Digital SAT, ACT, PSAT - Everything You Need to Know

Tom Ehlers

Founder

Method Learning

Method Learning

Tom Ehlers
President and Founder

Tom graduated from Princeton University and completed Princeton's Teacher Preparation Program. Early on, he developed a passion for learning which led to the inception of Method Test Prep. Running this small business allowed Tom to really focus on each student's needs and spend countless hours tutoring with the belief that all students have the ability to succeed. In addition, he has worked as an educational consultant with school districts across the country and advises them on ways to improve the districts' college admission test scores.

Tom is a father to twins Jonathan and Julia and enjoys traveling with his children and wife, Ally. In his down time, he reads, watches sports, and stays active. His motto in life, "Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadows."

What's Our Goal?
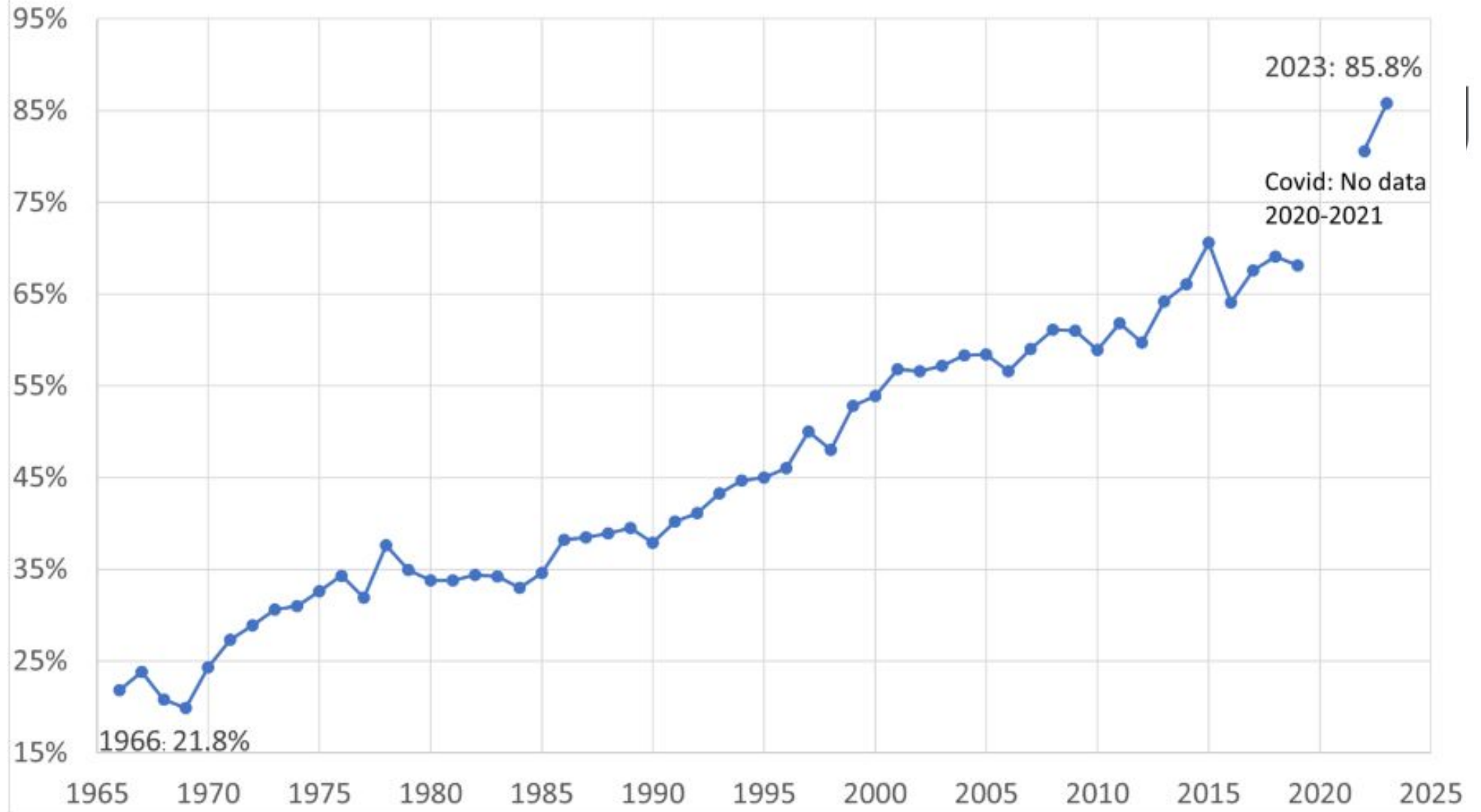
Use higher ACT and SAT scores to…

