College Admissions and the SAT/ACT

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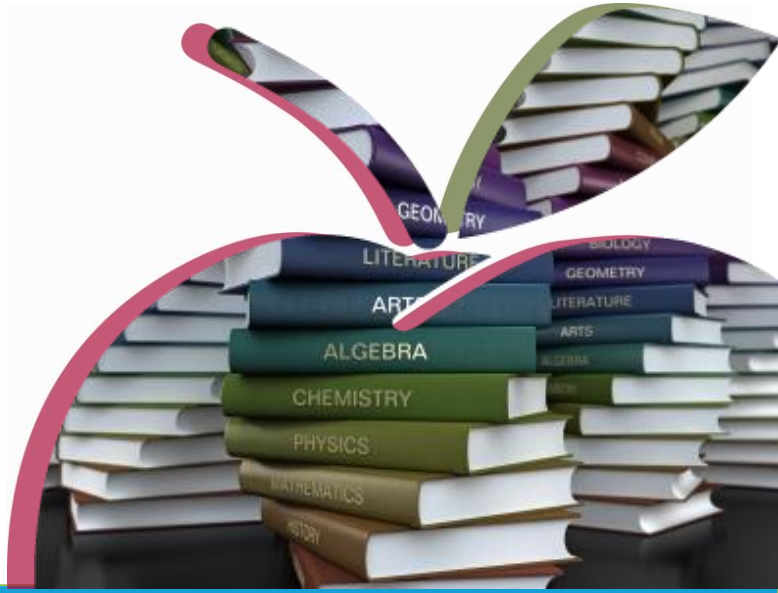
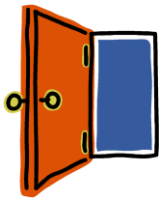
ADMISSIONS

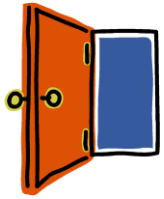


The admissions process

H.S. GPA in the context of Schedule Strength and Academic Strength of School



SAT
ACT



SAT Subject Tests

Academic Index: quantitative components
How will they read your application?

Admissions Essays

Teacher/Counselor Recommendations

Activities (Leadership, Depth)

Demonstrated Interest

qualitative components: the packaging of the application:
Is there a cohesive story?

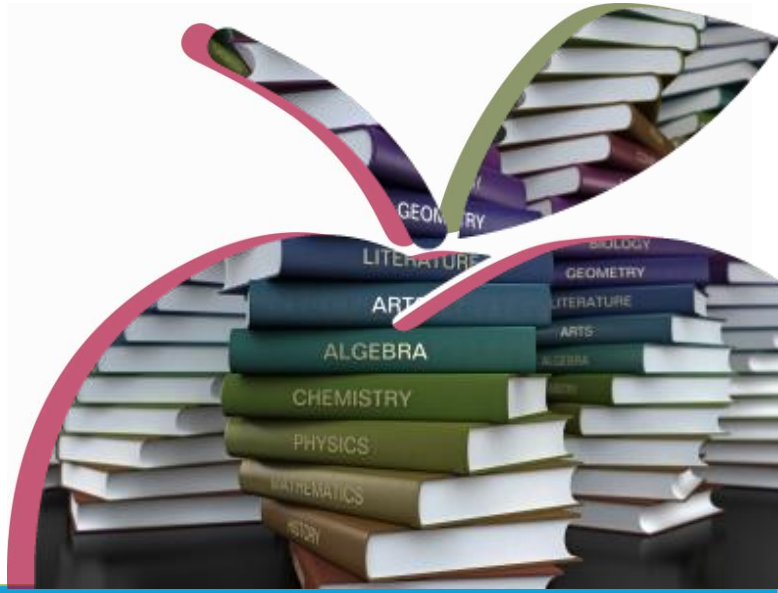
Types of Applications

Early Applications:

- Early Action
  - Restricted, e.g., Single Choice Early Action
  - Unrestricted
- Early Decision (A Binding Commitment)
- Priority Deadlines (Better odds early)
- Rolling Decision (A *Yes* in October could become a *No* by December as the class fills)

