

A Parent's Cheat Sheet to Standardized Tests for College Admission



Standardized Tests Leaving You Puzzled?

Not sure which test your child should take? Does it even matter? What's the new ACT and the online SAT really all about? We receive many questions from parents about how to help their child choose a college admission test, so we created this little cheat sheet to help you get the best possible results!

At Pathfinders College & Career Advisors, we have **in-depth knowledge** of the college system and the entire college and career decision-making process. If you need help **choosing** and **preparing** for standardized tests, contact us to learn more about our **comprehensive college and career advisory courses**, test prep resources, and 1:1 sessions.



**Let us help you choose and prepare for the standardized test
that is right for you.**



Test Scores Matter

1. Many colleges still use ACT/SAT scores as a key factor that impacts college admissions.
2. High scores can unlock merit-based scholarships.
3. Students who prepare increase their scores by an average of 100+ points on the SAT and 4 points on the ACT.

Top Tips for Test Prep



Start early

Sophomore year isn't too soon to start getting ready.



Be realistic

Improvement takes time and effort.



Support matters

Encourage and guide your child without adding pressure.



Resources are key

Leverage tools, experts, and practice tests.

What's the Difference

| ACT | SAT |
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| Five sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Math • Reading • Science (optional effective April 2025) • Optional essay | Two sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • Evidence-Based Reading & Writing |
| Faster-pace, (44 fewer questions effective April 2025) The optional Science section makes it unique. | Focuses more on logical reasoning and problem-solving. |
| Good for students strong in Math and Science. | Good for students strong in Reading and Social Sciences. |
| Revised version online effective April 2025. Paper version available in September 2025. | Now fully digital. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English, Math, and Reading test (2 hours 5 minutes) • Optional Science and essay (1 hour 20 minutes.) • If paper, the results can take a bit longer to come out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter test, faster results (2 hours 15 minutes). |
| Each question will have only 4 possible answers and the time allotment for each question is longer. | Uses adaptive testing, where the difficulty of the second module in each section adjusts based on performance in the first module. |
| Preparation Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the preparation page on ACT.org | Preparation Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice with official digital tools • Focus on time management. |

