

# Should I Take the SAT or ACT?

From Prepscholar.com

## Take the SAT if You...

### 1. Panic when faced with time limits

- a. You have much more time per question on the SAT than on the ACT, making the ACT feel more like a time crunch.

### 2. Can't stand the idea of not getting to every question

- a. On the SAT, you have enough time to get to most of the questions, as long as you use it wisely.

### 3. Have a hard time spotting details when you read

- a. SAT reading questions almost always give you the line number where you can find relevant information. Even if they don't give you the exact location, the questions are in order, so it's rarely difficult to find information in a passage.

### 4. Struggle with geometry

- a. ACT math has over 3x as many geometry questions as the math section on the SAT. Plus, for the ACT, you need to memorize all the formulas, while on the SAT you're given them at the beginning of the section

### 5. Want to encounter as little science as possible

- a. Questions are incorporated into both the Math and Reading sections on the SAT. Therefore, struggling with science will have less of an effect on your score on the SAT than it will on the ACT where there is an entire science section.

## Take the ACT if You...

### 1. Struggle with vocabulary

- a. The ACT is the better test if you want to avoid higher-level words. The SAT tests more challenging vocabulary. It also has harder passages and more vocabulary questions overall.

### 2. Can't always explain how you know an answer is correct

- a. The SAT asks evidence questions, asking you to point to the part of a passage that supports your answer. If you struggle with this skill, consider taking the ACT.

### 3. Are intimidated by doing math without a calculator

- a. The SAT has one no-calculator section, but on the ACT you are permitted to use a calculator for all math sections. While all of the math questions on both the SAT and ACT can be done without a calculator, consider the ACT if you feel more comfortable using a calculator.

### 4. Prefer that different topics be tested in different sections

- a. One of the goals of the SAT is to integrate important skills across both of its sections, so there is more overlap between the different sections than on the ACT. If you prefer to avoid concept mixing, stick with the ACT

### 5. Have a solid grasp on experimental design

- a. If you like science, have a good understanding of how experiments are built and know the difference between independent and dependent variables, consider taking the ACT. A strong grasp

of these concepts will give you a considerable leg up on the ACT.

## Quiz: Should I Take the SAT or ACT?

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Directions: Go through and check “yes” or “no” for each question. Then tally up your answers and give yourself one point for each “yes” and no points for each “no”.

Question	Yes	No
Do you perform well under time pressure?		
Are you okay with not answering every question on a test?		
Do you struggle to explain why you think an answer is correct?		
Do you have a hard time with high level vocab words?		
Can you spot details in a passage without reading it closely?		
Do you dread doing math without a calculator?		
Do you excel at geometry?		
Do you prefer each topic be tested separately?		
Do you understand experimental design?		
Do you like science?		

Here's what your score means:

- **1-3: You're an SAT person!**
  - If you answered “no” to most of the questions, you'll probably find the SAT to be more your style. You don't mind slightly harder questions as long as you don't have to rush and don't have to cover too much material.
- **4-7: You can do either!**

- If you answered “no” and “yes” roughly the same amount, you will probably find the tests to be equally approachable. Try taking one of each test and see if you have a strong preference for one over the other.
- **8-10: You’re an ACT person!**
  - If you answered mostly “yes,” then you’re more of an ACT person. You don’t mind moving quickly, memorizing material, or answering questions about science.