9, 2007	May 4, 2007	May 8 - May 18, 2007

* Test not given in New York State on these dates.

**Test available only in limited states. It is available in Pennsylvania.

Non-Saturday test dates are available for each of these dates. Please consult the website for more information and to apply for non-Saturday testing. After the late fee date, stand-by status only is available.

SAT Test Dates

Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Applies
-------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------

January 28, 2006	December 22, 2005	December 23, 2005 - January 4, 2006
April 1, 2006*	February 24, 2006	February 25 - March 8, 2006
May 6, 2006	April 3, 2006	April 4 - April 12, 2006
June 3, 2006	April 28, 2006	April 29 -May 10, 2006
October 14, 2006**	No dates available for registration/late fees	
November 4, 2006		
December 2, 2006		
January 27, 2007		
March 10, 2007*		
June 2, 2007		

Sunday testing available for the date immediately following the regular testing date with the exception of October 14.

See note below. Please consult the website for more information and to apply for non-Saturday testing.

*No subject tests given on these dates

** Sunday testing for October 14 schedules for October 22

SAT Subject Tests

Language tests with listening are administered only in the November test dates.

Subject tests in Literature, US History, Math 1, Math 2, Biology E/M, Chemistry, and Physics are administered for all test dates except April 1, 2006 and March 10, 2007 as noted above.

French and Spanish reading tests are administered for all test dates except April 1, 2006, November 4, 2006 and March 10, 2007.

Check the website for German, Modern Hebrew, Italian and Latin as these tests have very limited availability.

9. SAT/ACT Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Both the ACT and the College Board, for tests including the SAT, PSAT, SAT subject tests and AP exams, may provide special testing accommodations for students with provable disabilities. The application and approval process is complex and time consuming for each test. Fortunately, most students who require special accommodations have already been assessed and have the proper certifications on file with their schools. These are permanent certifications as long as the student stays in the same school district and the student's needs do not change. After being certified by the testing agency, the student is provided with an identification number that is used on test registration forms.

The school contact should encourage students who are known to have disabilities to begin the certification process well before any test dates, allowing a couple of months review of the application. A student who will be taking the PSAT with accommodation should begin the application process in early summer.

A student who has been approved for accommodations is not required to use them. If a student wishes to take a test without accommodation, he should register for the test, but should not provide his special identification number on the form.

There is no standby registration for students with accommodations.

Types of Disabilities

Any student who currently has an IEP, 504 or other accommodation plan in place should consider special testing. Disabilities include visual or hearing impairment, medical, physical and psychiatric conditions, AD/HD, and learning disabilities.

Limited English language proficiency is not considered to be a disability, nor is any disability of a temporary nature, i.e. a broken arm.

Types of Accommodations

For the visually impaired, accommodations include large-type test booklets, readers, Braille booklets, and answering devices, magnification devices, dictation, and large block answer sheets. For the hearing impaired, they provide audio amplification and sign presentations. Other learning /testing disabilities are accommodated by extended time, extra breaks, multiple-day testing, specific time of day testing, small groups, individual testing, special furnishings and alternative test sites with an approved proctor.

Some of the accommodations will permit the student to be tested in the regular testing sites. Others require special venues and special testing dates. Please be sure to specify any special needs, however small they may seem.

Score Reporting

Score reports are received by disabled students in the same manner as by non-disabled students. Score reports are not flagged for accommodations. If a student is tested with any accommodation that has not been previously approved, his or her test scores will be cancelled.

10. Which Exam Should I Take?

The SAT and ACT are accepted by most schools. In the Eastern United States, most students take the SAT. A look at school statistics shows that most schools accept either test, but the majority of applicants take the SAT. Many students submit both.

So Which Test is Right for You?

Although a comparison chart of the two tests is a starting point for selecting either test, the best way to decide if the ACT or the SAT is better for a particular student is to try out sample questions. If a student is tempted to take the ACT instead of the SAT because he hears that the ACT is easier, he should look into the test before actually taking it. Neither test is easy, and both are a fairly grueling way to spend a long Saturday morning.

Every student should visit the testing websites (www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org). Both have good preparation pages. For more information, students may also visit school libraries or the public library to check out test prep books – and read them! It does not take long to become familiar with the types of questions asked and to make a thoughtful decision on which test to take.

Most juniors take a standardized test in the spring with the idea that it can be retaken in the fall of the senior year. If you retake the ACT or SAT, do some preparation beforehand. There is often some minor improvement with a second testing, but most students can sometimes increase their performances substantially with some serious preparation. Above all, students should not obsess about test scores. They remain only one facet of the college application and for most schools, they are not the most significant or deciding factor. High school grades, class rank and the degree of difficulty of courses taken are substantially more important.

