

ACT-SAT Challenge:

Practical advice for students and parents
on College Admissions Testing

Suggestions from the BCSD ACT-SAT Task Force...

1) The best way for students to be successful on the ACT or SAT is to take academically rigorous and challenging courses in Middle and High School.
2) The best test for the student is the one on which he/she performs the best -- colleges treat the ACT and SAT equally.
3) All students DO NOT need to take the ACT or SAT. Students that are planning to apply to a two-year college (such as Trident Technical College) can save time and money by taking one of the FREE college admissions assessments such as the COMPASS or ASSET assessments.
4) Students should make a minimum of 2 attempts on the ACT and/or SAT in order to achieve their best possible score.
5) Students should make their first attempt on the ACT/SAT no later than the spring of 11th Grade.
6) Students should take advantage of FREE practice and preparation opportunities available through their High School; contact your School Counselor for more information.
7) Students and Parents should review testing results from EXPLORE, PLAN, PSAT, and ACT/SAT with your School Counselor to determine which assessment might show your student in the best light.
8) Parents, please attend your child's IGP (Individual Graduation Plan) Conferences in Grades 8-12.
9) For more information contact your School Counselor.

What to do before taking the ACT or SAT...

- 1) Successfully complete or be enrolled in the following courses:
English Courses: English 1, 2, 3 (concurrent); Vocabulary/Grammar Course (if available)
Math Courses: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 or Pre-Calculus
- 2) Take **Practice Tests** to become familiar with test structure, content, and directions.
- 3) Enroll in **ACT/SAT Preparation Courses** and/or **Workshops** offered at your High School.

ACT-SAT Resources

Preparation Opportunities:

EXPLORE (Practice ACT) – 8th Grade

PLAN (Practice ACT) – 10th Grade

PSAT (Practice SAT) – 10th and 11th Grade (student may need to pay exam fee)

ACT/SAT Preparation Courses and **Workshops** offered in-school and/or after-school at all BCSD High Schools

Please contact your ACT/SAT Coach or School Counselor about BCSD's Partnership with www.brightstorm.com

ACT: www.actstudent.org

SAT: www.collegeboard.com

ACT or SAT? How are they different?

The SAT and ACT are very different college entrance exams. Both exams are used to help colleges evaluate applicants. The SAT is a three-part aptitude test (Reading, Math, Writing) while the ACT is an achievement test with four core sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) and an optional Writing section.

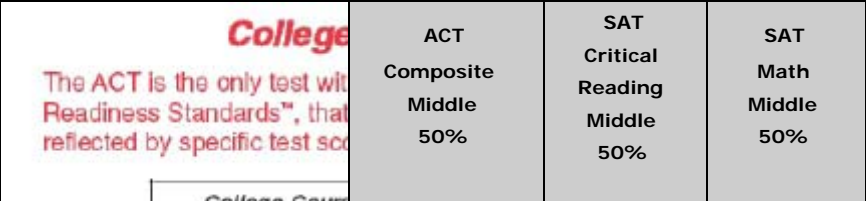
	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (optional 30-minute Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Sections	4 Sections: English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (optional; required by some colleges)	10 Sections: 3 Critical Reading, 3 Math, 3 Writing (including Essay), 1 Experimental (not scored)
Score Composition	$\frac{1}{4}$ English, $\frac{1}{4}$ Math, $\frac{1}{4}$ Reading, $\frac{1}{4}$ Science	$\frac{1}{3}$ Math, $\frac{1}{3}$ Reading, $\frac{1}{3}$ Writing
Scoring	Composite score 1-36 based on average of 4 sections: English Math, Reading, Science (Score 0-12 for Optional Essay)	Aggregate score 600 - 2400 based on total of 3 scores 200- 800 (Critical Reading, Math, Writing)
Guessing Penalty	No penalties for incorrect answers	Penalties (typically $\frac{1}{4}$ point deducted) for wrong answers
Essay	Optional (final section)	Required
Cost of Exam	\$32 ACT only; \$47 ACT plus Writing	\$45 for all three sections

ACT-SAT Concordance

The ACT and SAT are different tests that measure similar but distinct constructs. The ACT measures achievement related to high school curricula, while the SAT measures general verbal and quantitative reasoning. ACT and the College Board have completed a concordance study that is designed to examine the relationship between two scores on the ACT and SAT. These concordance tables do not equate scores, but rather provide a tool for finding comparable scores. You can find the concordance tables and guidelines for proper use online at: www.act.org/aap/concordance.

ACT Composite Score	SAT Score Critical Reading + Math (Single Score)	SAT Score Critical Reading + Math (Score Range)
36	1600	1600
35	1560	1540-1590
34	1510	1490-1530
33	1460	1440-1480
32	1420	1400-1430
31	1380	1360-1390
30	1340	1330-1350
29	1300	1290-1320
28	1260	1250-1280
27	1220	1210-1240
26	1190	1170-1200
25	1150	1130-1160
24	1110	1090-1120
23	1070	1050-1080
22	1030	1020-1040
21	990	980-1010
20	950	940-970
19	910	900-930
18	870	860-890
17	830	820-850
16	790	770-810
15	740	720-760
14	690	670-710
13	640	620-660
12	590	560-610
11	530	510-550

What colleges want on the ACT or SAT...

