# Cambridge student compares SAT exam to UK A Levels with surprising results



A Cambridge University student, Erin Meryl, has made headlines after taking an American SAT exam to compare it with the UK’s A Level qualifications, leading to surprising results. Erin, who studies economics and enjoys a large following on TikTok—under the handle @erinmerylstudy—shared her journey, inspired by the popular television show "Gilmore Girls", in which the character Rory Gilmore is frequently depicted stressing over the SAT as she sets her sights on Harvard University.

On her TikTok page, Erin expressed her bewilderment regarding the American obsession with the SAT, stating, "Why do Americans get so worked up about the SAT? It is not that hard." She noted that American television programming often amplifies the narrative around the stress associated with the exam, prompting her curiosity to explore the test’s difficulty.

To conduct her comparison, Erin completed a practice SAT test. She discovered that the structure included two reading and two mathematics modules. During her test, she noted, "So I am a couple of questions into the reading section and it is literally like 'which word fills the gap to complete the sentence?'" She described many of the questions as simple comprehension tasks. Her initial experience with the mathematics section surprised her, as one of the first questions asked what 10% of 470 is, which she deemed "literally just GCSE level maths".

Erin did acknowledge that she completed the test without the pressures of a time limit, which she suggested could pose additional challenges in a real exam setting. Despite recognising this, she concluded, "But they're not objectively hard questions," and compared the exam's questions to those found in the 11 plus exams in the UK.

Upon reviewing her results, Erin scored 30 out of 33 in one English section and 31 out of 33 in another. In mathematics, she achieved 25 out of 27 and 26 out of 27 in the respective sections. Overall, her total score ranged from 1470 to 1520. According to comments from American users, these scores suggest strong potential for admission into prestigious universities, with one observer noting, "That score could get you into Harvard," while another remarked that her scores placed her in the top 97%-99% of test-takers.

The SAT serves as an entrance exam for US colleges and universities, designed to assess a student’s readiness for higher education by providing a uniform data point for admissions committees to evaluate applicants. The Princeton Review states, "The purpose of the SAT is to measure a high school student's readiness for college."

While many responses agreed with Erin's assessment that the SAT's content isn't necessarily difficult, some reiterated that the time constraints are integral to the test's challenge. A commenter pointedly noted that "doing the test untimed defeats the whole purpose," underscoring that the limited time is a significant factor in the examination’s difficulty level.

America's cultural perception of the SAT has generated considerable debate, with some suggesting that while the test is designed primarily as a measure of problem-solving skills, it is not explicitly aimed to be difficult. Erin's comparisons between the SAT and A Levels diverge into discussions about academic standards and varying evaluation techniques between the US and the UK educational systems.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.tiktok.com/@erinmerylstudy/video/7414153749544881440> - This URL provides evidence of Erin Meryl’s TikTok activity, where she discussed her experience with the SAT and other study-related topics.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/discover/erin-meryl> - This link showcases Erin Meryl’s presence on TikTok, focusing on study tips and techniques for A-levels and beyond.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/discover/erin-meryl-study> - This URL highlights Erin Meryl’s TikTok content related to study hacks for SATs and GCSEs, indicating a focus on academic success.
* <https://www.collegeboard.org/> - The College Board website provides official information about the SAT, its structure, and its purpose as an entrance exam for US colleges and universities.
* <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/sat> - This Princeton Review page explains the purpose of the SAT, including measuring high school students' readiness for college, aligning with Erin's observations.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/a-levels-and-other-16-to-18-qualifications> - This UK government resource provides an overview of A Level qualifications, which Erin compared to the SAT in her study.
* <https://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/brit-a-student-takes-american-34976708> - Please view link - unable to able to access data