



Calculating Your SAT Math and Reading Score Targets

Find out what's right for
you

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1. Why Set a Score Target?



Target scores are useful to calculate because they help you set realistic goals that are **based on schools you'll be applying to**, rather than on some arbitrary standard that has no real justification behind it.

By creating concrete, results-oriented scores to aim for, you'll not only increase your chances of a successful outcome (getting into the schools you want), but, since the relationship between the scores and acceptance at colleges you wish to attend is so linear, you might even be **more motivated** to study to reach these goals.

The steps you'll follow for finding your **target SAT Math and Evidence-Based Reading and Writing scores** are similar to what you'd do to find your overall SAT target score. If you haven't done this already, stop now and read our [free resource](#) on how to calculate your SAT target score, then come back to this book; it's far more important to set an overall SAT score target than it is to calculate individual section score targets.

Print Out These Worksheets

To mathematically determine the target Math and EBRW scores you should be aiming for, we'll be filling out two worksheets for all the schools you're interested in. I highly recommend printing out the next two pages before going any further.

2. SAT Math Score Target Worksheet

School Name	25 th Percentile (2400 SAT)	75 th Percentile (2400 SAT)	75 th Percentile (1600 SAT)
Average			

My SAT Math Score Target

Math Target Score: _____

(we recommend you use the average 75th percentile new SAT score calculated above)

3. SAT Evidence-Based Reading & Writing Score Target Worksheet

School Name	25 th %ile (2400 SAT)		75 th %ile (2400 SAT)		75 th %ile (1600 SAT)
	Reading	Writing	Reading	Writing	
Average					

My SAT EBRW Score Target

EBRW Target Score: _____

(we recommend you use the average 75th percentile new SAT score calculated above)

4. Calculating Your Score Targets

Got the two worksheets printed out? We'll be filling out each line of these worksheets.

Step 1: Fill In Your Target Schools

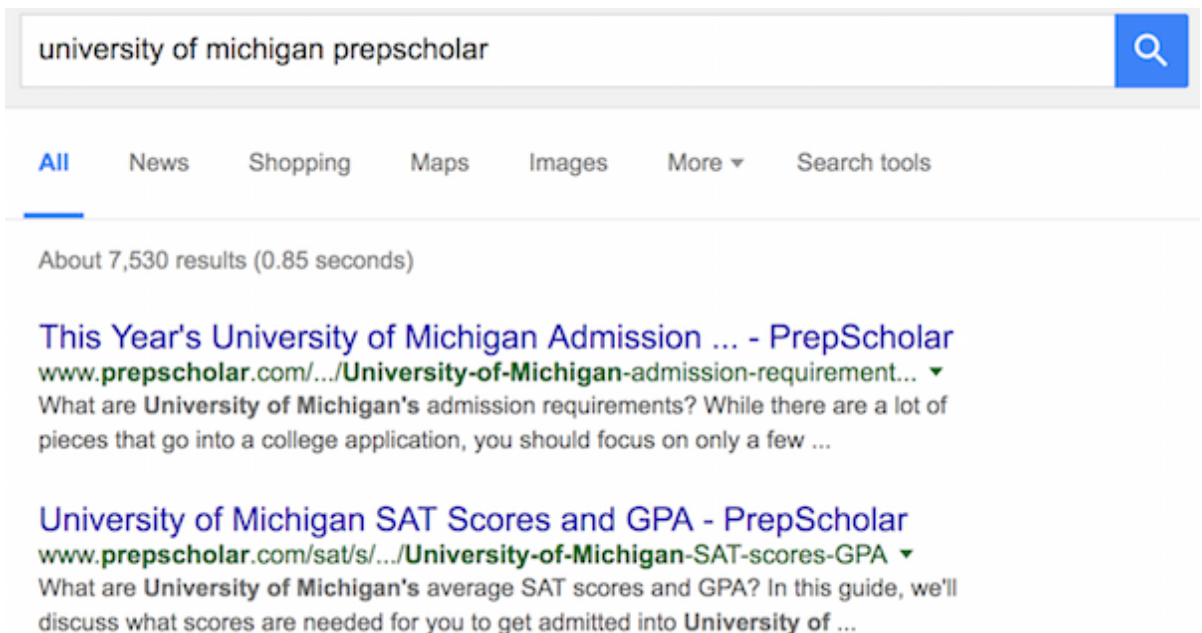
First, fill in the schools you want to get into on the left. These might be schools that you already know you want to apply to, including your dream or "reach" schools; however, don't include [safety schools](#) (schools that you're 90% sure that you're going to get accepted to).

If you're not sure yet what schools you want to apply to, go ahead and put down any schools you've heard of, or schools that your friends are interested in. We do recommend, however, that you research the schools

before calculating your target score, though, so you'll get a sense of what scores you'll need to get into the schools you're interested in and if they're realistic for you given other factors like your [high school GPA](#).

