



*Climbing the steps to success*

## December 2017

### 2<sup>nd</sup>— SAT Reasoning and Subject Exams

### 9<sup>th</sup>— ACT and ACT With Writing

Underclassmen — Review PSAT report with advisor and map out a plan for test preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT testing dates

Seniors — File any additional college applications before deadline dates

## January 2018

Seniors – Search and apply for scholarships that match your qualifications

Seniors – File any additional college applications

## SAT or ACT? Deciding Which Test Is Right For You

The SAT's 2016 redesign made the differences between the SAT and the ACT less clear-cut, leaving many students confused about which college entrance exam they should take.

First, it's important to know that both exams are accepted by all U.S. colleges and universities. Admission offices don't have a preference for one exam over the other; both exams are treated equally in making admissions decisions. You won't gain an edge at any college simply by opting for a particular exam.

What *might* make a difference in your admission profile, however, is identifying the exam that plays to your strengths as both a student and a test-taker. Focus your efforts on the exam you feel most comfortable with, advise test preparation experts, and your odds of scoring well are likely to be better.

So, how do you decide which exam is the better fit for you? The following questions are a good starting point:

### Which practice test do I score best on?

The best way to decide which of the exams is the best match for you is to do a timed practice test for each exam. Both the ACT and the College Board (the maker of the SAT) offer free online sample tests on their websites. If you score significantly better on one exam (a score converter is available on the College Board site), it makes sense to devote your energies to that exam. If your scores are similar, think about which exam felt more comfortable to you; that's often the best match.

**Do you prefer to work at a faster pace on exams?** There isn't a huge difference in the amount of time required for each exam; without the optional essay, the SAT is three hours while the ACT takes two

hours and 55 minutes. However, the ACT has more questions overall, so students have less time per question. This may be a plus for students who like to move quickly on exams, but a negative for students who prefer to take their time.

**Are you a strong, fast reader?** The passages on the reading section of the ACT are written for a 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, while the SAT uses passages that range from a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level through early college. The SAT reading section may be a little more challenging for weaker readers because it includes passages from classic texts which use more arcane language. The questions then ask test-takers to identify the specific parts of the passage that support their answers to certain questions. On the ACT, solid reading skills are important not just for the reading section, but also for the science section, which asks students to read, identify and interpret data in passages. Strong readers likely will do well on either exam, but given the ACT's fast pace, the SAT may be more comfortable for you if you are a slower reader.

**Do you panic on math tests if you can't use a calculator?** The ACT allows you to use a calculator for the entire math section. On the SAT, however, you can't use your calculator for approximately 20 out of 75 questions. While the questions are designed to be answered without a calculator, the ACT might be the way to go if you feel more confident having full access to a calculator for the entire exam.

**Are you more confident on math tests when the necessary formulas are given to you?** The ACT math section assumes that students will have certain basic mathematics formulas memorized. On the SAT, the formulas necessary to answer questions (continued p. 3.)

### Careers for Cyber Security Majors

- Chief Information Security Officer
- Cryptographer
- Forensics Expert
- Incident Responder
- Penetration Tester
- Security Administrator
- Security Analyst
- Security Architect
- Security Auditor
- Security Consultant
- Security Director
- Security Engineer
- Security Manager
- Security Software Developer
- Security Specialist
- Security Code Auditor
- Vulnerability Assessor



Learn more about what individuals in these careers do at <http://www.cyberdegrees.org/jobs>

## Majoring in Cyber-security

In September, 2017, the credit-reporting bureau Equifax made a stunning announcement: the personal and financial information of almost 146 million U.S. consumers had been compromised in a hacking breach of Equifax's computer database. This was just the latest in a long line of cyber thefts affecting companies in industries as diverse as retailing (Target, Whole Foods), healthcare (Anthem), entertainment (SONY) and even the U.S. Government's Office of Personnel Management.

