

CHAPTER 2

Doing Your Best on the SAT

The SAT is an important test, one that can have a big impact on your future. And getting ready for the SAT involves a lot of time and hard work. In order to do your best on the SAT, it's important not to think of the test as an obstacle that's in your way or an ordeal that you have to endure. Instead, think of the SAT as an opportunity to show colleges and scholarship programs that you're ready to succeed at the next level. You can make best use of your opportunity by learning the essential skills and knowledge covered on the test, getting familiar with the test itself, practicing in smart ways, and having a good test day strategy.

Building Important Knowledge and Skills Measured on the SAT

The Key: Working Hard in School

The best preparation for the SAT occurs every day as you study hard in school and acquire important reading, writing, language, and math knowledge and skills. You don't have to discover secret tricks or go into training for test day. The SAT is focused on the skills and knowledge at the heart of education. It will measure:

- What you learn in high school
- What you need to succeed in college and career

The same habits and choices that lead to success in school will help you get ready for the SAT. The best way to prepare for the test is to:

- Take challenging courses
- Do your homework
- Prepare for tests and quizzes
- Ask and answer lots of questions

In short, take charge of your education and learn as much as you can.



REMEMBER

The best way to prepare for the SAT is to work hard in school. The SAT has been designed to reflect what you're being taught in school, as well as the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in college and workforce training programs.

Reading Knowledge and Skills

To succeed in college and career, you'll need a range of reading skills — and the ability to use those skills when you engage with challenging texts in a wide array of subjects. Not coincidentally, you'll also need those skills to do well on the SAT.

Some SAT questions ask you to locate a piece of information or an idea stated directly. But there's much more to reading than understanding the things that an author writes explicitly. You'll also need to understand what the author's words imply.

Authors are often subtle, and readers have to make reasonable inferences or draw logical conclusions on their own. In other words, they have to read between the lines to reach a deeper meaning — or just to follow the author's train of thought.

Some SAT questions ask you to use clearly stated information and ideas in a passage or pair of related passages to figure out meanings that are only suggested. You'll also need to apply this skill when you read the complex texts assigned in college. Because you'll encounter such texts in your earliest classes, you'll see them on the SAT, too.

Complex texts often:

- Include uncommon words
- Use sophisticated sentence structures
- Present large amounts of information and ideas quickly
- Discuss abstract ideas (such as justice or freedom)
- Describe subtle or complicated relationships among concepts

Not all passages on the SAT are this challenging, but you should be ready to use your reading skills to draw out meaning from those that are.

Vocabulary Knowledge and Skills

The SAT doesn't have a vocabulary section, but it does test how well you know, interpret, and use words and phrases.

On the Reading Test, you'll be asked to read a passage and figure out the precise meaning of a word or phrase as it is used in a given context. The word or phrase will probably have more than one dictionary meaning, so you'll have to use context clues to figure out which meaning is intended in the passage. You may also be asked to analyze how words and phrases are used to convey meaning, style, tone, or the like.

Both the Writing and Language Test and the Essay test your ability to use words and phrases appropriately and precisely. On the Writing and Language Test, for example, you may be asked to choose the word or phrase that best expresses an idea or creates a particular mood.



REMEMBER

SAT Reading Test and Essay passages are drawn from high-quality, previously published sources. Reading Test passages are drawn from the subject areas of U.S. and world literature, history/social studies, and science, while Essay passages are arguments written for a broad audience. Practice reading and analyzing essays or articles from each of these areas to prepare yourself for the SAT.

Writing and Language Knowledge and Skills

Writing is another central component of your post-high school future. The SAT divides the skills assessed on the Writing and Language Test into two broad categories: Expression of Ideas and Standard English Conventions.

Expression of Ideas questions focus on revision of text for topic development; organization, logic, and cohesion; and rhetorically effective use of language. You may be asked to:

- Replace a sentence with one that states the main claim more clearly.
- Add evidence that supports an argument.
- Remove an example that's not relevant to the passage's central idea.
- Correct the writer's interpretation of the data presented in a graph.
- Ensure that information and ideas are presented in the clearest and most logical order.
- Decide which word or phrase expresses an idea most clearly.
- Choose between similar words with different connotations.
- Revise language to get rid of wordiness or repetition.
- Change a sentence so that it is more consistent with the passage's style or tone.
- Revise sentence structure to shift emphasis.
- Combine two sentences effectively.

