

SAT Tips

Math

Tip #1: Use our proven SAT Math approach to answer every SAT math question

- Step 1: Read the question, identifying and organizing important information as you go
 - What information am I given?
 - Separate the question from the context.
 - How are the answer choices different?
 - Should I label or draw a diagram?
- Step 2: Choose the best strategy to answer the SAT Math question
 - Look for Patterns
 - Pick numbers or use straightforward math
- Step 3: Check that you answered the right question
 - Review the question stem
 - Check units of measurement
 - Double-check your work

Tip #2: Use the Kaplan Method for Multi-Part Math questions

1. Read the first question in the set, looking for clues
2. Identify and organize the information you need
3. Based on what you know, plan your steps to navigate the first question
4. Solve, step-by-step, checking units as you go
5. Did I answer the right question?
6. Repeat for remaining questions, incorporating results from the previous question if possible

Tip #3: Translate words into math

Tip #4: Review number properties and SAT math relationships

- Recognizing number properties will save you time on Test Day. Number properties rules include odds and evens, prime numbers, and the order of operations. You can pick numbers to help you remember the rules.
- For SAT math relationships, knowing the difference between ratios, proportions, and percents can save valuable time. Being able to move easily among percents, fractions, and decimals will also save time.

Tip #5: Make sure your calculator is allowed on Test Day

Writing

Tip #1 Answer questions as you read.

With roughly 48 seconds to answer each question, you certainly don't have time to read entire passages on the Writing & Language section. Don't start the section by reading the passage—instead, immediately begin reading the first question and reading what you need to answer it.

Tip #2 Read only what is needed to answer the given question.

You will never have to read every word of a Writing & Language passage to be able to answer its questions correctly. Most just require you to skip around through the passage, reading only a sentence or two for each question. You may get an occasional question that requires you to use the main idea of a paragraph, in which case you should skim through that paragraph. Though you

might be concerned about questions that ask you to consider the passage as a whole, realize that you can get all the info you need by quickly reading the passage's topic sentences.

Tip #3 Make sure your answer is both concise and relevant.

When more than one choice seems to work well grammatically in the passage, you should gravitate towards shorter choices to eliminate wordiness. Furthermore, if an answer choice seems to go off-topic, eliminate it immediately! The correct answer will ALWAYS be relevant to the material surrounding it.

Tip #4 Know your punctuation.

Roughly two questions per passage on the Writing & Language section will specifically test you on punctuation, and you'll be able to use your punctuating skills to answer many others. Here's a summary of some important punctuation rules:

1. **Commas (,)** are used to:
 - separate three or more items in a list (*apples, bananas, and oranges*)
 - separate two or more independent clauses with a FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) conjunction (*My mom was going to pick me up from school, but my dad came instead.*)
 - set off introductory information from the rest of the sentence (*In 2008, the Phillies won the World Series.*)
 - set off non-essential descriptive information within or at the end of a sentence (*I ran across the floor, which was painted with school colors, to meet Steve. OR I ran across the floor to meet Steve, who greeted me with a high five.*)
2. **Semicolons (;)** are used to join two independent clauses WITHOUT the use of a FANBOYS conjunction. The sentences on both sides of a semicolon MUST be complete, stand-alone sentences. (*I entered the competition early; however, I decided to withdraw a week later.*)
3. **Colons (:)** are used to introduce and/or emphasize a short phrase, quotation, explanation, example, or list. (*The greatest obstacle to completing my homework was imminent: the finale of Grey's Anatomy.*)
4. **Dashes (—)** are used to:
 - indicate a hesitation/break in thought (*I saw John the other day and he looked great—no, it was actually Greg.*)
 - set off an explanatory example or list from the rest of the sentence. (*Many facets of Jill's personality—among them empathy, respect, and kindness—make her a great friend and human being.*)
5. **Apostrophes (')** are used to:
 - indicate possession (*Bob's book, my friends' phones*)
 - create contractions (*there's the rabbit, it's important, who's in charge*)

Tip #5 Know the possible relationships between ideas.

Questions on the Writing & Language Test will ask you to make appropriate and effective transitions between ideas. In general, there are four relationships ideas can have, and you should select the right type of transition word to establish these relationships.

