



# Admission Testing 2017

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*Promoting Successful and  
Sane Approaches to Testing*

Compass Education Group  
[compassprep.com](http://compassprep.com)

# Flexibility ↔ Complexity

## TRICKY QUESTIONS ABOUT TESTING

### PRACTICAL

- Do I need to take admission tests?
- Should I take the SAT, ACT, or both?
- Is the SAT or ACT essay necessary?
- Are Subject Tests required or expected?
- Does the ACT replace Subject Tests?

### TACTICAL

- If optional, should I submit my scores?
- When should I begin/end my testing & prep?
- How many times should I test?
- Which colleges require reporting **all** scores?
- Do colleges combine scores across dates?

***Easier than ever to apply . . .***

***. . . harder than ever to predict.***



HERE LIES  
FREDERICK  
JONES

VERBAL - MATH  
680 720

R. Chis

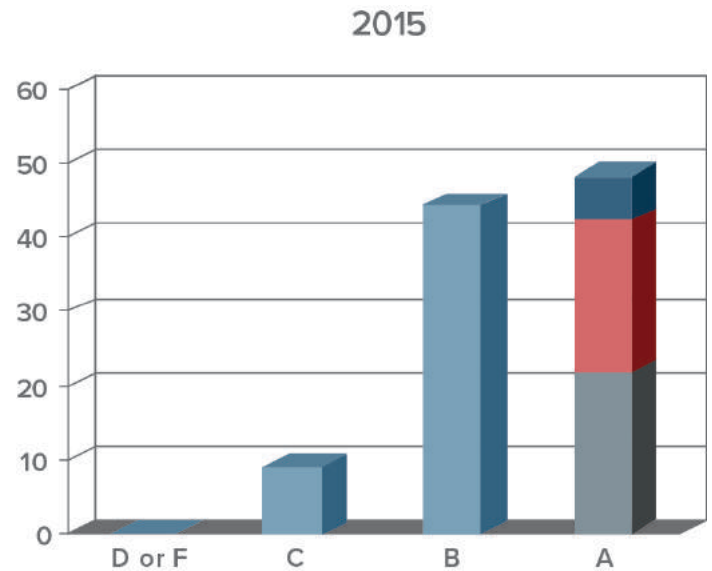
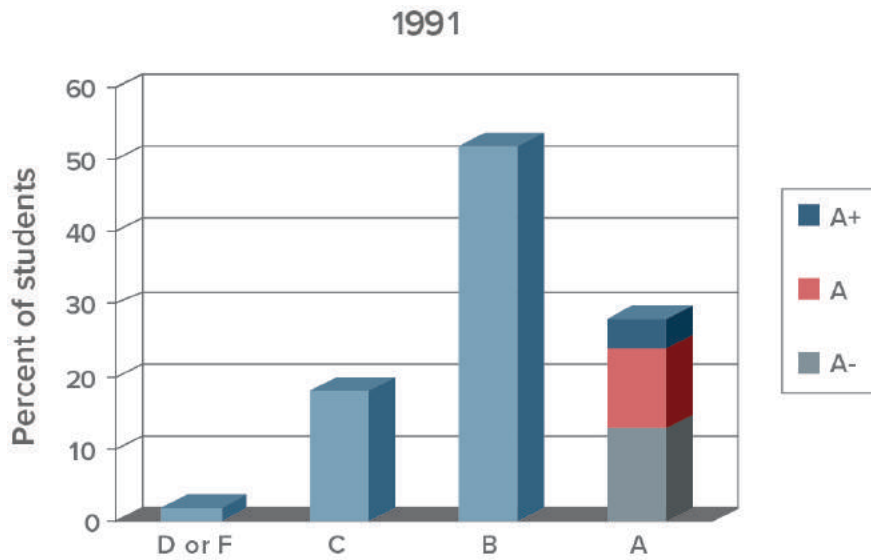
# Role of Standardized Testing *Today*



- ***National Association for College Admission Counseling Report on Standardized Testing (2009):***

*“Typically, the validity of admission tests as a selection tool for higher education institutions is judged by [how well the tests] can predict first-year college grade-point average (FGPA).”*