Standard English Conventions questions focus on editing text following the conventions of standard written English sentence structure, usage, and punctuation. These questions may ask you to recognize and correct:

- Grammatically incomplete sentences, run-ons, and comma splices
- Problems with coordination or subordination of clauses in sentences
- Lack of parallelism in sentence construction
- Dangling and other misplaced modifiers
- Inappropriate shifts in verb tense, voice, and mood and in pronoun person and number
- Vague or ambiguous pronouns
- Confusion between the words *its/it's*, *your/you're*, and *their/they're/there* as well as other commonly confused words (for example, *affect* and *effect*)

- Lack of agreement between pronouns and antecedents, between subjects and verbs, and between nouns
- Illogical comparisons of unlike terms
- Cases of nonstandard expression (when words and phrases are used in a way not typical to standard written English)
- Problems with using end-of-sentence punctuation or punctuation within sentences (particularly colons, semicolons, and dashes) to signal sharp breaks in thought
- Confusion between plurals and possessives and between singular and plural possessives
- Problems with punctuating a series of items
- Confusion between restrictive/essential and nonrestrictive/nonessential sentence elements
- Unnecessary punctuation (for example, between a subject and a verb)



REMEMBER

The SAT Essay is optional for students. Some school districts and colleges, however, will require it. The Essay has been designed to mirror some of the kinds of work often required in college and career.

Your writing skills will also be evaluated if you choose to take the optional SAT Essay. The Essay, in part, will be scored according to how well you've expressed your ideas and to what extent, if any, mistakes in applying standard written English conventions impair the quality of your expression.

Math Knowledge and Skills

The SAT Math Test covers a range of math practices, with an emphasis on problem solving, modeling, using tools strategically, and using algebraic structure. The Math Test is your chance to show that you have mathematical fluency, an understanding of mathematical concepts, and skill in applying your math knowledge to real-world problems.

Demonstrating fluency on the Math Test means being able to carry out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and strategically. You'll need to show that you can solve problems quickly by identifying and using the most efficient solution approaches. This may involve solving a problem by inspection, finding a shortcut, or reorganizing the information you've been given.

The Math Test will also give you the opportunity to demonstrate your grasp of math concepts, operations, and relations. For instance, you may be asked to make connections between properties of linear equations, their graphs, and the contexts they represent.

Application problems on the SAT Math Test are your chance to show that you can apply the math skills you've been learning in class. These real-world problems ask you to analyze a situation, determine the essential elements required to solve the problem, represent the problem mathematically, and carry out a solution.

Getting Familiar with the SAT

Know the Test Directions

Knowing the directions for the SAT before test day will give you an advantage. By learning in advance what the directions say, you can minimize the amount of time you spend reading them on test day and be more focused on the actual questions. The directions for each portion of the SAT are reprinted on the following pages. Study them now and you'll be better prepared to do your best on test day.

Know the Test Question Formats

In addition to knowing the test directions, you should also know how questions on the various parts of the SAT are asked. Doing so will help prevent surprises on test day and free you up to focus on the content rather than the format. For example, you'll want to become familiar with the two-column presentation and the use of underlined portions of text in the Writing and Language Test. For the Math Test, you'll definitely want to become familiar with the format of the student-produced response questions (SPRs), sometimes referred to as "grid-ins." For each of these questions, you won't have answer choices to select from. Rather, you must solve the problem and "grid" the answer you came up with on the answer sheet.

The more you practice with official SAT practice tests and sample questions, the more comfortable you'll become with the question formats. And be sure to read through this book's information about the format of each test and work through the sample questions in Chapter 9 (the Reading Test), Chapter 13 (the Writing and Language Test), and Chapters 20 and 21 (the Math Test).



