
SAT[®] Understanding Scores

2017



Contact Us

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The SAT Suite of Assessments

The SAT® Suite of Assessments is an integrated system of tests that includes the SAT (for students in grades 11 and 12), the PSAT/NMSQT® and the PSAT™ 10 (for grades 10 and 11), and the PSAT™ 8/9 (for grades 8 and 9).

The tests measure the same skills and knowledge in grade-appropriate ways. They work together to show college readiness over time so educators, students, and parents can monitor student progress. Their content reflects the kinds of meaningful, engaging, and challenging work that students find in the best middle and high school courses taught today.

The SAT, the last test in the suite, is a globally recognized college admission test that's accepted at all U.S. colleges.

What Does the SAT Measure?

The SAT measures the skills and knowledge that research shows are the most important for success in college and career. It includes the following sections.

EVIDENCE-BASED READING AND WRITING

This section is made up of a Reading Test and a Writing and Language Test, each composed of multiparagraph passages and multiple-choice questions.

The Reading Test measures comprehension and reasoning skills and focuses on close reading of passages in a wide array of subject areas. The Writing and Language Test measures a range of skills including command of evidence, expression of ideas, and the use of standard English conventions in grammar and punctuation.

MATH

This section includes multiple-choice and student-produced response questions. It assesses skills in algebra, problem solving and data analysis, manipulation of complex equations, geometry, and trigonometry.

ESSAY (OPTIONAL)

The SAT Essay asks students to read a high-quality source text and write an effective analysis of that text using evidence drawn from the source. It measures a range of skills in reading, analysis, and writing.

How Is the SAT Scored?

Students receive a total score that is the sum of their scores on the two sections (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math). The optional SAT Essay is scored separately.

To calculate section scores, we first compute the student's raw score—the number of questions correctly answered—for each section. Nothing is deducted for incorrect answers or for unanswered questions.

Next, we convert each of the raw section scores to a scaled score of 200 to 800. This conversion process adjusts for slight differences in difficulty among versions of the test and provides a score that is consistent across different versions. The scaled scores are the scores provided on score reports.

How Can I Use the Student Score Report?

The student score report clearly summarizes a student's current achievement levels and encourages next steps to increase college and career readiness. You can help students by going over their score reports and helping them understand what their scores mean. Here's how.

TALK WITH STUDENTS ABOUT COLLEGE READINESS

The score report includes an indicator for each section that shows whether the student's score meets the college readiness benchmark.

- If the student is meeting the benchmark for a section, explain that this means they're right on track to be ready for college when they graduate from high school.
- If the student isn't meeting the benchmark for a section, encourage them to strengthen their skills in that area.

USE STUDENT SCORES TO IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Use the test scores, cross-test scores, and subscores to evaluate the student’s relative strengths and weaknesses and see what skills need practice.
- Use the red/yellow/green coding on test scores and subscores to see how the student is performing relative to other students who are meeting or exceeding the benchmark. Prioritize areas in the red range for additional work and practice.

HELP STUDENTS DECIDE ON NEXT STEPS

- Work with students to think of ways to develop each of the skills you’ve identified for focus and improvement.
- Encourage students to go online for more details about their scores and to link their College Board account to Khan Academy® for a personalized study plan.

For further guidance on interpreting score reports, see the Professional Development modules for K–12 educators at sat.org/educators.

How Can I Use the K–12 Score Reporting Portal?

The online reporting portal at k12reports.collegeboard.org offers you an array of powerful tools to assess your students’ progress and plan instruction that delivers what they need. The tools include:

- Flexible reports that can be sorted and filtered by key demographics.
- Instructional planning support using test subscores in specific content areas, benchmarks, information for cross-subject tasks, and data for prescribing interventions when students are behind or ahead.

SAT Scores

Total Scores

The total score is the sum of the two section scores; its range is 400–1600.

Section Scores

Your students receive scores in the range of 200–800 for each of two sections. The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section score combines the scores for the Reading Test and the Writing and Language Test. The Math section score is derived from the Math Test score, including the calculator and no-calculator portions.

Percentiles

Two types of percentiles accompany student scores. One compares the scores to those of students in the class of 2017 who took the new SAT. The other compares the scores to those of all U.S. students in grades 11 and 12 and is derived from a weighted research study sample.

Test Scores

The range for the following test scores is 10–40:

- Reading
- Writing and Language
- Math

Cross-Test Scores

The range for cross-test scores is also 10–40. These scores represent performance on select questions across the three tests and show a student's strengths in the following domains:

- Analysis in History/Social Studies
- Analysis in Science

Subscores

Subscores in the range of 1–15 offer feedback on student performance in the following skill areas:

- Command of Evidence
- Words in Context
- Expression of Ideas
- Standard English Conventions
- Heart of Algebra
- Problem Solving and Data Analysis
- Passport to Advanced Math

SAT Essay Scores

The following three scores for the optional SAT Essay are on a 2–8 scale:

- Reading
- Analysis
- Writing

These scores aren't added together or combined with any other test scores. The online score report shows the prompt the student responded to and the student's essay.

