



# SAT<sup>®</sup> Trends

Background on the SAT Takers in the **Class of 2010** 

Embargoed until 11 a.m. EDT Monday, Sept. 13, 2010



## SAT<sup>®</sup> Trends

### Embargoed until 11 a.m. EDT Monday, Sept. 13, 2010

This report contains embargoed information on college-bound students who took the SAT<sup>®</sup> any time before high school graduation in 2010. Please do not share any of this information before **11 a.m. EDT Monday, Sept. 13**, when public versions will be available at **www.collegeboard.com/satprofiles**. All media requests for this information prior to that time should be directed to **communications@collegeboard.org**.

#### **Background on the SAT Takers in the Class of 2010**

The information presented is based on the number of students who responded to each corresponding question on the SAT Questionnaire, an optional questionnaire that most students complete when they register for the SAT.

The class of 2010 included 1,597,329 college-bound students who took the SAT.

The nearly 1.6 million SAT takers in the graduating the class of 2010 include all students who took the SAT at any point in high school, through June of their senior year. Traditionally, SAT trend data has been reported for all students who took the SAT at any point in high school through March of their senior year. This year, first-time senior test-takers in May and June, a group that has grown substantially in the last five years, were included to provide a more complete picture of the total college-bound population. In order to maintain consistency with prior year trend data, the 2010 data featured in this report include students who met the traditional cohort definition of testing through the March of their senior year — totaling over 1.54 million students. Page 10 of this report provides a comparison of March and June cohorts for 2009 and 2010. In the future, this and other SAT college-bound seniors trend reports will include May and June senior test-takers.

#### A Word About Comparing States and Schools

The SAT is a strong indicator of trends in the college-bound population, but it should never be used alone for such comparisons because demographics and other nonschool factors can have a strong effect on scores.

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## How Have College-Bound Seniors Changed in **10 years**?



Based on college-bound seniors who took the SAT through March of their senior year in 2000, 2009 and 2010.

### SAT takers are diverse — a trend that is increasing over time.

		2000	2009	2010
Ethnic diversity is increasing	American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%
Ethnic diversity is increasing.	Asian, Asian Am. or Pacific Islander	8	10	11
	Black or African American	9	12	13
Mexican or Mexican American	4	5	6	
	Black or African American Mexican or Mexican American Puerto Rican Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin Am.	1	1	2
Nexican or Mexican American Puerto Rican Other Hispanic, Latino or Latin Am.	3	7	7	
	White	57	56	54
	Other	3	3	3
	No Response	15	4	4

		2000	2009	2010
Language diversity is also increasing.	English	81%	75%	74%
Language diversity is also increasing.	English and another language	10	15	14
	Another language	9	10	11

		2000	2009	2010
Females continue to be the majority of test-takers.	Female test-takers	54%	54%	53%

(Females became the majority in the early 1970s.)

		2000	2009	2010
Majority of tost takers are still from	Public	82%	83%	83%
Majority of test-takers are still from <b>Public</b> Nonpublic	Nonpublic	18	17	17

		2000	2009	2010
Many tast takars will be the first in their	No high school diploma	4%	5%	5%
families to go to college.	High school diploma	33	31	31
	Associate degree	9	9	9
	Bachelor's	29	30	30
	Graduate degree	25	25	26

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Continued

## How Have College-Bound Seniors Changed in **10 years**?



Based on college-bound seniors who took the SAT through March of their senior year in 2000, 2009 and 2010.

College plans of SAT takers.				
		2000	2009	2010
3 in 4 students plan to apply for financial aid.	Plan to apply for financial aid	74%	71%	75%
		2000	2009	2010
Approximately half of students plan	Certificate program	1%	1%	1%
to pursue advanced degrees	Associate degree	2	1	1
to pursue devanced degrees.	Bachelor's degree	25	26	28
	Master's degree	31	31	30
	Doctoral/related degree	22	20	21
	Other	1	0	1
	Undecided	19	20	18
		2000	2009	2010
Health carears are the most popular	Health Related	16%	19%	18%
meaith careers are the most popular.	Business/Commerce	14	14	12
	Arts: Visual and Performing	8	8	8
	Education	9	7	6
	Engineering	8	8	8
	Biological Sciences	5	6	6

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## How Have College-Bound Seniors Changed in **10 years**?



