

# Understanding Your PSAT/NMSQT Scores

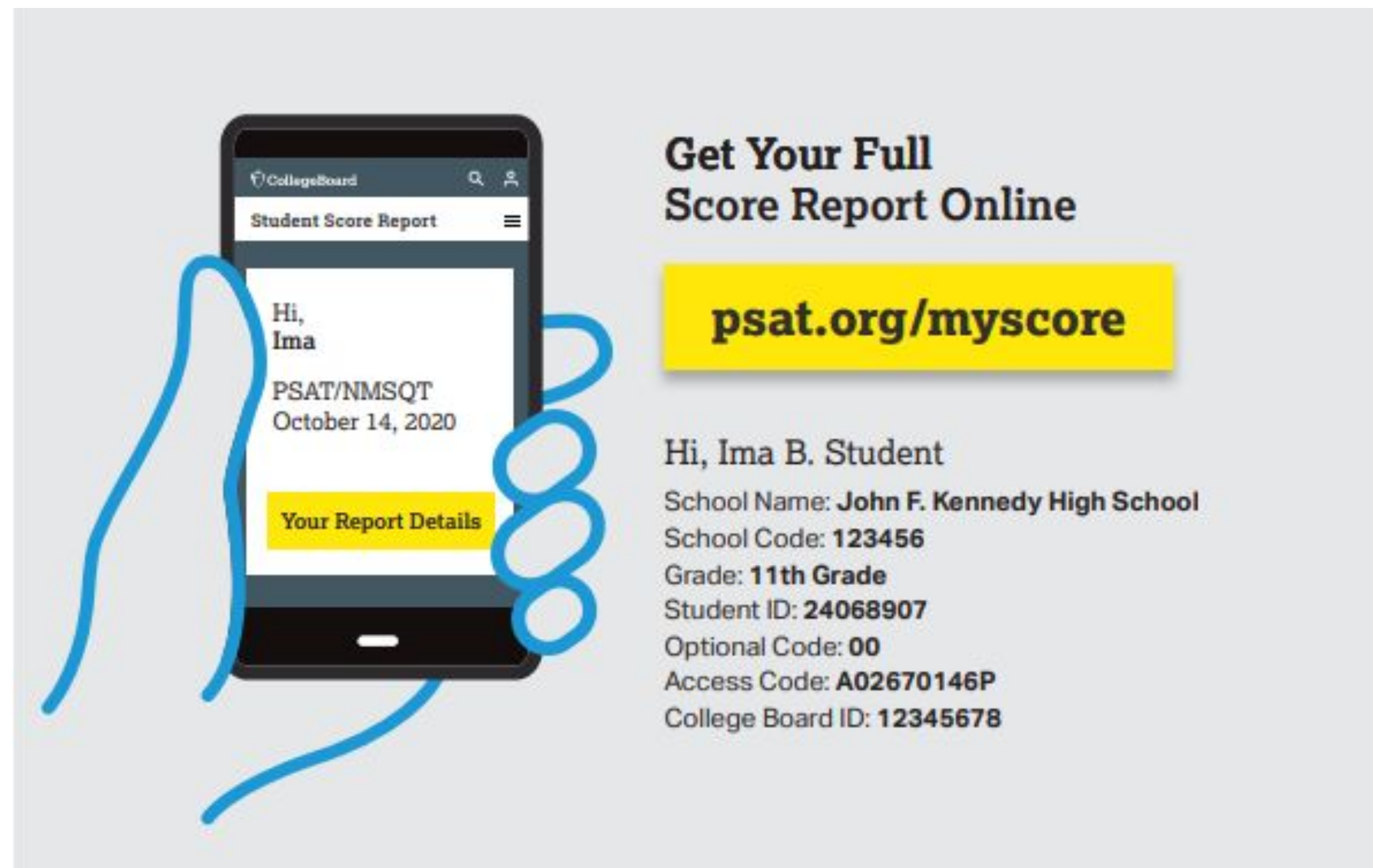
Katie Rose-DeLaet, Communications  
Coordinator

# Your Score Report

*What it tells you about your college prep readiness*



# What's in your report:



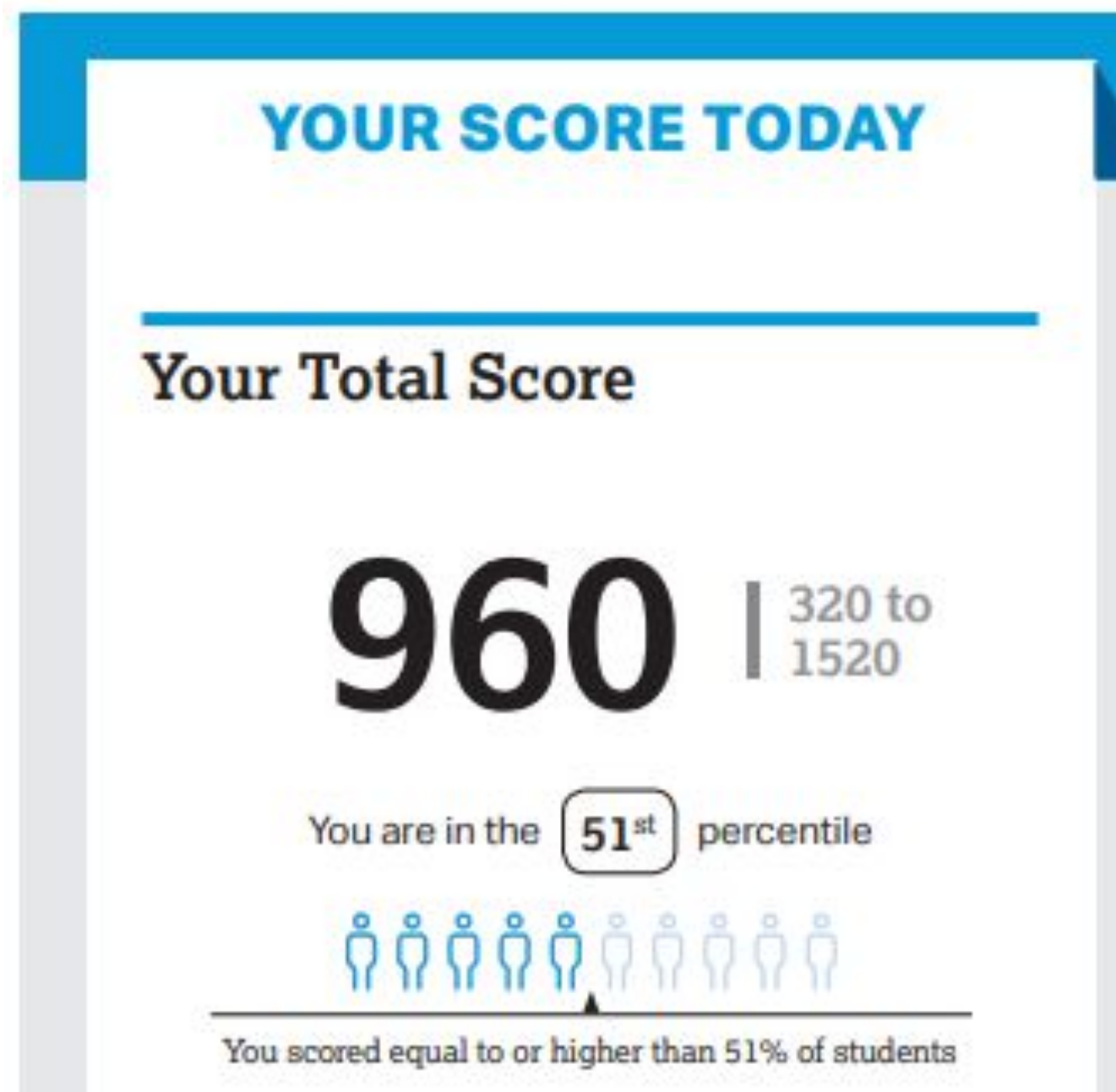
**Get Your Full Score Report Online**

[psat.org/myscore](https://psat.org/myscore)

