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**A Look at the New SAT**  
By Susan Monroe  
  
On March 5, 2016 the updated SAT launched, let's take a closer look at what the revamped test is all about. Detailed information abounds, so the goal of this post is to winnow it down to the essentials.

***New Features***

Perhaps bowing to the competition, the new SAT features content that is similar to the ACT. And it has also adopted two ACT features. Test takers don’t lose points for wrong answers—so there’s less temptation to leave an answer blank—and they are offered only four choices of response instead of five.

On the other hand, the SAT tests concepts differently. Students need to apply their information processing skills—quickly—and reason their way through the exam, rather than relying on answers that “look” right or that they may have memorized. According to College Board President and CEO David Coleman, [standardized tests are not only stressful but also “far too disconnected from the work of our high schools.”](http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/05/living/sat-test-changes-schools/) As a result, the revised SAT focuses on real knowledge—rather than on a student’s mastery of test-taking tricks.

***The Old and the New***

Here’s a snapshot of other major differences between the old and new SAT (with special thanks to the [College Board](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/inside-the-test/compare-current-new-specifications)):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **“Old” SAT** | | **“New” SAT** |
| **Time** | * 3 hours, 45 minutes | | * 3 hours (and 50 minutes for the optional essay\*) |
| **Focus** | * General reasoning skills      * Vocabulary—especially obscure “SAT” words, which do not typically appear in “real life” | | * Knowledge and skills that have been proven necessary for college/career readiness and success * Vocabulary in extended contexts and an understanding of how words shape meaning and tone |
| **Essay** | * Tests writing skill on a topic of the student’s choice | | * Tests reading, writing, and analytical skills; students analyze a text provided on the test. |
| **Scoring** | * Scale ranges from 600 to 2400.      * No subscore reporting | | * Scale ranges from 400 to 1600      * Subscore reporting for each test |
|  | |

\* Educational institutions decide whether or not they’ll require the essay for admission.

Gale has responded to the new SAT with changes to the *Testing & Education Reference Center* *(TERC)* available at our library. These changes are all designed to offer the most up-to-date test preparation available for the SAT. And there are even more benefits for our students, library patrons, and general users:

* **Enhanced test preparation** through full-length practice exams and diagnostic pre-tests for the AP, ACT, SAT, PSAT, Ged, HiSET, and TASC
* **Better college planning** through an easy-to-search database of more than 4,000 accredited schools, including academics, admission requirements, campus life, tuition, and more
* **Financial aid essentials** through the ability to quickly search for scholarships, calculate college savings, pinpoint tuition costs, and more
* **Sharper career focus** through an extensive database of standardized tests, such as the Holland Codes, a Resume Builder, and a Virtual Careers Library.

*TERC* serves as a vital resource to everyone from high school and community college students to those leaving the military and adults seeking to upgrade their careers. Access the product through our library website: **<INSERT LINK TO ACCESS>.** Or, contact **<INSERT CONTACT INFO HERE>** for more information.