



Test Guide



College Counseling Office
International Programs
Chengdu Meishi International School

SAT

The SAT is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned, published, and developed by the College Board, a nonprofit organization in the United States. It was formerly developed, published, and scored by the Educational Testing Service which still administers the exam. The test is intended to assess a student's readiness for college. It was first introduced in 1926, and its name and scoring have changed several times. It was first called the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then the Scholastic Assessment Test, but now SAT does not stand for anything, hence is an empty acronym.

The current SAT Reasoning Test, introduced in 2005, takes three hours and forty-five minutes to finish, and costs \$51 + \$40 Non-U.S. Regional Fee (East Asia/Pacific), excluding late fees. Possible scores range from 600 to 2,400, combining test results from three 800-point sections (Mathematics, Critical Reading, and Writing).

Taking the SAT or its competitor, the ACT, is required for freshman entry to many, but not all, universities in the United States.

Important Facts

- **Time**

SAT Test Months - INTERNATIONAL (Outside the USA)

January

May

June

October

November

December

- **College Board Official Website:** <http://www.collegeboard.org/>

- **Test Centers**

There is no Test Center in Mainland China. Students often choose Test Centers in Hong Kong which is the closest from Mainland China, or in Macau, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan or South Korea.

- **Fees**

The SAT Reasoning Test costs \$51 + \$40 Non-U.S. Regional Fee (East Asia/Pacific). For the Subject tests, students pay a \$24.5 Basic Registration Fee and \$13 per test (except for language tests with listening, which cost \$24 each). The College Board makes fee waivers available for low income students. Additional fees apply for late registration, standby testing, registration changes, scores by telephone, and extra score reports (beyond the four provided for free).

• Taking the test

The SAT is offered seven times a year in the United States; in October, November, December, January, March (or April, alternating), May, and June. The test is typically offered on the first Saturday of the month for the November, December, May, and June administrations. In other countries, the SAT is offered on the same dates as in the United States except for the first spring test date (i.e., March or April), which is not offered. In 2006, the test was taken 1,465,744 times.

Candidates may take either the SAT Reasoning Test or up to three SAT Subject Tests on any given test date, except the first spring test date, when only the SAT Reasoning Test is offered. Candidates wishing to take the test may register online at the College Board's website, by mail, or by telephone, at least three weeks before the test date.

The SAT Subject Tests are all given in one large book on test day. Therefore, it is actually immaterial which tests, and how many, the student signs up for; with the possible exception of the language tests with listening, the student may change his or her mind and take any tests, regardless of his or her initial sign-ups. Students who choose to take more subject tests than they signed up for will later be billed by College Board for the additional tests and their scores will be withheld until the bill is paid. Students who choose to take fewer subject tests than they signed up for are not eligible for a refund.

Candidates whose religious beliefs prevent them from taking the test on a Saturday may request to take the test on the following day, except for the October test date in which the Sunday test date is eight days after the main test offering. Such requests must be made at the time of registration and are subject to denial.

Students with verifiable disabilities, including physical and learning disabilities, are eligible to take the SAT with accommodations. The standard time increase for students requiring additional time due to learning disabilities is time + 50%; time + 100% is also offered.

SAT Tests are usually offered on the first Saturdays of May, June, October, November, December and the 3rd Saturday of January.

Advice: Students are recommended to take tests in May, June, Oct. and Nov.

(December is the high time they submit their applications)

TOEFL

TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language) evaluates the ability of an individual to use and understand English in an academic setting. It was developed to address the problem on ensuring English language proficiency for non-native speakers wishing to study at American universities. It has become an admission requirement for non-native English speakers at many English-speaking colleges and universities. Additionally, institutions such as government agencies, licensing bodies, businesses, or scholarship programs may require this test. A TOEFL score is valid for two years and then will no longer be officially reported since a candidate's language proficiency could have significantly changed since the date of the test. Colleges and universities usually consider only the most recent TOEFL score.

Test Center & Time

Chengdu: Sichuan University (STN80036) , University of Electronic Science & Technology of China (STN80051) , Chengdu University of Information Technology (STN80066)

Chongqing: Chongqing University (STN80060) , Sichuan International Studies University (STN80001)

To check exact dates for the up-coming tests:

Please log on the official website: <http://toefl.etest.net.cn/>

Formats and contents

■ Internet-based Test

Since its introduction in late 2005, the **Internet-based Test (iBT)** has progressively replaced both the computer-based tests (CBT) and paper-based tests (PBT), although paper-based testing is still used in select areas. The iBT has been introduced in phases, with the United States, Canada, France, Germany, and Italy in 2005 and the rest of the world in 2006, with test centers added regularly. The CBT was discontinued in September 2006 and these scores are no longer valid.