Hi, Ima B. Student  
School Name: **John F. Kennedy High School**  
School Code: **123456**  
Grade: **11th Grade**  
Student ID: **24068907**  
Optional Code: **00**  
Access Code: **A02670146P**  
College Board ID: **12345678**

The front page gives you the information you'll need to access your full score report and any supplementary material online.

# What's in your report: Total Score



Your total score is out of a possible 1520 points, and your percentile is based on a sample study of students. If you're a 11th-grader, it's an 11th-grade study. If you're a 10th- or 9th-grader, it's against 10th graders.

The College Board predicts that student scores on the PSAT are very indicative of what they'd score on the SAT.

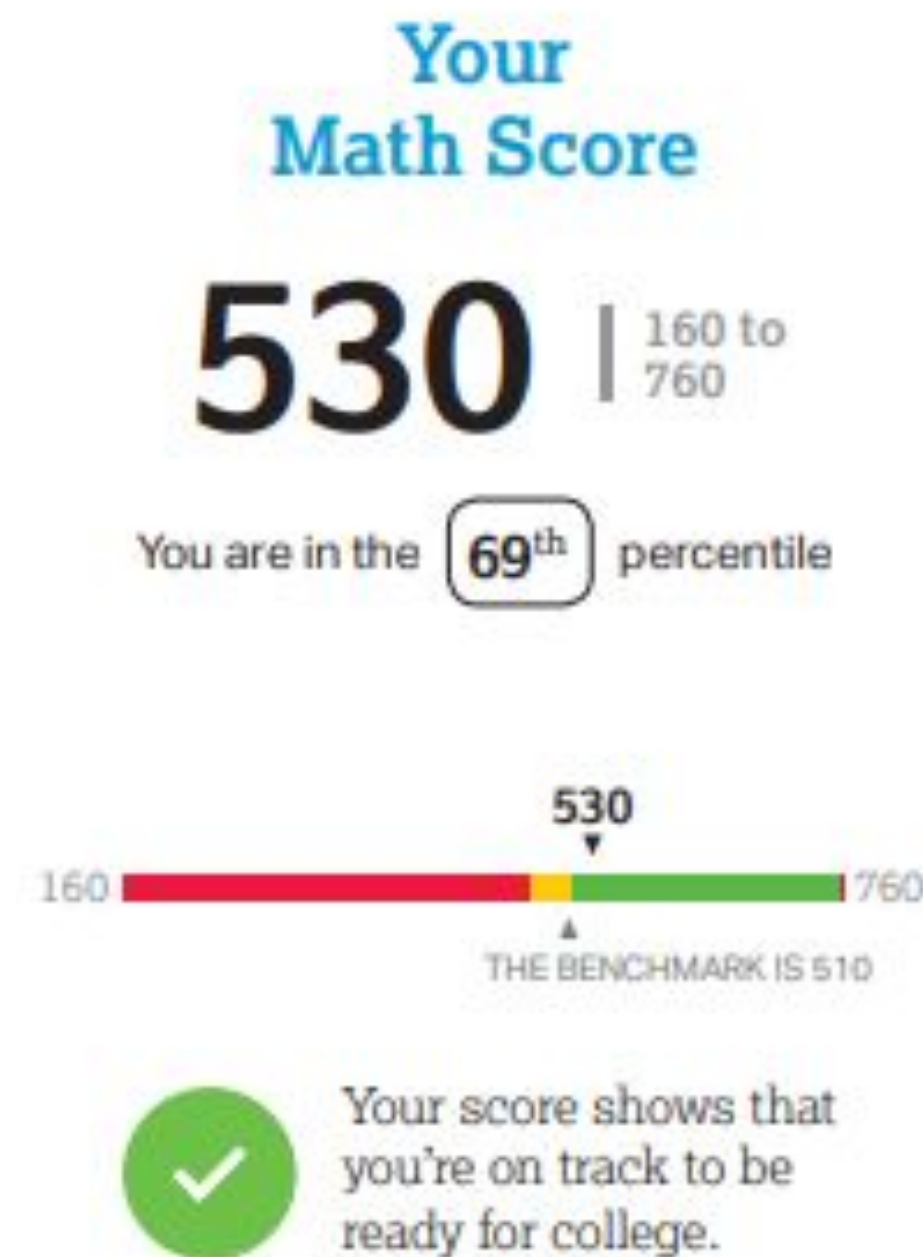
# What's in your report: EBRW score

Your EBRW (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing) score comes from the first two sections of the test: Reading and Writing.

Icons under your score show the benchmark and how you measure up.



# What's in your report: Math score



Your math score comes from the two math sections: No Calculator and Calculator. You'll also get a benchmark notification for this section. Benchmarks come from the College Board's general college research and don't indicate a student's chance at a specific college.

# What's in your report: Test scores

Your test scores are one step back from your total scores - and one step forward from your raw score. They're used to calculate your National Merit Selection Index.

## Your Test Scores\*

Reading  
**23** | 8 to 38

Writing and Language  
**20** | 8 to 38

Math  
**26.5** | 8 to 38

Additional detailed scores, like test scores, provide students with a deeper understanding of their performance. Test scores are also used to calculate your NMSC Selection Index.

# The PSAT and National Merit (NMSQT)

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In 11th grade, students who take the PSAT are eligible for National Merit recognition, which can bring in scholarship money and an edge in college admissions.

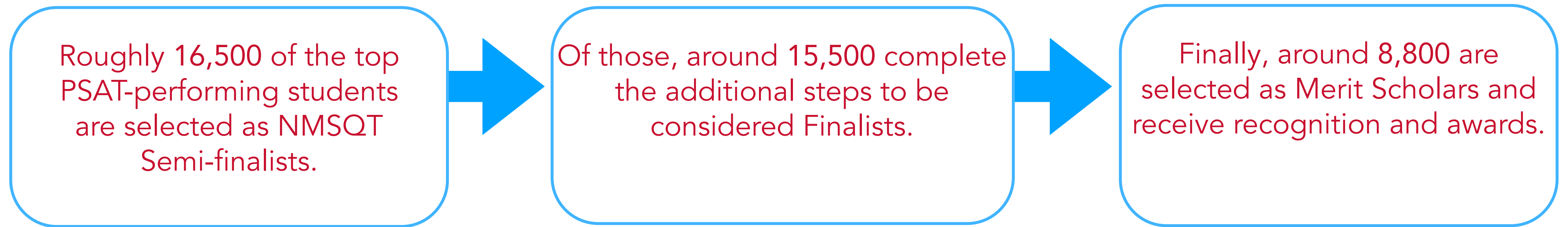


If you're a sophomore or freshman, you're not eligible yet, but you will be in your junior year!

