

College Entrance Exams

SAT, ACT, THEA

The SAT and ACT are entrance exams required by colleges and universities for admission. It is recommended to take the college entrance exams during the spring of your junior year so there is time during the fall of your senior year to retake if necessary.

All colleges and universities in Texas accept either exam. The majority of schools require a minimum score on the Act or SAT to be admitted. To find out the minimum score for the school you are interested in, check with the school's website, their current catalog, or admissions office.

What are the differences between SAT and ACT?

SAT attempts to measure your aptitude and ability in the three areas of math, critical reading, and writing. The test includes a 60-minute writing section; a critical reading section with long and short reading passages; and a math section with algebra, geometry, operations, and probability. Each section is reported as a score on the scale from 200-800.

ACT attempts to measure specific knowledge and curriculum in the four areas of English, math, science, and reading. Scores are reported in the form of sub scale scores for each section and the composite score that ranges from 1 to 36. Currently the national average composite score is 21.

Students also have the option on the ACT to take a 30-minute writing section. This writing section complements the English section. Scores are reported the same as above plus there will be two additional scores reported for the writing sub score and combined English/writing score. Students should contact the schools/colleges they are considering to determine if the writing test is required or visit www.act.org for a listing.

Which exam should I take?

It depends on your strengths. The SAT tries to measure ability, which supposedly does not change. On the other hand, the ACT tries to measure specific knowledge from curriculum so items may look familiar to you. Another factor to consider is that one-third of the SAT is math with only one-fourth of the Act is math.

The choice of which exam to take can only be made by you, because you should know which one is likely to show your strengths. It is recommended that you take both tests to see which one you perform better on.

How do I register for SAT and ACT?

Pick up the proper packet for SAT and Act in the counselor's office. Fill out the registration form and make sure you choose test centers and school you want to receive your scores. Then put your payment in the envelope, and mail the materials. Pay attention to deadlines. You will receive a ticket in the mail for admittance to the test. Your scores will be reported to you four to six weeks after you have taken the test.

OR

Register online for SAT at www.collegeboard.com and for ACT at www.actstudent.org. you can complete all the registration information online. One advantage is your test center site is reserved immediately. Another advantage is that if you retake the exams you can access the registration information already saved. Keep in mind that with this registration method, you are required to pay with credit card. After you register, you print the admission ticket.

How do I prepare for the SAT?

It is recommended for students to prepare for the ACT and/or SAT before they take the test. Students can take practice tests in order to become familiar with the format, types of questions, timing and directions. Practice tests are available in:

- The counselor's office
- Online at registration websites for ACT and SAT
- Online at websites www.4tests.com, www.gocollege.com, www.collegefortexans.com, www.princetonreview.com, and www.number2.com

THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment)

If students are planning to attend a public community college, public technical college, or public university in Texas, they are required to take this basic assessment test for reading, writing, and math skills before enrolling in classes. This test is NOT an admissions test, and students cannot be denied admission based on their score. However, if certain requirements are not met then students may be placed in remedial classes to work on the above skills.

Students can be exempt from the THEA by:

Having an ACT composite score of 23, with a minimum of 19 on both English and math tests;

or

Having an SAT combined verbal math score of 1070, with a minimum of 500 on both verbal and math tests; or

Scoring 2200 on Exit-level math TAKS, and score 2200 on Exit-level English/Language Arts TAKS with a writing sub score of 3; or

Enroll in a certificate program of 42 semester hours or less at a public community college or technical college.

Students can register online at www.thea.nesinc.com or pick up registration packers in the counselor's office.