

**SAT/ACT**

**STRATEGIES**

# SAT - What to Bring

- Admission Ticket
- Calculator
- Protein Snack
- Photo ID
- No. 2 Pencils
- A watch

# General Tips

- Get a good night's sleep
- Don't discuss the test with friends before the test or during breaks (to keep your nerves in check)
- Guess only when you can eliminate two out of five choices
- Never skip a grid-in
- Concentrate on the easy questions (often, but not always, the first questions in each section) if time is an issue

# Guess or not to Guess

- Maybe
- Your raw score on the SAT is the number of questions you got right, minus a fraction of the number you got wrong (except on grid-ins). Every time you answer an SAT question correctly, you get one raw point. Every time you leave an SAT question blank, you get zero raw points. Every time you answer an SAT question incorrectly, ETS subtracts one-fourth of a raw point if the question has five answer choices, or nothing if it is a grid-in.
- Grid-ins – always guess b/c there is no penalty for a wrong answer.

# Math: Facts to Remember

- Some phrases – less than, fewer than, shorter than, subtracted from – reverse the order of subtraction (four less than  $x$  is  $x-4$ ).
- In a triangle, the largest angle is opposite the largest side, and the smallest angle is opposite the smallest side.
- The sum of two sides of any triangle must be larger than the length of the third side.
- In a circle, inscribed angles are half as large as their arcs.

# Math Facts to Remember – Contin.

- A tangent line and a radius always make a right angle
- To solve a linear equation, isolate the variable on one side of the equal sign.
- A base to the zero power equals one.
- Anything quadratic on the SAT can usually be factored.

# Math: Formulas You Need to Know

- If the mean of  $n$  numbers is  $m$ , the sum of the numbers is the product of  $mn$ .
- To find the number of ways for a sequence of events to occur, multiply the number of ways to do each event (rolling two dice:  $6 \times 6 = 36$  possibilities).
- In percent problems,  $\text{is/of} = \%/100$
- FOIL  $(x + A)(x + b) = x^2 + bx + ax + ab$  (FOIL tells you the order in which you should approach an algebra problem: First, Outer, Inner, Last.)
- Slope Formula:  $y_2 - y_1 / x_2 - x_1$
- Distance = square root of  $(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2$

# Critical Reading: Comprehension Techniques

- Read the introduction to each passage carefully so you know what the passage is about and, perhaps, something of the author's viewpoint.
- Glance at the questions before reading the passage so you know what you're looking for.
- Never skip a vocabulary – in – context question.
- Remember that the SAT looks for positive, not negative, comments about groups of people.
- Titles or main ideas must cover everything in the passage, without being too general.
- In the margins, jot down the key ideas that each paragraph covers.

# Critical Reading: Hints for Sentence Completion

- Insert your own word into the sentence and then check the choices to see which one matches your chosen word.
- Apply real-world knowledge.
- Look for words that change the sentence from positive to negative or vice versa, such as therefore, however, and but.

# Math Pacing Chart

		Attempt this many questions				
To Get	You need to earn: (raw pts)	20-question section	18 – question section		16- question section	Total # of questions to attempt
			8 multiple choice	10 grid-ins		
350	7	6	2	2	2	12
400	12	7	3	3	4	17
450	19	9	4	4	6	23
500	25	11	5	5	8	29
550	32	14	6	6	10	36
600	38	16	6	7	13	42
650	44	18	7	8	15	48
700	47	All	All	9	All	53
750	52	All	All	All	All	54
800	54	All	All	All	All	54

# Critical Reading Pacing Chart

To Get	You need to earn: (raw pts)	Attempt this many questions		
		23-25 question section	19- question section	Total # of questions to attempt
300	5	6	3	15
350	9	8	4	20
400	14	11	8	30
450	21	15	12	42
500	29	20	14	54
550	38	23	18	64
600	46	All	All	65-69
650	53	All	All	65-69
700	59	All	All	65-69
750	63	All	All	65-69
800	67	All	All	65-69

# 9 Ways to Calm Down

- Preparing Well
- Get a good nights sleep
- Start Early – on the day of the exam set your alarm a little earlier
- Make a list of all you need to do before leaving the house on the exam date
- Stretch before taking the test
- Breath deeply
- Make a pact w/ friends to stay silent about SAT questions the day of the test
- Stop obsessing – just sit down and take the test
- Focus on the future

# Things to Double Check

- Organize – put admission ticket, car keys, pencils, calculator, watch in plain sight
- Make sure you are bubbling in your answer to the corresponding number on the answer document (better to bubble in per page as to not waste time).
- Answer all grid-ins
- Remember the Order of Operations (PEMDAS)
- Write Legibly

# ACT

Test	Minutes	Questions	Topics
English	45	75	Run-ons, fragments, grammar, usage, punctuation, organization, style, and strategy.
Mathematics	60	60	Geometry, algebra, mathematics, and only four questions on trigonometry. The test does not cover calculus
Reading	35	40	Humanities, social studies, natural sciences, and prose fiction
Science Reasoning	35	40	Science reasoning; all questions may be answered by reading the information stated or implied in the passages, graphs, or tables; no specific background knowledge is required.

# What you should know about the ACT

- The ACT has no penalty for wrong answers. Never leave any answer blank; guess, guess, guess!
- The ACT features four tests: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning
- The ACT does not have a verbal portion that specifically tests vocab.
- You are allowed to use a calculator on the Math section.
- Many colleges accept either the ACT or the SAT I. You may want to take both exams to maximize your chances of college admission.

# Contin.

- The ACT does not require an essay (but you are strongly recommended to do the writing component)
- All questions on the ACT have multiple-choice answers.
- Mark answers in the booklet and on the grid. When you answer a question, circle the answer in your test booklet first, and then shade in the appropriate circle on your test grid. Doing so can be your salvation if you make a mistake in your numbering on the grid and have to erase and start over again. This technique also helps you when you double check your work.