# Why Standardized Tests?

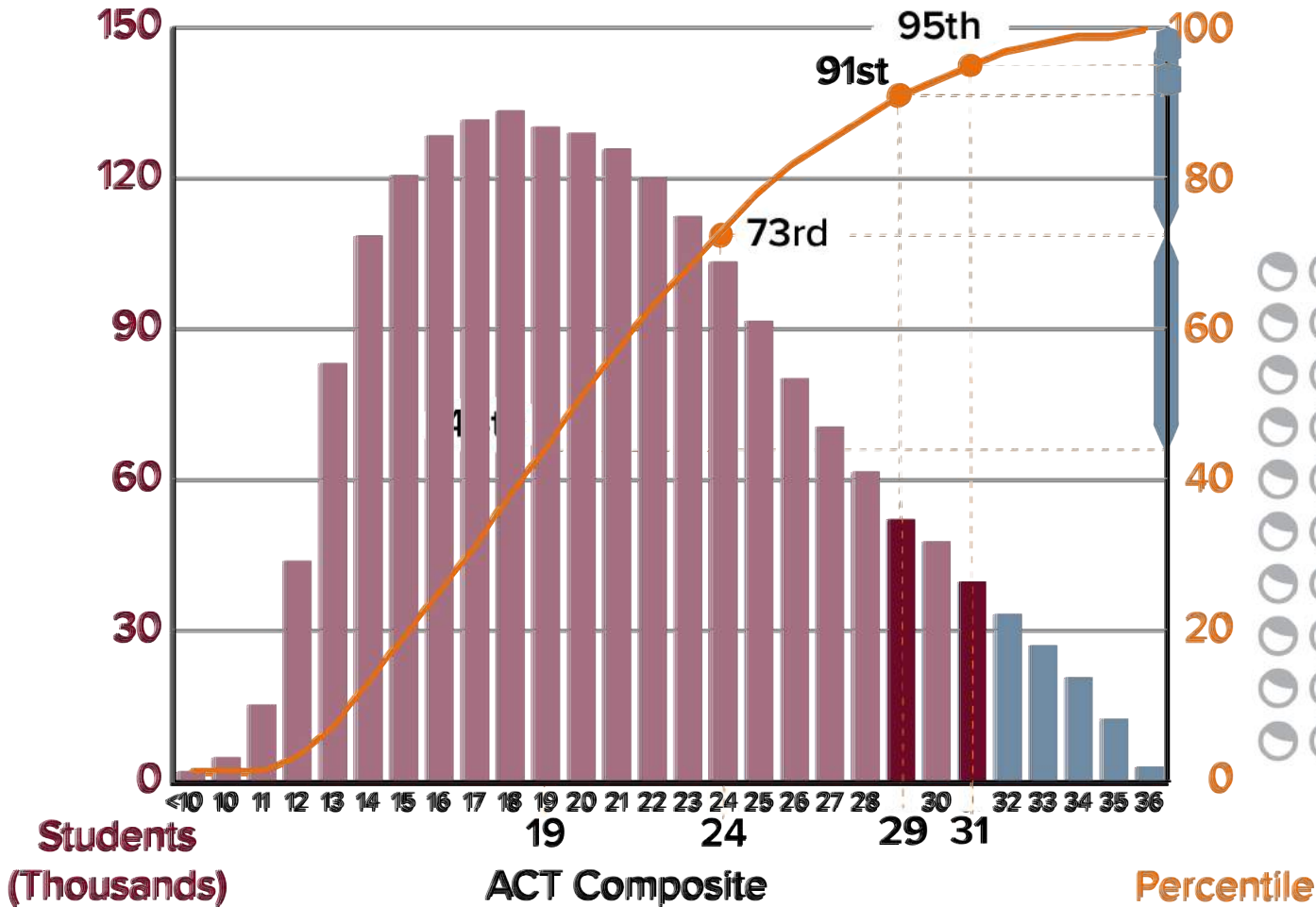


Source: College Board

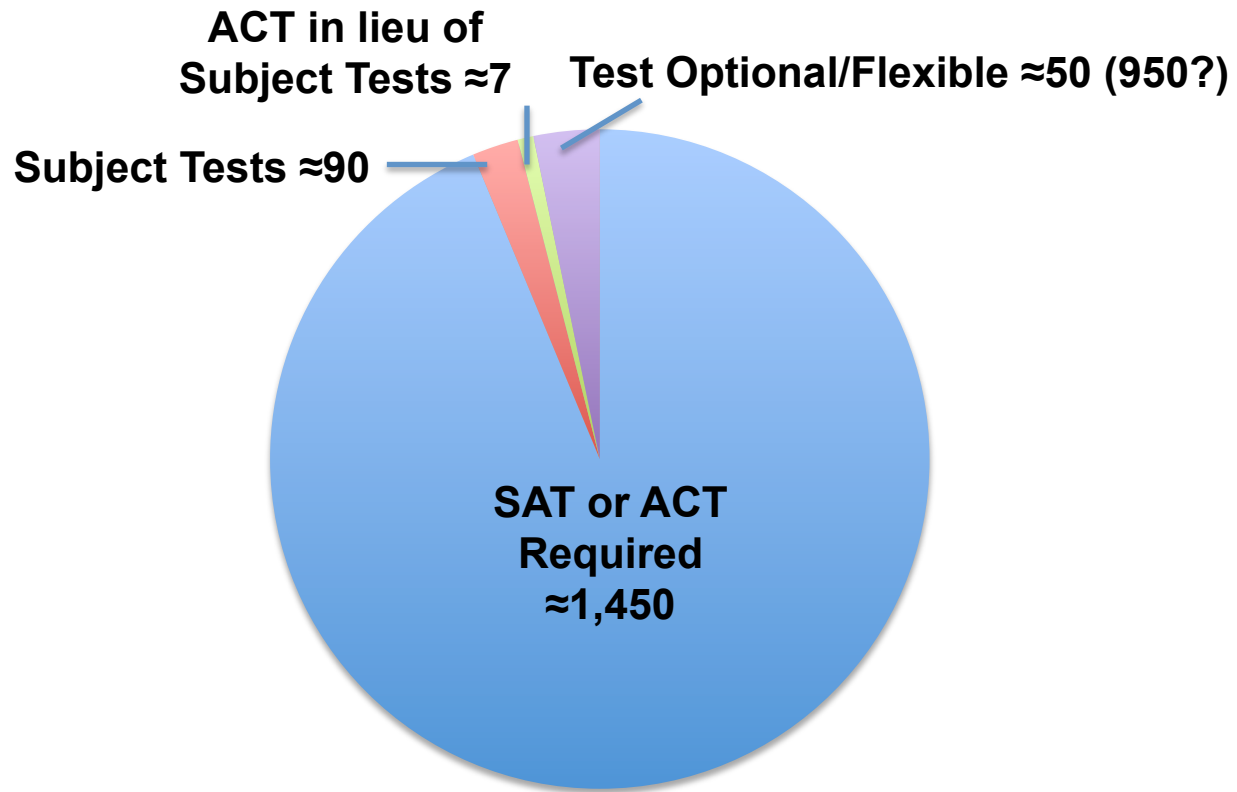
# Standardized Tests Resist Inflation



# Score Increases



# Test Requirements





# Subject Test Options

- ▲ Literature
- ▲ U.S. History or World History
- ▲ Math Level 2 or Math Level 1
- ▲ Biology (E/M), Chemistry, and Physics
- ▲ Languages: French, Chinese, German, Spanish, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin

# 2006: 44 COLLEGES REQUIRE THE SAT SUBJECT TESTS

AMHERST	COLUMBIA	HAVERFORD	UC DAVIS	UVA
BARNARD	CONNECTICUT COLLEGE	HOLY CROSS	UC IRVINE	VASSAR
BOSTON COLLEGE	CORNELL	MIT	UCLA	WASHINGTON & LEE
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	DARTMOUTH	POMONA	UC MERCED	WELLESLEY
BRANDEIS	DUKE	PRINCETON	UC RIVERSIDE	WESLEYAN
BROWN	FRANKLIN OLIN	RICE	UC SAN DIEGO	WILLIAMS
BRYN MAWR	GEORGETOWN	SWARTHMORE	UC SANTA BARBARA	WPI
CALTECH	HARVARD	TULANE	UC SANTA CRUZ	YALE
CARNEGIE MELLON	HARVEY MUDD	UC BERKELEY	UPENN	