Based on college-bound seniors who took the SAT through March of their senior year in 2000, 2009 and 2010.

High school grades are shifting over ti	me.			
		2000	2009	2010
Grados are higher than 10 years ago **	Art and Music	3.74	3.76	3.75
Glades are fligher than to years ago.	English	3.26	3.37	3.39
	Foreign/Classical Languages	3.22	3.31	3.33
	Mathematics	3.07	3.14	3.16
	Natural Sciences	3.20	3.25	3.27
	Social Sciences/History	3.34	3.39	3.40
	Grade average for all subjects	3.28	3.32	3.34
		2000	2009	2010
Students are getting more A's	A+, A, A- grade averages	40%	43%	44%
than 10 years ago	B+, B, B- grade averages	47	46	45
than to years ago.	C+, C, C- grade averages	12	11	10

Score changes are slight over time.											
		2000	2009	2010							
Critical reading is down 1 points	Critical Reading	505	501	501							
mathematics is up 2 points from 10 years ago.	Male	507	503	503							
	Female	504	498	498							
	Mathematics	514	515	516							
	Male	533	534	534							
	Female	498	499	500							
	Writing*	-	493	492							
	Male	-	486	486							
	Female	-	499	498							

\*\*Based on 4-point system, where A = 400

\*Writing data are based on students who took the current version of the SAT, first administered in March 2005. All students in the 2009 and 2010 cohorts took the SAT writing section.

## 10-Year Trend in Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing Mean Scores





Year	<b>Critical Reading</b>	Mathematics	Writing	Critical Read
2000	505	514	-	Mathematics
2001	506	514	-	
2002	504	516	-	Writing
2003	507	519	-	g
2004	508	518	-	
2005	508	520	-	
2006	503	518	497	
2007	502	515	494	
2008	502	515	494	
2009	501	515	493	
2010	501	516	492	

Data above includes students who took the SAT through March of their senior year. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the analysis.



# 2010 College-Bound Seniors by Race/Ethnicity



## SAT Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing Mean Scores by Race/Ethnicity

		Criti	cal Rea	ding		Mathematics					Writing		
Racial/Ethnic				1-Year	10-Year				1-Year	10-Year			1-Year
Groups	2000	2009	2010	Change	Change	2000	2009	2010	Change	Change	2009	2010	Change
American Indian	482	486	485	-1	+3	481	493	492	-1	+11	469	467	-2
Asian	499	516	519	+3	+20	565	587	591	+4	+26	520	526	+6
Black	434	429	429	0	-5	426	426	428	+2	+2	421	420	-1
Mexican American	453	453	454	+1	+1	460	463	467	+4	+7	446	448	+2
Puerto Rican	456	452	454	+2	-2	451	450	452	+2	+1	443	443	0
Other Hispanic	461	455	454	-1	-7	467	461	462	+1	-5	448	447	-1
White	528	528	528	0	0	530	536	536	0	+6	517	516	-1
Other	508	494	494	0	-14	515	514	514	0	-1	493	492	-1
Total	505	501	501	0	-4	514	515	516	+1	+2	493	492	-1

Data above includes students who took the SAT through March of their senior year. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the analysis.

