

A GUIDE TO FUNDING

YOUR UNDERGRAD STUDIES

Through SAT, SAT Subject, ACT and APs

This guide is meant for those who wish to pursue their undergraduate studies in the USA, Canada, UK, Australasia and similar developed countries. It will help you with understanding the standardized tests such as SAT and ACT and will also acquaint you with the SAT Subject Tests and AP Programs; which are taken by thousands of students in the USA.

It is compiled to create awareness in India on SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests and AP Program, on saving tuition, standing out with your profile and earning university-level credits in India.

You are requested to take your time and go through this handout thoroughly. More resources and links have also been shared on the last page of this handout.

SAT® and ACT®

The SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test - is a standardized test widely used for college admissions in the United States. Since it was debuted by the College Board in 1926, its name and scoring have changed several times; originally called the Scholastic Aptitude Test, it was later called the Scholastic Assessment Test, then the SAT I: Reasoning Test, then the SAT Reasoning Test, and now, simply the SAT. Today, the SAT is also called 'SAT 1' and SAT Subject is referred to as 'SAT 2'.

The ACT is a standardized test used for college admissions in the United States. It was first introduced in November 1959 by University of Iowa professor Everett Franklin Lindquist as a competitor to the Scholastic Aptitude Test. It is currently administered by ACT, a nonprofit organization of the same name.



The ACT has seen a gradual increase in the number of test takers since its inception, and in 2011 the ACT surpassed the SAT for the first time in total test takers; that year, 1,666,017 students took the ACT and 1,664,479 students took the SAT. All four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. accept the ACT, but different institutions place different emphases on standardized tests such as the ACT, compared to other factors including class rank, GPA, and extracurricular activities.

Both exams are equally accepted many universities, as these tests are two major groups of students - one which prefers lengthier questions and time relaxation, and the other which prefers shorter questions and time sensitivity.

In India, it is ideal to being acquainting yourself with these exams in the 8th grade. A majority of the high school students in the USA start preparing for these tests in 9th grade and write it over the summer. The score of SAT and ACT is valid for 5 years, which is why it becomes easier to focus on building the academic profile and preparing for the SAT Subjects and APs in the higher grades. Indian students should also follow a similar timeline, as the syllabus, especially for Math, for both SAT and ACT is more or less between in 8th-10th grade.

The universities abroad usually have a concordance table for reference to compare a students' SAT vs. ACT score. The term 'concordance' refers to establishing a relationship between scores on assessments that measure similar (but not identical) constructs. Both CollegeBoard and ACT publish the table to show how scores on each test compare. A link to those tables has been shared at the end of this handout.

Is there any schedule for these exams? What timeline should one follow?

If you are planning to go abroad in the year 2020 for your undergrad, then you should have all your scores and documents ready by October 2019. You will be yet to write your final 12th grade exam by then, which is why there's a provision of 'Predictive Grade' where your school send scores to the university based on your performance of the latest exam.

Following tables will help you identify in which months you may write the tests and how many attempts you have as you move to higher grades.

SAT and SAT Subject Months

School Year	June	July-Aug-Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-Feb	March	April	May
8th Grade	SAT SUB		SAT & SAT SUB	SAT SUB	SAT & SAT SUB		SAT		SAT & SAT SUB
9th Grade/ Freshman									
10th Grade/ Sophomore									
11th Grade/ Junior			Collect all the documents and begin application process						

ACT Months

School Year	June	Jul-Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar-Apr-May
8th Grade	ACT		ACT			ACT		ACT	
9th Grade/ Freshman									
10th Grade/ Sophomore									
11th Grade/ Junior									

AP Exams are conducted once a year, in the month of May. So, one may write the AP in the summer of their 9th, 10th or 11th grade.

Which one is easier? SAT or ACT? Which test should one take?

There's no such thing as which one of these is easier. It is always recommended that you write a full length practice test, preferably without any preparation, so that you get acquainted with the exam pattern, and with the score you also understand where you stand before you begin working on your strengths, weaknesses and strategies. It is subject to your time management, as the syllabus is more or less identical.

What are the major differences between these two exams?