Step 2: For Each School, Google “[Name of School] PrepScholar”

For example, if I'm interested in University of Michigan, I'll do the following search:



Most schools will have a **PrepScholar.com link**, as shown on the previous page. If you don't find one, try using the National Center for Education Statistic's IPEDS [Data Center](#) to look up the school's Admissions and Test Scores information; the data will be older but will still be official.

Alternatively, you can try searching "[name of school] average sat scores" to see if the scores are listed on the official school website (although many schools do not report individual section scores on their websites). Use either of these methods to double-check your numbers.



What Percentile Scores Mean for Your Chances

- **If you score at the 75th percentile** for a school, you have a great chance of getting in.
- **If you're at the 25th percentile**, you'll have to rely on some other part of your application to impress them (or **retake the SAT** to get your score more in line with the middle 50 percent of students admitted).

Use either of these methods to double-check your numbers.

Our PrepScholar.com page lists the 25th/75th percentile scores for current University of Michigan students. This basically covers the middle 50% of all students admitted to the University of Michigan.

Step 2a (if necessary): New SAT Adjustment

Because you'll be taking the new 1600 SAT, you'll need to **convert old scores** from the out-of-2400 SAT into new SAT scores in the rightmost column of the worksheets. This is particularly important for converting old Reading and Writing scores (which, when combined, were on a scale of 400-1600) to the new SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score (on a scale of 200-800).

Use our updated online [converter tool](#), which is based on official concordance tables from the College Board, to determine 75th percentile scores for the new SAT.

Step 3: Calculate Target SAT Section Scores

Finally, take the average of all the percentile columns. In general, we recommend **using the 75th percentile score as your target**, because it'll give you the greatest chance of acceptance (as compared shooting for the 25th percentile or even the "average" score).

However, just because you score at the 75th percentile doesn't mean that you have a 75% chance of acceptance at any given school. The **baseline acceptance rate** for the school also affects the target score you choose.

If a school's acceptance rate is low (<20%), then you'll want to aim for a score even higher than the 75th percentile score for a fixed likelihood of getting in. If the acceptance rate is higher, then you can aim for a lower percentile score (since increasing your SAT score is likely to only have a marginal effect on your acceptance rate).

5. When Section Scores Matter

- > **Key Point:** SAT section scores matter most for engineering and liberal arts schools.



Most of the time, **hitting specific section score targets isn't as important as making sure your overall SAT score is good**; whether that high total score comes from a 680 on Math and a 780 on Evidence-Based Reading and Writing or a 780 on Math and a 680 on EBRW is usually a moot point.

There are two types of schools, however, for which individual section scores become more important: **engineering programs and liberal arts colleges.**

For engineering schools and programs, a high SAT Math score (**above a 700**) is imperative. Even a perfect 800 won't guarantee you admission, but getting a SAT Math score below a 750 lowers your odds dramatically at schools like MIT.



Be Aware of the Competition

For the most competitive engineering programs, you'll be at a **severe disadvantage** if you don't get a 770 or above on SAT Math.

On the other hand, you can get away with a (relatively) low Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score for most engineering programs. For example, a 720 EBRW score still puts you in the middle 50 percent of students at MIT.

Liberal arts schools, by contrast, prefer to see relatively equal section scores.



You don't to get exactly the same score on Math and EBRW, but it does mean that you'd have a **better chance** of getting into most liberal arts schools with **two medium-high section scores** (e.g. 700 Math, 690 EBRW) than with **one high and one low score** (e.g. 590 Math, 800 EBRW).

Some liberal arts schools may even look at Reading and Writing subscores when it comes to evenness. However, with the new combined Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score, the odds of this happening are lower than with the old SAT (where students received out-of-800 scores for both Critical Reading and Writing).

A good strategy if you're applying to a mixed set of schools (some engineering, some liberal arts, and some that fit into neither category) is to create **multiple different target scores sheets**.

If you take the SAT multiple times and get mixed results, the different sheets will help you determine which scores to send to schools that don't superscore.



Choosing Which SAT Scores to Send: An Example

Let's say I take the SAT twice and get **730 Math/780 EBRW** the first time and **790 Math/610 EBRW** the second time.

For schools that don't super score: Send the **first** score to **liberal arts** schools and the **second** score to **engineering** schools.

For schools that do superscore or require all scores sent: Send both the scores to get the **790 Math/780 EBRW** combo.

AND NOW WHAT?

Through this guide, you've learned a lot about what makes a good SAT Math and EBRW score. Make sure you calibrate your section scores to the schools to which you're applying to get the best results.

We at PrepScholar believe we've built the best SAT prep program in the world. But even if you don't work with us at PrepScholar, we hope you found this guide useful.

Next up: Read our free Ebook on the PrepScholar system today: [Click here to get your Ebook!](#)

or **call us** at **1(866) 811-5546**, where one of our Academic Advisers will walk you through the best options for you and your family.

We'd love to hear from you.

Finally, if you found this guide helpful, please share it with any other people who might benefit.

Good luck!

-The PrepScholar Team