

The ACT and/or SAT is a part of most students' college planning process, but when is the right time to begin test prep and take the test?

Students usually take the ACT or SAT two to four times, starting as early as the summer after sophomore year though the fall of senior year. The ideal timeline within that window is unique to each student.

Some factors to consider:

Diagnostic testing, which may include a diagnostic ACT, a diagnostic SAT, or both. Diagnostic testing helps you determine if your student is ready to prepare for an official exam and also helps clarify which is the better test format.

Additional testing data, such as prior test scores (typically PSAT or PACT).

Academic background, including math courses completed, academic strength areas, and any testing accommodations. For example, students in advanced math classes may be familiar with all the math content on the exam by the end of sophomore year, while others will score higher once they have had time to learn the content in school.

Time available to devote to study/preparation. Extracurricular activities and course workload can affect a student's ability to prepare properly for the exam.

Motivation. For many students, reaching their ideal score will involve consistent study and practice, so the testing timeline should factor in a student's desire to put in the effort.

Are you unsure of the best testing timeline for your student? At LGC, our Parent Liaisons are happy to help you plan the best timeline, from diagnostic testing to tutoring to official testing.