



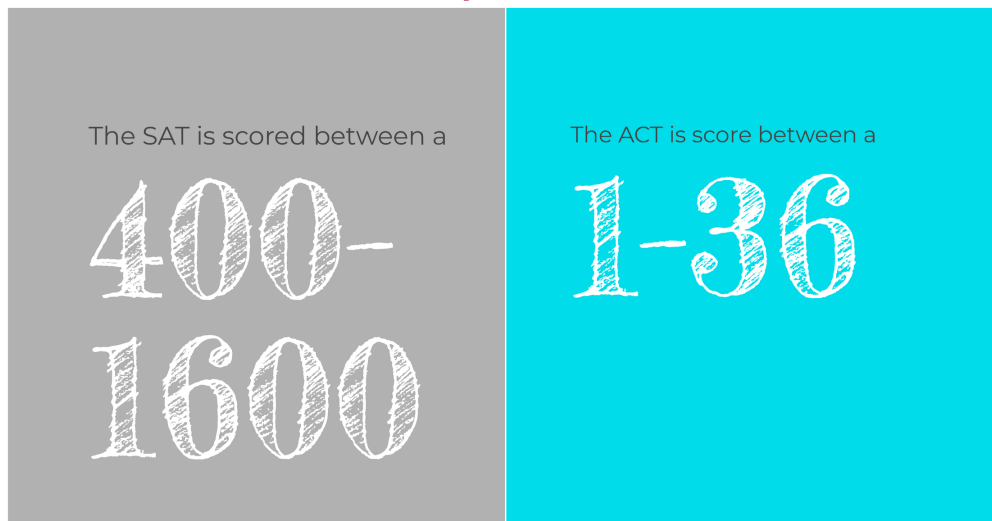
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1600: SAT TIPS YOU NEED

SAT VS. ACT

Most schools will take either the SAT or the ACT, while some schools will give preference to one over the other. The easiest way to decide which test(s) you should be taking is first, to check which tests the schools you are applying to require and second, to find out which test you will score better on. It's important to try both exams before deciding on one.

SCORES



ESSAY



The SAT asks you to evaluate the strength of an argument, while the ACT asks you to craft your own argument

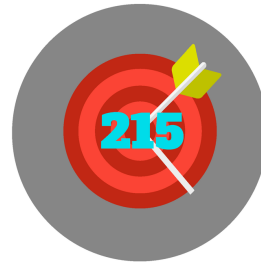
Ultimately, you will have to decide based on which exam plays on your strengths and which exam you can get a better score on.

SAT VS. ACT

QUESTIONS



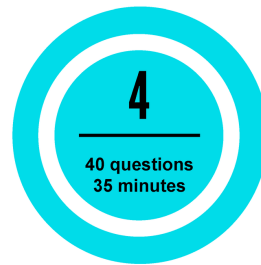
There are fewer harder questions on the SAT.



There are quantitatively more straightforward questions on the ACT.



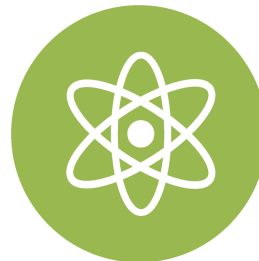
There are five SAT Reading passages



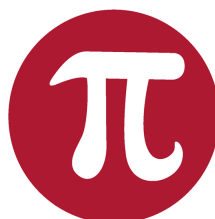
There are four ACT Reading passages



You are not allowed a calculator with all math questions on the SAT



The ACT has a science section



Both tests cover the same advanced math topics, including trigonometry and statistics

STUDY TIPS & RESOURCES

When preparing for standardized tests, you should always start by taking a diagnostic test—this is a practice test completed under testing conditions, which means sitting in a quiet space and adhering to test timings. These diagnostic tests will give a baseline score that will help you discover which tests are better suited to your strengths and subsequently which will reflect best on your college applications. Diagnostic tests done under simulated test conditions will also help you tailor your studying towards areas of weakness. Rather than continuing to take full-length practice tests to prepare for your exam, focus more time on sections you are scoring poorly on. Reviewing your practice test to find which types of questions are giving you trouble is equally as important as taking the test in the first place.