→

Get accepted to more places/have more options

→

Earn more $$ in academic merit aid

Percentage of Freshmen at 4-Year Universities with an A+, A, or A- Average in High School

2023: 85.8%

Covid: No data
2020-2021

1966: 21.8%

Grade Inflation in U.S. High Schools, 1966–2022, "American Freshman Survey" from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA (1966–2019, 2022, and 2023 data — the

If you only remember ONE THING from this presentation…

Predictability warrants preparation

The exams are *standardized*: they must test the same set of skills in the same way on every administration

If a student gets just 1 more question correct on the SAT, how many points does his or her score often go up?

National Averages

ACT - 19 (Highest - 36)

SAT - 1030 (Highest-1600)

What's a good score?

What's a good score?

A Bird's Eye View of the Process

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Foundation

Academic history

Diagnostic tests

Select exam, prep option(s)

Establish goals, target test

Preparation

Consistent sessions emphasizing *strategy*

Practice with official material

Periodic full-length practice exams

Evaluate and iterate

Execution

Take test

Analyze results

Adjust plan

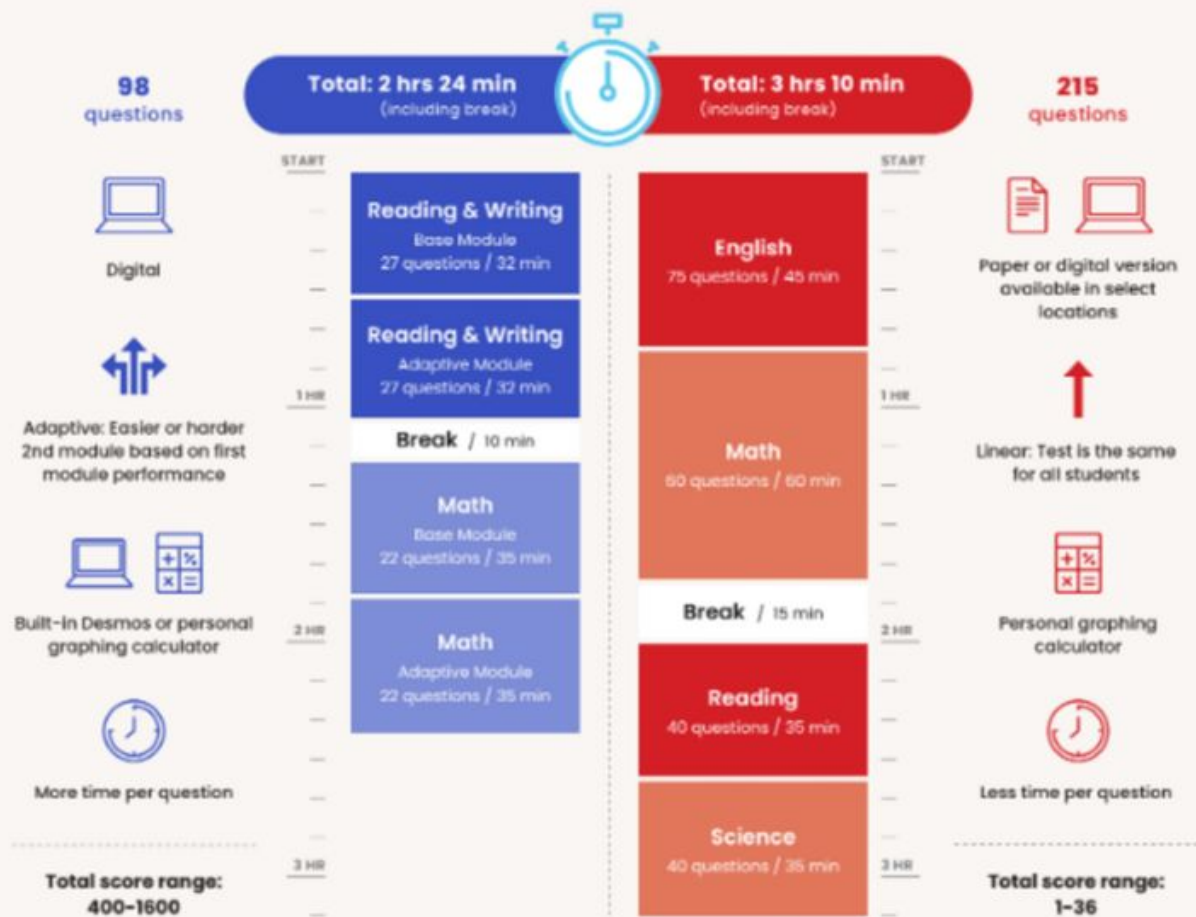Should a student take both the SAT and ACT?

