

Understanding Score Percentiles

A score percentile represents the percentage of scores that are equal or below a certain score within a given sample.

Example: The 75th percentile SAT score for incoming freshmen is 1400.



**75% of students
Scored 1400 or below**

**75th percentile
(25% of students)
Scored above 1400**

ThoughtCo.

How to Understand Score Percentiles

By **Kelly Roell** (July 03, 2019)

Confused about score percentiles? Don't be! If you've gotten back your score report, whether it's for the SAT, GRE, ACT or another standardized test, and you're wondering what that percentage posted front and center on your score report actually means, then here's your explanation.

Score Percentile Rankings

One instance in which you'll be viewing score percentiles is when you look at school rankings to figure out whether or not you even have a shot at getting in your school of choice. Let's say you're looking at the SAT scores for the Really Prestigious School you're thinking about attending, and you find yourself staring at this information from last year's incoming freshman when you peruse their website:

Really Prestigious School:

25th percentile scores for incoming freshmen: 1400

75th percentile scores for incoming freshmen: 1570

So, what does that mean?

25th percentile means that 25% of the accepted students made a 1400 or *below* on the test. It also means that 75% of the accepted students scored *above* a 1400.

75th percentile means that 75% of the accepted students made a 1570 or *below* on the test and that 25% of the accepted students scored *above* a 1570.

Basically, most incoming freshman from this school have scored at least a 1400 and that a quarter of their incoming freshman have scored a 1570 or higher.