

Entrance Exams

How to Create a Better Game Plan for the ACT, SAT

When is the right time to take these tests? What score do you need? How do you study?

SAT VS ACT: WHICH ONE? OR BOTH?

Most colleges and universities accept both the SAT and ACT, but you should check the schools on your target list to see if they have a preference. The tests are fairly similar in the types of questions, although the SAT is slightly longer and doesn't include a science section. Other differences between the tests include:

- The SAT focuses more on vocabulary and | general reasoning.
- The math section of the ACT is more advanced than the SAT.

A good way to determine which test you should choose is to take the PSAT and the PreACT, the respective practice tests for the SAT and ACT. If you do much better on the PSAT than the PreACT, for example, you should consider the SAT over the ACT. You will discover what sections you are lacking in and can prepare for those sections before taking the actual test for the first time.

A timeline for when to take the SAT and/or ACT:

- Take the SAT or ACT at the beginning of your junior year, as many colleges have application deadlines of early December of senior year that don't leave much time to get test scores up as a senior.
- Take the test again during your junior year if you're looking to improve your score.

SAT AND ACT TEST DATES FOR 2019

SAT		
2019 SAT TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DATE	SCORES BACK DATE
Saturday, March 9, 2019	Feb. 8, 2019	March 22, 2019
Saturday, May 4, 2019	April 5, 2019	May 17, 2019
Saturday, June 1, 2019	May 3, 2019	July 10, 2019
ACT		
2019 ACT TEST DATE	NORMAL DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION
Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019	Jan. 11, 2019	Jan. 12-18, 2019
Saturday, April 13, 2019	March 8, 2019	March 9-25, 2019
Saturday, June 8, 2019	May 3, 2019	May 4-20, 2019
Saturday, July 13, 2019	June 14, 2019	June 15-24, 2019

By summer of your junior year, if you're still dissatisfied with your test scores, this is your chance to do final study prep for the beginning of your senior year. The last ACT for early action/decision is in October; for the SAT, it's in October or November (depending on the college's deadline). For regular-decision applicants, December of your senior year is the last time you can take the SAT or ACT.

INSIDER TIP: You can take the SAT as many times as you want and the ACT up to 12 times. However, taking either test more than three times is not likely to help you. According to the College Board, which administers the SAT, more than half of students take the SAT more than once and see an increase in their score. The ACT reports similar findings.

1. Get help with studying.

At least 40 total hours studying for either test is recommended. The Princeton Review (princetonreview.com) offers free SAT and ACT practice tests. If you can afford a tutor, it could be worth it – see your counselor for a list of ACT/SAT tutors.

2. Choose your test date wisely.

Students have busy schedules, but try to pick test dates that don't fall in the busiest periods of your life. The more stress you have on your plate, the less focus you'll have on testing.

3. Get proper rest.

Staying up too late the night before you take the SAT or ACT can affect your outcome.