What are the differences between the SAT and ACT?

SAT HIGHLIGHTS
Shorter reading passages
More difficult text complexity, more vocabulary
Fewer math topics, but more in depth
Students use their own devices (tablets and computers)

ACT HIGHLIGHTS
Longer reading passages, less vocabulary
More straightforward but faster paced questions
Greater variety of math topics with simpler problem-solving
Emphasizes science reasoning and graphical literacy

98 questions

Total: 2 hrs 24 min (including break)

Total: 3 hrs 10 min (including break)

215 questions

START

START

Digital

Reading & Writing
Base Module
27 questions / 32 min

English
75 questions / 45 min

Paper or digital version available in select locations

Adaptive: Easier or harder 2nd module based on first module performance

Reading & Writing
Adaptive Module
27 questions / 32 min

1 HR

1 HR

Break / 10 min

Math
60 questions / 60 min

Linear: Test is the same for all students

Math
Base Module
22 questions / 35 min

Built-in Desmos or personal graphing calculator

2 HR

Break / 15 min

2 HR

Personal graphing calculator

Math
Adaptive Module
22 questions / 35 min

Reading
40 questions / 35 min

More time per question

Less time per question

Total score range:
400–1600

3 HR

Science
40 questions / 35 min

3 HR

Total score range:
1–36

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If you get a question wrong on the SAT or ACT, you lose how many points?

How much time should I put in each week to prepare for the tests?

What would I do if I had a student heading into 12th grade?
(or if I was heading into in 12th grade)

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Figure out which upcoming test makes the most sense

- Oct SAT

- Oct ACT

- Nov SAT

ACT 2024 -2025 Test Dates

Test Date	Regular Registration Deadline Late Fee Applies After This Date	Late Registration Deadline
September 14, 2024	August 9	August 25
October 26, 2024	September 20	October 7
December 14, 2024	November 8	November 22
February 8, 2025	January 3	January 20
April 5, 2025	February 28	March 16
June 14, 2025	May 9	May 26
July 12, 2025*	June 6	June 20

SAT 2024 -2025 Test Dates

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SAT Test Date*	Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes, Regular Cancellation, and Late Registration**
Aug 24, 2024	Aug 9, 2024 [Register]	Aug 13, 2024
Oct 5, 2024	Sept 20, 2024 [Register]	Sept 24, 2024
Nov 2, 2024	Oct 18, 2024 [Register]	Oct 22, 2024
Dec 7, 2024	Nov 22, 2024 [Register]	Nov 26, 2024
Mar 8, 2025	Feb 21, 2025 [Register]	Feb 25, 2025
May 3, 2025	Apr 18, 2025 [Register]	April 22, 2025
June 7, 2025	May 22, 2025 [Register]	May 27, 2025

What would I do if I had a student heading into 11th grade?
(or if I was heading into in 11th grade)

ACT TIR Service

Test Information Release Service

- September
- December
- February 2025

11th grade timeline

- Fall PSAT

- Sept or Dec ACT?

- SAT in the fall or winter?

- SAT or ACT in the spring of junior year

What would I do if I had a student heading into 10th grade?
(or if I was heading into in 10th grade)

Oh my goodness, I do!