REMEMBER

By knowing in advance how long the test is, when the breaks are scheduled, what formats the questions come in, what the test directions are, and how the test is scored, you won't have any surprises on test day and will be able to focus on performing your best.

Reading Test

65 MINUTES, 52 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 1 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

DIRECTIONS

Each passage or pair of passages below is followed by a number of questions. After reading each passage or pair, choose the best answer to each question based on what is stated or implied in the passage or passages and in any accompanying graphics (such as a table or graph).

Writing and Language Test

35 MINUTES, 44 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 2 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

DIRECTIONS

Each passage below is accompanied by a number of questions. For some questions, you will consider how the passage might be revised to improve the expression of ideas. For other questions, you will consider how the passage might be edited to correct errors in sentence structure, usage, or punctuation. A passage or a question may be accompanied by one or more graphics (such as a table or graph) that you will consider as you make revising and editing decisions.

Some questions will direct you to an underlined portion of a passage. Other questions will direct you to a location in a passage or ask you to think about the passage as a whole.

After reading each passage, choose the answer to each question that most effectively improves the quality of writing in the passage or that makes the passage conform to the conventions of standard written English. Many questions include a “NO CHANGE” option. Choose that option if you think the best choice is to leave the relevant portion of the passage as it is.

Math Test – No Calculator

25 MINUTES, 20 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 3 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

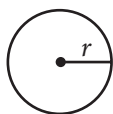
DIRECTIONS

For questions 1-15, solve each problem, choose the best answer from the choices provided, and fill in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet. For questions 16-20, solve the problem and enter your answer in the grid on the answer sheet. Please refer to the directions before question 16 on how to enter your answers in the grid. You may use any available space in your test booklet for scratch work.

NOTES

1. The use of a calculator **is not permitted**.
2. All variables and expressions used represent real numbers unless otherwise indicated.
3. Figures provided in this test are drawn to scale unless otherwise indicated.
4. All figures lie in a plane unless otherwise indicated.
5. Unless otherwise indicated, the domain of a given function f is the set of all real numbers x for which $f(x)$ is a real number.

REFERENCE

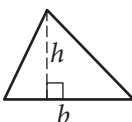


$$A = \pi r^2$$

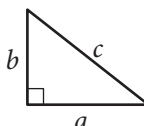
$$C = 2\pi r$$



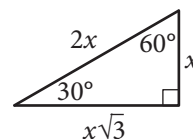
$$A = \ell w$$



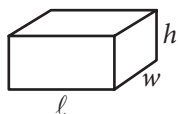
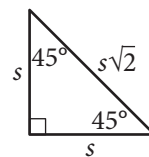
$$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$$



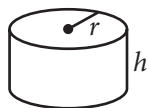
$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$



Special Right Triangles



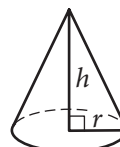
$$V = \ell wh$$



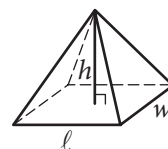
$$V = \pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\ell wh$$

The number of degrees of arc in a circle is 360.

The number of radians of arc in a circle is 2π .

The sum of the measures in degrees of the angles of a triangle is 180.

Math Test – Calculator

55 MINUTES, 38 QUESTIONS

Turn to Section 4 of your answer sheet to answer the questions in this section.

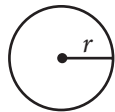
DIRECTIONS

For questions 1-30, solve each problem, choose the best answer from the choices provided, and fill in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet. For questions 31-38, solve the problem and enter your answer in the grid on the answer sheet. Please refer to the directions before question 31 on how to enter your answers in the grid. You may use any available space in your test booklet for scratch work.

NOTES

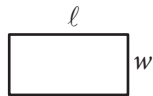
1. The use of a calculator **is permitted**.
2. All variables and expressions used represent real numbers unless otherwise indicated.
3. Figures provided in this test are drawn to scale unless otherwise indicated.
4. All figures lie in a plane unless otherwise indicated.
5. Unless otherwise indicated, the domain of a given function f is the set of all real numbers x for which $f(x)$ is a real number.