Score Ranges

A student's ability is better represented by score ranges than points. Score ranges are derived from the standard error of measurement and show how much students' scores would likely vary if they took a different administration of the test under identical conditions.

Score ranges:

- Total: ± 40 points
- Section: ± 30 points
- Test Scores, subscores, and cross-test scores: ± 2 points

Benchmarks

The SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks are a set of benchmark scores for each SAT section. Students whose scores meet both the Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math benchmarks are considered college and career ready.

Benchmarks Help You Guide Students

Color-coded indicators in the student score report show whether the student meets the benchmark, is approaching the benchmark, or needs to strengthen skills. You can use this information to decide on next steps as you work with the student. For example, you can use the benchmarks to guide students to take courses that will challenge them, based on their progress thus far, and to practice the skills and knowledge that matter the most for college.

Benchmarks shouldn't be used to assign academic tracks, to discourage students from pursuing college, or to keep students from enrolling in challenging courses. Rather, the benchmarks are intended to help all students better prepare for life after high school.

What the Benchmarks Mean

The College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for the current SAT predict a 75% likelihood of achieving a C or higher in related, first-semester, credit-bearing college courses. The benchmarks are set at the section level, so there is a benchmark for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and a benchmark for Math.

SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

Evidence-Based
Reading and Writing

480

Math

530

Percentiles

A student's percentile rank represents the percentage of students whose score is equal to or lower than their score. For example, if a student's score is in the 75th percentile, 75% of a comparison group achieved scores at or below that student's score. Two types of percentile ranks, comparing student scores to two different reference populations, are provided in this publication for both total and section scores.

Nationally Representative Sample Percentiles are derived from a research study of U.S. students in grades 11 and 12 and are weighted to represent all U.S. students in those grades, regardless of whether they typically take the SAT.

SAT User Percentiles are based on the actual scores of students in the graduating class of 2017 who took the new SAT (first offered in March 2016).

Percentiles for Total Scores

Total Score	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User
1600	99+	99+
1590	99+	99+
1580	99+	99+
1570	99+	99+
1560	99+	99+
1550	99+	99+
1540	99+	99+
1530	99+	99+
1520	99+	99
1510	99	99
1500	99	99
1490	99	99
1480	99	99
1470	99	98
1460	99	98
1450	99	98
1440	98	97
1430	98	97
1420	98	96
1410	97	96
1400	97	95
1390	97	95
1380	96	94
1370	96	94
1360	95	93
1350	94	92
1340	94	91
1330	93	90
1320	93	90
1310	92	89
1300	91	88
1290	90	87
1280	89	86
1270	88	85
1260	87	83
1250	86	82
1240	85	81
1230	84	80
1220	83	78
1210	82	77
1200	81	76
1190	80	74
1180	78	73

Total Score	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User
1170	77	71
1160	76	69
1150	74	68
1140	73	66
1130	71	64
1120	70	63
1110	69	61
1100	67	59
1090	65	57
1080	63	55
1070	61	53
1060	60	51
1050	58	49
1040	56	47
1030	54	45
1020	52	43
1010	50	41
1000	48	40
990	46	38
980	44	36
970	42	34
960	40	32
950	38	31
940	36	29
930	35	27
920	33	26
910	31	24
900	29	22
890	27	21
880	26	19
870	24	18
860	23	17
850	21	15
840	20	14
830	18	13
820	17	12
810	16	11
800	14	9
790	13	8
780	11	8
770	10	7
760	9	6
750	8	5

Total Score	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User
740	7	4
730	6	4
720	5	3
710	4	3
700	4	2
690	3	2
680	2	1
670	2	1
660	1	1
650	1	1
640	1	1
630	1	1-
620	1-	1-
610	1-	1-
600	1-	1-
590	1-	1-
580	1-	1-
570	1-	1-
560	1-	1-
550	1-	1-
540	1-	1-
530	1-	1-
520	1-	1-
510	1-	1-
500	1-	1-
490	1-	1-
480	1-	1-
470	1-	1-
460	1-	1-
450	1-	1-
440	1-	1-
430	1-	1-
420	1-	1-
410	1-	1-
400	1-	1-

Percentiles for Section Scores

Total Score	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing		Math	
	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User
800	99+	99+	99+	99+
790	99+	99+	99+	99
780	99+	99+	99	99
770	99+	99+	99	99
760	99+	99	99	98
750	99	99	98	97
740	99	98	98	97
730	99	98	97	96
720	98	97	97	95
710	97	96	96	94
700	97	95	95	94
690	96	94	94	92
680	95	92	93	91
670	93	91	92	89
660	92	89	91	88
650	90	87	90	86
640	88	85	89	84
630	86	82	87	82
620	84	79	85	81
610	81	77	83	78
600	79	73	81	76
590	76	70	79	73
580	74	67	76	70
570	71	64	73	67
560	68	60	71	65
550	65	57	68	61
540	62	53	65	58
530	58	49	61	54
520	55	46	57	49
510	51	42	52	45
500	48	39	47	40
490	44	35	44	37
480	41	32	40	34
470	38	28	36	32
460	34	25	32	29
450	31	22	29	25
440	28	19	25	22
430	24	16	23	20
420	22	14	20	17