Put all of my academic energy into my classes

Take the most challenging classes I can and focus on my GPA

So what is the next step? How can I improve my score most efficiently?

Smithtown pays for all students to have access to my Methodize program. (Students access through Castle Learning.)

SAT

The SAT course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the most effective strategies and most relevant content for raising their SAT scores. It also offers robust features for teachers looking to improve their students' SAT skills and performance in math, reading, and English.

Continue ➡

Course Progress

2%

Units	Lessons	Quizzes	Test Sections
1/17	1/51	0/59	0/11
View Units	View Lessons	View Quizzes	View Tests

Functions   Report Issue   Answered: 0 of 1   ▶ Play Audio   Segment 1 of 3   **Next Segment**

Understanding Functions

Think of a function like you think of software: it takes an input (something you type in) and gives you an output (a result) according to a program. Typical notation gives the function a name like f, an input, and an output.

$$f(\underbrace{x}_{\text{input}}) = \underbrace{2x^2 + 5x}_{\text{output}}$$

Once the function is defined (just like f is defined above), anything that shows up in the "input" variable (here, that's x) gets plugged in whenever the variable shows up in the output. *No matter what the input is—a number or another variable—it gets plugged in.* Here are a few examples using the function above. Inputs are shown in blue.

$$f(4) = 2(4)^2 + 5(4)$$
$$f(4) = 52$$

$$f(a) = 2(a)^2 + 5(a)$$
$$f(a) = 2a^2 + 5a$$

$$f(p+q) = 2(p+q)^2 + 5(p+q)$$
$$f(p+q) = 2(p+q)(p+q) + 5p + 5q$$
$$f(p+q) = 2p^2 + 4pq + 2q^2 + 5p + 5q$$

Now, give the basic function question below a try.

QUESTION 1 OF 1

Catch All Geometry

In the figure above, square ABCD is inscribed in a regular dodecagon (12 sides). Each side of the dodecagon has length 10. What is the area of the square?

A $200\sqrt{3} + 300$

B   700   Incorrect

C $200\sqrt{3} + 400$ Correct

D   900

View Explanation   **Next Question**

An ice-cream truck driver's monthly profit can be modeled by the equation $p = 2k + m + 3n$, where p is the monthly profit in dollars, k is the number of ice-cream cones sold, m is the number of ice-cream sandwiches sold, and n is the number of ice pops sold. What is the ice-cream truck driver's monthly profit if he sells 200 ice-cream cones, 100 ice-cream sandwiches and 50 ice pops?

A) 350

B) 450

C) 650

D) 800

$$p = 2(200) + 100 + 3(50)$$
$$400 + 100 + 150$$
$$650$$
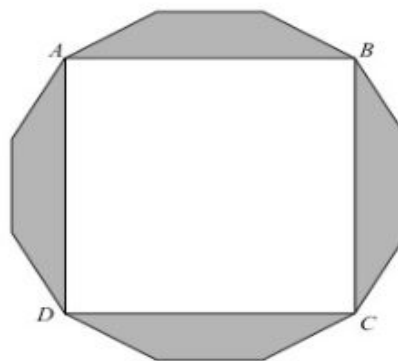
Test #2

○ Super Score   ○ First Attempt   **Submit**

Score	Reading and Writing	Math
—	—	—

Reading and Writing

The Reading and Writing section of the digital SAT focuses on key elements of comprehension, rhetoric, and language use that the best available evidence identifies as necessary for college readiness and success.

Start Reading and Writing

Math

Attempt	Score	Correct	Answered	Questions	Time Spent	Complete	Time Out	
1	—	In Progress	In Progress	44	23 min	—	—	Continue ▶

Missed and Mastered Vocabulary Words

A vocabulary word is considered "mastered' when you have correctly defined it more than one time in the vocabulary quiz.