# 2017: 4 COLLEGES REQUIRE THE SAT SUBJECT TESTS

	CORNELL	MIT		
CALTECH				
	HARVEY MUDD			

# Require or “Recommend” or “Consider”

Amherst	Duke	Oberlin	UC Santa Barbara
Babson	Emory	Occidental	UC Santa Cruz
Barnard	Franklin Olin	Pomona	Union
Bates	George Washington	Pratt Institute	U of Delaware
Boston College	Georgetown	Princeton	U of Georgia
Boston University	Hamilton	Reed	UNC
Bowdoin	Harvard	Rice	U of Rochester
Brandeis	Haverford	RPI	UPenn
Brown	Holy Cross	Scripps	USC
Bryn Mawr	Ithaca	Smith	UVA
Bucknell	Johns Hopkins	Stanford	Vanderbilt
Carleton	Kenyon	Stevens Institute	Vassar
Case Western	Lafayette	Swarthmore	Wake Forest
Claremont McKenna	Macalester	Tufts	Washington & Lee
Colby	Miami (FL)	Tulane	Wash U St. Louis
Colorado College	Michigan	UC Berkeley	Wellesley
Columbia	Middlebury	UC Irvine	Wesleyan
Connecticut College	Mills	UCLA	William & Mary
Cooper Union	Northwestern	UC Merced	Williams
Dartmouth	Notre Dame	UC Riverside	WPI
Davidson	NYU	UC San Diego	Yale

# ACT vs SAT

## ACT

### 4 Tests + Optional Writing

- English
- Math
- Reading
- Science

### 1-36 scale for each test

Composite score = average

### Writing score of 2-12:

rounded average of 4  
domain scores

## SAT

### 4 Sections + Optional Essay

- Reading
- Writing and Language (English)
- Math without Calculator
- Math with Calculator

### 200-800 scale for 2 sections

Total score is sum 400–1600

### Essay score of 2–8 in 3 separate

domains: Reading, Analysis,  
Writing (e.g. 6, 5, 6)

**NO GUESSING PENALTY**

# SAT and/or ACT Essay: Required?

## Yes, Still Will

Brown  
Caltech  
Claremont McKenna  
Dartmouth  
Duke  
Harvard  
Michigan  
Princeton  
Stanford  
UC's  
Yale

## No, Not Anymore

Columbia  
Cornell  
Georgetown  
Johns Hopkins  
MIT  
Northwestern  
NYU  
Penn  
Swarthmore  
Tufts  
USC