1. **Reinforcement** means one idea supports or builds off another, so transitions to use include *in addition, furthermore, for example, and also*, among others.

2. **Contrast** means one idea opposes another. Here, the right transitions might be *however*, *on the other hand*, *despite*, and *unlike*.
3. **Cause-and-effect** means one idea directly leads to another. To indicate this relationship, use transitions like *consequently*, *therefore*, *since*, and *because*.
4. **Sequence** transitions are used for items part of a series. Words like *first*, *then*, *afterwards*, and *finally* would establish this relationship.

Reading

Tip #1: Don't spend too much time reading the passage.

You should be able to read through an SAT passage in 3-4 minutes. Anything longer and you will likely be compromising your time on the questions. Read the passage through once to get the main idea, then move onto the questions.

Tip #2 If you're zoning out, change the way you're sitting and try again.

Even top scorers will find themselves losing focus at times on Test Day. Don't panic! If you've been reading a passage with upright posture, then try slouching a little or leaning to one side as you read. If you've been slouching, sit up straight. A simple adjustment like this will usually solve the problem and help you refocus on the task at hand.

Tip #3: Do a time check after the third passage.

When you're through the third passage, you should have around 25 minutes left on the section. Otherwise, you should speed up! The SAT Reading Test is 65 minutes long and typically has 5 passages and associated questions. This means you need to spend 13 minutes per passage on average.

Tip #4: Answer easier questions first.

Every passage will have a range of difficulty in its questions. If you're stumped on a passage, try finding quick, easy questions to answer. These might be ask about vocab words or have line references for you to quickly locate the answer in the text. Once you answer these, you'll have a better understanding of the passage and can tackle the harder ones with ease.

Tip #5: If you're going to skip a question to try later, put a guess down anyway.

There's no guessing penalty on the new SAT, so you should make sure you answer every single question. If you need to skip a question, put a star next to it in your test booklet and enter a temporary guess on your answer grid on the off-chance you don't have time to come back to it later. You don't want to be scrambling to put random guesses to your skipped questions as time is winding down!

TAKING THE SAT

Before the Test:

- During bad weather, check for test center closings on Friday night and on Saturday morning
- **Print Your Admission Ticket** on College Board
- Relax the night before the test. Don't cram.
- Eat breakfast before you arrive

What to Bring:

- Your Admission Ticket
- Acceptable photo ID
- Two No. 2 pencils with erasers
- An approved calculator

Nice to Have

- A watch (without an audible alarm)
- Extra batteries and backup equipment—you'll have to ask for permission to access them. They cannot be on your desk during the test.
- A bag or backpack
- A drink or snacks (for your break)

What **NOT** to Bring

- Any devices, including digital watches, that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content (with the exception of CD players used for Language with Listening Subject Tests only)
- Audio players/recorders, tablets, laptops, notebooks, Google Glass, or any other personal computing devices
- iPods or other MP3 players
- iPads or other tablet devices
- Laptops, notebooks, PDAs or any other personal computing devices
- Any texting device
- Cameras or any other photographic equipment
- Separate timers of any type
- Protractors, compasses, rulers
- Highlighters, colored pens, colored pencils
- Pamphlets or papers of any kind
- Dictionaries or other books—there are no exceptions, even if English is not your first language
- Food or drinks (except for during breaks), unless approved by the College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities. [Learn more about testing with accommodations.](#)

Your school counselor can share a complete list of prohibited devices—just ask to see the *Official Student Guide*.

Turn Off All Electronic Devices: You'll need to turn off all electronic devices during the test and even during breaks. This includes cellphones. Be sure to turn off your watch alarm, if you have one.

ACT Tips

English

When searching for sentence errors, start by reading the sentence or paragraph carefully, listening in your head; usually the word or phrase that contains an error will sound wrong. If no errors pop up, look for the four most common types of errors:

- Errors in the relationship between the verb and its subject
- Pronoun errors
- Sentence structure errors
- Awkwardness, verbosity, and incorrect use of idioms

Mathematics

As soon as you find the right answer, mark it and move on -- there are no "degrees of rightness" to be considered. Marking up diagrams or sketching simple drawings when none are available can help you "see" the answers. The questions generally focus on mathematical reasoning, not your ability to perform calculations; if you find yourself spending too much time figuring the problem out, then you've probably overlooked a simple shortcut.

