**Standardized Tests for University Admissions**

*What are the different standardized tests?*

PSAT, SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, AP Exams, TOEFL, IELTS

**PSAT**

* PSAT/NMSQT targeted to première. PSAT 10 targeted to seconde.
* Five multiple choice sections: Critical Reading, Math, Critical Reading, Math, Writing

**SAT**

* Five long sections. 3 hrs, 50 mins total time. Essay optional. No penalty for guessing.
* Scored out of 1600 total: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing 200-800, and Math 200-800

*Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section*

* Less advanced vocabulary. More punctuation and rhetoric.
* Four passages and one paired passage. One “founding documents” passage.

*Math section*

* More algebra, less geometry. One section without calculator.
* One new extended thinking question worth four points. Increased time per question

*Science section*

* Charts, graphs, and data incorporated throughout all other sections, but no discrete science section

**ACT**

American College Test: alternative to the SAT Reasoning Test. The sections measure academic achievement in major curricular areas: English, math, reading, and science. All four subject sections are scored on a scale of 1-36

1. English: 45 mins, 75 questions

2. Math: 60 mins, 60 questions

3. Reading: 35 mins, 40 questions

4. Science: 35 mins, 40 questions

5. Essay: 30 mins

Fee for 2016-17: with no writing, $42.50. With writing, $58.50.

**SAT Subject Tests (SAT II)**

Cover specific subject areas, like US History, German, or Biology. Usually students take the relevant test right after completing the course in school. Examples: Math Level 1, Math Level 2, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Languages, US History, World History

Here is a summary of SAT Subject Test requirements for some competitive universities (as of January 2017):

Harvard: Requires two subject tests, any subject

Yale: Recommended but not required (no number or subject preference)

Stanford: Recommended but not required (no number or subject preference). However, “if you elect to take a math test, we do prefer to see the Math Level 2 test if you feel that your math background has adequately prepared you for this test.”

Columbia: No subject tests required

Princeton: Recommended but not required (no number of subject preference). However, “if you apply for the B.S.E degree, we recommend that you take either mathematics Level I or II, and either physics or chemistry.”

Brown: EITHER: 1) The SAT Reasoning Test (“SAT I”) and any two (2) SAT Subject Tests (“SAT II”) of your choice; OR 2) The ACT with writing component required

Duke: [SAT and two SAT Subject Tests](http://admissions.duke.edu/application/instructions#testing), OR [ACT with Writing](http://admissions.duke.edu/application/instructions#testing) required

MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology): Requires one test from each of three categories: 1) SAT or ACT or TOEFL, 2) a math SAT subject test in Math I or Math II, AND 3) a science SAT subject test in Biology or Chemistry or Physics.

New York University: Submit results from one of the following: [SAT Reasoning Test](https://sat.collegeboard.org/home) (writing test and optional essay not required) OR [ACT](http://www.actstudent.org/) (writing test not required) OR Three [SAT Subject Test](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat) scores OR Three [AP exam](https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/home) scores.

University of Maryland College Park: Does not mention these tests at all

University of California system: Recommendation for subject tests varies by campus, but those that recommend a math test recommend Math Level II.<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/examination-requirement/SAT-subject-tests/>

Swarthmore College: “Subject Tests are not required for admission, but will be considered if submitted.”

Colgate University: Not required, and no mention made of the tests being recommended

Since subject tests would be used in the admission process, ideally these will be taken no later than October of terminale; spring of première is a good time. For students wishing to meet "early" admission deadlines (Early Action or Early Decision are usually in October or November), you'd have to have all tests completed by spring of première, as the October administration would be too late for scores to reach institutions. Here is a calendar of the test dates:<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests/register/test-dates-deadlines>

**Advanced Placement (AP)**

* AP courses are not the same thing as AP exams. You can take AP exams without having taken AP courses.
* AP usually not required for admission but can be helpful after a student is admitted and enrolls at a university. Many universities will grant college credit for AP scores of 4 or 5. Still, high scores can also give students a boost in the admission process, even if AP scores are not listed as a requirement for admission.
* Offered in May, ordered at students’/families’ request

Testing Calendar

PSAT: Feb/Mar (seconde), Oct (première)

SAT: Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Mar, May, Jun (première, terminale if needed)

ACT: Sep, Oct, Dec, Feb, Apr, Jun (première, terminale if needed)

SAT Subject: Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, May, Jun (seconde, première)

AP: May (seconde, première)

Première Timeline Sample

Sept/Oct: Prepare for and take the PSAT

Nov: Decide whether you’ll take ACT, SAT, or both

Jan: Take your first ACT or SAT

Mar/Apr: Retake ACT or SAT as needed

May: AP exams, some Subject Tests

June: other Subject Tests

Tests required for admission to colleges and universities

* SAT and ACT are equally accepted, no preference
* Some schools require you to submit test scores from ALL test dates; for others you can choose which test dates to send (“score choice”)
* Some schools “superscore,” meaning they’ll use the highest score from each section, across test dates; for others they’ll look at the highest overall score from one test date
* Some schools require Subject Tests, others recommend them, and others do not use them at all.

What should you do to prepare for SAT/ACT?

* Mock tests that have been given during normal class time at school are practice
* Take optional test prep courses given at the school by PrepMatters
* Take free practice tests offered at PrepMatters Bethesda office on weekends
* Register for the PSAT at school as appropriate
* Take an ACT practice test on your own, early. If your score is as good as, or better than, your PSAT score, take the ACT.

TOEFL and IELTS

These are the most common tests taken by students who need to show proof of English proficiency to be considered for university admission. Two different tests, offered in various local venues multiple times per year

o Test of English as a Foreign Language

o International English Language Testing System

Each university has its own policies on English proficiency. Some universities will waive the English language proficiency requirement under certain circumstances. Examples:

o Student is in Group 4 or OIB English

o Student lists English as his or her native/first language

o Student has lived AND attended school in a country in which English is the primary language, for at least four consecutive years (regardless of the language of instruction)

o Student has completed at least three years of full-time study in a school in which English is the only language of instruction AND in a country in which English is the primary language

It is your responsibility to take any required tests and have your official scores sent to each university that requires them. Look at the admissions requirements for the schools in which you’re interested.