




STRATEGIES FOR THE SAT & ACT

College & Career Pathways 2020

1

How colleges evaluate your scores

- The best single time out
or
- Super-score method (the best mix on each section)




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2

Suggested testing timeline

- ACT or SAT in early spring.
- SAT Subject Test in April-June.
- Assess scores over the summer.
- Retake SAT/ACT, if necessary, late spring or fall.



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3

Guessing strategy

Guess!

Select the letter you feel you've answered least.

All choices are equally represented; therefore, the letter you've chosen the least is likely to appear more frequently in the unanswered questions.



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4

ACT percentile score chart

Score	ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	READING	SCIENCE	COMPOSITE	STEM	Score
36	100	100	100	100	100	100	36
35	99	99	99	99	99	99	35
34	97	97	97	97	97	97	34
33	95	95	95	95	95	95	33
32	92	92	92	92	92	92	32
31	89	89	89	89	89	89	31
30	87	87	87	87	87	87	30
29	85	85	85	85	85	85	29
28	83	83	83	83	83	83	28
27	81	81	81	81	81	81	27
26	79	79	79	79	79	79	26
25	77	77	77	77	77	77	25
24	75	75	75	75	75	75	24
23	73	73	73	73	73	73	23
22	71	71	71	71	71	71	22
21	69	69	69	69	69	69	21
20	67	67	67	67	67	67	20
19	65	65	65	65	65	65	19
18	63	63	63	63	63	63	18
17	61	61	61	61	61	61	17
16	59	59	59	59	59	59	16
15	57	57	57	57	57	57	15
14	55	55	55	55	55	55	14
13	53	53	53	53	53	53	13
12	51	51	51	51	51	51	12
11	49	49	49	49	49	49	11
10	47	47	47	47	47	47	10
9	45	45	45	45	45	45	9
8	43	43	43	43	43	43	8
7	41	41	41	41	41	41	7
6	39	39	39	39	39	39	6
5	37	37	37	37	37	37	5
4	35	35	35	35	35	35	4
3	33	33	33	33	33	33	3
2	31	31	31	31	31	31	2
1	29	29	29	29	29	29	1
Mean	20.2	20.6	21.3	20.8	20.9	20.9	
S.D.	6.9	5.5	6.6	6.6	5.7	5.5	



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5

SAT percentiles for total scores

SAT Score	National Percentile		SAT Score	National Percentile	
	2019	2018		2019	2018
1550	99	99	3200	99	99
1540	98	98	3180	98	98
1530	97	97	3160	97	97
1520	96	96	3140	96	96
1510	95	95	3120	95	95
1500	94	94	3100	94	94
1490	93	93	3080	93	93
1480	92	92	3060	92	92
1470	91	91	3040	91	91
1460	90	90	3020	90	90
1450	89	89	3000	89	89
1440	88	88	2980	88	88
1430	87	87	2960	87	87
1420	86	86	2940	86	86
1410	85	85	2920	85	85
1400	84	84	2900	84	84
1390	83	83	2880	83	83
1380	82	82	2860	82	82
1370	81	81	2840	81	81
1360	80	80	2820	80	80
1350	79	79	2800	79	79
1340	78	78	2780	78	78
1330	77	77	2760	77	77
1320	76	76	2740	76	76
1310	75	75	2720	75	75
1300	74	74	2700	74	74
1290	73	73	2680	73	73
1280	72	72	2660	72	72
1270	71	71	2640	71	71
1260	70	70	2620	70	70
1250	69	69	2600	69	69
1240	68	68	2580	68	68
1230	67	67	2560	67	67
1220	66	66	2540	66	66
1210	65	65	2520	65	65
1200	64	64	2500	64	64
1190	63	63	2480	63	63
1180	62	62	2460	62	62
1170	61	61	2440	61	61
1160	60	60	2420	60	60
1150	59	59	2400	59	59
1140	58	58	2380	58	58
1130	57	57	2360	57	57
1120	56	56	2340	56	56
1110	55	55	2320	55	55
1100	54	54	2300	54	54
1090	53	53	2280	53	53
1080	52	52	2260	52	52
1070	51	51	2240	51	51
1060	50	50	2220	50	50
1050	49	49	2200	49	49
1040	48	48	2180	48	48
1030	47	47	2160	47	47
1020	46	46	2140	46	46
1010	45	45	2120	45	45
1000	44	44	2100	44	44
990	43	43	2080	43	43
980	42	42	2060	42	42
970	41	41	2040	41	41
960	40	40	2020	40	40
950	39	39	2000	39	39
940	38	38	1980	38	38
930	37	37	1960	37	37
920	36	36	1940	36	36
910	35	35	1920	35	35
900	34	34	1900	34	34
890	33	33	1880	33	33
880	32	32	1860	32	32
870	31	31	1840	31	31
860	30	30	1820	30	30
850	29	29	1800	29	29
840	28	28	1780	28	28
830	27	27	1760	27	27
820	26	26	1740	26	26
810	25	25	1720	25	25
800	24	24	1700	24	24
790	23	23	1680	23	23
780	22	22	1660	22	22
770	21	21	1640	21	21
760	20	20	1620	20	20
750	19	19	1600	19	19
740	18	18	1580	18	18
730	17	17	1560	17	17
720	16	16	1540	16	16
710	15	15	1520	15	15
700	14	14	1500	14	14
690	13	13	1480	13	13
680	12	12	1460	12	12
670	11	11	1440	11	11
660	10	10	1420	10	10
650	9	9	1400	9	9
640	8	8	1380	8	8
630	7	7	1360	7	7
620	6	6	1340	6	6
610	5	5	1320	5	5
600	4	4	1300	4	4
590	3	3	1280	3	3
580	2	2	1260	2	2
570	1	1	1240	1	1
560	0	0	1220	0	0