These and other cyber-crimes have created a huge demand for cyber-security professionals who have the skills and knowledge needed to protect the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of the information and information systems that keep businesses, governments, and other enterprises humming. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, jobs in the information security field are expected to grow 37% by 2022, much faster than average for all occupations. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also notes that the median pay for professionals in this field is over \$90,000 a year.

Responding to this demand, a growing number of colleges and universities have launched undergraduate majors in cyber-security. Although there can be differences among programs, the typical major includes classes in digital forensics and cyber investigation, cryptology, ethical hacking, software development, database design and Internet law and ethics. Internships in the field are often a key component of the major. At some schools, the major is offered as part of the computer science program, while at others it is offered in the school of engineering or business.

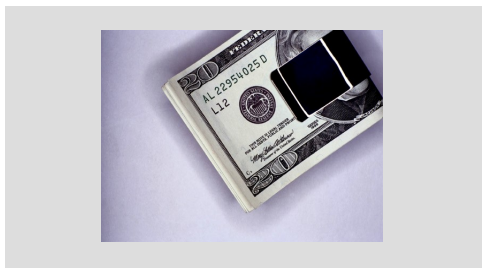
Cyber-security is a key concern for the United States government. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency jointly sponsor the National Centers of Academic Excel-

lence (CAE) in Cyber Security education programs. The programs that have received the CAE designation have undergone a rigorous review and met NSA standards for training professionals. Students and parents can find a list of CAE designated programs at <https://www.caecommunity.org/resources/cae-institutions>.

At certain colleges, cyber-security majors also have a unique scholarship opportunity, called the CyberCorps Scholarship for Service. Funded through the National Security Agency, this scholarship covers full tuition for three years at participating universities and colleges, and also pays a stipend of \$22,500 a year. In exchange, recipients must agree to work in a cyber-security position after graduation for a period equal to the length of the scholarship. Students in the program also do a 10-week paid summer internship before graduation. A list of colleges and universities participating in the CyberCorps Scholarship for Service program is available here: <https://www.sfs.opm.gov/ContactsPI.aspx>. In addition to the CyberCorps Scholarship, some colleges and universities also offer institutional scholarships for students majoring in cyber security.

Is a career in cyber security right for you? Successful professionals in this field are usually highly curious, enjoy solving complex problems, and have a strong sense of ethics. Most undergraduate programs require good math skills and familiarity with computers. A good way to find out if cyber-security might be a match is to attend a GenCyber Camp. Funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Security Agency with the goal of encouraging more students to enter the cyber-security profession, these free camps are designed to help students learn more about cyber-security careers. For information on GenCyber Camps, visit <http://www.gencyber.com>.

### Financial Matters: Searching for Scholarships



Scholarships provide gift money that does not have to be repaid. That makes scholarships an attractive way to help pay for college. Most scholarships are awarded directly by the college you attend, but there are also other sources of scholarship aid. Federal and state governments, employers, credit and professional organizations, some private companies, foundations, individuals, and religious and civic organizations offer scholarships. But how can you find out about these?

To search for scholarships, choose a couple of the free scholarship search

engines described below. And remember, any scholarship service that requests money is likely to be a scam.

- FastWeb ([fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)) connects you to targeted scholarships based on your profile (strengths, interests, skills, groups).
- Mach25 ([collegenet.com](http://collegenet.com)) is a free web version of Wintergreen/Orchard House Scholarship Finder database.
- SRN ([studentscholarshipsearch.com](http://studentscholarshipsearch.com)) matches students to appropriate scholarships based on strengths, talents, field of study, sports, achievements, background.
- College Resource Network ([collegeresourcenetwork.com](http://collegeresourcenetwork.com)) also includes many minority scholarships in its database.

- School Soup ([goodcall.com](http://goodcall.com)) allows users to search through thousands of awards with no fee or account sign-up required.
- Cappex ([cappex.com](http://cappex.com)) comprises a database of scholarships worth over \$11 billion.
- BigFuture ([bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)) offers a searchable scholarship database.
- Salliemae ([salliemae.com](http://salliemae.com)) includes over 3 million scholarships in its database.
- [Scholarships.com](http://Scholarships.com) compares your background with its database and identifies good matches.

Happy searching!

### SAT or ACT? Deciding Which Test Is Right For You—continued from p.1

are provided. In either case, you still need to know how to actually use math formulas to solve problems, but if you tend to get brain freeze when it comes to math formulas, you may prefer the SAT.

**Are you good at interpreting and analyzing data using charts and graphs?** The fact that there is a “science” section on the ACT scares off many students. In truth, you don’t actually need to know much scientific theory in order to do well on the ACT Science section. What you do need to know is how to read, analyze and interpret data given in charts and graphs, as that is what the ACT science section asks test-takers to do. If you opt for the SAT, you won’t skip this entirely,

since the SAT reading section includes at least one science passage and the math section also includes some data analysis, however, you won’t have an entire test section devoted to it.

**Do you need extended time accommodations due to a learning difference?** On the SAT, if you’ve received 50% extended time, you can only complete one section at a time and must stay on the same timeline as the rest of the extended time group. On the ACT, you’ll be given an extended block of time for the entire test and can self-pace how you divide your time between sections. If you receive 100% extended time, you can take the SAT over two days at your school. The ACT program allows 100% extended

time students to take one section of the ACT per day.

**Does your state or school district require or pay for a particular exam?** Twelve states currently require that all high school seniors take the ACT, while nine states have the same requirement for the SAT. Sixteen states make the ACT available for free, while another four fund ACT testing on a district-optional basis. Nine states plus the District of Columbia fund the SAT for students. Although you always have the option of taking both exams, if your state or district requires a particular exam – or will pay for it – it may make sense for many students to focus their test preparation energies on the relevant exam.

## Religiously Affiliated Colleges

### A2Z College Planning

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There are many issues to consider when determining college fit. Do you want to go to a large school or a smaller one? Does the east coast seem more like home, or do you long to live in California? All girls or co-ed? Is a Christian college always the best choice for a Christian student? There are pros and cons to attending a religiously-affiliated school, and it is important to think about both before choosing the ideal university.

There can be many positive aspects to attending a religiously affiliated school. You may find it empowering to be surrounded by like-minded people, and to have friends and professors who share your core beliefs. This atmosphere may deepen your convictions and strengthen your spirituality, while at the same time, teach you more about your religion. It may be easier to embrace and prioritize your faith with frequent reminders and encouragement from other students and staff members. Having religious services available on campus can be convenient, and makes it easier to regularly attend. Avoiding a party atmosphere is probably less difficult at a faith-based school. The best way to find out about its general ambiance is always to visit the campus and talk to current students. There may be more access to mentors, in the form of chaplains or other religious advisors, and more encouragement to make a difference by starting your own clubs and ministries, attending mission trips, and volunteering in faith-based organizations and charities.

On the other hand, only being around

people who share your faith may result in an environment that lacks diversity, thus giving you limited exposure to different and opposing viewpoints. There are fewer opportunities to challenge and question your beliefs than there might be at secular schools, and many believe that faith actually strengthens when faced with challenges. Stricter rules and regulations may be in place at religiously-affiliated schools, including dress codes and curfews. They sometimes prohibit alcohol consumption, even for 21-year-olds, and mingling between men and women. Since non-secular schools are often smaller and private, they may cost more to attend, and offer fewer majors due to their size. It is important to note that many of these universities promote one particular worldview, and may discourage students from adhering to other opinions and ideas about their religion. Sometimes students are given extra coursework that doesn't directly pertain to their major, such as required chapel visits. These may carry penalties for non-participation.

The bottom line is that every school is different, just like each individual student and their respective wants and needs. If possible, visit all the schools in which you are interested. Talk to current students to get a feel for the general attitudes and perceptions on campus. Research each college as much as possible. Not all religiously-affiliated schools are the same, even if they promote the same religion. Don't pick a school solely based on its religious leanings, but rather on all the positive personal and academic aspects that make it a good fit.