Regular Decision: Regular Deadlines Apply

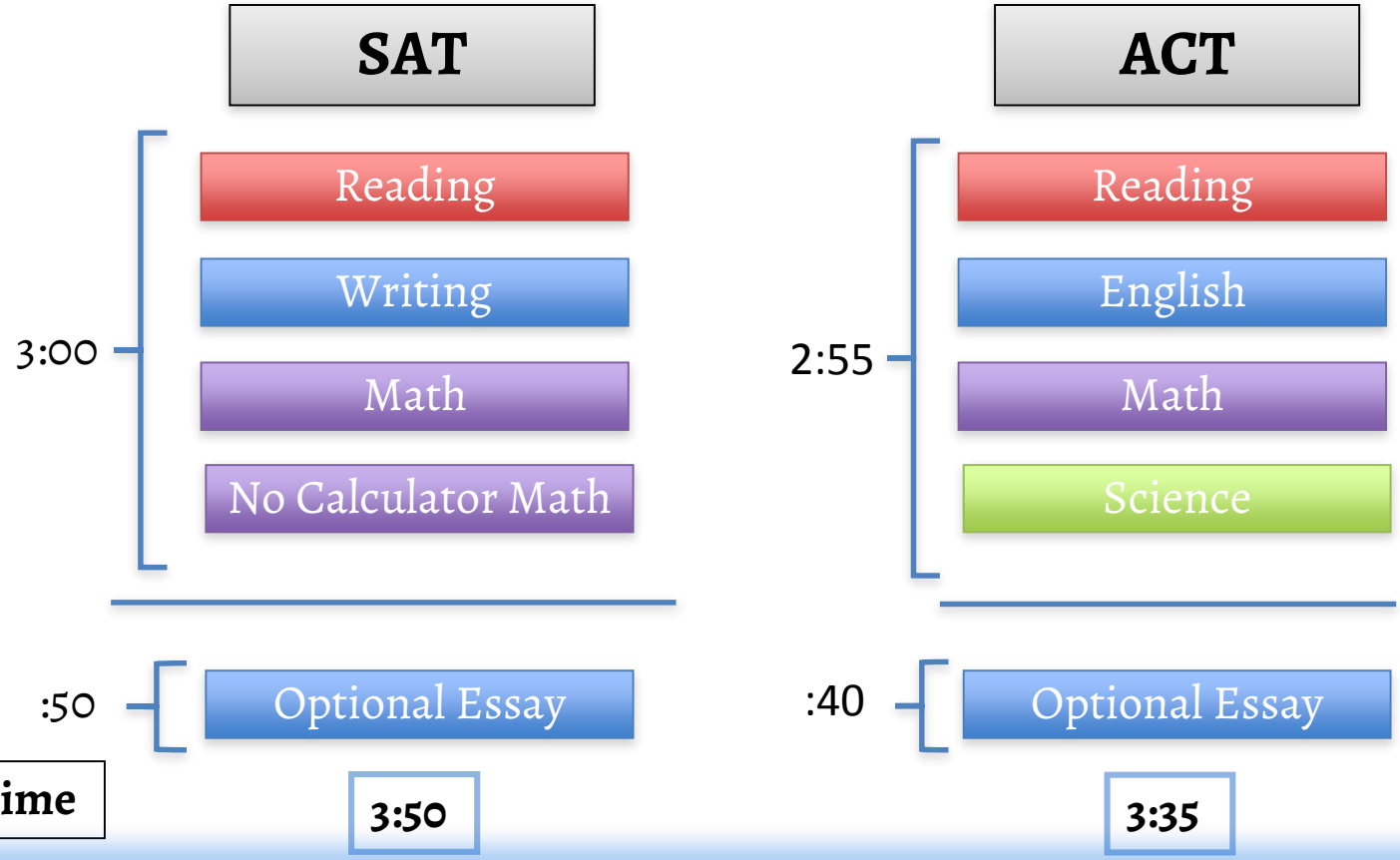
THE ACT VS. THE SAT



The amount of time allocated per question is a profound difference. The ACT is a speed test; the SAT less so

