

ACT / SAT Reference Sheet

Are you a sophomore, junior, or senior in high school? If the answer is yes, then the time has come to take the next crucial steps in planning for college. Most four-year universities and colleges require a standardized admission test, usually the ACT or SAT. Indiana's four-year universities accept test scores from both the ACT and SAT for admission. This reference sheet will help you choose the best test for your future plans.

Did you know?

On average, students take the ACT or SAT twice. Some students even take both exams.

The best time to take the ACT or SAT is during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year.

Preparing

Colleges report that the most important factors weighed in admissions decisions are transcripts, grade point averages, and rigor of courses taken. The ACT and SAT are intended to supplement an admission application.

Be sure to be well prepared for the ACT, SAT and college admission process by taking challenging academic courses in high school. To have the best preparation possible, complete Core 40, Core 40 with Academic Honors, or Core 40 with Technical Honors.

PLAN / PSAT

The PLAN serves as a great practice test for the ACT.

The PSAT is a shorter version of the SAT. Indiana pays for every student to take the PSAT, so check with your counselor about utilizing this opportunity. The PSAT also is the qualifying test for the National Merit and National Achievement scholarship programs (www.nationalmerit.org).

Available Resources

Online **practice tests and sample questions** are available:

- ACT (www.actstudent.org)
- SAT (www.collegeboard.com)

For academic, college and career information, contact **Learn More Indiana**.

The Helpline (1-800-992-2076) offers individual help to answer your questions about college, financial aid and career exploration, and it is available all-day, every day.

The Learn More Indiana Web site (www.learnmoreindiana.org) features tools, checklists and other resources to explore careers and colleges.

Differences between the ACT and SAT

The ACT measures what a student learned in school. The SAT is more of an aptitude test that examines reasoning and verbal skills.

The ACT has four components (English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science) and an optional Writing Test. The SAT has three components: Critical Reading, Mathematics, and a required Writing Test.

The ACT has no penalty for guessing. The SAT does take points off for wrong answers.

ACT sends score reports from one test date and lets students select the test date that they want sent. The College Board sends all SAT scores from all test dates.

ACT & SAT Comparison



flip this sheet over for additional test-related information



ACT & SAT Comparison

Area	ACT	SAT
Average Scores	Indiana 21.7 / Nation 21.1 The above average is based on possible score of 36 (does not include optional Writing section). Writing scores are reported separately.	Indiana 1493 / Nation 1518 The above average is based on possible score of 2400 and includes the Writing section.
Cost of Exam	\$29 or \$43 for ACT PLUS Writing	\$41.50 for all three sections
Score Reporting	Student selects which set of scores to report	All scores are reported
Times offered each year	Six, generally in September, October, December, February, April, and June <i>Schools do not offer testing at each of these times. Please check with your school counselor for local testing dates.</i>	Seven, generally in October, November, December, January, March, May, and June
Mathematics	60-question, 60-minute test Measures mathematical skills most students have learned in courses taken by the end of 11th grade. Questions come from algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. Questions are multiple-choice and require knowledge of basic formulas and computational skills. <i>Both the ACT and SAT allow students to use a four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator during the math test, but models with certain features are prohibited.</i>	70 minutes taken in two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section Tests math topics such as: numbers and operations; algebra and functions; geometry; statistics, probability, and data analysis. Questions are multiple-choice and student-produced responses. Student-produced responses have no answer choices provided. Instead, the answers are filled-in on a special grid. Ten questions will be of this type.
Reading	40-question, 35-minute test. Questions are multiple-choice. Measures reading comprehension through several texts and questions that show an understanding of what is directly stated and statements with implied meanings.	70 minutes taken in two 25-minute sections and one 20-minute section. The critical reading section includes short reading passages along with the existing long reading passages. Analogies have been eliminated, but sentence-completion questions and passage-based reading questions remain.
English	75-question, 45-minute test. Questions are multiple-choice. Measures standard written English (punctuation, grammar usage, and sentence structure) and rhetorical skills (strategy, organization, and style).	The SAT does not have a separate English section, but the multiple-choice questions in the Writing section measure ability to improve sentences and paragraphs as well as find errors (diction, grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, word usage, and wordiness).
Science	40-question, 35-minute test. Questions are multiple-choice. Measures skills in the natural sciences: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving. Assumes students have completed a course in biology as well as a course in an Earth science and/or physical science.	The SAT does not test Science.
Writing	30-minute essay test that measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. The essay involves responding to a question about a particular issue described in the writing prompt.	Multiple choice questions (35 minutes) and student-written essay (25 minutes). The short essay measures ability to: clearly organize, express, develop and support ideas, and use appropriate word choices and sentence structures.