*Source: National Merit Annual Report, 2017*



# The National Merit Selection Process



Although the Merit Scholars only make up 0.05% of students taking the NMSQT, Finalists and even Semi-finalists can use their NMSQT status to earn scholarships from private organizations and universities.

*Source: National Merit Annual Report, 2017*

# Your NMSC Selection Index



Your NMSC Selection Index

**139**

NMSC uses a Selection Index score based on PSAT/NMSQT scores as an initial screen of students who enter its scholarship programs. The Selection Index score is double the sum of your Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Test scores.

## Eligibility Information

You meet entry requirements for the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program and your Selection Index score will be considered among 1.5 million program entrants.

If your Selection Index places you among the 50,000 high scorers who qualify for National Merit Scholarship Program recognition, you will be notified next September when qualifying Selection Index scores will be made available.

## Entry Requirements

Information you provided on your answer sheet:

High school student: **YES**

Year to complete high school and enroll full time in college: **2022**

Total years to be spent in grades 9–12: **4**

Your NMSC selection index determines whether you'll be selected as a Commended Student or Semi-Finalist. Recognized students will be informed in September of their senior year.

We don't know what the cutoff will be this year for students in Georgia; it depends on the scores of the current juniors who took the test (either in October or January) and that number hasn't been released. It's hovered around 220 for the past few years in GA.

# What's in your report: Question-Level Feedback

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## Your Question-Level Feedback

For January administrations of the PSAT, you won't get to see the specific questions and their answers; you can only see whether you got the questions right or wrong.

However, you still have access to Khan Academy and additional resources on your online account.

# Looking for Patterns in the Test Report: Time management

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If your accuracy starts to dip towards the end of the test, it means one of two things:

- Time management issues
- Mental fatigue (this is particularly prevalent in the Reading section, since it is so long)

Both can be helped with steady practice!

## Looking for patterns in the test report: EBRW-specific

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Large error blocks in Reading/Writing might indicate a lack of interest or confidence in content area. Targeted practice will help!

The PSAT and SAT are reading-centric tests; you probably encountered at least one set of paired passages and one very challenging social sciences passages.

It's also worth noting that the reading on the ACT is faster-paced, but more consistent in its difficulty level (and the passages are shorter).

## Looking for patterns in the test report: Math-centric

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Generally speaking, the Math (No-Calculator) section requires students to do long-form multiplication and division and deal with exponents, radicals, and factoring by hand. If your accuracy rate was low, it's worth checking over what *you wrote down*.

The Calculator-enabled Math section is all about algebraic modeling and functions! This is a word-problem-heavy section. Look at the difficulty level of the problems you missed - if they're mostly 1- or 2- block questions, it's likely that you're not reading carefully enough.

# Digging Deeper: PSAT Math Content Areas

The College Board groups the PSAT Math content areas into three main categories:

1

## Heart of Algebra

solving functions, linear equations and inequalities; graphing linear functions, equations and inequalities; solving systems of linear equations and inequalities; modeling linear relationships; linear word problems

2

## Passport to Advanced Math

quadratic, radical and exponential equations and word problems; polynomials; factoring; non-linear functions and graphs; modeling exponential relationships

3

## Problem Solving and Data Analysis

ratios, proportions and percents; unit conversion; tables, scatterplots, and graphs; linear and exponential growth and decay; inferring from data; center, spread and share of data sets; other introductory statistics concepts

# Digging Deeper: PSAT Math Content Areas

In addition to those three big areas, the PSAT features a few questions each on:

## Geometry

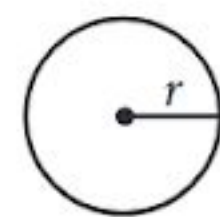
area, volume, perimeter, angles, polygons. Most of these are in word problem format.

## Trigonometry

right triangles, SOH-CAH-TOA

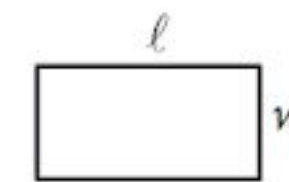
You'll get a reference guide for formulas!

### REFERENCE

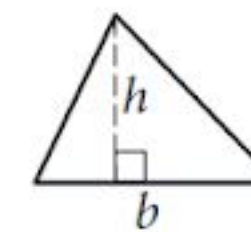


$$A = \pi r^2$$

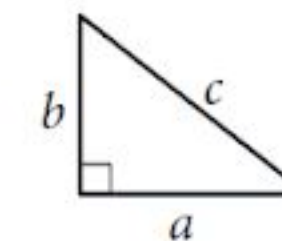
$$C = 2\pi r$$



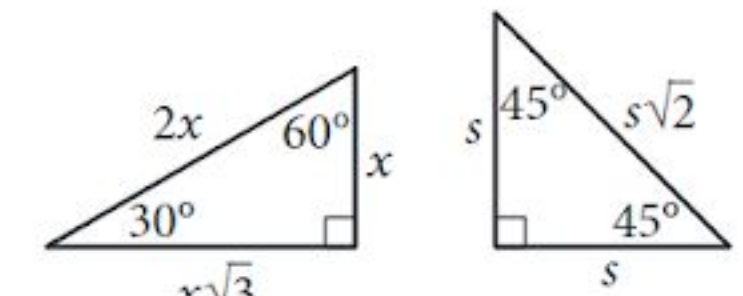
$$A = \ell w$$



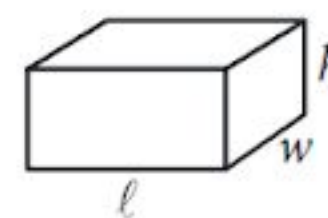
$$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$$



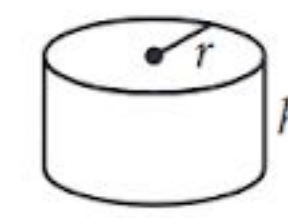
$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$



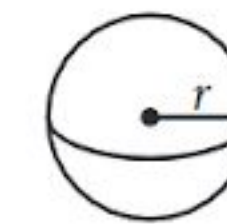
Special Right Triangles



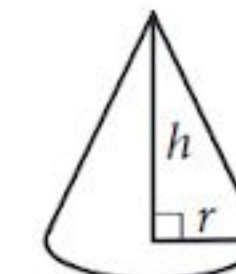
$$V = \ell wh$$



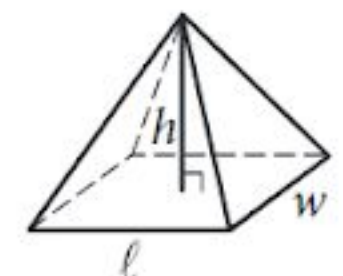
$$V = \pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\ell wh$$

The number of degrees of arc in a circle is 360.