REFERENCE

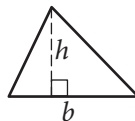


$$A = \pi r^2$$

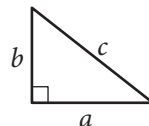
$$C = 2\pi r$$



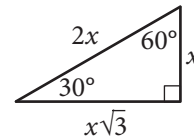
$$A = \ell w$$



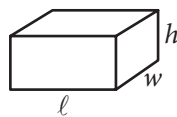
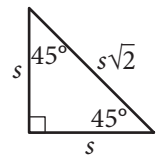
$$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$$



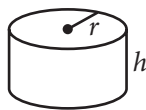
$$c^2 = a^2 + b^2$$



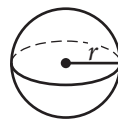
Special Right Triangles



$$V = \ell wh$$



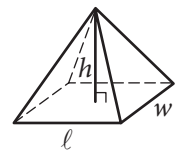
$$V = \pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\pi r^2 h$$



$$V = \frac{1}{3}\ell wh$$


The number of degrees of arc in a circle is 360.

The number of radians of arc in a circle is 2π .

The sum of the measures in degrees of the angles of a triangle is 180.

DIRECTIONS

For questions 16–20, solve the problem and enter your answer in the grid, as described below, on the answer sheet.

- Although not required, it is suggested that you write your answer in the boxes at the top of the columns to help you fill in the circles accurately. You will receive credit only if the circles are filled in correctly.
- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- No question has a negative answer.
- Some problems may have more than one correct answer. In such cases, grid only one answer.
- Mixed numbers** such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ must be gridded as 3.5 or 7/2. (If  is entered into the grid, it will be interpreted as $\frac{31}{2}$, not $3\frac{1}{2}$.)
- Decimal answers:** If you obtain a decimal answer with more digits than the grid can accommodate, it may be either rounded or truncated, but it must fill the entire grid.

Write answer in boxes. →

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

7	/	1	2
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	•	1
2	2	2	•
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
•	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

← Fraction line

Grid in result. →

Answer: 2.5

	2	.	5
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	•
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

← Decimal point

Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:

	2	/	3
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	•
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8

.	6	6	6
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	•	•	•
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8

.	6	6	7
•	•	•	•
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	•	•	6
7	7	7	•
8	8	8	8

Answer: 201 – either position is correct

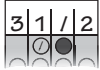
	2	0	1
•	•	•	•
0	0	•	0
1	1	1	•
2	•	2	2
3	3	3	3

2	0	1	
•	•	•	•
•	0	0	0
1	1	•	1
•	2	2	2
3	3	3	3

NOTE: You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns you don't need to use should be left blank.

DIRECTIONS

For questions 31–38, solve the problem and enter your answer in the grid, as described below, on the answer sheet.

- Although not required, it is suggested that you write your answer in the boxes at the top of the columns to help you fill in the circles accurately. You will receive credit only if the circles are filled in correctly.
- Mark no more than one circle in any column.
- No question has a negative answer.
- Some problems may have more than one correct answer. In such cases, grid only one answer.
- Mixed numbers** such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ must be gridded as 3.5 or 7/2. (If  is entered into the grid, it will be interpreted as $\frac{31}{2}$, not $3\frac{1}{2}$.)
- Decimal answers:** If you obtain a decimal answer with more digits than the grid can accommodate, it may be either rounded or truncated, but it must fill the entire grid.

Write answer → in boxes.

Grid in result.

Answer: $\frac{7}{12}$

	7	/	1	2
.
	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9

← Fraction line

Answer: 2.5

	2	.	5
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9

← Decimal point

Acceptable ways to grid $\frac{2}{3}$ are:

	2	/	3
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8

.	6	6	6
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8

.	6	6	7
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8

Answer: 201 – either position is correct

	2	0	1
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3

2	0	1	
.	.	.	.
	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3

NOTE: You may start your answers in any column, space permitting. Columns you don't need to use should be left blank.

