

## The SAT and the ACT...

### What is the difference and should I take both?

Standardized tests are an important requirement for admission to most colleges and universities. The two most critical aspects of a students' application are the high-school transcript and standardized test scores. There are two tests available – the SAT (<http://www.collegeboard.org>) and the ACT (<http://www.actstudent.org>).

I was doing some research on the new SAT, though, and came across this article that appeared in Forbes magazine in the spring of 2015. After reading through it, I've come to believe that the author makes some very good arguments as to why it might be better to focus on taking the ACT for the next several years, rather than trying to study for the new SAT when there's very little known about this test and probably very little in the way of reliable prep material available.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/noodleeducation/2015/04/20/3-reasons-you-shouldnt-take-the-new-sat/>

It also sounds as if the developers of the new exam worked specifically to make it more like the ACT, so you will probably be better off going with the one that's been around a long time and had a chance to improve any oddly asked or poorly written questions. Here is a comparison of the two tests. Please note that at the top it gives a link for how to prepare for the new test.

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>

Most colleges today accept both tests equally. I can't think of one I've come across that only asks for the SAT, but I would definitely check with any college you have your heart set on just to make sure it's not the anomaly. :)

In the past, I've encouraged students to take a college entrance test at least twice - once in the spring of the junior year and once in the fall of the senior year - and to also take at least one of both the ACT and SAT. However, I had a former senior mention to me that it had been much easier for him to take the spring test than the fall, as he hadn't been using his math and science skills over the summer and noticed he wasn't quite as quick in retrieving them when school started back up. So, with that in mind, I am now recommending that you consider taking two

ACT tests in the spring of the junior year - one in April and one in June - and then, if you feel so led, you can always take the September test, as well (this has a deadline of early August).

Many colleges also "super score" your tests - meaning they take the best scores for each section from every test you take, so there's should be little concern of decreasing your score if you take the exam a second time. As you can see in the following post, big colleges such as MIT super score, so even if you don't see one of your choices listed, check that school's website or contact your admissions rep and ask about super scoring, if you're at all concerned.

<http://blog.prepscholar.com/colleges-that-superscore-act-complete-list> (there is also quite a bit of other test information on this blog, as well)

If you're comfortable with this direction, I'd recommend taking two ACT tests and, if - after reading the test comparison above - you think you'd do better with the SAT format, give that at least one try. If you're more of a math/ science student, you might just stick with the ACT, let the dust settle a bit on the SAT, and see how colleges and students respond to it.

**The college registration number for Veritas School is: 380-743.  
This will also come up on a prompt during registration.**

Here is the suggested timeline for taking the PSAT/SAT/ACT:

Freshman/Sophomore:

PSAT in October at Veritas School

SAT Subject Tests in May or June for subjects taken that year (in your intended major – i.e. Biology for pre-med)

Junior:

PSAT in October at Veritas (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

SAT/ACT in May and/or June (Please see note above about changes with the new SAT)

SAT Subject Tests in May or June (see note above about subject tests)

Senior:

SAT/ACT in October (if not pleased with tests taken earlier)

SAT Subject Tests in May or June (see note above about subject tests).

*PLEASE NOTE: Two subject tests are usually also required by State colleges for any student who did not attend a public high school.*

Subject Tests are specific, content-based exams scored on the same scale as SATs, and colleges may require two or three of them (especially State schools). As part of their application process, most state universities in Oregon require any graduate of a non-public high school to take both the math and English SAT subject tests the senior year to show a minimum level of mastery. For other subject tests, it is best if the student takes those exams that tie in with the intended major. For instance, a student planning on going in to engineering should take the chemistry and physics subject tests at the end of the school year in which he/she has that course at Veritas, before the information fades from memory –the same recommendation is made with AP (Advanced Placement) tests. Because Veritas does not offer AP-regulated classes, some tests may require more outside studying than others. Please check with your teacher in that subject before registering for a particular test. Tests are administered at Veritas and registration is done in class during early spring.

NOTE: Students should always verify specific test requirements at each college of interest.