# Comparing Test Structure

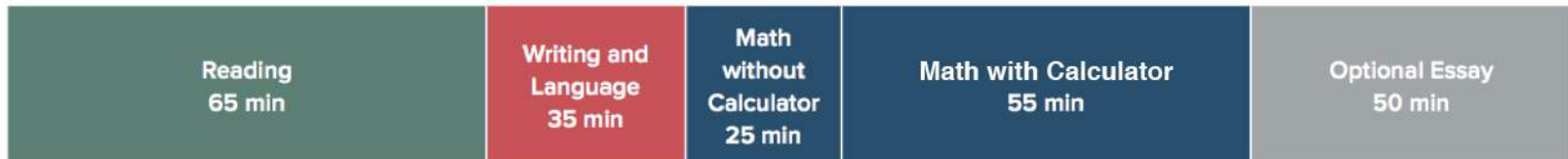
## PSAT

4 Sections; 2 Hours and 45 Minutes



## SAT

4 Sections + Essay; 3 Hours and 50 Minutes



## ACT

4 Sections + Essay; 3 Hours and 35 Minutes



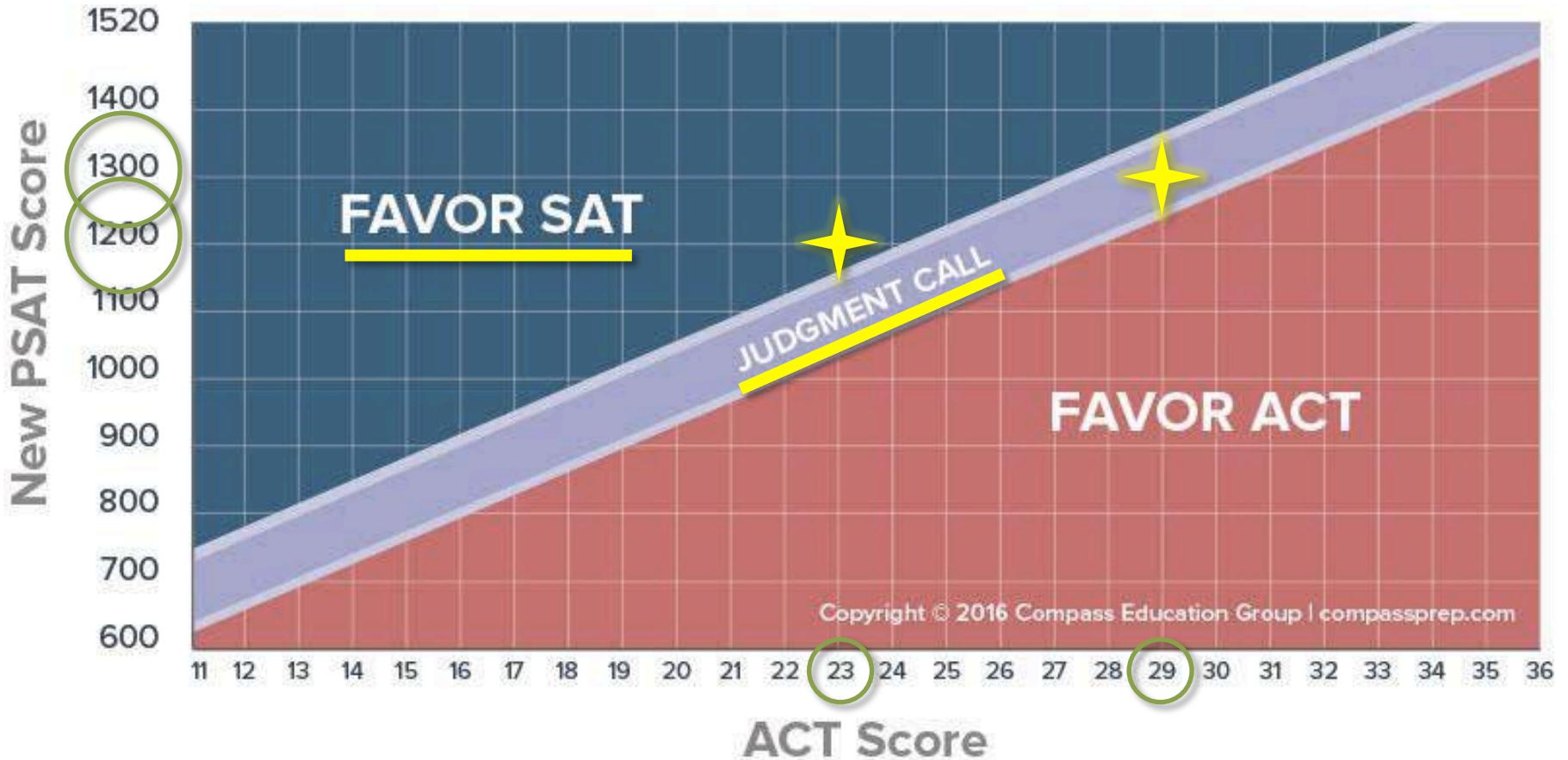
# ACT or SAT?



*"We were originally thinking SAT, but then Noah's admissions advisor told us left-handed students born on Tuesdays do better on the ACT."*