Essay

DIRECTIONS

The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can read and comprehend a passage and write an essay analyzing the passage. In your essay, you should demonstrate that you have read the passage carefully, present a clear and logical analysis, and use language precisely.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided in your answer booklet; except for the Planning Page of the answer booklet, you will receive no other paper on which to write. You will have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. Remember that people who are not familiar with your handwriting will read what you write. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to those readers.

You have 50 minutes to read the passage and write an essay in response to the prompt provided inside this booklet.

REMINDERS:

- Do not write your essay in this booklet. Only what you write on the lined pages of your answer booklet will be evaluated.
- An off-topic essay will not be evaluated.

As you read the passage below, consider how [the author] uses

- evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

The passage follows the box above.

Write an essay in which you explain how [the author] builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience that [author's claim]. In your essay, analyze how [the author] uses one or more of the features listed above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of [his/her] argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant aspects of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with [the author's] claims, but rather explain how the author builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience.

The Best Practice

The Sat Suite of Assessments

The SAT is part of an integrated system called the SAT Suite of Assessments. The other tests in the suite are the PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT™ 8/9. The tests are connected by the same underlying continuum of knowledge and skills that research shows are the most essential for college and career readiness and success. The PSAT 8/9 is administered to eighth- and ninth-graders, and the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT 10 are administered to high school sophomores and juniors. The tests in the SAT Suite of Assessments measure the same skills and knowledge in ways that make sense for different grade levels. As you progress through the suite, the tests keep pace, matching the scope and difficulty of the work you're doing in the classroom.

Because the content is aligned across all tests in the suite, taking the earlier tests is a great way to get ready for the SAT. Plus, if you take any test in the SAT Suite of Assessments, you'll get access to video lessons and personalized SAT study resources from Khan Academy®. Talk to your school counselor or visit collegereadiness.collegeboard.org to learn more about the SAT Suite of Assessments.



PRACTICE AT **satpractice.org**

Throughout this book, you'll see notes like this one that give you specific ideas on how to improve your SAT score. To learn more about the College Board's partnership with Khan Academy and how it can help you succeed on the SAT, go to satpractice.org.

Official Sat Practice from Khan Academy

The College Board's test developers and the online learning experts at Khan Academy worked together to create Official SAT Practice. And it's free — just go to satpractice.org and create a Khan Academy account to get started. Don't miss out on these practice tools:

- Personalized recommendations for practice on the knowledge and skills you need the most help with
- Thousands of questions written by authors trained by College Board test developers
- Video lessons that explain problems step-by-step
- Full-length practice tests

If you've already taken the PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, PSAT/NMSQT, or the SAT, you can connect your College Board account to your Khan Academy account and automatically get personalized practice recommendations based on your test results. If you haven't yet taken a test in the SAT Suite of Assessments, you'll be able to get personalized practice recommendations after taking diagnostic quizzes.

Daily Practice App

It's easy to make practice a part of your daily routine with the Daily Practice for the New SAT app. You'll get a new question to answer each day, and you'll get immediate feedback. The free app makes it easy to:

- Answer an official Reading, Writing and Language, or Math Test question
- Get a hint if you're stuck
- Read answer explanations and learn from your mistakes
- Keep at it — daily practice can only enhance your knowledge and skills

Daily Practice for the New SAT also has a Scan and Score feature to use when you're practicing on paper. Here's how Scan and Score works:

1. Take a complete SAT practice test, using the official answer sheet to bubble in your answers.
2. Open the Daily Practice app and activate your phone's camera.
3. Keeping the app open, scan your answer sheet with your phone's camera.

You'll have your scores instantly, along with a summary of how you did on each question. Your scores will be saved so you can review your answers and discover what you did right — and wrong.

Daily Practice for the New SAT is available for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch in the App Store and for Android devices on Google Play.

Sat Study Group

Creating a study plan and sticking to it are important parts of getting ready for the SAT. Having an SAT study group can help. Working with a group united around a common goal — to do your best on the SAT — can help you stay on track with your study plan and obtain support when you get stuck. And research shows that students who study together learn 2.5 times as much as students who study alone.

