



Prepping for College in the COVID Landscape

College Admissions Testing: To Test or not to Test

Co-presenters



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Topics



- What is on the ACT and SAT?
- Changes Due to COVID-19
- Whether and When to Test



WHAT IS ON THE ACT & SAT?

WHAT DO THESE TESTS MEASURE?

Admission tests..	True	False
... measure intelligence?		✓
... can be used to award aid?	✓	
... reflect your GPA in high school?		✓
... predict your college GPA?		✓
... can be prepared for?	✓	
... should be prepared for?	✓	
... test what you've learned in HS?	?	?



TESTS AT-A GLANCE

ACT is a registered trademark of ACT, Inc., which is not affiliated with The Princeton Review.

	ACT®	SAT
Format	Exclusively multiple choice	Mostly multiple choice
Content areas	English, Math, Reading, Science, optional Writing,	Math, Reading, optional Essay
Scoring per section	1 – 36	200 – 800
Timing	2:55 (3:35 w/essay)	3:00 (3:50 w/essay)
# of Questions	215	154



WHAT ABOUT THE ESSAY?

- Only three colleges, including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, require the essay.
- Ivy League and other elite colleges will consider scores if submitted but do not require them.



WHAT IS A GOOD SCORE?

WHERE YOUR SCORES CAN TAKE YOU (in normal times)

SCHOOL	SAT*	ACT*
MIT	1560	34
Harvard	1550	34
University of Maryland	1380	31
Rutgers (New Brunswick)	1300	28
Penn State University (University Park)	1220	27
Arizona State	1220	26
Montclair State University	1130	23

* SAT scores are reflective of the Critical reading and Math scores. The data is self-reported from the schools and represents data during the 2015-2016 school year. * ACT scores are self-reported from the schools and represent data during the 2015-2016 school year.

** Average merit award for qualifying individuals provided by schools.

HIGH SCORES CAN LEAD TO SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS (in normal times)

SCHOOL	SAT*	ACT*	AVG. MERIT AWARD**
Dickinson College	1350	31	\$16,952
University of North Carolina, Charlotte	1270	29	\$16,455
Quinnipiac University	1100	25	\$17,000
University of Maine	1100	24	\$10,800
Saint Louis University	1070	23	\$16,794

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** Average merit award for qualifying individuals provided by schools.

Changes During COVID-19



TEST CANCELLATIONS

- Test site cancellation decisions vary by site.
- ACT and College Board (SAT) do not always notify of cancellations in time.
- Check with your test site a few days ahead to confirm.

SAT CHANGES

Online testing has been cancelled.

SAT in-person tests this fall

- August 29
- September 26
- October 3
- November 7
- December 5

ACT CHANGES

Online testing suspended for now.
Single section retesting cancelled this year.

ACT tests this fall

- September 12, 19
- October 10, 17, 24
- December 12



Colleges and
universities are
actively changing the
metrics they will use to
analyze the Class of
2021.

TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSIONS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOLS

1-YEAR TEMPORARY

- Just 2020-2021.
- Include Amherst, Cornell, Harvard, Northeastern, USC, Pomona, Wellesley, Brown

PILOT PROGRAM

- Plan to re-evaluate after 2 or 3 years.
- Include Davidson, Middlebury, Rhodes, Tufts, Swarthmore, UCs

PERMANENT POLICY

- Part of a growing trend across U.S.
- Include Bowdoin, UChicago, Butler, Scripps, all public schools in Oregon

WHAT TEST-OPTIONAL MEANS

- Test-Optional does not mean Test-Prohibitive.
- Without test scores, everything else -- grades, course rigor, activities, recommendations -- matters even more.
- Strong test scores could strengthen an application at Test-Optional schools.



TEST-OPTIONAL MERIT AWARDS

Under COVID-19 many colleges are suspending test score requirements for merit aid.

- Check, on the website or by calling the admissions office, with every college.

A woman with long brown hair and glasses is standing in a library, looking at books on a wooden shelf. The shelves are filled with books, and the lighting is warm. The text 'THERE ARE SILVER LININGS' is overlaid in large white letters, with a small yellow horizontal line underneath the word 'LININGS'.

THERE ARE SILVER LININGS

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Demonstrated interest is IT!
- Best-fit is more key than ever.
- Letters of recommendation are more important.
- Essays matter.
- Virtual volunteering abounds!

So, do I test or not?



1400+ colleges are test optional



Hundreds of colleges and universities are test optional under COVID-19.

- Public flagship universities in all but 12 states (notably Georgia and Florida).
- All liberal arts colleges except for military service academies and some Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Visit www.fairtest.org for a full list of test requirements.

Juniors



- During COVID-19, please allow seniors to claim spots this fall.
- Wait to register for spring test dates.
- PSAT tests may not take place at all.
- Focus on doing really well in your classes.

Seniors



- Health should be the #1 priority.
- Optional means optional.
- Roughly 30%+ of applicants may not have scores.
- Colleges need students and will admit without scores.
- If current score is not within mid-50% of target colleges, consider re-taking safely.

Seniors



If you choose to test:

- Be willing to take SAT or ACT.
- Find out if Early Decision or Early Action colleges will accept late scores.
- Submit scores that strengthen the application.
 - = or > mid 50% range
- No colleges require SAT subject tests, this year.

Seniors



Focus on what matters

- Emotional and physical health
- First quarter and first semester grades
- Applications and essays
- Testing only if safe

Questions?



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