Filter: | **All Time** | | **This Year** |

Words Missed	Total: 7
scrupulous	1
vitriolic	1
perspicacious	1
resolve	1
voracious	1
vapid	1
monotony	1

Words Mastered	Total: 0

Practice Vocabulary Words

Features of the Digital Test

Section-Level Adaptivity

Module 1

Same average difficulty
for everyone

R&W: 27 Q – 32 min
Math: 22 Q – 35 min

Slightly > 50% correct*

Module 2 – Harder

Higher average difficulty

R&W: 27 Q – 32 min
Math: 22 Q – 35 min

No score cap

< 50% correct*

Module 2 – Easier

Lower average difficulty

R&W: 27 Q – 32 min
Math: 22 Q – 35 min
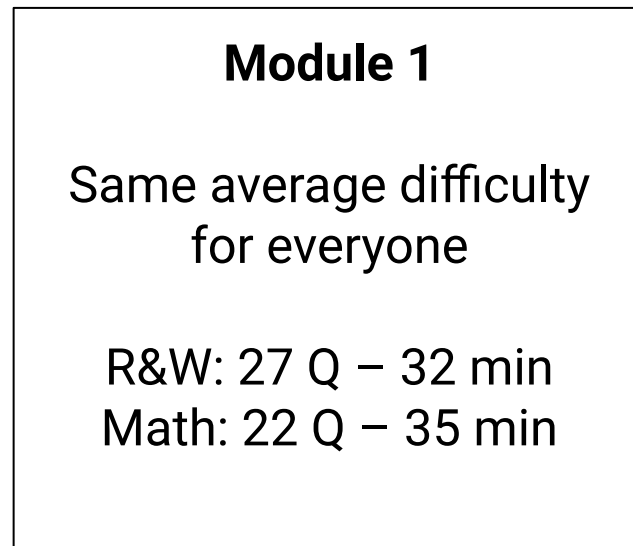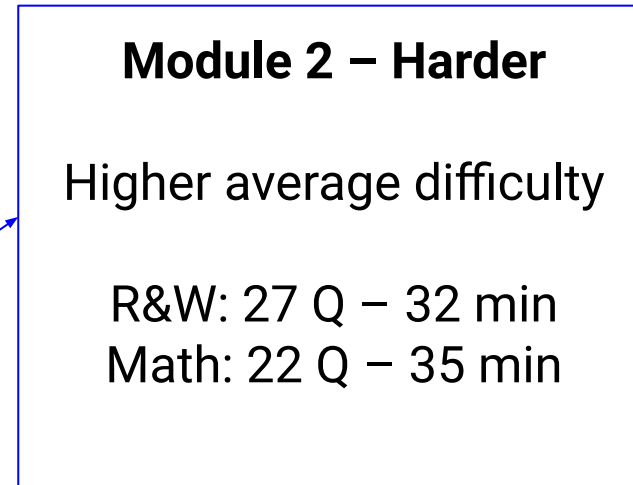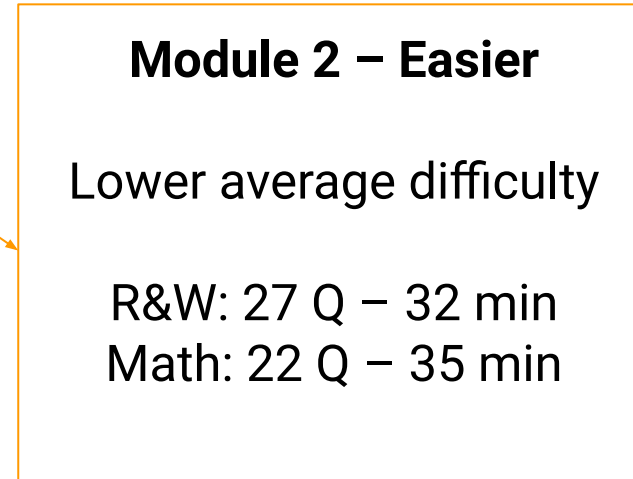
Significant score cap in
upper-mid 500s