There are also a growing number of colleges and universities that do not require standardized test scores. Many of these schools are very selective but have chosen to concentrate on grades and class rankings and have other requirements, such as the submission of graded research papers. If standardized testing is a real problem for a student, one of these schools might be the answer.

If test scores and grades are not high enough to get a student into the school of his dreams, there may still be alternatives. It is possible to enroll as a freshman at one school and transfer to another after the completion of the student's freshman or sophomore year.

11. Comparison of SAT and ACT Tests

	SAT	ACT
Who Uses Which Test	Most schools accept both tests. There is a preference in the east and the west for the SAT and in the middle of the United States for the ACT. Check each school's statistics to see which test is submitted more.	
Number of Questions	170 questions	215 questions
Overall Time	3 hours 45 minutes	2 hours 55 minutes without essay 3 hours 25 minutes with essay
Test Organization	10 sections: 3 math, 3 reading comprehension, 2 grammar, 1 essay and 1 equating section in math, reading or grammar – difficult to identify – not included in score	4 sections plus optional essay, an equating section is given on some dates and is identifiable; one subject per section
Section Lengths	25 minutes: essay, 2 math, 2 reading, 1 grammar and 1 equating ; 20 minutes, 1 each math and Reading, 10 minutes grammar	Grammar, 45 minutes; math, 60 minute; reading, 35 minute; science, 35 minutes and essay, 30 minutes
Type of Questions	There are 10 student-produced response questions in the math section. The rest of the test is comprised of 5-choice multiple choice questions; Each section arranged easy to hard questions except reading, which follows the passage	All 4-choice multiple choice No difficulty order
Penalty for guessing	1/4 point subtracted for incorrect answers	No penalty
Scoring	Each subject receives a score of 200-800; 3 scores added for a composite score of 600-2400. Essay scored 2-12	Each subject receives a score of 1-36; scores averaged for a composite score of 1-36. Essay is scored 2-12
Essay	25 minutes, first section of test. Topics: general truths, sayings, historic quotes; essays available to schools	30 minutes, last section of test (optional); topics: subjects of concern to high school students; essays available to schools

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

SAT

Subjects/Skills tested

Math through the first semester of Algebra II
Reading, Vocabulary and Grammar
Questions require much decoding

Math through basic trig
Reading and Grammar
Questions are straightforward

Calculators

Scientific graphing calculator allowed

Scientific graphing calculator allowed

When Offered

Seven times each year: January, March/April,
May, June, October, November, December
Most students test on Saturday; Sunday is
available for documented religious reasons

Six times each year: February, April, June, September
(limited locations) October, December
Most students test on Saturday; non-Saturday is
available for documented religious reasons

Where Offered

Both tests are given at most area high schools at least once a year. Some schools offer both tests each time offered
Subject tests cannot be taken on same day as SAT. SAT test dates differ from ACT dates.

Ease of registration

Easy, on-line, by mail, by phone

Easy, on-line, by mail, by phone

Preparation

Practice questions on-line at ACT and SAT websites, books in library and for purchase; on-line practice for free, group classes and individual tutoring are available for both tests.

Fees

\$41.50 for regular registration; includes scores sent
to 4 schools, each additional school \$9.00
essay included in registration
Late registration add \$21.00
Standby testing add \$36.00
Changing date or place \$20.00
Scores free on-line; by phone \$11.00

\$29.00 for regular registration; includes scores sent
to 4 schools, each additional school \$7.00
add \$14.00 for writing
Late registration add \$18.00
Standby testing add \$36.00
Change place \$18.00
Scores free on-line, early release \$8.00

Score Choice

No score choice. Each score report includes all
test results. Schools see all scores including
subject test scores. Some schools use highest
score in each area to form composite score.
Others use a single score date only.

Send selected test result to selected schools
Test scores cannot be broken down by subject and
sent separately. Some schools will use multiple
test results to create a composite score of highest
subject scores.

Other tests

SAT subject tests are required by some schools

Some schools accept ACT with writing instead of
subject tests

Question/Answer Service

For some test dates, students may receive a copy of their test booklet and a printout of their answers and the correct answers. See
websites for available dates and fees.