# Mean SAT Scores of College-Bound Seniors, 1972–2010<sup>\*</sup>



			Male		Female				Critical		
	Year	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing**	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing**	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing**	
	1972	531	527	-	529	489	-	530	509	-	
	1973	523	525	-	521	489	-	523	506	-	
	1974	524	524	-	520	488	-	521	505	-	
	1975	515	518	-	509	479	-	512	498	-	
	1976	511	520	-	508	475	-	509	497	-	
	1977	509	520	-	505	474	-	507	496	-	
	1978	511	517	-	503	474	-	507	494	-	
	1979	509	516	-	501	473	-	505	493	-	
30 yr	1980	506	515	-	498	473	-	502	492	-	
	1981	508	516	-	496	473	-	502	492	-	
	1982	509	516	-	499	473	-	504	493	-	
	1983	508	516	-	498	474	-	503	494	-	
	1984	511	518	-	498	478	-	504	497	-	
	1985	514	522	-	503	480	-	509	500	-	
	1986	515	523	-	504	479	-	509	500	-	
	1987	512	523	-	502	481	-	507	501	-	
	1988	512	521	-	499	483	-	505	501	-	
	1989	510	523	-	498	482	-	504	502	-	
20 yr	1990	505	521	-	496	483	-	500	501	-	
	1991	503	520	-	495	482	-	499	500	-	
	1992	504	521	-	496	484	-	500	501	-	
	1993	504	524	-	497	484	-	500	503	-	
	1994	501	523	-	497	487	-	499	504	-	
	1995	505	525	-	502	490	-	504	506	-	
	1996	507	527	-	503	492	-	505	508	-	
	1997	507	530	-	503	494	-	505	511	-	
	1998	509	531	-	502	496	-	505	512	-	
	1999	509	531	-	502	495	-	505	511	-	
10 yr	2000	507	533	-	504	498	-	505	514	-	
	2001	509	533	-	502	498	-	506	514	-	
	2002	507	534	-	502	500	-	504	516	-	
	2003	512	537	-	503	503	-	507	519	-	
	2004	512	537	-	504	501	-	508	518	-	
5 yr	2005	513	538	-	505	504	-	508	520	-	
	2006	505	536	491	502	502	502	503	518	497	
	2007	504	533	489	502	499	500	502	515	494	
	2008	504	533	488	500	500	501	502	515	494	
	2009	503	534	486	498	499	499	501	515	493	
	2010	503	534	486	498	500	498	501	516	492	

\* When the SAT was renormed in April 1995, mean scores were set at or near the midpoint of 500 on the 200- to 800-point score scale, a process called recentering. All scores in this table reflect that process. Means after 1996 are recentered, and those for 1996 are based on recentered scores plus scores converted from the original to the new scale. Means for 1887–1995 were recomputed after individual scores were converted from the original to the new scale; and means for 1972–1986 were converted to the new scale after a formula was applied to the original means and standard deviation.

\*\* Writing data are based on students who took the current version of the SAT, first administered in March 2005. All students in the 2009 and 2010 cohorts took the SAT writing section. Of the 1,518,859 students in the 2008 cohort, 1,518,176 had scores on the SAT writing section. Of the 1,494,531 students in the 2007 cohort, 1,491,749 had scores on the SAT writing section. Of the 1,465,744 students in the 2006 cohort, 1,376,745 had scores on the SAT writing section.

Data above includes students who took the SAT through March of their senior year. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the analysis.

## Mean SAT Scores by State, **All Schools**



(States are listed by percentage of high school graduates who took the SAT.\*) The College Board strongly discourages the comparison or ranking of states on the basis of SAT scores alone.

