

Guidance on Standardized Testing (AP, ACT, SAT, etc.)

AKEB USA shares the following facts, tips, strategies and resources for students and families in our Jamat affected by the significant changes with standardized tests

EXAM FACTS

ACT/SAT

- o Many ACT and SAT exams were cancelled between March-July
- o Testing sites remain at limited capacity or closed in some states
- o Many colleges have become 'test optional' for the 2020-2021 application cycle, and it is unclear if they will reverse this decision

AP Exams

- o AP exams were administered at home in Spring 2020
- o Exams were reduced to 50 minutes with free response questions
- o Colleges are still accepting scores from these modified AP exams

IB Exams

- o Diploma/Certificate exams were canceled in May
- o Students were awarded a score based on an algorithm that considered a student's coursework, grades, and historical exams
- o The algorithm was highly contested and many students felt scores disadvantaged them in the admissions process

SAT Subject Tests

- o SAT subject test requirements have been loosened, and vary by college - recommended, optional or not considered at all

WHAT DOES A COLLEGE MEAN WHEN IT SAYS...

Test optional:

The school lets you decide if you want to submit test scores. If submitted, the school will consider the scores, but may focus more on other parts of the application.

Test flexible:

The school allows you to submit test scores for the SAT or ACT, OR a different test entirely (e.g., SAT Subject Test, AP test).

Test blind:

The school will not consider any scores, even if they are include in the application.



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TIPS AND STRATEGIES

Scenario 1: Student has taken the SAT/ACT and scored well

- o You can proceed to apply as normal
- o Don't neglect other parts of your application just because you are submitting test scores

Scenario 2: Student has taken the SAT/ACT, but did not score in the competitive range for the college(s) to which they are applying

- o If there is a significant discrepancy between your test score and that of the incoming class of the desired college(s), (i.e. test score falls below 25th percentile of school's average), then omit test scores at your own discretion and focus on enhancing other aspects of your application

Scenario 3: Student has not yet taken the SAT/ACT

- o If possible, take the test if you feel confident that you can perform successfully on the test (for seniors applying this cycle, that should be no later than October)
- o If testing is not an option, focus on essays and enhancing other aspects of your application

Overall, you may consider submitting test scores if...

- o Your test score can function as a "meaningful differentiator"
- o You feel comfortable taking the test, or feel strongly that you can obtain a score above or within the average range for colleges to which you are applying

GRADE-SPECIFIC ADVICE

11th/12th grade - see above for what applies to you, since it is likely that impacts of COVID-19 on testing policies will persist for now; focus on maintaining grades and engaging in meaningful extracurriculars during this time

9th/10th grade - focus on earning/maintaining grades and joining meaningful extracurriculars, work on establishing relationships with teachers and plan to prepare for these exams when the time is appropriate

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Books at your local library or favorite bookseller: *The Official ACT Prep Guide* and *The Official SAT Study Guide*; also consider Princeton Review, Barron's, etc.
- Quizlet, Magoosh and YouTube have free content and strategy tips
- Free ACT practice/diagnostic tests [here](#), and sample questions for [English](#), [Math](#), [Reading](#), [Science](#), and [Writing](#)
- Free SAT practice/diagnostic tests [here](#) and [here](#), and sample questions [here](#)