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Bluebook

Section 2: Math

0:00

Hide

100%

Calculator   Reference   More

Directions ⌄

Calculator   ⋮⋮⋮   ⤢ Expand   ✕

powered by
desmos

1   🔖 Mark for Review

The scatterplot shows the relationship between two variables, x and y. A line of best fit for the data is also shown.
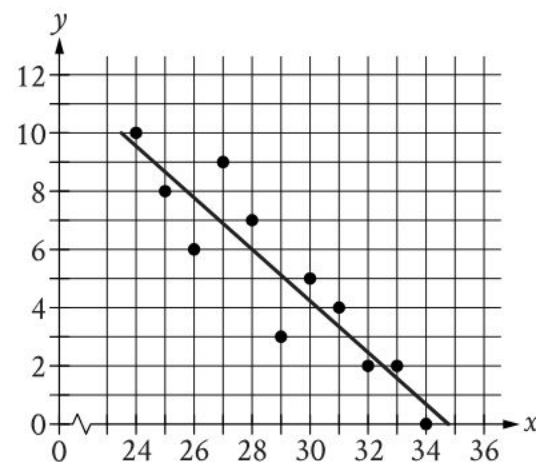
At $x = 32$, which of the following is closest to the y-value predicted by the line of best fit?

(A)   0.4

(B)   1.5

(C)   2.4

Bluebook

Section 1: Reading and Writing

0:00

Directions ∨

Hide

100%

Annotate   More

In recommending Bao Phi's collection *Sông I Sing*, a librarian noted that pieces by the spoken-word poet don't lose their _____ nature when printed: the language has the same pleasant musical quality on the page as it does when performed by Phi.

1   ☐ Mark for Review

Which choice completes the text with the most logical and precise word or phrase?

(A) scholarly   Undo

(B) melodic

(C) jarring   Undo

(D) personal

New Annotation: "the language has the same pleasant musical quality"   CLOSE ✕

Highlight Color: ⬤   Underline style: [U]

Save   Cancel

Bluebook

Section 1: Reading and Writing

0:00

Directions ∨

Hide

100%

Annotate   More

Check Your Work

On test day, you won't be able to move on to the next module until time expires.

For these practice questions, you can click **Next** when you're ready to move on.

Section 1: Reading and Writing Questions
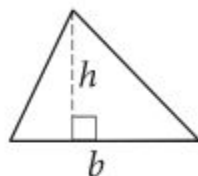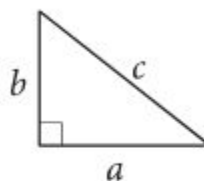
Unanswered   🚩 For Review

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

John Ehlers
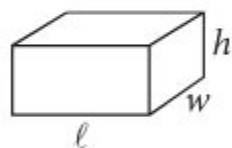
Back   Next
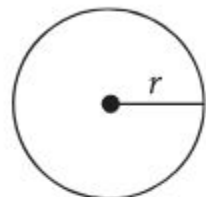
$A = \pi r^2$
$C = 2\pi r$
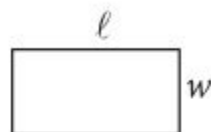
$A = \ell w$

$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$

$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$
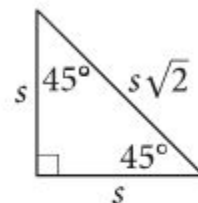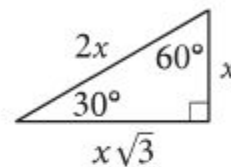
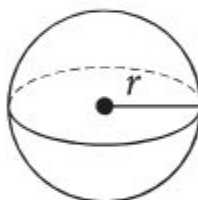**Special Right Triangles**

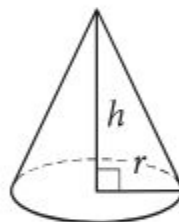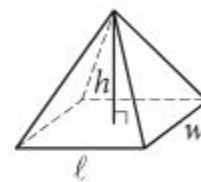$V = \ell wh$

$V = \pi r^2 h$

$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$

$V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$

$V = \frac{1}{3}\ell wh$

The number of degrees of arc in a circle is 360.

The number of radians of arc in a circle is 2π.

The sum of the measures in degrees of the angles of a triangle is 180.

Special Offer for Tonight

Coupon Code: 150off for $150 (50%) off the cost of our PSAT/SAT Prep Class that starts Monday

Questions?

Method Learning

Call: 1-877-871-PREP

Email: tom@methodlearning.com

March and May SATs
What are the takeaways?

1. If students were routed into the more difficult second math section, it was much more difficult than the math on the Blue Book practice exams

2. On balance, <u>students prefer the Digital SAT</u> to the previous, paper SAT. No surprise:

- Much shorter exam
- More time per question
- Much shorter reading passages

3. The SAT remains a very <u>literal</u> test:

- If an answer choice is not supported in the passage, eliminate the choice.
- If there is one word wrong in an answer choice, eliminate the choice.

