

SAT® FAQs

1. Why should you take the SAT?

The SAT® is the nation's most widely used college admission test, a distinction that it has held for more than seven decades. The SAT is taken by more than two million students every year and is accepted by virtually all colleges and universities. The SAT measures knowledge of subjects learned in the classroom, including reading, writing and math — and how well you can apply that knowledge outside of the classroom. The SAT helps colleges get to know you better by giving them insight into how you think, solve problems and communicate.

2. When should I take the SAT?

The College Board recommends that you take the SAT in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year, if you feel you can improve your score. Research shows that students receive little benefit from repeating the SAT multiple times. Students receive, on average, a 40-point increase across all three sections when they take it a second time. Score increases are lower on subsequent retesting.

3. How is the SAT developed?

Meticulous care goes into developing and evaluating each test. Test developers write the questions for the SAT, sometimes incorporating questions submitted by high school and college teachers from around the country. A test committee made up of high school and college faculty and administrators reviews each test before it is administered. To ensure that the SAT is a valid measure of the skills and knowledge specified for the tests, as well as fair to all students, the SAT Program maintains rigorous standards for administering and scoring the tests and for reporting test scores.

4. What else does the SAT provide?

The SAT experience does not start or end with the test. The College Board is there for you at each step on your path to college. From the moment you register for the test, you can take advantage of the College Board's free online practice materials and many useful tools, including SAT Skills Insight™, which helps you understand what skills are tested on the SAT; a college search tool; financial aid and scholarship information; and a profile of several careers and majors. The College Board also helps you understand the details of your scores with My Online Score Report.

5. How fair is the SAT?

The SAT is carefully designed to be a fair test for all students. It is also the most rigorously researched and analyzed standardized test in the world. Each question on the SAT goes through an in-depth pretesting and review process to ensure that every single question is fair to all students across genders and ethnicity groups.

SAT FAQs (page 2)

6. How valid is the SAT in predicting college success?

The SAT, along with high school grades, is the best predictor of success in college. The SAT gives you an opportunity to show colleges what you know and what you know you can do. Taking the SAT is the first step in finding the right college for you — the one where you'll best succeed and discover the tools necessary to pursue your passions and achieve your career goals.

7. How many questions must I answer correctly to get an average score on the SAT?

The average score on the SAT is about 500 on the critical reading section, 500 on the writing section and 500 on the mathematics section. Some of the questions are easy, and some are hard, but the majority are of medium difficulty. Medium difficulty questions are answered correctly by about one-third to two-thirds of students. The SAT is designed so that a student who answers about half the questions correctly will receive an average score.

8. How do colleges use the writing score?

Different colleges use the writing score in different ways. Writing scores may be used for admission decisions, and possibly for placement in English composition courses. Some colleges may choose to use writing scores for research purposes only, and not for decisions about admission or placement. In addition to the raw writing score, colleges that are sent a student's SAT score will also be able to access the student's essay.

Recent studies show that the writing section, of all three sections, is the best predictor of a student's academic success in college.

9. How should I get ready?

There are many ways to practice for the test. Here are some ideas:

- Study hard, read outside of the classroom and take challenging classes.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT®. It is great practice for the SAT.
- Take advantage of the College Board's free online readiness/practice tools, which include a free official practice test, sample questions, The Official SAT Question of the Day™ and other low-cost tools.
- Know that research proves that you don't need expensive test-preparation courses to prepare you to do well on the test.
- If you've already taken the SAT once, consider taking it again. There's a good chance that you'll improve your score.

Source: www.collegeboard.org