

## Major Features Compared

### Comparison of the Major Features: Pre-March-2016 SAT and New SAT

Category	Pre-March-2016 SAT	New SAT
<b>Total Testing Time</b>	3 hours and 45 minutes	3 hours (plus 50 minutes for the Essay [optional])
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Critical Reading</li> <li>2. Writing</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Essay</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evidence-Based Reading and Writing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Test</li> <li>• Writing and Language Test</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Math</li> <li>3. Essay (optional)</li> </ol>
<b>Important Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on general reasoning skills</li> <li>• Emphasis on vocabulary, often in limited contexts</li> <li>• Complex scoring (a point for a correct answer and a deduction for an incorrect answer; blank responses have no impact on scores)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career readiness and success</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact</li> <li>• Rights-only scoring (no penalty for guessing)</li> </ul>
<b>Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required and given at the beginning of the SAT</li> <li>• 25 minutes to write the essay</li> <li>• Tests writing skill; students take a position on a presented issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional and given at the end of the SAT; postsecondary institutions determine whether they will require the Essay for admission</li> <li>• 50 minutes to write the essay</li> <li>• Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; students produce a written analysis of a provided source text</li> </ul>
<b>Score Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale ranging from 600 to 2400</li> <li>• Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Critical Reading; 200 to 800 for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale ranging from 400 to 1600</li> <li>• Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing; 200 to 800 for Math; 2 to 8 on each of three dimensions for Essay</li> </ul>

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Category	Pre-March-2016 SAT	New SAT
	<p>Mathematics; 200 to 800 for Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essay results scaled to multiple-choice Writing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Essay results reported separately</li></ul>
<b>Subscore Reporting</b>	None	Subscores for every test, providing added insight for students, parents, admission officers, educators, and counselors

# Test Length and Timing Compared

## Comparison of Test Length and Timing: Pre-March-2016 SAT and New SAT

Pre-March-2016 SAT			New SAT		
Component	Time Allotted (min.)	Number of Questions/ Tasks	Component	Time Allotted (min.)	Number of Questions/ Tasks
Critical Reading	70	67	Reading	65	52
Writing	60	49	Writing and Language	35	44
Essay	25	1	Essay (optional)	50	1
Mathematics	70	54	Math	80	58
<b>Total</b>	225	171	<b>Total</b>	180 (230 with Essay)	154 (155 with Essay)

# Compare the New SAT to the ACT

Taking the SAT is the best way to show colleges you have the skills and knowledge they want most. Find out how the new SAT, launching in March, compares to the ACT.\*

Test Snapshot		
Features	New SAT	ACT
Widely accepted	All U.S. colleges	Almost all U.S. colleges
Major redesign	2016 SAT is based on the latest research on the skills colleges value most.	No recent significant revisions.
Tests the vocabulary you'll use	Yes	Yes
Everyday math formulas provided	Yes	No
Essay is optional	Yes	Yes
Penalty for guessing	No	No
Cost	\$54.50 (\$43 without essay)	\$56.50 (\$39.50 without essay)

<b>Free Practice</b>		
<b>Resources</b>	<b>New SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>Free daily practice questions</b>	Yes, the free mobile app, Daily Practice for the New SAT.	Yes
<b>Free comprehensive test practice</b>	Yes, through Khan Academy®, with over 4,000 questions and video lessons.	No
<b>Free, downloadable practice tests</b>	Yes	No
<b>Mobile app that instantly scores paper tests</b>	Yes, Daily Practice for the New SAT.	No
<b>Flexibility</b>		
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>New SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>Test days</b>	7 times a year	6 times a year
<b>Regular registration deadline</b>	About 4 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later.	About 5 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later.
<b>Late registration closes</b>	About 11 days before test day	20+ days before test day

<b>Fee Waivers</b>		
<b>Benefits and Rules</b>	<b>New SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>Test fees waived for eligible students</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Waivers cover late fees</b>	Yes	No
<b>Miss the test, forfeit your fee waiver</b>	No	Yes
<b>Four college application fee waivers sent directly to eligible students</b>	Yes	No
<b>Test Format</b>		
<b>Structure and Timing</b>	<b>New SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>Testing time</b>	3 hours + 50-minute essay (optional)	2 hours 55 minutes + 40-minute essay (optional)
<b>Structure</b>	3 tests + optional essay	4 tests + optional writing test
<b>Number of questions</b>	154	215

<b>Test Format</b>		
<b>Structure and Timing</b>	<b>New SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>Time per question</b>	1 minute, 10 seconds	49 seconds
<b>Score range</b>	Composite 400–1600 (SAT Essay: reported in 3 dimensions, each 2–8)	Composite 1–36 (writing domain scores: 2–12)
<b>Test length and timing</b>	<p><b>Reading Test</b> 65 minutes 52 questions</p> <p><b>Writing and Language Test</b> 35 minutes 44 questions</p> <p><b>Math Test</b> 80 minutes 58 questions</p>	<p><b>Reading Test</b> 35 minutes 40 questions</p> <p><b>English Test</b> 45 minutes 75 questions</p> <p><b>Math Test</b> 60 minutes 60 questions</p> <p><b>Science Test</b> 35 minutes 40 questions</p>

# Key Content Changes

Like other assessments in the [SAT Suite of Assessments](#), the new SAT includes a Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, and a Math Test. The SAT has an [optional essay component](#), which some colleges will require. SAT questions focus on skills that matter most for college readiness and success, according to the latest research.