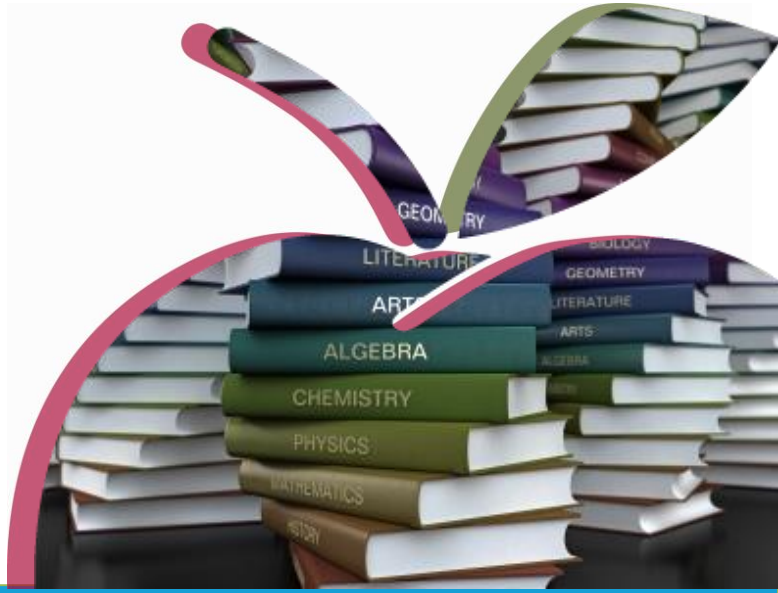
	Seconds Per Question		
Section	ACT	SAT	
Writing	36.0	**47.7**	33 %
Reading	52.5	**75.0**	43 %
Math	60.0	**84.2**	40 %
Science	52.5		

Structurally the two tests appear nearly identical

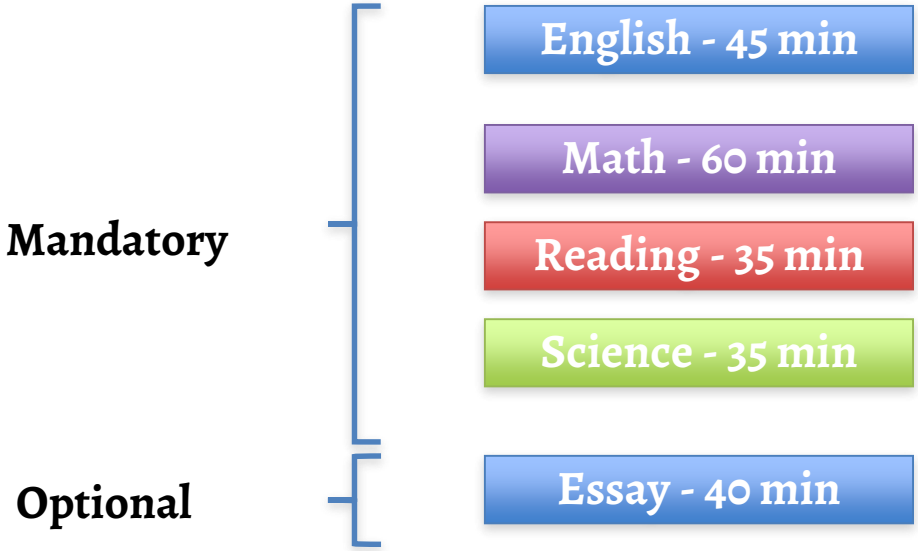


The ACT's stand-alone science section is one of the key differences, but there are also differences in the way the test treats the Reading and Math sections.

THE ACT



The ACT - Section by Section



The ACT's total time (without the essay) comes to 2:55

English

Time: 45 minutes
Questions: 75
Passages: 5

The English section is made up of two major types of questions - Grammar Questions and Rhetorical Skills Questions

Math

- **Time: 60 minutes**
- **Questions: 60**
- **Calculator? Yes**
- **Formulas given? No**

Comparing SAT and ACT content*

Test	Algebra	Geometry	Arithmetic/ Data Analysis	Trigonometry
ACT	46%	23%	24%	7%
SAT	**62%**	**6%**	30%	2%

SAT has more algebra and much less geometry. Trigonometry is mostly an afterthought. Algebra dominates the SAT.

*Using SAT categories, slightly different from how the ACT categorizes math items

ACT math is shifting, integrating more varied concepts

- Expanding use of matrices (e.g., multiplication)
- Adding more conic sections (e.g., working with ellipses and parabolic equations)
- Understanding the domain of a function
- Vertical and horizontal asymptotes
- Trig: Using Radians, Terminal Sides and Coterminal Angles (e.g., 30°, –330° and 390°)
- Monomial factors
- Associative and commutative properties

Reading

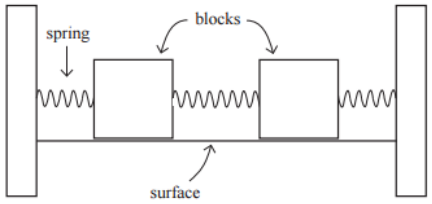
Time: 35 minutes
Questions: 40
Passages: 4

That's 52.5 seconds per question! The Reading section on the ACT is one of the most stressful, from a time-management perspective.