Once you have identified the types of problems that you need to focus your time on, start doing those practice problems without giving yourself time constraints. Take time to understand the correct answers and how to arrive at them. Go deeper than the test sections to identify which question types within each section you are not answering correctly. Work on building up your accuracy with each question type before you re-introduce the timing conditions to your practice. You can select these practice questions from existing practice tests or external study materials. You can track your progress with each question type after practice tests with a spreadsheet that breaks down your success by specific question type.



READING SECTION LAYOUT

The SAT Reading section is the first and longest of the exam. With five passages and 52 questions to be done in 65 minutes, building up your precision and stamina will be the key to doing well on this section. The Reading section will test your comprehension of text passages as well as information graphics. Of the five passage and question subsections, there will be one subsection that will require you to read two short passages and answer questions on them. This is the breakdown for content on the SAT Reading section:

- One passage from a classic or contemporary work of U.S. or world literature.
- One passage or a pair of passages from either a U.S. founding document or a text in the Great Global Conversation they inspired. The U.S. Constitution or a speech by Nelson Mandela, for example.
- A selection about economics, psychology, sociology, or some other social science.
- Two science passages (or one passage and one passage pair) that examine foundational concepts and developments in Earth science, biology, chemistry, or physics.

You will be tested on three main concepts. First, the majority of questions will focus on your analysis skills. These questions will ask you to evaluate the author's attitude and purpose, and the passage's structure and organization. About 10 of the 52 questions will be Command of Evidence questions. These focus on the author's use of evidence to support their claims. These questions require you to look at the evidence-based inferences the author is using. In considering the evidence the author uses, it can also be important to identify what evidence the author is lacking or choosing not to use. Finally, there will be about 10 Words in Context questions. These questions ask you to determine the meaning of a word as it is used within the specific context of the passage.

READING SECTION STRATEGIES

One way to prepare for the SAT Reading and Writing sections long-term is to read more than just your class readings on your own time. Reading news articles from reputable sources can be a quick and easy way to build up your analysis skills. As you read, pay attention to structure, point of view, and diction.

There are also a number of strategies specific to the SAT Reading section as a whole. As you read each passage, you should always be paying attention to three important points:

 **Author's point of view**

 **Author's tone**

 **Structure of passages**

The author's point of view refers to whether the piece is written in first person (I), second person (you), or third person (they) – their point of view can give clues about their tone. The tone of the passage refers to how the author is talking about the subjects in the passage. Your first step in determining the tone of the passage should be to decide whether the tone is positive, negative, or neutral. Take note of this as you read. Finally, as you are reading, you should be annotating the passage and taking note of the layout of the passage and how it is constructed. Specifically, take note of the type of language being used (is it simple and straightforward?), take note of the sentence structure (is the author using short concise sentences, or long run-ons?), and finally take note of any major shifts or contradictions in the author's writing. Annotating the passage and passage mapping is discussed in the example problems.

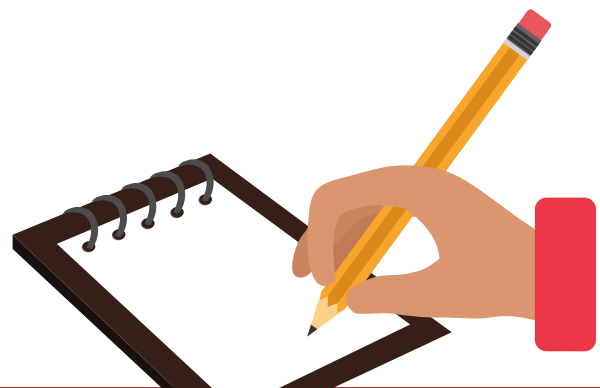
WRITING SECTION LAYOUT

The Writing section is a 35 minutes section with 44 questions. You will be given four passages to edit and answer questions on as you read them. For this section, you will also have to focus on the passage layout, tone, point of view, and word choice. Similar to the Reading section, you will have to follow the logical organization of the passage and comment on it.