The number of radians of arc in a circle is  $2\pi$

The sum of the measures in degrees of the angles of a triangle is 180.



# The PSAT and College Admissions

*How the PSAT fits in*



## How important is the PSAT?

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For most students, the PSAT scores have no direct impact on their college admissions process. Colleges never receive students' PSAT scores, and National Merit affects a tiny percentage of students.

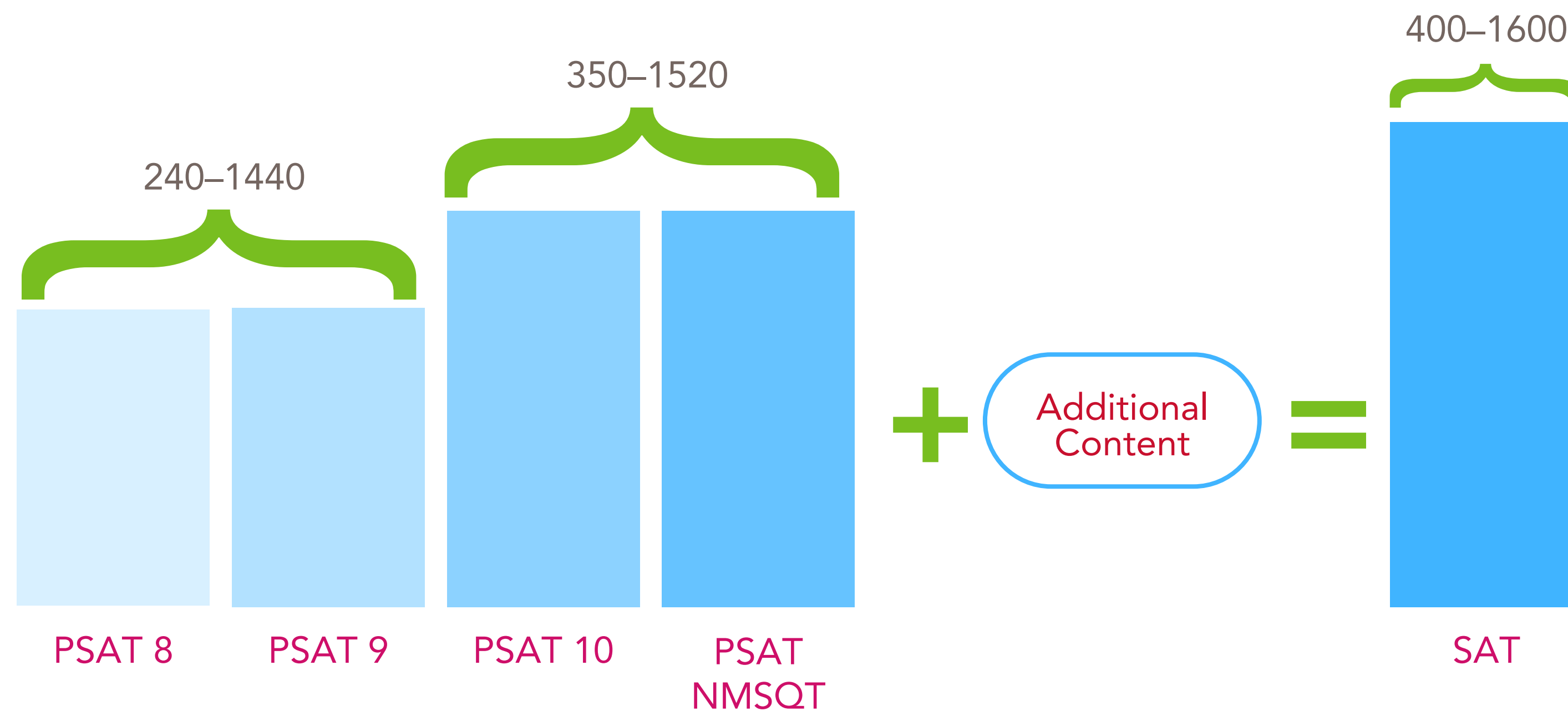
However, the PSAT is a great practice run for the SAT and can tell you a lot about how you would perform on that test.



The PSAT was written to pair with the SAT; although the SAT is longer and more difficult, PSAT scores can give a general\* sense of a student's potential SAT score.

Vertical scaling falls apart at the high end of the scoring curve, so it's less useful in predicting a high-scorer's SAT score.

