Knowing where you're going on the road to college is the key to a successful trip. From test prep to admission tips, here's the expert advice you need to get started on your journey and stay in the know along the way.

Let's talk about the SAT and ACT. These two exams are the best-known and most-dreaded parts of the college application. Don't sweat it. Nearly every school accepts either the SAT or the ACT for admission, which means you can take the test that's best for you. Here's how they compare.

**SAT**
- **3 tests:** Reading, Writing and Language, Math
- **Optional Essay**
- **Length:** 3 hours (without essay), 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)
- **Math:** Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis
- **Science:** None (science section testing your overall thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge))
- **Tools:** You cannot use a calculator on 1 out of 2 math sections.
- **Essays:** Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
- **Scoring:** Scored on a scale of 1400-1600

**ACT**
- **4 tests:** English, Math, Reading, Science
- **Length:** 3 hours
- **Math:** Arithmetic, Algebra I & II, Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis
- **Science:** None
- **Tools:** You can use a calculator on all math sections.
- **Essays:** Optional. The essay will test how you'll score on each one. To find a free practice test near you, visit PrincetonReview.com/FreePracticeTests.

### The cost of college

Affording college is a major concern for many students and their families. In The Princeton Review's College Hopes and Worries survey, debt has been the biggest concern among parents and students alike for the past three years. Nearly 40% said "level of debt...to pay for the degree" was their biggest concern about college.†

That said, you shouldn't let the price tag dissuade you from applying to your top-choice college. Schools often have significant aid packages available—just know where to look and how to apply.

For more info, check out our college finance page at PrincetonReview.com/CollegeFinance.

### Where will your scores take you?

There are a lot of colleges out there. Want to see where your ACT and SAT scores could take you? Check it out!

### Getting in takes more than just your score...

The Princeton Review’s tools will help you get everything you need for an amazing application.

**Great grades with Homework Help Powered by Tutor.com**

Algebra or World History getting you down? Get 24/7 help from an expert tutor in more than 40 subjects with our online, on-demand Homework Help. Get started at PrincetonReview.com/workahomeworkhelp.

### Recommended Reading

What's a trip without some good books to read?

**College Essays That Made A Difference**

Check out more than 100 college essays written by applicants to top schools and get a little inspiration for your own college essay. You'll also get tips and advice on avoiding common grammatical errors and a Q&A with admissions pros.

**Colleges That Pay You Back**

Find out which colleges and universities give you the biggest bang for your buck. This guide will help you explore which schools give their students the biggest return on their investment with a great post-college outcome.

### Applying to college: early decision vs. early action

Deciding when and where to apply to college may seem like a daunting task, but it shouldn’t be. With the right info, you can cut down on stress and enjoy this exciting time in your life.

**Early decision vs. early action**

If you want to apply early, you have two options: early decision and early action. They’ll both get you a decision early in the year, but they are very different options.

**Early decision is binding.** You can only apply to one school, and if you’re admitted you MUST attend that school. You cannot submit an early decision application and an early action or regular admission application at the same time.

**Early action is not binding,** so you can apply to multiple schools. This means you can compare financial aid packages from the schools you’re accepted to, and choose the one that’s right for you. Both early decision and early action often have deadlines in November, but it’s always smart to check with the schools of your dreams and make sure you have the most up-to-date information.