About half of the questions on this section will concern the expression of ideas. These questions will ask you to improve or evaluate the organization of content. You will be required to add relevant information and remove irrelevant information. Further, you will have to maintain a uniform tone throughout the passage.

The other half of the questions on this section will concern the usage of standard English conventions. This means you will have to have a strong command of English grammar, punctuation, mechanics, word choice, and phrase structure.

Some of the Writing passages will include informational graphics. You will have to evaluate their relevance and usage within these passages.



WRITING SECTION STRATEGIES

The best preparation for the Writing section will be studying the grammar rules and vocabulary words you learn in your high school English classes. As with the Reading section, you will undoubtedly encounter words in the answer choices that you don't know. Add these to a running list of words and their definitions so that you begin to build your vocabulary. Many of these words will recur on future tests. Regarding word choice, this section tests your accuracy. One concept you will be tested on is redundancy in word choice. Pay close attention to sentence structure and word choice to determine if certain phrases or words are repeating the same idea unnecessarily. The bottom line is don't be redundant. Let's look at some specific grammar rules the SAT tests often. You should be able to identify all parts of speech in sentences before considering these rules.

Part of Speech	Definition	Example
Noun	A person, place, thing or idea	The green monster quickly ran into the room . He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Pronoun	A word used in place of a noun	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Adjective	A word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Verb	A word that expresses action or a state of being	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell . Oh no!
Adverb	A word that modifies or describes a verb, adjective, or another adverb	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Preposition	A word that expresses the relationship between nouns or pronouns	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Conjunction	A word that joins words, phrases, or clauses	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!
Interjection	A word used to express emotion	The green monster quickly ran into the room. He crashed and fell. Oh no!

WRITING SECTION STRATEGIES

Here are some grammar issues that the SAT typically test:

- Colon vs. Semi-Colon
- Commas & Oxford Comma
- Conjunctions/Transition Words

The difference between a colon and semi-colon is that colons are used to introduce a word, list, or phrase, while semicolons are used to separate clauses in a sentence. Semicolons are extended pauses and can often signal an area where one sentence can be split in two.

Commas are used for pauses and introductions between dependent clauses—or phrases that cannot stand alone. The Oxford comma is the debated comma that goes before “and” or “or” towards the end of a list. The SAT considers the use of the Oxford comma to be correct. This section will also test your understanding of conjunctions and transition words and their usage in a passage. These words are important for passage construction. You should be able to correctly determine where a transition word should go and which type of transition words should be used. This means understanding the difference between modifying transition words—such as “also” “again” and “identically” and contradiction transition words – such as “although” and “comparatively”. The key difference here is that if you are linking the same ideas within a sentence or paragraph, use modifying transition words, whereas when you are linking ideas that contradict one another or do not logically follow together, use transition words that indicate the changing direction of the subject material.

Common transition words include: again, to, and, also, then, equally, identically, uniquely, like, as, too, moreover, as well as, together with, of course, likewise, comparatively, correspondingly, similarly, furthermore, and additionally.

MATH SECTION LAYOUT

The SAT has two math sections. The first is a 25 minute no-calculator section with 20 questions. The second is a 55 minute calculator section with 38 questions. Both sections get increasingly difficult as you go through them. The difficulty resets at the start of the calculator section.

There are two types of questions on the math sections: multiple choice questions with four answer choices, and write-in questions for which you will have to write and bubble in the number you get from solving the problem. The majority of questions fall under the topics of Algebra, Problem Solving, and Data Analysis. There will also be a few trigonometry and geometry problems.