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6

Critical reading

- Prose fiction
Characters!
- Social science
Arguments!
- Humanities
Inspiration!
- Natural science
Why we were wrong!




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10

Passages

- Read passage **first**.
- Write brief notes:
 - 1) Highlight main ideas/topics in each paragraph.
 - 2) Underline key words.
 - 3) Indicate conflict.
- Answer question before looking at answer choices.
- SAT: Double-check "linked questions," where second question depends on answer you got for first question.




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11

Multiple choice writing

- Most correct.
- Most relevant.
- Most concise.

TIP: Pick the **shortest** grammatically correct answer.




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12

Grammar to know

- Subject-verb agreement
- Pronouns & prepositions
- Punctuation
- Usage (Further or farther? Much or many?)




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13

SAT essay

- Focus on rhetorical analysis.
- Identify figures of speech, “slippery slopes,” mistakes/oversights in the argument, and “good points” that persuade the intended audience.



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14

SAT essay

Analyzing what authors do and why

Your introduction can be very basic; nothing more than:

- In [his/her] essay, [author] [explores/is troubled by/discusses] [the main topic/subject of the essay].
- The main goal of [the author] is to [convince/persuade/explain to] the reader of [main goal of the author] about [the main topic/subject of the essay].

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15

SAT essay

Analyzing what authors do and why

Start your body paragraphs by using the sentence “root” of:

[Author] uses [rhetorical device/technique/structure] in order to have [a specific effect/argue a specific point] on the reader.



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16

SAT essay

Analyzing what authors do and why

Other rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques:

- compare/contrast
- metaphor
- repetition
- “slippery slope”
- cause-to-effect
- repetition

... and the test does not grade you on how “technical” the persuasive techniques you identify are.

Length: At least 1½ pages; 4–5 paragraphs of 5–6 sentences.



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17

ACT essay: 6-paragraph format

- Strongly rewards a rebuttal paragraph (second-to-last paragraph).
- 5 goals of education — address at least 3.
- Grammar a concern only if systematic or repeated (both ACT/SAT).
- Read once by 2 different readers in 2 minutes.
- Length: at least 2 pages.




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18

Science

- Understand and apply the scientific method to various experiments, diagrams, and arguments.

TIP: Use your fingers to “anchor” the chart or experiment you need to review as you come across those in the passage!



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19

Preparation & resources

- College Board new “Blue Book”
- ACT Inc. new “Red Book”
- Khan Academy
- ACT and SAT pamphlets
- wikibooks.org
- freerice.org
- wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_Greek_and_Latin_roots_in_English

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20
