



Frequently Asked Questions

When is the SAT administered internationally?

Fall 2016–Spring 2017: October, November, December, January, May, June

Summer 2017–onward: August, October, November, December, May, June

Note: At this time, some countries may have more limited test dates. To be safe, make sure to continually check your country's available testing dates.

Can I take the old SAT?

No. Unfortunately, the old SAT is no longer administered.

What type of student is best suited for the redesigned SAT?

First, the student should be very strong in Math. Because Math is now 50% of the composite score, a student can no longer earn a competitive SAT score without a high Math score. Second, the student should have excellent focus and test endurance. Sections are longer and more compact, so there will be fewer occasions for the proctor to warn the student that time is running out.

Why did the SAT change?

The SAT has made an intense effort to align itself with the Common Core, a federally mandated testing program in the United States. By modeling its content after the Common Core, the SAT has become an increasingly popular way for schools to administer required standardized tests. This move has helped the SAT regain its footing in the wake of increasing competition from the ACT.



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Does the redesigned SAT's emphasis on the Common Core place international students at a disadvantage?

Not necessarily. Because the Common Core focuses on building understanding of concepts versus simply memorizing facts, SAT questions may look a lot more like the questions international students are used to seeing in school. Still, there are a few challenges to look out for.

First, students will no longer be able to game the Reading section by memorizing long lists of vocabulary words. There are no more Sentence Completions in the Reading section.

Second, Common Core Math questions are notoriously wordy. Students who struggle with lengthy word problems will need to spend extra time learning to break problems down piece by piece.

Finally, students who take the Essay section may need to spend some time learning the common literary devices and rhetorical techniques taught in American classrooms.

Is the redesigned SAT Essay optional?

Technically, the redesigned SAT Essay is optional and an increasing number of competitive universities have recently changed their policies to no longer require the Essay. However, some colleges still require an Essay score. Be sure to research your schools of choice before opting out of the Essay.



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Are there any disadvantages to taking the redesigned SAT Essay?

Perhaps. The redesigned Essay task is in many respects more challenging than its predecessor. Before, students could memorize a few canned examples and a general structure to earn a decent score. Now, students must identify and thoroughly analyze another author's use of logic, structure, and rhetorical skills to build an argument. This task involves reading and correctly interpreting a persuasive passage, identifying what makes the passage strong, and crafting a full analysis of those elements.

Perhaps more worrying than the content, though, is the scoring rubric. The redesign's new scale from 1–4 leaves very little margin of error for graders. As a result, we can expect most graders to favor the safer “middle number” scores (i.e. 2 and 3) over extreme scores (i.e. 1 and 4). This will make achieving an excellent Essay score even more challenging than before.

Does the Founding Documents/Global Conversation passage automatically place international students at a disadvantage?

Probably not. At the end of the day, these are reading comprehension passages. Every question can be answered without any prior knowledge about the topic. What may prove challenging for all students is the antiquated language used in this passage. The Global Conversation passage could have been written in the 1700's or 1800's, so get ready to practice deciphering words in context!



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Does the SAT still offer special accommodations for students with learning differences?

Yes, students with a recognized learning difference can apply for extended time. However, the redesigned SAT's extended time policies are not as favorable as those of the ACT. The ACT allows students to allocate their time however they see fit. So if a student only struggles with Reading, for example, he or she can self-impose normal time restrictions on the other sections, banking extra time for the Reading section. The SAT does not include this provision.

Will colleges superscore the redesigned SAT?

While colleges will not superscore between old and redesigned SAT's, many will still superscore the redesigned SAT. Due to the recent changes, several colleges have since revisited their policies on superscoring. We recommend checking a school's admissions policies before recommending a superscoring plan.