Math: Multiple-Choice Questions

As you work through the multiple-choice math questions, you'll be given reference information (formulas and facts), but you'll need to know how to use them. You're allowed to use a calculator, but, again, it won't help you unless you know how to approach the problems. If you're stuck, try substituting numbers for variables. You can also try plugging in numbers from the answer choices. Start with the middle number. That way, if it doesn't work, you can strategically choose one that's higher or lower.

Reading

Use the three-stage method (previewing, reading, and reviewing) to get the most out of each reading passage. Focus on the big ideas in each passage, not the small details. Look for connections among ideas in each passage. To help you find answers quickly, take notes as you read, marking the main ideas or connections with your pencil.

Science Reasoning

Use the same three-stage method (previewing, reading, reviewing) for each science reasoning passage. In data representation passages, focus on what is being measured, relationships among variables, and trends in data. Don't be confused by irrelevant information or technical terminology -- most science reasoning passages have them, and they can almost always be ignored.

Writing (Optional)

Essays are scored holistically, which means that the final score is based on an overall impression. To make that overall impression a good one, be sure to organize your ideas into a standard essay format. A well-organized essay consists of four to five paragraphs, including an introduction, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. Aim to have at least two body paragraphs to develop and support your ideas.

SAT/ACT Apps:Android

ACT Exam Prep
 ACT Test
 SAT Test Prep
 QuotEd Reading Comprehension

Apple

The Grading Game
 Math Brain Booster
 SAT Prep Pro
 ACT Prep

Both

play2prep
 Ready4 SAT (Prep4 SAT)
 Daily Practice SAT
 Magoosh ACT Flashcards
 Khan Academy

SAT Fee Waiver:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers>

ACT Fee Waiver:

<http://blog.prepscholar.com/act-fee-waiver-complete-guide>

Practice Sites/ Activities:**SAT:**

- <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-admissions/making-high-school-count/standardized-tests/a/full-length-sats-to-take-online>
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>
- <https://www.kaptest.com/sat>
- <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice>
- <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/taking-the-test/test-day-checklist>
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat/new-sat-tips-planning>

ACT:

- <https://www.kaptest.com/act>
- <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html>
- <https://www.4tests.com/act>

BOTH:

- https://www.powerscore.com/sat/help/content_practice_tests.cfm

2017 SAT Administration Dates and Deadlines				
<i>SAT Date</i>	<i>SAT Subject Tests Available</i>	<i>Registration</i>	<i>Late Registration Deadline</i>	<i>Deadline for Changes</i>
March 11, 2017	Not offered	Feb 10, 2017	Feb 21, 2017 (for mailed registrations) Feb 28, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	Feb 28, 2017
May 06, 2017	Available	April 07, 2017	Apr 18, 2017 (for mailed registrations) Apr 25, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	Apr 25, 2017
June 03, 2017	Available	May 09, 2017	May 16, 2017 (for mailed registrations) May 24, 2017 (for registrations made online or by phone)	May 24, 2017

2017-2018 ACT Administration Dates and Deadlines			
<i>Test Date</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Late Deadline</i>	<i>Scores Available</i>
April 8, 2017	March 3, 2017	March 4-17, 2017	April 18, 2017
June 10, 2017	May 5, 2017	May 6-19, 2017	June 20, 2017
September 9, 2017	August 4, 2017*	August 5-18, 2017*	September 19, 2017*
October 28, 2017	September 22, 2017*	September 23-October 6, 2017*	November 14, 2017*
December 9, 2017	November 3, 2017*	November 4-17, 2017*	December 21, 2017*
February 10, 2018	January 5, 2018*	January 6-19, 2018*	February 21, 2017*
April 14, 2018	March 9, 2018*	March 10-23, 2018*	April 24, 2017*
June 9, 2018	May 4, 2018*	May 5-18, 2018*	June 21, 2017*