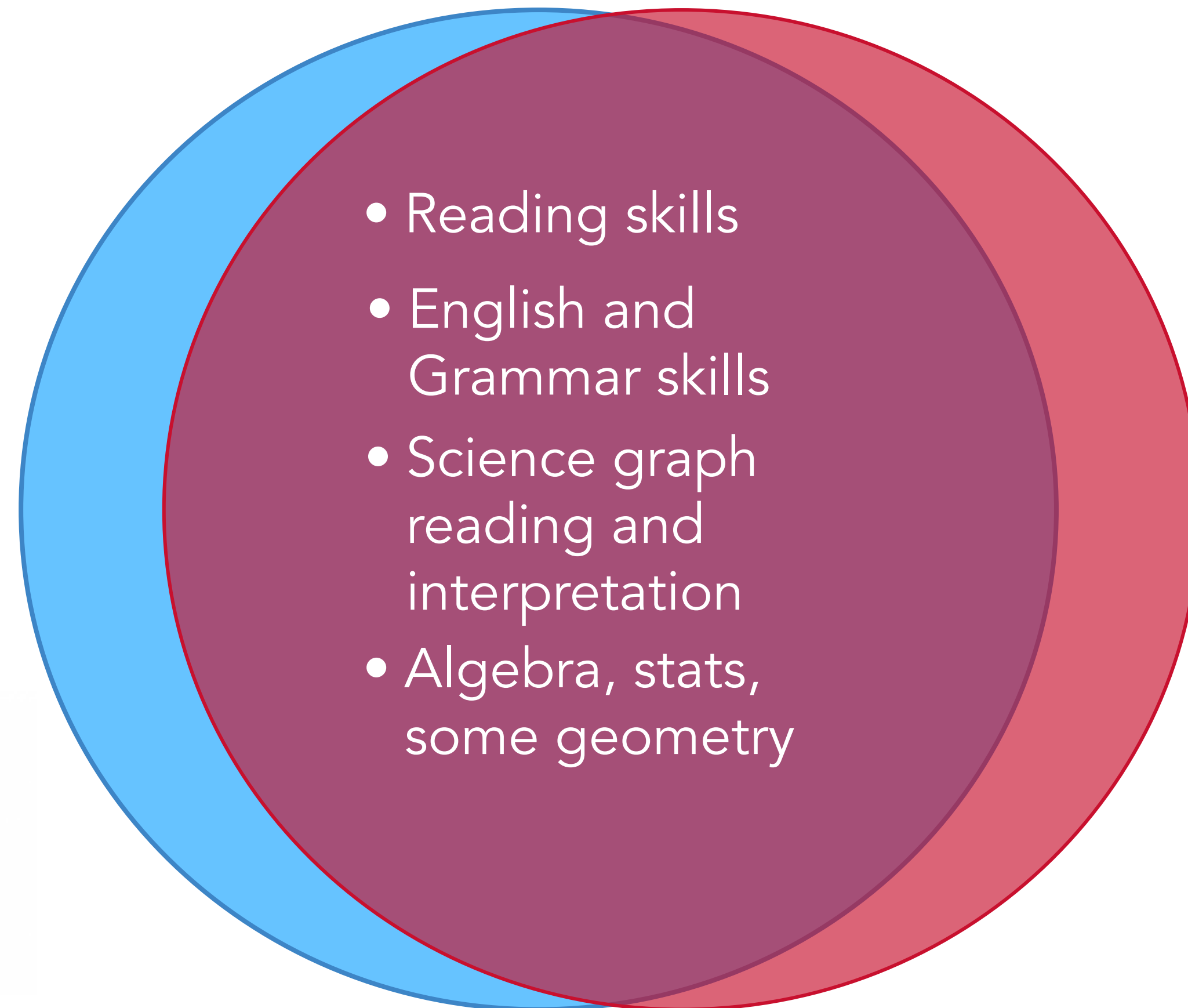
# Vertical Scaling of PSAT and SAT



As content gets harder, the possible point total increases.

# PSAT/SAT and ACT are more similar than ever

- More advanced reading
- More math word problems



- Reading skills
- English and Grammar skills
- Science graph reading and interpretation
- Algebra, stats, some geometry

- More advanced science
- More advanced math



## Using the PSAT to decide between SAT and ACT

- Take a practice ACT and use your PSAT scores for a baseline comparison. If you're a high scorer, you may want to do a practice SAT as well.
- By converting ACT scores to the SAT/PSAT scale, you can compare apples to apples:



If your scores are different by 70 SAT points or more, that means you have a significant strength in one test. Prep for the higher-scoring test.

If your scores are within 60 SAT points of each other, then you are within the margin of error for each test. Choose the one you'd like to focus on.



# Next Steps

*The SAT, ACT, and Admissions in the Time of COVID*



# The admissions process

## Academic Index:

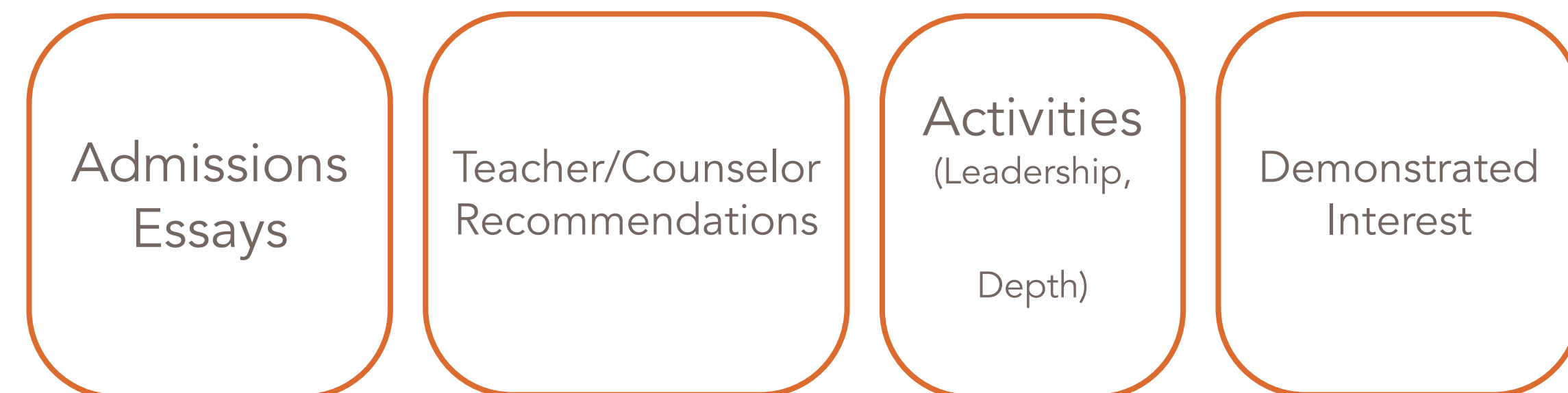
### Quantitative components



HOW will they read your application?

## Academic Index:

### Qualitative components



The packaging of the application—Is there a cohesive story?

# COVID-19 has made college admissions testing challenging

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During the spring, both the SAT and ACT were cancelled due to virus outbreaks worldwide.

The logo for the ACT (American College Testing) is displayed in a bold, dark blue serif font. A red swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letter 'A'. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the 'T'.

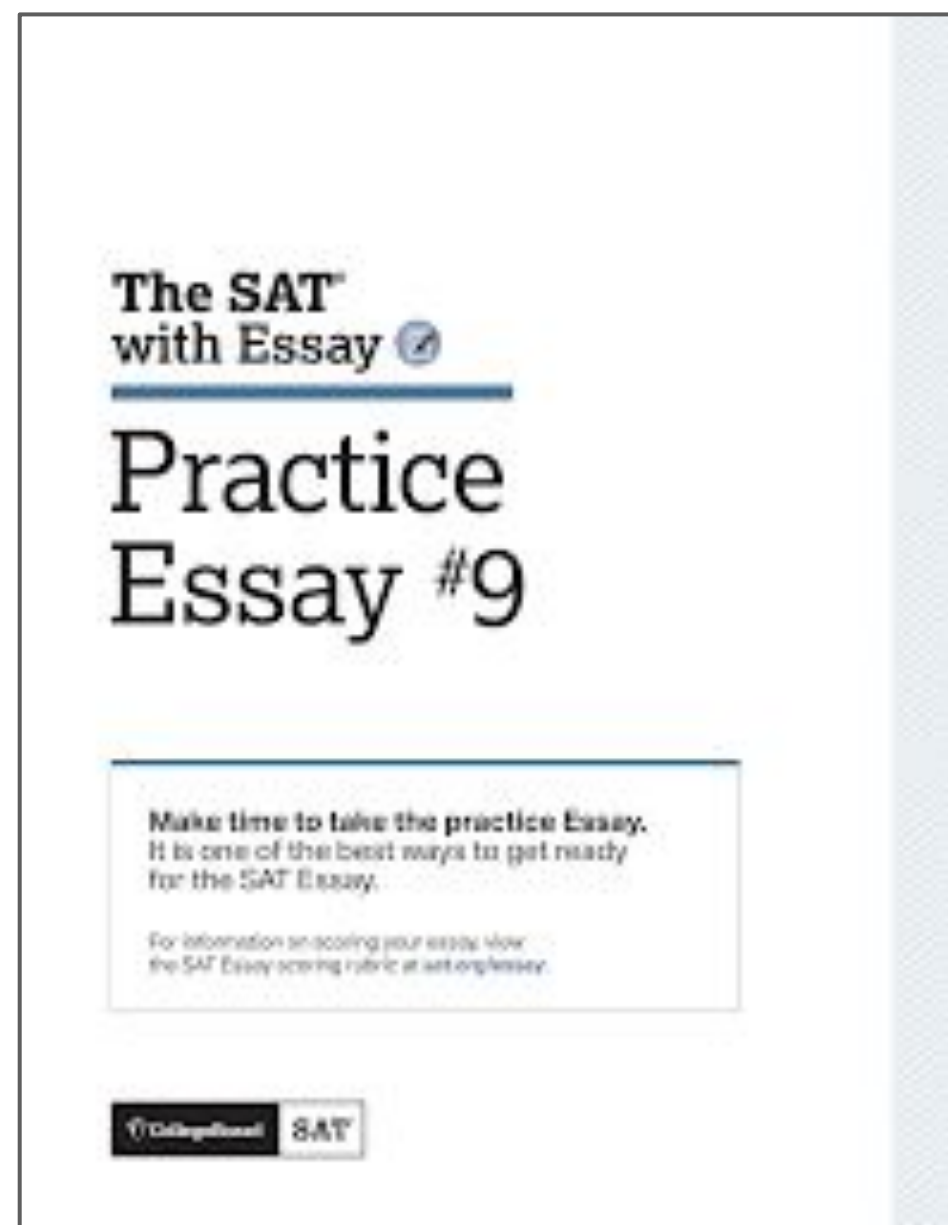
In the fall, testing resumed, but with much more limited seating and the frequent possibility of testing site cancellations.