4. Students who take the Digital SAT multiple times will have a large advantage:

- Less questions means each question is worth more. Just getting two more questions correct, could mean a 40-50 point increase

Your Score Report

TOTAL SCORE

1120 | 400–1600 | (75th*)

Score Range: 1080-1160
Average Score (all testers): 1100

SECTION SCORES

Reading and Writing

620 | 200–800 | (60th*)

Your Score Range: 590-650
Average Score (all testers): 600

Math

500 | 200–800 | (70th*)

Your Score Range: 470-530
Average Score (all testers): 530

* Percentiles represent the percent of 11th grade test takers from the past 3 years who scored the same as or below you.

Score range: This is the range of scores you could possibly get if you took the SAT multiple times on different days.
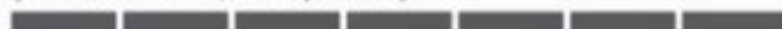
Knowledge and Skills

View your performance across the 8 content domains measured on the SAT.

Reading and Writing

Information and Ideas
(26% of test section, 12-14 questions)

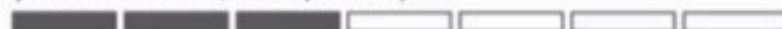**Craft and Structure**
(28% of test section, 13-15 questions)

Expression of Ideas
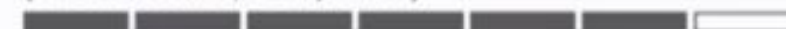(20% of test section, 8-12 questions)

Standard English Conventions
(26% of test section, 11-15 questions)

Math

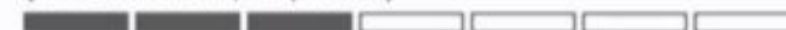**Algebra**
(35% of test section, 13-15 questions)

Advanced Math
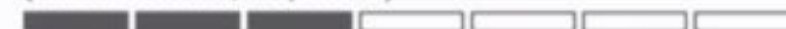(35% of test section, 13-15 questions)

Problem Solving & Data Analysis
(15% of test section, 5-7 questions)

Geometry & Trigonometry
(15% of test section, 5-7 questions)

Reading and Writing Domains and Skills

Information and Ideas

Central Ideas and Details

- Main idea
- Individual details

Command of Evidence

- Textual evidence to support/weaken
- Quantitative evidence to support/weaken

Inference

- Logically completing the text

Craft and Structure

Words in Context

- Fill-in vocabulary
- Similar meaning vocabulary

Text Structure and Purpose

- Main purpose of passage or sentence
- Overall structure

Cross-Text Connections

- Paired texts

Expression of Ideas

Transitions

- Selecting the best transition word for logical coherence

Rhetorical Synthesis

- Bullet-point note integration and achieving a goal

Standard English Conventions

Boundaries

- Punctuation and phrasing

Form, Structure, Sense

- Subject-verb agreement
- Tense
- Pronoun agreement
- Misplaced modifier
- Proper comparison

Math Domains and Skills

Algebra

- Linear equations in one and two variables

- Linear functions

- Systems of equations

- Systems of inequalities

Advanced Math

- Equivalent algebraic expressions

- Nonlinear equations

- Nonlinear functions

Problem Solving & Data Analysis

- Ratios and proportions

- Units (conversion)

- Percentages

- Probability

- Statistics (mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation)

- Evaluating statistical models and experiments

Geometry & Trigonometry

- Area and volume of 2D and 3D figures

- Lines, angles

- Triangles (angles, similar triangles, right triangles)

- Trigonometry (SOH-CAH-TOA, degrees & radians)

- Circles (equations on the plane)

How many questions are on

the 45-minute ACT English section?

An Example: "Red Flag" Words

Where's the error?

The congressional panel issued their findings after conducting an investigation that lasted for over a year.

The congressional panel issued their findings

The congressional panel issued its findings

SAT vs. ACT: on which test do you have more time per question?

Private tutoring and classes

- For students and families who want/prefer live instruction:
  - we offer many class and private tutoring options at MethodLearning.com

Private Tutoring

If you are interested, scan this QR code for information on packages and prices:

How many sections are on the SAT? the ACT? (putting aside the optional essay section)

Poll: True/False: The ACT Science Section test students on science knowledge?