Learning to read quickly and effectively for this test is vital.

Science

two blocks were placed on a surface and connected by a system of springs (see Figure 1).



Identical blocks were used in all 3 experiments. In each experiment, the scientists shook the system by striking it with a pneumatic hammer with a discrete force of 800 newtons.

Experiment 1

The spring system, at spring resistance 1, was placed on an ice surface. The scientists activated the pneumatic hammer to shake the system, and measured how many times the blocks collided during the first minute. Next, they shook the system at spring resistance 2 on an ice surface and counted how many times the blocks collided during the first minute. They repeated this procedure on carpet and linoleum. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Trial	Surface	Normal Modes	
		Spring resistance 1	Spring resistance 2
1	Ice	62	66
2	Carpet	35	39
3	Linoleum	42	51

shaking each system a final time and measured the normal modes for the next minute (Trial 5). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Trial	Normal Modes	
	Spring resistance 1	Spring resistance 2
4	45	60
5	42	51

Experiment 3

The scientists shook the spring system with each spring resistance on a linoleum surface. Two minutes later, they shook the system again and measured the number of collisions in each 30-second span over the duration of three minutes. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Time (sec)	Number of collisions	
	Spring resistance 1	Spring resistance 2
0-30	29	38
30-60	16	22
60-90	11	14
90-120	5	8
120-150	1	4
150-180	0	0

Time: 35 minutes
Questions: 40
Passages: 6

This is another 52.5-second test!

The ACT has a rigorous science section, which tests science fluency, not science knowledge

Science fluency examines one's ability to read tables, charts, and graphs and science texts. Students must see trends, correlations, extrapolate and interpolate data.

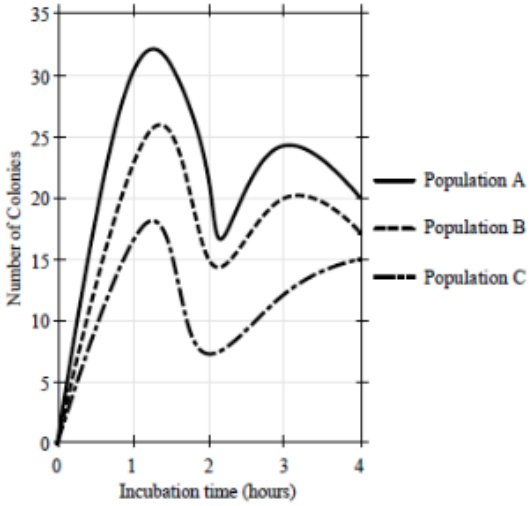


Figure 1

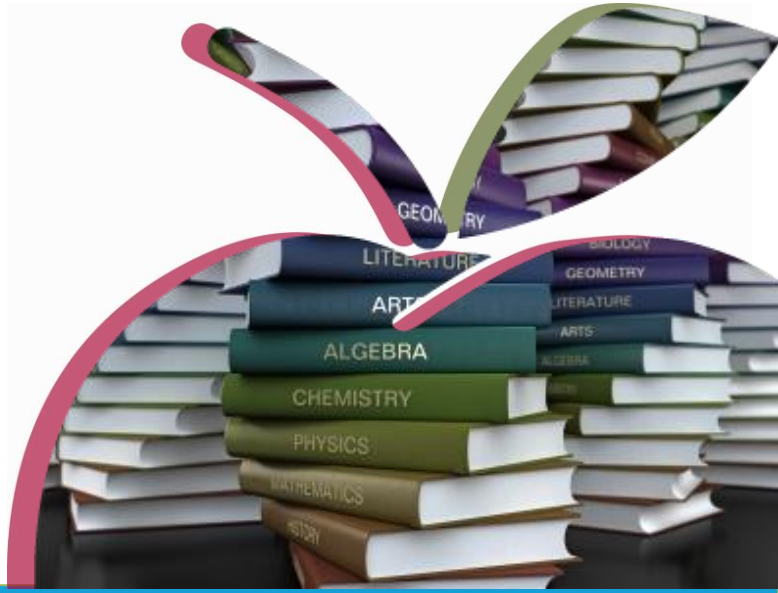
The ACT Science section is a far greater challenge than the "science" tested thus far on the SAT