## Words in Context

Many questions on the new SAT focus on important, widely used words and phrases found in texts in many different subjects. Some questions ask you to figure out a word's meaning based on context. The words are ones that you will probably encounter in college or in the workplace long after test day.

No longer will students use flashcards to memorize obscure words, only to forget them the minute they put their test pencils down. The redesigned exams will engage students in close reading and honor the best work of the classroom.



## Command of Evidence

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and the SAT Essay ask you to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence found in a wide range of sources. These sources include informational graphics, such as tables, charts, and graphs, as well as multiparagraph passages in the areas of literature and literary nonfiction, the humanities, science, history and social studies, and on topics about work and career.

For every passage or pair of passages you'll see during the [Reading Test](#), at least one question will ask you to identify which part of the text best supports the answer to the previous question. In other instances, you'll be asked to find the best answer to a question by pulling together information conveyed in words and graphics.

The [Writing and Language Test](#) also focuses on command of evidence. It asks you to do things like analyze a series of sentences or paragraphs and decide if it makes sense. Other questions ask you to interpret graphics and to edit a part of the accompanying passage so that it clearly and accurately communicates the information in the graphics.

[The SAT Essay](#) also tests command of evidence. After reading a passage, you'll be asked to determine how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience through the use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive devices. Scorers look for cogent, clear analyses supported by critical reasoning and evidence drawn from the text provided.



## Essay Analyzing a Source

The redesigned SAT Essay asks you to read a passage and explain how an author builds an argument to persuade an audience. This task closely mirrors college writing assignments because it is asking you to analyze how the author used evidence, reasoning, and stylistic and persuasive elements.

The new Essay is designed to support high school students and teachers as they cultivate close reading, careful analysis, and clear writing. It will promote the practice of reading a wide variety of arguments and analyzing how authors do their work as writers.

The essay prompt will be the same every time the new SAT is offered, but the source material students are asked to write about will be different each time.

Not all students will take the SAT with Essay, but some school districts and colleges require it. The SAT is the only assessment in the SAT Suite that includes the Essay. [Learn more about the Essay.](#)



## Math that Matters Most

The Math Test focuses in-depth on three essential areas of math: Problem Solving and Data Analysis, Heart of Algebra, and Passport to Advanced Math.

Problem Solving and Data Analysis is about being quantitatively literate. It includes using ratios, percentages, and proportional reasoning to solve problems in science, social science, and career contexts.

The Heart of Algebra focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems, which helps students develop key powers of abstraction.

Passport to Advanced Math focuses on more complex equations and the manipulation they require.

Current research shows that these areas are used disproportionately in a wide range of majors and careers. The redesigned SAT also includes questions on other topics in math, including the kinds of geometric and trigonometric skills that are most relevant to college and careers. [Learn more about the Math Test.](#)



## **Problems Grounded in Real-World Contexts**

Throughout the SAT, you'll be asked questions grounded in the real world, directly related to work performed in college and career.

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section includes questions on literature and literary nonfiction, but also features charts, graphs, and passages like the ones students are likely to encounter in science, social science, and other majors and careers.

Questions on the Writing and Language Test ask you to do more than correct errors; they ask you to edit, revise, and improve texts from the humanities, history, social science, science, and career contexts.

The Math section features multistep applications to solve problems in science, social science, career scenarios, and other real-life situations. The test sets up a scenario and asks several questions that give you the opportunity to dig in and model it mathematically.



## **Analysis in Science and in History/Social Studies**

The redesigned SAT asks you to apply your reading, writing, language, and math knowledge and skills to answer questions in science, history, and social studies contexts. In this way, the assessments call on the same sorts of knowledge and skills that you'll use in college, at work, and throughout your life to make sense of recent discoveries, political developments, global events, and health and environmental issues.

The redesigned SAT includes a range of challenging texts and informational graphics that address these sorts of issues and topics in the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and the Math section. Questions will require you to read and understand texts, revise texts to be consistent with data presented in graphics, synthesize information presented through texts and graphics, and solve problems that are grounded in science and social science.



## **U.S. Founding Documents and the Great Global Conversation**

When you take the SAT, you'll be asked to read a passage from U.S. founding documents or the global conversation they inspired.

The U.S. founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers, have been inspired by and have helped to inspire a conversation that continues to this day about the nature of civic life.

Authors, speakers, and thinkers from the United States and around the world, including Edmund Burke, Mary Wollstonecraft, Nelson Mandela, and Mohandas Gandhi, have broadened and deepened the conversation around such vital matters as freedom, justice, and human dignity.

The new SAT includes texts from this global conversation. The goal is to inspire a close reading of these rich, meaningful, often profound texts, not only as a way to develop valuable college and career readiness skills but also as an opportunity to reflect on and deeply engage with issues and concerns central to informed citizenship.



## **No Penalty for Guessing**

On the new SAT, you simply earn points for the questions you answer correctly. So go ahead and give your best answer to every question — there's no advantage to leaving them blank.