								1-Year					10-Year	
			2010			2009		C	hang	e	200	)0	Char	ıge
		Critical			Critical						Critical			
State	Participation Rate 2010*	Reading Mean	Math Mean	Writing Mean	Reading Mean	Math Mean	Writing Mean	Critical Reading	Math	Writing	Reading Mean	Math Mean	Critical Reading	Math
Maine	<b>92%</b>	468	467	454	468	467	455	0	0	-1	504	500	-36	-33
Massachusetts	86%	512	526	509	514	526	510	-2	0	-1	511	513	+1	+13
New York	85%	484	499	478	485	502	478	-1	-3	0	494	506	-10	-7
Connecticut	84%	509	514	513	509	513	512	0	+1	+1	508	509	+1	+5
New Hampshire	77%	520	524	510	523	523	510	-3	+1	0	520	519	0	+5
<b>District of Columbia</b>	76%	474	464	466	466	451	461	+8	+13	+5	494	486	-20	-22
New Jersey	76%	495	514	497	496	513	496	-1	+1	+1	498	513	-3	+1
Georgia	74%	488	490	475	490	491	479	-2	-1	-4	488	486	0	+4
Delaware	71%	493	495	481	495	498	484	-2	-3	-3	502	496	-9	-1
Pennsylvania	71%	492	501	480	493	501	483	-1	0	-3	498	497	-6	+4
Maryland	70%	501	506	495	500	502	495	+1	+4	0	507	509	-6	-3
Rhode Island	67%	494	495	488	498	496	494	-4	-1	-6	505	500	-11	-5
Virginia	67%	512	512	497	511	512	498	+1	0	-1	509	500	+3	+12
South Carolina	66%	484	495	468	486	496	470	-2	-1	-2	484	482	0	+13
Vermont	66%	519	521	506	518	518	506	+1	+3	0	513	508	+6	+13
Indiana	64%	494	505	477	496	507	480	-2	-2	-3	498	501	-4	+4
North Carolina	<b>63%</b>	497	511	477	495	511	480	+2	0	-3	492	496	+5	+15
Florida	59%	496	498	479	497	498	480	-1	0	-1	498	500	-2	-2
Hawaii	58%	483	505	470	479	502	469	+4	+3	+1	488	519	-5	-14
Oregon	54%	523	524	499	523	525	499	0	-1	0	527	527	-4	-3
Washington	54%	524	532	508	524	531	507	0	+1	+1	526	528	-2	+4
Texas	53%	484	505	473	486	506	475	-2	-1	-2	493	500	-9	+5
California	50%	501	516	500	500	513	498	+1	+3	+2	497	518	+4	-2
Alaska	48%	518	515	491	520	516	492	-2	-1	-1	519	515	-1	0
Nevada	43%	496	501	473	501	505	479	-5	-4	-6	510	517	-14	-16
Arizona	25%	519	525	500	516	521	497	+3	+4	+3	521	523	-2	+2
Montana	24%	538	538	517	541	542	519	-3	-4	-2	543	546	-5	-8
Ohio	21%	538	548	522	537	546	523	+1	+2	-1	533	539	+5	+9
Idaho	19%	543	541	517	541	540	520	+2	+1	-3	540	541	+3	0

\* The percentage of high school graduates is based on the recently revised projection of high school graduates in 2010 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE),<sup>†</sup> and the number of students in the class of 2010 who took the SAT in each state through March 2010. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the analysis.

\* Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992–2022, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008.

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## Mean SAT Scores by State, **All Schools**



(States are listed by percentage of high school graduates who took the SAT.\*) The College Board strongly discourages the comparison or ranking of states on the basis of SAT scores alone.

					1-Year						<b>10-Year</b>			
		2010			2009			Change			2000		Change	
State	Participation Rate 2010*	Critical Reading Mean	Math Mean	Writing Mean	Critical Reading Mean	Math Mean	Writing Mean	Critical Reading	Math	Writing	Critical Reading Mean	Math Mean	Critical Reading	Math
Colorado	18%	568	572	555	568	575	555	0	-3	0	534	537	+34	+35
West Virginia	16%	515	507	500	511	501	499	+4	+6	+1	526	511	-11	-4
New Mexico	11%	553	549	534	553	546	534	0	+3	0	549	543	+4	+6
Tennessee	10%	576	571	565	571	565	565	+5	+6	0	563	553	+13	+18
Alabama	7%	556	550	544	557	552	549	-1	-2	-5	559	555	-3	-5
Louisiana	7%	555	550	547	563	558	555	-8	-8	-8	562	558	-7	-8
Minnesota	7%	594	607	580	595	609	578	-1	-2	+2	581	594	+13	+13
Illinois	6%	585	600	577	588	604	583	-3	-4	-6	568	586	+17	+14
Kansas	6%	590	595	567	581	589	564	+9	+6	+3	574	580	+16	+15
Kentucky	6%	575	575	563	573	573	561	+2	+2	+2	548	550	+27	+25
Utah	6%	568	559	547	559	558	540	+9	+1	+7	570	569	-2	-10
Michigan	5%	585	605	576	584	603	575	+1	+2	+1	557	569	+28	+36
Oklahoma	5%	569	568	547	575	571	557	-6	-3	-10	563	560	+6	+8
Wyoming	5%	570	567	546	567	568	550	+3	-1	-4	545	545	+25	+22
Arkansas	4%	566	566	552	572	572	556	-6	-6	-4	563	554	+3	+12
Missouri	4%	593	595	580	595	600	584	-2	-5	-4	572	577	+21	+18
Nebraska	4%	585	593	568	587	594	572	-2	-1	-4	560	571	+25	+22
North Dakota	4%	580	594	559	590	593	566	-10	+1	-7	588	609	-8	-15
Wisconsin	4%	595	604	579	594	608	582	+1	-4	-3	584	597	+11	+7
lowa	3%	603	613	582	610	615	588	-7	-2	-6	589	600	+14	+13
Mississippi	3%	566	548	552	567	554	559	-1	-6	-7	562	549	+4	-1
South Dakota	3%	592	603	571	589	600	569	+3	+3	+2	587	588	+5	+15
All students	47%	501	516	492	501	515	493	0	+1	-1	505	514	-4	+2