The ACT essay is challenging

- **Evaluates 4 areas: ideas and analysis, development and support, organization, and language use.**

- **Students are provided several perspectives and asked to create their own analysis of an issue**

THE SAT



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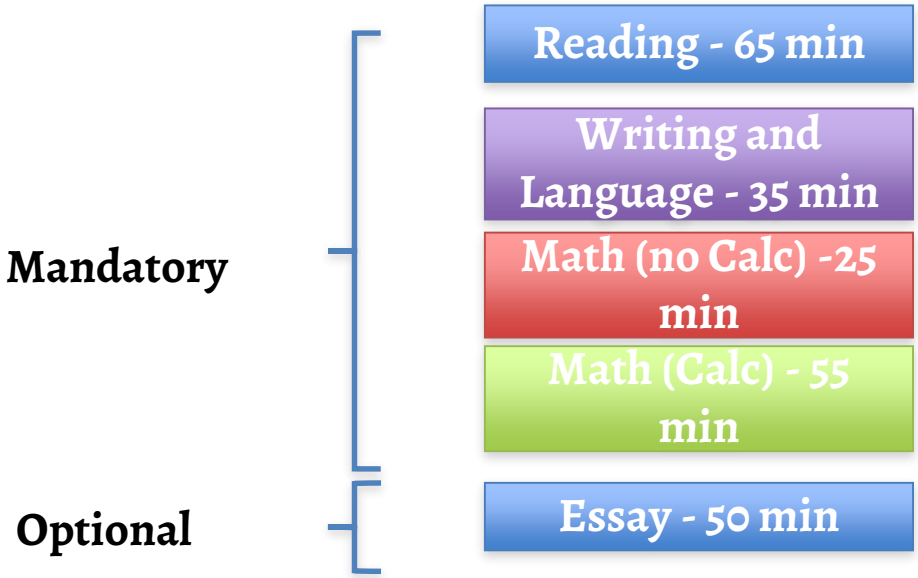

The SAT's total time (without the essay) comes to 3 hours even.

Reading

Time: 65 minutes
Questions: 52
Time per question: 75 seconds

The Reading section on the SAT is a marathon! It's the longest section and comes right at the beginning.

Writing and Language

Time: 35 minutes
Questions: 44
Time per question: 48 seconds

The questions in this section cover both grammar/language use and rhetorical skills.

Math (no Calculator)

- **Time: 25 minutes**
- **Questions: 20**
- **Time per question: 75 seconds**
- **Calculator? No**
- **Formulas given? Yes**

Math (Calculator)

- **Time: 55 minutes**
- **Questions: 38**
- **Time per question: 77 seconds**
- **Calculator? Yes**
- **Formulas given? Yes**

Comparing SAT and ACT content*

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SAT has more algebra and much less geometry. Trigonometry is mostly an afterthought. Algebra dominates the SAT.

*Using SAT categories, slightly different from how the ACT categorizes math items

SAT math emphasizes conceptual understanding

- Interpreting trumps solving.
- Understanding how to build and manipulate functions and equations. Gives formulas!
- It's more of an applied math test, gauging fluency and understanding, rather than systematic solving.
- No more immediate roadmap to an answer, students must be more discriminating and find a path to an answer.
- Overlapping content with fewer items assessing a solitary concept.

The SAT tests more math in the context of word problems than does the ACT

Test	Contextual	Conceptual
ACT	36%	64%
SAT	**53%**	47%

The SAT Essay: A document based question

As you read the passage below, consider how Jimmy Carter uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

