

THE ROLE OF THE SAT & ACT IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

CHAMINADE COUNSELING

11/16/2016



WHY SCORES MATTER

- Colleges use scores in their admission decisions
 - *(Note: grades still matter most!)*
- Most colleges publish student test-score information
- Scores let colleges find students
- Colleges may use scores for scholarships or may determine placement in certain college classes
- Colleges consider scores in different ways —
 - Some require all scores.
 - Some look at the highest combined scores from one test date.
 - Some accept the highest section scores from any test date.

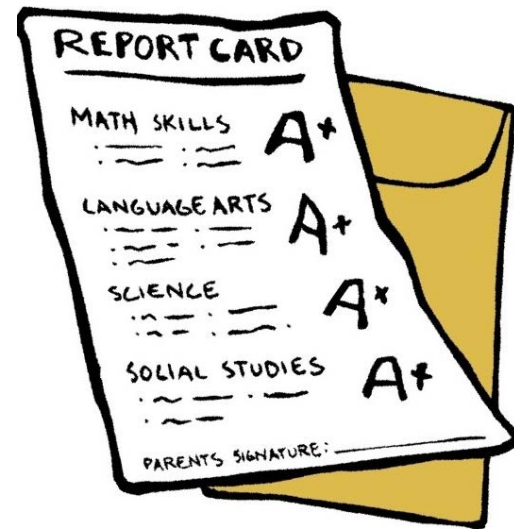


Source: College Board



SO WHAT MATTERS MOST TO COLLEGES??

- Academic GPA: Grades earned in core academic courses
(Remember that colleges may recalculate GPA)
- Rigor of coursework
- Progression over time



THE ACT

- The basic ACT structure and timing is remaining the same, with the exception of the new essay, which will be longer.
- English: 75 questions, 45 min
- Math: 60 questions, 60 min
- Reading: 40 questions, 35 min
- Science: 40 questions, 35 min
- ❖ “Optional” writing: 1 prompt, 40 min
- ❖ The format of the redesigned SAT is more similar to that of the ACT.





THE NEW SAT

- Only 1 reading section and 1 writing section
- The math section is divided into 1 calculator portion and 1 non-calculator portion.
- 3 hours (plus the optional essay)
 - Reading: 52 questions, 65 minutes
 - Writing and Language: 44 questions, 35 minutes
 - Math: 58 question, 80 minutes (some with and some without calculator)
 - “Optional” essay: 1 prompt, 50 min



SCORING GUIDELINES

Old SAT:

- ❖ Total score: 2400
- ❖ $\frac{1}{4}$ point guessing penalty

New SAT: (as of March 2016)

- ❖ Score: 400 -1600
- ❖ Optional Essay scored separately
- ❖ No wrong answer penalty

ACT:

- ❖ Score: 1 - 36
- ❖ Optional essay scored separately
- ❖ No wrong answer penalty

Multiple Choice Items



Open-Ended Items



WHAT IS A SUPERSCORE?

- A Superscore is the combination of the highest scores in each section of the test from different sittings

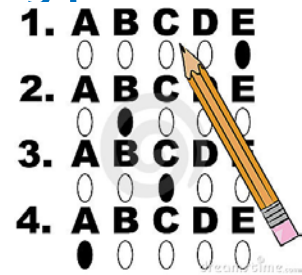
John's Score	May	October	Superscore
Math	550	650	650
Reading	650	550	650
Total	1200	1200	1300

- Some schools will Superscore the SAT and/or the ACT.
- It is recommended that students send all test scores, so colleges see the highest scores on each section.



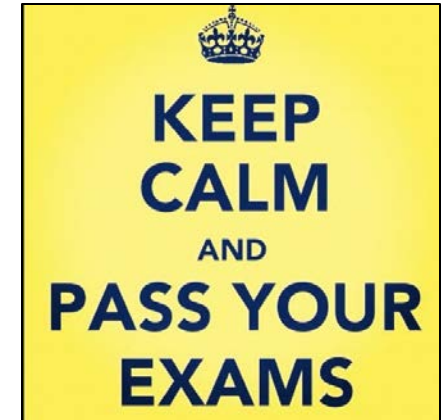
SUBJECT TESTS

- Multiple choice exams in one subject area
- Can take up to 3 on a given test date; 1 hour long per exam
- Not required by most colleges
- Recommended for students in applicable AP classes or who have a strong propensity in a certain area
- Recommended for students to demonstrate mastery
- Recommended for students declaring specific majors (ie. Math 2 & Physics for Engineering)



TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fall of 9th — ACT Aspire (aka: Pre-ACT)
- Fall of 10th — PSAT (Preliminary SAT)
- Spring of 10th — SAT subject tests if applicable
- Fall of 11th — PSAT
 - National Merit Scholarship qualifier
- Spring of 11th —
 - Begin prep 8-10 weeks prior to test date
 - Khan Academy and Shmoop (& other FREE prep)
 - Take 1 ACT & 1 SAT for the first time
 - Take SAT subject tests if applicable
 - Repeat best test
- Fall of 12th — Finalize testing by November
- Beware of testing burnout!



UNDERSTANDING PSAT SCORE REPORT

This short video will show how you and your student can best utilize the results of their PSAT.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzCSIilL3WQ>



KHAN ACADEMY AND SHMOOP!

- FREE!
- Other resources

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NEED YOUR LICENSE?

WHAT IS SHMOOP?

WHAT IS YOUR COLLEGE?

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SO, WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

- A \$4,000 Private Tutoring: WT_?
- B \$1,000 Classroom Course: OMG
- C \$300 Online Course: ROFL
- D \$23 Dead Tree (Book): ZZZ
- E \$23 Shmoop Online Course: WIN! >**

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ROVER

http://www.shmoop.com/sat/sat-scores.html

100% 7:20 AM 11/22/2013

BEWARE OF TEST PREP PROMISES

- Test Prep Companies sometimes offer college counseling packages
- Tutors often lack college counseling credentials and experience
- Advice is often conflicting
- Colleges only want to hear from Chaminade counselors
- Chaminade offers full-service college counseling assistance



SCHOOLS REQUIRING OR RECOMMENDING SUBJECT TESTS



- Dartmouth, Duke, Georgetown, CalTech, Harvard, Harvey Mudd, Brown, Vassar, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Stanford, Princeton, UCLA, UC Berkeley, USC, Yale, University of Georgia and more
- Schools that *Strongly Recommend* do expect students from a school like Chaminade to take subject tests
- Check the school websites — some do require for certain majors



SENDING TEST SCORES

- In the fall of senior year, students are required to submit official test scores to colleges.
 - Sent electronically (at least two weeks prior to deadline)
 - Must come directly from testing agencies to be official
 - CHAMINADE DOES NOT REPORT SCORES ON TRANSCRIPT
- SAT: <http://collegeboard.org>
- ACT: www.actstudent.org
- Colleges will accept scores from EITHER exam.
(Yes, they really will 😊)



TEST OPTIONAL SCHOOLS

- ❖ Over 900 schools in the US do not require SAT or ACT test scores for admission
 - They believe it invites more diversity, offers more accessibility
 - Do not want over-reliance on tests
 - Hope to attract more academically-capable student
 - High school performance remains most important



- ❖ Some caveats ~
 - Many have (often more competitive) GPA requirements
 - Some may require submission of graded assignments, interviews, etc.
- Students may still want to submit test scores.

- ❖ *National Center for Fair and Open Testing*
<http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>