\* The percentage of high school graduates is based on the recently revised projection of high school graduates in 2010 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE),<sup>†</sup> and the number of students in the class of 2010 who took the SAT in each state through March 2010. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the analysis.

\* Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/Ethnicity, 1992–2022, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, March 2008.

### **SAT Trend Reporting Transition**

The 1,597,329 SAT takers in the graduating class of 2010 include all students who took the SAT through June 2010. The SAT college-bound seniors trend data have historically included students who took the SAT at any point in high school through March of their senior year, by which time



almost all college-bound students had taken the test. Over the last five years, the College Board has observed a trend in which more students are taking the SAT for the first time in May or June of their senior year. This population of college-bound students has grown into a significant segment of nearly 50,000 students in the graduating class of 2010. The College Board believes it is important to acknowledge these students to truly complete the 2010 college-bound seniors cohort.

In order to provide a more complete view of the college-going population, the official 2010 college-bound seniors cohort of almost 1.6 million includes all students who tested through June of their senior year. To maintain consistency and reliability of year-over-year comparisons, the 2010 trend data details shown in this report continue to reflect information on the student population who tested through March of their senior year. Beginning in 2011, SAT college-bound trend reports, group profile reports and all state profile reports will include students who took the SAT at any point in high school through June of their senior year.

The table below provides score information for the student group through March and through June.

All Schools		2010			2009				
Total Group	Students	Critical Reading	Math	Writing	Students	Critical Reading	Math	Writing	
June Cohort	1,597,329	500	515	491	1,573,110	499	514	492	
March Cohort	1,547,990	501	516	492	1,530,128	501	515	493	

As the table shows, mean scores for the full-year group that includes May and June test-takers are marginally lower than the mean scores for the March group. This difference is driven by the fact that the population of "late-starting" test-takers has lower mean SAT scores than the March cohort test-takers.

The College Board, with the high school counseling community as its partner, will also be encouraging even more students to participate in the college planning process earlier in their high school careers in order to maximize available student choices.

### How should colleges and universities use SAT scores in admission decisions?

SAT scores can make a significant contribution to admission decisions when colleges, universities and systems of higher education use them properly. To advise these institutions on the proper use of SAT scores, the *Guidelines on the Uses of College Board Test Scores and Related Data* (2010) indicates that the responsible officials and selection committee members at each institution should:

- Know enough about tests and test data to ensure that their proper uses and limitations are understood and applied.
- Use SAT scores in conjunction with other indicators, such as the secondary school record (grades and courses), interviews, personal statements, writing samples, portfolios, recommendations, etc., in evaluating the applicant's admissibility at a particular institution.
- View admission test scores as contemporary and approximate indicators rather than as fixed and exact measures of a student's preparation for college-level work.
- Evaluate test results and other information about applicants in the context of their particular background and experience, as well as in the context of the programs they intend to pursue.
- Ensure that small differences in test scores are not the basis for rejecting an otherwise qualified applicant.