To start a successful study group, you'll need to figure a few things out: who, where, and when. You'll want to find other students who plan to take the SAT the same day as you so the same study timeline can work for everyone. An ideal study group will be big enough to be a strong resource, with students who are strong in different areas, and small enough so that everyone stays involved asking and answering questions. Look for five to eight members. Once you have your study group, you'll need to figure out the where and the when. You'll want a place where you can talk and solve problems together and a quiet room where you can take full-length SAT practice tests together. And agreeing on a meeting schedule that works for everyone is important. Try for one or two 45- to 60-minute meetings each week.

**PRACTICE AT**
satpractice.org

Resist the temptation to cram hours and hours of test preparation into those last few days before the SAT. Cramming has been shown to be an ineffective study technique and may lead to fatigue and increased anxiety.

**PRACTICE AT**
satpractice.org

It's important to get plenty of sleep during the nights leading up to your SAT. But don't drastically alter your sleep schedule by, for instance, going to sleep much earlier than usual. Stick with a sleep schedule that works for you and allows you to do your best.

Your SAT study group needs someone to keep things running smoothly, doing things such as making sure everyone knows about schedule changes and tracking progress toward goals. A group sponsor — such as a teacher, coach, or parent — could take on these responsibilities, but so can you or another group member. It's good experience, and leading an extracurricular activity is a plus on college applications. Talk to your school counselor or visit collegereadiness.collegeboard.org to find out more about starting an SAT study group.

Test Day

Counting Down to the Test

In the months and weeks leading up to test day, you'll probably spend a good amount of time preparing for the test: brushing up on old skills, developing new ones, going over sample questions and tests, and so on. In the days immediately preceding the test, you might want to consider taking a different approach by focusing on maintaining your physical health and readiness.

If exercise is part of your daily routine, keep it up. If you like to walk or do other physical activity during times of stress, plan to include these activities in your preparation time. And eat well in the days preceding the test. Your brain operates optimally when you feed your body a balanced diet. On test day, it's good to include proteins and whole grains in your breakfast to help you with lasting energy and focus.

Get a good night's sleep. In a TED talk, neuroscientist Jeff Iliff explains that our brains use one-quarter of our energy and that a remarkable “cleaning” goes on while we slumber. Many adults and teens know how hard it is to turn off electronics at night. For many, phones, tablets, and computers have become companions, keeping us up-to-date on the latest, well, everything. Using them at night, though, can interfere with sleep. If that sounds like you, you'll find it an interesting experiment to set a time to turn them off.

Readying Yourself the Day Before the Test

- **Plan how you will get to the test site.** If it's in a large school or office building, be sure to find out which door will be open. If you haven't been in the building before, find out how to get to the room.
- **Set two alarms.** Even though alarms rarely fail, it can happen. You'll sleep better knowing you have a backup.
- **Review the list of things you need to take with you, and pack them all in a bag.**
- **Review the test directions once more.**

Understanding What to Pack

- **Photo admission ticket** (remember that the photo must resemble how you'll look on the day of the test and must comply with the rules posted on collegeboard.org/sat)
- **Valid photo ID** (driver's license or other state-issued photo ID, school identification card, valid passport, or student ID form prepared by your school with a photo and the school seal overlapping the photo)
- **Several number 2 pencils** with soft erasers (mechanical pencils are not permitted)
- **Approved calculator** (see collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/taking-the-test for calculator guidance)
- **Watch** (one that only tells time; nothing that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content)
- **A drink or snacks** (for your break)

Understanding What Not to Pack

- Cell phones or smartphones
- Audio players or recorders
- Tablets, laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices, including wearable technology
- Separate timers of any type
- Cameras or any other photographic equipment
- Smartwatches or any other devices that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content
- Pens, highlighters, or mechanical or colored pencils
- Books, dictionaries, or references of any kind
- Compasses, rulers, protractors, or cutting devices
- Notes, pamphlets, or papers of any kind, including scratch paper
- Earplugs
- Unacceptable calculators that have typewriter-like keypads, use paper tape, make noise, or use a power cord

If you're seen using any of the items above, they'll be held by a test administrator, you'll be asked to leave, or you may be denied admission. Obviously, the better choice is to leave them at home.

