Gender Differences and Trends over time for the SAT® Reasoning Test

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History of the SAT

• Original test (1901)
  – nine essay exams
  – 973 candidates

• Scholastic Aptitude Test (1926)
  – Multiple choice exams
  – 8,040 candidates (mostly men)

• Scholastic Aptitude Test (1968)
  – Multiple choice
  – national and foreign testing centers
History of the SAT (con’t)

Shifting patterns in the 1970’s

- More ethnic minorities
- More females
  - Absolute number of males decreasing
  - Number of females increasing
  - Late 70’s about 51% of test-takers were females
- More older students (individuals who had deferred entry)
Since 1970

- Ensuring that content is balanced and appropriate for test-takers with widely different cultural and educational backgrounds
- Reducing effects of special preparation
- Ensuring that test content is consistent with changes in school based learning
Gender Changes

1967-1968

46% 54%

1982-1983

52% 48%
College Bound Seniors (CBS)

1990-1994

53%  47%

2000-2004

54%  46%
Math Score Intervals 1990-1994

1990 to 1994

Average Percent

Score Interval

Males  Females  Total
Conclusion

- Increases in the number/percentage of women taking the SAT over time
- Differences in means for Verbal and Math sections are slowly being eroded
- Percent of women taking math courses is increasing over time, and the average number of years of study is also increasing