

College Planning

What Students Need To Know About The SAT And ACT

(NAPSA)—For most high school juniors, the SAT or ACT represents one of the most important stepping-stones between them and admission to the colleges of their choice.

Many students consider only one test—either the SAT or ACT—and as a result of geographical predominance and lack of information, they might be missing an opportunity to achieve their optimal score by taking the test best suited to their academic strengths.

The Difference

Historically, the SAT is the standard test on the West and East Coasts, while the ACT dominates the Midwest and South, but things are beginning to shift as more students realize they have the option of taking both tests. The main difference between the SAT and the ACT is that the latter measures the student's knowledge learned in high school, whereas the SAT tries to determine "innate" abilities.

"Most schools accept both the SAT or ACT, except in rare cases, so the test a student decides to take shouldn't be a deal breaker in admissions," says Jake Becker, academic director at Grockit.com, a collaborative and social learning platform. "When trying to decide which test is right for you, I suggest taking a practice test in each and exploring the requirements of each school that you're considering applying to."

The ACT has four sections (English, Math, Science and Reading) and the SAT has three (Reading, Writing and Math). The SAT recently added Writing to the main exam after the majority of



Students should consider both college admission tests before taking either.

colleges started requiring the SAT Subject Test in Writing (SAT II) as part of the application.

The ACT does not require an essay as part of the main test but offers an optional one and it's suggested that all students take it. The College Board also has SAT II Subject Tests that let students showcase their classroom-based knowledge in subjects such as Physics, Calculus or History, which the ACT does not offer.

"Students should consider their strengths and weaknesses in the different subjects available for the SAT II and compare them with the ACT to help decide which would be a better supplement to their application," Becker added. "If a student has taken AP courses that align with one of the SAT Subject Tests, he or she might feel more confident taking that test. If these SAT II tests are daunting and won't provide great scores, the ACT may be a better choice."

Learn More

For more information and additional test prep resources, please visit www.Grockit.com. Use the code PREP at Grockit's checkout for a 10 percent discount.