This continues into the spring and summer - so if you plan to test, make sure you have multiple test dates lined up to hedge against possible cancellations.

The logo for the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) is shown. The letters 'SAT' are in a large, black, serif font. Above the 'A' is a blue speech bubble containing the words 'achieve more' in white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is placed to the upper right of the 'T'.



# The College Board dropped offerings due to COVID-19



The College Board announced in January that it will be dropping the optional essay from the SAT after June 2021.



## SAT Subject Tests

The College Board ended its SAT Subject Test program in January (they will be offered internationally until June).

# The pandemic broadened test-optional admissions



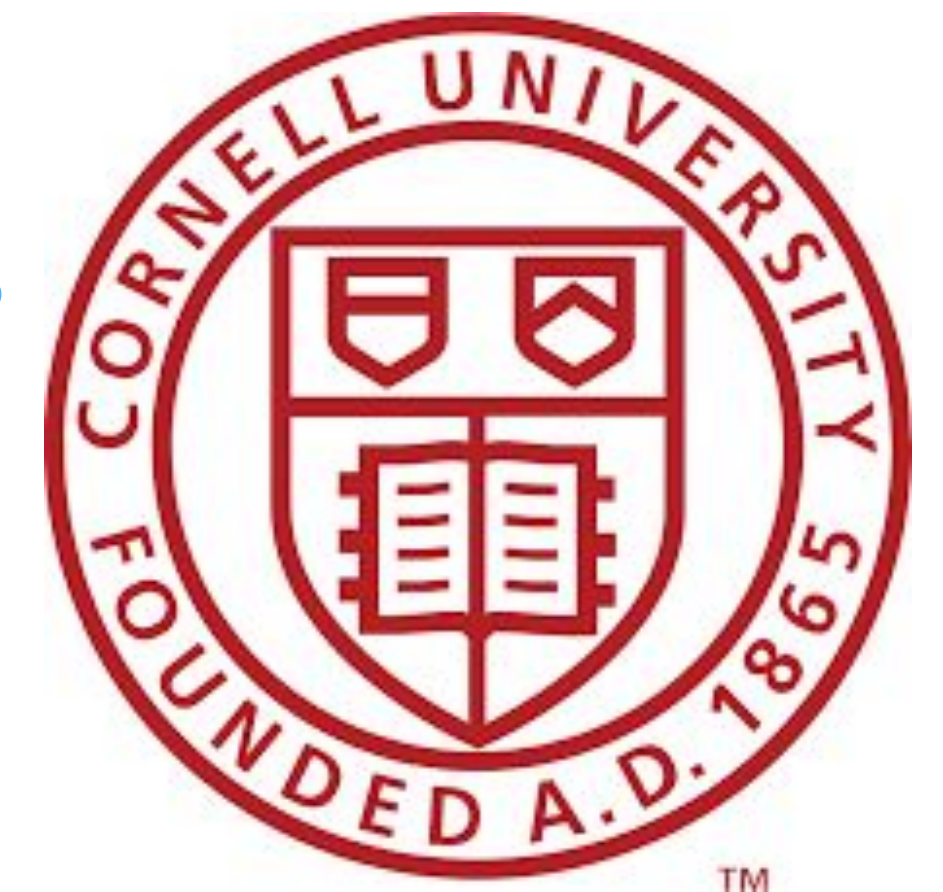
According to the ACT, approximately 50% of 4-yr colleges were already test-optional or flexible in some way. An additional 30% dropped testing requirements as a result of COVID-19.

<https://chronicle.brightspotcdn.com/a1/52/DCF530674AB59217FC5F025D6A76/210212-hedsurveysummaryfindings-externaluse.pdf>

## Cornell clarifies: test-optional means higher-scrutiny

“For those who can’t plan for, take, and submit exams, Cornell readers will consider with increased scrutiny their other application documents, looking for different evidence of excellent academic preparation.” These include:

- Rigor and GPA
- Commitment to pursuing other learning experiences
- Other testing
- Essays
- Counselor and teacher recs



<https://admissions.cornell.edu/news/cornell-university-suspends-actsat-testing-requirement-2021-applicants>

## Test-optional is here to stay, but not test-blind in most cases

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The same ACT study found that most admissions officers do not believe their schools will reinstate ACT/SAT requirements, but they also don't think their schools will do away with testing altogether.

Almost 70% of surveyed admissions officers said that testing results "are too useful to abandon altogether."

