

Choosing the Right Test

ACT:

- Knowledge/curriculum-based
- Tests what you have learned in school compared with others of the same age.
- Reading skills are more important than vocabulary skills on this test.
- Covers English, math, reading, and science. Designed to evaluate your overall educational development and your ability to complete college level work.
- More punctuation and sentence structure based (think proof-reading a paper).
- 2 hours 55 minutes (may add 30 min. for optional writing test) for 215 questions
- Only correct answers count! Guessing is not penalized. The four areas are averaged together for a composite score.
- Score Choice—you can take the test several times and then send your best score to the schools of your choice.
- Perfect score—36

Need to Know Facts

- Most colleges and universities accept both ACT and SAT test scores without prejudice.
- Not needed at community colleges.
- Consider taking both tests to see how well you score on each.
- Free practice tests are available on each website.
- Begin taking tests the second semester of your junior year.
- Look at your PLAN and PSAT results to help determine which test you would be better off taking.
- WHS Avg. for ACT—23.9
- WHS Avg. for SAT—1567
- Able to take as many times as you want, but prep work is recommended prior to testing again.
- Register online (and early) if at all possible.
- www.act.org or www.sat.org

SAT:

- Strategy/reasoning-based
- Tests your ability to reason using information you have learned in school.
- Covers writing, critical reading and math sections. Writing is part of the test—25 minute essay is not optional, but colleges are not yet using that score to determine admissions.
- Great if you have an awesome vocabulary and are good at picking out grammatical mistakes (think subject-verb agreement).
- Great if you have strong math skills—math makes up a bigger portion of the SAT.
- 3 hours 5 minutes for 140 questions and essay
- Slight penalty for wrong answers (-1/4 pt)
- May take subject tests if your college or university requires it, or you want to show your skills in a particular area
- Score choice is an option depending on the school.
- Perfect score—800 per section.