Although initially, the demand for test seats was higher than availability, and candidates had to wait for months, it is now possible to take the test within one to four weeks in most countries. The four-hour test consists of four sections, each measuring one of the basic language skills (while some tasks require integrating multiple skills) and all tasks focus on language used in an academic, higher-education environment. Note-taking is allowed during the iBT. The test cannot be taken more than once a week.

1. **Reading**

The Reading section consists of 3–4 passages, each approximately 700 words in length and questions about the passages. The passages are on academic topics; they are the kind of material that might be found in an undergraduate university textbook. Passages require understanding of rhetorical functions such as cause-effect, compare-contrast and argumentation. Students answer questions about main ideas, details, inferences, essential information, sentence insertion, vocabulary, rhetorical purpose and overall ideas. New types of questions in the iBT require filling out tables or completing summaries. Prior knowledge of the subject under discussion is not necessary to come to the correct answer.

2. **Listening**

The Listening section consists of six passages 3–5 minutes in length and questions about the passages. These passages include two student conversations and four academic lectures or discussions. A conversation involves two speakers, a student and either a professor or a campus service provider. A lecture is a self-contained portion of an academic lecture, which may involve student participation and does not assume specialized background knowledge in the subject area. Each conversation and lecture stimulus is heard only once. Test-takers may take notes while they listen and they may refer to their notes when they answer the questions. Each conversation is associated with five questions and each lecture with six. The questions are meant to measure the ability to understand main ideas, important details, implications, relationships between ideas, organization of information, speaker purpose and speaker attitude.

3. **Speaking**

The Speaking section consists of six tasks: two independent tasks and four integrated tasks. In the two independent tasks, test-takers answer opinion questions on familiar topics. They are evaluated on their ability to speak spontaneously and convey their ideas clearly and coherently. In two of the integrated tasks, test-takers read a short passage, listen to an academic course lecture or a conversation about campus life and answer a question by combining appropriate information from the text and the talk. In the two remaining integrated tasks, test-takers listen to an academic course lecture or a conversation about campus life and then respond to a question about what they heard. In the integrated tasks, test-takers are evaluated on their ability to appropriately synthesize and effectively convey information from the reading and listening material. Test-takers may take notes as they read and listen and may use their notes to help prepare their responses. Test-takers are given a short preparation time before they have to begin speaking. The responses are digitally recorded, sent to ETS's Online Scoring Network (OSN) and evaluated by three to six raters.

4. Writing

The Writing section measures a test taker's ability to write in an academic setting and consists of two tasks: one integrated task and one independent task. In the integrated task, test-takers read a passage on an academic topic and then listen to a speaker discuss the same topic. The test-taker will then write a summary about the important points in the listening passage and explain how these relate to the key points of the reading passage. In the independent task, the test-taker must write an essay that states, explains, and supports their opinion on an issue, supporting their opinions or choices, rather than simply listing personal preferences or choices. Responses are sent to the ETS OSN and evaluated by four raters.

Task	Description	Approx. time
Reading	3–4 passages, each containing 12–14 questions	60–80 minutes
Listening	6–9 passages, each containing 5–6 questions	60–90 minutes
Break		10 minutes
Speaking	6 tasks and 6 questions	20 minutes
Writing	2 tasks and 2 questions	50 minutes

One of the sections of the test will include extra, uncounted material. Educational Testing Service includes extra material in order to pilot test questions for future test forms. When test-takers are given a longer section, they should give equal effort to all of the questions because they do not know which question will count and which will be considered extra. For example, if there are four reading passages instead of three, then three of those passages will count and one of the passages will not be counted. Any of the four passages could be the uncounted one.

Test scores

Internet-based Test

The iBT version of the TOEFL test is scored on a scale of 0 to 120 points.

- ✓ Each of the four sections (Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing) receives a scaled score from 0 to 30. The scaled scores from the four sections are added together to determine the total score.
- ✓ Each speaking question is initially given a score of 0 to 4, and each writing question is initially given a score of 0 to 5. These scores are converted to scaled scores of 0 to 30.

Accepted TOEFL Scores

Most colleges use TOEFL scores as only one factor in their admission process. Each college or program within a college often has a minimum TOEFL score required. The minimum TOEFL iBT scores range from 61 (Bowling Green State University) to 110 (MIT, Columbia, Harvard).

ETS has released tables to convert between iBT, CBT and PBT scores.

Notice:

- 1) Due to the large number of candidates, it is best that students register for tests 3 to 6 months in advance.**
- 2) If the seats at your local test centers are full, you can choose other test centers outside your city for registering and taking tests.**
- 3) Grade 11 students are advised to take tests in July, Aug. and Sept.**

IELTS

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is an international standardized test of English language proficiency. It is jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Pty Ltd, and was established in 1989.