- Guard against using minimum test scores unless used in conjunction with other information such as secondary school performance and unless properly validated. An exception to this guideline is that institutions may establish, based on empirical data, specific score levels that reflect desired skill competencies, such as English language proficiency.
- Regularly validate data used in the selection process to ensure their continuing relevance.
- Maintain adequate procedures for protecting the confidentiality of test scores and other admission data.
- When introducing or revising admission policies, allow sufficient lead time and provide adequate notice to schools and students so that they can take the new policies into account when planning school programs and curricular offerings and preparing for admission tests and other requirements.

### How prevalent are changes in high school SAT scores?



This table shows that most changes in mean SAT scores are not unusual. Based on schools in which at least 50 college-bound seniors took the SAT, it shows the percentage of schools whose mean scores rose or fell at least 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 points by the size of their test-taking populations (50–99, 100–299 and 300+ test-takers) and across all schools. Low-volume schools tend to have larger changes. For example, 60 percent of schools with 50–99 test-takers saw their SAT critical reading mean scores rise or fall 10 or more points, well above the 29 percent of schools with 300 or more test-takers.

#### Percentage of High Schools Whose Mean SAT Scores Rose or Fell in 2009-2010.

	Scores rose or fell at least this	Percenta score cha	age of schools with t ange, by number of t	Percentage of all schools with 50+ test-takers with			
	many points	50–99	100–299	300+	this much score change		
Critical Reading	10	60%	46%	29%	50%		
	20	29%	13%	3%	18%		
	30	11 %	3%	1%	6%		
	40	3%	1%	0%	2%		
	50	1%	0%	0%	1%		
Mathematics	10	60%	48%	30%	51%		
	20	27%	15%	4%	19%		
	30	10%	4%	1%	6%		
	40	4%	1%	0%	2%		
	50	1%	0%	0%	1%		
Writing	10	60%	46%	30%	50%		
	20	27%	14%	4%	18%		
	30	10%	3%	0%	6%		
	40	3%	1%	0%	2%		
	50	1%	0%	0%	1%		

### **Using Aggregate Scores**



#### Educators, the media and others should:

- Use aggregate scores in conjunction with other factors such as the number of courses taken in academic subjects, scores on other standardized tests, pupil-teacher ratios, teacher credentials, expenditures per student, participation rates, retention and attrition rates, graduation rates, and other outcome measures for:
  - Evaluation of the general direction in which education in a particular jurisdiction is headed;
  - Curriculum development;
  - Faculty staffing;
  - Student recruitment;
  - Planning for physical facilities;
  - Student services such as guidance and placement; and
  - Monitoring teacher development and curricular effectiveness over time.
- ▶ Not rank or rate teachers, educational institutions, districts or states solely on the basis of aggregate scores derived from tests that are intended primarily as a measure of individual students.

### A Note on the Use of Aggregate SAT Data

As measures of developed critical reading, mathematical and writing abilities important for success in college, SAT scores are useful in making decisions about individual students and assessing their academic preparation. Because of the increasing public interest in educational accountability, aggregate test data continue to be widely publicized and analyzed. Aggregate scores can be considered one indicator of educational quality when used in conjunction with a careful examination of other conditions that affect the educational enterprise.

However, it is important to note that many College Board tests are taken only by particular groups of self-selected students. Therefore, aggregate results of their performance on these tests usually do not reflect the educational attainment of all students in a school, district or state. Useful comparisons of students' performance are possible only if all students take the same test. Average SAT scores are not appropriate for state comparisons because the percentage of SAT takers varies widely among states. In some states, a very small percentage of the college-bound seniors take the SAT. Typically, in a state with a very small percentage of the college-bound population taking the SAT, these students have strong academic backgrounds and are applicants to the nation's most selective colleges and scholarship programs. Therefore, it is expected that the SAT critical reading, mathematics and writing averages reported for these states will be higher than the national averages. In states where a greater proportion of students with a wide range of academic backgrounds take the SAT, the scores are closer to the national averages.

### **Data Notes**

- The trend data in this report includes students in the class of 2010 who took the SAT through March 2010. Senior test-takers in May and June are not included in the detailed analyses.
- "Parental education" indicates the highest level of either parent's education.
- The "mean" is defined as the arithmetic average.
- "Percent" is a way of expressing a proportion, a ratio or a fraction as a whole number by using 100 as the denominator.