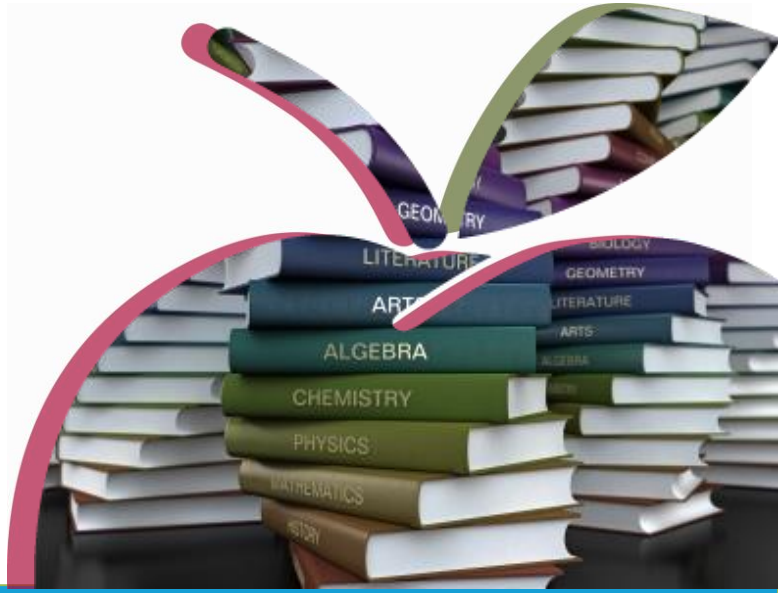
Write an essay in which you explain how Jimmy Carter builds an argument to persuade his audience that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should not be developed for industry. In your essay, analyze how Carter uses one or more of the features listed in the box above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Carter's claims, but rather explain how Carter builds an argument to persuade his audience.

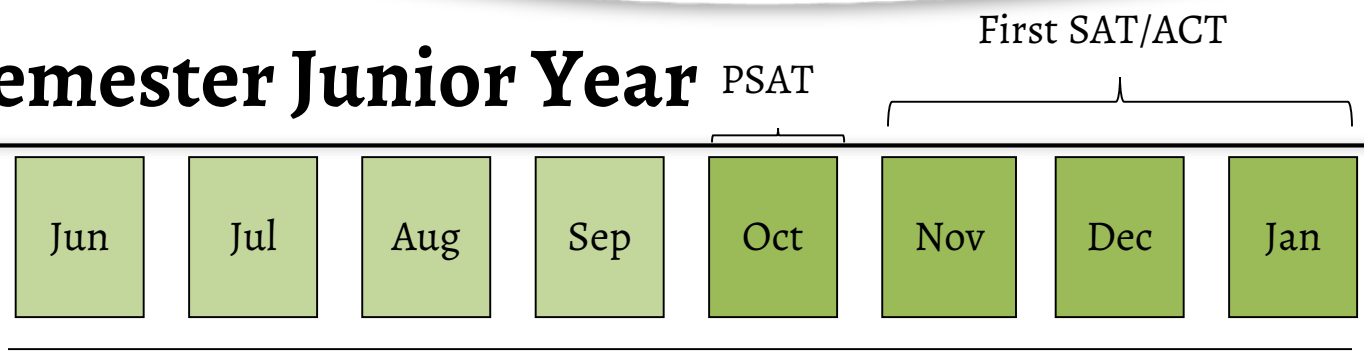
The College Board has modified free response exercises from AP Language and AP Literature exams to create this new SAT essay

