

# GEARUP SCORES!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS at Cincinnati Public Schools

**April 20-24**  
Ohio Achievement Tests, grades 3-8

**April 27-May 1**  
Midterm Week

**May 4-15**  
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

**Monday, May 25**  
Memorial Day Holiday  
schools closed

**Thursday, May 28**  
Last day for pupils

## Did you know?

Many resources are available to help you prepare for the SAT and ACT. Start online—learn how the tests are structured, take sample tests, and read more tips and suggestions at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (for the SAT) and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) (for the ACT).

For additional help, ask your school counselor or **GEARUP SCORES** specialist.

## GEARUP



Guiding 4,000 Cincinnati Public Schools students step by step to college

For more information:  
phone 513-556-3611  
or fax 513-556-1037



## Tips for successful ACT/SAT test-taking

It's the unusual person who really enjoys taking tests! Most of us face exams with sweaty palms, tight nerves, and some degree of self-doubt.

You can reduce pre-test anxiety with knowledge and preparation – not only about the test subject, but about the test purpose, process, and structure. Here are a few facts and tips about the SAT and ACT tests to get you started.

### What is the ACT/SAT?

While the SAT and ACT are different in structure and content, they serve similar purposes in the college admission process. They help admissions officers determine how well you'll do in college, and they help compare students from varying high school backgrounds.

The SAT is a reasoning test that measures critical thinking skills. It shows how well you analyze information and solve problems. The ACT tests content knowledge in basic subjects you've studied in high school: English, math, reading and science. Depending on your strengths and thinking/learning styles, you may perform much better on one test than the other. That's why many schools require or suggest both tests – to give a balanced look at each student's performance.

Keep in mind that test scores are only one factor college admissions officers look at. Your transcripts, extracurricular activities, references, essay and interview all are considered in the acceptance decision. Don't pin all your hopes or expectations on your test scores, but strive for balance.

Here are some quick facts about -- and differences between -- the two tests:

	SAT	ACT
<b>When is the test offered?</b>	Seven times annually	Six times annually
<b>What does the test cover?</b>	Critical reading, mathematics, writing, 9th-grade math equations, reading passages, comprehension and sentence completion. An essay and grammar questions.	English, mathematics, reading, science and reasoning. Math problems can vary and may include trigonometry. Reading comprises passages that are fictional, scientific and humanities-related. The English section focuses on grammar.
<b>Is there a penalty for wrong answers?</b>	Yes	No
<b>How is the test scored?</b>	200–800 per section, added together for an accumulated score. 2400 is the maximum possible score.	1–36 for each subject, averaged for a single score. A 36 is the highest possible score.
<b>When do you register for the test?</b>	At least six weeks before the test date.	At least four weeks before the test date.
<b>How long is the test?</b>	3 hours, 45 minutes	3 hours, 30 minutes

### General test-taking tips

All the general test-taking advice you've received on these pages and in your school classes applies to the ACT and SAT. These include getting a good night's sleep the night before, eating breakfast that morning, bringing everything you'll need with you, reading all questions carefully, and so on. In addition, these tips apply specifically to the ACT and SAT:

**Budget your time wisely.** Avoid spending too much time on hard questions or passages, or rushing through them too quickly. Answer the easy ones first, then go back over the section to work on the harder ones. If you have no idea of the correct answer to a question, skip it and come back later if you have time. (Often the second time around the answer will come to you.) This is especially important in the SAT, since all questions are worth the same number of points.

**For multiple-choice questions, use the process of elimination.** The correct answer is there, you just have to find it! Eliminate the choices you are confident are wrong, then make an educated guess.

**For the ACT, answer every question.** Your scores on multiple-choice sections are based on the number of questions you answer correctly, and there is no "penalty" for guessing.

**Don't obsess over questions that completely stump you.** Remember, the tests are designed to be difficult!

### Essay insights

The essay segment of the SAT (or the writing portion of the ACT Plus Writing test) deserves attention, too. These sections are designed to engage your ability to think critically, organize your thoughts logically, and write concisely and correctly.

The general format consists of a writing prompt describing a controversy or issue, briefly outlining opposing points of view. You'll be asked to choose a viewpoint (you can develop your own or choose one that's given) and write about it persuasively. Be sure to start with a provocative opening sentence. Explain your point of view clearly and logically and give specific examples to illustrate and back up your ideas. Then bring up some opposing viewpoints and refute them logically. Stay on topic; be thorough, but concise and lead toward a strong conclusion.

Budgeting your time is especially important. It's helpful to think about your essay points and jot down a brief outline before starting to write. You'll also want to allow enough time to read the finished essay carefully to make final edits.

## Just For Parents Help reduce your teen's test anxiety

- Don't judge your teen on one particular test score. These scores are not always perfect measures of a student's knowledge.
- Encourage your teen! Although he may give the impression that your approval isn't as important as it once was, he still values — and will be motivated by — your praise.
- Stay connected with your teen's teachers. It's true, your teen won't always tell you very much about her day. Checking in with her teachers occasionally via phone or email will keep you up to date on test schedules and study sessions.
- It's not easy, but make sure your teen is well rested for test days.
- Encourage healthy eating. A certain amount of fat is okay — and necessary — for your teen's brain development. But balance that with lean protein, fruits and vegetables.