More Information

www.collegeboard.com/

www.act.org/

Montgomery County 215-886-9188 • Main Line 610-520-0537 • www.aplustutoring.com

12. Schools That Do Not Require the SAT or ACT

There are a growing number of colleges and universities that do not require submission of SAT or ACT scores. Fair Test (www.fairtest.org) includes a list of over 700 schools on its website. This list provides only a starting point, however. Included on the list are De Vry Institute and ITT Technical Institutes, schools that focus on older students, such as Peirce College, and distance (on-line) learning schools. All the schools on the list offer bachelor degrees. The list is followed by a long list of footnotes and many schools on the list have multiple notations that qualify their test-free classification. There are a number of highly selective schools on the list that truly do have alternatives to the SAT or ACT. Any student who does not want to use test scores should be careful to check each school's admissions guidelines. A school that does not require standardized test scores usually has alternative requirements.

The most common alternative requirement is that students submit a graded paper with the grade and comments from the teacher. Schools usually ask for a research paper written in 11th or 12th grade. Some schools ask for more than one paper. High class rank and GPA may also excuse a student from submitting test scores.

The list that follows is a selection, compiled from the Fair Test list and other sources, of schools in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions that offer standardized test score alternatives. Most still accept standardized test scores and for many of these schools, the majority of applicants do submit SAT or ACT scores.

Pennsylvania

Chatham College – accepts a graded paper or portfolio, or test scores

Dickinson College – test scores are optional for admission, but are required for scholarship consideration

Franklin & Marshall College – no test scores if in top 10% of class or have a 3.6 or 4.0 in a school without rankings; applicants must submit two graded papers

Muhlenberg College – accepts a graded paper and personal interview instead of test scores

Susquehanna University – accepts two graded papers instead of scores; also requires college prep courses

Ursinus College – no test scores if in top 10% of class or a 3.6 or 4.0 in a school without rankings

New Jersey

Drew University – beginning September 21, 2005, a graded paper may be submitted instead of test scores

Thomas Edison College – no test scores required

New York

Bard College – test scores optional

Hamilton College – accepts SAT, ACT or subject tests, or applicant can submit all; school will select the most favorable combination

Sarah Lawrence College – a graded paper is requested; no standardized tests required

Union College – requires test scores as well as a graded paper, but accepts SAT, ACT or SAT subject tests

Connecticut

Connecticut College – SAT is optional, two subject tests or ACT, with or without writing, is required

Massachusetts

Cambridge College – does not require scores

College of the Holy Cross – beginning in 2006, SAT and ACT are optional

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

Mount Holyoke College – Test scores are optional; college assigns only 10% weight in selection process to scores
Wheaton College – test scores not required, but will consider if submitted

Vermont

Middlebury College – accepts SAT, ACT, three subject tests, AP or IB scores

Maine

Bates College – test scores optional for admission, but must be submitted before entering school

Bowdoin College – scores optional; 20-25% of applicants do not submit; however scores must be submitted after acceptance for course placement.

13. Helpful Websites/Books

<http://www.compassprep.com>

Links to college related websites, some info on test requirements

<http://www.mytutor.com>

Links to college info pages and financial aid pages

<http://www.ivywest.com>

Provides an extensive list of college's SAT subject test requirements

www.nacacnet.org

National Association for College Admissions Counseling; website has an area for students and parents with information and numerous links. Also includes articles and past issues of organization newsletter

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool>

National Center for Educational Statistics website – COOL (college opportunities on-line) pages on many schools including admissions information, test scores, costs and college profiles

www.fairtest.org

Provides information about schools with alternatives to SAT/ACT. Although there are a few school which do not use test scores at all, the majority of the schools on this list use scores in some way

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Official site for the federal financial aid application form; print out or apply on-line

www.fastweb.com

Scholarship matching; financial aid information with many links

www.finaid.com

Financial aid information including a needs calculator, many links

www.collegeboard.com

Overview of SAT I, SAT II, on-line registration, scores, practice questions, practice test, test dates, registration, college information, financial aid information

www.act.org

Overview of the ACT test, including writing, test dates and registration, practice questions, college information

www.commonapplication.org

Official website for the common application, get information, download the application, apply on-line and more

www.number2.com

Free on-line test prep for SAT and ACT plus a vocabulary builder

www.gocollege.com

Free on-line test prep for SAT and ACT

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

The College Board College Handbook, 2006, College Board, 2005

Extensive listing of schools, including admissions info, size, cost, application deadlines, majors, scholarships. Updated regularly

The Insiders' Guide to the Colleges 2006, Yale Daily News, St Martin's- Griffin, New York, 2005