AP CollegeBoard Advanced Placement Program

NUTS AND BOLTS

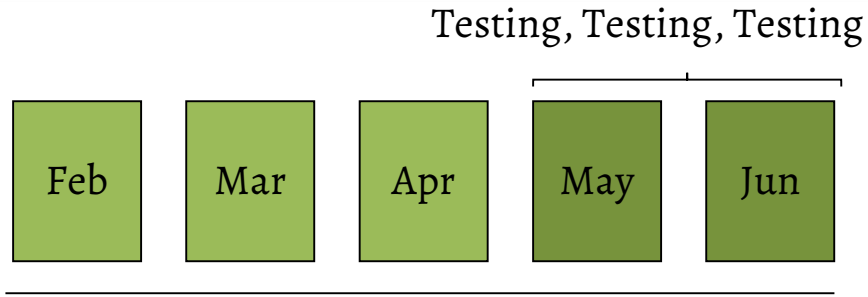


Fall Semester Junior Year



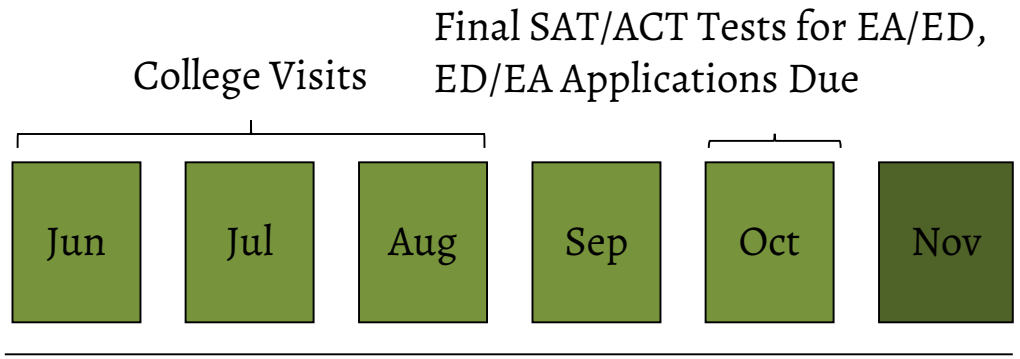
- Summer: Stay involved in extracurricular activities. Show consistency and depth.
- Aug: Take a challenging schedule. Add as many APs as you can realistically handle. Junior grades must be solid.
- Oct: PSAT. PSAT prep course if you are a potential National Merit Scholar or want to jumpstart SAT prep.
- Nov – Jan: Take first SAT or ACT. Prepare 8 to 12 weeks prior to scheduled test date.

Spring Semester Junior Year



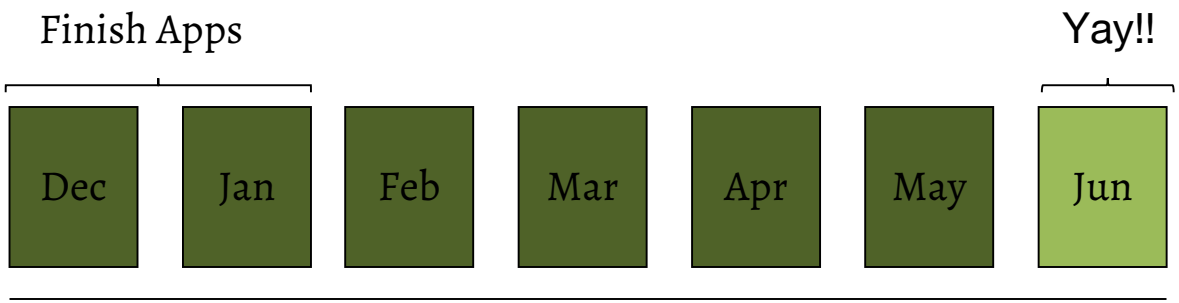
- Jan – Feb: Register for spring AP exams (if schools don't register the students).
- Dec – May: Explore financial aid/ scholarships/ grants for college.
- May – Jun: Take APs, SAT subject tests, ACT, SAT (prep courses as needed).
- Jun – Aug
  - ❑ Make a college list and collect applications
  - ❑ Begin applications/essays , set up interviews and college visits

Fall Semester Senior Year



- Summer: Stay involved in extracurricular activities.
- Aug: Strong academic schedule. APs are ideal. Keep grades solid.
- Sep – Nov
  - ❑ SAT/ACT final push if needed
  - ❑ Meet with your guidance counselor for application advice
  - ❑ Finish early applications
  - ❑ October: ED deadlines

Spring Semester Senior Year



- Nov – Dec: Complete remaining applications
- Dec: ED responses arrive
- Mar – Apr: Responses from colleges
- May: Deposits due
- Jun: Graduate and send final transcript to your school of choice!

Superscoring

A majority of colleges will superscore the SAT and many will superscore the ACT, combining the top section scores to form a new composite score, the only score to be used in the admissions process.

Test Date	Verbal	Math	Composite
March	630	**670**	1300
May	610	630	1240
June	**660**	650	1310
Superscore	**660**	**670**	**1330**

March and June contribute to the superscore, May does not. Withhold May unless a school requires all tests

Accommodations

- **Both the ACT and SAT offer a range of accommodations for eligible students, such as extended time, a separate room, and visual/audio aids**
- **Typically, students must be using accommodations at school to qualify for testing accommodations**
- **For the SAT, you must apply once for all testing; for the ACT, you must apply for each test administration you plan to sit for.**
- **The accommodations process (even with no appeals) can take several weeks - get started early!**

Which Test Should I Try First?

- **Both, ideally, to establish dual baselines**
  - **1. Start with your STRENGTH. If none,**
  - **2. Prep to your PREFERENCE.**
  - **3. If prep is not yielding results, switch to the other test. If you have to switch, 90% of the content transfers**

Elements to Successful Prep

- Mock tests: testing effects
- Distributed practice
- Starting early
- Time on Task
- Finishing strong
- Having a goal (use Collegeboard.org to calibrate)

Our Services

- SAT & ACT prep (online, private, group)
- SAT Subject and AP prep
- HS subject assistance
- Study Skills

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