

COLLEGE CONNECTION GUIDE: WHEN TO TAKE THE SAT/ACT EXAM?

The makers of the SAT/ACT will not tell you when to test, but, I will: Although the makers of the SAT/ACT vociferously deny that their respective exams are curved, College Connection's analysis of the various respective SAT/ACT score conversion charts suggests otherwise. The domestic SAT is typically administered on the second weekend of March*, the first weekends of May and June, the last weekend of August, and, on the first weekends of October, November, and December. The international SAT is typically administered on the same test dates as the domestic SAT, except, the international SAT is not administered on the first weekend of November.

Both the domestic and the international ACT are typically administered on the second weekend of February.* the third weekend of April, the second weekend of June, the third weekend of July**, the second weekend of September, the third weekend of October, and the second weekend of December.

*Students with a religious exemption can take the test on the Sunday of their scheduled test date. In this regard, please note that the ACT is always more stringent in accommodating student test-takers than the SAT. For example, in order to obtain a religious exemption to test on the Sunday of their scheduled test date, the ACT requires its test-takers to obtain a note from their religious leaders; whereas, the SAT grants this exemption without requiring its test-takers to obtain a note from their religious leaders. In a similar vein, with respect to requests for testing accommodations, the ACT typically requires that the student test-taker have had an I.E.P (Individual Educational Plan) in place since the sixth grade; whereas, the SAT is typically more lenient in granting students' requests for testing accommodations.

"The July ACT is not given at any New York State test center. Students, from New York State, wishing to take the July ACT, can take the exam in a neighboring state.

Additionally, some fortunate students are able to take a "School-Day" SAT/ACT exam, but only if the students' high school offers school-day testing. In this regard, please note that all N.Y.C. public high schools offer school-day testing. These school-day SAT/ACT tests are typically offered to juniors either sometime in April, or are offered to seniors sometime in October. Unfortunately, not all domestic high schools currently offer school-day SAT/ACT tests, and, no international high school currently offers school-day SAT/ACT testing. I think all high schools, around the world, should offer SAT/ACT school-day testing, and, with the advent of the newly revised digitalized SAT/ACT *** perhaps, I hope, sometime soon, all high schools, around the world, will offer school-day SAT/ACT tests.

In this regard, please note for the remainder of the 2023 domestic SAT testing season, all SAT test-takers will continue taking the paper version of the exam; however, commencing with the second weekend of March, 2024, all domestic SAT test-takers will take the digitalized version of

the SAT exam; whereas, all international SAT test-takers will start taking the digitalized version of the SAT exam commencing on the second weekend of March, 2023.****

With respect to the ACT, on National ACT test dates, those ACT test dates listed above, for example, all students currently will continue taking the paper version of the ACT. With regard to ACT School-Day testing, the format of the ACT exam varies, depending on the state/school district where the test-taker is taking the ACT; whereas, all international students have been taking the digitalized version of the ACT since February 2018.

***Please go to "Digitalized Version of SAT/ACT Exam" on my website for a full discussion of the newly revised digitalized SAT/ACT exam.

****Here is why I prefer school-day SAT/ACT TESTING: In my 20+ years working as an expert SAT/ACT tutor, I have seen the positive impact -often a one-hundred point increase in SAT test scores, and a 2-4 point increase in ACT composite test scores -that SAT/ACT school-day testing has had on my students. The reason for this has everything to do with the deleterious effects test anxiety often plays in artificially depressing a student test-takers SAT/ACT test scores. [Please see College Connection's Stress Management video.]

My review of the various SAT/ACT score conversion charts reveals that the best domestic SAT score conversion chart is on the November and December domestic SAT test date, as well as the December international SAT test date; whereas, the best domestic and international ACT score conversion chart is on the December ACT test date.

The reason for this is because the SAT/ACT score conversion charts are based upon who else is taking the exam with you. That is why the November and December domestic SAT test dates, the December international SAT test date, and the December domestic and international ACT test date have the best score conversion charts because. for all these exams, at least 50% of the test-takers are seniors who are generally not the top test-takers.

In the Spring semester, the best domestic and international SAT score conversion chart is the May SAT test date; whereas, the best domestic and international ACT score conversion chart is the April ACT test date. The reason for this is because. before the domestic April ACT, and the domestic May SAT, the better test-taking juniors will be preparing to take their Advanced Placement exams; whereas, before the international April ACT, and the international May SAT, the better test-taking juniors will be preparing to take their A level exams in the United Kingdom, and their baccalaureate exam in France.

Conversely, the worst score conversion chart for the domestic and international SAT/ACT is the October test dates because, typically, the best test-taking seniors will try and re-test in October, aiming to achieve a perfect SAT/ACT score with which to use to apply early to college.

The second worst score conversion chart. for both the domestic and the international SAT/ACT. is the February test date for the ACT, and the March test date for the SAT. The reason for this is because, unfortunately, the world over, most juniors are misinformed, by their high school college counselors, that the first time their students can take the ACT is in February of their junior year of high school, and the first time their students can take the SAT is in March of their junior year of high school.

This fact does not surprise Sam who has seen far too many incompetent public and private high school counselors, as well as private college advisors, continually spread misinformation to the students the counselors are supposed to be providing accurate college guidance to.