

SAT Registration Instructions, Standardized Testing Guidelines, and the PSAT

This is a three-part document. The first portion will instruct you on how to register for the SAT testing at the American International School of Guangzhou. The second part will go over testing options and other need-to-know information. Finally, there is info on the PSAT/NMSQT.

To Register for the SAT at AISG:

1. Navigate to <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
2. Click on "Register for the SAT"
3. You will be prompted to Log In. If you do not already have a College Board account, you will need to create one. Students that have taken the PSAT should already have a College Board account.

Note: It is strongly recommended that you use your school email to log in. Every year, students register for these tests and then cannot remember the log in email and/or password. Find a place to securely store all user names and passwords – you will have a lot of them before high school is over.

Of Utmost Importance:

NEVER register for a test with anything but your full, official (passport) name. This is what you will HAVE to use on a college application (which will lead to a student visa) and if you use a nickname/preferred name, it will not line up. When you show up for a SAT test, you will have to show identification that matches your entrance ticket *exactly*. The names must match. To avoid problems, make sure that you use your official name every time you register for something school/testing/university related.

Back to the College Board

- You will be asked to verify your demographic information. Be sure this is completely correct because it cannot be changed once you have submitted your registration.
- Make sure your school is listed as "American International School of Guangzhou." You should switch it if it says anything else. Our school CEEB code is: **694519**
- The questions around race/ethnicity and religion are optional and for understanding trends only. They will not affect your registration or result. You may choose to answer them or not.

Student Search Service

This is an optional sign up for mailing lists. Colleges will get your data (not your scores) and send promotional materials to you via email or paper mail. Don't be fooled; this is marketing. So, when you get invitations as a "top candidate" encouraging you to apply, it is just solicitation. If you choose this option, expect many emails and mailings for years to come. (The advice is to check "No thanks".)

Academics and Activities

You will then be asked to indicate which courses and activities you have taken (or plan to take) in high school and college.

Further Registration

1. Agree to the terms and conditions.
2. Indicate that you are testing outside of the US for AISG
3. Select "SAT"
 - a. SAT Subject Tests are being discontinued after June, 2021

4. Select the date of the exam you wish to take.
5. Select the SAT with or without the Essay (see the section later in this document for this decision)
6. Indicate if you are using Testing Accommodations (usually not; you must be pre-approved for these. See your counselor if you have questions.)
7. Select if you have a Fee Waiver (see notes)
8. Indicate if you want to pay for the Student Answer Service (paid access to your answers and essay)

Searching for a Test Center

1. Click on “Try searching for a test center by name or city”
2. When it asks if you know your test center code, hit YES
3. Type in **74317** and hit “Search for My Test Center”
4. You will see AISG come up and you will hit “Select”

Note: You will NOT be able to search for our testing center. We are a closed testing center and cannot be found without this code. Do not share this code with anyone outside of AISG. No participants other than our students will be permitted on campus and in the testing rooms.

Upload a headshot (should be recent)

Review your ticket for errors. Make your payment: You may want to check the box to keep the info on file. That way if you make changes on test day, you can get a quick refund or apply the charge. Keep a copy of your entrance ticket.

Note: Taking the SAT at another location would require you to enter a different test center code (or search for an alternate center in your area). To take the ACT, you must register with [ACT](#) and find a testing location in proximity to your location.

Considerations

Essay vs. Without Essay

The SAT’s Essay is being discontinued after May, 2021. It is no longer necessary to take this exam with the essay.

Fee Waiver

Students that have significant financial need may qualify for a fee waiver. It is unlikely that any students at AISG will qualify for this exemption. However, if you have questions, read the policy on College Board and speak to your counselor.

Calendar of Testing

Be advised, the SAT is not always offered at AISG on each occasion. It is important to check both the [College Board](#) (and not other sites) for *international* testing dates, and check with the school on the registration for tests/dates offered at AISG.

The SAT vs. The ACT

There are a lot of considerations for choosing between these two tests. Students may ask, “Do schools prefer one test over the other?” This is an old practice. Decades ago, schools on the coasts of the US used the SAT and school in the middle of the country used the ACT. That has long since changed. In the USA, no university is permitted to show a preference for one test. They must accept each test with equal merit. However, schools are [permitted to ask for/require](#) SAT Subject Tests, and schools in other countries may require an SAT (if a student does not have credentials such as an IB diploma).

AISG does NOT offer administration of the ACT. Therefore, a vast majority of AISG students will take the SAT because of the convenience of the private, closed testing center. However, that should not indicate which test YOU should take (see below).

Differences

Here is an [article](#) on the difference between the exams and a [video](#) (and [another](#)) of the same topic.

