SAT vs. ACT

Colleges typically accept both the SAT and ACT scores equally. Help students evaluate the characteristics of each exam to determine which best fits their needs.

	SAT	ACT
Scores	The SAT is scored on a scale of 400–1600	The ACT is scored on a scale of 1–36
Structure	2 tests Reading and Writing, and Math	3 tests + 2 optional sections English, Math, Reading, Optional Science and essay
Time	2 hours 14 minutes	2 hours
Questions	98	131
Test Prep	Free online test prep for all students through Khan Academy	Free online test prep for all students through MyACT
Reading	The SAT has 5 reading passages	The ACT has 4 reading passages
Science	Cross-test score for analysis in science	Science optional section that tests critical thinking skills
+ − × ÷ Math	Both the SAT and ACT have the same math concepts	
Calculator	Calculator allowed for all math questions	Calculator allowed for all math questions
Essay	The SAT does not offer an essay section.	The ACT essay focuses on evaluation and analysis of complex issues