	SAT®	ACT®
SECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • Evidence-based Reading and Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading - Writing and Language • Optional Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • English • Reading • Science • Optional Essay
SCORING	Total score: 400–1600 Section scores for Math and Evidence-based, Reading and Writing (200–800)	Composite score : 1–36 Section scores in English, Math, Reading and Science (1–36 each)
LENGTH	3 hours (without essay) 3 hours 50 minutes (with essay) Break: 65-10-55-5-55-2-50 mins	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 25 minutes (with essay) Break: 105-10-70-5-40 mins
READING AND WRITING	2 sections (Reading test, Writing and Language Test)	2 sections (English, Reading)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more sentence completion; focus on multiple-meaning words • Reading passages will draw from significant historical or scientific documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passage-based grammar—including punctuation • Reading passages drawn from Fiction, Social Sciences, Humanities & Natural Sciences
MATH AND SCIENCE	2 Sections – with and without Calculator Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trigonometry	1 Math and 1 Science Section Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trigonometry
ESSAY	50 minutes Students will be provided with a substantial passage (600-700 words) and asked to analyze how the author built his or her argument; students will need to understand the techniques the author used to write persuasively.	40 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passage-based grammar—including punctuation • Reading passages drawn from Fiction, Social Sciences, Humanities & Natural Sciences

The Essay is optional for the university, meaning they may or may not consider your essay, nor it is preferred, but it also demonstrates your writing skills; therefore it is better to write one.

SAT[®] Subject Test

The SAT is offered internationally in October, December, March, and May. The SAT Subject Tests are available internationally in October, November, December, May, and June.

Why take the SAT Subject?

Play to Your Strengths

If English is not your best language, SAT Subject Tests may be even more important for you. They let you show your abilities and academic strength in math, science, or other languages. Also, many international colleges use Subject Tests to make decisions about admission or placement, so taking the tests gives you more opportunities. And taking Subject Tests can help you see how well you've learned the subject matter compared to other students around the world.

If you speak a language other than English, SAT Subject Tests are a great opportunity for you to show your skills. You may be able to fulfill foreign language competency requirements for some colleges. Be sure to check policies on SAT Subject Tests in foreign languages for the colleges you are interested in.

Colleges May Require Subject Tests

Some colleges require or recommend that you take SAT Subject Tests, especially if you're applying to take specific courses or programs. See a list of colleges that require, recommend, or consider Subject Tests.

Stand Out in College Admissions

Even colleges that don't require Subject Tests may accept them and use them in admission to get a more complete picture of applicants. By sending Subject Test scores to colleges, you can showcase your strengths. See a list of colleges that require, recommend, or consider Subject Tests.

Show Colleges Your Interests

You can send a strong message to colleges about your interest in specific majors or programs — and how ready you are to tackle the work.

Fulfill Requirements or Get Credit

Some colleges use Subject Tests to place students into the appropriate courses. Depending on your test scores, you might be able to fulfill basic requirements or get credit for introductory-level courses.

Show What You've Learned outside the Classroom

Have you taken a summer program, weekend classes, or an online course — or studied a subject on your own? Taking a Subject Test is one way to show the skills and understanding you gained.

Think About Your Interests and Strengths

The SAT Subject Tests that you take should be based on your interests and academic strengths. The tests are a great way to show colleges your interest in specific majors or programs of study (e.g., engineering, pre-med, cultural studies), and to highlight your strong points.

Research College Requirements or Recommendations

You should also consider whether the colleges that you're interested in require or recommend a specific Subject Test to enter a program or major. Remember, even if a college does not require Subject Test scores, submitting your scores may enhance your college application. See a list of colleges that require, recommend, or consider Subject Tests. Some colleges will grant an exemption from or credit for a freshman course requirement if a student does well on a particular SAT Subject Test. Check with the college you're interested in about its policies.

Full List of SAT® Subject Tests

If you're applying to a selective college, you'll probably need to submit scores from at least two SAT Subject Tests. To help you decide, here's a quick rundown of what you can expect on each test.

SAT Biology E/M

The Biology Subject Test assesses your understanding of general biology at the college preparatory level, your recall and comprehension of the major concepts of biology, and your ability to apply the principles learned to solve specific problems in biology. Both Biology Ecological and Biology Molecular are offered.

SAT Chemistry

The Chemistry Subject Test measures your ability to organize and interpret results obtained by observation and experimentation. The test also assesses your aptitude for drawing conclusions and/or making inferences using experimental data, including data presented in graphic and/or tabular form.

SAT Physics

The Physics Subject Test measures your ability to solve specific problems with the application of physical principles. The test also assesses your understanding of simple algebraic, trigonometric, and graphical relationships, the concepts of ratio and proportion, and how to apply these concepts to physics problems.

SAT U.S. History

The United States History Subject Test assesses your familiarity with historical concepts, cause-and-effect relationships, geography, and other data necessary for interpreting and understanding major historical developments in U.S. History.

SAT World History

The World History Subject Test assesses your understanding of key developments in global history, your use of basic historical techniques and terminology, and your aptitude for the critical analysis and interpretation of documented events.

SAT Literature

The Literature Subject Test aims to see how well you can read and interpret literature. Questions focus on issues of theme, argument, tone, etc.

SAT Math Level 1

Tests: Algebra, geometry, basic trigonometry, Algebraic functions, elementary statistics, logic, elementary number theory, and arithmetic and geometric sequences.