While years ago, the two tests used to be wildly different, now (with the redesigned SAT) they are more similar than ever before. The tests are similar in length, content, and predictive validity. While there are subtle differences, where they differ boils down to a few main points:

1. The ACT is now on a computer; the SAT is entirely paper and pencil
2. You can use a calculator on only some portions of the SAT math, but you can use it on all of the math portion on the ACT
3. The ACT is entirely multiple choice; the SAT has some student-generated responses
4. The ACT has a Science section; but not really. The Science section is largely a reading comprehension section and interpretation of data section. It does not require a background in science to be able to answer the questions correctly. Therefore, it really isn't a difference among the tests.

Which Test to Take?

If you intend to use this exam for the US, you should, quite simply, take the test that is best for you. So, how do you find out which is best? Well, there are a number of free, online services that will give full-length tests. You should take each of the tests under the same conditions as the real exam (for the ACT, the computer conditions make this difficult to simulate but there are some out there). Start in the morning. Work in a quiet space, free from distractions. Take the exam under real timing conditions and use only prescribed breaks. Use comparison charts to learn which test you did better on, and share these results with the counselor. If you scored better on one test than another, then take the test you scored better on. If you scored similar, take the test you felt most comfortable taking – the one with the questions that were easiest for you to read and the one in which you finished quickly (giving you time to go back and check your answers).

Do I Take Both Tests for Real (paid)?

No. Students somehow get in their head that if they don't get a score they want on one test, they move to the other. This shows no advantage and in fact, is statistically proven to be a bad idea. Students, almost all the time, see an increase in scores the second time they take the test, for whatever reason. So, taking the SAT and switching to the ACT only means you will start over and not likely see an improvement until you take

it again, and if you take the second administration long after the first, the effects are diminished. Do the practice tests, choose your best test, and stick with it.

Should I Prepare for This Test?

Absolutely. This is a major factor in college admissions and could determine honors college acceptance and scholarships. There are a number of schools that are test optional (see [FairTest.org](https://www.fairtest.org/)); however, many universities still require these tests for special programs, majors, and scholarships, not to mention for international students. Having a score that makes you competitive only helps. Therefore, you should spend time preparing for the exam. Prep, however, does not mean paying someone to tutor you. While paid services like a class or a tutor may be helpful, it is a personal choice, and not required to score well. There are numerous [free resources](#) found online that, if practiced with diligence and determination, yield the same results. There are no “secrets” to these tests, just strategies and approaches to maximize your potential. Put in appropriate time and you will be rewarded in kind.

When Should I Take an Exam?

The SAT/ACT largely test information that is obtained in two ways: first, your math learning for this test is largely done by the time you have taken Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, and some Trigonometry, or about the start of your junior year; and second, your ability to read and analyze text. Therefore, it is not advised that most students take this test before the end of 10th grade. The fall of 11th grade tends to be very busy with the increased demands of the IB program. Due to the need to have these scores to advise the college search process and the significance of the workload and applications of senior year, it is not advised to take this test after the start of 12th grade. However, there are some considerations. First, some students will need a score or increased score and have to take it in 12th grade - the earlier the better - but again, balance with schoolwork is paramount: your scores in classes should not suffer. Next, some students that are taking prep courses may be able to take the exam at the end of 10th grade. This is an ideal situation, allowing for a second or third attempt in the fall of 11th grade, and permitting the student to take Subject Tests in May or June of 11th grade. Completing these exams before the beginning of 12th grade is recommended. Again, each student will have their own pathway and should consult the counselor for their best approach and timing of these exams.

THE PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT is coupled in name with the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test. It is often used as a practice for the SAT, though it also serves as a qualifying test for a merit-based scholarship. Only US citizens are eligible for the NMSQT, and few students will be selected for monetary prizes. To read more about this, check out the [National Merit Scholarship Program](#).

The PSAT occurs every year in the fall, usually around the second week of October. The test is very similar to the SAT and is often a good predictor of what a student would earn if they took the SAT soon after. The sections tested are the same and laid out like the SAT would be, although there is no essay option on the PSAT. Also, due to slight differences in what is being tested, the maximum score is 1520. The total test takes 2 hours and 45 minutes, but with distribution/collection of materials, instructions, and managing students, it often takes slightly longer.

The PSAT is paid for by the school and all 10th and 11th graders take this exam. This exam is not open to students before grade 10 due to space, cost, and the inappropriateness of standardized testing driving student time. Students do not need to register for the test; this will be done in school. Students also do not need to “prep” for the PSAT. Information on the types of questions as well as the purpose of the tests, practice tests, and info on the NMSQT will all be provided prior to the test in a student guide. For students not needing/not interested in taking the SAT are still advised to sit for the PSAT exam. Practice with standardized testing environments is beneficial for the SAT as well as entrance exams for university, university exams, graduate school entrance exams, and tests for licensure. The PSAT is an experience of AISG and part of the expectations of students during the school day.

The PSAT is NOT used for university admissions.