

## Comparison of the SAT and the National Curriculum for England

The table compares the skills and concepts assessed by the SAT, as described on the College Board website (<http://www.collegeboard.com>), and the National Curriculum programmes of study for English and Mathematics (higher) (<http://www.nc.uk.net>).

SAT	National Curriculum
<b>Writing Section</b>	
Short Essay (1)	
organise and express ideas clearly	En3 1d-o
develop and support the main idea	En3 1d-o
use appropriate word choice and sentence structure	En3 1b, c, e, f
Multiple Choice (49)	
improve sentences and paragraphs	En3 2a, b, c; 7a-e
identify errors	En3 2a, b, c; 7a-e
<b>Critical Reading Section (67)</b>	
Sentence Completion	
knowledge of meaning of words	En1 5; 6e; En2 1a
understanding of how parts of sentences fit together	En3 7a-e
Passage Based Reading	
vocabulary in context	En2 1a, g, 3a, b
literal comprehension	En2 1a, h, 3a, b
extended reasoning	En2 1a-d, g, h, i
<b>Mathematics Section (54)</b>	
Number and Operation	
arithmetic word problems	Ma2 4a
properties of integers	Ma2 2a-f
rational numbers	Ma2 2 c-d
logical reasoning	Ma2 1a-b
sets	KS2 (NNS)
counting techniques	KS2 Ma2 2a
sequences and series	Ma2 1j, 6a
elementary number theory	Ma2 2a
Algebra and Functions	
substitution and simplifying algebraic expressions	Ma2 5
properties of exponents	Ma2 6f
algebraic word problems	Ma2 5 h
solutions of equations and inequalities	Ma2 5e, f, i-m
quadratic equations	Ma2 5k
rational and radical equations	Ma2 5b, f, k
equations of lines	Ma2 6b-h
absolute value	-
direct and inverse variation	Ma2 5h
concepts of algebraic functions	Ma2 5
newly defined symbols based on commonly used ops.	Ma2 5a
Geometry and Measurement	
area and perimeter of a polygon	Ma3 2i (KS2 Ma3 2e)
area and circumference of a circle	Ma2 5g, Ma3 2h
volume of a box, cube and cylinder	Ma3 2i
Pythagorean theorem and special properties of triangles	Ma3 2b, f
properties of parallel and perpendicular lines	Ma2 6c; Ma3 2a
coordinate geometry	Ma3 3e
geometric visualisation	Ma3 2i
slope	Ma2 6c
similarity	Ma3 2g
transformations	Ma3 2g, 3b-d
Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability	
data interpretation	Ma4 1a 5
statistics (mean, median and mode)	KS3 Ma4 4b, e, f
probability	Ma4 4b, c, d, g, h

NB Key Stage 4 National Curriculum English and Mathematics (higher) references are used, unless indicated.  
 KS3 = Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum; NNS = National Numeracy Strategy/Primary Framework

This comparison, together with a review of SAT and GCSE specimen materials, reveals that:

- although the SAT is described as a reasoning test, much of the SAT assesses knowledge of formal elements of Mathematics and English, rather than generic reasoning skills;
- the vast majority of the material covered by the SAT is included in the English and Mathematics programmes of study of the National Curriculum. The level of difficulty is roughly equivalent to level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework (e.g. higher tier GCSE). It might be expected that performance on the SAT could be affected by a candidate's educational background, and by extensive preparation.