SAT Math Level 2

Tests: Algebra, three-dimensional and coordinate geometry, Trigonometry, functions, probability, permutations, combinations, logic, proofs, elementary number theory, sequences, and limits.

Foreign Languages with/ without Listening

Tests a student's reading ability in a specific language. Languages available for testing include: SAT French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. For the language exams, you will require language competency up to CEFR Level A2 or two years of schooling to appear for the AP.

Advanced Placement®

The Advanced Placement Program (AP®) offers university-level courses and exams that you can take while you are still in secondary school. It is offered by the CollegeBoard and is taken each May by students. The tests are the culmination of year-long Advanced Placement (AP®) courses. All AP exams (with few exceptions) have a multiple-choice section and a free-response section.

Why take AP Exams?

To stand out to universities. AP shows that you've mastered university-level knowledge and skills while still in high school. Nearly all universities in the U.S., as well as many in Canada, recognize qualifying AP Exam scores of 3 or higher on a scale of 5 for credit and/or advanced placement. Students can apply to universities in the U.K. via UCAS with their AP results.

To save money. Many universities give credit or advanced placement for qualifying AP Exam scores of 3 or higher. For example, if you get a score of 4 on the AP English Language and Composition Exam, then you may be eligible to skip your university's English Language 101 course. The more classes you can skip with qualifying AP Exam scores, the more money you could save on tuition.

To save time. If you can skip an introductory course by earning a qualifying AP Exam scores, then you can take another class instead that will count toward your degree. Use the time you save to take on a double major, an internship, or an on-campus job—or even graduate early.

Exam Scores

AP Exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. A score of 3 or higher qualifies you for university credit or advanced placement and may be considered for admissions.

AP Exam scores are released to you and colleges and universities in July.

You may send your score report to additional universities by ordering online. You may also withhold or cancel scores. If you took at least three AP Exams, you may be eligible for AP Scholar Awards, which recognize students who have demonstrated outstanding performance on AP Exams. These awards are calculated and added to your online score report during the summer. You will be notified by email if you've earned an award.

Planning ahead for May 2020 AP Exams?

Students must register by Oct-Nov 2019 for May 2020 exams in India.

AP Subjects List

A total of 38 APs are offered by the CollegeBoard.

AP Art History	AP Macroeconomics
AP Biology	AP Microeconomics
AP Calculus AB	AP Music Theory
AP Calculus BC	AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based
AP Chemistry	AP Physics 2: Algebra-Based
AP Chinese Language & Culture	AP Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism
AP Comparative Government & Politics	AP Physics C: Mechanics
AP Computer Science A	AP Psychology
AP Computer Science Principles	AP Research
AP English Language and Composition	AP Seminar
AP English Literature and Composition	AP Spanish Language & Culture
AP Environmental Science	AP Spanish Literature & Culture
AP European History	AP Statistics
AP French Language & Culture	AP Studio Art: 2-D Design
AP German Language & Culture	AP Studio Art: 3-D Design
AP Human Geography	AP Studio Art: Drawing
AP Italian Language & Culture	AP U.S. Government & Politics
AP Japanese Language and Culture	AP U.S. History
AP Latin	AP World History

Conditions

- For the AP language exams, you should have studied till CEFR Level B1 or will need three years of schooling to appear for the AP to gain the language competency.
- You cannot take both Calculus AB (11th Grade level) and Calculus BC (Calculus AB+12th Grade level) in the same year.
- You can take up to all 4 Physics exams in the same year.
- You cannot take 2 exams scheduled at the same time during the Regular Testing period. Instead, you can take one of the clashing exams during the Late Testing period.

Late Testing

Occasionally, circumstances make it necessary for students to test late. To preserve the security of AP Exams, alternate forms are used for late testing. All students who participate in late testing at a given school must take these alternate exams on the scheduled late-testing dates at the scheduled times.

The schedule for late testing is usually in the last week of May.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between SAT Subject Tests and Advanced Placement exams?

SAT Subject Tests are high school-level tests, reflecting high school curricula. These tests indicate a student's readiness to take college-level courses in specific subject areas. AP Exams, however, assess a student's college-level knowledge, skills and abilities, learned in the corresponding AP courses. As a result, the topics covered on SAT Subject Tests may differ from those covered on AP Exams.

While AP Exams are also an excellent way to demonstrate understanding in specific subject areas, not all students have an opportunity to take AP courses in a range of subjects. For students who lack access to AP and still wish to demonstrate subject knowledge, the Subject Tests offer this opportunity.

For the foreign languages, one needs the language competency of A2 for the SAT Subject and B1 for the AP, or 2-3 years of schooling where the language was offered as a subject.

What if the colleges that I'm interested in don't require the SAT Subject or the AP Test scores?

You may still want to take Subject Tests and/ or AP in the subjects that you excel in and submit those scores. Many colleges may still consider Subject Tests when reviewing your application, since they give a more complete picture of your academic background and show your readiness to focus on a specific major or program of study.