**REMEMBER**

You won't be permitted to take the test if you arrive late. Make sure you know exactly how to get to the test site, and plan to arrive early to account for unexpected transportation delays.

Avoiding Problems on Test Day

You will not be allowed to take the test if:

- The photo on the admission ticket doesn't look like you or otherwise doesn't comply with the rules posted on collegeboard.org/sat (for example, it's too light or too dark, it includes another person, or your face is covered)
- You're missing either the admission ticket or a valid photo ID
- You're late

Please note:

- Changes to where you take the test are not permitted on test day. You can take the test only at the center or school where you're registered to take it.
- Test-type changes are not guaranteed on test day. You can only switch from SAT to SAT with Essay if space and materials allow.
- Walk-in (or standby) testing is not permitted.

Using Good Test-Taking Strategies

Try these strategies out as you practice, and be ready to use them on test day:

- Pace yourself by keeping track of the time using either a clock or a watch that's on your desk. Each section of the test has its own time limit. Check yourself one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarters of the way through the allotted time to make sure you're still on pace.
- While you need to keep your answer sheet free of stray marks, you're welcome to mark up the test booklet as much as you want. Annotating your test booklet can, if done judiciously, help you recall important facts or work through challenging problems.
- Consider skimming the questions in the Reading and the Writing and Language Tests prior to reading each of the passages in order to get a sense of what issues will be important.
- Before reading the answer choices for each multiple-choice question, try to come up with the right answer on your own. Then read the possible answers to find the one closest to your own.
- Always read all the answer choices. You don't want a hasty decision to cause you to select the wrong answer to a question.
- Don't dwell on questions that stump you. Circle ones you decide to skip so that you can return to them quickly later. Remember that a question you answer easily and quickly is worth as much as a question that you struggle with or take a lot of time on.

**PRACTICE AT**

satpractice.org

Formulating an answer, or at least an approximation of an answer, to a multiple-choice question before reading the answer choices will help you to select the correct answer more accurately and efficiently.

- Remember that there's no penalty for guessing, so you should answer all questions before time is up. When you're not sure of an answer, make an educated guess. For multiple-choice questions, draw lines through each of the answer choices you eliminate. Eliminating even one answer choice substantially increases your odds of choosing correctly.
- **Important:** Be sure to check often to make sure that the number of the question you're about to answer matches the number in the test booklet. Erase and adjust if needed.
- You may finish some sections before time runs out. Review, but do so carefully. You don't want to second-guess yourself and change answers just to change them.

Dealing with Nerves and Distractions

It's not uncommon to feel nervous about the test. Try to consider that adrenaline rush as an aid. It's chemical energy, after all; your body is trying to help. If the energy feels like too much help, take a few slow, deep breaths and remember that you're prepared for this test. Combine that thought with the fact that while this test is important, it's only one of several factors that colleges consider when they review your application.

You'll want to put distractions out of your mind as much as possible. If you're momentarily struggling, a nearby student turning a page, for example, can break your concentration and make you feel like you're falling behind (even if you're not). Remember: You have no idea how well other people are doing on the test, and being the fastest doesn't mean being the most successful. Stay focused on your own effort, and push unhelpful thoughts away as quickly as they enter your mind.

One more way to quiet your nerves is to remember that you can take the SAT again. More than half of the students who take the SAT take it twice — once in the spring of their junior year and once in the fall of their senior year. Most students who do so have higher scores on the later test. If you choose this path, make sure you spend time between tests to brush up on areas that you struggled with the first time.



REMEMBER

Answer every question. Points aren't deducted for wrong answers. For multiple-choice questions, eliminate as many answer choices as you can and make an educated guess from among those remaining.



PRACTICE AT

satpractice.org

It's perfectly normal to feel nervous or anxious on test day. Research has shown that when facing an important event, students who view nervousness as a normal and even a positive response by the body perform better than students who view nervousness as detrimental.

PART 2

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing

