

SAT vs. ACT Verbal Comparison

	SAT	ACT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score out of 2400: scores from 200-800 on Reading, Writing & Math Essay included in overall score 5 answer choices ¼ point penalty for wrong answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score out of 36: sub-scores from 1-36 in English, Math, Reading, and Science Essay not included in composite score 4 answer choices No penalty for wrong answers
Grammar	Writing	English
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 minutes 49 questions Individual sentences & 1 passage Focus on grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 minutes 75 questions Passages only Grammar, punctuation, and rhetoric
Reading	Critical Reading	Reading Comprehension
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 minutes total Two 25-minute sections 48 questions Sections distributed randomly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 minutes total 1 section 40 questions Always 3rd section
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 Sentence completions Vocabulary in context Challenging, <i>New York Times</i> level-vocabulary and second meanings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No sentence completions Vocabulary in context Second meanings of common words
Passage-Based Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 single passages 2 sets of paired passages Short, medium & long passages Passages in random order: contemporary social science, humanities, science; 1 fiction passage Argument comprehension – emphasis on logic and abstraction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 or 4 single passages 1 set of paired passages, if present Long passages only Passages always in same order: Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, Natural Science Literal comprehension – concrete and straightforward
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required 25 minutes Broad & abstract – examples can be drawn from a range of fields No counter-argument for top score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Optional” (selective colleges require) 30 minutes High-school focused – examples mostly personal and current events Need counterargument for top score