APs give your profile a competitive, yet challenging edge as compared to the SAT Subjects which are often required by the university department.

How many AP Exams can I take? How many exams do students usually take?

Colleges look to see that students have taken the most challenging courses available to them. You may take as many AP exams as you are prepared for each year. The average student takes 3 exams over their high school/secondary school career, although there are certainly students who take more.

In which Grade should I take AP Exams? Can I take them in Grade 9?

Most students take AP courses and exams in Grades 11. However, you may feel prepared to take on the challenge of AP earlier, in Grades 9 or 10.

Can I retake an AP Exam in the same year?

You may not take the same AP exam more than once in the same year; however, you may repeat an exam in a subsequent year. In such cases, both scores will be reported unless you request that one be withheld or cancelled.

What is the syllabus? How long will it take one to prepare for these tests?

The syllabus of the SAT and ACT is nearly identical, besides both the websites of SAT and ACT offer plenty practice tests and resources for studying for free upon registering on their respective websites.

One thing to remember is that the syllabus of these tests goes very little beyond the 10th grade, so it is always recommended that you write a practice test first to see where you stand. The board of education (HSC, CBSE, ICSE, and IBDP) does not make any difference with your prep.

The ideal time to prepare for the SAT and ACT is 3 months. As the syllabus is something that you have studied for a while, the initial test will give you a benchmark and working on your strength and weaknesses is how you will achieve your target score.

If you are planning to write SAT Subject or AP, then you may need up to 30-40 hours of tutoring to gain mastery over the subjects, especially if you are writing the exam of a subject you have not studied at school as a part of your academic year. Say if you are a PCM student, and you want to write the SAT Biology, then you will need to study to cover relevant topics and practice the questions. Many classes and private tutors offer coaching for these tests; however it is your responsibility to make sure that you write a free practice test first.

You may also study on your own for all these tests, provided that you find the right study material and stick to a steady timetable.

Are there any best books or official guides for these tests?

Yes. Both SAT and ACT have their very own official guides to study from and with some previous years questions. CollegeBoard publishes official guides offers SAT, SAT Subject and AP. ACT has their own official guide.

Khan Academy has recently partnered with the College Board, the makers of the SAT, to produce free and official SAT prep materials.

How and where to prepare for these exams?

The CollegeBoard and ACT.org publishes an Official Guide for all their exams, the SAT, SAT Subjects, AP and ACT respectively.

As for the SAT Subjects, one should always thoroughly go through the syllabus, write a free practice tests available online and decide for themselves whether to get extra tutoring classes or go the self-study way.

For APs, students may require tutoring as it consists of university level syllabus, for which there are multiple publishers who release exam preparation books every year. Some of them are Barron's, The Princeton Review, McGraw Hill, Kaplan and many more.

Educational websites such as Coursera, edX, Udemy also offers courses with pre-recorded video lessons. CrashCourse by John Green has its own playlist on YouTube that offers AP Exam lessons by subject.

Apart from these, there are publishers such as the McGraw Hill, Barron's, Princeton Review, REA (Research & Education Association) who publish books with updated strategies every year. There are plenty of resources available online as well, such as WikiNotes, AP Study Notes, Course-Notes.org and more.

Apart from this, you will find local institutes and private tutors who offer coaching and tutoring for SAT, ACT, SAT Subjects and AP. There are many qualified tutors, both offline and online, on different teaching platforms.

The books required for the preparation of these exams often include multiple practice tests, along with the syllabus. These books are also easily available on Amazon and Flipkart.

More links and (re)sources for this handout

1. Prepare to study abroad - SAT, SAT Subject and AP Guide
<https://international.collegeboard.org/prepare-to-study-abroad>
2. ACT Exam Guideline for non-USA Students
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-non-us.html>
3. Global Higher Education Recognition SAT, SAT Subject Tests™, and AP
A list of universities outside the U.S. that also recognize SAT,
SAT Subject Tests, and/or AP for admission and/or credit or advanced standing.
<https://international.collegeboard.org/xlsx/college-board-higher-education-recognition-policies.xlsx>
4. SAT Subject Test
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests/about>
5. AP Exam and AP in India
<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/home>
<https://international.collegeboard.org/prepare-to-study-in-the-us/ap-in-india>
6. AP Previous free response questions and scoring guide for all the subjects
<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/takingtheexam/preparing-for-exams>
7. SAT Subject and AP Exam Schedule for 2019-2020
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/international>
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/exam-dates-and-fees/exam-dates-2020>
8. SAT & ACT Concordance Table
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/guide-2018-act-sat-concordance.pdf>
<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT-SAT-Concordance-Tables.pdf>
9. Official SAT® Practice by Khan Academy
<https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>

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