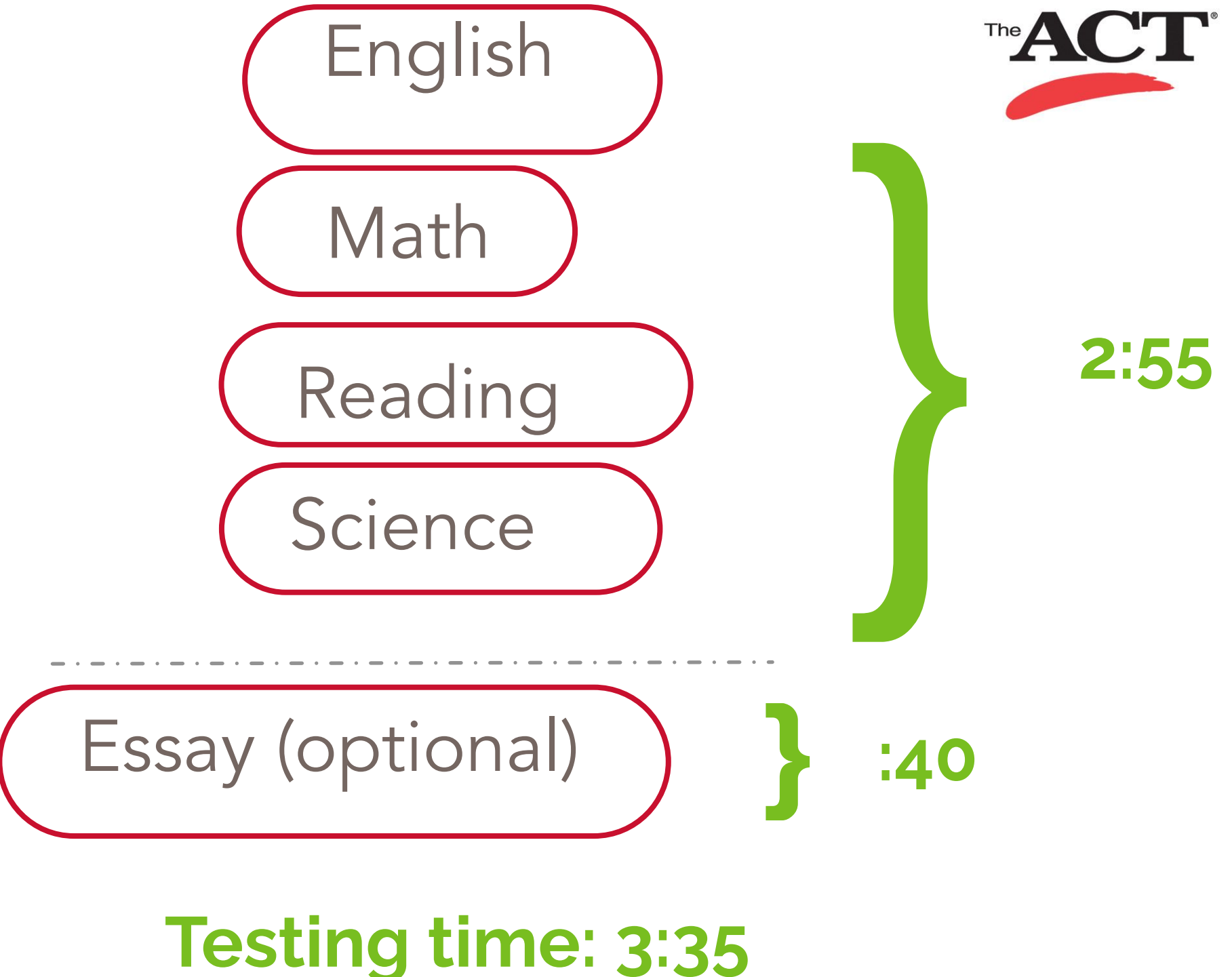
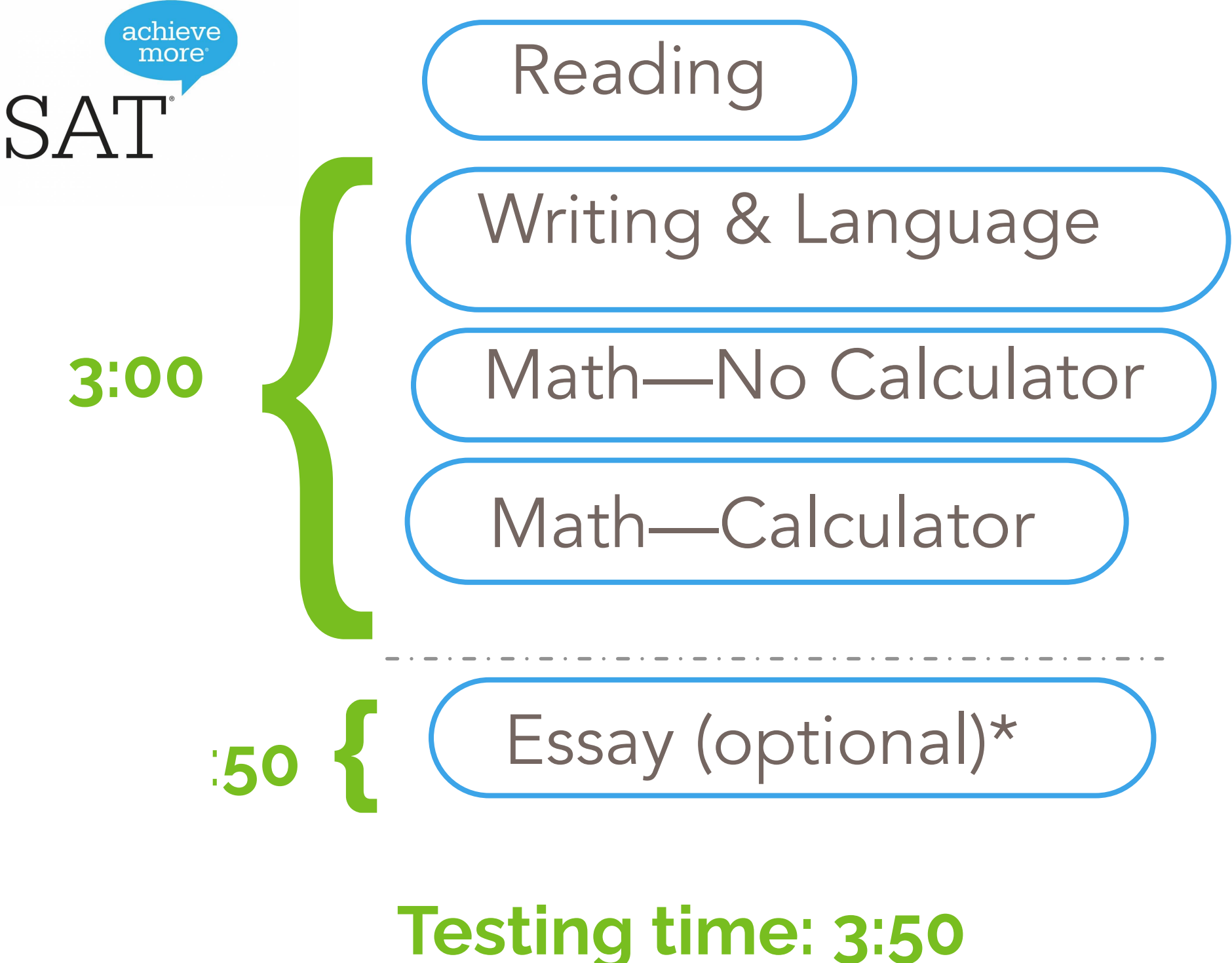
Today the SAT and ACT are interchangeable

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Colleges will accept either test without prejudice.