A look at schools from the student perspective

14. SAT and ACT Scores at Various Colleges and Universities

College or University	SAT Mid 50%		ACT Composite Mid 50%	ACT writing required	SAT Subject Test Requirements	Comments
	Verbal					
	Math					
Albright College	460-570	450-570	*		not required	
Amherst college	680-770	680-780	30-33		SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Arcadia University	490-610	470-590	20-26	N	not required	
Boston University	600-690	620-690	27-31	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Brown University	650-760	660-760	27-32		SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Bryn Mawr College	620-720	600-690	28		SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Cabrini College	440-530	430-520	*	N	not required	
Carnegie Mellon University	610-710	680-770	27-32		required - subjects based on major	
Chestnut Hill College	430-540	420-520	17-20	N		
Columbia University	660-760	670-780	27-32	Y	required - subjects based on major	
Cornell University	630-730	660-780	28-32	Y	required - subjects based on major	
Dartmouth College	670-760	680-780	28-34	Y	2 subject tests - student choice	
De Sales University	500-600	490-600	17-26			
Delaware Valley College	450-550	460-550	20-27	Y		
Dickinson College	600-690	590-680	26-29		used for placement	all tests optional but recommended
Drexel University	540-640	560-670	*	N		
Duke University	660-750	670-780	29-34	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Eastern University	490-610	470-590	19-24			
Elizabethtown College	510-610	510-630	21-26			
Georgetown University	640-740	640-740	27-32	N	required - 3 subject tests	
Gwynedd-Mercy College	440-530	430-530	*			
Harvard University	700-790	700-790	31-34	Y	required - 3 subject tests	
Haverford College	640-740	640-740	*	Y	2 subject tests	
Holy Family University	450-520	430-530	*	N		
Howard University	430-690	450-680	18-29	Y	recommended	
Ithaca College	540-640	540-640	*	Y		

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

College or University	SAT		ACT Composite Mid 50%	ACT writing required	SAT Subject Test Requirements	Comments
	Mid 50%					
	Verbal	Math				
Johns Hopkins University	630-730	660-760	27-32		SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
King's College	470-570	470-570	*			
Kutztown University	450-540	450-540	*	N	required for some majors	
La Salle University	500-600	490-600	*	N		
Lafayette College	570-660	600-700	25-29	Y	recommended - used for placement	
Lehigh University	590-670	630-710	*	Y		
Mass Inst of Technology (MIT)	680-760	730-800	31-34	Y	3 SAT subject tests - math, science, student choice	
Millersville University	480-570	480-580	*	N		
Moravian College	510-600	510-610	19-22	Y		
Muhlenberg College	560-660	560-660				SAT/ACT not required, submit graded paper test required for some scholarships
New York University	610-700	610-710	27-31		2 subject tests recommended	
Peirce College						no test scores required
Penn State Abington	420-550	430-570	*	N		
Penn State University Park	530-630	560-670	*	N	not required	
Philadelphia University	480-560	490-570	*	N		
Princeton University	690-780	700-790	*	N	3 subject tests - required	
Rider University	470-570	470-580	*	N		
Rowan University	500-590	510-610	*	N		
Rutgers University (Camden)	500-600	520-620	*	Y	SAT II if not yet a high school grad	
Shippensburg University of PA	480-570	480-580	*	N		
St. Joseph's University	540-620	540-630	22-27			
Stanford University	680-770	690-780	29-34			
Swarthmore College	680-770	670-760	*	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
Temple University	490-590	500-600	19-24	N		

A+ Test Prep and Tutoring Fast Facts Handbook

College or University	SAT Mid 50%		ACT Composite Mid 50%	ACT writing required	SAT Subject Test Requirements	Comments
	Verbal	Math				
University of Delaware	540-630	560-650	24-28	Y	2 subject tests - recommended esp. for honors	
University of Notre Dame	630-730	650-740	30-33	N	not required - used for placement	
University of Pennsylvania	650-740	680-760	28-33	Y	SAT + 2 subject tests or ACT w/writing	
University of Pittsburgh	540-660	580-670	24-28			
University of the Arts			*			no tests required
University of the Sciences	490-580	530-620	20-25	Y		
Ursinus College	550-660	560-660	22-28		strongly recommended	no tests required w/ 3.5 GPA or in top 10%
Villanova University	580-660	600-680	27-30	Y		
West Chester University	490-570	490-570	*	Y		
Widener University	440-560	430-540	*	N		
Yale University	690-790	690-790	30-34		SAT w/3 subject tests or ACT w/writing	

*Accepts ACT but scores not reported; usually due to too few scores.