

# 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 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.**

**Feel free to link to our site. Give credit to [www.how-to-study.com](http://www.how-to-study.com) whenever you print and distribute material from this site.**