# P/SAT vs ACT Concordance



# Why Might I Favor the SAT?



*PSAT & practice test scores  
clearly stronger than ACT*



*SAT pacing and structure  
feels more comfortable*



*Dread of ACT Science  
can't be overcome*



*Will need SAT for  
National Merit Scholarship*

*Unavoidable conflicts  
with ACT dates*



*Special accommodations  
granted by SAT but not ACT*



*Believer in "no stone left  
unturned" approach*



# What Is Good Test Prep?

**Content  
Knowledge**

**Command of  
Strategies**

**Emotional  
Control**

**Optimal Test  
Management**

# ACT Math: Structure & Pacing

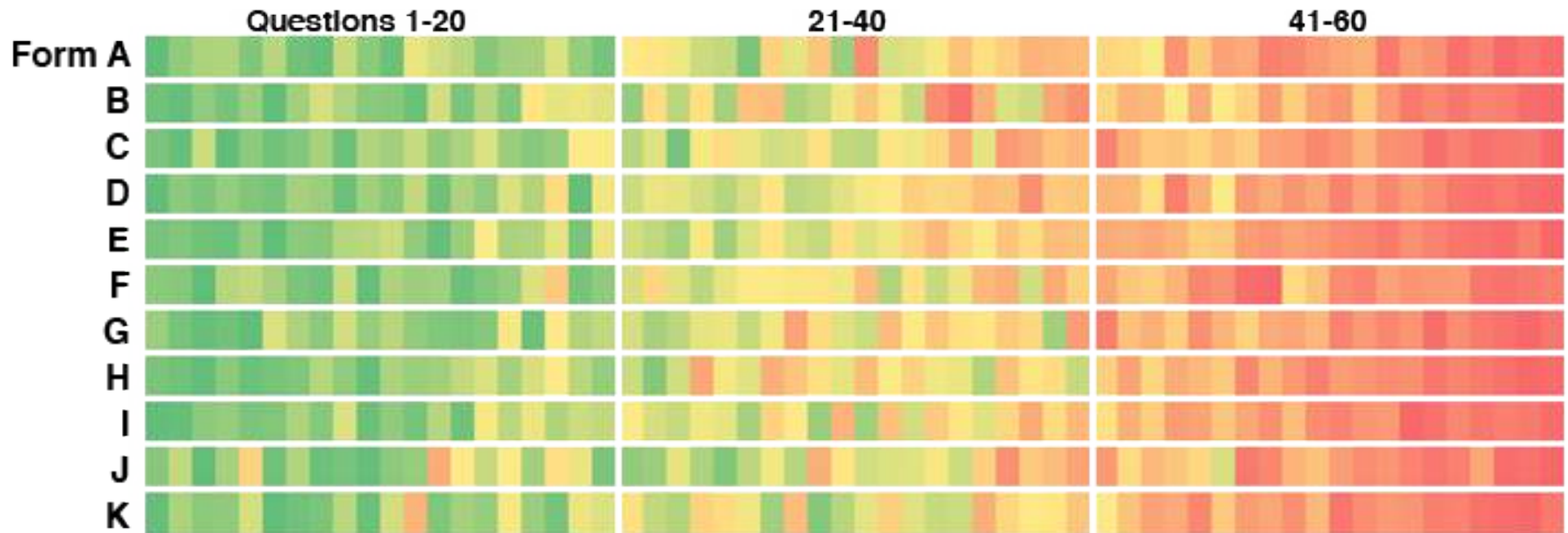
## Structure:

- 60 questions in 60 minutes
- Content breakdown
  - 23% Pre-Algebra
  - 17% Elementary Algebra
  - 15% Intermediate Algebra
  - 15% Coordinate Geometry
  - 23% Plane Geometry
  - 7% Trigonometry

## Pacing Concerns:

- Average 1 minute per question\*
- Difficulty escalates steadily throughout
- Problems at the end are much harder but worth same points
- Rushing and cherry-picking can be dangerous