Total Score	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing		Math	
	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User	Nationally Representative Sample	SAT User
410	19	12	17	14
400	16	10	15	12
390	13	8	13	10
380	11	6	10	8
370	9	5	9	7
360	7	4	7	5
350	5	3	5	4
340	3	2	4	3
330	2	1	3	2
320	2	1	2	1
310	1	1	1	1
300	1	1	1	1
290	1-	1-	1-	1-
280	1-	1-	1-	1-
270	1-	1-	1-	1-
260	1-	1-	1-	1-
250	1-	1-	1-	1-
240	1-	1-	1-	1-
230	1-	1-	1-	1-
220	1-	1-	1-	1-
210	1-	1-	1-	1-
200	1-	1-	1-	1-

Sample Score Report (Front)



SAT Score Report

Test Date: **May 06, 2017**
Registration Number: **0123456789**
Sex: **Female**
Date of Birth: **Feb. 12, 2001**
Test Center Number: **12345**
CB Student ID: **12345678**
High School Code: **123456**
High School Name: **John F. Kennedy High School**

Imagood Student
100 Main Street
Apt 2
Anytown, MI 00000-0000

Your Total Score

1010 | 400–1600

50th

Nationally Representative Sample Percentile

36th

SAT User Percentile

Essay Scores

4 | 2–8
Reading

4 | 2–8
Analysis

4 | 2–8
Writing

Am I on Track for College?

Look for the green, yellow, or red symbols next to your section scores. They let you know if your scores are at or above the benchmark scores. Benchmarks show college readiness. If you see green, you're on track to be ready for college when you graduate.

If your score below the benchmark, you can use the feedback and tips in your online report to get back on track.

Benchmark scores:

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 470

Math: 530

How Do My Scores Compare?

A percentile shows how you scored, compared to other students. It's a number between 1 and 99 and represents the percentage of students whose scores are equal to or below yours.

For example, if your Math percentile is 57, that means 57% of test takers have Math scores equal to or below yours.

The Nationally Representative Sample Percentile compares your score to the scores of typical U.S. students.

SAT® User Percentile compares your score to the scores of students who typically take the test.

How Can I Improve?

To see which skills are your strongest and what you can do to boost your college readiness, go to your full report online and look for Skills Insight™.

What Are Score Ranges?

Test scores are single snapshots in time—if you took the SAT once a week for a month, your scores would vary. That's why score ranges are better representations of your true ability. They show how much your score can change with repeated testing, even if your skill level remains the same.

Colleges know this, and they get score ranges along with scores so they can consider scores in context.

Your online score report shows your score ranges.

Section Scores

490 | 200–800

Your Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Score

44th Nationally Representative Sample Percentile
31st SAT User Percentile



You've met the benchmark!

520 | 200–800

Your Math Score

57th Nationally Representative Sample Percentile
45th SAT User Percentile



You've scored below the benchmark.

Test Scores

22 | 10–40
Reading

27 | 10–40
Writing and Language

26.0 | 10–40
Math

Cross-Test Scores | 10–40

24
Analysis in History/Social Studies

23
Analysis in Science

Subscores | 1–15

6
Command of Evidence

9
Words in Context

8
Expression of Ideas

9
Standard English Conventions

8
Heart of Algebra

9
Problem Solving and Data Analysis

7
Passport to Advanced Math

Get your full report online at sat.org/scorereport

Sample Score Report (Back)

SAT Summary of Scores

Date	May 06, 2017					
Grade	11					
SAT						
Total	1010					
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	490					
Math	520					
Essay	Reading	4				
	Analysis	4				
	Writing	4				
Old SAT						
Critical Reading						
Mathematics						
Writing						

SAT Subject Test Scores

Date	Nov. 05, 2016					
Grade	11					
Subject Test						
	Japanese w/ Listening					
Test Score	620					
Language Subscores	Reading	58				
	Listening	63				
	Usage	66				
Subject Test						
	Chemistry					
Test Score	590					
Subject Test						
	Literature					
Test Score	690					

* Scores from the SAT Subject Test in Mathematics aren't comparable to Math section, test, and related subscores on the SAT.
 *Not all SAT Subject Tests™ have subscores.

How Do I Send My Scores to Colleges?

This student score report is for your use only. Most colleges require you to have the College Board send them official score reports. They don't accept copies of student score reports, online score reports, or score report labels on transcripts.

Can I Choose Which Scores to Send?

With Score Choice™, you decide which scores you send to colleges. Choose by test date for the SAT and individual test for SAT Subject Tests™. Just make sure you follow each college's stated score-use policy.

What's Next?

Go to sat.org/scorereport and choose your next steps:

- Send your scores to colleges.
- Find out which AP® courses you might do well in.
- Get tips on boosting your skills.
- Use your scores to personalize your SAT practice.
- Make a college plan.
- Follow your interests, and build a career road map.
- Register for SAT Subject Tests, or take the SAT again.