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	3 tests	4 tests + optional essay
Time	3 tests	2 hours 55 minutes + 40-minute optional essay
Questions	154	215
Test Prep	Free online test prep for all students through Khan Academy	Free online test prep for all students through ACT's website
Reading	The SAT has 5 reading passages	The ACT has 4 reading passages
Science	Cross-test score for analysis in science	Science section that tests critical thinking skills
+ − × ÷ Math	Everyday math formulas are provided	No math formulas are provided
Calculator	Calculator allowed for some math questions	Calculator allowed for all math questions
Essay	No optional essay	The ACT essay focuses on evaluation and analysis of complex issues