SAT Math

- Heart of Algebra, 19 questions: linear equations, systems of linear equations, and inequalities
 - Problem Solving and Data Analysis, 17 questions: ratios, proportions, percentages, units, quantitative data, probabilities
 - Passport to Advanced Math, 16 questions: equivalent algebraic expressions, quadratic equations, exponential functions, other nonlinear equations and functions)
 - Additional Topics in Math, 6 questions: basic trigonometry, the geometry of area, volume, lines, angles, shapes
- 🕒 Time: 80 minutes (55 with a calculator, 25 without)



MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

The best way to prepare for the math section of the SAT is to do practice problems and review basic concepts you have trouble with. It is important to keep careful note of the types of questions you are getting wrong. Use a chart like the one on the next few pages to keep track of your strengths and weaknesses.

There are a few other ways to approach the math section that play to your strengths. Remember that all questions, despite their difficulty are worth the same amount towards your composite score. That means that if math is difficult for you, focus your time on getting the earlier questions correct, as these questions will be easier and will help you score points. If math is a strength of yours, try to spend less time on the earlier questions and focus on getting through the entire section.

Time is precious on these sections, which means you triage as you go through the questions. This means skipping questions you don't understand and moving onto questions you can solve more easily. Remember that the SAT does not penalize incorrect answers so it is advantageous for you to guess on any questions you do not have time for or do not know how to solve.



MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

Use the below study trackers to help you follow your progress as you take your SAT practice tests, found on the College Board website.

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Heart of Algebra

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Create, solve, or interpret a linear expression or equation in one variable	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Create, solve, or interpret linear inequalities in one variable	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Build a linear function that models a linear relationship between two quantities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Create, solve, and interpret systems of linear inequalities in two variables	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Algebraically solve linear equations (or inequalities) in one variable	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Heart of Algebra

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Create, solve, and interpret systems of two linear equations in two variables	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Algebraically solve systems of two linear equations in two variables	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Interpret the variables and constants in expressions for linear functions within the context presented	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Understand connections between algebraic and graphical representations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Problem Solving and Data Analysis

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Use ratios, rates, proportional relationships, and scale drawings to solve single- and multistep problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve single- and multistep problems involving percentages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve single- and multistep problems involving measurement quantities, units, and unit conversion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given a scatterplot, use linear, quadratic, or exponential models to describe how the variables are related.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use the relationship between two variables to investigate key features of the graph	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Problem Solving and Data Analysis

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Compare linear growth with exponential growth	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Use two-way tables to summarize categorical data and relative frequencies, and calculate conditional probability	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Make inferences about population parameters based on sample data	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Use statistics to investigate measures of center of data and analyze shape, center, and spread	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Evaluate reports to make inferences, justify conclusions, and determine appropriateness of data collection methods	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Passport to Advance Math

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Create a quadratic or exponential function or equation that models a context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine the most suitable form of an expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create equivalent expressions involving rational exponents and radicals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an equivalent form of an algebraic expression by using structure and fluency with operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve a quadratic equation having rational coefficients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add, subtract, and multiply polynomial expressions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Passport to Advance Math

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Solve an equation in one variable that contains radicals or contains the variable in the denominator of a fraction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solve a system of one linear equation and one quadratic equation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rewrite simple rational expressions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpret parts of nonlinear expressions in terms of their context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand the relationship between zeros and factors of polynomials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand a nonlinear relationship between two variables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MATH SECTION STRATEGIES

SAT MATH STUDY TRACKER

Passport to Advance Math

SAT Question Type	Practice Test 1 Questions Correct	Practice Test 2 Questions Correct	Practice Test 3 Questions Correct
Use function notation, and interpret statements using function notation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use structure to isolate or identify a quantity of interest in an expression or isolate a quantity of interest in an equation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The most important aspect of preparing for the SAT Math sections is practice. Utilize all eight of the free SAT practice tests that can be found on the College Board website. By tracking your progress over anywhere from three to six of these tests, you will be able to see your weak points and then focus your efforts to improve your skills. It may seem tedious, but this is the most effective and efficient way for you to prepare.

