

Table 263. SAT Scores and Characteristics of College-Bound Seniors: 1970 to 2009

[For school year ending in year shown. Data are for the SAT I: Reasoning Tests. SAT I: Reasoning Test replaced the SAT in March 1994. Scores between the two tests have been equated to the same 200–800 scale and are thus comparable. Scores for 1995 and prior years have been recentered and revised]

Type of test and characteristic	Unit	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
AVERAGE TEST SCORES ¹											
Critical reading, total ²	Point	537	502	500	504	505	508	503	502	502	501
Male	Point	536	506	505	505	507	513	505	504	504	503
Female	Point	538	498	496	502	504	505	502	502	500	498
Math, total ²	Point	512	492	501	506	514	520	518	515	515	515
Male	Point	531	515	521	525	533	538	536	533	533	534
Female	Point	493	473	483	490	498	504	502	499	500	499
Writing	Point	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	497	494	494	493
Male	Point	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	491	489	488	486
Female	Point	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	502	500	501	499
PARTICIPANTS											
Total ³	1,000	(NA)	922	1,026	1,068	1,260	1,476	1,466	1,495	1,519	1,530
Male	Percent	(NA)	48.2	47.8	46.4	46.2	46.5	46.4	46.4	46.4	46.5
White	Percent	(NA)	82.1	73.0	69.2	66.4	62.3	62.1	60.8	59.8	58.1
Black	Percent	(NA)	9.1	10.0	10.7	11.2	11.6	11.3	11.7	12.1	12.8
Obtaining scores ¹ of—											
600 or above:											
Critical reading	Percent	(NA)	(NA)	20.3	21.9	21.1	22.5	21.4	21.2	21.0	20.5
Math	Percent	(NA)	(NA)	20.4	23.4	24.2	26.5	25.8	24.5	25.0	25.7
Writing	Percent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	18.9	18.4	18.3	18.7
Below 400:											
Critical reading	Percent	(NA)	(NA)	17.3	16.4	15.9	15.5	16.6	16.5	17.0	17.4
Math	Percent	(NA)	(NA)	15.8	16.0	14.7	13.8	14.3	14.8	15.0	15.3
Writing	Percent	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	17.8	18.4	18.5	19.4

NA Not available. X Not applicable. ¹ Minimum score, 200; maximum score, 800. ² 1970 estimates based on total number of persons taking SAT. For 2009, based on 1,530,128 test takers. ³ 922 represents 922,000.

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Table 264. ACT Program Scores and Characteristics of College-Bound Students: 1970 to 2009

[For academic year ending in year shown. Except as indicated, test scores and characteristics of college-bound students. Through 1980, data based on 10 percent sample; thereafter, based on all ACT tested graduating seniors]

Type of test and characteristic	Unit	1970	1980	1990 ¹	1995 ¹	2000 ¹	2005 ¹	2006 ¹	2007 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹
TEST SCORES ²											
Composite	Point	19.9	18.5	20.6	20.8	21.0	20.9	21.1	21.2	21.1	21.1
Male	Point	20.3	19.3	21.0	21.0	21.2	21.1	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.3
Female	Point	19.4	17.9	20.3	20.7	20.9	20.9	21.0	21.0	21.0	20.9
English	Point	18.5	17.9	20.5	20.2	20.5	20.4	20.6	20.7	20.6	20.6
Male	Point	17.6	17.3	20.1	19.8	20.0	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.1	20.2
Female	Point	19.4	18.3	20.9	20.6	20.9	20.8	21.0	21.0	21.0	20.9
Math	Point	20.0	17.4	19.9	20.2	20.7	20.7	20.8	21.0	21.0	21.0
Male	Point	21.1	18.9	20.7	20.9	21.4	21.3	21.5	21.6	21.6	21.6
Female	Point	18.8	16.2	19.3	19.7	20.2	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.4	20.4
Reading ³	Point	19.7	17.2	(NA)	21.3	21.4	21.3	21.4	21.5	21.4	21.4
Male	Point	20.3	18.2	(NA)	21.1	21.2	21.0	21.1	21.2	21.2	21.3
Female	Point	19.0	16.4	(NA)	21.4	21.5	21.5	21.6	21.6	21.5	21.4
Science reasoning ⁴	Point	20.8	21.1	(NA)	21.0	21.0	20.9	20.9	21.0	20.8	20.9
Male	Point	21.6	22.4	(NA)	21.6	21.6	21.4	21.2	21.4	21.3	21.4
Female	Point	20.0	20.0	(NA)	20.5	20.6	20.5	21.0	20.5	20.4	20.4
PARTICIPANTS ⁵											
Total ⁶	1,000	788	822	817	945	1,065	1,186	1,206	1,301	1,422	1,480
Male	Percent	52	45	46	44	43	44	44	45	45	45
White	Percent	(NA)	83	73	69	72	66	63	60	63	64
Black	Percent	4	8	9	9	10	12	12	12	13	13
Obtaining composite scores of— ⁷											
27 or above											
Percent	Percent	14	13	12	13	14	14	14	15	16	16
18 or below											
Percent	Percent	21	33	35	34	32	34	33	32	33	34

NA Not available. ¹ Beginning 1990, not comparable with previous years because a new version of the ACT was introduced. Estimated average composite scores for prior years: 1989, 20.6; 1988, 19.87, and 1986, 20.8. ² Minimum score, 1; maximum score, 36. ³ Prior to 1990, social studies; data not comparable with previous years. ⁴ Prior to 1990, natural sciences; data not comparable with previous years. ⁵ Beginning 1985, data are for seniors who graduated in year shown and had taken the ACT in their junior or senior years. Data by race are for those responding to the race question. ⁶ 788 represents 788,000. ⁷ Prior to 1990, 26 or above and 15 or below.

Source: The ACT, Inc., Iowa City, IA, *High School Profile Report*, annual.