



ACT or SAT?

The ACT and SAT are significantly different tests that measure different skills, and the standardized test scores are only one of a number of factors considered in the college application process. Student strengths and weaknesses will determine which test they do better on. The ACT is content based (knowledge based). The SAT is a critical thinking and problem solving test (application of their knowledge). The majority of colleges will accept scores from either the ACT or the SAT.

www.kaptest.com lists a number of the differences between the tests including these factors:

- The ACT includes a science reasoning test; the SAT does not.
- The ACT math section includes trigonometry.
- The SAT tests vocabulary much more than the ACT.
- The SAT is not entirely multiple choice.
- The SAT has a guessing penalty; the ACT does not.
- The ACT tests English grammar; the SAT does not.

For guidance in determining which test would be a better fit, review the scores received on both your PSAT (an indicator for the SAT) and the PLAN and EXPLORE (indicators for the ACT). Valor students have the opportunity to take 2 PSAT tests, 2 PLAN tests and 1 EXPLORE test by the spring of their junior year. These tests should give you a good idea of how you will score. If you have shown a trend of stronger scores on one of those tests, you can continue with that test. However, if the results are similar, which is common, you could consider taking both tests to determine which test better shows your strengths. After comparing the results, you can decide if you want to take the stronger test again to try to increase your score. In addition to being a factor in acceptance, test scores can also play a part in collegiate course placement and the level of academic scholarship you may receive.

One last note... The ACT offers an additional writing test. It is not included, unless indicated when you sign up. Many of the more selective schools require the writing portion. If you're not sure which colleges you'll be applying to, you may want to go ahead and sign up for the writing portion. The SAT automatically includes a writing section. You may also be required to take SAT Subject tests. Check the websites of the colleges you are interested in to see if they are required.

Follow these links for more information on the differences between the ACT and SAT:

www.kaptest.com/College/Getting-into-College/About-the-Tests/SAT/sat-vs-act.html

www.math.com/students/kaplan/satoract.html

www.actstudent.org (ACT) www.collegeboard.com (SAT)

VALOR SCHOOL CODE: 060749