

The Right Way to SAT and ACT Success

SAT

The writing section is a mandatory part of the SAT. Students are allowed 35 minutes to answer multiple choice questions and 25 minutes to write an essay.

The multiple choice component of the SAT Writing section measures a student's ability to:

- Improve sentences and paragraphs
- Identify errors in diction, grammar, sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, proper word usage and wordiness

The SAT essay section challenges a student to develop a point of view on an issue and use reasoning and evidence — based on personal or historical experiences, readings, or observations — to support that point of view. It also measures students' ability to:

- Organize and express ideas clearly
- Develop and support a main argument or point of view
- Use appropriate word choice and sentence structure

For sample writing test questions and information, visit The College Board, at <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

ACT

ACT offers a 30-minute Writing Test as an optional component. It's optional because not every higher education institution requires a writing test, and because the ACT also measures a student's writing ability on its English test. The ACT offers a listing of colleges and universities that require students to take a writing test at its Web site.

In the writing section of the ACT, the test taker is presented with two sides to an issue. Students are then asked to take a position on the issue — either one of those presented or one of their own. Students must then present a well-reasoned argument in a short essay to support their position. Students' scores are based on their ability to do the following:

- Express judgments clearly
- Maintain a focus on the topic throughout the essay
- Develop a position by using logical reasoning and supporting points
- Organize ideas in a logical way
- Use language clearly and effectively

The ACT writing test is scored on a level of one to six, and students receive individualized feedback from the essay graders as part of their score.

For sample writing test questions, or to learn more about the test and the colleges that require it, visit ACT at <http://www.act.org>.