College admissions today is more competitive than ever before

Strong test scores give strong grades more credibility

The less information an applicant gives, the more the college will scrutinize the information the applicant does give

A high score is better than no score

Anything that a college says is optional, (if you are serious about going to that college), you do.

Students who submit strong test scores are offered more generous academic merit aid packages.

The SAT and ACT test students on skills they will need for success in college: reading comprehension, fundamental math and grammar concepts.

Institutions Requiring Standardized Test Scores

Despite COVID, several popular colleges and universities require test scores, including:

- ✅ All state-sponsored universities in Florida

- ✅ University of Georgia at Athens

- ✅ Georgia Institute of Technology

- ✅ Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- ✅ University of Tennessee at Knoxville

- ✅ United States Service Academies
  - Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy, Military Academy, Naval Academy

Students can and will be successful on these exams with the right preparation

Polls: How many times?

Ideal number of times?

How many times can a student take these exams?
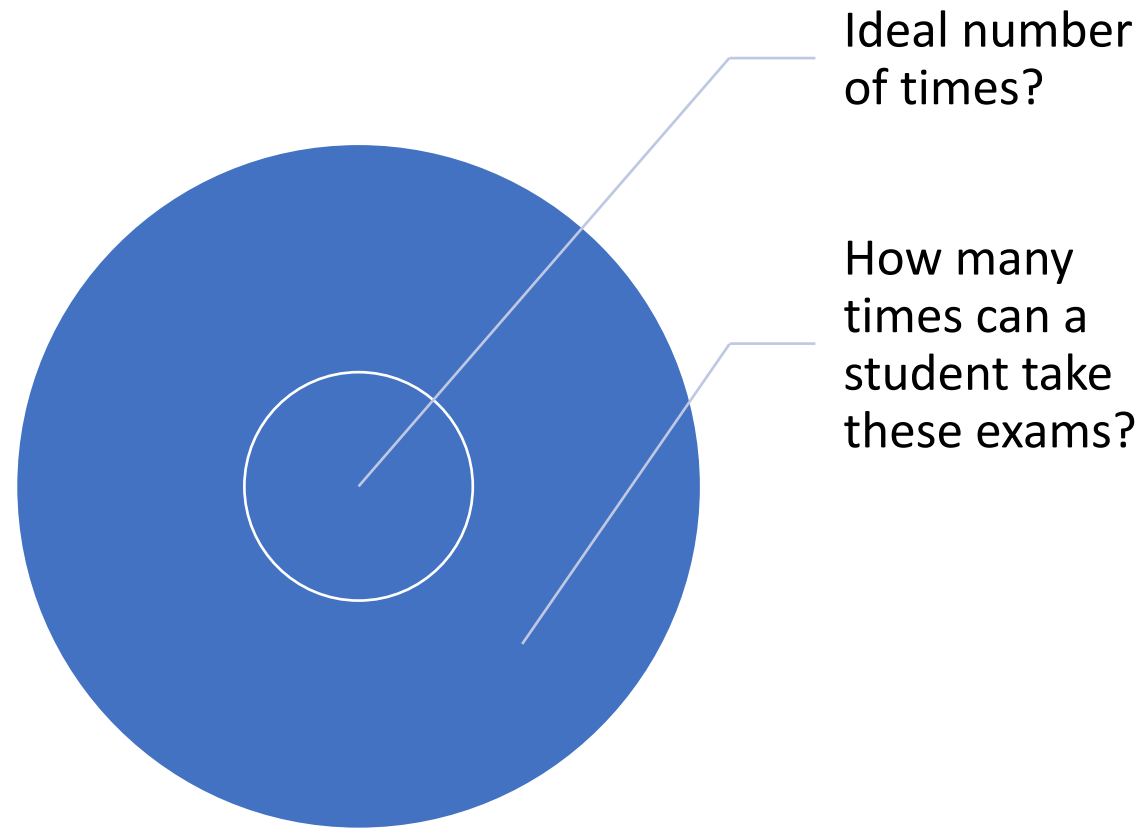
Can you mix and match your best scores?