There are two versions of the IELTS: the **Academic Version** and the **General Training Version**:

- ✓ The Academic Version is intended for those who want to enroll in universities and other institutions of higher education and for professionals such as medical doctors and nurses who want to study or practice in an English-speaking country.
- ✓ The General Training Version is intended for those planning to undertake non-academic training or to gain work experience, or for immigration purposes.

IELTS is accepted by most Australian, British, Canadian, Irish, New Zealand and Singaporean academic institutions, over 3,000 academic institutions including all 8 in the Ivy League in the United States, and various professional organizations. It is also a requirement for immigration to Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

No minimum score is required to pass the test. An IELTS result or **Test Report Form** is issued to all candidates with a score from 1 (no knowledge) to 9 (expert user) and each institution sets a different threshold. Institutions are advised not to consider valid a report older than two years, unless the user proves that he has worked to maintain his level.

The IELTS Administrator in China has its official website as: <http://www.chinaielts.org/en/> that includes all the information needed for the test. Please check out before you register.

Test Center & Time

Chengdu: Sichuan University, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

Chongqing: Chongqing University

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IELTS features

The IELTS incorporates the following features:

- A variety of accents and writing styles have presented in test materials in order to minimize linguistic bias.
- IELTS tests the ability to listen, read, write and speak in English.
- Band scores used for each language sub-skill (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking). The Band Scale ranges from 0 ("Did not attempt the test") to 9 ("Expert User").
- The speaking module is a key component of IELTS. It is conducted in the form of a one-to-one interview with an examiner. The examiner assesses the candidate as he or she is speaking, but the speaking session is also recorded for monitoring as well as re-marking in case of an appeal against the banding given.
- IELTS is developed with input from item writers from around the world. Teams are located in the USA, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and other English-speaking nations.

IELTS test structure

All candidates must complete four Modules - Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking - to obtain a band score, which is shown on the IELTS Test Report Form (TRF). All candidates take the same Listening and Speaking Modules, while the Reading and Writing Modules differ depending on whether the candidate is taking the **Academic** or **General Training** Versions of the Test.

■ Listening

The listening module comprises four sections. Each section begins with a short introduction telling the candidates about the situation and the speakers. Then they have some time to look through the questions. The first three sections have a break in the middle allowing candidates to look at the remaining questions. Each section is heard only once.

■ Reading

In the academic module the reading test comprises three sections, with 3 texts normally followed by 13 or 14 questions for a total of 40 questions overall. The General test also has 3 sections. However the texts are shorter, so there can be up to 5 texts to read.

■ Writing

In the Academic module, there are two tasks: in Task 1 candidates describe a diagram, graph, process or chart, and in Task 2 they respond to an argument. In the General Training module, there are also two tasks: in Task 1 candidates write a letter or explain a situation, and in Task 2 they write an essay.

■ Speaking

The speaking test contains three sections. The first section takes the form of an interview during which candidates may be asked about their hobbies, interests, reasons for taking IELTS exam as well as other general topics such as clothing, free time, computers and the internet or family. In the second section candidates are given a topic card and then have one minute to prepare after which they must speak about the given topic. The third section involves a discussion between the examiner and the candidate, generally on questions relating to the theme which they have already spoken about in part 2. This last section is more abstract, and is usually considered the most difficult.

■ Duration

The total test duration is around **2 hours and 45 minutes** for Listening, Reading and Writing modules.

- ✓ **Listening: 40 minutes**, 30 minutes for which a recording is played centrally and additional 10 minutes for transferring answers onto the OMR answer sheet.
- ✓ **Reading: 60 minutes.**
- ✓ **Writing: 60 minutes.**
- ✓ **Speaking: 11–14 minutes.**

(Note: No additional time is given for transfer of answers in Reading and Writing modules)

The first three modules - Listening, Reading and Writing (always in that order) - are completed in one day, and in fact are taken with no break in between. The Speaking Module may be taken, at the discretion of the test centre, in the period seven days before or after the other Modules.

The tests are designed to cover the full range of ability from non-user to expert user.

Band scale

IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale, with each band corresponding to a specified competence in English. Overall Band Scores are reported to the nearest half band.

The following rounding convention applies: if the average across the four skills ends in .25, it is rounded up to the next half band, and if it ends in .75, it is rounded up to the next whole band.

The nine bands are described as follows:

9	Expert User	Has full operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.
8	Very Good User	Has full operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.
7	Good User	Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriateness and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.
6	Competent User	Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.
5	Modest user	Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.
4	Limited User	Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in using complex language.
3	Extremely Limited User	Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations.
2	Intermittent User	No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs.
1	Non User	Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

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