# ACT Math: Difficulty Distribution

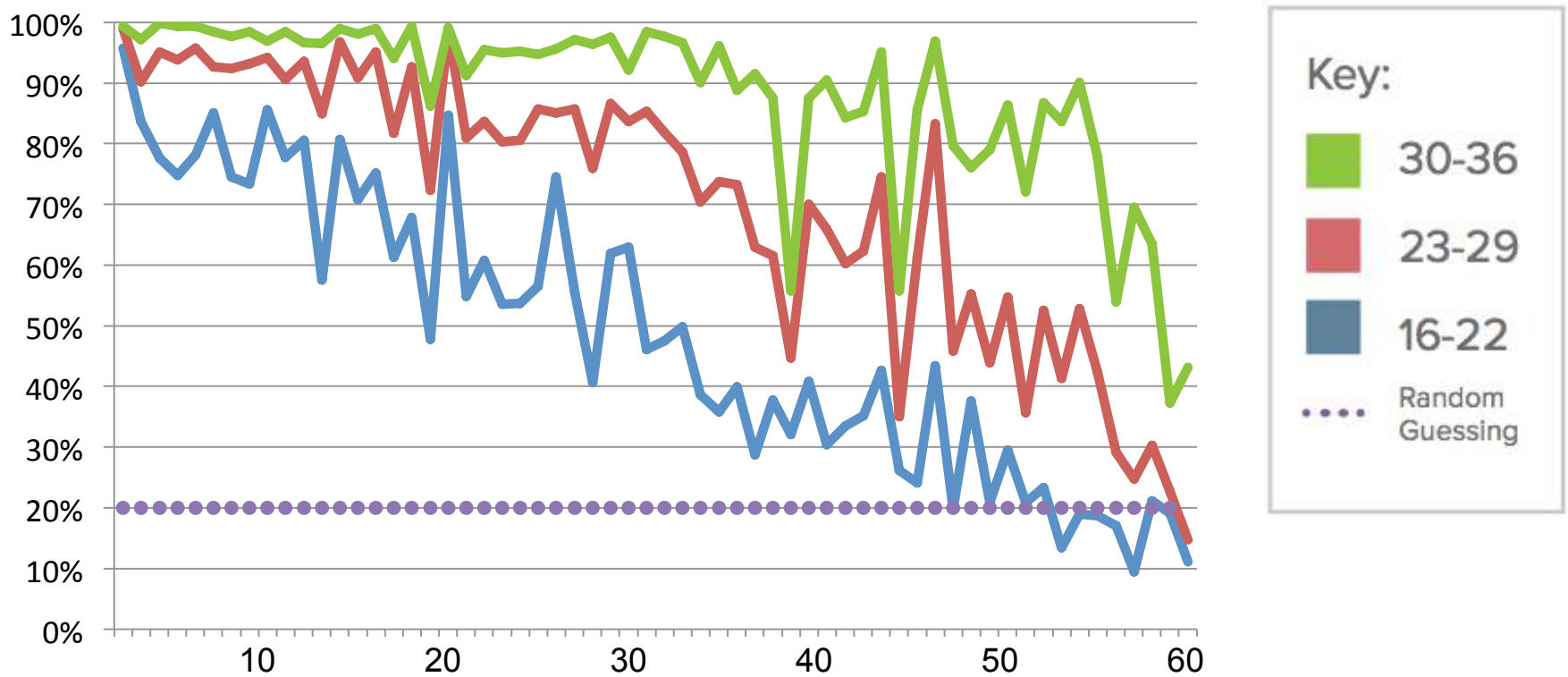


Data reflects performance of several thousand first-time ACT takers on eleven different tests.

