

SAT Test Taking Tips



The SAT is the most popular standardized test used for admission into colleges and universities in the United States. It includes three sections: math, critical reading, and writing.

General Tips

- In each section of the SAT, the questions start out easy and become increasingly difficult. Answer the questions that are easiest for you first.
- Be careful about guessing. For most questions, you don't lose a point for omitting an answer, but you do lose a fractional point for a wrong answer.
- Don't spend more than one or two minutes on any one question.
- Mark the test book in any way that will help you.
- Keep track of time.
- Bring water and healthy snacks to renew your mental and physical energy during breaks.

Math Section Tips

Most of the items in the math section are multiple-choice questions.

- Use a calculator as needed. (Be sure to bring a calculator.)
- Use the test booklet for scratch work.
- If stuck, try substituting the numbers given as answer choices for the variables in the question.

Other questions require that you come up with your own answers and fit them into a grid.

- Since there is no penalty for wrong answers here, take your best guess if you can't figure out the answer.
- The answer cannot be a negative number. Do the problem again if you come up with a negative number.
- The answer cannot be a mixed number. If your answer is a mixed number, convert it to an improper fraction or a decimal.

Critical Reading Section Tips

Some of the questions require you to read a sentence containing one or two blanks. You are required to select the answer choice that correctly completes the sentence.

- Read the sentence and try to complete it before looking at the answer choices. If what you come up with is one of the answer choices, select it as your answer.
- Read all the answer choices before selecting one. Don't just select the first one you come to that you think might be correct.
- Be especially careful when sentences include negative words (e.g., not) or prefixes (e.g., un). These change the meaning of a sentence.

- When a sentence contains two blanks, do not select an answer choice unless you are certain that both words in the answer choice are correct.

Other questions require you to read a passage and select the correct answers to questions about the passage.

- Read the passage before reading the questions.
- As you read a passage look for the main ideas. You can always go back to look for details.
- Pay the most attention to the first and last sentence in a paragraph.
- Some passages are presented in pairs. In this case, read the introduction first to see how the passages are related.

Writing Section Tips

This section includes multiple-choice questions. Some require you to improve sentences, others to find errors in sentences, and others to improve paragraphs.

- Select an answer choice that seems simple and clear. Do not select an answer choice that seems awkward and very complicated.
- It is particularly important to read the questions and answer choices in this section very carefully.

This section also requires you to write a short, persuasive essay on an assigned topic within 25 minutes.

- Because the score for your essay is based on the reader's overall impression, express your ideas clearly using examples to back them up.
- The standard five-paragraph essay is the best format to use.
- Keep your writing as simple as possible. Don't be too "wordy."
- Focus on the organization of the essay rather than perfect grammar and spelling.
- Avoid the use of slang.

Nothing can take the place of math, reading, and writing skills. But these tips can help you make the most of your skills when taking the SAT.

See our other study skills resources at www.how-to-study.com and don't forget to visit www.mangrum-strichart.com to learn about our study skills products.

Feel free to link to our site. Give credit to www.how-to-study.com whenever you print and distribute material from this site.

You must obtain our written permission for use of any of the information at this site for commercial purposes.

Copyright © How-To-Study.com.