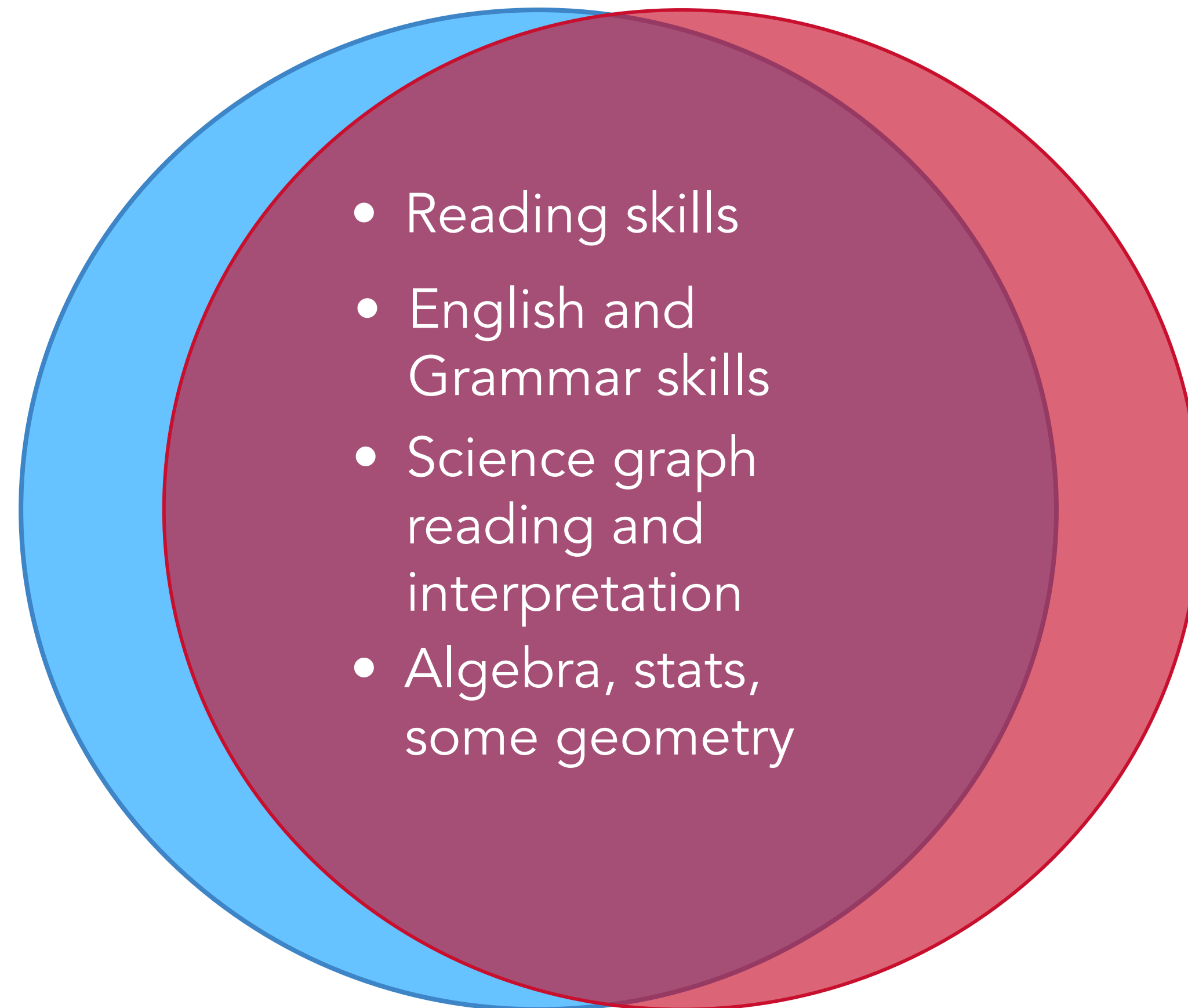
# Structurally, the two tests appear nearly identical



\*Offered until June 2021

# Overall, 75-80% of the test content overlaps

- More advanced reading
- More math word problems



- Reading skills
- English and Grammar skills
- Science graph reading and interpretation
- Algebra, stats, some geometry

- More advanced science
- More advanced math



The amount of time per question is a profound difference.

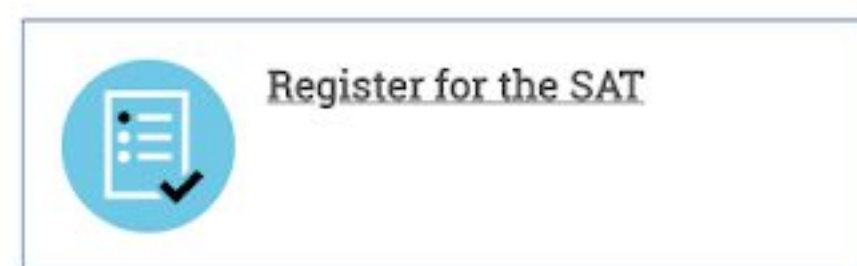
Section	ACT	SAT	% Difference
Writing	36.0	47.7	33%
Reading	52.5	75.0	43%
Math	60.0	84.2	40%
Science	52.5	N/A	N/A

The SAT has a more forgiving timing structure, which can benefit some students, but in many ways it's also a more complicated test.



# How to register for the SAT and ACT

To register for the SAT, log on to <http://www.collegeboard.org> and click "Register for the SAT." You will have to create a CollegeBoard account if you do not already have one.



To register for the ACT, log on to <http://www.act.org> and click "Register Now for the ACT." You will have to create an ACT account if you do not already have one.



# How to secure accommodations

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If your student needs accommodations for either the SAT or ACT, you must work with your student's school guidance counselor or disabilities coordinator to submit the correct paperwork.

- ★ If your student plans to take the SAT multiple times with accommodations, you only have to go through the process once—the accommodations follow your student through any SAT, AP exam or PSAT.
- ★ However, you have to re-apply for accommodations for every ACT administration your student plans to sit for. Be aware that it can take some time to process, and don't leave registration until the last minute!

Colleges cannot see when a student has taken a test with accommodations—it's the law!

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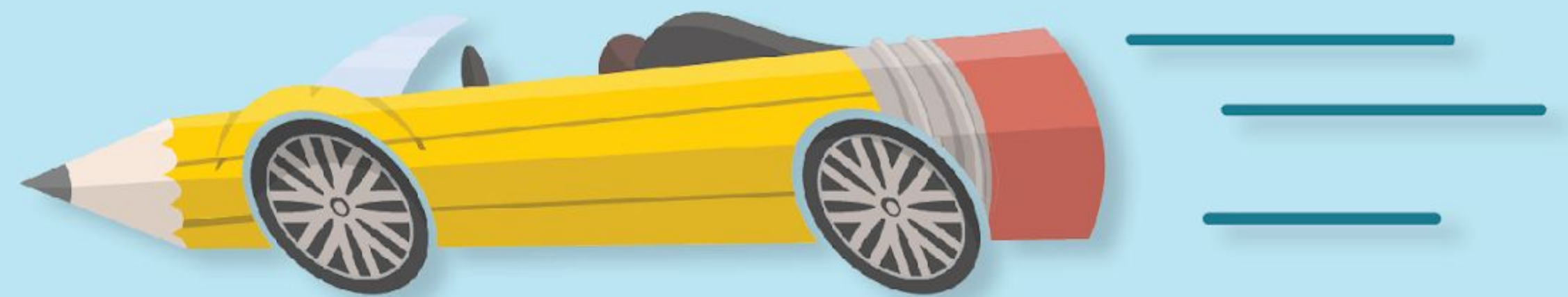
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We'll keep you up-to-date on what's happening at Applerouth and in the world of college admission testing!

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# Our Services

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SAT & ACT prep  
(online, private, group)

SAT Subject and  
AP prep

HS subject assistance

Study Skills



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