See *Compass Guide* **page 45**

# ACT Math: Where to Invest Effort

## Student Accuracy Per Question



# Timelines for Preparation

## EARLY

**SAT: > 1200**  
**ACT: > 25**  
1 in 6 Students

Formal prep in summer  
before 11<sup>th</sup> grade

May be seeking National  
Merit recognition

**1<sup>st</sup> SAT or ACT** in **winter**  
of 11<sup>th</sup> grade

**Subject Tests**  
May/June of 11<sup>th</sup>

## TRADITIONAL

**SAT: 900-1200**  
**ACT: 17-25**  
1 in 2 Students

Foundational prep  
in summer before 11<sup>th</sup> grade

PSAT relevant only as  
a benchmark

**1<sup>st</sup> SAT or ACT** in **spring**  
of 11<sup>th</sup> grade

**Subject Tests**  
May/June of 11<sup>th</sup>

## DEFERRED

**SAT: < 900**  
**ACT: < 17**  
1 in 3 students

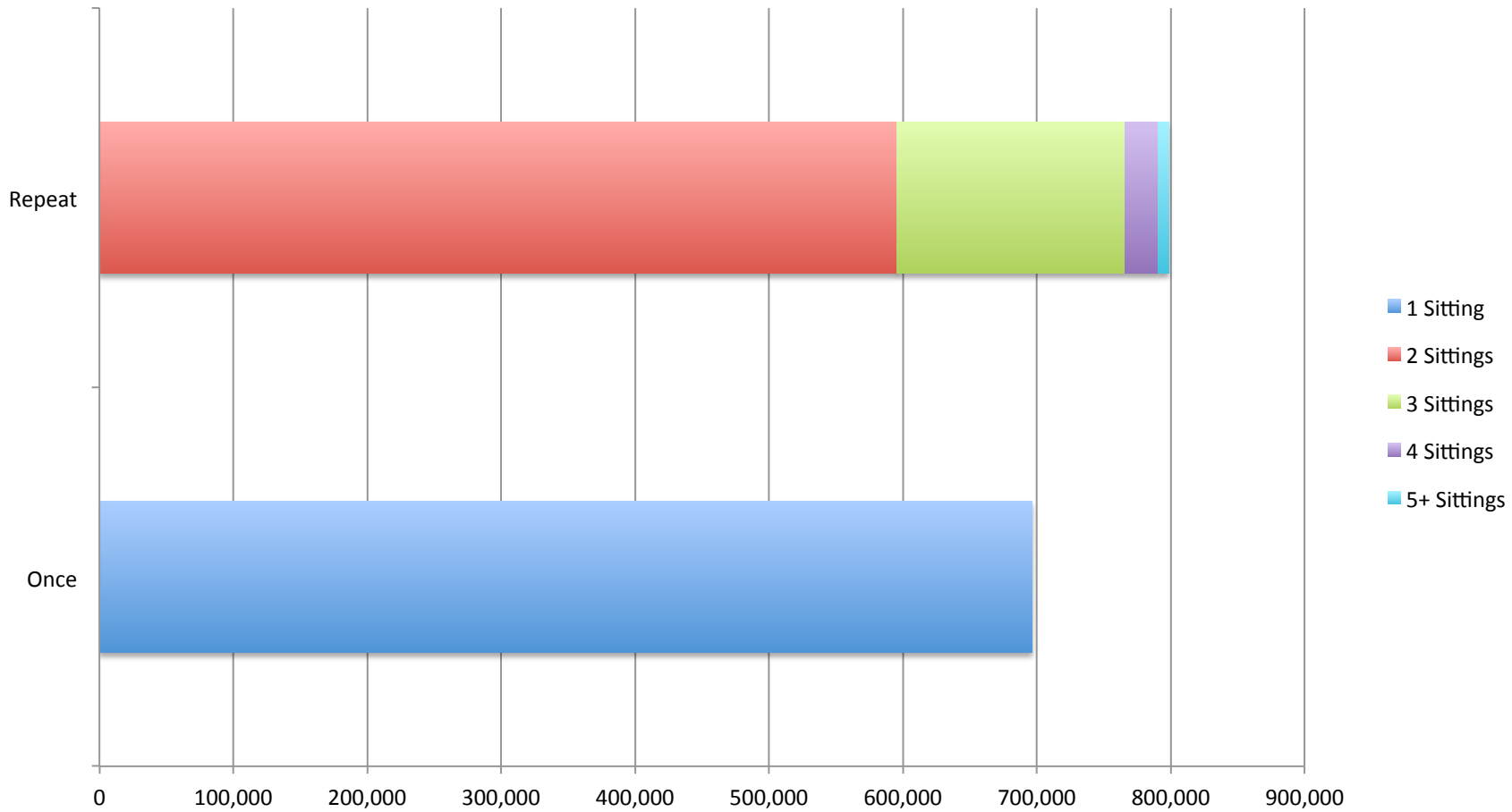
Little to no prep in summer  
prior to 11<sup>th</sup> grade

**1<sup>st</sup> SAT or ACT** in **late spring**  
(minimal prep)

Majority of prep  
after end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade

Peaks **late fall** of 12<sup>th</sup>

# Repeat Testing





# Super-scoring

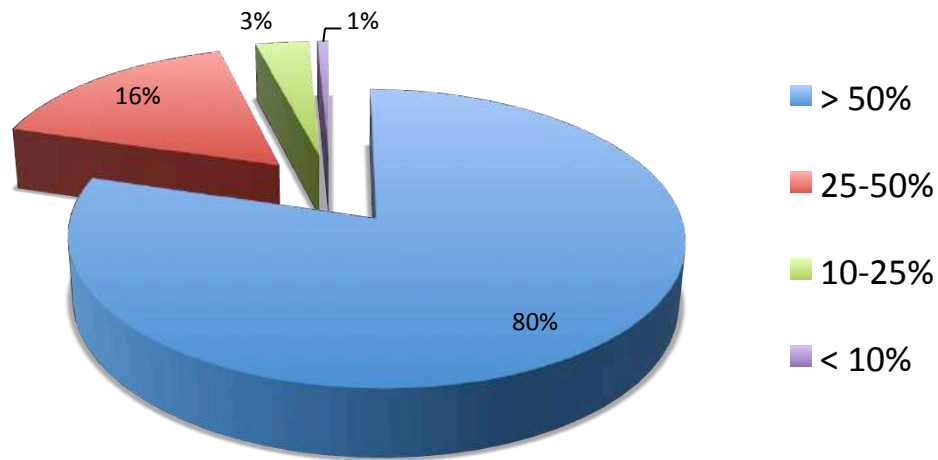
April ACT	
English	26
Math	27
Reading	27
Science	23
Composite	26

September ACT	
English	29
Math	25
Reading	24
Science	27
Composite	26

Super-scored ACT	
English	29
Math	27
Reading	27
Science	27
Composite	28

# Selectivity: A Two-Way Street

## Enrollment by Admission Rate



- **Admit Rate: 70%**
  - **Yield: 33%**

*Stanford (<5%) denied 70% of applicants with **perfect test scores***



*"You're kidding! You count S.A.T.s?"*

**Q & A**



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