

UC Davis Project

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Who should take SAT I?

Students who are planning to go to college should take the SAT I. Many colleges require the SAT I for admission because it provides important information about the scholastic ability of potential students.

The SAT I is a standardized test that measures two sets of skills -- verbal and mathematical reasoning -- that students need to do college-level work. About 2 million students take the SAT I every year. Most students take the SAT at national administrations during their junior or senior year in high school. However, there are no age or grade restrictions for taking the test. At least half of all students take the SAT twice -- in the spring of junior year and in the fall of senior year. Most students improve their scores the second time around. All scores are reported to colleges, but colleges generally look at only the highest scores.

The most important factor for college admission is a student's high school transcript -- judged by grades received and the rigor of the courses. SAT scores are intended to supplement a student's academic record. Other important information that is considered for college admission includes student's extracurricular activities and recommendations. While grades and courses taken are considered the best academic predictors, all information is collectively evaluated by colleges to make admission decisions.

New SAT I

The class of 2006 will be the first to take the new SAT I in spring 2005. It is a paper-based written exam with a total testing time of 3 hours and 45 minutes (including one 25-minute unscored section). There are three sections in the new SAT I. These include a math section, a verbal section renamed as critical reading, and a new writing section. The writing section consists of a written essay and multiple-choice questions on grammar and usage.

The new SAT I has changed the content of its test, including the: (1) elimination of analogies; (2) addition of short reading passages; (3) expansion of new math content, including third-year college preparatory math; (4) elimination of quantitative comparisons.

	Writing Section	Critical Reading	Math Section
Time	60 minutes total (One 35-minute section; One 25-minute section)	70 minutes total (Two 25-minute sections; One 20-minute section)	70 minutes total (Two 25-minute sections; One 20-minute section)
Content	Grammar, usage, and word choice	Critical reading; Sentence-level reading	Number and operations; Algebra I, II and functions; Geometry; Statistics, probability and data analysis
Items	Multiple-choice questions; Student-written essay	Reading comprehension; Sentence completions; Paragraph-length critical reading	5-choice multiple-choice questions; Student-produced responses
Score	Total W 200-800 (include multiple-choice subscore 20-80 and essay subscore 2-12)	CR 200-800	M 200-800 **Students are allowed to use a scientific or graphing calculator.

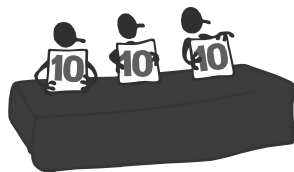
The SAT I scoring system

Each section of the new SAT I, including the new writing section, is scored using the familiar scale of 200-800. Two subscores are given for the writing section: a multiple-choice subscore on a scale of 20-80, and an essay subscore, on a scale of 2-12. These two subscales are combined to a score of 200-800.



There are two types of scores on the SAT I: raw score and scale score. Raw score refers to the number of questions answered correctly minus a fraction of the number of questions answered incorrectly. It is used to determine a scale score. Scale score is what you normally think of as the “SAT score,” which ranges from 200 to 800.

In all three sections of the new SAT I, students get one raw score point for each correct answer. An incorrect answer will result in a penalty, which equals to a quarter of a raw score point. There is no penalty if a question is left blank. After calculating the total raw score, it is converted to a scale score using the “Score Conversion Table” which is found in the SAT I Registration Bulletin. This scale score is the “SAT score”.



The essay is scored by two experienced and trained readers. These are high school and college teachers who rate the essay independently of one another. Each reader gives the essay a score from 1 to 6 based on the overall quality of the essay and the student’s demonstration of writing competence. The two scores are then added together to arrive at an essay subscore.

Scores for the current and new SAT I will remain equivalent. The math and critical reading scores can be compared to the existing math and verbal scores. Because the SAT writing score is new, colleges will use student’s writing score in different ways. Writing scores may be used for admission decisions and possibly for placement in English Composition courses. However, for the first few years, some schools may choose to use writing scores for research purposes only, and not for decisions about admission or placement.

Unlike tests taken in high school, the SAT does not assign passing or failing scores. Whether one's scores are high enough depends on personal standards and the admission requirements of the colleges in which a student is interested. However, there is a score called "percentile score," which a student can use to compare his/her scores to others who took the SAT. This score shows the percentage of other students who did worse than a particular student. For example, if one's percentile rank is 80, then that person did as well as or better than 80% of all students who took the SAT.

SAT II: Subject Test

Who Should Take Subject Tests?

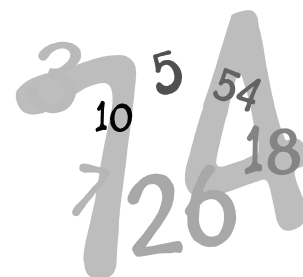
Some colleges require or recommend applicants to take one or more SAT II subject tests in addition to the SAT I. Each college and university has its own SAT II policy. For example, in addition to the new SAT I, all of the University of California campuses require applicants for fall 2006 admission to take two SAT II subject tests in two different subject areas (e.g., History, Literature, Mathematics, Laboratory Science, or Chinese Reading with Listening). California State University does not require the SAT II test for admission.

All SAT II subject tests can be taken as early as ninth grade and should be taken immediately upon completion of the corresponding high school course. At some colleges, the admissions committees only look at the highest scores, so students can take the same subject tests more than once.



SAT II: Mathematics

There are two types of subject tests in Mathematics: Math Level IC and Math Level IIC. Before registering for the SAT II Math subject test, a student may need to consider how many years of math she/he has taken in high school. If the student plans to take the math subject test to fulfill the admission requirement of the University of California, only the Math Level IIC will meet the fall 2006 admission requirement. For both tests, students are allowed to use a scientific or graphing calculator.



	Math Level IC	Math Level IIC
Time	1 hour	1 hour
Content	Algebra; Geometry (plane Euclidean, three-dimensional, & coordinate); Trigonometry; Functions; Elementary Statistics (probability, data interpretation, mean, median, & mode)	Algebra; Geometry (three-dimensional & coordinate); Trigonometry; Functions; Statistics (probability, permutations, & combinations)
Items	50 multiple-choice questions	50 multiple-choice questions
Years of Math Required	3 years college-prep math (2 years algebra, 1 year geometry)	>3 years college-prep math (2 years algebra, 1 year geometry, plus a pre-calculus or elementary functions/trigonometry course)

What about SAT II: Writing Test?

Because the new SAT I will include a writing section with content similar to the SAT II: Writing Test, this latter test is no longer offered after January of 2005. For students entering college in fall of 2006 or later, some colleges may accept scores from either the old SAT without a writing section or the new SAT with a writing section. For a list of colleges that may require the new SAT I, please visit the following website:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/newsat/colleges/require.html>

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By Phone: (866) 7-FAMILY (This is a toll-free number.)

By E-mail: kimsu@hawaii.edu

By Web: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~kimsu/ucdavis/>

Reference

The College Board website:
<http://www.collegeboard.com/>

Information on the new SAT I:
<http://www.collegeboard.com/newsat/>

University of California admission information:
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/>

California State University admission information:
http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/

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