	ACT	SAT	
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (optional 30-minute Writing Test)	3 hours, 45 minutes	
Sections	4 Sections: English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (optional; required by some colleges)	10 Sections: 3 Critical Reading, 3 Math (including Essay), 1 Experimental (not scored)	
Score Composition	$\frac{1}{4}$ English, $\frac{1}{4}$ Math, $\frac{1}{4}$ Reading, $\frac{1}{4}$ Science	$\frac{1}{3}$ Math, $\frac{1}{3}$ Reading, $\frac{1}{3}$ Writing	
Scoring	Composite score 1-36 based on average of 4 sections: English Math, Reading, Science (Score 0-12 for Optional Essay)	Aggregate score 600-2400 total of 3 scores (Critical Reading, Math, Writing)	
Guessing Penalty	No penalties for incorrect answers	Penalties (typically $\frac{1}{4}$ for wrong answer)	
Essay	Optional (final section)	Required	
Cost of Exam	\$32 ACT only; \$47 ACT plus Writing	\$45 for all three sections	
	ACT Composite Middle 50%	SAT Critical Reading Middle 50%	SAT Math Middle 50%
Charleston Southern University	18-22	440-600	450-550
The Citadel	19-23	480-580	510-600
Clemson University	25-30	550-640	590-680
Coastal Carolina University	20-23	460-540	480-560
College of Charleston	23-26	570-650	570-650

College Readiness Benchmark Scores

The ACT is the only test with College Readiness Benchmarks directly measuring College Readiness Standards™, that are based on actual college performance of students, and reflected by specific test scores.

<i>College Course/ Course Area</i>	<i>ACT Test</i>	<i>Benchmark Score</i>
English Composition	English	18
Algebra	Mathematics	22
Social Sciences	Reading	21
Biology	Science	24

An ACT College Readiness Benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses. These scores were empirically derived based on the actual performance of students in college. ACT College Readiness Standards are subject-based knowledge skills statements that are informed by the ACT National Curriculum Survey®, directly measured by the ACT, and grouped by ACT score ranges. They may be found at www.act.org/standard/instruct/index.html

Using **PLAN** to Identify Student Readiness for Rigorous Courses in High School

Table 1: PLAN Scores Associated with Selected AP Exam Scores

AP Exam	Sample Size	PLAN Tests	PLAN Scores		
			3 or Higher AP Score		4 or Higher AP Score
			50%	75%	50%
Biology	4,781	Avg. Mathematics & Science	23	26	26.5
Calculus AB	5,858	Avg. Mathematics & Science	22.5	25.5	25.5
Calculus BC	696	Avg. Mathematics & Science	21	24.5	25
Chemistry	828	Avg. Mathematics & Science	24.5	27.5	28
English Language	13,449	Avg. English & Reading	21.5	24	26
English Literature	11,402	Avg. English & Reading	21.5	24	26.5
European History	2,006	Avg. English & Reading	21.5	24.5	27
Government and Politics: Comparative	815	Avg. English & Reading	22	25.5	26.5
Government and Politics: United States	3,397	Avg. English & Reading	22.5	26	27
Macroeconomics	500	Avg. Mathematics & Science	24	27.5	27
Microeconomics	288	Avg. Mathematics & Science	22	26	26.5
Physics B	1,075	Avg. Mathematics & Science	23.5	26.5	27
Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism	146	Avg. Mathematics & Science	23	27.5	28
Physics C: Mechanics	370	Avg. Mathematics & Science	22.5	25.5	25.5
Psychology	2,828	Avg. English & Reading	19	22.5	22.5
Statistics	2,283	Avg. Mathematics & Science	22.5	24.5	25.5
U.S. History	12,280	Avg. English & Reading	22.5	26	26.5
World History	5,937	Avg. English & Reading	22	25	26

Using the Table

PLAN scores corresponding to a 50 percent chance of earning a 3 or higher AP score (fourth column, shaded in pink) might be a reasonable starting point for identifying students who would likely succeed in an AP course. However, compared to higher scores such as the scores in the fifth column (shaded in gray) that correspond to a 75 percent chance of earning a score of 3 or higher, lower scores are also associated with a greater chance of identifying students for an AP course who ultimately would not be successful in the course. The following are suggested guidelines for using the PLAN/AP score linkages in Table 1:

- 1) Students with PLAN scores *at or above* the score corresponding to a 75 percent chance of earning an AP score of 3 or higher (gray-shaded column) are likely to succeed in, and should therefore be encouraged to consider taking, an AP course. Frequently, this PLAN score, or the score 1 point above this score, corresponds to at least a 50 percent chance of earning an AP score of 4 or higher (last column).
- 2) Students with PLAN scores *between* the two scores corresponding to a 50 percent chance (pink-shaded column) and a 75 percent chance (gray-shaded column) of earning an AP score of 3 or higher might succeed in an AP course. At a minimum, these students should be made aware of the possible AP courses available to them, as well as be encouraged to take the high school coursework necessary to prepare them for these AP courses.
- 3) Students with PLAN scores *considerably below* the score corresponding to a 50 percent chance of earning an AP score of 3 or higher (pink-shaded column) are not likely to succeed in an AP course. These students might benefit most by taking additional high school coursework necessary to prepare them for AP courses.

Source: ACT: "Using PLAN to Identify Student Readiness for Rigorous Courses in High School"
<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/UsingPlan.pdf>

